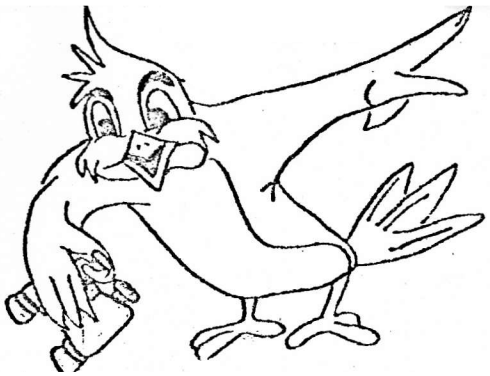

THE WILLIAMSBURG FLIER
March, 1979

The March meeting of the Williamsburg Bird Club will be held Wednesday, March 21 at 7:30 P.M. in Millington Hall. Our program for this month will be presented by Joe and Judy Pauley who will be showing us a film on the nesting cycles of the open-billed stork. The Pauleys photographed the storks last year just outside of Bangkok, Thailand.

The weather has been something less than helpful in contributing to the success of our last two field trips, but as the old saying goes, the third time is the charm, so this time maybe we can get out for an enjoyable day's birding. On Sat., March 24, there will be a field trip to Lake Matoaka and the College woods area. Please assemble by 8:00 A.M. in the Information Center Parking Lot.

Spring is definitely in the air, and soon the change in seasons will be marked by a change in avian activity. Already Canada geese and swans have been making their way north, and soon we can be expecting the arrival of such early migrants as the blue-gray gnatcatcher, Northern waterthrush, and the yellow-throated warbler.

At the last executive meeting of the V.S.O. a scholarship in memory of J.J. Murray was established, and funds were set aside to create a rare bird alert for the state.

Birds depend on sound for communication of many kinds; their flight notes help to keep flocks together, and alarm calls and songs play an important part in mating and in guarding territory. Sound also plays a part in food hunting. There is experimental evidence to show that golden plovers listen for earthworms as they burrow underground, and barn owls can find their prey in pitch darkness by sound alone. Some song birds have a hearing range similar to that of a normal human ear: 20-20,000 cycles per second. But for most birds the range is narrower. The crow and mallard are limited to a range of 300-8000 cycles; the pigeon to 50-11,000 cycles; and the long-eared owl to 100-18,000 cycles.

Birds are receptive mainly to sounds pitched at the same level as their own voices; and it has been claimed that sparrows and canaries may not be able to hear a normal low-toned human conversation. Birds hear sound faster than humans, picking out details of song which are too rapid for the human ear to distinguish. A scientist taped a whip-poor-will's song, played it back 8 times slower than it was recorded, and found that the bird's distinctive "whip-poor-will" call was actually "whip-pup-poor-will". To find out what other birds heard, the voice of a mockingbird was recorded while it was mimicking the whip-poor-will"; and when the tape was again slowed down, the mockingbird was heard calling "whip-pup-poor-will". (From Book of British Birds, 1969.)