

The Williamsburg Flyer  
June 1982

Thus far the month that inaugurates summer has been relatively kind. A wet May gave way to a cool June and hopefully portends a mild, growing season for those who have found the last two summers a bit on the dry side. The nesting season for the local birdlife has found the mildness quite favorable and fledglings are seen flitting everywhere. Many species are well on their way to second broods.

Should you be wondering about meetings this summer, don't brood over it too much. There won't be any monthly meetings until September. Sorry. June, July and August will be used to hatch out new plans for 1982-83.

This month's field trip will focus on Grandview Beach in Hampton. The journey will commence from the south parking lot of the Colonial Williamsburg Information Center at 7:00 a.m. Sunday June 20. On June 5 several of our group banded 224 young least terns at the ternery on Grandview that has an estimated 600 birds nesting. This colony may very well be the largest of its kind in the east (country). Several pairs of piping plovers are also associated with the terns. Along the beach one can anticipate western, semipalmated sandpipers, sanderlings, ruddy turnstones, and various gulls and terns. The marsh sports least bitterns, a possible common gallinule, seaside sparrows, marsh wrens, and yellow warblers. This is a marvelous summer excursion. Join it!

Jewel Thomas has some bluebird houses for sale. Bird box and pole assembly is priced at \$20. The box alone is \$6. Locally our bluebirds at Williamsburg Country Club are doing fine. Several pairs are incubating their second sets of eggs having cut the silver thread with one crew of youngsters already. As of late May the Country Club had five of its six boxes in use with a crowd of twenty nestlings, total. Cynthia Long reports the Carter's effort is "wonderful", there being four nests with 18-20 eggs.

May's field trip to Cheatham Annex had a large contingent of birders from Williamsburg and the Hampton Rhoads Bird Club. Highlights included pheasants and a highly startled black snake!

We are all aware of Ruth Beck's constant monitoring of the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker which nests in counties south of the James River. Not only has Ruth been encountering the woodpeckers but she's also seen a hen turkey with 14 gobblers. If that doesn't strike your fancy how does a bobcat grab you?! You bet'ya! And it wasn't a recruit cub scout either. It was a, for real, great big unkitty cat. The local forester informed her that several bobcats had been captured in the area recently. The world of bird study is never short of surprises and excitement.

A bar-headed goose was spotted not long ago at Hog Island by several members of the Hampton Club. Teta Kain spread the word to us immediately. Apparently the same bird showed up several days later at one of the Kingsmill ponds where it stayed three or four days. A check with Busch Gardens about a possible escape proved negative, so we are at a loss to explain this exotic's appearance.

A common gallinule made an appearance at Camp Peary in early June. Carolyn Lowe heard about a duck with a red bill from one of her neighbors. Checking out the unusual description Carolyn gave us our third confirmed record, the first since 1962. Way to go!

Black Skimmers have been regularly seen at Felgate's Creek off the York River end of the Colonial Parkway. Schools of small bluefish have apparently lured the "cut-waters" from their normal distribution closer to the ocean and Bay. A maximum of thirty birds were seen June 8 mixed with several least terns.

Several folks reported spring nighthawks locally. Brian Taber saw one near Woolco in late May, and Dick Hines had two off Olde Town Road winging about with purple martins on May 26. Also on the 26th a late Blackburnian warbler was observed At Waller Mill Park.

I've still got information on summer and fall pelagic trips. A May 30 trip out of Cape Hatteras nailed 14 black capped petrels, a Sabine's gull, 2 Harcourt petrels, and Audubon's and Cory's shearwaters. Let me know (229-0098) if you are interested.

Ask Owl: What is the national record for bird species seen in one day? The record is 235 species set this spring in Texas by a team headed by Roger Tory Peterson.