



The Dragon's Tale

Friends of Dragon Run
PO Box 882
Gloucester, VA 23061

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Friends of Dragon Run, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to the preservation, protection, and encouragement of wise use of the Dragon Run and its watershed.

Formation of Friends of Dragon Run and Big Island Purchase

Please join us on Wednesday, November 20, 2019 for our annual meeting to learn more about the history of our organization and to elect FODR's officers and directors for 2020. Jerry Stokes, a FODR Founding Member, will recount stories about the formation of FODR. Jerry played a significant role in the purchase of our Big Island property as well as FODR's formation. He had a very diverse career in a wide range of natural resource conservation positions, but he wrote to us earlier this year that his role in conserving Dragon Run was one of the most important projects in his career, and he has had some really grand responsibilities (including management of a million-acre Montana wilderness). We can probably persuade him to answer questions about some of those other experiences as well.

Jerry Stokes is a native of Brunswick Georgia. He holds a BS in forestry and a Master's degree in forestry from the University of Georgia, and a PhD in natural resource policy and management from Colorado State University. He served as an officer in the U.S. Air Force from 1967 to 1971, including a tour in Vietnam.

Jerry's career includes a wide variety of positions in numerous conservation organizations. They include the Virginia Commission of Outdoor Recreation (later absorbed by the Department of Conservation and Historic resources) in Richmond; Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, US Department of the Interior (later absorbed into the National Park Service) in Denver; Flathead National Forest, US Department of Agriculture, Kalispell Montana; the Virginia Department of Soil and Water conservation and the Chesapeake Bay foundation, Tappahannock; Forest Service liaison to Environmental Protection Agency, Chesapeake Bay Program headquarters, Annapolis Maryland, national headquarters of the U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, Washington DC. Jerry retired as U.S. Forest Service Director Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers management. He lives in Fredericksburg with Ellen, his wife of 44 years. They have adult twin sons, a daughter and two grandsons.



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Roadside Trash Pickup November 23 @ 9AM

Meet in the parking lot of Rappahannock Community College in Glens. For more information, contact Hugh Markham at hughr.markham@gmail.com



\$35.00



Red Tee- just in time for Christmas

New FODR items with logo. Check website @

www.dragonrun.org

PRESIDENT'S NOTE—*Alas, No Water for 2019 Fall Paddle Season*



Our 2019 Spring Paddle Season was a success by any measure, and we greatly appreciate all the hard work of the paddle and logistics crew members, who worked diligently every day to be sure that our almost 400 paddlers enjoyed their time on the Dragon. As you know, we are always at the mercy of the weather before and during our daily paddles. This year, the drought in the four counties through which the Dragon runs created water so shallow that we walked our kayaks through at least half of the old logging canal on our workday to clear the water trail for the fall paddle. After much research for alternative locations for launch and takeout, the Board determined earlier this month that we had to cancel the 2019 Fall Paddle Season. We thank those folks who made donations and joined FODR

as new members despite the cancellation, and we hope that everyone will join us on a paddle in Spring 2020.

Thanks to everyone who stepped up and bought the 12-foot kayaks that we offered for sale. It's especially helpful to have those funds because we will not have donations from guest paddlers this fall. And please contact me if you have gently used kayaks or other equipment that we might be able to use or sell.

Please join us at our Annual Meeting on November 20, at 7 pm in the Gloucester Library. Thanks to Jerry Stokes, who will present a program about the formation of FODR and our first land purchase: the hundreds of acres we call "Big Island."

We also need you to come to the Annual Meeting to meet the people whom the Board is proposing to lead your organization as officers and members of your Board of Directors. The Nominating Committee Report is included in this Newsletter, and I hope you will agree that we are quite fortunate to have such stellar folks willing to serve on the FODR board, especially our new nominee, Carol Kauffman, who has been a valuable member of our paddle crew.

Check out our 2019 Activities Calendar to find out our other plans for 2019. We'd love to hear from you if you want to be a paddle crew or logistics crew member, write an article for the newsletter, or let us know about an event or help us to host a community event that would welcome FODR's participation.

Be sure to check our website <http://www.dragonrun.org/> and our Facebook page frequently. Remember that you can now pay your membership dues (whether joining for the first time or renewing your annual membership) and also order and pay for our new Dragon Run tee shirts, long-sleeved performance shirts, new quarter-zip long-sleeved performance shirts, new hoodies, and caps and bucket hats using our website and PayPal. You don't need to have a PayPal account; you can use any credit card.

Don't forget to send me an email at President@dragonrun.org, call me (703-217-0610), write me a letter (P.O. Box 247, Deltaville, VA 23043), or post a comment on our Facebook page and let me know what you are thinking. I hope to see or hear from you very soon!!



PROTHONOTARY WARBLERS – A GEM OF DRAGON RUN

By Kevin Howe

Birds, in general, are the most colorful of our land vertebrates and one of the most striking is the Prothonotary Warbler. If you have been on our spring paddle, you may have been lucky enough to see a male with its brilliant orange-yellow head and yellow underparts with olive back and blue-grey wings. By the time of our fall paddle, they have migrated south for the winter. While they breed here in the U.S., they spend their winters in central and northern South America (truly snow birds, but referred to as Neotropical migrants).



Although widely found throughout the eastern U.S., with a few appearing in Canada, they are quite habitat specific and are restricted to our bottomland-floodplain forest ecosystems (swamps) and occasionally in riparian habitats around lakes. It may dawn on you that these habitats have been frequently logged and drained over the past 300 years, so it should not surprise you that this tiny bird has been continually subjected to the loss of habitat. This is the number one threat to this bird, as it is to most organisms. Sadly, loss of habitat is not restricted to the U.S. The warbler's winter habitat of mangrove

swamps is one of the most endangered habitats on the planet; research indicates that the planet has lost one-fifth of mangrove habitat since 1980 although there is evidence this loss has begun to slow. When habitats decline, so do all the species dependent on that habitat, and the data on the Prothonotary bears this out. Detailed analysis of data from the North American Breeding Bird Study (1996 to 2012), suggest a 1% annual decline in the population of Prothonotary Warblers. Habitat loss occurs everywhere. That makes the protection of Dragon Run all the more critical, and we thank you for your support.

In the context of habitat loss, the Prothonotary's nesting behavior is of interest. It is a cavity nester, meaning that it nests in a cavity, usually a tree, like a woodpecker. Curious for sure, as out of the 114 different warblers in North America, there are only two cavity nesters, with the Prothonotary the only one in the east. Most often the trees with cavities are old growth or certainly older or larger dead trees; something we see less and less, due to human intervention. These warblers do not make the cavities but rather find one created by other cavity nesters; some research suggests they particularly like the cavities made by Downy Woodpeckers, which are small and lower in the tree than cavities made by other woodpeckers. But on your next trip down the Dragon, check out the large number of trees with cavities which some of Dragon guides call bird condos due to the dozens of holes in some trees. Interestingly, many cavity nesting birds take quite readily to nest boxes and you can see a number of boxes that have been placed along Dragon Run and are used year after year. These boxes have been installed by FODR member, Gary Driscole, who monitors them. After the birds lay their eggs and the baby birds fledge, Gary cleans out the boxes so that the warblers can breed again and successfully raise another group of fledglings.



A Walk Among Fungus by Teta Kain

A walk in the woods in late summer and early fall can be quite exciting when mushrooms of all kinds start appearing along the trails. There is a bewildering variety of mushrooms, slimes, crusts, and polypores, just to name a few of the many types you will find in all kinds of habitats. Over the years, I have found a bewildering variety and here are some of the stories that go with my discoveries over the years.



One of my first field trips to try my hand at mushroom identification was in Newport News Park with a friend whom I did not think knew any more about mushrooms than I did, and I did not know anything about them at all! We came upon a patch of mushrooms beside the path and I pulled out the field guide to identify them. I was diligently fishing through the book while my friend, Betty, was examining the specimens. There were several in front of us and I saw a picture in the book of a Parasol Mushroom (*Lepiota procera*) (picture left) that resembled what we were looking at. I was reading the list of characteristics “. . . cap wide, convex, becoming flat, down-curved scales. . . flesh white . . . band-like ring on upper stalk . . . resembles several other mushrooms that are poisonous!” At that moment, I glanced toward Betty and to my horror, she was EATING the

specimen! I tried to make her spit it out, sure she was going to die on the spot, only to learn, as she told me between bites, that this happened to be a species she was very familiar with and it was edible, in fact, delicious. She said she and her family gathered and ate them when she lived in Arkansas. I am happy to say she is still alive and well, but reading the dire warnings solidly convinced me NEVER to sample any mushrooms. Many are devilishly hard to identify correctly.

Shortly after that episode, my husband and I moved to Gloucester County and I forgot about the mushroom caper until I started exploring the woods at FODR's Big Island property and began finding a host of different mushrooms. And true to my promise to myself, I have NEVER sampled any mushrooms. However, I have found plenty of unusual and weird ones along the trails.

One of the easiest fungi to find are Eastern Cauliflower Mushrooms (*Sparassis crispa*) (picture right) Resembling what I would describe as human brains, they certainly do not look appetizing, but the field guides all describe the edibility as “choice.” You are welcome to have my portion.



Something else gave me the willies: there used to be an old slab table in the woods up at Big Island. It was decaying badly. For several years a dreadful looking fungus would poke up between the boards on the tabletop. It is called Dead-man's Fingers (*Xylaria polymorpha*) (picture left). It looked, for all the world, just like the fingers of a skeleton. I found another place to have my lunch.

Speaking of anatomical look-alikes - the repulsive Elegant Stinkhorn (*Mutinus elegans*) (picture right) occasionally occurs in leaf litter or wood debris based on rich soil. You would not be tempted to taste it. There are several species of stinkhorns and I am told they all smell to high heaven (I have no sense of smell so cannot attest to that fact), and I am happy to give them wide berth as I pass by. A couple of years ago a group of us were clearing trails on Big Island and our president, sharp-eyed Janice Moore, discovered a Ravenel's Stinkhorn (*Phallus ravenelii*), a species I had never seen before.



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A Walk Among Fungus by Teta Kaincontinued

Sometimes, when walking along a path, you come across something so bizarre-looking that it makes you jump. One of the mushrooms that falls into this category is the dramatic-looking Old-Man-of-the-Woods (*Strobilomyces floccopus*) (picture right). At first glance, it gives the impression that it is some kind of animal lurking beside a tree and might jump out at you. Closer inspection reveals its rough-topped black-and-white capped mushroom supported by a sturdy stem. The underneath is a spongy structure that takes the place of gills. It is one of the mushrooms called “boletes.” Some boletes are edible, and this one also falls into that category, but it would be better described as “undesirable.” Though it is not poisonous, many describe the taste as very bad. Best to leave it to mushroom-loving critters of the forest.



On the other end of the scale is the beautiful, and very tasty, American Caesar's Mushroom (*Amanita caesarea*). It is quite common and highly prized by mycologists, but there is a deadly surprise regarding this mushroom. It closely resembles another species of *Amanita* that looks almost exactly like it and grows in the same habitat as the Caesar. And therein lies the awful surprise. Whereas the Caesar is one of the most delectable mushrooms, its look-alike, False Caesar's Mushroom (*Amanita parcivolvata*) (picture left) is lethally poisonous. Woe be to the incautious epicurean who does not carefully check all the identification features that distinguish the two species.

Sometimes fungi can make you look awfully foolish. When I first started leading paddle trips down the Dragon, I would notice small, dainty growths sprouting from the needles of the Bald Cypress trees that lined the river. I pointed out these pretty little “flowers” to dozens of paddlers until one day someone quietly whispered in my ear, “Teta, those are not flowers. They are actually fungi that appear on Bald Cypress trees most every spring. They are called Stalked Hairy Fairy Cups (*Dasyscyphus virgineus*).” (picture right)



To my way of thinking, one of the most incredibly beautiful and delicate mushrooms is the Fragile Dapperling (*Leucocoprinus fragillissimus*) (picture left). This mushroom is so delicate that you can almost see through it. I have found it only in the month of August, and only during years when the weather is exceptionally wet, very humid, and extremely hot, up in the high 90s. The pleated cap is soft yellowish white; the stem sports a small ringlet. Even the softest breeze will blow it over. And, oh yes! If you really want to see it and photograph it, you had better visit it very early in the day. It usually disintegrates and disappears by 11 a.m.

Finally, the most memorable fungus I have found so far is one that is common, but the specimen I stumbled across a couple years ago was something I never expected to see. As I walked by a tree and looked down, there was an unbelievably beautiful polypore called Varnish Shelf (*Ganoderma curtisii*) (picture right). Many Varnish Shelves are colorful, but this one glowed with bright pink, purple, and yellow bands. It lasted a surprisingly long time, two or three weeks, but depending on the weather, the colors often changed. Sometimes bright, other times duller subdued color predominated. I have been back by that spot many times, and other Varnish Shelves have appeared, but never with the glowing beauty of that specimen had I stumbled across that October morning.

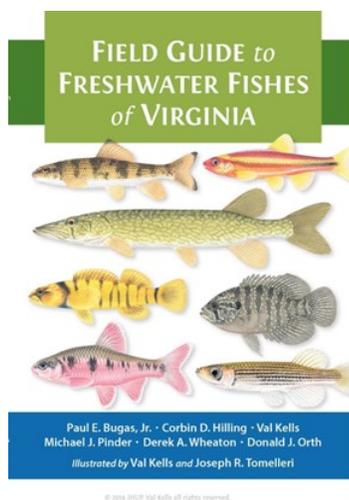


Field Guide to Freshwater Fishes of Virginia Review by Jeff Wright

“You can never have too many field guides” is a quote to live by from one of my favorite naturalists, Teta Kain. Finally, we have an exceptional field guide that captures some of the many and varied swimmers that live below our kayaks as we paddle on the Dragon. *Field Guide to Freshwater Fishes of Virginia* is the work of the team of authors Paul E. Bugas, Jr., Corbin D. Hilling, Val Kells, Michael J. Pinder, Derek A. Wheaton, and Donald J. Orth, and illustrators Val Kells and Joseph R. Tomelleri. This field guide fulfills a longstanding need in nature education, conservation, and species identification.

This book is a complete reference to the fishes of the entire commonwealth of Virginia. Gathering information that until now could only be found scattered across numerous reference works, online databases, and lower “resolution” illustrations and photographs - this book provides what you need to know to identify fish families and species in Dragon Run. Particularly helpful are the exceptionally detailed illustrations by Kells and Tomelleri.

The field guide covers how to collect, handle, observe, conserve, and protect these unique fishes. Of note are sections on “Management and Conservation” and “Fish Watching, Photography, and Keeping.” I hope the guide fosters the same challenges and fun we are having on the Dragon identifying birds to now also include identifying the Commonwealth’s swimmers.



The book's key features include:

- more than 175 full-color illustrations, set side by side with descriptions of each fish
- introductory chapters on how to use the field guide
- line drawings that depict the most reliable diagnostic characteristics for field identifications (e.g., snout shape, pigment patterns, mouth morphology)
- descriptions of Virginia's freshwater habitats
- examples of fish spawning and feeding behavior
- tips on observing fish in the wild and in captivity
- a chapter on the taxonomy of family and common names of the fish species most common throughout Virginia
- up-to-date fish distribution maps
- a complete glossary of terms

The *Field Guide to Freshwater Fishes of Virginia* will appeal to scientists, naturalists, teachers, students, and anglers. Stated another way, this is a guide for beginning naturalists as well as field biologists. But just as important it should aid efforts of the Friends of Dragon Run to protect, preserve, and educate. It should help the paddle crew answer the question from paddle guests “are there fish here...?”

Released in September 2019, the guide is available through on-line book sellers and in bookstores.



2019 NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Election of officers and board of directors members will be conducted during the Friends of Dragon Run annual meeting on Wednesday, November 20, 2019, at the Gloucester Library, beginning at 7 pm.

The Nominating Committee Chair is Teta Kain. Serving on the committee with Kain are Jeff Wright and Molly Broderson. Here is the committee's report.

The slate of nominees for terms beginning January 1, 2020, is as follows:

Officers: (the term of each officer is one year)

President:	Janice Moore
Vice President:	Jeff Wright
Secretary:	Adrienne Frank
Treasurer:	Anne Atkins

Board of directors: (the term of each board member is two years)

Board members whose terms will expire 12/31/19 and who are nominated to serve another two-year term: Anne Ducey-Ortiz and S. Davis Rhodes.

Nominee to serve a two-year term:

Carol Kauffman

Carol and her husband, Jack, retired to Gloucester from southeast Pennsylvania in 2018. As luck would have it, they found a spectacular home on Caffee Creek right next door to the infamous Teta Kain! Carol has a bachelor's degree in education and taught in New Jersey and Pennsylvania and homeschooled their son, Noah. She enjoys paddle boarding and kayaking. She served many times on the FODR paddle crew during the 2019 spring paddle season. Some of Carol's many interests include hiking, gardening, environmental issues, vegan cooking, and traveling. She is currently studying to become a Middle Peninsula Master Naturalist.

We will also accept nominations from the floor at our annual meeting.

Board members with one more year to serve and not up for re-election:

John Jensen; Teta Kain; David Milby; Marsha Carlton; Katie Hawks; and Kevin Howe.

Terry DuRose's 2-year term as Board Member expires 12/31/19. She has chosen not to stand for re-election. We sincerely thank Terry for her service on the board. She has been an outstanding Board Member and will continue to provide assistance with FODR's merchandise inventory, as she has done for the past several years.

Respectfully submitted,

Teta Kain

Nominating Committee Chair



OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Janice Moore	President	PO Box 247, Deltaville, VA 23043	703-217-0610	jrmoore27@gmail.com
Jeff Wright	Vice President	PO Box 564, Ophelia, VA 22530	703-801-0239	pec11908@mac.com
Adrienne Frank	Secretary	114 Crescent Dr. Williamsburg, VA 23188-1044	757-566-4009	adrienne-gary@cox.net
Anne Atkins	Treasurer		H 804-502-8262	
Marsha Carlton	2020	P.O. Box 126, North, VA 23128	832-661-5783	carltonhouse80@gmail.com
John Jensen	2020	P.O. Box 573, Aylett, VA 23009-0573	H-804-769-1565 C-703-402-7097	hopesdadjohn@aol.com
Teta Kain	2020	7083 Caffee Creek Ln. Gloucester, VA 23061	804-693-5246	tkdragonrun7@gmail.com
David Milby	2020	P.O. Box 362, Saluda, VA 23149	C 804-370-7559 W 804-966-5092	david.milby@dof.virginia.gov
Anne Ducey-Ortiz	2019	389 Wading Creek Rd., Dutton, VA 23050	804-725-1259	aduceyortiz@earthlink.net
Terry DuRose	2019	12014 Trails La., Gloucester, VA 23061	804-815-2930	chesapeakebay_mgr@equitylifestyle.com
S. Davis Rhodes	2019	3004 Luxford Court, Chesapeake, VA 23321-5760	757-484-9522	s.d.rhodes@verizon.net

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