



The Flyer

Newsletter of the Williamsburg Bird Club

Vol. 32, No. 5

www.williamsburgbirdclub.org

May 2009

President's Corner

By Shirley Devan

Back away from the computer [or TV] and no one will get hurt! May is one of the most glorious birding months of the year. Avian jewelry items (commonly known as Wood Warblers) are arriving daily. Looking at a Prothonotary Warbler through your binoculars is sure to cause your heart to race. Get out to one of the Club's three Saturday bird expeditions in May. We'll be at New Quarter Park May 9 and 23 and at the new James City County trail at the Warhill Sports Complex May 16. Look for the specific times elsewhere in the newsletter. The wooded areas we have left are stuffed with wonders. Get outside!

Annual Picnic June 7 at Ruth & Sherwin Beck's House

Save the Day: Our Annual Picnic will resume this year. Thankfully, Ruth Beck has recovered quite well, and she and Sherwin will graciously open their Barhamsville home and yard to us Sunday, June 7. Time is 4:00 PM.

You should call Jean Rend at 220-9032 to let her know that you are coming, and discuss what side dish you might contribute to the feast. She'll also have a signup sheet at the May meetings. We hope to see you there.

Directions to the Beck's house: Take I-64 west toward Richmond to exit #227 (West Point/Toano). **Turn right onto Route 30 North** going toward West Point. Follow Route 30 about 2.5 miles to Barhamsville. The center of Barhamsville extends along the road for less than a mile. Look for the Post Office on your right. Then immediately look for a secondary paved road, **Route 273 N, turn to the right.** Follow it for 1.6 miles. As the forested area to your right suddenly gives way to open fields, look for a road sign on the left that says Farmer's Drive and Polish Town Road (State Route 634). Directly opposite Route 634, there will be a gravel/dirt road on the right. **Turn right on to the gravel/dirt road** (A large stork-like wooden bird will mark the driveway). Stay on this road for about ½ mile. This

gravel lane goes the Beck's driveway. Go through an open red gate and continue to the parking area in front of the house. In case you have a problem, the Beck's phone number is 566-8234

May Meeting

The speaker on May 20th will be club member Duryea Morton. Many of you may remember his March, 2005 presentation on "Birds of the Falkland Islands". In May/June of 2008, Duryea and his wife Peggy, joined a group on a small ship that circumnavigated England, Scotland and part of Ireland. The itinerary included stops at many seabird islands, among them, St. Kilda, The Flannans and the Isle of May. His video of this trip is titled, "Wild Britain".

Duryea taught conservation and ecology in grades 5–8 in the 1950s and was on the Education Staff of the National Audubon Society for over 20 years. He retired as the Vice President of Education.

Plan to join us on May 20, 2009 at 7:30 PM in Room 117, Millington Hall, on the William and Mary campus. Refreshments will be provided by Jean Rend.

May Field Trip

The field trip for May 16 will be to the Warhill Sports Complex, which is off Longhill Road near Lafayette High School. Please meet at **8 AM** with leader Hugh Beard at the Colony Square Shopping Center on Jamestown Road. Participants will be walking the multi-use trail and will cover from 1 to 1-1/2 miles, which is about the length of the walks in New Quarter Park. In the last 2 weeks of April over 30 species of birds have made their 2009 appearance in James City County—some of them you have to see while they are passing through. Never miss a walk in May.

Welcome New Members

We would like to welcome Duane and Dorothy Tibbetts to the club and also to welcome back former member Paul Leger.

Officers

President	220-6269
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Joe Piotrowski	<i>joepiotrowski@cox.net</i>
Vice-President (The Flyer)	229-4346
Fred Blystone	<i>fmb19481@verizon.net</i>
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Secretary	566-2615
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Member-at-Large	259-0867
Joanne Andrews	<i>kaiviti37@hotmail.com</i>
Past President	259-9559
Bob Long	

Committee Chairpersons

Field Trips	229-2363
Tom Armour	<i>swiftyarmour@cox.net</i>
Records & Bird Counts	229-1124
Bill Williams	<i>jwwil2@wm.edu</i>
Library Liaison	565-6148
Lee Schuster	<i>dljschuster@cox.net</i>
Refreshments	565-0250
Barb Streb	<i>barbarastreb@starpower.net</i>
Membership/Webmaster	565-2597
Jeanette Navia	<i>jnavia@gmail.com</i>
Adopt-A-Highway	566-2615
John Fennell	<i>maffjf07@netzero.net</i>
Historian	259-9559
Cynthia Long	

New Feature on Website

Mary Anne Fennel has created an index for all currently posted issues of *The Flyer*. This is a very handy feature if you want to look up past articles. As editor of *The Flyer*, I want to personally thank Mary Anne for doing this and I'd also at this time like to remind everyone how lucky we are to have a Webmaster like Jeanette Navia. Our website is one we can all be proud of.

Conservation and Management Projects at Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel South Island & Craney Island

Ruth Beck will still need help during May. If interested please email Ruth Beck at rabeck@hughes.net or call at 757-870-0318.

Task: Carry out approved management and conservation action plans under the supervision of Ruth Beck, Professor Emeritus of Biology at W&M. Activities will include site preparation at three areas in Hampton and Portsmouth and monitoring bird colonies for nesting least terns, gull-billed terns, common terns, royal terns and black skimmers.

Departure time: 8 AM from Colony Square Shopping Center. Arrive back in Williamsburg approximately 3-4 PM.

April Bird Sightings

Report your backyard birds and local sightings to Fred Blystone at 229-4346 or fmb19481@verizon.net. If you encounter interesting birds on your vacation/travels, please share!

Apr 3: From Lee Schuster— "Just heard a Louisiana Waterthrush in the backyard. We head to Marietta Georgia this week and hopefully I will get a chance to walk up Kennesaw Mtn. where the warblers are in abundance. It is early but should still be good." Tom Armour reports 2 male Purple Finches at their feeders.

Apr 3: Joe and Grace Doyle observed 2 pair of Bluebirds in their yard. One of the males had bands on both legs. Allyson Jackson at William and Mary was contacted and when told of the color combinations of the bands was able to trace the bird to a nestling that was banded in 2006 on the Colonial Parkway.

Apr 4: Shirley Devan helps with the "Walk in the Forest Event" at the New Kent Forestry Center. During the day a total of 62 species were seen, including eleven Wild Turkeys (1 tom with 10 hens), a fairly early Purple Martin, a Rusty Blackbird and a good selection of hawks.

April 5: Mac Mestayer went on a long hike at York River State Park and saw the following: a Wild Turkey, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, a Palm Warbler, lots of Cedar Waxwings, Bald Eagles, Osprey, lots of Yellow-throated Warblers and he also heard a Barred Owl.

Apr 5: On the Greensprings Nature Trail, Bill Williams adds to his year total of 81 species White-eyed Vireo, Purple Martin, Barn Swallow and Ovenbird. Tom Armour reports that 2 Purple Martin were on the nest boxes on Lake Powell Road.

Apr 6: Lois Leeth reports she has the following visiting her yard; White-breasted Nuthatch, White-throated Sparrows, White-crowned Sparrows, Common Grackles, Cardinals, Blue Jays, Eastern Towhee, Mourning Doves, Carolina Chickadees, American Goldfinches and House Finches

Apr 9: From Adrienne Frank and Gary Driscoll—"For the first time, we walked the 4-mile loop at the Warhill Track and found our way across the swamp to the Lafayette High School trail. We were pleasantly surprised to see more than 35 species of birds and butterflies (e.g., Eastern tail blue, orange sulfur, cabbage white, common sootywing, tiger swallowtail). Birds

included Palm Warblers in 2 locations, 2 Louisiana Waterthrush near a large patch of skunk cabbage and spring beauty flowers; Hermit Thrush in 2 locations, lots of titmice and Carolina Chickadees; Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-rumped Warblers, gnatcatchers in 3 locations, goldfinch, Carolina Wrens, juncos, blue birds, Bluejays, cardinals, robins, and White-throated Sparrows; nuthatch, Pileated and Red-bellied Woodpeckers; soaring above we watched a Red-tail Hawk, Turkey and Black Vultures, an adult eagle, and later a Red-shouldered Hawk; on one of the ponds we saw lots of turtles and a Canada Goose and nearby a phoebe and a thrasher; In the open, we saw crows, starlings, cowbird, grackle, Red-winged Blackbird, mockingbirds, Mourning Dove, and two Killdeer in the parking lot.

Apr 11: Lee Schuster reports “I had my first hummer yesterday about an hour after I got my feeder out. If we had not been out of town, I am sure I would have had one sooner. I still have siskins as well and had Purple Finches before we left last week.”

Apr 12: Tom Armour reports their first Ruby-throated Hummingbird of the year. They also still have a female Purple Finch that Tom says is acting a bit strange, very unafraid and not using the feeders. Kathi Mestayer saw a pair of Hermit Thrushes at College Woods.

Apr 12: From Shirley Devan (housesitting in Virginia Beach)—“I decided to explore a local city park this morning, Red Wing Park at 1398 General Booth Blvd, VA Beach. Most of the park is for picnics, dog walks, jogging, soccer, etc. At the back of the park behind the picnic area and shelters there’s a nature trail that goes back to a cypress swamp.

As I walked behind the Picnic Shelter, I flushed a Pileated Woodpecker. Good day bird!

The day was cold and windy but I was hoping that it would be warmer back in the woods. A short path led to the swamp and a T intersection in the trail. No way to cross the swamp but there was a trail along the edge. Right there at the T intersection, I saw a Prothonotary Warbler on the other side!!! My first of the season and only 2 days after the Gold Book says they usually arrive. An excellent day bird. I decided this was a spot worthy of some time. So I meandered down the trail, peering up and down the swamp—actually more like a slough. I spotted two male Wood Ducks and immediately started looking for the females. Finally, one flew up to a tree directly across from me. More great day birds. No signs of ducklings though

The wind seemed to suppressed the birds—all except the

Yellow-rump Warblers. **Whenever are they leaving?** The males are in beautiful breeding plumage. The butter butts were **everywhere**.

Later along the trail I saw another Prothonotary Warbler foraging along the ground in a mossy area. I hope they are nest building there.

I only recorded 12 species, but they were great birds. This park is very close to the Virginia Aquarium. Worth checking out for a few minutes if you come over to VA Beach for the aquarium.”

Apr 12: Bill Williams brings his Greensprings Nature Trail year species total to 90 by adding a Green Heron, Royal Tern, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Cedar Waxwing and Palm Warbler.

Apr 14: Shirley Devan receives this email from Ninna Snead—“I think my Rufous is gone this is the third day I haven’t seen him, a Ruby-throated hummer came last Monday April 6th he has taken over kind of. I am almost sure my goldfinches are infected with ticks they are so lethargic some don’t make it to the feeders I know I could catch some of them they walk slowly enough I can see something dark around the eyes. I feel so helpless to see them like this I don’t know what to do.”

Apr 16: Lee Schuster writes that she still has lots of Purple Finches and Pine Siskins. Shirley Devan reports from California that she sees a Wilson’s Warbler.

April 21: Bill Williams, Fred Blystone and Alex Minarik bird the Jericho Ditch in the Great Dismal Swamp. During the morning around 50 species were identified. The Prothonotary Warblers were very active and many were heard and seen. There were a number of Swainson’s Warblers heard but none made themselves visible. As they first entered the swamp they were greeted by a turkey. At the end of the road, Bill found a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Alex spotted a Green Heron that flew onto a low branch and made for easy viewing.

Apr 22: Kathi Mestayer sees a Palm Warbler in the College Woods. From Shirley Devan—“Today when I was stopped for a red light, I saw a Great Egret in the pond on the right by Route 199 and Route 5 intersection.” Lee Schuster has a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak visit her yard.

Apr 23: Joe Piotrowski has a Rose-breasted Grosbeak at his feeder.

Apr 24: Alex Minarik has a Rose-breasted Grosbeak at her feeder—the first one in her yard since 4/25/06. Grace Doyle observes a Green Heron on Kingsmill Pond.

Apr 26: At Camp Peary for the Spring Bird Count, Joe and

Grace Doyle along with the Tom and Jeanne Armour were preparing to eat lunch in a small building in the middle of a field. Joe opened the door to get some paper towels and such. Just as soon as he opened the door, a Ruby-throated Hummingbird zoomed past his shoulder, hit the door, knocked himself out and fell at Joe's feet. Joe picked him up and carried him around in his closed hand for several minutes waiting for him to recover and calm down. When he opened his hand, the bird just sat there, looking around. And he sat and sat and sat. Finally, after 5 minutes and a gentle prodding, the bird took off.

Apr 27: Of the 80 species that Bill Williams has at Greensprings Nature Trail, 14 of them are new for the year, bringing his 2009 total on the trail to 114.

Apr 28: Fred Blystone, Bill Williams, Shirley Devan and Alex Minark head over the river to look for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in Piney Grove Preserve in Sussex County and also to visit Hog Island. It was a beautiful, cool morning in the Preserve but they had no luck finding their target bird. There were numerous Red-headed Woodpeckers and they were lucky to see 2 Northern Bobwhite before they ran off of the road into the shrubs. There were a total of 78 species identified during the morning, and after much looking Shirley saw her first Wild Turkey of the year.

Apr 30: Alex Minark reports she heard and then saw her FOS Black-throated Blue Warbler behind her house. Bill Williams has 8 Cattle Egrets fly over just as he is about to leave the Hawkwatch at College Creek.

Great Dismal Swamp Birding Festival

In celebration of International Migratory Bird Day, the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge is hosting the third annual Great Dismal Swamp Birding Festival during the height of the spring neotropical songbird migration. This family-friendly event is free and open to the public. Activities include guided bird walks, narrated bus tours, owl prowls, bird banding demonstrations, nature photography workshops, beginner bird walks for kids and adults, and more! Walks and bus tours require reservations, which can be made by calling the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters at 757-986-3705. The website is www.fws.gov/northeast/greatdismalswamp.

The Great Dismal Swamp Birding Festival is sponsored by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Department of Game & Inland Fisheries, Great Dismal Swamp Coalition and the Suffolk Division of Tourism.

The festival is on May 7, 8 and 9. On all three days there will be a bird banding demonstration at the Jericho Ditch

Bird Banding Station. On each of the three days there will also be guided bird walks, bus tours to Lake Drummond, owl prowls on May 7th and 9th, and Photographing Nature workshops and guided photographic nature walks on May 8th and 9th. There will be a beginners bird watching class and guided walk on May 9th.

Ecuador Highlights

By Shirley Devan

Over 60 of you saw Bill Williams's Ecuador presentation at the April 15 Bird Club meeting. Many thanks to Bill for putting that program together and describing what a phenomenal trip it was for all 10 of us.

Our newsletter editor asked me to write an article for the newsletter as a follow up to my piece in the April newsletter about the run-up to the trip. I am not capable of adding anything to Bill's presentation, but I thought I would try to describe three personal highlights from the trip.

The first day we were in Ecuador, we traveled north of Quito to the Tandayapa Hummingbird Preserve, owned by our guide, Dr. Jorge Cruz. After an arduous bus ride and a steep hike up a mountain, we arrived about 9:30 am at a small eco-lodge in the cloud forest. A small mountain-side clearing revealed a shelter with a large dining area with about a dozen hummingbird feeders arrayed on two sides. This was our lunch spot! Luckily, they also had a WC! As we shed our backpacks and rain jackets, we quickly realized why it was worth the considerable effort to come up to this spot. Hummingbirds were buzzing all around us! Not just one or two species, but a dozen! More than a dozen! The official count for our visit was 16 species, I believe. For me the most remarkable hummer was the Racket-tailed Puffleg (or Booted Racket-tail). As soon as I saw it, I wondered, "What evolutionary pressures caused this bird to adapt to look like this?" Imagine a green hummer with longer than usual wings and legs, with a fluffy white cheerleader pompom wrapped around each leg. Wait, it gets better! Then add a tail about 3 inches long with just two unfeathered shafts for outer tail feathers. Each shaft ends with a feathered blue spatula on the end! How did this bird evolve and what is going on with those "pufflegs" and that "racket tail"? Nature is better than science fiction!

One of the unexpected delights of the Sacha Lodge was their Butterfly House. Whenever we had down time or it was raining, several of us decamped to the Butterfly House. No escort needed and it was near enough to drag the heaviest camera equipment and tripods. Early in the week our guide told us that some of the butterflies there do not even have

English names. [I wish that the level of interpretation were a bit more elaborate to include photos with the species names of the butterflies—Latin or English.] But the lack of names added to the charm of the Butterfly House. We couldn't be compulsive about listing the species or trying to photograph the signs. We simply enjoyed them for the beautiful creatures



they were. In this one location, we could see the full life cycle of all the butterflies. We saw the host house where they grew the host plants. We saw the eggs and caterpillars on the host plants, each species

in its own cabinet. Then we saw the chrysalises in a separate cabinet waiting to hatch. We observed some hatching and then saw them dry their wings and then take off in search of food spread around the house. We saw dead butterflies as well as many with tattered wings. We learned that Sacha Lodge had a commercial butterfly sales operation and regularly shipped off chrysalises to organizations preparing butterfly displays. Imagine a local Botanical Garden installing a temporary butterfly house. The butterflies might come from Sacha Lodge, or one of many small commercial butterfly operations in South America. This is an increasing industry in South America and allows families to earn money in a way that does not involve oil drilling, clear cutting, or cattle farming. Meanwhile, visitors at Sacha enjoy these beautiful jewels.

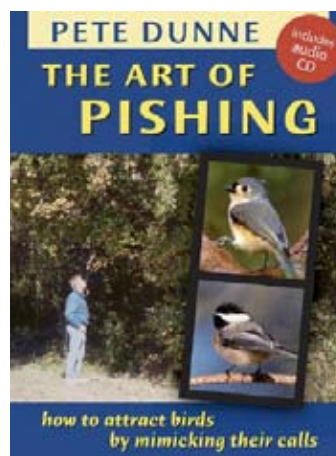
Sacha Lodge boasts about its tower canopies. Long before our visit we were intrigued about these towers – how tall were they, how steep are the steps, how big is the platform, how far can we see? The Kapok Tower, about 90 feet tall and wrapped around a magnificent Kapok Tree, was my favorite. I visited twice – once in the early morning and once in late afternoon. Mornings are definitely better. I saw over 50 species in just over two hours on the tower. Almost all of the birds were “exotic” tropical birds I am not likely to see again. Each species was as breathtakingly beautiful as the previous one. The guides pointed out several warblers and tanagers, but the one that grabbed my heart was the Scarlet Tanager. “Hey, that’s one of our birds” I exclaimed. The



true wonder of migration was sitting there in front of me in South America. I knew that in a few weeks I would see this brilliant bird (hey – it’s not impossible!!) in a local park on a bird walk or field trip. Sure enough, we spotted one at Jolly Pond Dam on our Spring Count Sunday. The circle of life is a wonder to behold!

Williamsburg Bird Club Book Review

By Jeanette Navia



The Art of Pishing: How to Attract Birds by Mimicking Their Calls, by Pete Dunne. Stackpole Books, 2006. ISBN: 9780811732956. \$17.95. pbk. 92 p. James City County Library call number 598.072 DUN.

When new birders join a bird walk and the leader starts to pish, they may be startled. I’ve had a few people ask me on one of our

early Saturday morning bird walks, “Why did Bill make that noise? What’s he doing?” I’d reply, “He’s making a sound like a distressed bird, to get birds to come out and look.” Once, somebody asked, “Why would the birds do that? Wouldn’t they try to fly away or hide?” I didn’t know, and hadn’t thought to ask Bill that myself.

I remember when we first got *The Art of Pishing* at the library. It was shortly before I started birding, and I had no idea what “pishing” was all about, but whatever it was, I thought the title was cute. I didn’t know anything about Pete Dunne then, either, except that he’d written a lot of books about birds. I’ve since been to two birding conferences where Dunne was a speaker and have come to love his humor. Still, I didn’t think reading a book about how to mimic bird calls would be much fun to read, and I didn’t think I’d ever want to get out there on a bird walk – in public! – and start going “Psssh! Psssh! Psssh!,” but the book was short (92 pages), and I wanted to write a book review and didn’t have much time to read a longer book.

The Art of Pishing was actually quite fun to read. With headings like “Why birds don’t just tell you to pish off,” “Finding a plot to pish in,” and “To pish or not to pish,” Dunne explains how, when, and where to pish. He even speculates on why pishing works, why birds come out and show themselves when they hear another bird in distress (or hear a birder making a racket trying to imitate a bird in distress.)

Dunne goes beyond the basic pish. Besides variations on pisssh, he also explains how to make the eerie sound of an Eastern Screech Owl, how to make squeals: SkreEEEuh, SkreEEEuh, SkreEEEuh (in a section titled “My surefire, patent-pending, reluctant-bird-reforming squeal call”), and how to chip for sparrows.

There is a compact disc included in the book. On it, Dunne describes and demonstrates the basic pish, a variation with a stutter, the sounds of a Barred Owl, a Northern Saw Whet Owl, and Northern Pygmy Owls, a “whisper pish,” and a “knock-down pish” which can be used to get a bird flying overhead to land and look around to see what the danger is. He also includes a section on pishing etiquette both in the book and on the CD.

Whether you want to pish or are just curious about why birds and birders make weird sounds, you should read this book.

Pulaski, Virginia

By Joe Piotrowski

Over my last child(sob...) at home Erika's Spring Break, April 6th through 10th, my wife Anita and I decided to rent a cabin near Va Tech and Radford where the other kids are in college. We found a nice cabin near the town of Pulaski in the New River Valley. In the process we discovered that the “New” River is quite old and may be second only to the Nile in geologic terms. It is also one of the only rivers to flow north in the US. Pulaski is a small town, which like many of those along the Wilderness Trail was a pit stop for travelers from Philadelphia to the settlements in Indian country in the Midwest. Pulaski is named after General Cazimir Pulaski, one of the many European officers who fought in our Revolutionary War. There are many small towns with museums to explore, several wineries (which we visited), and a 50 mile bike trail which follows the New River along an abandoned railroad track (the rails are gone and the path is very flat and easy to navigate). In warmer weather, tubing, canoeing and kayaking are easy on the New River near Radford University.



I birded (is this really a verb?) along this path and at the cabin. Some of what I saw included Tree and Barn Swallows, Eastern Phoebes, Eastern Meadowlarks, Brown Thrashers, Sparrows (many of them TUBs), along with the more common cardinals, titmouses (or is that titmice?), etc. I've included some photos for your enjoyment.



News from the Hampton Roads Bird Club

Jane Frigo reports that Sunday, April 5, 2009 was **perfect** for bird watching in Newport News Park. Tom Charlock, Jim Harrison, Richard and Barbara Hudgins, Mel Pettard, Nick Flanders, Elisa Enders, Mike Lowry, Marc Nichols, Eileen O'Toole, Cathy Bond, and Jane counted 67 species! Several winter residents were still around including a Winter Wren, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Brown Creeper, Gadwall, Red-breasted Merganser and American Wigeon. FOS arrivals were a male Purple Martin and several Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. The best bird was a Broad-winged Hawk flyover! A Great Horned Owl was seen near the Japanese Tea House.

According to Jane, Spring arrived for the April 19 NNP walk and brought with it several FOS visitors. The weather was perfect, with no wind, sunny skies and temperatures reaching the 70's. Participants at the walk included Eileen O'Toole, Stewart and Dick Sweetman, Mary Pulley and her daughter Judy, Bettye Fields, Mike Lowry, Marc Nichols, Nancy Gruttman-Tyler and Jane Frigo. FSO species included Blue-headed Vireo, House Wren, Black-and-white Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-eyed Vireo and Blue Grosbeak. There were 57 species seen during the morning. Species not seen but expected to arrive soon include the Green Heron, Wood Thrush and various warbler species.

Walks are conducted the 1st and 3rd Sundays year round in the park by the HRBC. Meet at the parking lot to the left of the Ranger Station around 7 AM.

Leader Nick Flanders reported that twelve birders participated in the Hampton Roads Bird Club field trip to the Great Dismal Swamp on April 18. They covered the Railroad Ditch from approximately 7:00 AM to 12:00 PM, and spent about 2.5 hours of the early afternoon on Jericho Ditch/Lane. The group tallied 69 species for the day, with 15 warbler species in the Swamp: Northern Parula (Railroad only), Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green (Jericho only), Yellow-Throated (Railroad only), Pine, Prairie, Yellow Palm (Railroad only), Black-and-white (Jericho only), American Redstart, Prothonotary, Swainson's (One singing on Jericho Ditch just north of banding station), Ovenbird, Louisiana Waterthrush, Common Yellowthroat, and Hooded Warbler.

Other highlights included 4 Vireo species: White-eyed, Red-eyed, Yellow-throated, and Blue-headed; Great-Crested Flycatchers calling all over, a Blue Grosbeak at Railroad Ditch, at least 2 Northern Bobwhite calling in Railroad Ditch., a lingering Ruddy Duck on Lake Drummond, a Ruby-throated Hummer (Jericho), and singing Rusty Blackbirds: 6 on Railroad Ditch and approximately 4 in Jericho Ditch. Also, the group noted an Eastern Meadowlark and Eastern Kingbird along White-Marsh Road en route to the Ditches.

WBC April Walks & Field Trip

Mike Powell, Margaret Ware, George Rountree, Tom McCary, David Laughlin and Jan Mayberry joined leader Susan Powell for the April 11th walk in New Quarter Park. The highlight of the day were the Palm Warblers—great looks. There were Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Ovenbirds everywhere. A total of 50 species were seen.



Photo by Joe Piotrowski

On April 18, 2009 Alex Minarik led eleven other birders on the first-ever club field trip to Chickahominy Riverfront Park, which is a part of the JCC Park and Rec system. The perfect spring weekend brought out lots of campers, therefore much of the park was off-limits for birding pursuits. They did most of the birding around the Nature Trail and got permission to walk past the “No Trespassing” sign to access the W&M crew team dock which overlooks Gordon Creek. The highlight of the day was the Pileated Woodpecker nest that park assistant Steve Gallo had discovered earlier this spring. They observed both the female and, then later, the male inside the nest hole, presumably incubating and guarding the eggs. A total of 54 species was counted and included Royal Tern, Chimney Swift, Eastern Kingbird, Barn and Tree Swallow, and Summer Tanager.

Leader Bill Williams was joined by Joanne Andrews, Inge Curtis, Shirley Devan, Jim & Phoebe Kent, Paul Leger, Jeanette Navia, Chuck Rend and Margaret Ware on a glorious morning for the April 25 walk at New Quarter Park. Bill had arrived earlier than the 7 AM starting time and had scoped out the woodlands across the road from the overflow parking lot finding them full of birds. When the walk officially started, the group walked across the road and birded the mature hardwood forest and spotted (and heard) an orchestra of birdsongs. They were able to spot the following species: Summer Tanager, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Black-and-White Warbler, Chipping Sparrow and Eastern Bluebird. They heard many more. Fifty-two species were identified during the walk.



Photo by Shirley Devan

New Feature

We are adding a new feature to the website and to the electronic version of *The Flyer* called “**Bird ID from Recycle Bin Photos by Joe Piotrowski**”. (It might be too difficult to identify birds from these black and white photos in the print version of the newsletter.) The answer to the “puzzle” will be given during the next club meeting and in the next electronic newsletter, as well as on the website.



Mystery Bird for May

Members' Photo Gallery



Chickadee nestlings

by Shirley Devan



House Finch Nest

by Mary Anne Fennell



Bald Eagle (with fish)

by Beth Morgan



Royal Terns

by Shirley Devan



Worm-eating Warbler

by Beth Morgan

CALENDAR

May 7–9	Great Dismal Swamp Birding Festival, see page 4
Saturday, May 9	WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, 8 AM, Tom McCary, Leader
Saturday, May 16	WBC Field Trip to Warhill Sports Complex, 7 AM, Hugh Beard, Leader. (see front page)
Saturday, May 16	HRBC Field Trip to the James River Prk in Richmon, contact Jane Frigo at 873-0721 or birderjane@gmail.com for further information
Sunday, May 17	HRBC Bird Walk, Newport News Park, 7 AM, Jane Frigo, Leader
Wednesday, May 20	WBC Montly Meeing, 7:30 PM, Millington Hall. Duryea Morton will present a program, <i>Wild Britain</i> (See front page)
Saturday, May 23	WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, 7 AM, Bill Williams, Leader



Gannet

by Peggy Morton

May 20

Duryea Morton presents *Wild Britain*