



THE FLYER

Volume 17, No. 5

May 1993

Williamsburg Bird Club

Meeting

Wednesday, May 19th, at 7:30 p.m. in Room 117, Millington Hall, at the College.

Program

Our guest speaker will be retired Professor Sam Gamble of Lynchburg. His presentation will take us to Australia for a visit with *Birds Down Under*. We believe this may include some of the unusual plants and animals peculiar to that part of the world.

Field Trip

The regular May trip will be on Saturday, May 22nd to York River State Park with Tom Armour leading the flock. At the Park, we'll bird an assortment of habitats, including marsh, hedge rows, tidal creek, freshwater creek and York River. Meet Tom at 7:30 a.m. at the CW Information Center Parking lot (East side); or, if more convenient, rendezvous with Tom at the Park at 8 a.m. Tom says you will recognize him by the fact that he'll be wearing his best binoculars. Come on out! (Don't forget your insect repellent!)

Summer Schedule

Meetings: None until September 15th, when regular monthly schedule resumes

Field Trips: Except for August, monthly trips are scheduled as in Coming Summer Attractions, page 2 this issue.

Coming Attractions

VSO Annual Meeting - May 14-16, Norton, Va. Host club is Cumberland Natural Club. Banquet speaker will be Ted Eubanks, who runs the Piping Plover project on the Texas and Mexican Gulf Coast.

September 15th—Regular Club meeting—to start the fall season. Guest speaker will be former member Brian Patteson. Brian will introduce us to the exciting world of pelagic birds based on his wide and current expertise in deep-sea off-shore birding.

President's

Corner

The morning of the Williamsburg Bird Club Spring count began with an avian chorus that heralds spring migration in the Williamsburg area. Prothonotary Warblers, Parula Warblers, Ovenbirds, and Louisiana Waterthrushes were vocalizing and easily seen at the bridge at Hickory Sign Post Road. If you want a quick and quiet time watching the migrants and nesting species check with Bill Sheehan for exact locations.

Also a special call for your assistance in observations and data collection at Craney Island, Portsmouth and Grandview Beach, Hampton—the Common Terns and Least Terns and Black Skimmers are back at the nesting sites. If you are interested, call me at 221-2217.

Ruth Beck



Coming Summer Attractions

June 5th: (Saturday) Field trip to Grandview Beach, Hampton. Grandview is usually a mecca for shorebirds. Highlight may be a peek at Least Terns in nesting sites—a project long fostered by Ruth Beck, who will lead. Meet Ruth at CW Information Center Parking Lot at 7:30. (Insect repellent recommended)

June 12th: (Saturday) Special Field trip to Emporia, Virginia, in search of the rare Mississippi Kites and Bachman's Warblers and with a chance of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers enroute. Emily and Allan Sharrett will lead us south of the James to Emporia. From Emporia, their son Allan will take us to his secret local "hot-spots" where those rare species may be. This should be a winner. For more information and for further instructions, please telephone the Sharretts before June 12th at 229-6199. (Insect repellent recommended)

July 24th: (Saturday) Regular WBC July trip will be to Craney Island in Portsmouth. Shorebirds should be fattening up and packing their little satchels for their southward migrations. Tom Armour will be leader, and asks that you meet him at the CW Information Center Parking Lot at 7:30 a.m. (Insect repellent recommended)

August—No scheduled trip

Habitat Hints

by Cynthia Long

Hummingbirds love our native columbine and coral honeysuckle. Both plants thrive on neglect, and spread freely. These and other Virginia native plants will be available at the Wildflower Sale co-sponsored by the John Clayton Chapter, VNPA and the Virginia Living Museum. Sale is held on two weekends, the second being May 15—16th, at the Virginia Living Museum in Newport News.

Adopt-A-Highway Pickup Report

Bill Davies and his talented pick-up team of litter-lifters scored big again. On April 17th, Bill was joined by: Tom Armour, Fred Blystone, Louise Menges, Sam Hart, Phyllis Johnson, Dick Mahone, Dorothy Whitfield, Pat Bostian, Jim Booth, and Pat & Mike Healy. And, the good thing they did was to pick up and segregate roadside litter along Route 5, from Five Forks to Rt. 614 (Greensprings Road). All they picked up was: 6 large bags of litter; an additional 62 pounds of glass (129 bottles); and 16.5 pounds of aluminum (390 cans). The latter two items were recycled.

Thanks to all of you. We are proud of you, and the community continues to be in your debt.

New Bird Books in Library

Alice Springe, our competent book lady, has arranged for our Club to donate two new bird books to the local Public Library. This continues a long-time custom, and the books will be tastefully inscribed as WBC donations. The books are due in early to mid-May.

Bird Migration—an Illustrated Account, by Robert Burton

The Encyclopedia of Birds, by Multiple Authors (odd name, the latter!)



Local Scene

We'll pick up with our notes of 4/6, when Drummond's Field produced both Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal—plus a Harrier. Same day, a dozen waxwings lunched on my Nandina berries (Kingswood area), and a Hairy Woodpecker came to one of my peanut buttered pine cones. One or two Siskins stayed around til 4/12. On 4/07, Pat Sgrinia, out Toano way, reported a pair of Common Loons on near-by Little Creek Reservoir. They were in their breeding plumage, and one night they **sang** for her! We're nothing but envious, Pat. Pat also reported a single White-fronted Goose on the Reservoir during the winter of 91/92. On 4/08, at Drummond's Field, were Tree and Barn Swallows, Greater Yellowlegs and both Teal. The bridge on Hickory Signpost Road had Yellow-throated Warblers, a Parula, and a Red-shouldered Hawk. Same day, Tom Armour saw two Bank Swallows over Mill Creek at the Parkway. And, to lead our Hummingbird Sweepstakes, Betty and John Williams enjoyed a male at their feeder on April 8th. (They had the foresight to put their feeder up earlier in the month!) On 4/09, Tom recorded a full-plumage Loon on Kingsmill Pond—his first ever on the pond. Same day, Bill Williams greeted a couple Ovenbirds in Deerwood Hills—out Jolly Pond way. On 4/10, a Green-backed Heron and a Northern Yellowthroat were seen at Kingsmill. (The odd couple?)

Brian Taber resumed his hawk vigil over the James on 4/10. On the raptor side were 3 each Kestrels and Harriers, plus a single Sharp-shinned. As dividends, Brian also recorded 1 each of Glossy Ibis, Great Egret and Kingbird. On 4/11, and of all places, over my house 3 Caspian Terns were maneuvering and screaming unpleasant things to each other. On 4/12, Nancy Bates at Fords Colony reported Red-shouldered Hawks nesting on her property—

with a fairly well grown young visible. Same day, 9 Snipe joined the previously reported Teal and Yellowlegs species at Drummond's and Tom Armour identified 1 Common and 2 Red-breasted Mergansers on the James, vicinity Mill Creek turnout. Later, Jamestown Island was hosting a White-eyed Vireo, 2 Yellow-throated Warblers, 3 Ruby-crowned Kinglets, a pair of Gnatcatchers and 5 Red-headed Woodpeckers. Backing up a few days, Steve Reams had a nice mix on and about Queens Lake (4/10); a Black-crowned Night Heron, a Common Loon, 4 Double-crested Cormorants and a bright shiny Prothonotary Warbler. Then the "Hummers" started popping up all over: Brian Taber at Kingswood (4/10); Sharretts at Kingsmill (4/12); Martha Armstrong at Newport Ave. (4/13); Henry DeGraff at Lake Barlowe (4/14); Peter Brown at The Coves (4/15); and Cynthia Long at Queens Lake (4./15). On 4/13 Martha Armstrong and the Sharretts located a Black & White Warbler, an Ovenbird and Phoebe at Hickory Signpost Road. They went to Jolly Pond to find a Red-shouldered Hawk, Louisiana Waterthrush and Parulas. My last Junco was 4/14, as was my find Ruby-crowned Kinglet. On 4/14, Chippokes area produced Wood Duck, Eagles, Red-tails, Hairy Woodpecker, Ovenbirds, White-eyed Vireo and Prothonotary Warblers. Hog Island presented a Pied-billed Grebe, a Coot, a migrant Cooper's Hawk, a Caspian Tern and a lot of Royals, a Kingbird, 2 Palm Warblers, a Blue Grosbeak, 15 Savannah Sparrows and 200+ Tree Swallows. On 4/15, Armour and I watched a Barred Owl sitting on a fallen log, and scanning a pool of shallow water very attentively—frog watching, perhaps. We drove slowly by—maybe 15 feet away—and he watched us before resuming hunting. This was a sunny morning, about 9:30 a.m., in woods. Also 4/15, Cynthia Long reports Martins nesting at Queens Lake. On 4/16, a Glossy Ibis joined the regulars at Drummond's (also seen by Joy Archer next day). Grace Doyle had Great Crested Flycatcher at



Kingsmill, and Larry Ricketts had them checking his boxes (Oak Road). This would be the 5th year of breeding in his yard. On 4/17, a pair of Purple Finches started using my feeders (had a few irregulars during the winter)—there daily through 4/22. Same date, Joy Archer and a group of enthusiasts saw a White Pelican at Hog. A couple Eagles, lots of Osprey (nesting & fishing), 1 Bonaparte's Gull, and a bunch of Tree and Barn Swallows.

On 4/18, Grace & Joe Doyle at Camp Peary came up with a fine mix: 6 Canvas-back Ducks, 200 Ruddy Ducks, a few Lesser Yellowlegs, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Warbler with nesting material, 3 Parula Warblers, a Summer Tanager, 5 Red-headed Woodpeckers and 2 Great-crested Flycatchers. Perhaps the best was watching Brown-headed Nuthatches going in & out of a hole in a piling at the boat landing. On 4/19, Tom saw a Solitary Sandpiper and a Pectoral Sandpiper at Drummonds, and a pair of Hairy Woodpeckers on Hickory Signpost Road. A Red-shouldered Hawk was again seen near the bridge, suggesting nesting in the vicinity? Ruth Beck reported a Scarlet Tanager on campus on 4/16; and Yellow-throated Vireos were in song at Hickory Signpost (4/19), campus, and Kingswood 4/20. Cattle Egrets (3) were aloft over Drummonds Field on 4/22. A pair of Eagles were perched along the James (vic. the Farm) on 4/22, and another day-hunting Barred Owl was on the prowl at Hickory Signpost that morning. On 4/23, your editor had an early Yellow-billed Cuckoo in an oak tree, and Starlings evicted Flickers from their Flicker-built nesting hole. It's not worth an ulcer. Tom Armour, at home on 4/23, had a singing Palm Warbler, a glorious male Redstart, and his resident Barred Owl. 4/24 brought a male Indigo Bunting through my yard, with neighbor Larry Ricketts and I enjoying every moment

of his transit. And Bill Snyder watched Red-breasted Mergansers, Rough-winged Swallows, and an adult Bald Eagle. 4/24 and 4/25 brought a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak into the yard of Johnny Minor out Route 5. They should be filtering through for another few weeks and frequently visit feeders for sunflower seeds. Johnny also had an Indigo Bunting on 4/25. And so did Larry Ricketts. This Bunting was working a thistle feeder, and enjoying it. While not strictly a "local scene" item, Bill Williams certainly is! And Bill spent a few days in New Mexico on a non-birding trip. While "non-birding", would you believe he watched Roadrunners, Gambel's Quail, Red-naped Sapsuckers and Western Screech Owls—the latter two being life birds for BW. Also, not quite local, the Sharretts stopped a few places on the Bridge-Tunnel to watch Harlequin Ducks, Ruddy Turnstones, lots of Common Loons and at least 20 Seaside Sparrows. On 4/25, Bill Williams inventoried his home area of Deerwood Hills: Rose-breasted and Blue Grosbeaks; Solitary Vireo, both Tanagers, Whip poor-wills, a Caspian Tern screaming after dark, and a large tom Turkey. On 4/26, Tom and I pulled into the parkway turnout on the west side of Halfway Creek. A Summer Tanager, a Rose-breasted Grosbeak and a Yellow-throated Vireo were there—and quite vocal.

Others around the area are reporting Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at or near their feeders: Joy Archer in Canterbury Hills and Ginny Schiavelli in Old Quaker Estates. Among the vireos, four species have been reported: Red-eyed, White-eyed, Yellow-throated, and Solitary. No Philadelphias out there? Dur Morton, in the "The Woods" off Jamestown Road has **nesting** birds (4/28): Carolina Wren (young fledged and out on 4/18; Titmouse; Chickadee; Bluebird; and White-breasted Nuthatch—all still at home. Dur saw a Kentucky Warbler, Summer Tanager and a pair of Common Yellowthroats between 15th and 25th. On 4/29, Drummonds Field had a wider variety than usual: Both Teal, both Yellowlegs, Spotted, Pectoral, Least, and Solitary Sandpipers, and a single Water Pipit.

Alice Springe had been checking the migrat-

(Continued on Page 5)



ing hawks on the 24th with Brian Taber. When she left, she saw a real rare one at Jamestown Settlement—President Clinton! Next day, talking to her sister in Florida, Alice said: “You’ll never guess who I saw yesterday”. Sis coolly replied: “I know, we saw you on national TV.” We asked Alice about the bird’s plumage and she allowed it was surprisingly unruffled considering what he has been through lately.

Tom Armour (4/29) had Common Terns at KM Marina, and 4 fledged young Canada Geese with adult birds on Warehams Pond. Also on 4/29, at Kingsmill, the Sharretts had their own spring count: Blackpoll, Yellow, and Black and White Warblers, Yellow-throated Vireo, both Tanagers, Acadian Flycatcher, and a Green-backed Heron. On 4/30, they added Orchard Oriole and House Wren. And if you, like me, are having trouble identifying warblers, here is what our former president Thom Blair reports from Stanardsville: “Warblers are here, but the wind is too strong and the trees are too high, and my ear never was any good—and I do not know who or what they might be”. Thanks Thom! It’s heartening to know that a retired Rector of Bruton Parish—with his probable connections—is no better off than many of us.

Sunday, 5/02, was our annual Spring Count Day. The weather was superb, the number of participants was above average—but the total number of species was a bit below average at 152. And that includes 3 not seen on 5/02, but reported within 3 days of 5/02. Lowest total ever was 141 in 1979; highest was 166 in 1989. Anyway, the list (herein) is worthy of our attention just to see what is in our neighborhood this glorious time of year.

On 5/03, Bill Williams spotted a Wilson’s Phalarope splashing around the pasture pond at Drummonds Field—only our eleventh sighting ever. Also present were both Teal; both Yellowlegs, Snipe; Pectoral, Solitary and Spotted Sandpipers; and Semi-palmated Plovers. Please keep your reports coming my way!

Virginia Rare Bird Alert

The above title represents a phone number, (804) 929-1736, which anyone may call to listen to a taped recording listing rare birds recently reported in Virginia, and telling where they have been seen. This “Birdline” has been in effect since 1987. It is sponsored by the Virginia Society of Ornithology (VSO) and operated by Virginia birder Mike Boatwright. The tape changes each Monday. There is some concern in VSO circles that this service is under-utilized, and that one of the reasons may be the perception that only VSO members may use it. Not so! Try it some rainy day!

April 24th Field Trip— Colonial Parkway

Bill Williams, as advertised, led an enthusiastic group of birders on a tour of Colonial Parkway’s great turnouts—plus a quick look at the ever fruitful little pasture pond at Drummonds Field. Bill estimates about 75 species as heard or observed. Among them, at least a few are of special note: Solitary Vireos singing in the CW parking lot; Pectoral Sandpipers and both Teal at Drummonds Field; lots of Ospreys on each river; a magnificent Common Loon on the York; and 4 Boat-tailed Grackles. Participants were: Carro Seay (all the way from Kilmarnock), Carolyn Lowe, Joy Archer, Marilyn Zeigler, Pat Healy, Bill Davies and Tom Armour.



Birding in Arizona

by Adrienne Frank and Gary Driscole

Gary and I had one very productive day of birding during Easter week. In the morning, Gary and I drove through southeastern Arizona. We followed directions from the Lane guide around the mountains to Portal and up Dave Creek Canyon. A trogon was sighted earlier in the day, but we missed seeing it. We did see a Dusky-capped and Ash-throated Flycatcher, Bewick's Wren, Curve-billed Thrasher, Solitary Vireo, Black-throated Warbler, Painted Redstart, Bridled Titmouse, Gray-breasted Jay, and Scott's Oriole.

We were buzzed by several hummingbirds but couldn't identify say, until we stopped at the Stoford's backyard. We sat for almost an hour watching Magnificents, Blue-throated, Black-chinned, Broad-tailed, and Broad-billed Hummingbirds. There was a Lucifer's too! Hooded and Scott's Oriole and many other birds came to their feeders.

Late in the day we arrived at Saguaro National Monument near Tucson. We saw, on top of 175 year old cacti, Gila and Red-shafted Woodpeckers, Cactus Wren, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Phainopepla, and Pyrrhoxia. In the bushes or on the ground we saw Black-throated Sparrow, White-wing and Inca Dove, and Gambel's Quail among other species.

Our short trip was grand, the sunrise and sunset beautiful, and the scenery was nothing like Virginia.

Plan Announced for Protection of Woodpeckers

Hancock Timber Resource Group and wildlife agencies have announced a plan to protect the habitat of federally endangered Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in Virginia.

About 12 of the rare birds live in southern Virginia, and about half of those are on Hancock land, said Dana Bradshaw, a wildlife biologist with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

(continued in next column)

The agreement announced Friday is similar to one announce earlier by Georgia-Pacific Corp. to protect the bird in four other Southern states.

The agreement between Hancock and the wildlife agencies will protect birds on land the company recently acquired near Waverly and Wakefield.

The woodpeckers live in the cavities of older, living pine trees. The birds are dying out because their habitats have been destroyed and replaced by intensively managed farms of younger trees in the South. Hancock Timber is a unit of Boston-based John Hancock Financial Services.

Spring Count Participants

Below are listed the participants in our annual Spring Count.

Sue Gray Al-Salam, Amanda Allen, Joy Archer, Jeanne and Tom Armour, Ruth Beck, Fred Blystone, Christine Burr, Christie & Ralph Clement, Grace and Joe Doyle, Gary Driscole, Bettye Fields, Adrienne Frank, Julie & Ty Hotchkiss, Carolyn Lowe, Mary Pulley, Lee & David Schuster, Emily Sharrett, Dot Silsby, Ida Van Ness, Brian Taber (Leader), and Marilyn Zeigler + *Bill Williams*

The complete list of all the birds seen is detailed on pages 7 & 8.

Your friendly editor welcomes any news items, short articles for publication, comments on birds (or editors) etc. Thanks.

Bill Sheehan (220-2122)
104 Oak Road
Williamsburg, Va. 23185

1993 Spring Count

LOON, Common	1
GREBE, Pied-billed	1
CORMORANT, Double-crested	97
HERON, Great Blue	252
EGRET, Great	32
Snowy	3
HERON, Tricolored	1
Green-backed	14
NIGHT-HERON, Black-crowned	1
Yellow-crowned	1
SWAN, Mute	18
GOOSE, Canada	261
DUCK, Wood	49
TEAL, Green-winged	2
MALLARD	35
CANVASBACK	1
SCAUP, Lesser	2
MERGANSEER, Red-breasted	5
DUCK, Ruddy	3
VULTURE, Black	8
Turkey	97
OSPREY	83
EAGLE, Bald	5
HARRIER, Northern	1 CW
HAWK, Sharp-shinned	1
HAWK, Red-shouldered	5
Red-tailed	12
KESTREL, American	1
TURKEY, Wild	6
BOBWHITE, Northern	36
RAIL, Clapper	21
PLOVER, Semipalmated	1
KILLDEER	39
YELLOWLEGS, Greater	20
Lesser	7
SANDPIPER, Solitary	3
Spotted	13
Least	6
Pectoral	12
SNIPE, Common	8
WOODCOCK, American	1
PHALAROPE, Wilson's	1 CW
GULL, Laughing	3400

GULL, Bonaparte's	8
Ring-billed	143
Herring	71
Great Black-backed	27
TERN, Caspian	16
Royal	127
Common	8
Forster's	25
Least	3
DOVE, Rock	11
Mourning	140
CUCKOO, Yellow-billed	3
SCREECH-OWL, Eastern	1
OWL, Barred	2
CHUCK-WILL'S WIDOW	5
WHIP-POOR-WILL	2
SWIFT, Chimney	40
HUMMINGBIRD, Ruby-throated	17
KINGFISHER, Belted	12
WOODPECKER, Red-headed	20
Red-bellied	91
WOODPECKER, Downy	16
Hairy	6
FLICKER, Northern	44
WOODPECKER, Pileated	14
WOOD-PEWEE, Eastern	22
FLYCATCHER, Acadian	13
PHOEBE, Eastern	25
FLYCATCHER, Great-crested	59
KINGBIRD, Eastern	45
MARTIN, Purple	88
SWALLOW, Tree	81
Rough-winged	21
Barn	131
JAY, Blue	76
CROW, American	141
Fish	50
CHICKADEE, Carolina	46
TITMOUSE, Tufted	110
NUTHATCH, White-breasted	23
Brown-headed	7
WREN, Carolina	111
House	5

1993 Spring Count (continued)

KINGLET, Ruby-crowned	2
GNATCATCHER, Blue-gray	91
BLUEBIRD, Eastern	128
VEERY	1
THRUSH, Swainson's	1
Wood	105
ROBIN, American	180
CATBIRD, Gray	32
MOCKINGBIRD, Northern	77
THRASHER, Brown	51
WAXWING, Cedar	12
STARLING, European	298
VIREO, White-eyed	47
Solitary	4
Yellow-throated	17
Red-eyed	154
WARBLER Blue-winged	1
Parula	60
Yellow	13
Cape May	2
Black-throated Blue	1
Yellow-rumped	22
Black-throated Green	3
Yellow-throated	36
Pine	75
Prairie	42
Palm	1
Blackpoll	12
Black and White	13
REDSTART, American	7
WARBLER, Prothonotary	13
OVENBIRD	75
WATERTHRUSH, Northern	2
Louisiana	4

WARBLER, Kentucky	17
YELLOWTHROAT, Common	46
WARBLER, Hooded	13
CHAT, Yellow-breasted	8
TANAGER, Summer	46
Scarlet	30
CARDINAL, Northern	187
GROSBEAK, Rose-breasted	6
Blue	20
BUNTING, Indigo	29
TOWHEE, Rufous-sided	90
SPARROW, Chipping	107
Field	41
Savannah	19
Sharp-tailed	2
Seaside	4
White-throated	55
BOBOLINK	57
BLACKBIRD, Red-winged	513
MEADOWLARK, Eastern	38
BLACKBIRD, Rusty	3 CW
GRACKLE, Boat-tailed	5
Common	340
COWBIRD, Brown-headed	79
ORIOLE, Orchard	44
Northern	1
FINCH, House	132
GOLDFINCH, American	118
SPARROW, House	30