



The Williamsburg Flyers

January

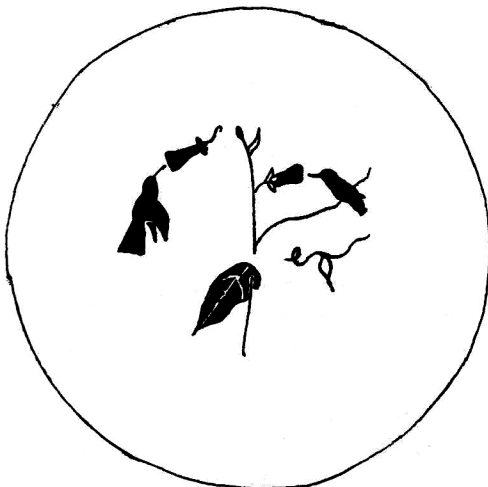
1989

Bob Cross, our 1987 and 1988 student research grant recipient, has recently finished his work on the Piping Plover. On January 18th at 7:30 p.m. in room 117 of Millington Hall, Bob will present his findings to the Williamsburg Bird club. Please come in order to learn more about the endangered Piping Plover and to wish Bob the best of luck as he finishes his graduate work at the College of William and Mary and becomes yet another of our Byrd fledglings.



The first field trip of the new year will be held on January 21st. We will meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Colonial Williamsburg Information Center (the right side as you face it) and go to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel islands. It should be a very interesting trip as the tunnel islands often provide close looks at various bay and sea ducks, gulls, and gannets. Earlier this winter Harlequin Ducks, Common Eiders, Great Cormorants, Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Purple Sandpipers, and Oldsquaw were seen from the islands and we have a good chance of seeing these species on the 21st. Although I can't promise birds we will see, I can almost certainly promise that it will be Cold, so dress warmly. It should be a fun trip.

(from Craig Turner; Field Trip Chairman)



RENEWL FORMS ! Anyone that received a renewal form with this mailing, according to our records, has not yet paid their dues for 1989. Please send this form and your dues to Fred Blystone as soon as possible. Don't miss out on being part of the exciting programs and field trips that are already planned for this new year!

Please welcome Amy Campbell as our newest Club member.

Bird Sightings

Tom Armour and Bill Sheehan report seeing two adult Bald Eagles, two Tree Sparrows, and a large number of Hooded Mergansers at Hog Island during the first week of January.

Fred Blystone saw a hummingbird in his yard on Christmas day. The species, either Ruby-throated or Rufous, has yet to be determined.

Although the end is approaching, this is still the period of the Mid Winter Eagle Count. Anyone that sees eagles should note information as to the date, time, location, circumstances, number of birds, and whether or not the individuals were mature or immature. Please send all records to M.A. Byrd Biology Department, The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185.



Christmas Bird Count 1988

December 18th 5:15 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

conditions:

temperature: 18-30 degrees F.

sky: clear a.m., partly cloudy p.m.

wind: 10-15 mph. North

fresh water areas were partially to completely frozen,
concentrating ducks.

15 observers

107 species observed

in total roughly 15,900 birds were counted

HIGHLIGHTS-

Mallard-581

Redhead-80

Bald Eagle-9 (5 adult, 4 imm.)

Screech Owl-9

Great Horned Owl-6

Barred Owl-5

Bluebird-157

Water Pipit-7 (Hog Island)

Tree Sparrow-1 (Hog Island)

Fox Sparrow-1 (Jolly Pond)

Northern Oriole-1

Black-crowned Night Heron-1 imm. (Hog Island)

White-eyed vireo-1 (Cheatham)

Mute Swan-1 (Cheatham)

A number of species frequently seen on our counts went unobserved this year. A few of the most notably missed species included Ring-necked Pheasant (probably gone from the area), Wild Turkey (elusive and scattered by hunters), Horned Grebe, American Coot, Winter Wren, Rusty Blackbird, Pine Siskin, and Evening Grosbeaks.

President's Comments

The 1989 Williamsburg Bird Club officers are looking forward to a busy birding year. We want to encourage each of you to participate at whatever level time and energy will allow. The W.B.C. has over one hundred members. One of the strengths of the club is the diversity of the membership, which ranges from professional ornithologists to the window watchers. With our main purpose to promote interest in the study of wild birds, we have again lined up a variety of programs for 1989. We will have guest speakers to talk about Piping Plovers, owls (followed by an owl hoot), and warblers this spring. We will have a program on bluebirds and set up a bluebird house workshop one evening.

Purple Martin time will be here before long, the first scouts arriving in early March.

We have lined up an exciting field trip program. The list will be in your newsletter each month. Come and enjoy the variety of bird life we are fortunate to have in our area.

All in all, we look forward to a year of GOOD birding!

Ruth Beck (President)

The Eagle

*He clasps the crag with crooked hands
Close to the sun in lonely lands
Ringed with the azure world, he stands*

*The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls
He watches from his mountain walls,
and like a thunderbolt he falls.*

*Alfred, Lord Tennyson
(1809-1892)*

Over the last four years an organophosphate pesticide known by the trade name Furadan (carbofuran) has been responsible for the deaths of at least 23 Bald Eagles in Virginia and Maryland. Although FMC Corporation, manufacturers of Furadan, deny that their pesticide is a major threat to Bald Eagles and other wildlife, the EPA has estimated that carbofuran may be killing more than two million birds, of various species, every year. Produced in liquid and granular form, carbofuran is mainly used on corn and other small grain fields in order to control pests such as the European Cornborer. An estimated seven million to ten million pounds of the pesticide's active ingredient are applied annually nationwide. The liquid form has yet to be targeted as an environmental hazard. However, birds that ingest the granules, mistaking them as seeds or grit, are almost certainly doomed. One granule of this pesticide is toxic enough to kill a small songbird or mammal. Eagles and other raptors are poisoned secondarily after feeding on this dead or debilitated wildlife.

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In Maryland wells near carbofuran treated fields, the water is tainted with pesticide runoff. Some of these wells contain twice the amount of carbofuran estimated to be hazardous to man.

On January fifth according to Ed Clark, director of the Wildlife Center of Virginia, the EPA stated in the Federal Register that the first steps to suspend the registration and initiate removal of all granular forms of Furadan are underway. There is a 60 day period in which public comments and an appeal from FMC may be received. In order to push for the removal of granular carbofuran, a coalition of environmental groups, including The Wildlife Center of Virginia, The Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and the National Wildlife Federation, has been formed. I encourage everyone to support the banning of granular carbofuran for the preservation of our environment as well as ALL of Earth's life forms.

Jamie K. Doyle (Vice President)



Bird Seed

There is still PLENTY of bird seed available. Anyone that is interested in purchasing some may contact Shirley Raynes at 229-8975 or Fred Blystone at 229-4346. Let's keep our feathered friends fat and happy throughout the winter months.



Submissions for the February addition of the Williamsburg Flyer need to be received no later than February 3rd. Those people reporting bird sightings should list not only the species and numbers, but also the date, time, and location. Any additional comments as to the report are welcome. I encourage members to submit any information concerning conservation problems or accomplishments.

Jamie K. Doyle

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253-4240 (Dept.)
220-6611 (Home)