



THE FLYER

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Williamsburg Bird Club

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on **Wednesday, October 19, 1994** at 7:30 PM in Room 117, Millington Hall at William and Mary.

Ruth Beck will be presenting our program, which could be entitled "One Good Tern Deserves Another" or "I'm Looking over a Piping Plover" (the proposed titles quickly go down-hill from here). Seriously though, Ruth will be discussing the status of her research programs investigating **Least Tern** and **Piping Plover** nesting in the Hampton Roads area. These small, but captivating birds are being seriously threatened by loss of suitable breeding habitat, and our area represents one of the few locations where these birds can still successfully breed. Ruth will be discussing her efforts to monitor these birds during their breeding period, and to preserve habitat so that they will have sufficient nesting area in the future. This is an extremely challenging task, and one which has a direct and measurable impact on saving two important species. Thus her program should prove to be very interesting and one nobody should miss.

October Field Trip

This month, we will be traveling to the Eastern Shore to view the Autumn hawk and songbird migration. The trip is scheduled for Saturday October 22, and we will meet at the Colonial Williamsburg Visitor's center at 7:30 a.m. We will travel to Kiptopeke State Park via the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Along the way, we will stop at the tunnel islands which are good areas for migrating passerines, shorebirds and waterfowl. At Kiptopeke, the hawk migration should still be under way, and we will visit the

songbird banding station there as well. Come prepared for a fairly long day with a lunch and something to drink. Also be ready for varied weather conditions with layers of clothing which can be added and/or removed as conditions dictate.

President's Corner

The arrival of autumn signals the return of many of our winter residents and so it is time to re-establish your bird feeding station. Cold fronts are arriving, each with accompanying northwest winds and more migrating songbirds. Many of these birds continue southward, but some will become familiar faces.

On Thursday, September 29, a flock of White-throated Sparrows arrived here in Barhamsville, and with this group came a nice immature White-crowned Sparrow. Hopefully Juncos will follow soon.

While these early birds are just a vanguard of the larger flocks to come back in the fall and winter, starting a feeder now will assist in keeping these birds around, and help attract others to the area. Also keep in mind the permanent residents that will continue to frequent your feeding station.

Every feeding area should include one or two hanging feeders filled with black-oil sunflower seeds, safflower, thistle, etc., a platform or shelf feeder of some kind and a suet feeder. Also, one can make use of the ground as an additional feeding area. See your local bird seed supplier for appropriate feeders and seed.

Hanging feeders will attract Chickadees, Titmice, Nuthatches, and various finches if filled with sunflower seeds (black-oil, striped, or hearts).



Good luck with your station, and I hope you enjoy feeding our winter visitors.

Ruth Beck

September Field Trip Review

It was a beautiful fall morning as we ventured out to Governor's Land. Our original mission was to tackle the large area called Middle Plantation which is covered in our Christmas and Spring Bird counts. Our goals for the day were industrious, but we never made it past Governor's Land, our first stop.

Due to parking limitations, we only birded around the poolhouse and second island. Our day started with a sighting of a Black-throated Green Warbler near the pool, and only got better from there. Shorebirds and raptors didn't make an appearance, but the woodpeckers and warblers showed their stuff.

We had a pair of **American Redstarts** really perform for us. Everyone had an opportunity to observe, at close range, both the male and female for a long time. The only woodpeckers we didn't see were a Hairy Woodpecker and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, but we tried hard to find them. Our warbler list included **Blue-winged Warbler, Northern Parula, Black-throated Green Warbler, Pine Warbler, Black & White Warbler, American Redstart, and Common Yellowthroat.**

Needless to say it was a good day. Eleven of us explored that second island: Marilyn Zeigler, Helen Vandermark, Duryea Morton, Emily Sharrett, Marilyn Lewis, Mack Lundy, Julie Hotchkiss, Dorothy Whitfield, Charles Rend and Dave and Lee Schuster. We hope to see everyone next time.

Welcome to our Newest Member

A Williamsburg Bird Club welcome to its newest member:

Laura Rowland
3805 Grey Fox Circle, Apt. B
Williamsburg, VA 23188-7841

Field Notes for July - August, 1994

Okay folks, its fall, and I know birds are migrating through the area, but our reports are pretty sparse. The most spectacular sightings in the local area are the **Blue-winged Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler** and **American Redstart** spotted on the September field trip, and a **Philadelphia Vireo** sighted in Brian Taber's backyard. Ruth Beck has had some early fall migrants and winter residents in the form of a **White-throated Sparrow, a White-crowned Sparrow** and a **Hermit Thrush** at her property in Barhamsville. Lee and I have had a **Black-throated Blue Warbler** and a **Black & White Warbler** in our yard. The hawk watch at Kiptopeke State Park observed a record-breaking migration of birds on October 1-4 (see related article), and the raptors have been steadily streaming by the observation station throughout the month.

Unless otherwise noted, the following notes were compiled by Bill Sheehan, Tom Armour, Joy Archer, and Joe & Grace Doyle. C'mon folks lets get some others in on the listing with their sightings!!

Migrating Warblers, etc.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird(last date 9/27),
Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Philadelphia Vireo, Blue-winged Warbler, Northern Parula, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Pine Warbler, Palm Warbler, Black and



White Warbler, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

Jamestown Island and Colonial Parkway

Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Green Heron, Bald Eagle, Clapper Rail, Virginia Rail, Laughing Gull, Greater Black-backed Gull, Royal Tern, Forster's Tern, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Belted Kingfisher, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Kingbird, Tree Swallow, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Marsh Wren, Yellow-throated Vireo, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Bobolink, Orchard Oriole, American Goldfinch.

Hog Island

Great Egret, Northern Harrier, Black-bellied Plover, Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Caspian Tern, Royal Tern, Forster's Tern, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Palm Warbler, Bobolink, Blue Grosbeak, Savannah Sparrow.

Camp Peary (Joe and Grace Doyle)

Snowy Egret, Tri-colored Heron, Green Heron, Wood Duck, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Wild turkey, Northern Bobwhite, Killdeer, Laughing Gull, Red-headed Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Northern Parula, Pine Warbler, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Chipping Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco

What's Happening Out There?

As everyone begins to climb out of the summer doldrums to see what's passing through, don't forget to call and let us know what is happening. The shorebirds are almost through, the warblers are in process, and the ducks are on their way. Your friendly editors, record keeper and fellow members are anxiously awaiting to hear what is out there. So call Dave or Lee Schuster (565-6148) or Bill Sheehan (220-2122) so we can report to you what is being seen and where. Hopefully this will allow everyone the opportunity to see some new and interesting birds this fall and winter.

Busy Days at Kiptopeke

Life at the Kiptopeke Hawk watching Station has been very busy lately. The first weekend in October not only had a big front come through, it also had a few hawks fly over following the front. Between October 1 and October 4, approximately 8500 hawks were counted. Some of the highest number of visitors were 116 Northern Harriers, 187 Cooper's Hawks, 635 Broad-winged Hawks, 1,388 Kestrels, and 60 Merlins.

The WBC will be taking its annual trek down there October 22. Hopefully the numbers then will resemble the numbers of early October.

Christmas Bird Count

Sunday, December 18, 1994 marks the day of our annual Christmas Bird Count. The annual count came about when 27 conservationists decided to protest the traditional bird shoot, and instead of shooting birds, they counted them on Christmas Day 1900. The event originated as a protest to the traditional holiday 'side hunt' in which teams



competed to see who could shoot the most birds and other animals in one day.

Today volunteers from all 50 states, every Canadian province, parts of Central and South America, Bermuda, and the West Indies count and record every bird species seen or heard during on calendar day. More than 1600 individual Christmas Bird Counts will be held during a two and one half week period.

Each count group has a designated circle 15 miles in diameter - about 177 square miles - where they try to cover as much ground as possible within a 24-hour period. The data collected by each count group is then sent into National Audubon Society Headquarters in New York. Count data is published in a special book sized edition of American Birds magazine.

Apart from its attraction as a social, sporting and competitive event, the annual count reveals interesting and scientifically useful information on the early winter distribution patterns of various bird species and overall health of the environment.

The Williamsburg Christmas Bird Count involves 8 areas centered around the Colonial Williamsburg Visitor's Center. The day begins around 5:00 a.m. and end with the final tally at 5:00 p.m. An individual may participate the entire day or only part of the day. Each area will have a designated leader who knows the territory to be covered. There will be sign-up sheets at both the October and November meetings for everyone who is interested. If there are any questions, or if someone is unable to attend the meetings, please call Lee Schuster at 565-6148 (after 6:00 p.m.).

Storks I Have Known

by Marilyn Zeigler

Mid-July found me with an Elderhostel group in Budapest. After a week of city dwelling and lectures on Hungarian history, the group drove southeast to Kecskemet, home of the composer Kodaly, and next day turned east across the Visza River and the great Hungarian plain, flat as a table and largely given to growing wheat. As we approached the Romanian border, I began to see storks in small groups in the fields, on village roofs, and standing on bulky nests atop concrete telephone poles. Occasionally nesting platforms had been provided.

These White Storks (*Ciconia ciconia*) are impressive birds, 40 inches tall, with black flight feathers and bright red bill and legs. They fly with neck extended, and dine - according to Peterson, Mountfort and Hollom - on insects, fish, frogs, or almost any other small animal. The plains seemed very dry; are there mice out there? I understand that storks make hissing and coughing notes when breeding, and clatter their bills at mating displays. I saw about 40 birds, which really do tend to stand around quite a lot, inviting to photographers. Across the border in Transylvania, a single specimen was stalking through a hay field.

My two previous stork encounters had been in the Danish village of Ribe, near the North Sea in 1960, where storks nested on chimneys, and a lone bird in 1987 nesting on top of the single standing column of the Temple of Artemis (one of the seven ancient wonders) near Selcuk, Turkey. It's handy for Americans that our Wood Storks are relatives of similar size in the same family, Ciconiidae.

One more sighting in August occurred in a small Austrian town near Salzburg, with different



habitat, mountains near. A White Stork stood very deliberately in a tree top, and at one point nibbled along a branch.

A Birder's Test II

Back by popular demand is another round of bird puns. But first the answers to last month's questions: 1) Grosbeak, 2) Crossbill, 3) Whip-Poor-Will, 4) Flycatcher, 5) Flicker, 6) Rusty Blackbird, 7) Cardinal, and 8) Tern. Try these out:

- 1) What bird is a litterer?
- 2) What bird is fast?
- 3) What bird enjoys a good joke?
- 4) What bird is used in making a fence?
- 5) What bird is a midget?
- 6) What bird goes slowly?
- 7) What bird is sour?
- 8) What bird is a decoy?

Bird of the Month

Blue-winged Warbler

(Vermivora pinus)

During the bird club's adventure to Governor's Land last month, many warblers topped our list. But the warbler we saw as we were leaving the trail was the highlight. The Blue-winged Warbler was busily eating his way through the trees and his activity kept us watching as our necks slowly began to tire.

The Blue-winged Warbler is an inhabitant of overgrown fields with few trees, as well as second growth forests and brushy hillsides. It is a quiet, unobtrusive bird whose movements are more indicative of a vireo. It stays fairly close to

the ground, but the male typically sings from a tree-top perch.

As we tried to identify the warbler, we saw the black eyeline that runs from the base of the bill to a short distance behind the eye. Spring adults have a bright yellow crown and underparts, except for white undertail coverts. The back is greenish-yellow. The wings and tail are bluish-gray with two white wing bars. In the fall, the yellow crown is hidden by greenish feather tips. Immature birds are duller.

A Blue-wing Warbler's nest is found close to or on the ground. It is cone-shaped and made of dead leaves, grasses, and fragments of bark. It may be lined with bark from grapevines, horsehair, or fine grasses. It can be built among stems of blackberries, weeds, and grasses, or under bushes.

An eastern warbler, the Blue-winged breeds from eastern Nebraska, southern Ontario, and southern Maine south to Oklahoma and Northern Georgia in the interior and to northern Virginia along the coast. It winters in Central America.

It was an exciting bird to watch and observe. This was the first time I had seen one, though Dave had seen them in the yard a few times. Everyone was thrilled with this sighting, and the Blue-winged Warbler was at the top of our list.