



THE FLYER

Volume 14, No. 10

November 1990

Williamsburg Bird Club

Bill Sheehan, Editor (220-2122)

November Program

Meeting: Wednesday, November 21st, at 7:30 p.m. in Room 117 of Millington Hall, on the campus of William and Mary.

Program: Guest speakers will be Scottie and John Austin, club members of long standing, and their program is based on their participation earlier this year in an *"International Expedition to Malaysia, Thailand and Borneo"*.

Not to upstage Julie Hotchkiss when she introduces them at our meeting, I will merely whet your appetites: Scottie Austin is a truly **superb** photographer; John Austin is Curator of Ceramics at Colonial Williamsburg.

Proposed Slate—1991 Club Officers

During October, and in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Club, the Executive Board designated four members in good standing to serve as a Nominating Committee for Club officers and at-large Board Members for 1991. The Committee consisted of: Ruth Beck, Chair; Anne Beckley; Jullie Hotchkiss; and Alice Springe.

The Nominating Committee hereby recommends the following slate to the membership for consideration and voting at the November meeting. Prior to voting, floor nominations will be invited for any or all offices.

1991 Slate

President	Tom Armour
1st Vice President/Programs	Julie Hotchkiss
2nd Vice President/FLYER Editor	Bill Sheehan
Treasurer	Fred Blystone
Secretary	Joy Archer
Executive Board At-Large Members	Bill Akers
	Marilyn Zeigler

Announcement

The bird seed sale was a great success!
We have extra seed available on a first come, first serve basis—
see stories on page 5.

Coming Attractions

There will not be a bird walk this month (see article on Page 3) or a meeting in December, but we will participate in the **91st Annual National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count** on Sunday, December 16th. (see article on Page 2)

CORRECTION

In the October FLYER, we described the Newport News City Park bird walks (run by the Hampton Roads Bird Club) as being held every Saturday. That is just plain wrong! These walks are conducted the 1st and 3rd **Sundays** of every month from 7 to 9 a.m. Meet at the Ranger

Station Parking lot. (Thanks to Tess Matteson for calling in to correct us.)

President's

Corner

One of the greatest birding events of the year is almost upon us: **TURKEY DAY!** No problems in identifying this bird on that day. We don't need the usual excuses of "poor light" or "indistinct field marks".

I want to use my November Corner to wish you all a pleasant and fulfilling **THANKS-GIVING 1990**.

Tom Armour

Christmas Bird Count

On Sunday, December 16th, our Club will participate in the 91st Annual National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count. Since WBC was born, in 1977, we have participated each year, so this will be number 14. Brian Taber will again serve as coordinator.

We concentrate our birding within a 15-mile diameter circle which has the Colonial Williamsburg Information Center as its mid-point. Ideally, we would identify and count every bird within that circle. Since that is not attainable with the present state of the art, we break our circle into eight rather loose areas and try to saturate them.

1. **Cheatham Annex—** Camp Peary, Queen's Lake, Cheatham Annex, Felgate's Creek, Indian Field Creek
2. **Kingsmill—** Country Road to Carter's Grove, Kingsmill, Williamsburg Airport, Parkway from Info Center to just before College Creek.
3. **Hog Island—** Ferry ride over and Hog Island Refuge
4. **Jamestown—** Parkway from College Creek to Jamestown and Jamestown Island
5. **College Woods—** College Woods and Campus, Lake Matoaka, Lake Powell, College Landing Park on South Henry Street, Population Lab, Hickory Signpost Road, Treasure Island Rd.
6. **Middle Plantation—** Mid-County Park, Waller Mill Park (both entrances), Drummonds Field, News Road, First Colony
7. **Jolly Pond—** Jolly Pond, Landfill, Cranston's Mill Road, Little Creek Reservoir
8. **Skimino—** Barlow's Pond, Skimino Farms, Mirror Lakes, entrance to York River State Park, Riverview Plantation

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 periods 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 will again compile the observations of yard and feeder watchers on the 16th. Hopefully, you "at home" birders will record what you see at your feeders and in your yards—then report by phone to a compiler/coordinator in time to pass totals to Brian before 4 p.m. This was highly successful last year, and lots of fun. If you can participate, and/or wish to serve as the phone coordinator, please call Bill Sheehan at 220-2122.

If anyone has questions about the count, contact Brian (253-1181) or Ruth Beck (566-8234). The meeting place for the day is the C. W. Information Center parking lot, the same as for our field trips. The time is 7 a.m., except for those who go owling earlier. The final tally will take place at 5 p.m. in Millington Hall, just down the hall from our usual monthly meeting place. There will be warm refreshments for everyone. If you wish to be assigned to a group prior to the count day, please call Brian ahead of time.

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. •

No November Bird Walk — BUT!

The field trip which normally takes place on Saturday, Nov. 24th has been cancelled for the reason that none of our usual leaders will be available.

But, for those of you who might feel the urge to get out and see another aspect of birding, Bill Sheehan invites members to come to his house between 7 and 9:30 a.m. to have a cup of coffee and do a little feeder watching from Bill's kitchen. We happen to know that the National Wildlife Federation has awarded a Certificate of Achievement to Bill in recognition of his **Wildlife Backyard Habitat**: (104 Oak Rd.; 220-2122)

From the Nov. issue of THE BLUEBIRD,
the newsletter of the Lynchburg Bird
Club

Did you know that each year 20 times the amount of oil spilled by the Exxon tanker Valdez in Alaska is dumped into our environment by ordinary people? According to the Sept/Oct issue of *Tidewater Motorist*, published by AAA, about 210 million of the 350 million gallons of used motor oil drained from crankcases by do-it-yourselfers are disposed of improperly: poured on the ground or into a storm drain, buried in the backyard or taken to the landfill. These practices can impair water treatment plants, reduce soil productivity, contaminate ground water supplies and destroy or contaminate fish and animals destined for human consumption. They also waste resources because used oil can be recycled. If you change your own oil, take it to a designated oil recycle center. If someone does it for you, ask what is done with the used oil. Make sure you approve!

WBC October Bird Trip

On Oct. 29, Ruth Beck and Tom Armour, accompanied by Alice Springe, Marilyn Zeigler, Steve Rottenborn, Brandy Martin, Craig Turner, Ellen McLean and Greg Keller consolidated into 2 vehicles and visited the Raptor Station at Kiptopeake—stopping on the Bridge-Tunnel Islands on the return trip. They saw about sixty species, including:

At Kiptopeake and vicinity

Brown Pelican	50	Merlin	2
Great Cormorant	6	Lesser Yellowlegs	10
Bald Eagle	6	Ruddy Turnstone	4
Harrier	4	Great Black-backed Gull	+
Sharp-shinned Hawk	20	Caspian Tern	1
Coopers Hawk	6	Royal Tern	1
Broad-winged Hawk	2	Chimney Swift	1
* Golden Eagle	1	Tree Swallow	+
Kestrel	2	Red-breasted Nuthatch	6
		Water Pipits	2
		Brown Creeper	1
		Palm Warbler	3

*(At the October meeting, Charlie Hacker had reported an earlier sighting at Kiptopeake)

On the Bridge-Tunnel Islands

Harlequin Duck	1		
Virginia Rail	1		
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1	Brown Thrasher	1
House Wren	2	Grasshopper Sparrow	1
Winter Wren	4	Swamp Sparrow	2
Marsh Wren	1		



Local Gleanings

A Snow Goose joined the local flock of Canadas on the Kingsmill Golf Course about October 4th. The bird was first reported by Billy Hynes and has been seen by a number of observers almost daily through the 20th. (Grace Doyle)

The Doyles reported Black-throated Green Warblers at Camp Peary on October 7th, and saw 7 early Ruddy Ducks there on the 14th.

I (Sheehan) thought my last Hummer was 9/22—but refilled the feeder and left it up. On 10/14, a male Hummer came by for early supper. Next morning, Tom Armour and I watched a female bird use the feeder. I observed both sexes on the 16th—at different times—and saw a male on the 18th. None for over a week after that, but the feeder stays up!

On 10/15 Tom A. watched a Sharp-shinned Hawk conduct aerial maneuvers with a Laughing Gull near Kingsmill Marina. On the 16th, at the College Creek turnout on the Parkway, Tom ran his Rail tapes and a King Rail plus two Virginia Rails responded by voice, and then showed themselves. Lots of Yellow-rumped Warblers in the shrubbery and trees at the turnout. Continuing on to Jamestown Island, a single King Rail announced itself from one of the marshes. There were a number of indications of pre-migratory flocking: hundreds of Jays, in small groups; many Flickers in small (10-20)

groups; and Common Grackles in large noisy flocks. Thrashers were abundant, as were Yellow-rumps. Additionally: 2 Osprey; one Red-tailed Hawk and 4 Red-headed Woodpeckers rounded out a nice few hours.

On 10/18, Armour and Sheehan visited Hog Island. Several hundred Cormorants (all Double-crested); lots of Turkey Vultures in the air; a pair of Kestrels; Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs in small numbers; Semi-palmated and Western Sandpipers; Dunlin, and Forster's Terns were seen—all from the main road. A group of birders from the College had checked out the woods and the more remote impoundments. They added Sharp-shinned Hawk, Harrier, both Teal and both Kinglets.

On 10/19, Tom Armour watched a Northern Parula at his birdbath.

On 10/20, a Brown Creeper and a Sapsucker visited the Hotchkiss yard at First Colony. Same date, 3 Golden-crowned Kinglets and a half a dozen White-throated Sparrows showed up at 104 Oak Road. On 10/22 Steve Rottenborn noticed, and he and I watched a Red-breasted Nuthatch—also in my yard at 104 Oak Road. One has been seen (and heard) on several dates subsequently—at least through 11/13.

On 10/24, Tom and I heard 2 Virginia Rails at the College Creek turnout, and saw a Great Cormorant in the James at the Mill Creek turnout. This bird

was perched on the derelict material in mid-river, along with about 50 Ring-billed Gulls. Tom scoped the bird from all angles. Later that morning, a Junco appeared on my deck, and there have been 3 or 4 in the yard in the early mornings and late afternoons through Nov. 12th.

On 10/25, Ruth Beck and Steve Rotternborn visited some of the wilder parts of Fort Eustis, particularly a new water impoundment with attendant mudflats. They saw both Yellowlegs varieties, 15-20 Stilt Sandpipers, and small flocks of Dowitchers and Ruddy Ducks. Also in the area were bunches of Cedar Waxwings! Same place, same observers on 10/30 recorded 8 species of shorebirds and nine species of ducks.

Armour and Sheehan took a fast tour of the Parkway between College Creek and Powhatan Creek on 10/26—'midst high gusting winds and unusually high tides. Several hundred well-scattered Tree Swallows were cavorting over the marshes and the James. Mill Creek turnout revealed 4 Bonaparte Gulls and 10 Forsters' Terns over the river.

On 10/27, Tom saw a pair of Purple Finches at his feeder. Several other sightings have been reported in early November. Same day, 2 Or 3 Hermit Thrushes were "clucking" on Oak Road, and both Kinglet varieties continue to be present on a daily basis as we go to press.

(continued on Page 5)

At Camp Peary on 10/28, the Doyles reported 3 early Tundra Swans, 7 Ring-necked Ducks, 2 Harriers over the Queen's Creek marshes—and very large rafts of Ruddy Ducks in the York River.

Our President opened November with a Brown Creeper and a Pied-billed Grebe. Way back on October 11th, Ty Hotchkiss recorded a Common Loon on the James off First Colony. Julie and Ty have just acquired a new RV, after putting 177,000 miles on the old Volkswagon. Rumor has it that Ty is working his road maps by candlelight late into the night. We'll just have to wait for Julie's postcards.

Bill Snyder had a Winter Wren in his yard on Powhatan Creek on 11/4, and, speaking of wrens, David Hughes found a Rock Wren at Craney Island—rare indeed in Virginia. Armour, Rottenborn and Beck found the bird in the same place on 11/6, and Tom believes he may have a few photos to share with us later on.

Tom Armour counted about 60 Forster's Terns on and about the breakwater at Kingsmill Marina on 11/6. Same area on the 8th, but on the adjacent beach, he watched a Spotted Sandpiper and a Greater Yellowlegs.

Alice Springe reports a Purple Finch at her feeder on the 7th, and on the 10th Tom Armour watched a Pied-billed Grebe foraging on and under Kingsmill Pond.

Steve Rottenborn exchanged greetings with a flyover Siskin on 11/10 during the bird seed pick-up at the Farmer's Market. Steve thinks the bird was checking on who was taking what kind of seed!

And on the eleventh, Grace and Joe Doyle saw about 50 American Wigeon on one of Camp Peary's ponds. That, plus a pair of Bald Eagles, and a raft or two of Ruddy Ducks on the York, made their day.

Bird Seed Sale-Report

Despite the damp weather on Saturday morning, 11/10, over 18,000 pounds of bird food was loaded out of the trailer at Farmer's Market into the cars of (or for delivery to) about 150 customers. Thanks to all who ordered for your direct participation in this annual event. And very special thanks to those who organized the event, kept the records, inventoried the trailer, and even put the bags in our cars. Notably: members of the W&M Biology Club, plus Michael Beck, provided the muscle; Grace Doyle, Joy Archer and Ruth Beck kept things going smoothly; Shirley Raynes, Fred Blystone and Tom Armour did all the day to day preliminary work in grand style; and Marilyn Zeigler, Grace Doyle and Bill Sheehan made the 150+ "reminder" calls before D-Day •

Seed Still Available

As has been our custom, we ordered a little bit extra of most seed items to cover breakage, last minute orders, etc.

Tom Armour now has these limited stocks in his garage, and they are available on a first call basis.

So call Tom on **229-2363** if you need or can use any of the following.

50# Black Oil Sunflower	\$18.00
25# Striped Sunflower	10.50
50# Striped Sunflower	20.00
40# Custom Mix	11.50
40# Special Mix	15.50
8# Sunflower Chips	6.50
25# Sunflower Chips	17.25
8# Peanut Bits	8.75
8# Thistle	10.00
25# Thistle	28.50
8# Safflower	5.75

Tom will appreciate your early calls so his garage can quickly revert to its designed purpose.

Please send any news or articles for future issues of the FLYER to

**Bill Sheehan at
104 Oak Road, Williamsburg,**

23185