

WILLIAMSBURG FLYER

November 1988

The November meeting of the Williamsburg Bird Club will be held on Wednesday, November 16th at 7:30 p.m. in room 117 of Millington Hall on the campus of William & Mary. The speaker will be Carolyn Lowe and she will present a slide show on "Impressions of South Africa."

At this meeting we will also vote on the officers for next year. The slate that will be presented is:

President—	Ruth Beck
V.P. Programs—	Grace Doyle
V.P. Newsletter—	Jamie Doyle
Secretary—	Joy Archer
Treasurer—	Fred Blystone
Members at Large—	Martha Armstrong and Cynthia Carlson

Birding Opportunities—

The bird walk this month will be to Hog Island on the 19th. More information on this walk will be given at the monthly meeting or can be obtained by calling Bill Williams at 565-3491.

Brian Patterson has scheduled an early winter pelagic trip out of Rudee Inlet on Saturday December 3rd at 5:30 a.m. (The weather date will be December 4th.) The trip will be aboard the Sea Sport, a 65-foot boat with a heated cabin and will cost \$60.00 per

person. The deadline for reservations is November 23rd. The objective of the trip will be to see offshore birds which may include cold water tubenoses, phalaropes, jaegers, and alcids.

For more information contact Brian at 253-0933.

For VSO members—December 9th, 10th, and 11th, are that dates of the VSO weekend at Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Headquarters for the trip is the Howard Johnson Hotel at 38th and Atlantic Avenue, in Virginia Beach. Rates are \$36 for single or double, \$41 for a triple and \$46 for a quad, plus 8.5% tax. You must make your own reservations, using the form at the end of the October VSO newsletter and sending in one night's lodging two weeks in advance to the attention of Ms. Jerry Pauley, Reservations Manager. The phone number is 804-428-7220.

Bird Sightings—

(From the Fall issue of the
VSO newsletter)

VIRGINIA BIRDLINE (703) 898-3713 OFF
TO A PROMISING START

During the first nine months of operation the Virginia Birdline sponsored by the Virginia Society of Ornithology and operated by Michael R. Boatwright has received 134 reports of sightings of 78 species. Forty-nine tapes have been made with details on rare birds and their location with Lewis' Woodpecker

-Loudoun County, Fork-tailed Flycatcher-Charles City County, Rednecked Grebe-Alexandria, and Dickcissel - various localities generating the most birder interest. Also popular have been the Common and King Eiders seen on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel (CBBT).

Other unusual reports include Ash-throated Flycatcher-Wachapreague Christmas Bird Count (CBC), Varied Thrush-Luray CBC, Ross' Goose-Curles Neck Farm, Thayer's Gull-CBBT, Mississippi Kite-False Cape State Park, Black-shouldered Kite-Charles City County, Groove-billed Ani, Charles City C., Bandrumped Storm-Petrel and White-tailed Tropicbird-off Virginia Beach, Curlew Sandpiper-Craney Island, Long-billed Curlew-Chincoteague, Eared Grebe-Lynchburg, Franklin's Gull-Craney Island, Western Tanager-Accomack, Va., Clay-colored Sparrow-CBBT, Lark Sparrow-Chincoteague, Back Bay, CBBT, Chesapeake, and Brewer's Blackbird-Nelson County.

Mike believes the "Virginia Birdline" is going well, but hopes for more participation in the form of reports, particularly from the western part of the state.

A call to the Birdline on the morning of November 12th. resulted in information on a Rufous Humingbird in Salem, Virginia and of Wood Storks spotted in Isle of Wight County on November 10th, by Fenton Day.

BIRD SEED SALE

The pickup date on the 5th went off extremely well (except for the weather, and that could have been worse). Many thanks are due Ruth Beck, Joy Archer, Joe & Grace Doyle, Jim Lowry, Jamie Doyle, Bob Cross, and Mary Ellen Solytis for dispensing the bags of seed. I would also like to thank Andy Jacob, Michael Beck, and Sam Hart for assisting in transporting the seed that was not picked up from the Colony Square Shopping Center to my basement. There

is some extra seed still available. Please give me a call at 229-8975. We also have Droll and Hyde feeders for sale. If you are interested in these please call Fred Blystone at 229-4346.

CALLING ALL BIRD FEEDERS WATCHERS!

Have you ever wondered where the birds at your feeder come from, where they go when they leave, and why bird numbers change from year to year? Do you want to know what birds come to feeders in different parts of North America? Project FeederWatch is a new continent wide survey of bird feeders designed to help answer questions such as these, and you are invited to join.

Project FeederWatch is a cooperative research venture of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and Canada's Long Point Bird Observatory, and is in the midst of a successful pilot year with 4,000 participants from all across North America. The project is modelled on a survey run successfully in Ontario for the past 11 years, which has shown that male Evening Grosbeaks winter farther south than females, Black-capped Chickadees are found in low numbers when Evening Grosbeaks are abundant, and numbers of many species at feeders parallel those found on Christmas Bird Counts.

Sound interesting? Project FeederWatch needs thousands of additional observers across the continent to help answer questions about feeder birds on a broad geographic scale. You need not be an expert birder to take part--the project concentrates on common species, and baffling rarities can be ignored. Although counts are made over a one- to two-day period of your choice every other week from November through March, you are not obliged to watch every time, nor must you watch continuously on count days. All observations are recorded on computer-readable

forms so that detailed summaries can be provided to participants promptly each season and to insure that the data are readily available for further analyses.

In return for your observations, Project FeederWatch will send you an annual newsletter and report on the season's results, plus 2 issues of "Birdscope", the Laboratory of Ornithology's research newsletter. If you can't take part but would like to receive these publications anyway, you may subscribe to them separately.

Project FeederWatch requires an annual registration fee of \$9, which helps pay for data forms, analysis and preparation and mailing of reports and newsletter. To join, write to Erica Dunn, Coordinator, Project FeederWatch, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Sapsucker Woods, Ithaca, NY 14850. Include your name and address, state whether you wish to contribute observations from your feeder or just receive reports, and enclose your check for \$9 (made payable to 'Project FeederWatch'). Please sign up right away, to help them plan how many forms to print and to avoid mailing delays. You will receive all materials and instructions just before the season begins in mid-November. Help make Project Feederwatch a truly continental survey by representing our state.

Wing Tips from The Duncraft Flyer

- Grape jelly is an especially good energy food in as it doesn't freeze. Woodpeckers love it.
- To keep raccoons away from feeders, try stringing up an onion bag filled with suet just for them.
- Birds do not have sweat glands, so they do not secrete moisture that would cause their feet to stick to freezing metal. However, plastic perch guards on metal perches are useful for insulating birds' feet

from the quick drain of heat in very cold weather.

- Moisture in your tube thistle feeder? Place 1/2" of kitty litter at the bottom before filling with thistle. The litter will absorb the moisture.
- Keep your feeders filled at least halfway. Hungry birds at empty feeders can be so eager for seed that they can lodge themselves in positions where they can endanger their lives.
- Collect pine cones and fill with peanut butter mixed with seed. Hang nearby and watch the flurry of activity.
- Birds crashing into your window? They see the reflection of sky and trees and mistake this for open space. This is especially true for suddenly frightened birds and for migrating newcomers to your yard. Invent what you can to eliminate the reflection: Hang ribbon, strips of aluminum foil or a windsock with streamers outside the window.

TIPS FOR A WINTER BIRDBATH—*BIRD WATCHER'S DIGEST*

Birds need water year around. Anyone who keeps a birdbath during the summer can maintain it during the winter by observing a few guidelines. Birdbaths, like feeders, are usually more successful in a spot sheltered from the wind. A sunny spot is nice, unless the basin is metal. In that case it should be shaded—at least in summer when direct sunlight can heat metal enough to

burn the birds.

The bath should be near bushes and trees to which the birds can flee at any hint of danger, but not so near that the predator can lurk concealed beside the bath. Birds are especially vulnerable when they have wet wings.

The basin should be kept filled with clean, fresh water; stagnant leaf-filled water can harbor disease. In winter, it's good to use an immersion heater in the water. make sure the heating elements are kept completely covered with water when in use. All wiring must be weatherproof, so it is wise to consult an electrician about such installations. When using one of the birdbath heaters available commercially, be sure to follow the installation instructions carefully.

A well-used birdbath affords everyone in the family an unusual opportunity to observe birds—and some of their curious and interesting behavior.

We would like to welcome Barbara Davis back as a member.

To submit information for the December issue of The Williamsburg Flyer, please contact:

**Shirley Raynes at 229-8975
or write to
104 Vaiden Drive, Williamsburg, Va.
23185**