



THE FLYER

NEWSLETTER OF THE WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Oh what a wonderful day for a picnic! Special thank yous to Jeanne Armour for organizing and setting up our meal and to Ruth Beck for hosting our picnic at her lovely home. If you missed the annual Bird Club picnic, you'll have to wait another year for a rerun of this delightful event.

At this writing summer is just around the corner. We've been lucky so far with the mild weather but we all know that will change. I hope everyone has a relaxing summer planned and has not forgotten to mark his calendar for our next field trip to Craney Island in August. It will be on the third Saturday in August and then we don't meet again until the third Wednesday of September.

I am off to Alaska to take a course and to see the scenery and wildlife of my favorite state. This time the roles are reversed and I am the student. Should be interesting. I plan to report back to you a summary of this trip and the one Dave and I took to Point Pelee. So until the next newsletter (end of August) have a safe summer and may your binoculars take you to many exciting places to see plenty of interesting birds. — Lee

SUMMER SCHEDULE

No club meetings will take place during July or August. The August field trip to Craney Island will leave from the CW Visitor Center parking lot at the customary 7:30 AM time, on August 16, the third Saturday of the month. *The Flyer* will be published in August but not July.

FIELD NOTES FOR MAY

Birding in May lived up to its usual promise with a slightly above average spring count of 158 species. Field notes list 25 species of warblers, four different vireos and large numbers of shore birds. York River State park produced the largest number of warblers. One report listed over twenty in one day. Armour and Sheehan, covering the trail for Lee Schuster one weekend, saw 75 bird species in one morning! Shore birds were thick at Hog Island. An Upland Sandpiper and a Pectoral Sandpiper added spice as did a Sandwich Tern spotted from the Ferry. And, as reported last month, the American White Pelican made one of its visits to Hog Island in time for the Spring Count. Charlie Drubel, Bill Holcombe, John McDowell and Phil Young counted nesting Least Terns and Black-necked Stilts for Ruth Beck at Craney Island one week and were rewarded by the sight of a Black-bellied Plover and a Lesser Golden-Plover standing side-by-side. The Golden was a lifetime first for all four and the pair made memorable viewing through the scope.

Jamestown Island Wood Duck, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Northern Bobwhite, Solitary Sandpiper, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Belted Kingfisher, Hairy Woodpecker, Wood Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Phoebe, Great-crested Flycatcher, Tree Swallow, Rough-winged Swallow, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue-winged Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Black and White Warbler, Redstart, Prothonotary Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Ovenbird, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Orchard Oriole.

Ferry and Hog Island Pied-billed Grebe, Great Egret, Green Heron, Green-winged Teal, Red-breasted Merganser, Bald Eagle, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Upland Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Snipe, Bonaparte's Gull, Caspian Tern, Royal Tern, Sandwich Tern, Common Tern, Forster's Tern, Belted Kingfisher, Tree Swallow, Red-eyed Vireo, Northern Parula Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Field Sparrow, Bobolink, Orchard Oriole.

Chippokes Green Heron, Wood Duck, Bald Eagle, Kestrel, Wild Turkey, Northern Bobwhite, Acadian Flycatcher, Great-crested Flycatcher, House Wren, Yellow-throated Vireo, White-eyed Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Warbler, Black and White Warbler, Redstart, Prothonotary Warbler, Northern Water thrush, Ovenbird, Wilson's Warbler, Blue Grosbeak, Orchard Oriole, Northern Oriole.

York River State Park Northern Bobwhite, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Wood Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Phoebe, Great-crested Flycatcher, Tree Swallow, Wood Thrush, Cedar Waxwing, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Northern Parula Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Black and White Warbler, Redstart, Prothonotary Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Louisiana Water thrush, Ovenbird, Kentucky Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded Warbler, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Meadowlark, Northern Oriole.

Camp Peary Green-backed Heron, Mute Swan, Wood Duck, Bufflehead, Black Vulture, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Wild Turkey, Northern Bobwhite, Clapper Rail, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Great-crested Flycatcher, Eastern

Kingbird, Tree Swallow, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Wood Thrush, White-eyed Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Ovenbird, Kentucky Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Field Sparrow, Orchard Oriole. (*Our apologies for inadvertently not including Joe Doyle's report on Camp Peary last month. Ed.*)

Neighborhoods and Miscellaneous *Tom Armour's Kingsmill Report:* Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Semipalmated Plover, Spotted Sandpiper, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, House Wren, Cedar Waxwing, Red-eyed Vireo, Northern Parula Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Northern Water thrush, Common Yellowthroat, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Orchard Oriole. *Bill Sheehan's Kingswood Report:* Bald Eagle, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, House Wren, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, Cedar Waxwing, Philadelphia Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Northern Parula Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Black and White Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Blue Grosbeak. A Grasshopper Sparrow on **Jolly Pond Road**. A Woodcock on **Powhatan Creek**. *Joy Archer* on **Hickory Sign Post Road** Phoebe, Northern Parula Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Pine Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Redstart, Louisiana Water thrush. *Bill Holcombe* reports Barred Owls hooting most nights and some afternoons in **Graylin Woods** and at least two sessions of squawking by young hooters. When you have sightings to report call Bill Sheehan at 220-2122.

Contributors include Joy Archer, Tom Armour, Grace and Joe Doyle, Bill Holcombe, Lee Schuster, Bill Sheehan, Bill Snyder, Brian Taber, Bill Williams and Marilyn Zeigler.

COLLEGE CREEK HAWK WATCH

by Brian Taber

The College Creek Hawk Watch was conducted

from a site on the Colonial Parkway between Williamsburg and Jamestown. In this, its first year, the hawk watch recorded 1,368 migrant raptors of 12 species. An additional bird, a rare Mississippi Kite, was not on the official list because it was seen from Hog Island by Spring Counters, Adrienne Frank, Gary Driscoll, Bill Holcombe and Brian Taber on May 11. However, it undoubtedly passed over College Creek within five minutes of the observation.

Birds were recorded as they crossed the river during 91 hours of observation over a period of 45 days, from February 16th through May 4th. Brian Taber provided most of the coverage with help from Bill Sheehan and Tom Armour. Information was sent to the Hawk Migration Association of North America. Several other Club members dropped by on occasion to help out and to keep the counters company. The coverage was mostly lunch hours and weekends. Certainly thousands of hawks were missed. Maybe next year there will be more participants.

Bald Eagles were seen in all five plumage and were often seen in groups of 3 to 9. More than 8% of the eagles were immatures. Turkey Vultures usually travel in groups of 5 to 20. The hawk totals were as follows:

Turkey Vulture	947
Osprey	132
Bald Eagle	74
Black Vulture	56
Sharp-shinned Hawk	44
Red-tailed Hawk	40
American Kestrel	35
Northern Harrier	24
Cooper's Hawk	7
Red-shouldered Hawk	5
Broad-winged Hawk	2
Merlin	2

There were also many non-hawks passing the site, including hundreds of Red-breasted Mergansers, Tundra Swans, Tree Swallows, Barn Swallows, Fish Crows and even an American White Pelican!

RECYCLING IS FOR THE BIRDS

We recycle all of our food scraps, except meat, into a compost pile, which then makes good soil for our garden. The garden then produces worms,

insects, seeds, flowers and vegetables. It also attracts moles and voles and mice. All of this is good food for birds (owls love small rodents) if you don't mind sharing. The meat scraps go to a small platform crow feeder and usually disappear within a day. Sometimes Blue Jays and Red-shouldered Hawks visit the crow feeder too — help reduce your trash and help the birds by recycling! *Brian Taber*

RESULTS OF MARCH TO JUNE LISTING

by Bill Holcombe

I only received seven cards back of the twenty five that were handed out at the February and March meetings. The good news is that I got some delightful notes back with the cards.

Martha Briggs, accompanied her card last year (or was that the year before?) with the wonderful Ogden Nash poem for Bird Watchers with the soulful ending —

“But I sometimes visualize in my gin
the Audubon that I adubin.”

This year she sent enlightening information about the Canada Geese coded neck collars. She had spotted a goose wearing a collar inscribed “NAL” in Dory, Virginia, and was advised by the wildlife authorities in Williamsburg to contact the North Carolina Wildlife Department. She did so and they reported that the male goose was banded February 4, 1992, in Hertford County, North Carolina. (No one explained why the NAL identifies it as a North Carolina bird.) In spite of some health problems interfering in her birding this year Martha still managed to report 26 birds, including a Ruby-throated Humming Bird on April 12 at Dory, Va.

Shirley Devan got off to a wonderful start early on and surpassed her 75 bird goal by listing 84 and identified the places where she found these birds. But she says that she likes winter birding for the ducks, geese, and raptors but finds the shore birds and warblers confusing and frustrating. Oh, don't we all! But she found two spots that she especially liked and plans to revisit in the fall: Back Bay NWR and Huntley Meadows. She also said that

“this little contest with myself encouraged me to visit more and different places.”

No note from Joanne Finstrom but I did get her card with her 15 notations.

All of these folks identified themselves as “Ones” and I think that makes Shirley Divan the top of the heap in that department.

Tom McCary points out that you need not travel very far to see some very nice birds. Tom’s favorite spot is the trail in College Woods along Lake Matoka. This produced ten birds on his list including: Green-winged and Blue-winged Teals, Coot, Wood Duck and the Red-eyed and White-eyed Vireos. He set out to see 100 birds and came very close with 98.

Bill Holcombe tried to push his goal up to 175 but slipped back under last years 150 to 143. He did better on the winter birds but fell off on the shore birds and warblers. The highlight of the spring was really a tie between the majestic White Pelican soaring above Hog Island and the Black-bellied Plover sanding next to the Lesser Golden Plover at Craney Island.

Bill Sheehan’s 149 species wins the entire enchilada in this division. It includes practically all of the ducks and geese and missed only very few of the warblers. It included all of the vireos but the Warbling Vireo and included such winning warblers as the Chestnut-sided, the Hooded and the Yellow-breasted Chat. And, he maintained the integrity of his position that House Sparrows, Rock Doves and Starlings are non-birds by refusing to list them!

Summary of Local Bird Data 1997 Spring Count

Williamsburg • James City County • York County • Hog Island

Williamsburg, VA Bird Club

Lee Schuster, President

Compiled by W. J. Sheehan

Species	No.	Species	No.	Species	No.
Common Loon	1	Black Tern	7	Tennessee Warbler	1
American White Pelican	1	Rock Dove	6	Northern Parula	45
Brown Pelican	1	Mourning Dove	101	Yellow Warbler	21
Double-crested Cormorant	128	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	3	Chestnut-sided Warbler	6
Great Blue Heron	129	Eastern Screech Owl	2	Magnolia Warbler	3
Great Egret	7	Great Horned Owl	4	Cape May Warbler	1
Green-backed Heron	9	Barred Owl	2	Black-throated Blue Warbler	11
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	2	Chuck-will's-widow	4	Yellow-rumped Warbler	99
Mute Swan	11	Chimney Swift	62	Black-throated Green Warbler	2
Canada Goose	332	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	8	Blackburnian Warbler	1
Wood Duck	55	Belted Kingfisher	12	Yellow-throated Warbler	22
American Black Duck	2	Red-headed Woodpecker	14	Pine Warbler	33
Mallard	50	Red-bellied Woodpecker	49	Prairie Warbler	25
Lesser Scaup	1	Downy Woodpecker	16	Blackpoll warbler	27
Red-breasted Merganser	4	Hairy Woodpecker	1	Black and White Warbler	14
Ruddy Duck	7	Northern Flicker	26	American Redstart	19
Black Vulture	23	Pileated Woodpecker	12	Prothonotary Warbler	10
Turkey Vulture	124	Eastern Wood-Pewee	54	Ovenbird	59
Osprey	113	Acadian Flycatcher	31	Louisiana Water thrush	5
Mississippi Kite	1	Eastern Phoebe	7	Kentucky Warbler	6
Bald Eagle	18	Great Crested Flycatcher	69	Common Yellowthroat	47
Northern Harrier	1	Eastern Kingbird	66	Hooded Warbler	4
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Purple Martin	67	Yellow-breasted Chat	14
Cooper's Hawk	1	Tree Swallow	530	Summer Tanager	49
Red-shouldered Hawk	7	N. Rough-winged Swallow	44	Scarlet Tanager	22
Red-tailed Hawk	11	Bank Swallow	15	Northern Cardinal	135
American Kestrel	1	Cliff swallow	2	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	2
Wild Turkey	17	Barn Swallow	270	Blue Grosbeak	12
Northern Bobwhite	25	Blue Jay	67	Indigo Bunting	73
Clapper Rail	3	American Crow	133	Rufous-sided Towhee	60
Black-bellied Plover	3	Fish Crow	24	Chipping Sparrow	70
Semipalmated Plover	112	Carolina Chickadee	83	Field Sparrow	24
Piping Plover	1	Tufted Titmouse	86	Savannah Sparrow	9
Kildeer	22	White-breasted Nuthatch	14	Grasshopper Sparrow	2
Greater Yellowlegs	9	Brown-headed Nuthatch	3	Sharp-tailed Sparrow	2
Lesser Yellowlegs	204	Carolina Wren	64	Seaside Sparrow	3
Solitary Sandpiper	1	House Wren	24	Song Sparrow	38
Spotted Sandpiper	31	Marsh Wren	1	Swamp Sparrow	1
Semipalmated Sandpiper	66	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	65	White-throated Sparrow	4
Least Sandpiper	20	Eastern Bluebird	120	Bobolink	59
Dunlin	29	Veery	14	Red-winged Blackbird	96
Short-billed Dowitcher	177	Swainson's Thrush	7	Eastern Meadowlark	18
Common Snipe	1	Wood Thrush	50	Boat-tailed Grackle	4
American Woodcock	1	American Robin	155	Common Grackle	432
Laughing Gull	201	Gray Catbird	21	Brown-headed Cowbird	96
Bonaparte's Gull	51	Northern Mockingbird	95	Orchard Oriole	27
Ring-billed Gull	208	Brown Thrasher	32	Northern Oriole	4
Herring Gull	9	Cedar Waxwing	20	House Finch	174
Great Black-backed Gull	17	European Starling	296	American Goldfinch	167
Caspian Tern	24	White-eyed Vireo	24	House Sparrow	106
Royal Tern	109	Solitary Vireo	5		
Common Tern	17	Yellow-throated Vireo	8	Total Species	158
Forster's Tern	27	Philadelphia Vireo	2	Count Firsts	0
Least Tern	15	Red-eyed Vireo	143		