



THE FLYER

Volume 18, Number 6

June, 1994

Williamsburg Bird Club

Next Meeting

As most of you know, we take a break from our monthly meetings during June, July and August. Therefore our next meeting won't be until **Wednesday, September 21, 1994** at 7:30 PM in Room 117, Millington Hall at William and Mary. More about the meeting and speaker in September's newsletter.

Spring/Summer Picnic

Do you have your favorite recipe ready to prepare for the Club Picnic? If not, you are running out of time. Saturday, June 4 is the day for good birding and lots of eating. Meet at Ruth Beck's house in Barhamsville at 4:00 PM to start the picnic with some birding. Following our bird adventures, we will feast on various specialty dishes that everyone will bring. Turkey and ham will be provided along with soft drinks. You are to bring your most-famous salad, vegetable or dessert in a quantity large enough to feed 4 - 6 people. This will be one of the few opportunities we have to get together and socialize this summer, so try to be part of the fun. For directions to Ruth's house, call her at 566-8234, or Emily Sharrett at 229-4346.

June Field Trip

Our field trip this month has the chance of being a very special one. The trip will be Saturday, June 18, and we will try again for the special species foray to Greenville County, Virginia in hopes of finding the **Mississippi Kite**, **Red-cockaded Woodpecker** and **Bachman's Sparrow**. Emily and Allan Sharrett will lead us, assisted by

their son, Allan, a resident of Greenville County.

We will meet at the Colonial Williamsburg Visitor Center at 8:00 AM. **Anyone interested in going must call Emily at 229-4346 to let her know who will be participating.** During the week of the trip, Emily's son will survey the area to determine if the kite is back. If he does not spot the kite, we will not travel to Greenville County. We will still have a trip on the 18th, but the location will be changed. Be sure to contact Emily if interested.

July Field Trip

The July field trip will be July 16 to Craney Island. Meet at the Colonial Williamsburg Visitor Center at 7:00 AM. Brian Taber will lead us to this hot-spot for shorebird migration, nesting **Least Terns**, and hopefully, **Piping Plovers**. **Please note the earlier starting time** due to the summer's heat and long distance to travel. Be sure to bring a hat, sunscreen and bug repellent.

President's Corner

The spring migration is over and the summer breeders are setting up residence for June, July, and August. **Carolina Wrens** are stuffing any nook, box, hanging basket, etc. with such diligence. Many pairs are working on their second clutch. **Summer Tanagers** are "chucky-tucking" and **Scarlet Tanagers** are "chip-burring." **Bluebirds**, **Chickadees** and **Purple Martins** are stuffing insects into young mouths.

It was delightful for the month of May to have two male **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** at our feeders, and for one morning **only**, a **Clay-colored**



Sparrow (May 9). After 755 pounds of seeds, it's about time!

I look forward to a good summer of colonial bird projects. If you are interested in volunteering for a day, please call me at 566-8234.

Please consider working with the local committees of the planning group for the 1995 combined meeting of the Wilson Society and the Virginia Society of Ornithology. The Williamsburg Bird Club will host this meeting on May 4 - 7, 1995.

Have a Good Summer
Ruth Beck

Welcome to our Newest Members

First off, my apologies to Juel Duke for misspelling her first name in last month's issue. In addition, I forgot to welcome Mary Smith to the club last month, so I'll catch-up on that one this month. We also have two more new members, welcome all:

Mary E. Smith
122 Ferncliff Dr.
Williamsburg, VA 23185-2550

Paul & Elaine Mertus
4027 South Riverside
Lanexa, VA 23089

Donald & Jeanne Nelson
111 Wentworth Drive
Williamsburg, VA 23188

May's Field Trip

Sunday May 22 proved to be a great day for birds at York River State Park. Tom and Jeanne Armour, Paul and Elaine Mertus, Dorothy Whitfield, Marilyn Zeigler, Marilyn Lewis, Mack Lundy, Charles Rend, and Dave and Lee Schuster spotted 45 species on the Taskinas

Creek Trail and around the Visitor Center. Highlights of the day included a **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**, **Eastern Kingbirds** making good use of the volleyball net, a peculiar-sounding **Yellow-throated Vireo**, **Indigo Buntings**, **Summer** and **Scarlet Tanagers**, and various warblers. The warblers were definitely the key to the day, as we saw **Hooded**, **Magnolia** and **Bay-breasted**. The group was able to watch the Bay-breasted Warblers for a long time as they worked their way through a group of small pines. We could not have had a better day weather-wise or bird-wise.

Field Notes for April, 1994

We're on a tight schedule this month, so I have tended to just hit the hot-spots. Sorry if I left anyone out. We have had some interesting species pass through the area this month. In addition to the **Bay-breasted Warblers** spotted at York River State Park, Brian Taber had a **Wilson's Warbler** at his house. Bill Williams found a **Black Tern** in a group of **Common Terns** following the Jamestown Ferry. Many birds are nesting. We witnessed one of the more brutal sides of nature when we lost five baby **Bluebirds** and possibly an adult to a Black Rat Snake that found his way to our box. A **Brown Thrasher** is feeding her baby in our back yard and we have located a **Wood Thrush's** nest. We have a lot of **Tufted Titmouse**, **Carolina Chickadee**, **Carolina Wren**, **Cardinal** and **Summer Tanager** activity, and we're pretty sure they all have nests in our vicinity. These all make taking the loss of our Bluebirds a little easier.

Here's our monthly list of contributors and what they are seeing:

Contributors - Joy Archer(JA), Tom Armour (TA), Mr. & Mrs. Blair(M&MB), Joe & Grace Doyle(J&GD), Dave & Lee Schuster (D&LS),



Bill Sheehan (BS), Brian Taber(BT), Bill Williams(BW), Marilyn Zeigler(MZ).

Colonial Parkway/James River

Common Loon - 5/6 (TA); **Great Egret** - 5/19-21 (TA/BS); **Canada Goose** - 2 adult with 13 young 5/19 (TA/BS); **Spotted Sandpiper** - 5/23 (TA/BS); **Royal Tern** - 5/21(TA/BS); **Common Tern** - following ferry 5/26(BW); **Black Tern** - following ferry 5/26 (BW); **Eastern Wood-pewee** - 5/19(TA/BS); **Tree Swallow** - 5/21(TA/BS); **Barn Swallow** - 5/21(TA/BS); **Yellow-rumped Warbler** - 5/19-21 (TA/BS); **Blackpoll Warbler** - 5/19-21 (TA/BS); **Black & White Warbler** - 5/19-21 (TA/BS); **Summer Tanager** - 5/21(TA/BS); **Scarlet Tanager** - 5/19-21 (TA/BS).

Jamestown Island

Common Loon - 5/6 (JA/BS); **Spotted Sandpiper** - 5/25 (JA/BS); **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** - 5/22 (D&LS); **Red-headed Woodpecker** - 5/22 (D&LS); **Eastern Wood-pewee** - 5/6 (JA/BS); **Acadian Flycatcher** - 5/6 (JA/BS); **Great Crested Flycatcher** - 5/6 (JA/BS); **White-eyed Vireo** - 5/6 (JA/BS); **Northern Parula** - 5/6 (JA/BS); **Common Yellowthroat** - 5/6 (JA/BS), 5/22 (D&LS); **Summer Tanager** - 5/6 (JA/BS); **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** - 5/6 (JA/BS); **Indigo Bunting** - 5/6 (JA/BS).

Hog Island

Bald Eagle - 5/8 (JA); **Northern Harrier** - near Bacon's Castle 5/8 (JA); **Greater Yellowlegs** - 5/8 (JA); **White-eyed Vireo** - 5/8 (JA); **Black-throated Blue Warbler** - 5/8 (JA); **American Redstart** - 5/8 (JA); **Northern Parula** - 5/8 (JA); **Orchard Oriole** - 5/8 (JA); .

Kingsmill

Great Egret - 5/24 (J&GD); **Black-crowned Night Heron** - 5/2 (TA); **Spotted Sandpiper** - 5/2 (TA); **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** - 5/24 (J&GD); **Hairy**

Woodpecker - 5/24 (J&GD); **Veery** - 5/20 (TA); **Yellow Warbler** - 5/1 (TA); **Magnolia Warbler** - 5/20 (TA); **Black-throated Blue Warbler** - 5/8 (TA); **Blackpoll Warbler** - 5/7 (TA); **Prothonotary Warbler** - 5/23 (TA); **American Redstart** - 5/20 (TA); **Orchard Oriole** - 5/7 (TA); **Northern Oriole** - 5/22-23 (TA); .

Camp Peary (J&GD)

Green Heron; **Osprey**; **Bald Eagle**; **Northern Harrier**; **Red-headed Woodpecker**; **Wood Thrush**; **Red-eyed Vireo**; **Northern Parula**; **Prairie Warbler**; **Ovenbird**; **Hooded Warbler**; **Chipping Sparrow**; **Field Sparrow**; **Song Sparrow**; **Meadowlark**.

Hickory Sign Post Road

Red-shouldered Hawk - 4/30 (JA); **Barred Owl** - 4/30 (JA); **Acadian Flycatcher** - 5/1 (JA); **Yellow-throated Vireo** - 5/25 (JA/BS); **Yellow-throated Warbler** - 5/1 (JA), 5/25 (JA/BS); **Northern Parula** - 5/25 (JA/BS); **Prothonotary Warbler** - 5/25 (JA/BS); **Black & White Warbler** - 4/30 (JA); **Louisiana Waterthrush** - 5/1 (JA); **Scarlet Tanager** - 5/24 (TA/BS)

Old Rt. 31

Chestnut-sided Warbler - 5/10 (JA); **Yellow-breasted Chat** - 5/6-23 (TA/BS, JA); **Orchard Oriole** - 5/23 (TA/BS); **Blue Grosbeak** - 5/23 (TA/BS); **Indigo Bunting** - 5/23 (TA/BS);

Feeders, Yards and Miscellaneous

Yellow-billed Cuckoo - 5/22 (BS); **Wood Thrush** - building nest 5/30 (D&LS); **Magnolia Warbler** - 5/22 (BS); **Blackpoll Warbler** - 5/22(D&LS); **Wilson's Warbler** - 5/15 (BT); **Scarlet Tanager** - 4/30 (M&MB); **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** - 5/22 (MZ).



Adopt-A-Highway

As a warm-up for our picnic, join Bill Davies and his crew on June 4 at 8:00 AM to help clean up the club's stretch of road on Route 5 from Five Forks west to Route 614 (Green Springs Road). The club is responsible for cleaning up this two mile stretch on both sides of the highway, four times a year.

Meet at the rear of the parking lot opposite the IGA Market at Colony Square Shopping Center on Jamestown Road. It usually takes 1 1/2 to 2 hours to clean up, depending on the number of people that help.

Wear protective clothing for arms, legs and hands. Day-glo vests are provided. A small garden hoe or tool with a hook is helpful. Some tools are provided. If you are interested in helping out, or have any questions, contact Bill at 253-1461.

Spring Bird Count Contestants

A reminder that the deadline for listing birds was May 31, 1994. Please mail or otherwise deliver your completed checklists to Bill Holcombe or Ruth Beck by June 7. Better yet, bring them to the picnic on June 4 and save the postage. Addresses and phone numbers for Bill and Ruth are as follows:

Bill Holcombe
4705 Ladyslipper Path
Williamsburg, VA 23188-2400
229-8057

Ruth Beck
Box 270
Barhamsville, VA 23011-0270
566-8234

VSO Annual Meeting

The VSO (Virginia Society of Ornithology) held its annual meeting in Harrisburg, VA on May 13 -15. Marilyn Zeigler, Brian Taber and Ruth Beck traveled to the meeting and engaged in the mountain birding field trips. The Saturday paper sessions included new information about **Black-capped Chickadee** and **Carolina Chickadee** population distributions and a general opportunity to visit with birders from all over the state - about 125 people attended.

Bird of the Month

Bay-breasted Warbler

Dendroica castanea

Those of you who missed our walk at York River State Park also missed seeing one of the larger warblers, the Bay-breasted Warbler. We had just gotten on the Taskinas Creek Trail by the road when a strange high-pitched call caught our attention. There among some small pine trees were two Bay-breasted Warblers. They stayed around long enough for everyone to catch all of the distinctive field marks.

Males in breeding plumage have a chestnut crown, black face, large buff neck patch and upper parts that are greenish-gray streaked with black. There are two white wing bars. The upper breast, sides and flanks are deep chestnut. Females are similar, but with less chestnut.

The Bay-bested breeds from Northeastern British Columbia, east to Central Manitoba, and into Minnesota, Ontario, New York and Northern New England. It winters in Panama and South America. Bay-breasted Warblers are late migrants in the spring, but it is one of the earliest warblers to go south in the fall.



They are very active at mid-level in trees, searching the leaves and flowers for food. They eat beetles, flies, moths, cankerworms, leafhoppers, grasshoppers, and will occasionally eat berries from Virginia Creeper and Mulberries.

The Bay-breasted likes spruce and fir forests for breeding. The nests are loosely built of dried grass stalks, twigs, roots, mosses, lichens, bark and lined with bark strips and fur of the Northern Hare. It is usually built on a horizontal branch of spruce, hemlock, birch or other tree, 5 to 20 feet above the ground. Three to seven eggs are typically laid during the May-June time period.

In our area, the Bay-breasted Warbler can be considered an uncommon spring and fall migrant. In most seasons, one or two sighting reports can be expected in this area, but it is speculated that many birds are overlooked due to its weak song.
