

THE WILLIAMSBURG FLYER

OCTOBER 1980

BUSINESS

Breaker one, nine for a bird check! Yeah, boy it's time again for another rootin'-tootin' bird club meeting. This month we will be entertained on October 15 by our intrepid U. S. and world travelled Susan Sturm. As is her style you'll learn and fully enjoy her presentation. Be around at 7:30 p.m. at Millington Hall on the William and Mary Campus.

For those of you who missed our season opener in September go a plague of English sparrows. The talk given by Dr. Jack Willis of William and Mary was at once moving, informative and highly entertaining. The bird in human spirit was revealed beautifully and I believe everyone left the evening with a sense of closeness to our avian neighbors.

The field trip this month will be on October 18 to Cheatham Annex. This excursion is always a favorite due to the excellent birding offered on the base. As usual, the meeting time will be at 7:00 a.m. at the Colonial Williamsburg Information Center parking lot. One can expect sparrows, maybe some late warblers and even some early waterfowl. As many as 23 turkeys have been seen there recently by Bill Sheehan and Leigh Jones, and of course, there's always the possibility of a few lordly pheasants to brighten the morning. The base ranger, Walt Feurer, reports that the pheasants suffered due to the heat and dryness of the summer and that fox predation is further disrupting them. On the other hand, he reports that the breeding efforts of the turkeys were highly successful.

Included with the newsletter are two enclosures which warrant some explanation. The club is sponsoring its second Bird Seed Savings Day. This year we will be doing the project in conjunction with the Peninsula Nature and Science Center. The deadline for placing your prepaid order is October 20. You may order directly by mail at the address given on the order form or call Alice Springe (229-2661) or Fred Blystone (229-4346). They will process your order only after receiving your money. The pick-up date for your ordered seed is November 8 at the Colony Square Shopping Center on Jamestown Road (where Winn Dixie is) in the store front on the far left of the shopping complex. The sale is going to be offered to the public through newspaper ads and promotions. So order now and stock up for the upcoming feeder season.

Also enclosed is a chart showing seed preferences of many of the local feeder species. This may help you decide on the mix and quantity of seed you wish to purchase.

Obviously a project of the magnitude we're anticipating can't be done by just a few. We will need strong backs and steady man power to help unload the seed and to help dispense it on November 8. Please volunteer to lend a hand even if it's just for an hour.

BIRD BUSINESS

Mark your calendars now for Sunday, December 21. That's the date for our fourth annual Christmas Bird Count. We're sort of forced to choose a Sunday locally due to the hunting pressure in our area. Further, Saturdays seems to be more convenient for the Newport News count sponsored by the Hampton Roads Bird Club. Several of our club members assist in their count and vice versa. Over the last few years the

Newport News on Saturday and Williamsburg on Sunday arrangement seems to have worked best for a majority of the folks involved.

The dry weather continues to plague us all. But for local shore bird lovers its been a boon. Newport News Park continues to have a vast array of peeps at the back end of the lake dominated through late summer by dowitchers. Check it out!

Speaking of dowitchers reminds me of the field trip to Hog Island in September. The few folks who made the trip were entertained by a long-billed dowitcher. Normally one would expect the short-billed member of this species to be around. But the distinguishing features of the long-bill were clearly and carefully noted, including barring, instead of spotting on the flanks, obvious long-bill and its one note flight call as opposed to the tu-tu-tu-tu call of the short-bill. Additionally the group saw a John Willis special immature bald eagle (he missed it), numerous bobolinks, great egrets and several cattle egrets.

On the subject of field trips brings up the mention of the annual VSO field trip to Chincoteague in late September. This year the foray was as successful as ever. Several rare Baird's sandpipers were located and seen by many. Also flapping about were golden plovers and a flock of buff-breasted sandpipers, both unusual in the fall or any other time. One lucky group was even able to view the quick arrival and departure of an immature black-legged kittiwake. Brian Taber, Rich Goll and Cindy Fletcher got in on most of the goodies found. The Baird's sandpipers and golden plovers were still available as of October 4.

On the local scene there's been a lot of action. Tom Armour and Bill Sheehan turned up a rare Western Kingbird on Kingsmill on September 26. This most welcomed tourist was last seen by Rich Goll on September 29. President Beck and Betty Williams also got to see him. It took five trips for Ruth to run this beauty down.

Sora rails are plentiful on the Chickahominy. A recent hunting party was able to down 50 of them off Gordon's Creek and they estimated that the 60 acre marsh had as many as 500 of these shy birds.

Bill Sheehan has recently purchased a new pair of binoculars. Please recall that he has previously been mentioned in this newsletter for two goody species in anyone's book. On October 6 he added still another great local find. Unfortunately, the bird had already met its demise. Bill discovered an immature white-crowned sparrow in his yard off Jamestown Road which had apparently run head on into the Sheehan's fence. Now look folks, I hope this doesn't mean we should all go out and assault the binoc market, but it makes you wonder, huh?

A lesser black-backed gull, a European vagrant, has again taken up residence on the first, or south, island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. It differs from the common great black-backed gull by its smaller size, grayer black back and yellow legs. Several of our club members have been able to see this neat visitor.

The Kiptopeke bird banding station on the southern end of the Eastern Shore is in full operation both for banding and hawk watching. Already the nets have produced some great goodies for the Williamsburg crowd, including Philadelphia vireo, Connecticut warbler, Nashville warbler, Blackburnian warbler, many thrushes, screech owls, black-billed cuckoos and red-breasted nuthatches to mention only a few. Hawk counts have been variable topped off by better than two thousand raptors on

October 5. Bald eagles, peregrine falcons, merlins and Cooper's hawks are usually present along with scads of sharp-shins and many broad-wings. It was great to see the Long's and Hudson's there on their way to Chincoteague.

ASK OWL

Owl has gotten wind of Peterson's new Field Guide to the Birds. When Owl saw the color plates he came within an ace of slapping some bands on the fall warblers they looked so real. Each species is pictured opposite its written account which is a great improvement over the last edition. The color plates include not only all of the regular eastern species, but also accidentals from Europe, etc. and exotic species recently established in our country. To put it calmly this book is the greatest buy in bird guides you could find. Great Christmas gift idea!?



quantity	description	size	price	total
1	Sunflower Seed	25lb.	7.50	
2	Sunflower Seed	50lb.	14.00	
3	Nature Center Blend	25lb.	5.25	
	7% Sunflower seed	50 lb.	9.65	
4	Sunrich Blend	20lb.	6.50	
	30% Sunflower seed	40lb.	12.00	
5	Cracked Corn	25lb.	4.45	
6	Cracked Corn	50lb.	8.15	
7	Sunflower Hearts	10lb.	6.95	
8	Peanut Bits & Pieces	10lb.	6.50	
9	Thistle Seed	10lb.	15.50	

check must accompany order
 Name _____
 Address _____
 Phone _____

Total
 4% sales tax
Grand Total

Order Deadline : Oct. 20 1980
 Pick-up Date Nov. 8, 1980, 9am -4pm
 Pick-up Location: Nature Center for seed ordered through Center
 Trevillian Moving Service , Colony Square Shopping Center for seed ordered through BIRD CLUB

sponsored jointly by: Peninsula Nature & Science Center
 524 J. Clyde Morris Blvd.
 Newport News, Va. 23601
 phone: 595-1900

Williamsburg Bird Club
 134 Ferncliffe Drive
 Williamsburg, Va. 23185
 phone: 229-2661 or 229-4346

