

July 14, 1978

The Williamsburg Flier

Summer Calendar - Remember NO meetings until September 20, 1978.

July 22 (Sat.)	Waller Mill	Assemble at 7:00 A.M. in front of People's Drug Store (Wmsbg. Shop Center)
August 12 (Sat.)	Cheatham Birdwalk	7:00 A.M. at the Information Center.
August 26 (Sat.)	Craney Island	7:00 A.M. at the Pizza Hut (James-York Plaza)
Sept. 9 (Sat.)	Jamestown Island	7:00 A.M. at the Jamestown Festival Parking lot
Sept. 23 (Sat.)	Hog Island	7:00 A.M. at the Jamestown Festival Parking lot

Summertime birding? You must be off your feeder, you say. Ticks, chiggers, flies, mosquitoes, poison ivy are out there! Snakes! Lions and tigers and bears (Oh, my) birds in forests and fields. And the birds? -- Why goodness there just don't appear to be many around. Such are the feelings of many beginning and experienced birders. In fact, this is a very exciting time to be bird watching, and skulking through woods and swamps isn't a necessity.

The emphasis during June, July and August is on the local breeding species. Careful observation simply around home can often reveal the excitement of watching a bird family develop from pair formation through fledging of young. Mr. and Mrs. R. D. Mahone, for instance, have a red-eyed vireo raising three young just outside a window in the rear of their home. Young robins and cardinals hatched out in early June are already evident around many yards. The singing that can be heard mornings and evenings from robins, mockingbirds, cardinals and wood-thrushes bespeak breeding territories, and the prospect at this time of the summer of second broods being produced. We hope that when and if you encounter some nesting you will record what you've found. Points of interest include the type of tree or structure the birds are using, when nesting begins, eggs laid, eggs hatched and young fledged. Only a small amount of time will provide needed scientific information. In addition; we are extremely interested in which species nest locally, when they nest and where they nest. Our records committee is anxious to get whatever breeding information you can find.

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Our Purple Martin Committee, under the direction of Roy Trow, has been actively banding young martins for about a month now. To date over 600 martins have been banded. Unfortunately, a number of dead adult martins have been found, usually males. The cause for these deaths is unknown, though pesticides are suspected.

The June 24 field trip to Grandview Beach in Hampton proved to be quite a treat for those that attended. Bill Akers, who has been studying the least tern colony at the tip of Grandview (a 2½ mile walk) was able to band 35 least tern chicks and one piping plover chick. Mr. and Mrs. Sam Hart, Alice Springe, Muriel Moritz, and Barbara Ema carefully helped Bill and Brian comb the sand and grass for the hard to find chicks. In addition, to the least terns the group recorded royal, common, and Forster's terns, seaside sparrows, and a few shorebirds. The glaucous gull Brian had photographed in early June was found - dead. The magnificent specimen will find a place of distinction in the William and Mary bird collection.

Recent surveys of the colonial birds of the Eastern Shore Barrier Islands revealed one colony of royal terns that totalled around 5000 adults. Banders from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service have already ringed 2300 young in that colony. Royal terns normally produce one chick per pair so getting a population count can be fairly accurate after banding is over.

On July 9 an adult bald eagle was observed flying northwest over Claremont in Surry County just off the James River.

July and August are shorebird times in eastern Virginia. By mid-July Craney Island in Portsmouth will attract literally thousands of shorebirds and peeps. Highlights there include stilt sandpipers, avocets, thousands of dowitchers and western sandpipers and (for the two previous summers) a very rare curlew sandpiper. Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge also attracts the shorebirds as well as numerous black terns and herons of all species. Both places are worth visiting!

Best Birds For the Summer.