

THE FLYER

NEWSLETTER OF THE WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB

Volume 28, Number 6

Website: www.wmbgbirdclub.com

June 2004

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Alex Minarik

I am a subscriber to VA-Bird and get posts of interesting bird sightings via email from other subscribers around the state. In early April, I was alerted that Red Crossbills were in the Roanoke area regularly visiting someone's feeder near where my in-laws live. I have never seen Red Crossbills. So when we went to my in-law's at Easter, I called the homeowners early Saturday morning. They graciously invited me over to look for the birds. When I arrived at their house they came out and showed me exactly where to look and even set up a scope for me to use. I stood in their side yard for an hour and a half but never saw the crossbills. Strike one.

Two weeks later I was alerted that there was a Eurasian Wigeon on a pond in Hampton. I have never seen a Eurasian Wigeon before, so I drove down there one day before work. The posting said the bird was hanging out with a dozen American Wigeons. I looked for over an hour but never saw it. Strike two.

In mid-May, I was alerted that a Purple Gallinule was seen on the Colonial Parkway by Dan Cristol during the Williamsburg Bird Club's Big Spring Day Count. I was unable to get over there until Wednesday morning. I looked for two hours but couldn't find the bird. That night I read that someone had seen the Gallinule Wednesday evening around 5:30. I decided to head straight to the parkway after work Thursday and give it another try. Finally I got a hit! (Not a life bird, but definitely my first for Virginia.)

BILL SHEEHAN MEMORIAL DEDICATION

On May 6, 2004 around 20 friends and admirers of Bill Sheehan gathered at the Populations Lab at William and Mary to dedicate a bench and tree, donated by the Williamsburg Bird Club, to his memory. Bill was a charter member of the club and its lifelong record keeper. Many shared fond

and sometimes funny remembrances of Bill. A champagne toast given by Bill Holcombe ended with a hearty "Good on you!" salute.

RESEARCH GRANTS AWARDED

Elizabeth Long and Caitlin Kight received the club's two William Sheehan Ornithology Research Grants this year. In May the club awarded each student a \$500 research grant. Caitlin will continue her research on Eastern Bluebird Productivity and Elizabeth Long will continue her research on the foraging strategies of Peregrine Falcons. Congratulations to both and best wishes in their research efforts. Perhaps they will discuss their research at a club meeting in the future.

CLUB FUND RAISER UNDERWAY

The Bird Club will be selling beautiful, colorful enamel Red-headed Woodpecker lapel pins to raise additional funds. The pins will be available at the September meeting. They will cost \$5 each and are suitable for men or women. They will look great on your jacket or blazer and will make great gifts for your birding friends.

NEXT MEETING IS SEPTEMBER 15

Plan to join us Wednesday, September 15, at 7:30 p.m. in Room 117 at Millington Hall at William and Mary. The speaker will be announced in the August and September newsletters. Mark these other fall meeting dates on your calendar: Wednesdays, October 20 and November 17. There is no meeting in December.

FIELD TRIP TO CRANEY ISLAND

The August Field Trip will be to Craney Island on Saturday, August 21st. The shore bird migration should be well underway by then. Car pooling is very important for this destination! Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the Colony Square Shopping Center parking lot on Jamestown Road (close to the Fresh

Market) where we'll consolidate in car pools. Consider wearing long pants and long sleeves and take bug spray, hats, a snack or lunch and liquids, as we probably will not return to Williamsburg until about 1:00 p.m. (depending on how good the birds are!). The drive each way is about an hour. This is one spot where scopes come in handy.

CVWO 10th ANNIVERSARY

By Brian Taber, CVWO

As part of the 10th anniversary activities for Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory this year, we will be selling CDs and DVD's with more than 400 color images of birds, butterflies, staff, publications, articles, volunteers and visitors to our programs. It's an incredible learning tool, with close-up, hand-held pictures of many species, including 29 species of warblers and 15 species of hawks and owls. While most are Kiptopeke activities, there are also pictures from the spring songbird banding seasons at Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge. board members, advisors, some of the Kiptopeke Challenge teams and awards ceremonies. More than twenty people contributed photos. The cost is \$20.00.

It would help to know whether people are interested in CDs or DVD's, so we can make them up in the most efficient way. Please contact me directly if you can provide this information, have any questions, or even if you want to place an order but won't be sending any money yet. Email: Taberzz@aol.com

Thanks for your help with this exciting and worthwhile project. More details to follow.

CONSERVATION CORNER

By Dan Cristol

Because I teach Ornithology and study birds for a living, going birding for fun has become a bit of a busman's holiday. Or at least that's what I had led myself to believe. Once every two years I take a big trip to Alaska or Colorado to find a few carefully researched "lifers," but since my kids were born I have completely stopped going out locally just for the fun of it. Sure, I still get up before dawn and join the crowd for Christmas Counts, class field trips or the never-ending outings to gather data for my research. But I can't remember the last time I went out — just me and my binoculars — to see what I could find in the neighborhood. "When the kids are older I'll do it with them" I had told myself so many times. All that changed on May 9th when Brian Taber convinced me to fill in for someone to cover Jamestown Island and the Parkway for the Spring Count.

Because of family obligations I promised my wife I'd be back by 10, so I left the house at 4:30 to give me a fighting chance to cover the territory adequately. In the cool of the predawn I slid the car to the shoulder of the Isthmus at Jamestown and stepped out to a full force warbler gale of singing blackpolls, parulas, yellow-throated warblers, yellowthroats, redstarts, black-and-whites and water thrushes. At every stop on the loop road I was inundated by the most energetic flycatcher chorus of phoebes, pewees, kingbirds, great-crested and Acadian flycatchers I'd ever heard. As the sun came up I realized why there were so many flycatchers — the deer flies descended. But with each brown-headed nuthatch and red-headed woodpecker sighting the flies bothered me less, and by 9, when I came across a lost purple gallinule feeding in a puddle at Gospel Spreading Farm with northbound least, semi-palmated and solitary sandpipers and greater and lesser yellowlegs, not even a horsefly bite could have shattered my bliss. When I got home at 10 I had seen over 100 species all within a few miles of my own yard. The pure joy of being out and looking at birds had been awakened. It was just like being a kid again — nothing to write down, no need to explain to someone that he is looking through the wrong end of the binoculars and unlimited possibilities emerging from a night of migration.

It's easy to get depressed reading about the decline in neotropical migrants, the unending assault of the current government on our wildlife and the rapid suburbanization of our local countryside. But I have discovered the perfect antidote to all of that. Just get out and enjoy the company of our still plentiful avian neighbors. I'm happy to report that I went out again and retraced the route last weekend (only 89 species this time, due to the warblers and sandpipers moving north), and it was even more fun the second time. There are fewer migrants and less forest to look for them in, but that's no reason to stop enjoying the incredible wealth of birds we have here. Happy birding and have a great summer.

THANKS TO THE CLUB CHEFS

Ever wonder who brings the eats and treats we devour after each meeting? Here are the names of those wonderful people who carry those beverages and pans all the way from the parking lot to Millington Hall so we can have a late night snack while we chat and catch up on the news. Thanks to all who "treat" us so well. Everything is delicious and much appreciated.

January - Diana Nolan and Ruth Beck

February - Diana Nolan and Barbara Streb

March - Carol and Dave Goff

April - Barbara Streb and Diana Nolan

May - Phyllis Jennings and Diana Nolan

NEW MEMBER

The Club welcomes new member: Jean Sherwin. Jean, we look forward to seeing you at our fall meetings and field trips.

COLLEGE CREEK HAWKWATCH

By Brian Taber, CVWO

The College Creek Hawkwatch, located on the James River, 3 miles southeast of Williamsburg, sponsored by Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory, completed 63 days and 97 hours of observation, from February 20 to May 22. It was the second-highest number of days and third highest number of hours of coverage. The protocol remained the same as in the previous 7 seasons: a daily watch was conducted, weather permitting, from about 10 a.m. to noon, Eastern Standard Time. All hawks and vultures crossing the river headed north were tallied.

The biggest days were 106 on March 7th; 73 on both April 3rd and April 16th; 67 on April 4th and 66 on March 9th; they accounted for 362 birds or 38 % of the total.

The season was typically “up and down,” with a good beginning to March, but a poor ending. The first half of April was excellent, but was followed by a slow end of the month. May totals were quite low, however; the 4 Mississippi Kites on the 17th were clearly the highlight of the season. Single Mississippi Kites have been seen on 3 previous seasons.

No Peregrines or Merlins were seen; they have been seen on four previous seasons. Broad-winged were seen only on one day, April 16th. A daily record 9 Red-tailed Hawks were seen on the first day of the count, February 20th, but amazingly, only 1 Red-tailed was recorded at the site from March 11th to April 13th. There has never been such a long period with only 1 Red-tailed recorded.

Black Vultures were recorded on only 7 days, for a total of 22, the 5th highest of the 8 years. Coopers’ Hawks were recorded on only 3 days, for a total of 4, the 6th highest of the 8 years. Red-shouldered Hawks were recorded only on 4 days, for a total of 5, tied for 6th highest of the 8 years. Only 13 Bald Eagles were recorded in May; as a comparison, last year a record 73 were recorded in May. The Osprey total of 152 was the highest of the 8 seasons. The 12 species for the season ties the lowest with 2 other years. The birds per hour

total of 10 is a little below the 8 season average of 11.75.

The Bald Eagle nest, just west of the site was active again this year. Three Osprey nests were visible, including the one directly in front of the hawkwatch, on the duck blind that was almost totally destroyed by Hurricane Isabel last September. The pair worked hard early in the season and it appeared that they wouldn’t be able to make the sticks stay on the structure, but eventually, they formed a substantial nest. 2004 totals:

Black Vulture, 22	Osprey, 152
Turkey Vulture, 654	Bald Eagle, 45
Mississippi Kite, 4	Northern Harrier, 23
Broad-winged Hawk, 3	American Kestrel, 22
Red-shouldered Hawk, 5	Red-tailed Hawk, 31
Total, 1013	

Some non-raptor highlights included Brown Pelicans in February and March, 94 Tundra Swans on February 29, hundreds of Red-breasted Mergansers and 2 Common Mergansers in March and April, a Red-headed Woodpecker on March 7, thousands of Ring-billed Gulls flying high and northward on March 7, an early Barn Swallow on March 12, a Lesser Black-backed Gull on March 26 and 27, 43 Chimney Swifts on May 6 and many days of hundreds of Tree Swallows.

Many thanks again to volunteers Tom Armour and Bill Williams for coverage help on 40 days and 27 days respectively.

SPRING COUNT RESULTS

By Bill Holcombe

The weather cooperated for the Spring Count on May 9 and 153 species were reported. This included 23 warbler species. Happily the warblers seemed to be holding their own with several species numbers showing improvement over recent years (not that we can draw significant conclusions from one count.) Shore birds also made a good showing with 10 species. And there were some outstanding birds including the Swainson’s Warbler, the Purple Gallinule (probably spring count firsts), the Wilson’s Warbler and the Cattle Egret. Some of the water fowl hung around long enough to be included, as did the Swamp Sparrow and the Savannahs.

There were also some surprisingly missing birds; no Loons, no Brown Pelicans, no Sharp-shinned Hawks, no Wild Turkeys and no Sanderlings.

Sam Skalak, who spotted the Swainson’s Warbler, was surprised at the excitement that his find caused. The bird was 15 feet away for about 15 minutes giving Sam time to compare all of the

possibilities in his book. He said "It practically posed for me."

Participants in the event included Jeanne and Tom Armour, Hugh Beard, Ruth Beck, Dan Cristol, Grace and Joe Doyle, Gary Driscoll, Bettye Fields, Carol and Paul McAllister, Alex Minarik, Lee Schuster, Dave Shantz, Sam Skalak, Brian Taber and Bill Williams.

Check the Bird Club web site for the complete listing of 153 species: www.wmbgbirdclub.com

BIRD SIGHTINGS: MAY, END OF APRIL AND EARLY JUNE

Report your backyard birds and local sightings to Shirley Devan at 220-6269 (evening phone) or sedevan52@cox.net (home email). Continue to send your June and July sightings and they will be listed in the August edition of The Flyer.

April 28: Marilyn Zeigler reports seeing a Rose-breasted Grosbeak in her yard just as she was preparing to head out the door for Atlanta. She described it as "a heart-stopping moment."

May 1: Joe Doyle reports that he saw a Black-and-white Warbler and a Black-throated Blue Warbler in his backyard at Kingsmill – both at the same time!

May 2: Joe and Grace Doyle report from their trip to Camp Peary: 56 species including Mute Swan, Turkey, Bald Eagle, Red-headed Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Great-crested Flycatcher, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Wood Thrush, White-eyed Vireo, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Ovenbird, Hooded Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Orchard Oriole and Northern Oriole.

May 3: Bill Holcombe reports: Toward the end of April I had two phone calls. Peter and Ellen Bennet from Kingspoint had a pair of Rose-Breasted Grosbeaks for those last few days as did Sue Voight from New Kent. "I had no such luck," reports Bill.

May 5: Tom Armour reports: Just now on Treasure Island Road, 1 Willow Flycatcher, 2 Yellow Warblers, 4 Indigo Buntings.

May 7: Gil and Jean Frey report: "Just wanted to report a rarity for us. A beautiful Rose Breasted Grosbeak landed on our feeder last Friday evening. Have not seen him since, but a neighbor on the farm has also seen one recently. I wonder if he is migrating. All other visitors are the usual. We have Chickadees and Tree Swallows usurping a few Bluebird boxes, but there are Bluebirds using others. Everybody's got to be somewhere,

right?"

May 8: Diana Nolan reports: "We've had a Red-headed Woodpecker visiting our suet for about a week. Wonderful to see since it has not been around for about six months. Also saw some Royal Terns on the James crossing on the ferry yesterday."

May 9: Joe and Grace Doyle surveyed Camp Peary for the Spring Count and reported 73 species!

May 10: Brian Taber reports: "Yesterday, on the Williamsburg Spring Count, Dan Cristol, of the College of William and Mary, found a Purple Gallinule along the Colonial Parkway, between Williamsburg and Jamestown. I saw it this morning at 7 in a narrow strip of water and feeding in the adjacent weedy field, where a farm pasture meets a small swamp."

May 11: Several birders from around VA reported on the VSO ListServe: Purple Gallinule still near the farm on Colonial Parkway between Williamsburg and Jamestown.

May 10: From Thelma Dalmás, in Evinston, VA: "The 'invasion' of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks seems to have ended in Central Virginia. We had birds at the feeder for 20 consecutive days, from April 20 through May 9. The numbers varied from 3 to 9 (our peak count on May 5). The highest count in our area was from Lynchburg on April 30 when 15 ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAKS were seen at a feeder. We have kept daily records at our home for six years and prior to this year our high count was 2 birds for three consecutive days."

May 14: Shirley Devan reports: "Eastern Kingbird and Song Sparrow May 14 at office. Nice change from the usual crows and starlings and house sparrows."

May 17: For the record the "Purple Gallinule" was seen by myself and 4 other birders on Sunday morning (5/17) from about 7:00 am - 8:15ish in the same area as has been previously described.

May 17: Brian Taber, Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory, reports: "Today, May 17th, bird number 1000 for the season at the College Creek Hawkwatch near Williamsburg, was a Mississippi Kite....and so were birds 1002, 1003 and 1004! Because of the backlighting, I can't be sure of the ages of all of the birds, though one was an adult. The birds passed the station at 11:23, 12:10 and 2 were at 12:22 (daylight savings time). One bird circled the marsh for a minute after crossing the river. The other three, just above treetop level, never even slowed down."

May 18: Bill Williams reports: "A single Cattle Egret was among the goat herd at Gospel Spreading Farm on Tuesday, May 18. Shirley Devan saw two Cattle Egrets between 11 and

11:30 am on same day (but no Purple Gallinule).”

May 21: Tony and Chris Dion: Both Chris & I saw an Orchard Oriole at our bird feeder. It stayed the better part of a half hour, and we haven't seen it since! Last year we saw an orchard oriole at our feeder irregularly throughout the summer. It has probably returned.

May 22: Bill Holcombe reports: I'm not sure that I've spotted them all but I have found the Wood Thrush and Cardinal nests in front of the house and a Titmouse nest in the rear and I believe that there is a Carolina Wren somewhere in the back but have not yet pinpointed it. The Wood Thrush sits very upright in her nest and looks quite regal.

May 23: Joe and Grace Doyle report from their trip to Camp Peary: 55 species sighted before having to leave early because of car trouble. Highlights include: Laughing Gull, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Great-crested Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, Northern Parula, Yellow Warbler, Hooded Warbler, and Scarlet Tanager.

May 30: Bill Holcombe reports: Two good yard visitors, a Scarlet Tanager and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.

May 30: Joe and Grace Doyle report from their trip to Camp Peary: 56 species including the highlight, a Yellow-billed Cuckoo plus Eastern Phoebe and most of the “usual suspect” birds seen on previous visits in May. Joe says that over 100,000 trees came down during the hurricane and the resulting clearing effort destroyed a lot of bird habitat. He added that they are just not seeing and hearing the numbers of birds they have observed in past years.

June 2: Chris & Tony Dion report: We have several bird houses in our yard. Two of them are ceramic bottle gourds that you see at Colonial Williamsburg. For the first time in two years we have nestlings one! Three bluebirds! When I put the bottle gourd up, I put it at eye level, so I can watch their progress regularly. The parents are busy feeding their young. I'd estimate 5-7 days old.

June 6: Shirley Devan reports from YRSP: “While checking nest boxes, heard Bobwhite Quail in three locations on Meh-te-Kos Trail; also, Indigo Buntings, Common Yellowthroat, Wood Thrushes (many heard all around), Downy Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, adult Bald Eagles, Eastern Kingbird, Hooded Warbler (near Visitor Center), Yellow-billed Cuckoos (near Visitor Center).

I bumped into Clark White from Yorktown and

the VSO who was birding around the Visitor Center. He was up to 36 species for his 3 hours at the Park. He identified the Yellow-billed Cuckoos for me and I spotted the Hooded Warbler he had been hearing.

June 6: Bill Williams reports: I had a Cliff Swallow at Mainland Farm adjacent to the Green Springs Trail on Sunday, June 6. This was species 194 for the trail list I've been keeping since 1997. Fledgling Common Grackles and American Robins are now being seen. A lone Prothonotary Warbler has been singing near the boardwalk and at least 2 pairs of Wood Ducks and 2 pairs of Canada Geese have downy to large young. The beaver pond area has 7 active Osprey nests and quite a few Green Herons.

June 8: The newsletter editors take a short summer break – no newsletter in July. Look for the next edition in early August and continue to send your sightings. If you take a vacation and see some unusual birds, please send the news!

ANNUAL PICNIC

Ruth and Sherwin Beck hosted the Club's Annual Picnic Sunday, June 6. Thirty-four members attended and everyone brought outstanding food! Jeanne Armour organized the food and we had a wonderful array of salads and desserts to accompany the smoked turkey prepared by Dave Schuster. Beth Morgan brought the door prize puzzle and awarded Jack Nolan and Sam Skalak with first and second prize, respectively. We're not revealing the winning answer to the door prize puzzle here because it may be used another time! (Now, don't you wish you had been there?!)

Alex Minarik led a group down the Beck's driveway in search of birds. With some effort a couple of people saw the Hooded Warbler, but he was elusive and most of us had to be happy listening to him. Some people gathered around the hummingbird station to witness the MANY hummers swarming around. Others camped out on the deck and swing down by the lake. No question about it – a very relaxing afternoon.

Here's a list of folks who enjoyed wonderful food, beautiful birds, and delightful conversation: Tom and Jeanne Armour, Ruth and Sherwin Beck, Winifred and John Buchanon, Steve and Shirley Devan, Joe and Grace Doyle, Dave and Carol Goff, Faye Hobbs, Bill and Jane Holcombe, Beth Morgan, Alex and Mike Minarik, Jack and Diana Nolan, Chuck and Jean Rend, Barbara Rockwell, Rich Scherer, Dave, Lee and Jenny Schuster, Sam Skalak, Mary Smith, Phil and Anne Young, Dave and Chris Wilcox and Marilyn Zeigler. Check the Bird Club web site for photos:

www.wmbgbirdclub.com

Thanks to Ruth and Sherwin Beck for opening their lovely home and property to us. Thanks also to Jeanne Armour for making sure we had everything we needed. Thanks to everyone who worked to bring delicious food. We look forward to next year!

HISTORY AND BIRDING: THE BEST OF BOTH IN LYNCHBURG

By Thomas B. McCary, VP & Program Chair

The VSO's seventy-fifth anniversary meeting in Lynchburg, Virginia provided this birder and historical interpreter with excellent opportunities for seeing birds and discovering history. When two hobbies and interests can be rewarded on two spring mornings in beautiful Virginia, one experiences a special blessing indeed.

Eager to visit Thomas Jefferson's retreat Poplar Forest for the first time in several years, I chose that historic destination for the May 1st field trip. Our binoculars danced quite a merry jig: at times we were searching the verdure for birds; at times we were focusing with wonder on the marvelous retreat. A Baltimore Oriole entertained us in trees near the parking lot. As we proceeded down the old carriage road from Jefferson's home, we heard the rather eerie enunciation of the "rain crow," or Yellow-billed Cuckoo. After some while of playing an artful game of hide-and-seek, this lovely creature finally took wing, allowing us a few good glimpses. We were indeed in the country and Common Crows were everywhere. White-tailed deer bounded through the fields. We searched in vain for the resident Great Horned Owl; perhaps the many crows had sent him packing. We were rewarded, however, with a handsome Indigo Bunting which kindly allowed us to view him up close and personal through a scope. No doubt Mr. Jefferson himself was charmed by some of these very same species at his cloistered country house long ago.

My second morning took me to downtown Lynchburg and the beautiful Riverwalk. We were all properly up-to-date and pronounced the rock doves of the old city "rock pigeons." Soon a Northern Rough-winged Swallow perched on a wire close by. But the highlight of the morning excursion was a magnificent Baltimore Oriole which treated us to his beauty and song. Another bird which posed in the open for us along the walk was the normally secretive Red-eyed Vireo.

Leaving the lovely James River behind, our group then traveled to the old city cemetery. This beautifully maintained site is the final resting place of hundreds of Confederate soldiers. Many varieties of birds are attracted to the open park-like setting. We enjoyed close observations of

handsome Tree Swallows which are occupying a birdhouse there. An Indigo Bunting entranced us with his color and his cheery warble.

In addition to the birding and the history, the meeting was marked by the good conviviality and camaraderie characteristic of birders who gather in fellowship. It was good to see Dr. and Mrs. Mitchell Byrd and Bill Williams at breakfast one morning, and I enjoyed some interesting chats with our neighbor in Gloucester and our VSO president, Teta Kain. As always, the Saturday evening social hour and banquet provided great food and opportunities for conversation with old friends.

Kudos to the Lynchburg Bird Club for organizing a very special weekend to celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the VSO. Many of the presentations and talks dealt with the history of the club and the VSO, and especially with Dr. Ruskin S. Freer, the gentleman who was the founder and first president of the club.

When I departed Lynchburg, I came away with that delightful feeling that one receives when a visit has been pleasant in all respects. Gently chastising myself for not visiting the historic city for some years, I began planning my next trip as I drove back to Williamsburg. When the birds are good and the history is good, it's definitely my kind of place.

NESTING SCHEDULE FOR CHICKADEES AND BLUEBIRDS

If you've got Bluebirds nesting in the box in your yard, this is their nesting schedule:

Nest building: 1 – 6 days

Egg laying: 5 – 7 days, one blue egg per day. Average clutch is 3 – 5 eggs. Often the first clutch of the season is 5 eggs and the second is 4 eggs.

Incubation: 12 – 14 days. Female begins incubation when final egg is laid.

Brooding (female sitting over the young to keep them warm): ~6days

You can identify approximately how old the nestlings are by their appearance:

Day 1 – Hatch Day! Nestlings are practically "naked." Bright coral pink skin, eyes sealed, sparse tufts of down.

Day 2 – 4: Wings, head, spine look bluish due to feathers developing under skin

Day 4 – 7: Feather sheaths begin to emerge on wings. Eyes open. Brooding by female decreases as birds mature because they are able "thermoregulate," or regulate their own body temperatures.

Day 7: First feathers burst from tip of sheaths. Eyes open as slits.

Day 8 – 11: Eyes fully open. Feathers continue to burst sheath

Day 11 – 12: Feathers of wing and tail reveal cobalt blue in males, duller gray in females.

Day 13: Fully feathered young are increasingly active

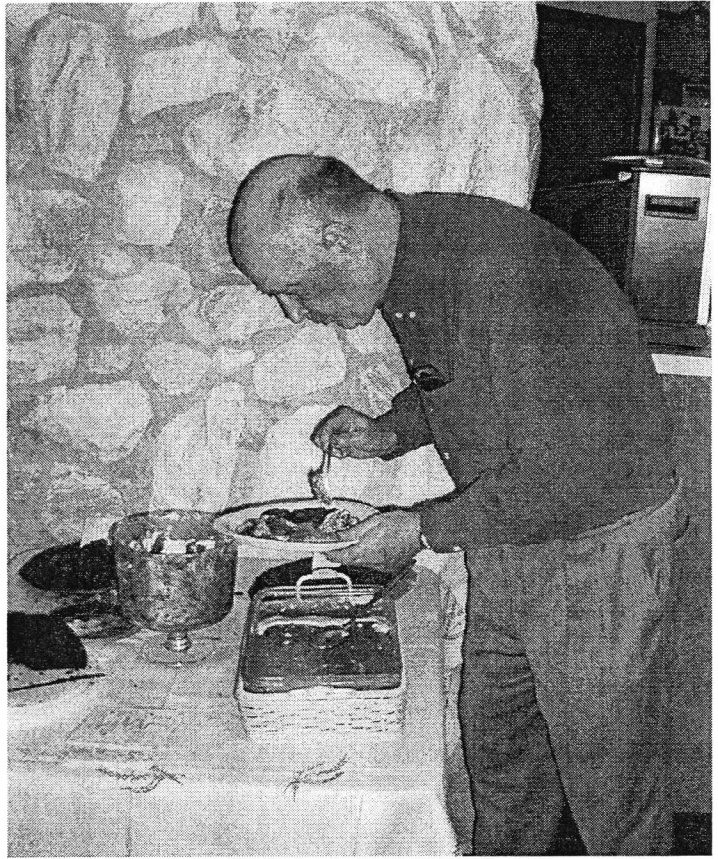
Day 14 – 22: Fledging and first flight. Empty nest soiled and flattened. Young remain in cover while parents feed them.

The schedule for Carolina Chickadees is similar to the Eastern Bluebird. The average clutch is 6 eggs but ranges from 5 – 8 eggs. Chickadees usually produce only one brood per season whereas Bluebirds often produce two broods and sometimes three.

Disturbing the boxes once a week to record observations is about the most the birds will tolerate. More disturbance than that will sometimes affect the nesting success and the behavior of the adults. It can also lead predators (raccoons, squirrels, etc.) to the box.

To get more detailed info about the birds nesting in your yard or neighborhood, go to Cornell's Lab of Ornithology web site:

http://birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse/bird_bios/bird-bios_index.html



Treasurer Chuck Rend revisits the dessert table.

PIX OF THE PICNIC



Jeanne Armour considers next year's menu.



Tom Armour and Joe Doyle debate politics.