



THE FLYER

NEWSLETTER OF THE WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB

Volume 27, Number 11

December 2003

A Very Merry Christmas

To all Bird Lovers

And a New Year Filled With Lots of Birds

THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Williamsburg Bird Club will take place at 7:30 on Wednesday, January 21, 2004 in Room 117 of Millington Hall on the William and Mary campus. The program for that meeting will be announced in the January *Flyer*.

SEARCHING FOR DUCKS ALONG THE YORK RIVER

Tom Armour led a field trip looking for waterfowl on the York River the third Saturday in November, enjoying an absolutely gorgeous day. Apparently it was just too beautiful for the waterfowl, which remained scarce. However, the searchers did find Loons at Yorktown, including a Red-throated Loon, and a total of thirty other species. Those enjoying this event were Dave and Ruth Anderton, Jim and Sue Burkhart, Carol and Dave Goff, Al and Meg Karb, Bill and Betty Ann Caldwell, Dave and Phylliss Lee, Cynthia Long and Marilyn Zeigler.

RUTH BECK'S GREAT IMPACT ON THE BIRD CLUB HONORED

As Ruth Beck ended her umteenth term as Club President at the last meeting of the year 2003, the Club officers decided that the time had come to recognize the importance of her 26 years of contributions to the existence and success of the Williamsburg Bird Club. A proclamation to that effect was prepared and presented to Ruth by treasurer, Charles Rend.

The proclamation:

The Williamsburg Bird Club

Is

Pleased upon this occasion to honor one of its most outstanding and cherished members,

Ruth Beck

Whereas, In 1977 Ruth co-founded the Williamsburg Bird Club, and,

Whereas, she has breathed life, fun, joy, knowledge and love of birds into the Club ever since, and

Whereas, she has served in one office or another for most of the Club's 26 years with more terms of President than anyone can any longer count, and,

Whereas, she has continued to educate a long green line of William and Mary students in the skills and joys of bird identification, and nurtured a steady graduate student stream of potential natural scientists, and,

Whereas, she has successfully fought for bird nesting habitat at Craney Island, The Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel and Grandview Beach becoming the god parent of thousands of Least Terns, Common Terns, Black Skimmers and of a smaller but highly valued number of Piping Plover, and,

Whereas, she has stirred the admiration and affection of 26 years of Club Members,

Now Therefore, The Board and Members of the Williamsburg Bird Club do hereby by unanimous and unrefutable acclamation, state, declare and affirm, that from this day forward, Ruth Beck shall be, and remain in perpetuity,

A Lifetime Member of the Williamsburg Bird Club

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This document was signed by current and past Club officers.

Alec Minarik, elected club president for 2004, started this program of recognition by presenting Ruth with a framed, artist's dry point print of six raptors.

The long and loud applause of the members present made clear their enthusiastic approval of the action of the Board.

## FIELD NOTES FOR NOVEMBER

*(Shirley Devan will take over the responsibilities and pleasures of writing **The Flyer** starting with the January edition. So please send your emails to her at [sedvan52@cox.net](mailto:sedvan52@cox.net) or call her at 565-2352. Ed.)*

Reports of arriving fall migrants continued in November with a few wonderful unexpecteds. A late report from Eleanor Young birding near Boykin Park last month found Green Heron, Ruddy Ducks, Brown Pelicans and what appeared to be Rusty Blackbirds, plus a lot “of the usual suspects.”

Our new president, Alex Minarik, enjoys birding trips to the CBBT islands so much that she wants everyone to know how easy it is to get permission to pull off on those islands to do some birding. You can get permission by calling the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel at 757-331-2960 and asking for a letter of permission. You can write them at CBBT, Dept. 001, P.O. Box 111, Cape Charles, Va. 23310-0111 or use their web site, <[www.CBBT.com](http://www.CBBT.com)>.

Nov. 10 – Tom Armour finds a Common Snipe at the Airport. *(I think that name has been changed to Wilson's Snipe but I am not certain of that. Ed.)*

Nov. 11 – Brian Taber takes a trip to Hog Island and finds a Lesser Black Backed Gull on the far side of the ferry and a Blue Phase Snow Goose mixed in with hundreds of Canada Geese at Hog Island.

Nov. 15 – Alex Minarik sees first Purple Finch (male) of the year on her feeder and splashing in the bath. Also had four Wild Turkeys walk into her back yard. The next day a female Purple Finch found the feeder.

Nov. 15 – From his front porch, Bill Snyder watches a Great Egret fishing in Powhatan Creek.

Nov. 16 – John McDowell spots two Horned Grebes enjoying the pond at 199-Rt5 intersection. Sees them there for several days.

Nov. 18 – Tom and Jeanne Armour visit the CBBT Islands and are rewarded with a “beautiful male Harlequin Duck, Purple Sandpipers, Greater Cormorants, a Greater Scaup and Black Scoters.” Then they went on to the Hawk Watch at Kiptopeke and found Pine Siskins, Purple Finches with a great many Gold Finches and White-throated Sparrows. Bill Williams was here with Mitchell Byrd and he'd found a White-winged Dove and two Harris's Sparrows at the refuge birding. Earlier that day Bill had found a Golden Plover feeding on the Mainland Farm.

Thanksgiving Day Jim Booth watched a flock of some 75-100 Northern Gannets working the York River off Yorktown.

Nov. 23 – Bill Williams spotted a female Blue Grosbeak on the Greensprings Nature trail. This sighting moved the late date for this bird back a total of 32 days!

| Williamsburg Bird Club Christmas Count 2003 |          |          |         |          |          |          |         |          |         |       |
|---------------------------------------------|----------|----------|---------|----------|----------|----------|---------|----------|---------|-------|
|                                             | Cp Peary | CheateAn | Coll Wd | Hog Isl. | James I. | JollPond | Kingsm. | Mid Plan | Skimino | Total |
| Common Loon                                 | 2        | 2        |         |          |          |          |         |          | 1       | 5     |
| Pied-billed Grebe                           | 3        | 4        |         | 7        | 1        |          |         | 2        |         | 17    |
| Horned Grebe                                | 1        | 4        |         |          |          |          |         |          |         | 5     |
| Brown Pelican                               |          | 3        |         | 11       |          |          |         |          |         | 14    |
| Dble.-crested Cormorant                     | 12       | 123      | 151     | 48       | 107      |          | 225     | 5        | 9       | 679   |
| Great Blue Heron                            | 8        | 3        |         | 17       | 8        |          | 2       | 2        | 3       | 43    |
| Great Egret                                 |          |          |         | 16       |          |          |         | 1        |         | 17    |
| Black Vulture                               |          |          |         |          |          |          |         | 1        |         | 1     |
| Turkey Vulture                              | 17       |          | 103     |          |          |          |         |          | 2       | 122   |
| Canada Goose                                | 15       | 73       | 51      | 341      | 75       |          |         | 10       |         | 565   |
| Mute Swan                                   | 13       | 9        |         |          |          |          |         | 4        | 1       | 27    |
| Tundra Swan                                 | 14       | 8        |         | 13       |          |          |         |          |         | 35    |
| Wood Duck                                   |          |          |         |          |          |          |         |          |         |       |
| Gadwall                                     |          | 3        | 14      | 4        |          |          |         |          | 3       | 24    |
| America Widgeon                             |          | 2        | 2       |          |          |          |         |          |         | 4     |
| American Black Duck                         |          | 3        |         | 14       | 1        |          |         |          |         | 18    |
| Mallard                                     | 18       |          | 1       | 62       | 5        |          | 28      | 11       | 23      | 148   |
| Blue-winged Teal                            |          |          |         |          |          |          |         |          |         |       |
| Northern Shoveler                           |          |          |         |          |          |          |         |          |         |       |
| Northern Pintail                            |          |          |         |          |          |          |         |          |         |       |
| Green-winged Teal                           |          | 16       |         |          |          |          |         |          |         | 16    |
| Canvasback                                  | 59       | 4        |         |          |          |          |         |          |         | 63    |
| Redhead                                     |          | 2        |         |          |          |          |         |          |         | 2     |
| Ring-necked Duck                            | 2        | 591      |         | 105      |          |          |         |          |         | 698   |
| Lesser Scaup                                |          | 1        |         |          |          |          |         |          |         | 1     |
| Bufflehead                                  | 17       | 36       | 2       | 1        | 1        |          |         |          | 10      | 67    |
| Common Goldeneye                            |          | 2        |         |          |          |          |         |          |         | 2     |
| Hooded Merganser                            | 68       | 13       | 4       | 130      |          |          | 6       | 20       | 2       | 245   |
| Red-breasted Mergans.                       |          |          |         |          | 24       |          |         | 5        | 3       | 32    |
| Ruddy Duck                                  | 1214     | 89       |         |          |          |          |         |          | 300     | 1603  |
| Osprey                                      |          |          |         |          |          |          |         |          |         |       |
| Bald Eagle (adult)                          | 2        | 4        |         | 3        |          |          |         |          |         | 10    |
| Bald Eagle (immature)                       |          |          |         |          |          |          |         |          |         |       |
| Northern Harrier                            |          |          |         | 1        |          |          |         |          |         | 1     |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk                          |          |          |         |          | 1        |          |         |          |         | 1     |
| Cooper's Hawk                               |          |          |         |          |          |          | 1       |          |         | 1     |
| Red-shouldered Hawk                         |          | 1        |         |          |          |          |         |          | 4       | 5     |
| Red-tailed Hawk                             | 2        |          | 1       |          | 1        |          | 1       |          | 2       | 7     |
| American Kestrel                            |          | 1        |         |          | 1        |          |         |          | 1       | 3     |
| Wild Turkey                                 | 1        |          |         |          | 23       |          |         | 3        |         | 27    |
| Northern Bobwhite                           |          |          |         | 6        |          |          |         |          |         | 6     |
| American Coot                               |          | 1        |         | 33       |          |          | 4       |          |         | 38    |
| Killdeer                                    |          | 5        |         |          |          |          |         | 1        | 4       | 10    |
| Greater Yellowlegs                          |          |          |         | 12       |          |          |         |          |         | 12    |
| American Woodcock                           |          |          |         |          |          |          |         | 1        |         | 1     |
| Laughing Gull                               |          |          |         |          |          |          |         |          |         |       |
| Bonaparte's Gull                            |          |          |         | 2        |          |          |         |          |         | 2     |
| Ring-billed Gull                            | 10       | 12       | 8       | 155      | 10       | 1        | 10      | 15       |         | 221   |
| Herring Gull                                |          | 2        |         | 4        |          |          |         |          |         | 6     |
| Great Black-backed Gull                     |          | 1        |         | 37       | 3        |          |         | 1        | 1       | 43    |
| Forster's Tern                              |          | 2        |         | 2        | 1        |          |         |          |         | 5     |
| Rock Dove                                   |          | 16       | 75      |          | 13       |          |         | 150      |         | 254   |
| Mourning Dove                               | 6        | 14       | 16      | 2        | 37       | 2        | 35      | 4        | 73      | 169   |
| Eastern Screech Owl                         |          |          |         |          |          |          |         |          |         |       |
| Great-horned Owl                            |          |          |         |          | 2        |          |         |          |         | 2     |



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