



# THE FLYER

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Williamsburg Bird Club

Bill Sheehan, Editor (220-2122)

## June Events

### Field Trip

The June field trip will be on **Saturday, the 22nd**; the destination—**York River State Park**. This trip offers an opportunity to study the birds which breed here; to observe them, to listen to their songs and calls, and to note the habitats in which they choose to nest. York River State Park presents an unusual diversity of such habitats: open fields, edges, mixed woods, a large pond, tidal marshes, — and, of course, the majestic York River. The park also has many picnic tables, so you might even want to bring a lunch along and stay on after the walk.

Brian Taber will be our leader, and asks that we meet at **7:30 a.m.** at the usual place (Colonial Williamsburg Information Center Parking Lot—right hand side) for possible car-pooling. If you need more information, call Brian at 253-1181 or Tom Armour at 229-2363.

## Coming Attractions

In September Bill Williams will present a two part thriller: **Hawk Migration through Kiptopeake**; and **Woodcocks Close Up**.

In October Dr. Jack Brooks of the William & Mary Biology Department will give us a program on **Aspects of Australia**.

Next Meeting  
Next FLYER

September  
August

Field Trips

Monthly  
(see Page 2)

## President's

Corner

Attendance of our monthly field trips has dropped off the last few months, so I'd like to let all members know about the remarkable birds that will be seen on this month's trip. These are our nesting Vireos, Tanagers and Warblers. They spend winters in the rain forests of South and Central America, and journey thousands of miles each spring to nest here.

Brian Taber, the trip leader, is one of our club's experts on identifying bird songs, so it should be a good education for all. There is also the possibility of locating a nesting Worm-eating Warbler, rare in our area, last reported in the Park about six years ago.

*Tom Armour*

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## July Field Trip

The July Field Trip is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, July 20 to Craney Island, for an advance peek at early migrating shore birds. We will meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Colonial Williamsburg Center Parking lot. Since the FLYER will not be published in July, you should carefully check the Virginia Gazette on Wednesday, July 17th, for last minute confirmation of the above—or notice of change in the event a change (or cancellation) becomes necessary.

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Below is a note from member  
Mandy Marvin

To the members of the WBC:

People say that birding is one of the few things one can do anywhere. That's comforting to know, since I'm off to a new adventure in Japan and everything will be so alien. I'll really miss the Bird Club, but I'm already writing to the Wild Bird Society of Japan to find out their chapter locations in my prefecture, and I have just bought a Japanese bird field guide. 'Peregrine falcon' is 'Haya busa'! I hope to send notes from afar about your Japanese counterparts. Thank you for all your kindness to and interest in us students, and for helping some of us hatch into fledging birders in the first place!

Yours affectionately,  
*Mandy Marvin*

P.S. I'm taking 'Brandy Martin' with me!

SAYONARA MANDY-SAN!

## May Field Trip

Only Tom Armour and Joy Archer represented our Club on Saturday, May 18th, at our regularly scheduled Field Trip to Newport News City Park and to Kingsmill. A visiting birder from Naples, Florida, Mr. Hank Colteryahn was a welcome addition. Be that as it may, the trio encountered about 60 species on a very pleasant morning. That comes to about 20 species per person, which is by no mean a shabby ratio. Beyond mere numbers. Highlights at the Park were most certainly a Common Moorhen, 2 Solitary Sandpipers and 2 Prothonotary Warblers. At Kingsmill, Tom produced his nestling Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, with 3 young 'uns being fed. Probably gnats, Tom?

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**Haven't you wondered** from time to time what exotic seeds comprised a wild game mixture? Member Dick Mahone was planting quantities of it locally recently, and provided the following analysis of the mix prepared by Wetsel Seed Company, Inc. This mixture meets State Game Commission standards, and contains the following:

Pure Seed %		Germination
24.75%	Grain Sorghum	80.00%
24.70%	Buckwheat	85.00%
22.54%	Korean Lespedesia	80.00%
21.56%	German Millet	80.00%
4.90%	Dwarf Essex Rape	
1.55%	Other Crop seed, weed seed & inert matter	

Thank you, Dick Mahone

# BIRDS FROM Around the Area

Where oh where did Spring do? Or does it really matter to most of us who enjoy the excitement of the northward migration, and then settle quickly into the breeding season. To wit!

At Kingsmill, Emily Sharrett ended April with both Solitary and Yellow-throated Vireos, along with a Northern Waterthrush and an Orchard Oriole. On May 3rd, Ruth Beck watched an Indigo Bunting taking seeds from one of her feeders. Same day, Homer Jones reported a Black-throated Blue Warbler at Queens Lake; Dick Mahone watched Redstarts off of Capitol Landing Road, and the Hotchkisses had a Blue-winged Warbler and a partially albino White-throated Sparrow at First Colony. On the 4th, Suzy Woodall recorded a Northern Yellowthroat in her shrubbery, and the Armourchap saw Scarlet Tanagers, Black-throated Blue Warblers, along with a mixed bag of Parulas, Yellow-rumped and Blackpoll Warblers.

May 5th brought a Chest-

nut-sided Warbler to the Hotchkiss property. I continued to enjoy a couple Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and from 2 to 12 Pine Siskins on a daily basis—along with good numbers of Redstarts and Blackpoll Warblers. It was to be the Siskins final appearance at my feeders, but one or two Grosbeaks (or their friends) visited me through May 8th. Tom and I "did" Kingsmill on the 6th, and Tom showed off the beautiful Gnatcatcher nest, looking somewhat like a giant Hummingbird nest astraddle a limb of a Black Locust tree. Mother Gnatcatcher was at home, sitting. We also saw both Tanagers, some Royal Terns, lots of Red-eyed Vireos (mostly heard), and a beautiful Northern Oriole in the vicinity of last year's nest. At the Halfway Creek turnout on the Parkway, we added 2 Acadian Flycatchers, a Spotted Sandpiper, and a Philadelphia Vireo. Several folks have reported House Wrens, Wood Peewees, Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Northern Orioles, Wood Thrushes, and the Tanagers during early May. At Kingsmill on May 7th, two Yellow Warblers, a Northern Waterthrush and a couple

Rough-winged Swallows appeared, Four Yellow Warblers next day in the willows near Warham Pond a a high count for the season.

On May 9th, our president guided members of the Kingsmill Garden Club on a birdwalk in selected KM bird hotspots. Lots of good birds performed for the group, among them: Swamp Sparrow, Gnatcatcher on nest, Northern Oriole, Yellow Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Redstart, Northern Waterthrush, Tree Swallow, Common and Royal Terns, Green-backed Heron, Osprey (on nest), Great-crested Flycatcher and a Common Loon—on the James. Bill Snyder, on the 11th, reported a Great Egret on Jamestown Island, and Larry Ricketts for the second year has Great-crested Flycatchers carrying nesting material into one of his bird boxes. (Oak Road, in Hollybrook). On the 12th, the Doyles saw a Common Moorhen and a Magnolia Warbler at Camp Peary. (The odd couple, Joe?). On the 13th, a second pair of Great-crested Flycatchers appeared to be moving in on another of Larry Ricketts boxes. Same day, Tom and I again found 2

Acadian Flycatchers at Halfway Creek, along with a Yellow-throated Vireo and a few Blackpolls. (The latter seem extra numerous to me this spring, along with Redstarts). On the 15th Armour notes Cedar Waxwings and a couple Brown-headed Nuthatches at KM.

At my house, a male adult Bluebird appears at my feeders 3 or 4 times daily with two fully-fledged and very vocal young birds. They are "queer" for peanut chips, and do not seem at all interested in other items on the menu. Also, am enjoying a couple young Thrashers (in parental custody). On the 20th, Armour and I drove the outer loop at Jamestown Island. Among others, 4 Red-headed Woodpeckers, 3 Redstarts, 4 Tree Swallows, 12 Acadian Flycatchers, a Northern Oriole and a Spotted Sandpiper. Alice Springe has a male Downy Woodpecker who has a sweet tooth(?), and tries again and again to crack the code to her Hummingbird feeder. There being no perch on the feeder, the poor Woodpecker slides off most of the time—but does succeed in spilling most of the feeder contents in the process. On the

23rd, Tom found a loose concentration of about 30 Common Terns on the James near KM. On the 24th, from a boat on Waller Mill Reservoir, Tom & I found no fish, but did record 1 Yellow-throated Vireo, 6 Yellow-throated Warblers, 1 White-eyed Vireo, numerous Red-eyes, 2 Summer Tanagers, 2 Scarlet Tanagers, 2 Ovenbirds, several Pine Warblers, 3 or 4 Acadian Flycatchers, 3 Great Crested Flycatchers and a Wood Pewee.

On May 25th, Tom and our visitor from Floirda, Hank Colteryahn, visited York River State Park—as a kind of preview for the upcoming June 22nd walk. Top bird had to be a Black-billed Cuckoo—of which we have less than ten area records. They also noted both Tanagers, a Yellow-breasted Chat, and a Chipping Sparrow—on nest, very close to the Information Center. May 28th brought a Yellow-throated Vireo to my yard. I hear one about every 3 days, usually early morning, and believe I must be on the outer edge of their foraging territory.

At Kingsmill, Sally and Fred Harris have had nesting Northern Orioles in one of

their shade trees for the second year in a row. At least one young fully fledged and presumably hungry bird was observed near the nesting tree on and after June 5th. On the 6th and 7th, Tom reported 2 adult Forster's Terns with 3 of this year's young at the KM Marina. Naturally, pictures were taken.

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**Alice Springe** reports that the Club has recently provided the Library with a new book, entitled *Birds and Their Young* by Gordon D. Alcorn, Emeritus Professor of Biology at the University of Puget Sound. The book describes the courtship, nesting, fledging and reproductive cycle of birds. Very Timely, Alice!

**Early in the year**, Bald Eagles were regularly observed on and about nesting sites at both Kingsmill and Hog Island. Recent observations—from both ground and air—suggest that no young were produced at either site. And we had such high hopes for both.

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## Birds from Outside Our Area

Bill Williams and Tom Armour set out on the 27th (a.k.a.) Memorial Day) for Essex County and certain reaches of the Meherin River at the Carolina border. For avid "listers" such as these two are, the targets were Bachman's Sparrow and Mississippi Kite. Each had been reliably reported in the respective areas; both are rare, rare, rare in Virginia. Near Gray, Virginia, is Essex County, Bill's sharp ears (very pointed at times) picked up a Bachman's Sparrow and they soon had it in sight. Pressing southward then to the Meherin, they were again rewarded in observing not one but two Mississippi Kites—hawking insects in their usual manner. After those two species, mundane things like Grasshopper Sparrows are barely worth mention. Good going, guys. Brian Taber and Fenton Day followed up a week later and saw both species.

A card from Julie Hotchkiss reported a great birding time at Pt. Pelee, Ontario, in late May. Their highlight was a White-winged Tern—"beautiful to watch with Black Terns", she says. They also saw several Eurasian Tree Sparrows near Alton, Ill.

Emily and Alan Sharrett returned from a birding trip to Arizona. They saw well over 100 species, we are told, with over 50 of them being new ones for the Sharretts.

Grace and Joe Doyle returned from the Adirondacks after a week at Long Lake and Blue Mountain Lake toward the end of May. They clocked 68 species, most notable of which were: Ruffed Grouse, Common Loons, (in full and glorious breeding plumage), Winter Wrens, Northern Waterthrushes, and good numbers of Blackburnian, Bay-breasted, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Blue and Black-throated Green Warblers. Grace was also impressed with vast fields of blooming Sweet Rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*).

## HOW LONG DO BIRDS LIVE?

This is a subject, which the experts walk around very gently, but here is the flavor of the answer—well qualified, as you will perceive. My source is J. C. Welty's *Life of Birds*, a widely-used college level textbook of Ornithology. Here are some of Professor Welty's numbers.

Species	Longevity (Years)
Canada Goose	25
Osprey	21
Crow	14
Brown Thrasher	13
Cardinal	13
Flicker	12
Junco	11
Song Sparrow	5
House Wren	5
Ruby-Crowned Hummingbird	5

But, Professor Welty cautions that these figures may be extremely optimistic, having been selected from very "thin" banding records, and representing **extreme** recorded data. He then concludes:

"The omnipresent hazards of predation, weather, accidents, starvation and other environmental hazards would appear to frustrate more meaningful data at this time."



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## From Eggs to Flight Selected Local Breeders

Species	Number of Eggs	Incubation Period (Days)	Hatch to Flight (Days)
Wood Duck	9 - 12	27 - 33	*30
Osprey	2 - 4	32 - 33	52-53
Bald Eagle	1 - 3	35	?
Downy			
Woodpecker	4 - 5	12	21 - 24
Hummingbird	2	16	20 - 22
Blue Jay	4 - 5	16 - 18	17 - 21
Carolina			
Chickadee	6	11	?
Bluebird	4 - 5	13 - 16	15 - 20
Robin	3 - 6	12 - 14	14 - 16
Mockingbird	4 - 5	12	10 - 12
Brown Thrasher	4 - 5	12 - 14	9 - 13
Cardinal	3 - 4	12 - 13	10 - 11
Towhee	3 - 4	12 - 13	10 - 12

\*Wood Duck young leave the nest shortly after hatching and go directly to water. Flight capability develops in about 30 days.

Source: Terres: *Encyclopedia of North American Birds*

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the newest members of the Williamsburg Bird Club.

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