

A Boat Ride and A Great Blue...Or, taking part in the annual Christmas Bird Count on Portsmouth Island. | 1

By Lou Ann Homan

With apples in my backpack and my camera case slung over my shoulder I step down into the boat on this cold morning. The other passengers are much more equipped for the day than am I. They carry binoculars and telescopes, and wear rubber boots for tramping over the beaches and through the marshes.



I pull my hood up and wrap my scarf around my face as we leave the dock and take off across the sound. It is a cold wind that blows as we travel the short distance. Our destination today is Portsmouth Island to participate in the Christmas bird count. Our leader, Peter Vankevich, is a born birder and the organizer of our group of birders. He spends days ahead of time sending out emails and getting everyone excited about the Christmas bird count. On this cold morning while he is handing out lists of birds and assignments, vegetarian chili simmers in the crock pot home in his cottage...(read more [from the Ocracoke Current](#))

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