

The Williamsburg Flyer

April, 1987

The April program will be a presentation by William and Mary Graduate student, Lynn Walters, who will speak to us about her work with chickadees. Please plan to attend at Millington Hall at 7:30 p.m. on April 15th.

The April Field Trip will be a local warbler adventure. Our area is rich in warblers during this month and we never have to travel far to see and hear many species. The date will not be the Saturday after our meeting, but rather the following one on April 25th. This is a change from our usual schedule. Please assemble at 7:30 at the Information Center. This trip will be an exciting preview of our Spring Count one week later.

The May program will feature Dorothy Mitchell of the Hampton Roads Bird Club. She has given many programs previously and will delight us again with her slides and stories about birds.

There will be no Bird Club Picnic this year. We will be busy enough with hosting the VSO Annual Conference and with our own Spring Count.

The Spring Count this year will be held on Sunday, May 3rd. We will assemble at 7:00 a.m. at the parking lot of the Colonial Williamsburg Information Center. We will again cover the usual eight areas and we need as many people as possible to assist. In past years, we have sometimes only had one person to an area and we are certainly missing some birds. Please contact me for further information. This is our 10th Annual Count so let's make it a great one! There will be a tally at 5 p.m. in the conference room at Millington Hall.

I received a very interesting letter from Kyle DuPuis, who witnessed a squirrel holding and apparently eating a dead towhee! I was as puzzled as Mr. Du Puis. I looked up squirrels in my mammal field guide but found no indication of this aspect of their diet. If anyone can shed some light on this behavior, please let me know.

I heard from several club members that feeder birds increased rapidly in late February and throughout March. Bill Williams said that his father had put out 300 pounds of seed by mid-March. There were a few reports of Evening Grosbeaks, although American Goldfinches and Pine Siskins have made a rather strong showing all winter. Purple and House finches are being reported regularly at many feeders. Fox Sparrows continued at my feeder for over a month as well.

Carolyn Lowe located a very early Solitary Vireo and Red-headed Woodpeckers at the Williamsburg West pond on March 14th. On March 25th, a Louisiana Waterthrush was singing at Jolly Pond. Also, there were American Wigeon, Wood Ducks, Golden-crowned

Kinglets, Chipping Sparrows and Pine Warblers. On the same date, a flock of Rusty Blackbirds was present at the usual location on the low point of News Road.

I made a trip to Yorktown and to Newport News Park on March 28th and found a lot of bird activity. The York River was full of Canvasbacks, Buffleheads and Horned Grebes. A male Boat-tailed Grackle was present at Indian Field Creek. Several Ospreys were along the river, as were Greater Yellowlegs and Ruddy Ducks. At Yorktown there were dozens of Laughing Gulls and several Double-crested Cormorants.

Newport News Park yielded more Ospreys, Red-shouldered Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Coot, Eastern Phoebe, Louisiana Waterthrush, Hairy Woodpecker, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Red-headed Woodpecker and Red-billed Grebe, to name only a few. Even an early Box Turtle and Black Rat Snake made an appearance. A Yellow-throated Warbler was singing near the water on South Henry Street.

There have been lots of singing Phoebes at the appropriate locations around Williamsburg. On March 8th and March 19th, there were Red-breasted Nuthatches in my yard. One bird sat dazed after crashing into the sliding glass door near the feeder. When I touched him, he flew away easily. Also on March 8th, a rather early Laughing Gull was among the Ring-billed Gulls chasing the Jamestown Ferry.

There were reports of returning Purple Martins as of March 27th in the area. Cedar Waxwings are forming big flocks in many parts of the Williamsburg area.

On April 7, 1987, our club will again assist with the Morning Bird Walk for the Garden Club Symposium meeting hosted by Colonial Williamsburg. We are very glad to be associated with this interesting, knowledgeable and very appreciative organization.

Shirley Raynes says that Mrs. Ann Rowland donated four 10 pound bags of thistle seed to the club. Anyone interested in purchasing some may contact Shirley.

At the April Club meeting, there will be an announcement about the replacement board member for the position held by Jo Anne Braun who moved away. At the May meeting there will be an announcement about the recipient of this year's Graduate Student Research Grant. This annual \$500 award is part of the Club's ongoing contribution to the College of William and Mary.

There is interest in organizing a committee to coordinate next year's bird seed sale. Recognizing the enormity of this task, the Club wants to share the responsibility among several members. Anyone wishing to participate in this money-making matter may contact Bill Williams or me. We would appreciate having the expertise of those who are adept at such ventures. The bird seed sale provides the Club with its only source of income besides annual dues.

The Club has an unwritten commitment from the Colonial Williamsburg Fife and Drum Corps to perform at the banquet when we host the Virginia Society of Ornithology conference in early June. We are expecting to have violins and balladeers.

Rich Goll and Cindy Carlson are back from an apparently wonderful two weeks in Trinidad and Tobago. The islands near Venezuela are filled with tropical birds, and the couple tallied over a hundred new birds.

Bill Williams reports that the male Harlequin Duck is still at Grandview Beach in Hampton. Royal Terns and Purple Martins were there, too, as of March 29th. He reminds us to put hummingbird feeders out as the Ruby-throated will be here probably before April 10th.

At the March Club meeting a Standing Committee on Conservation was formed. Already, several volunteers have expressed interest in helping to organize it.

To submit information for the newsletter, call Brian Taber, at 253-1181, or write to 104 Druid Court, Williamsburg.

**Bird of the Season:
Louisiana Waterthrush
*Seiurus motacilla***

Late March and early April marks the return of the Louisiana Waterthrush to our area. A little later, the Northern Waterthrush will be here also. The birds are not thrushes, but warblers with spotted and streaked underparts. The Louisiana is a little larger than the Northern, and whiter below. Their eyestripe is whiter, too, and wider, especially behind the eye. Waterthrushes bob as they walk, in the manner of Spotted Sandpipers. Look for the Louisiana near moving streams in the shade, near undergrowth. They can be quite inconspicuous because of their brownish coloration.

The song is beautiful and I will not try to describe it. It is all the better because in early spring it is one of the few forest birds to be singing and it truly forecasts the coming of warmer, more humid air. It can be located in wet areas along News Road, at Jolly Pond and in Newport News Park, to name a few favorite haunts.

Louisiana Waterthrushes nest throughout much of the eastern United States, while the Northern Waterthrush prefers Canada. The two species overlap in Pennsylvania and New England. The Louisiana winters in Florida and South America.



WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB
Founded in 1977

Reservation form for VSO
Annual Meeting June 5, 6, 7, 1987
College of William and Mary
Williamsburg, Va. 23185

Make Check payable Williamsburg Bird Club and mail with this form to Mrs. Carolyn Lowe, 50 Summer East, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185.

Mail by May 20.

Your Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone no. _____ For preferred suite assignment give name
of other party _____

Registration _____ No. of Person at \$10.00 each Total \$ _____
Registration _____ No. of persons at \$5.00 each \$ _____
under 10 yrs.

-- Note: meal/lodging package includes lodging Friday and Saturday nights; Friday evening dinner; Saturday breakfast, Banquet; Sunday Preakfast. --

Meals/Lodging package, double occupancy _____ at 65.00 \$ _____

Meals/Lodging, single occupancy: _____ at 75.00 \$ _____

Children 2-10 yr., double occupancy _____ at 50.00 \$ _____
(Meals and Lodging package (youngster over 10 yrs, adult rate))

Children 2-10 yr. single occupancy _____ at 60.00 \$ _____
(Meal and Lodging package (youngsters over 10 yrs. adult rate))

Single Banquet ticket - \$20.00 each person - No. persons. _____
For those not attending any other events except banquet. _____
Total \$ _____

For your information - those not using meal/lodging package but attend meetings, trips, programs, other events are required to pay the registration fee of \$10.00. Attending banquet only, registration fee is not required.

Total enclosed \$ _____

When you arrive, pick up your registration packet at Millington Hall, and get your room assignment, key and other information.

Checkout: 2:00 p.m Sunday, June, 7, 1987.
Map of William and Mary Campus - included in the newsletter.
Please bring with you.