

THE WILLIAMSBURG FLYER
December 1982

Green-winged teal, blue-winged teal, wood ducks o'er the bay. Oh, what fun it is to see a creeper, loon or jay. Such is the mood of the month for birders throughout North America. The Christmas Bird Counts are just around the holiday corner. From December 18, 1982 through January 2, 1983 counts will be conducted for the eighty-third consecutive year. What started out as an esoteric holiday past-time amongst a few naturalist in 1900 has developed into a massive, competitive event entered into by literally thousands of birdwatchers the world over! Some counts have 100-200 participants annually and barely record that many species of birds. North American counts of over 200 species for the 24 hour count day are rare but regular in Texas, Florida, and California. The object of the count is to record as many species of wild birds in a 15 mile diameter circle and to record how many of each species can be found. Many birders are afield from pre-dawn to post-dark several days in a row putting forth maximum effort on several consecutive counts in relatively close count circles. Some counts have turned up no birds at all while others produce only a few members of a single species!

Locally our bird club will sponsor the sixth annual Williamsburg Bird Count on Sunday December 19. The center of our count circle is the Colonial Williamsburg Information Center. Birders will cover as much of the area seven and a half miles in every direction from the center point as possible. Thus it is essential we get as many eyes out as possible. The count circle is divided into the following areas: Hog Island, Kingsmill, Jamestown, Jolly Pond, Middle Plantation, Skimino, Camp Peary, College Woods and Cheatham Annex. Each area has a designated leader who coordinates the effort for the day. Bill Williams (229-0098) supervises the whole count and works through the area leaders to achieve maximum coverage. If you can assist in the COUNT (remember 7½ miles in any direction from the Information center) in any way-feeder watching, yard watching, going out part of the day or all of the day please contact Bill soon. Everyone is asked to assemble at the Information Center parking lot (where we meet for field trips) at 7:00 a.m. December 19. The day's tally will be held at 5:00 p.m. in room 108 Millington Hall (down the hall from our monthly meeting room). We can always use some warm goodies for our weary watchers too. Again-let Bill know.

The results of the bird counts are published by the National Audubon Society in a huge issue of American Birds each July. To help defray the costs of publications each count participant is asked to pay \$2.00. This fee will be collected by group leaders and turned over to the count compiler at the tally. In addition, the area leaders are asked to keep track of group hours and the miles travelled by foot, car etc. Last year the North American count had time written up for birding from a ladder. Apparently it was used to check an owl roost and while checking the tree cavity other birds in the area were recorded!

These counts are very much a learning experience and should be used by all who are interested as such. Please join us for a great day of birding. Other counts of interest are: Hampton Roads-December 18, Cape Charles-December 27, Chincoteague-December 28, Back Bay-December 29, Little Creek and Mathews-January 1.

Remember there will be no monthly meeting or field trip this month in lieu of the bird count.

Our new club patches are in! They will be available for sale (approximately \$2.00 each) at the bird count. They are beautiful and are an excellent representation of our super group. Get one and show us off!

We have recently purchased two more books for the Williamsburg Regional Library. They are: A Celebration of Birds: The Life and Art of Louis Agassiz Fuertes and The Bird Watcher's Companion Handbook of North American Birdlife. Let us know if you can recommend other books we can add to the library shelves.

The bird news has been exciting to say the least. A Cooper's hawk was well seen on November 14 at Cheatham Annex by Bill Sheehab and Tom Armour. On November 13 Leigh Jones found a solitary vireo in the Dismal Swamp- a most unusual record for the date. Dick Hines saw an immature black-crowned night heron off the Chickahominy River on November 21 and in the same area that day numerous horned larks could be heard flying over head. Ann Beckley had one of those memorable birding adventures you can never forget on November 22. She saw an adult bald eagle casually circling over none other Patriot Chevrolet at high noon. How appropriate for our national symbol. Alice Springe had a fox sparrow at her feeder on November 24. Since then fox sparrows have been seen in Skipwith Farms by John Williams and by others at Queen's Lake. Let's hope that these will be available December 19.

November 30 produced several notable avian records. Brown Pelicans (7) were well seen off the Yorktown Coast Guard Station and reported to Brian Taber. This sighting constitutes our first local record. Brown pelicans have been almost common this summer and fall along the coast, so this report doesn't come as an out-of-the-blue shock. Elsewhere Gary Williamson of Virginia Beach called to report seeing a western kingbird and a rough-legged hawk at Hog Island. An effort to find these birds over the subsequent few days have been unsuccessful.

A mandarin duck, most likely an escapee, was recently found in Hampton Roads along Chesapeake Avenue. An injured black-legged kittiwake is rumored to be hanging around Lynnhaven Inlet in Virginia Beach and a likely Ross's goose was seen amongst the thousands of snow geese at Back Bay during the VSO weekend December 4 and 5. Also seen at Back Bay were red-throated and common loons, beautiful gannets, American bittern, sedge wrens, 17 brown pelicans, a common gallinule and numerous coots. We also heard that an immature goshawk was banded on Fisherman Island in late November.

Enclosed is a summary of this year's incredible hawk count from Kiptopeke. The only place we can go is up. Remember-Kiptopeke- A Place You Can Count On.

Owl wishes everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy Birdy New Year.

KIPTOPEKE BEACH FALL HAWK WATCH 1982

Virginia Eastern Shore
near Cape Charles, Va.

Reported to Hawk Migration
Assn. of North America

Eastern Shore Watch Leader - Bill Williams, 157 W. Queens Dr., Williamsburg, VA 23185

Date	Hrs	Sky	Wind	TV	BV	SS	CH	RT	RS	EW	BE	NH	OS	PG	Me	AK	Unid	Total	Code
9/5	3	1	NE 4		5			1				2	2	1		27	1	39	Sm
11	8	5-0	SW 1			4		2				2	17			56	1	82	W1
18	2	5	SW 1			77		3				6	10		2	87	1	186	Bl
19	3½	2	NE 2	5		377	6	3		16		29	23	1	10	274	2	746	Be
23	6	1	SW 3	3		152	1	3		1		6	11	1		29		207	Sl
25	9½	2-3	SE 2-5	7	1	2064	36	5		26	1	30	23	1	13	206	7	2420	W1
26	1½	3	ESE 6-7			506	2						4			8	2	522	Da
28	7½	3-0	Var 5-2			534	3			53		6	25	2	13	93	10	738	Fo
29	3½	0-1	NE 1-2	2		511	5			158	1	5	21	1		77	5	586	Fo
10/1	4	3-0	NE 2	10		183	3	1		12	6	3	13	1		15		247	Sl
2	9½	0-3	NE 4-5	10	6	1584	22	7	1	209		36	176	2	20	467	12	2552	W1
3	9½	0	NE 1	5		329	4	2		14	1	16	95	1	4	57	1	531	W1
7	7½	3-5	SE 1	10		667	7	3	5	219		17	66	21	5	27	1	1048	Sl
9	9½	3	W 5-1			198	3				1	4	20	1	15	73	1	316	W1
10	7	6-3	NE 6-3	13		1403	29	2		11		52	55		8	670	1	2244	W1
11	8½	1-2	E 1	69	5	478	2	28	1	48	1	10	20	2	5	85	2	756	Sl
16	6	3-2	NW 4-6	25		33	9				1	2	12			11	2	95	W1
17	5	0-1	NW 5-6	2		15	1	1			1	4	4			4		32	W1
19	5	0	SE 1	44		101	3	13	1	28	1	29	13	3	1	4		241	Sl
21	3	1-2	SE 2	17	1	65	2				2	3	6			9		105	Sl
23	8	3	NE 4	82		76	6	8			1	13	13			13		222	W1
24	1	3	NE 6			7	1	1				5	1	1		1	1	18	Sm
27	5½	0	NE 1	39		34	4	25		1	2	6	2	1		6		120	Sl
28	3	0	SW 1-2			12	1	7				3	1	1		2		27	Sl
30	7	0-3	SW 0-2	4		29	2				3	1	3			2		44	W1
31	6	0	SW 0-2			47	1				2	1	2					53	W1

Days	Hrs	TV	BV	SS	CH	RT	RS	EW	BE	NH	Cs	PG	Me	AK	Unid	Total
26	147 3/4	347	20	9286	153	115	8	796	24	291	638	41	96	2312	49	14,177

Recorders: Code - W1, Bill Williams. Sl, Dot Silsby. Sm, Ann & Paul Smith, Be Ruth Beck. Fo, Chris Foster. Bl, T Blair. Da, Bruce & Pring Davenport. Other observers: Robert Ake, Thomas Armour, Henry Bielstein, Cindy Fletcher, Bettye Fields, Rich Goll, Giesela Grimm, John & Eleanor Hertz, Chas. Hacker, Leigh Jones, Carolyn Lowe, Emily Moore, Zelda Silverman, Alice Springe, Margaret Toth, Dan Walker, Betty Williams, John Willis.

The Kiptopeke Lookout is at the tip of the Virginia Eastern Shore Peninsula, on the same property where the VSO-sponsored Kiptopeke Banding Station is located. To reach the spot from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel north tollbooth plaza: go north on Rt. 13, about 3.3 miles, turn left onto #704 (the road slants off to the southwest). This road used to lead to the old ferry but is no longer maintained. Keep on the strip left of the median until you see an unpaved driveway on the left. Follow this drive around until you find some parked cars, or see tracks indicating cars have been turning. Walk out to your right, to the edge of the woods; or ask directions at the banding station, which is usually open Sept 1 - Oct. 31 each fall.