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The Williamsburg Flyers

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NOVEMBER ISSUE, 1989

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November Meeting- Nov. 15th 7:30PM  
Millington Hall 117

Dr. Gustav W. Hall of the Biology Department of the College of William and Mary, in company with a group of British naturalists, visited an orangutan preserve and the cloudforests of Mt. Kinabalu this past summer. In Tamana Negara, Malaya they studied the largest remaining lowland rain-forest in Southeast Asia. We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Hall, his beautiful slides, stories, and insights at the November meeting.

DON'T FORGET !!!!

BIRD SEED SAVINGS DAY IS  
NOVEMBER 11th. BE SURE TO  
PICK UP YOUR SEED - OR HAVE  
SOMEONE PICK IT UP FOR YOU.  
PICK UP IS AT COLONY SQUARE  
SHOPPING CENTER. DON't  
LET YOUR BIRDS GO WITHOUT.

Thanks to Ruth Beck and Fred  
Blystone for finishing up last  
month's newsletter when I was  
unexpectedly hospitalized!

*Jamie*

Keep all newsletter information coming

October WBC Field Trip

Greetings. My name is Tim O'Connell and I am a first-year graduate student in Biology at William and Mary. I also plan to become a member of the Williamsburg Bird Club, so you'll be hearing more from me in the future.

As a native of Central New York State, my birding expeditions have most often taken place within the deciduous and mixed forest that dominates the Northeast. Thus, I was especially excited to accompany the Bird Club on Oct. 21 on a birding jaunt that took us to the Eastern Shore. Stops along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel revealed the following species of note:

Double-crested cormorant	Great cormorant	Great blue heron
Great egret	White-winged scoter	Red-tailed hawk
Bald eagle	Osprey	Cooper's hawk
Sharp-shinned hawk	Peregrine falcon	Merlin
American kestrel	Indigo bunting	Palm warbler
Yellow-rumped warbler	Orange-crowned w.	Savannah sparrow-
White-throated sparrow	Vesper sparrow	European starling
Killdeer	Common grackle	Turkey vulture
Brown-headed cowbird	Rock dove	Mourning dove
American crow	Fish crow	Tree swallow
*Longspur sp.	Royal tern	Black skimmer
Great black-backed gull	Laughing gull	Herring gull
Lesser black-backed gull	Ring-billed gull	*Ruddy turnstone
*Brown pelican		

\* = new birds for my list!

Tim O'Connell

The Longspur sp. listed above provided quite a bit of excitement for the birders. Seen on the jetty rocks of the fourth island, after looking through many field guides the more experienced felt that the bird did indeed seem to most closely resemble Smith's Longspur- a bird not yet listed in Virginia. The WBC members returned with new observers from the Kiptopeake Banding Station but we unable to relocate the Longspur.

Thanks to Tim O'Connell, Tom Armour, and Brian Patteson for their contributions to this newsletter issue !

Please send all information for future newsletters to:

Jamie K. Doyle  
Biology Department  
The College of William and Mary  
Williamsburg, Virginia 23185



#### **IN APPRECIATION:**

For 12 years Mrs. Betty Williams has so faithfully and capably served as the Williamsburg Bird Club historian. She has kept an organized record in form of an album of all the clubs activities since its organization in September of 1977. We thank you for all your efforts and for the contributions you have made to the club.

#### **HONORING:**

At the November 15th meeting we will be honoring Mrs. Ann Smith of Virginia Avenue here in Williamsburg. Mrs. Smith has been birding since she was a young girl and has provided many children with the initial spark to begin their appreciation of birds. Her yard and fine food offerings have provided one of the best areas for Northern Orioles in Williamsburg. On one Christmas count 9 Orioles were at her nectar feeders and oranges. In appreciation of all her contributions we are pleased to announce that we will honor Mrs. Smith with a life time membership in the Williamsburg Bird Club. Please join us for this presentation at the next meeting.

#### **PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS:**

A few days ago I received a call from visitors in the Williamsburg area who wanted a list of good places to go locally to find birds. Of course, we have many, but what seemed to appeal the visitors was Hogg Island. They spent a morning birding the area and were so excited and impressed they gave me a call back to let me know what they had observed. Besides, Canadian Geese, Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets, Bk.-bellied Plover, Gadwall, Shovelers, they were especially excited about the Bald Eagle observed. They noted seeing large flocks of geese flyin in V-shape formations and they asked a good question about ducks and geese flying in this regular V-shaped pattern. The answer to exactly why birds fly in Vees is still a mystery. According to K. Lorenz, one theory purposed is that all but the leaders are able to gain lift from the wing-tip vortices produced by the bird in front of them. Those vortices are formed by air rushing up over the tip from the high-pressure area under the wing into the low pressure area above the wing. The following bird, if it is in just the right position, will remain within the upward flow of the vortices. Calculations indicate that such an advantage could boost the range of a flock of birds over that of a bird flying alone.

Theoretically, to be most efficient, the wing tip of a following bird should remain about one-fourth of a wing span

from that of a bird in front of it. Videos of flying flocks reveal, however, that in practice Canadian Geese do not travel in formations that allow flight efficiency to be much increased by this mechanisms. Instead an ornithologist suggested that flying in Vee formation is a way of maintaining visual contact and avoiding collisions. Further studies continue about flying in Vees.

Some good news about the up coming events. Brian Taber has been working on the 8 areas within the 15 mile radius of our Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Many of the areas have changed radically due to development. Eight areas have additional various interesting sites that provide good birding. See Christmas count information in this Newsletter.

#### **BIRDING NEWS FROM TOM ARMOUR:**

Tom Armour and Paul Baker went to Fisherman's Island to the Raptor Banding Station. Highlights for the day were one Sharp-shinned Hawk, 3 Coopers Hawks, one Red-tail and one Peregrine Falcon. Each Bird was lured in, trapped, banded and released. Another highlight of the day was the observation of four otters "playing" in the creek next to the banding site.

#### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT:**



The nominating committee recommends the following slate of officers and board members for the Williamsburg Bird Club for 1990. A vote to accept this slate will take place November 15 at the meeting.

President - Tom Armour

Vice-President - (programs) - Julie Hotchkiss

Vice-President (Newsletter Editor) - Temporary Acting -  
Jamie Doyle  
Fred Blystone  
Ruth Beck

Treasure - Fred Blystone

Member at-large - Anne Beckley

Member at-large - Marilyn Zeigler

# Christmas Bird Count '89



Mark your calendars for the 90th Annual National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count! Our club will be participating by being afield on December 17th. Every year there are 10-15 regular members who search for and count birds and this year we want to encourage as many new birders as possible to come out also.

We need people to find birds even if they are not expert at identifying them. There will be experts in every group to help with identification. Some people spend all day counting, but we also need people for shorter amounts of time to cover the many areas within our count circle. Waterfowl and sparrows are generally abundant by mid-December and visitors such as Pine Siskins, Purple Finches and Evening Grosbeaks may also be around. Our club usually finds more than 100 species during the day!

This year we would also like to try something new--a coordinated network of feeder watchers. These people would record what they see at their feeders during the day and report the results to a coordinator who would get the results to the count compiler at the tally at day's end. If you are interested in watching a feeder or in being the coordinator, please contact Brian Taber at 253-1181, after 6PM.

If anyone has questions about the count, contact Brian or Ruth Beck at 566-8234. The meeting place for the day is the Colonial Williamsburg Information Center parking lot, the same as for our field trips. The time is 7AM, except for those who go owling earlier. Arrangements will be made to meet those who cannot come at 7AM. The final tally will take place at 5PM in Millington Hall, just down the hall from our usual monthly meeting place. There will be warm refreshments for everyone.

The Christmas Count is a great experience and a fun day. Come join over 40,000 counters across North America in this important early winter census of birdlife.





THE CAMPUS CONSERVATION  
COALITION NEEDS YOUR  
SUPPORT!

contact:  
Jamie K. Doyle c/o  
The Biology Club  
The College of William and Mary  
Williamsburg, Virginia 23185

(804) 220-6611

The CCC of The College of William and Mary was founded this semester in order to provide a network for the campus and Williamsburg communities. The function of the network is to

1. provide education as to environmental/conservation through outreach into the college system, local schools, and community organizations.

2. plan and organize activities that individuals and groups may participate in so that the environmental/conservation problems may be alleviated due to direct and indirect actions on the part of CCC.

The CCC has already been successful in having foam products banned at the College's Market Place and has worked to increase the awareness of the College's administration in respect to the poor environmental practices that led to the contamination of Lake Matoaka and student illnesses. Many campus groups are working on individual projects with the CCC that reach beyond the campus boundaries. The Clayton-Grimes Biology Club, for example, has developed four educational programs that they will be presenting through 1990 at the local elementary schools. In addition they will work with school children to construct nature trails on the school properties.

The CCC will undoubtedly be one of the major factors in changing the ethics of the College on environmental issues and helping students of all ages learn the importance of environmental concern and low impact living. The CCC needs the support of individuals and groups that might supply a contribution of funds and/or materials to its programs. In addition, community members are encouraged to become a part of the CCC by attending meetings every Thursday evening at 7:30 in Millinton 117.

## Pelagic Trips A Success

Pelagic trips in August and September were relatively successful as none of the six scheduled trips were weathered out and most of the trips succeeded in finding the expected birds of the season. We found no outstanding varieties but over the course of the six trips found the following pelagic species: Cary's Shearwater, Greater Shearwater, Audubon's Shearwater, Wilson's Storm-petrel, Red-necked Phalarope, Pomarine, Parasitic, and Long-tailed Jaegers and Bridled Tern. In addition to the birds we observed numerous pilot whales and offshore bottlenose dolphin. We usually trolled two to four lines and on September 2nd we boated a fifty-eight pound Yellowfin Tuna, and we caught and released three White Marlin. On August 19th I caught what is considered Virginia's rarest billfish- the Longbill Spearfish. This fish was photographed and released.

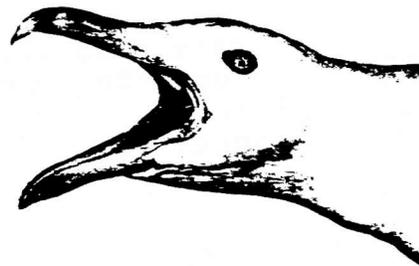
Onshore birding has been even more productive. As soon as we got off the boat on September 17th (at 6:30PM) we were on our way to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel to see the immature male Yellow-headed Blackbird found by participants on the VSO field trip to Chincoteague. We found it there on island number two and studied it until dark. Every trip to the CBBT was relatively successful through October fourth. Notable birds that friends and I saw were as follows- Roseate Tern 9/24, Clay-colored Sparrow 9/28-10/2, and Black-legged Kittiwake 9/30-10/2. The most exciting birds however were two rails on October fourth. The first was a Yellow Rail that Randy Moore found and showed to Fenton Day and me after it had been injured on Island four and the second was a Black Rail that flushed at my feet from the same small patch of thick grass and hid for several minutes under a nearby truck providing us with excellent views and an opportunity for photographs. Back Bay N,W.R has also been a good area for warblers and rare birds including an Eared Grebe on 9/30 and a Lark Sparrow on 9/30 and 10/2. A Western Kingbird was at Sandbridge on October 19th. Finally, on the far island of Kerr Reservoir Hurricane Hugo deposited four Sooty Terns, and unidentified Jaeger, and numerous Laughing Gulls, all on September 22nd.

Brian Patteson

see last page for information on Brian's next pelagic trip.



"New binoculars...a new field guide...a trip to the Everglades.....an Eskimo curlew? No way!"



EARLY WINTER PELAGIC TRIP

DATE- Saturday December 2 (weather date- December 3)

PLACE- Virginia Beach Fishing Center, 200 Winston Salem Ave.  
at Rudee Inlet aboard the chartered headboat, "Bobbi Lee"

TIME- meet at 5:30 AM

COST- \$70 per person, make checks payable to Brian Patteson

PURPOSE- to look for tubenoses, phalaropes, jaegers, kittiwakes,  
and alcids

WHAT TO BRING- binoculars, camera, lunch, seasickness medicine,  
and anything else you might need; rain gear is recommended

Leader- BRIAN PATTESON, call me at (804) 253-2597 (before mid-  
night most weeknights, some weekends)

SEND CHECKS TO- P.O. 125 Amherst, VA. 24521

DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS- ~~November 18~~, I will take them after  
that date until all spaces are filled, but if you want this trip  
to happen I need to know there are enough of you by then.

CANCELLATION POLICY- No cancellations will be accepted after  
November 18 unless a substitute participant can be found. All  
cancellations are subject to a \$10 handling fee. You are oblig-  
ated to the Sunday Dec. 3 weather date if the trip is postponed  
a day due to foul weather. If the trip is completely weathered  
out you will receive a full refund.

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cut out, send in

DEC. 2(3)

RESERVATION  
REQUEST-

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER in party \_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT PAID \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

DAY PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ NIGHT PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the policy statement regarding cancellations and  
accept the terms presented within it.

signed \_\_\_\_\_

PLACE THIS IN YOUR CAR'S FRONT WINDOW !

Date : the 3rd Wednesday of each month

LICENSE NUMBER:

As a member of the Williamsburg Bird Club, the operator of the automobile has permission to park on the campus of the College of William and Mary from 7:15 PM until 9:30 PM 1989-1990. DO NOT TICKET THIS VEHICLE.

*WBC Board of Advisors*

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