

WILLIAMSBURG FLYER

November 1987

With the passing of October, much of the migration is over. Still to come are northern finches and waterfowl. Bird feeder activity will increase now, well-timed to the arrival of our seed shipment on November 7th. I missed most of the warbler wave in October, although the 4th and the 8th were particularly active days in our area. There were reports of Bay-breasted, Cape May, Pine and Blackpoll warblers. I saw 11 Parulas simultaneously on October 3rd. By October 9th, there were many Yellow-rumped Warblers at Williamsburg West. A few days later, White-throated Sparrows, Ruby and Golden-crowned Kinglets, and Junco's were being regularly seen. Bill Sheehan heard—then saw—one Red-breasted Nuthatch in his yard in the middle of the month. A Rough-legged Hawk was reported from Kiptopeke on October 23rd.

The October club program was a great adventure into the realm of volcanoes and cloud forests in Central America. Dr. Gus Hall told about the plant and animal life of Guatemala and Costa Rica. He saw the flightless grebe, which is unique to a single lake, and he saw Howler and Squirrel monkeys. He saw Killer Bees and many birds including Resplendent Quetzal, Blue-crowned Mot-Mot and Orange-fronted Parakeet to name only a fraction. The landscapes were intriguing, if not awesome. Costa Rica has devoted a large percentage of its land to parks and over 800 bird species can be found in this country which is the size of West Virginia.

By the way, a company in Roanoke is organizing a trip to Costa Rica February 26—March 9. Leaders are club member Bill Akers and past VSO president, Jerry Via. For further details, contact "For the Birds" at 303 Market St., Roanoke, VA 24011.

Also, at the October meeting we saw slides taken by Tom Armour of a flock of over 500 hawks gathered over Fisherman Island on the Eastern Shore on October 3. Most were Broadwings, but a Swainson's Hawk was seen there on the same day, in advance of a strong cold front.

The November program will be on the 18th, a presentation by Pete Money, from the Living Museum in Newport News.



Our club was able to generate over \$1,800.00 as a result of hosting the Virginia Society of Ornithology Annual Conference in June. After discussion at the October meeting, a decision was reached to donate half of the money to the USO's J.J. Murray Scholarship Fund. The money is used to award grants sponsoring work related to birds. The other half of the money is to be kept by the Williamsburg Bird Club to be used for a specific special purpose. Ideas for the money included sending a child to a nature camp, raising our scholarship award amount, producing a local annotated checklist of the birds and using money for our established club committees. A decision will be made at the November meeting.

NEWS ITEMS . . .

The Peterson Field Guide Series has published a new book, this time about hawks, by William S. Clark and Brian Wheeler. There was discussion at the October meeting about ordering these at the bulk rate price to sell to club members at a discount. If interested in further information, contact Bill Williams.

Shirley Raynes announced at the October meeting that she had received over 120 bird seed orders and was expecting more. She also rounded up volunteers that night for unloading the seed on November 7 and for calling people to remind them to pick up their seeds and feeders. More than 6 tons of seed will be delivered.

Please welcome new club members Doris Slosson and Colonel and Mrs. Joseph Russell.

The October field trip to Kiptopeke was held on October 24, a beautiful autumn day. The highlight of the day was an immature Golden Eagle, well seen by all. About a dozen people participated and they were treated to excellent views of Cooper's Hawks, Sharp-shinned Hawks, and Peregrine Falcons as well. On the Bridge tunnel across Chesapeake Bay they found a Lesser Black-backed gull and Marsh Wren.

ATTENTION, PLEASE—

The nominating committee is searching for people to fill the 1988 offices of President, Vice-president in Charge of Programs, and Vice-president in Charge of Newsletters. If anyone is interested in serving on one of these posts or nominating someone else, please call Carolyn Lowe at 565-3167. The slate of officers will be presented and voted upon at the November meeting.

Rich Goll and Cindy Carlson took a second tropical vacation this year and spent the last week in September on the Island of St. John's in the Virgin Islands. They enjoyed snorkeling in the warm, clear waters and identified over 30 species of fish using their under-water field guides. The book literally goes under with the reader. Tropical Storm Emily dumped some rain on them, but they also managed to find White-cheeked Pintails, Bananaquits, Pearly-eyed Thrashers, Green-throated Carib and Antillean Crested Hummingbird. The island is sparsely populated and made up of many National Parks.

I received a call from Dave Shoch of the Richmond Audubon Society who made a trip in our direction on Halloween. He saw a Barn Owl, White-fronted Goose, and Bonaparte's Gulls at Curl's Neck on Route 5. He also found a Loggerhead Shrike and White-crowned Sparrow at Flowerdew Plantation on Route 10. At Jamestown he found both King and Clapper Rails and at Hog Island he found a Hudsonian Godwit. The only other record for our area of this bird was also in October. You may recall that Marbled Godwits were there in August.

UPCOMING TRIPS . . .

The November field trip, on the 21st, will be a waterfowl trip, this time to Hog Island in Surry County and other local hotspots as time allows.

The Virginia Society of Ornithology's Annual Back Bay trip will be held on December 4th, 5th, and 6th. Assemble at the Visitor's Center parking lot around 8 AM and you will see lots of other birders.

This year's Christmas Count, our eleventh, will be held on Sunday, December 20th. Please contact Bill Williams if you are interested in being part of an exciting day of early winter birding in our area. We need people in the field and at feeders to record sightings. A tally will be held in Millington Hall at 5 PM. Refreshments will be available for weary counters. This important event will take place all over North and Central America during late December and early January. Don't miss out on what is always a rewarding day.

December 19th is the day for the Hampton Road's count. Our two clubs always assist each other and participate in a friendly rivalry for number of species and varieties. Please lend a hand if you can.

Below is a copy of a statement made by Carolyn Lowe at the October Board of Supervisor's meeting concerning the Ford's Colony development—specifically the need for more environmental awareness community-wide.

"I have previously expressed great concern about the Ford's Colony project because of the large amount of land it encompasses, and because of the environmental sensitivity of an area that includes major portions of the Powhatan and Chisel Run stream basins and their associated wetlands. However, during the past few months the developers of Ford's Colony have taken some positive steps in responding to the environmental concerns of citizens in the community.

In April a local organization, the Williamsburg Bird Club, prepared a set of recommendations and presented them to Ford's Colony for consideration. The objective was to encourage protection of a very special wetland on Ford's Colony property that provides year-round habitat for an extraordinary number of bird species, as well as other wildlife. Ford's Colony was asked to consider several ways of mitigating the impact of development on the wetland and they agreed to do so. We appreciated their willingness to listen to our concerns and we are encouraged by the fact that they have apparently made certain adjustments in their site plan to reduce the adverse effects on one part of the wetland and to leave relatively undisturbed an area of particular importance to two bird species increasingly threatened by loss of nesting habitat.

I feel that this offers a good example of the kind of positive relationship that can occur between a developer and a group of concerned citizens. But, of course, local government has a vital role to play if we are to achieve a balance between growth and preservation of environmental quality. I would therefore urge you, our elected officials, to do whatever is necessary to ensure that protection of natural resources becomes a standard part of the subdivision and site plan review process, from the initial stages of a proposed development right on through to final approval. This should help to make the process smoother and more efficient by removing uncertainty and resolving potential conflict at the outset of a proposed development. It would surely be in the best interest of government planners, developers, and the community, and I'm sure would be supported by the general public. The environmental stewardship we practice now and over the next few years in James City County, and in the greater Williamsburg area, will do much to determine the future character of the community.

Thank you."

Bird of the Season:
Red-headed Woodpecker
Melanerpes erythrocephalus

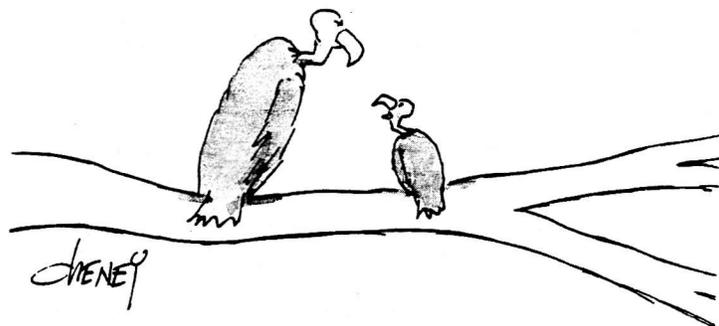
I picked the Red-headed Woodpecker for my final bird of the season because it is a strikingly beautiful bird as well as our club symbol. Our club patch was taken from a design by club member Richard Goll. The Red-head is found sparingly in the area, though fairly reliable locations to observe them are Jamestown Island and Longhill Road.

The habitat of Red-heads has been decreasing as dead trees used for nesting are cleared for land use. They prefer open woods and can be found around farms and even residential areas. Red-heads feed on a variety of food including acorns, wild fruits and even insects, which are often caught in flycatcher fashion.

The plumage is one of contrasts. The brilliant head of the adult is offset by jet black on the back, tail and much of the wings. The breast, belly, and rump are white as are the secondary flight feathers. Young birds are brownish.

Red-heads may be found irregularly within their range, withdrawing in some winters to the south. They inhabit much of the eastern United States as well as the Great Plains and southern Canada. The Red-head is a wonderful sight and a very worthy club symbol.

To submit information for the newsletter, contact
Brian Taber at 253-1181 or write to 104 Druid
Court, Williamsburg, VA 23185.



Is it true, Mom—leftovers for the rest of my life?