



THE FLYER

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November, 1994

Williamsburg Bird Club

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on **Wednesday, November 16, 1994** at 7:30 PM in Room 117, Millington Hall at William and Mary. Also, a reminder that we don't have a meeting in December.

This month's speaker will be Christine Clements, and she will be presenting her research findings on Great Blue Heron rookeries in the local area. The title of her talk is "Determinants of Great Blue Heron Colony Size and Locations along the James and Chickahominy Rivers." Christine is one of the club's annual William and Mary graduate student grantees and this presentation discusses the research she performed as a result of our grant.

November Field Trip

This month, Emily Sharrett will lead us on a tour of the Kingsmill area including the Colonial Parkway to College Creek, the Kingsmill Marina, and some of the local freshwater ponds.

Waterfowl should be beginning to move into the area (if we can ever get a little cool weather) and these areas have traditionally been good locations for ducks, geese and other Williamsburg winter residents. Following our trip, the Armour's have graciously invited us to their home on the shore of Kingsmill Pond for refreshments and additional birding. The trip will be held on Saturday, November 19, and as per our usual schedule, we will meet at 8:00 a.m. in the Colonial Williamsburg Visitor Center Parking lot. Emily requests that anyone who has them bring spotting scopes. Hope to see you there!

Coming Attractions

December 18th - Christmas Bird Count

Plan on participating in this event if you possibly can. We usually record over 100 species, with 108 being the average. Lee Schuster will coordinate the count again this year. Anyone who can help will be appreciated. A good weather day and lots of new observers could help us bring in the big numbers. (See separate article on page 3.)

President's Corner

It is hard to believe it is November. It was almost 80 degrees this past weekend. I know it is fall because the leaves are falling, the turkeys are gobbling, and this morning brought the first frost on the pumpkins. White-throated sparrows and Juncos are back in full force, and a Hermit Thrush flew across the lane as I left for work. The next couple of months will be unusually busy for most of us. Thanksgiving and Christmas are two major upcoming events, but for birders, so are the Audubon annual Christmas Counts. This area is rich in count opportunities. I urge all of you to participate in the Williamsburg Bird Club Christmas Count on December 18, 1994.

I would like to remind all of you of the upcoming jointly sponsored event of the annual meeting of Wilson's Ornithological Society/Virginia Society of Ornithologist/Williamsburg Bird Club to be held on May 4 - 7, 1995 at Fort Magruder Conference Center. A planning meeting of interested members will meet on December 1 at 7:00 p.m. in room 108, Millington Hall, College of William and Mary. Please come!

Ruth Beck



October Field Trip Summary

Brian Taber and friends had a productive day on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel Islands and at Kiptopeke. Marilyn Zeigler, Bill Holcombe, Leonard and Alice Lee Sargeant, Carolyn Lowe, Dorothy Whitfield and Joy Archer started out early to bird the tunnel islands, and then visit Kiptopeke.

While on the islands, they saw a Merlin perched in a tree near the north toll booth. The group also was lucky in their sighting of a Peregrine Falcon chasing a Herring Gull out over the water. The Gull dropped its food, and the Peregrine picked it up and returned to the rock to have dinner. What an exciting thing to see. The islands also produced a Great Cormorant.

At Kiptopeke, the hawk-watching was slow, but the passerines were really moving. Dawn brought a rush of birds to the nets and the banders closed most of them so they could catch up with their banding without having to go out and rescue more birds from the nets. The brush piles produced nine sparrow species including a Henslow's, which generated a little controversy at the banding station. The warbler's included Magnolia, Yellow-rumped (lots), Pine and Palm. Both kinglets showed themselves along with a Red-breasted Nuthatch and a Brown Creeper.

It was a long and busy, but good, day. The group didn't return to Williamsburg until after 6:00 p.m.

Fred Blystone: Our Newest Lifetime Member

The Board of Directors of the Williamsburg Bird Club is pleased to announce the award of a Lifetime Membership to Fred Blystone. Fred is a charter member of the club since 1977. He has

participated in every Audubon Christmas Count held by the club through 1993, and he served as the Treasurer for the club for 14 years until he was transferred to Dalton, Georgia. Fred, we appreciate all of your contributions to the WBC. We miss you, and come to visit us whenever you are back home!

New Members

A big Williamsburg Bird Club welcome to its newest members:

R. Hugh Van Brimer
119 Woodhall Spa
Williamsburg, VA 23188

Susan L. Chast
508 W. Maynor Dr.
Williamsburg, VA 23185

1995 WBC Board of Directors

We are pleased to announce that the current Officers and Members-at-Large have agreed to serve a second term. Therefore this years nominations are as follows:

Ruth Beck - President
Bill Holcombe - Vice President, Programs
Dave and Lee Schuster - Vice President,
Newsletter Editor
Dorothy Whitfield - Secretary
Charles Rend - Treasurer
Marilyn Lewis - Member-at-Large
Keith Kennedy - Member-at-Large

Any additional nominations will be accepted from the floor at the November 16 meeting, and a vote electing the officers will be taken at that time.



Field Notes for October, 1994

Fall migrants are beginning to thin out, and the winter residents are starting to show up. There have been a few reports of Ruddy Ducks in the area, and Tom Armour had a **White-Winged Scoter** on the James. There have also been several other notable sightings this past month. Bill Williams had a **Sora** at Jamestown Island, and Joy Archer and Bill Sheehan had a **Yellow Rail** responding to click noises there as well. The Doyles had a **Rough-legged Hawk** at Kingsmill, which is a fairly rare sighting for this area. Bill Holcombe called in to tell me about a **Barred Owl** he watched munching on a **Gackle** in his backyard. Later he was traipsing through his woods and found several piles of black feathers where, obviously, the owl had several other meals. Bill wishes it would change its diet over to **Cowbirds**.

We received a larger diversity of contributors this month. Thanks to everyone who provided sightings: Bill Akers(BA), Joy Archer(JA), Tom Armour(TA), Ruth Beck(RB), Joe and Grace Doyle(J&GD), Bill Holcombe(BH), Julie Hotchkiss(JH), Keith Kennedy(KK), Bill Sheehan(BH), and Bill Williams(BW).

Jamestown Island, Colonial Parkway, and Kingsmill

Common Loon - 10/18-29(TA), **Double-crested Cormorant** - Raft of 100+ on James River at Mill Creek 10/21, **Great Egret** - 10/21, **White-winged Scoter** - 10/27(TA), **Ruddy Duck** - 13 on 10/25(TA), **Osprey** - 10/10-31, **Bald Eagle** - 10/1-21, **Northern Harrier** - 10/10-31, **Sharp-shinned Hawk** - 10/26, **Cooper's Hawk** - 10/1-25, **Red-shouldered Hawk** - 10/26, **Red-tailed Hawk** - 10/12, **Rough-legged Hawk** - 10/15(J&GD), **Yellow Rail** - 10/26(JA/BS), **Clapper Rail** - 10/12-27, **King Rail** - 10/1-28, **Virginia Rail** -

10/11, **Sora** - 10/28(BW), **American Coot** - 10/28 at Kingsmill Marina(TA), **Spotted Sandpiper** - 10/3, **Royal Tern** - 10/11, **Forster's Tern** - 10/11, **Great Horned Owl** - 10/30(JA), **Belted Kingfisher** - 10/1, **Red-headed Woodpecker** - 10/21, **Hairy Woodpecker** - 10/10-27, **Eastern Wood-peewee** - 10/1, **Acadian Flycatcher**, **Eastern Phoebe** - 10/1-11, **Tree Swallow** - 10/3-21, **Blue Jay** - 100+ on Jamestown Island on 10/1, **Brown-headed Nuthatch** - 10/28, **House Wren** - 10/1(TA), **Winter Wren** - 10/19(RB), **Golden-crowned Kinglet** - 10/12, **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** - 10/10(TA), **Gray-cheeked Thrush** - 10/10(TA), **Hermit Thrush** - 10/28(TA), **White-eyed Vireo** - 10/12, **Northern Parula** - 10/1-2(TA), **Black-throated Blue Warbler** - 10/2(TA), **Yellow-rumped Warbler** - 10/11, 100+ on 10/12, **Pine Warbler** - 200+ on 10/21, **American Redstart** - 10/2(TA), **Common Yellowthroat** - 10/1-12, **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** - 10/1, **White-throated Sparrow** - 10/11, **Swamp Sparrow** - 10/12.

Hog Island - 10/6 & 11/7(TA/BS) & 11/8(RB)

Northern Harrier, **Black-bellied Plover**, **Greater Yellowlegs** - 21, **Bonaparte's Gull**, **Forster's Tern**, **Tree Swallow** - 750+, **Palm Warbler** - 20+, **Blue Grosbeak**, **Savannah Sparrow**.

Camp Peary (J&GD)

Pied-billed Grebe, **Mute Swan**, **Wood Duck**, **American Wigeon**, **Ruddy Duck**, **Bald Eagle**, **Red-tailed Hawk**, **American Kestrel**, **Northern Bobwhite**, **Killdeer**, **Laughing Gull**, **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, **Red-headed Woodpecker**, **Pileated Woodpecker**, **Eastern Phoebe**, **Tree Swallow**, **Brown-headed Nuthatch**, **Hermit Thrush**, **Yellow-rumped Warbler**, **Pine Warbler**, **Chipping Sparrow**, **White-throated Sparrow**.

Feeder's Yards and Miscellaneous

Golden-crowned Kinglet, **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, **Hermit Thrush**, **Wood Thrush**, **Northern Parula**,



Black-throated Blue Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Pine Warbler, Field Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco - all 10/3-28(BS). Brown Creeper and Winter Wren - 11/2 on Hickory Signpost Road(JA). Osprey - 10/21-22 at First Colony(JH). Brown Creeper and Dark-eyed Junco - 10/31(KK). Snow Bunting (2) and Common Loon (12) - Grandview Beach 11/7(BA).

Adopt-A-Highway

Bill Davies and his troops were out again helping to keep the streets clean. The clubs territory is 2 miles on Route 5 roughly from Five Forks west to Route 614.

The 16 bird club participants had a beautiful fall day. The temperature was great, and the sun was shining. The group was very productive collecting 18 bags plus 13 lb. of aluminum and 98 lb. of glass, which were all recycled.

The participants included: Sam Hart, Phyllis Johnson, Dorothy Whitfield, Joy Archer, Martha and Bob Burgess, Jim Booth, Bill and Mary Kafes, Charles Rend, Tom Mikula, Bob Morris, Carolina Williams, Leonard and Alice Lee Sargeant, and of course, Bill Davies.

Christmas Bird Count

A reminder to everyone - don't forget to sign up for the Christmas Bird Count that occurs on December 18th. Whether you are a beginner or experienced birder, we need your eyes and ears. Come spend the day or just half the day with fellow birders and find out how the birds spend Christmas. Or you might just want to come to the final count a 5:00 p.m. on the 18th to see what was found and any oddities that may have shown up. The eight areas that are surveyed are listed below. Each area has a leader, but we need

people to assist our leaders. If you are interested in a specific area or just want to help anywhere, we want you. Sign up at the November meeting or call Lee Schuster at 565-6148.

The eight survey areas are:

Cheatham Annex -	Camp Peary, Queen's Lake, Cheatham Annex, Felgate's Creek, Indian Field Creek.
Kingsmill -	Country Road to Carter's Grove, Kingsmill, Williamsburg Airport, Parkway from Information Center to just before College Creek.
Hog Island -	Ferry ride over and Hog Island Refuge.
Jamestown -	Parkway from College Creek to Jamestown and Jamestown Island.
College Woods -	College Woods and Campus, Lake Matoaka, Lake Powell, College Landing Park on South Henry Street, Population Lab, Hickory Signpost Road, Treasure Island Road.
Middle Plantation -	Mid-County Park, Waller Mill Park, Drummond's Field, Governor's Land, News Road, First Colony.
Jolly Pond -	Jolly Pond, Landfill, Cranston's Mill Road, Little Creek Reservoir.
Skimino -	Barlow's Pond, Skimino Farms, Mirror Lakes, entrance to York River State Park, Riverview Plantation.



How Did You Get Started Birding?

The WBC's most senior member, Lewis Hopps, provides us with the following note about how he got started birding:

"Bill Holcombe introduced me to your club, and I was reminded of the West Side Ornithologists, a Bird Club.

It was 1911; Warren, Kig, Tom and I were the founders. Kig's barn was the club house. Mr. Raymond was our friend and teacher. He drove us through the Devil's Garden where many birds lived away from prowling cats. I like to think that our little club was a first step in understanding how we could help the birds and realizing how much more they help us.

The little club went merrily through the summer. September came, Warren went back to Brooklyn. October came, many Myrtle Warblers came to say hello - good bye. November came, quiet now - for West Side Ornithologists have gone to sleep."

I'm sure we all have memories of how and why we got started birding. Maybe some of you might like to share them with the rest of the club as Lewis has. If so, drop your editors a line and we'll do what we can to get it in the newsletter.

Bird of the Month

Peregrine Falcon

(Falco peregrinus)

To see a Peregrine Falcon in action makes one appreciate its strength and speed, plus the hardships the species has faced. By 1970, the Peregrine was virtually eliminated from the East Coast. Due to dedicated efforts from many organizations and individuals (many locally), the

Peregrine is making a comeback with several local nests this past spring.

There are three North American races of Peregrine Falcons. *F. p. anatum*, the species once found east of the Mississippi, *F. p. tundrius*, found in the Arctic regions, and *F. p. pealei* (Peale's Falcon) found on the Pribilof Islands off the coast of Alaska and the coastal Pacific Northwest.

The Peregrine Falcon is a medium to large falcon with a wide range in size between the small male and the large female. The adults and immatures differ in plumage. Immature birds are brown on the back with heavily streaked underparts. Adults are blue-gray above and heavily barred below with a rufous color. The upper chest and throat are white. The head is dark with helmet-like markings. The black mustache stripe is sharply defined and bold. There are variations between subspecies. The artificial introduction programs along the East Coast produce some pure Peale's and hybrids. Therefore, subspecies identification can be difficult on the East Coast. The Peregrine has long pointed wings, and the tail is long, narrow, and rounded with narrow black bands. The body is heavy and broad.

Peregrine's do not build their own nests. They typically nest on cliffs, ledges, potholes and river slopes. Occasionally they will nest on various man-made structures, sometimes within cities - many of which are places where the Peregrine has been reintroduced. They prefer to nest near a body of water where prey is abundant.

Impressive speed and power are demonstrated when the Peregrine is in pursuit of prey. Reaching speeds of close to 200 mph in a dive, the Peregrine hunts pigeons, a favorite, along with passerines, shorebirds, alcids, and waterfowl.



Peregrines winter along the Atlantic Coast from New York through South America. Along the Pacific Coast, they winter from Alaska south. Tundra birds are the most migratory, wintering in Central and South America.

An incredible bird, the Peregrine is becoming more visible every year. Several times I have had close encounters with a Peregrine, and I am always awe-struck at the beauty and power of this bird. Several times at Kiptopeke, a Peregrine has been banded while I was present, but truly the most memorable experience was on Fisherman's Island. Our group sat for approximately 20 minutes watching a Peregrine sit upon a platform carefully eating the passerine he had picked out of the air. A remarkable bird that has demonstrated its power not only in the way it obtains food, but also in the way it has survived mans encroachment and poisons.
