



THE FLYER

W. J. Sheehan, Editor

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Williamsburg Bird Club

Program for May

Our meeting this month will be on **Wednesday, May 16th**, at 7:30 p.m. in Room 117 of Millington Hall.

Carol Curtis, Director of the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve System, will be our guest speaker. Ms. Curtis will tell us of on-going environmental studies at four selected sites in the York River System. These sites are: Goodwin's Island, Taskinas Creek in York River State Park, Sweet Hall Marsh on the Pamunkey River, and the Catlett Islands—roughly across the York River from Indian Field Creek. Her presentation should be of particular interest since, to paraphrase Pogo, "The subjects are us!"

MAY FIELD TRIP: Our May trip will be to **Grandview Beach** in Hampton, on **Saturday, May 19th**.

We will meet at **7:30 a.m.** in the usual place (**Colonial Williamsburg Information Center parking lot**—right-hand/east side). If you guessed that Brian Taber will lead this trip, you are absolutely correct. Just show up!

Brian makes no promises, but suggests that the following group is a sample of what one might see at Grandview at this time of year:

Least Bittern, Glossy Ibis, a wide range of shorebirds, four species of Terns, a good mix of Herons, Rails, and Egrets, a sprinkling of warblers (including Yellow and Prothonotary), Marsh Wrens and Seaside Sparrows.

President's

Corner

Our field trip this month presents a great opportunity to see species of marsh and shore birds not easily found in our area. The spring migration should be at it's peak so the possibilities are good for some great birds. I urge all member who can do so to join us.

April Bird Walk to Newport News City Park Summary

On April 21st, Brian Taber led himself and seven others into the wilds of Newport News City Park. Participants were members Zeigler, Moorman, Fields (and two guests), Armour and Archer—from Z to A, so to speak.

Over 60 species presented themselves, including Common Loons, Pied-billed Grebes, Great Egrets, Wood Ducks, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Osprey, Bald Eagles, a Barred Owl, a Hairy Woodpecker, a couple of Pileateds, a Kingbird, Martins, Barn Swallows, a Rough-winged Swallow, and a Tree Swallow. Gnatcatchers were plentiful, and warblers were well-represented by Parulas, Yellow-rumped, Pine, Palm, Ovenbird and Common Yellowthroats.

Betty Fields won the "Most Valuable Player Award" by unanimous vote. All she did was to find active nests of both Red-shouldered Hawks and Gnatcatchers—not to mention her producing a Barred Owl at roost! That's certainly worth a couple hearty "atta-girls"! Nice work, Miss B!

WBC Has Adopted a Highway

Under the State sponsored Adopt-a-Highway program, the Club has agreed to sponsor approximately two miles of Route 5, from Five Forks to Green Springs Road (Route 614). Essentially, volunteers from our membership (and friends, of course) will undertake to keep that part of Route 5 free of litter for a two year period.

Bill and Nancy Davies are the sparkplugs behind this worthy effort, and will serve as co-chairs of our effort. If this kind of community service appeals to you, please contact Bill or Nancy at **253-1461**.

The State Transportation Department provides us with orange safety vests and "At Work" signs—together with sturdy orange bags for collection purposes. Bill Davies will give us more information at the meeting on the 16th, and will field any questions at that time.

What Birds Really Breed Locally?

Our latest Summary of Local Bird Data (copy furnished you with the February FLYER) has a column headed **BREED**. In it, those birds which we know bred here are designated with a **B**. Those which formerly were known to breed locally, but for which we have not recent evidence of breeding, are designated with the letter **E**. Among these are;

Least Bittern
Little Blue Heron
Black-crowned Night Heron
Least Tern

If you have any evidence of these species nesting locally in recent years, and/or this year, we need to know and publish the fact.

Finally, there is a larger group which includes species we think may breed locally, but no one has reported a nest or any real evidence (like baby birds) that might prove that they breed here. These birds are designated a **P** (probable) and include:

Yellow-crowned Night Heron
King Rail
Virginia Rail
Chuck-will's Widow
Whip-Poor-Will
Tree Swallow
Bank Swallow
Yellow-throated Vireo
Yellow Warbler
Seaside Sparrow

Please call me at 220-2122, or Tom Armour at 229-2363 if you are aware that any of the above are in fact breeding locally.

We need your help!

Don't forget the Library Program for Birding Beginners we are sponsoring at the Williamsburg Regional Library on Sunday, May 13th, between the hours of 3 and 5 p.m. The program will consist of a lecture/slide portion stressing bird identification, local birds and habitat.

Bird Sightings

Our two Brians, Patteson and Taber, opened the Major League Baseball Season (April 9th) in wonderful fashion. From the vantage point of the Taber front steps on Druid Court they scanned the southern sky for raptors, and for whatever other feathered things might be travelling. It was such a success that they did it again on the 10th, with the following totals for the two days:

A: Flying very high, and in a northerly direction:

Black Vulture	2
Osprey	2
Bald Eagle	2
Harrier	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	10
Coopers Hawk	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	2
Red-tailed Hawk	2
Kestrel	28

B: Flying moderately high, and in an easterly direction:

Common Loon	11
Double-crested Cormorant	Many
Caspian Tern	1

A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher showed up in Bill Snyder's yard on April 8th—just about on schedule. Gnatcatchers have nested nearby for a number of years. Your Prothonotary Warblers should soon follow, Bill.

The Palm Warbler first reported by Julie Hotchkiss on April 6 appeared daily in their yard through April 9th.

On April 10th, Tom Armour watched a concentration of 12 Osprey fishing the James River near the Kingsmill Marina. Also the same day, Brian Taber found a Crested Flycatcher and a Prairie Warbler trespassing on his property. They followed a pair of Ovenbirds who were talking to each other on the 8th.

Occasionally, Ruth Beck provides us a status report of what birds are visiting her, Sherwin and Michael in Barhamsville. Her April 11th report includes 200 Goldfinches (an invasion?); some mixed groups of Tree, Rough-winged and Barn Swallows; 4 Purple Martins; 2 Black & White Warblers; and Ovenbird; a Great Horned Owl. Then, too, there was a pair of Gray Foxes—a daily occurrence.

A small number of Chimney Swifts were over First Colony on April 11th, and Hummingbirds showed up there on the 10th and 14th—under separate auspices (Stephens and Hotchkiss).

On April 14th, from a boat on the James, Tom Armour saw two Common Loons in flight over the river. Also, close to Hog Island, he watched a Sharp-shinned Hawk, a Cooper's Hawk and a Harrier do their respective hunting exercises over the Island.

Also on the 14th, the Doyles travelled the Country Road and were rewarded with two Barred Owls, half a dozen Gnatcatchers, and three or four each of Ovenbirds, Parula and Yellow-throated Warblers. Grace also reported a Vireo near their home.

A hummingbird showed up on the 14th, at the feeder of Bonnie Lou Scott in Kingsmill. Bill Sheehan saw one on the 15th, examining some Coral Honeysuckle.

On the 15th, Armour & Sheehan tried Jamestown Island. Two very vocal Virginia Rails were the highlights, supported by two Red-headed Woodpeckers, 3 White-eyed Vireos, about 25 Yellowthroats and half a dozen Brown Thrashers. Towhees and White-throated Sparrows were plentiful.

Later that day, Tom watched a Prothonotary Warbler in back of his house. Chimney Swifts have been

seen and heard in the area since at least the 10th. On April 17th, Paul Baker recorded a Summer Tanager at Queens Lake.

On the 20th, at Hog Island, Armour & Sheehan found 1 Green-winged Teal, 4 Blue-winged, 15 Red-breasted Mergansers, 1 Sharp-shinned Hawk, a Kingbird, and over 1000 Tree Swallows.

Ruth saw a Wood Thrush on the 21st at her former home on Ferncliffe Drive. A Catbird called on Bill Sheehan on the same date. Next day (22nd) Tom had a Crested Flycatcher and a Hummer at Kingsmill. And after that, they all started coming too fast to count! But on the 25th of April, Bettye Fields, doing some advance scouting for the Spring Count, heard some Golden Winged Warbler noises at Barlow's Pond (Route 646). None were seen, but later on Brian Taber found several Blue-winged Warblers, along with a Brewster's Warbler who was playing the song of the Golden-winged Warbler. At this point in the narrative, dear readers, I admit to a bit of confusion. Next day, Julie & Ty Hotchkiss did find a Blue-winged Warbler out there—singing his own song.

A few days later, on the 29th came our annual Spring Count. Our gals and guys came up with 157 species—not a record, certainly, but a rather nice number. The count brought three species not reported in prior Spring Counts: Horned Grebe, Brown Pelican and Wilson's Phalarope—the latter being only the tenth time the bird has been reported in our local area. We'll lay the details out elsewhere in this edition, but first a big **BRAVO** to all who participated; to wit:

Joy Archer, Jeanne & Tom Armour, Ruth Beck, Fred Blystone, Cindy Carlson, Fenton Day, Grace and Joe Doyle, Bettye Fields, Rich Goll, Julie & Ty Hotchkiss, Teta Kain, Carolyn Lowe, Carol & Dave McAllister, Bob Morris, Brian Patteson, Mary Pulley, Steve Rottenborn, Caro Seay, Bill Williams, and Brian Taber—who put it all together!

To close out the month, Brian Patteson and Fenton Day went to False Cape State Park (just south of Back Bay Refuge) seeking some Black-necked Stilts. They not only found **two**, but staked them out so very well that Brian Taber was able to record them on May 1st.

Two Northern Orioles were observed in Kingsmill on May 3rd by the MacDonalds. Tom Armour saw two the following day, also at Kingsmill but not necessarily the same birds. Tom also had a Blue Grosbeak on the 2nd-Kingsmill.

Instead of first sightings your Editor reports last sightings in Hollybrook:

Red-breasted Nuthatch	April 23rd
Pine Siskin	April 29th
White-throated Sparrows	May 3rd.

Sayonara!

Brian Taber and Fred Blystone both report House Wrens nesting in their yards! Anyone else?

For the third year in a row, the Armours have induced a pair of Prothonotary Warblers to nest in a CW type "bird bottle".

Brian Taber found a singing Swainson's Thrush in an American Holly tree in the editor's front yard on May 6th. The key seems to be that the Swainson's song sounds like a Veery, except that the notes run upward on the scale instead of descending as the song of the Veery does. Thanks, Brian. Glad you make house calls!

On May 6th, Bill Williams watched an Orchard Oriole and a Pine Warbler carry nesting materials. The same day, Bill visited Hog Island, and flushed an Upland Sandpiper near the very end of the access road. He also saw a Cliff Swallow and heard/saw three Marsh Wrens.

On the 7th, Tom Armour counted over 100 Bobolinks in the large field of oats on the White Farm property off Greensprings Road. He also watched 3 Semipalmated Sandpipers wheeling around a low spot off Route 614 in the same general area. (We used to refer to this area as St. George's, and, later as Saint Fenton's in response to the many, many fine species that Fenton Day routinely gleaned from the area.

1990 Spring Count

LOON, Common	6
GREBE, Pied-billed	1
PELICAN, Brown	1
CORMORANT, Double-crested	110
HERON, Great Blue	188
EGRET, Great	9
Snowy	1
HERON, Green-backed	14
NIGHT-HERON, Black-crowned	2
Yellow-crowned	2
SWAN, Mute	2
GOOSE, Canada	106
DUCK, Wood	76
TEAL, Green-winged	48
DUCK, American Black	2
MALLARD	71
TEAL, Blue-winged	4
CANVASBACK	2
SCAUP, Lesser	18
MERGANSER, Red-breasted	2
DUCK, Ruddy	10
VULTURE, Black	12
Turkey	55
OSPREY	73
EAGLE, Bald	8
HAWK, Sharp-shinned	1
HAWK, Red-shouldered	8
Red-tailed	12
KESTREL, American	2
TURKEY, Wild	4
BOBWHITE, Northern	49
RAIL, Clapper	13
PLOVER, Black-bellied	1
PLOVER, Semipalmated	4
KILLDEER	26
YELLOWLEGS, Greater	11
Lesser	112
SANDPIPER, Solitary	7

SANDPIPER, Spotted	4
Western	7
Least	135
White-rumped	1
Pectoral	6
DUNLIN	1
SANDPIPER, STILT	2
DOWTICHER, Short-billed	32
SNIPE, Common	6
WOODCOCK, American	1
PHALAROPE, Wilson's	1
GULL, Laughing	305
Bonaparte's	26
Ring-billed	128
Herring	82
Great Black-backed	7
TERN, Caspian	8
Royal	71
Common	5
Forster's	40
Least	2
DOVE, Rock	12
Mourning	82
SCREECH-OWL, EASTERN	5
OWL, Great Horned	2
Barred	5
CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW	3
WHIP-POOR-WILL	2
SWIFT, Chimney	36
HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-throated	9
KINGFISHER, Belted	9
WOODPECKER, Red-headed	6
Red-bellied	99
WOODPECKER, Downy	17
Hairy	2
FLICKER, Northern	52
WOODPECKED, Pileated	18
WOOD-PEWEE, Eastern	11

FLYCATCHER, Acadian	39
PHOEBE, Eastern	22
FLYCATCHER, Great Crested	50
KINGBIRD, Eastern	39
MARTIN, Purple	237
SWALLOW, Tree	143
Northern Rough-winged	44
Barn	126
JAY, Blue	107
CROW, American	154
Fish	23
CHICKADEE, Carolina	90
TITMOUSE, Tufted	101
NUTHATCH, White-breasted	18
Brown-headed	15
CREEPER, Brown	1
WREN, Carolina	83
House	6
Marsh	3
KINGLET, Ruby-crowned	1
GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray	93
BLUEBIRD, Eastern	135
THRUSH, Wood	92
ROBIN, American	295
CATBIRD, Gray	11
MOCKINGBIRD, NORTHERN	76
THRASHER, Brown	57
WAXWING, Cedar	14
STARLING, European	336
VIREO, White-eyed	77
Solitary	1
Yellow-throated	6
Red-eyed	162
WARBLER, Blue-winged	4
PARULA, Northern	58
WARBLER, Yellow	3
Magnolia	1
Cape-May	1
Black-throated Blue	6
Yellow-rumped	113
Black-throated Green	3

WARBLER, Yellow-throated	66
Pine	65
Prairie	30
Black-and-white	29
REDSTART, American	8
WARBLER, Prothonotary	14
OVENBIRD	88
WATERTHRUSH, Northern	8
Louisian	18
WARBLER, Kentucky	11
YELLOWTHROAT, Common	34
WARBLER, Hooded	20
CHAT, Yellow-breasted	13
TANAGER, Summer	46
Scarlet	26
CARDINAL, Northern	197
GROSBEAK, Rose-breasted	1
Blue	15
BUNTING, Indigo	20
TOWHEE, Rufous-sided	113
SPARROW, Chipping	127
Field	37
Savannah	12
Grasshopper	2
Seaside	3
Song	56
Swamp	1
White-throated	70
BOBOLINK	66
BLACKBIRD, Red-winged	240
MEADOWLARK, Eastern	53
GRACKLE, Boat-tailed	1
Common	305
COWBIRD, Brown-headed	189
ORIOLE, Orchard	38
Northern	2
FINCH, House	62
SISKIN, Pine	10
GOLDFINCH, American	484
SPARROW, House	71

Programs Yet to Come

June—August None-No Club meetings

September 19th Ty and Julie Hotchkiss **"The Wonders of South America"**

October 17th Dr. Jerry Via **"Flights Across the Tropics: Birds of Costa Rica"**

November 21st Scottie & John Austin
"Inter-National Expedition to Malaysia, Thailand and Borneo"

It would like to take this opportunity to welcome the newest members of our club—

Mr. & Mrs. Alfred Brokaw
208 Sheffield Road
Williamsburg, Va. 23185
565-0481

Deadline for June Flyer

There will be no meeting in June, but It will be helpful if you can get any news or articles to me at
104 Oak Road, Williamsburg, Va. 23185
by June 8th.