

THE FLYER

NEWSLETTER OF THE WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB

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August 2004

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Alex Minarik

It has been a good breeding season on my 0.602 acres this year. There have been two successful nestings by bluebirds in the bluebird boxes, one in May and the other in July. The chickadees had a successful nesting of five fledglings in early June. Red-bellied woodpeckers excavated a hole and nested in the gum tree in my back yard, and successfully raised two young. I am currently watching Carolina wrens feed their brood of five in the flower box outside the dining room window. (I decided to let them nest there after reading Dan Cristol's article in the Gazette.) Their nest is an interesting domed shaped affair made of leaves and pine needles.

There is plenty of other evidence of nearby breeding too. The titmice, white-breasted nuthatches, downy woodpeckers and house finches fed their young fledglings at our feeders back in June. Now there are several young cardinals coming to the feeder. The other evening two wood thrushes were harassing the barred owl in my yard, so I presume they have a nest in the area.

All of this activity has kept me entertained this summer. And now I look forward to the fall migration and the surprises it will bring to my yard.

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 for the "Bird Club Book Club." Tom McCary invites you to join him to discuss the book, The Big Year, by Mark Obmascik. Tom will give his impressions of the book in "The Race to Record: A Review of The Big Year." Then he'll show a video of the April segment from PBS's News Hour with Jim Lehrer in which correspondent Margaret Warner interviewed the author. There's plenty of time to read the book between now and the middle of September, so pack it in your beach bag and get ready for an entertaining read. The subtitle of the book is "A Tale of Man,

Nature, and Fowl Obsession." You're invited to share your ideas about the book, the competition and the results of The Big Year. Even if you have not read the book, come to the meeting and someone will most likely lend you a copy, because you'll most certainly want to read it after the discussion.

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.

AUGUST 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. Carpooling 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 carpools. 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.

JOE AND GRACE DOYLE REPORT CAMP PEARY BIRDS

Joe and Grace Doyle "bird" Camp Peary every weekend, weather permitting. Their weekly visits and ongoing records are important because of the bird population trends observed over time. Here are their observations from their June visits:

June 13: 53 species observed. The highlights include: Black Vulture, Wild Turkey, Common Yellowthroat, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Blue

Grosbeak, Orchard Oriole, Red-headed Woodpecker, Great Crested Flycatcher and American Oystercatcher.

June 20: 55 species observed. American Oystercatcher observed again. Birds seen this date (not seen the previous week) – Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Kingbird, Tree Swallow, American Robin, Brown Thrasher, Northern Parula, Hooded Warbler, Scarlet Tanager.

June 27: 57 species observed. Observed **only** on this date: Brown Pelican, Tundra Swan, Northern Flicker, Brown-headed Nuthatch. Birds seen on **each** of their visits in June: Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Red-tailed Hawk, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Barn Swallow, Blue Jay, American Crow, Fish Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, Wood Thrush, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, White-eyed Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Indigo Bunting, Rufous-sided Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

July 11: 55 species observed. Joe reported the following species still around (not migrated yet): Osprey, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, White-eyed Vireo, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Great-crested Flycatcher, Tree Swallows and Barn Swallows. Also observed were Wild Turkey and Red-tailed Hawk. Joe reports that they are not seeing many Mallards or Snowy Egrets this year and continues to remark about the strange mix of birds seen and not seen this year.

JUNE AND JULY BIRD SIGHTINGS

Report your backyard birds and local sightings to Shirley Devan at 220-6269 (evening phone) or sedevan52@cox.net (home email). If you encountered some interesting birds on your summer vacation/travels, please share!

June 12: Joe Doyle reports from their home in Kingsmill: For the last two weeks they knew they had a Barn Owl nest in their backyard. This evening between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m. two immature Barn Owls landed on their deck railing and observed Joe and Grace eating their dinner. Joe was stunned and amazed. He reports that their fronts were still fuzzy but that their backs had the regular Barn Owl coloration. Shortly after this an adult Barn Owl landed in their yard about 30 feet

away. Memorable sightings!

June 12: Alex Minarik accompanied Shirley Devan on the Meh-te-Kos Trail at York River State Park to check nest boxes. They recorded 36 species along the trail and on the entrance and approach roads. The highlights of what Alex heard (quite a few!) and Shirley saw (only a few!): Wood Duck, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great-crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Wood Thrush, White-eyed Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Northern Parula, Prothonotary Warbler, Ovenbird, Yellow-breasted Chat (the highlight of the day!), and Eastern Meadowlark.

June 15: Jeanne Frey reports: “Just wanted to report our delightful sighting yesterday, as we sipped our evening wine on the back deck. Up on the railing flew a beautiful blue gray gnatcatcher, which we confirmed via Peterson, immediately. We certainly hope that he lives up to his title!!! This year we have scarlet and summer tanagers in addition to all the regulars. It's a joy to watch all the young bald eagles from our beach.”

June 15: Bill Keith, Portsmouth, reports on VA-Bird: “There is at least one Common Grackle that gets a piece of dry dog food from my neighbor's yard & brings it to my bird bath. The bird drops it in the water and waits until it softens. Then the bird bites off the softened part & repeats the process until he eats it all. Talk about a bird brain.”

June 18: Terry Johnston reports, “we have a large family of mallards regularly feeding right at our deck at our back yard feeders. They don't seem to be old enough to fly so they are waddling up from the lake and returning under a slightly raised area in the fence.”

June 19: Bill Snyder found a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, an Eastern Kingbird and a Pileated Woodpecker in his yard. He also saw the Mute Swans sail up Powhatan Creek for the first time in a couple of weeks and they had two babies with them. All four scrambled for the corn he sprinkled in the creek.

June 20: Late June evening: Bill Snyder reported by way of Bill Holcombe: “Returning to his home on Powhatan Creek toward the end of a June evening, Bill Snyder watched four Osprey, two adults and two juveniles, circling over his front yard and apparently sharing a steady twittering and chattering with one another, a scene he had never seen before.”

July 3 & 4: Emedio Bracalente sent some photos (by email) of Great Egrets, Ospreys, Laughing Gulls, Herring Gulls and Great Blue Herons seen on Queens Creek at the Queens Lake boat

dock and from a dock in New Quarter Park. "The young Ospreys were on a channel marker pole on the Camp Peary side of the creek. The pictures of the Ospreys were taken from across the creek in New Quarter Park. Saw an Osprey pair, I assumed they were the parents, flying around over the creek but could not get a good close picture. Many of the photos were taken with 30X to 40X zoom so they are a little blurry. Also spotted a Bald Eagle flying around over the woods at Camp Peary."

July 8: From Fritz and Ineke Schaller by way of neighbor Bill Williams: "Last Thursday [July 1] we heard a Red-tailed Hawk in the back yard making all kind of noise. What we found was a baby Flicker on the ground. It was being attacked by not only the young hawk but by ants and yellow jackets. We know the rules, just let nature take its course. You know Ineke, well she couldn't let it just lie there and die, so she brought it in. It has been here a week and has recovered well and is doing really great. We are feeding it dog food every twenty minutes, except at night. He (Lucky) is growing like a weed. I started to teach him how to eat ants today."

July 8: Bill Holcombe had two good birds in the neighborhood for his birthday, a Yellow-billed Cuckoo and an Ovenbird.

July 10: Carol and Dave Goff report from YRSP: "We had wonderful, out-in-the open views of a Summer Tanager, a Blue Grosbeak, an Indigo Bunting, a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, a Common Yellowthroat. We stopped and listened for a long time to a wonderful Wood Thrush concert; it was right over our heads in a thickly wooded area, but we couldn't spot it because it wasn't moving at all, so we just gave up and listened to its "flute" symphony. We heard many other birds too – Ovenbird, Red-eyed Vireo, Great Crested Flycatcher, and the usual backyard bird songs. Heard some others too but didn't know what they were.

July 17: Alice Lee Sargeant reported two albino Northern Mockingbirds in Governor's Land.

July 21: Alex Minarik saw a Louisiana Water-thrush hunting for insects right beside the deck in her back yard.

July 28: Bill Williams reports: "Not too much on the move yet, but we're getting close to that time. Nevertheless, I have a few items of interest. A pair of Green Herons raised 3 young at the Greensprings Trail. I was able to watch the nest each week from incubation through pre-fledging of the young. Bryan Watts saw a Cattle Egret along the causeway at Jamestown Island 23 July. In between the heavy downpours of Sunday, 25 July, I had 2 hatch-year White Ibis at the Greensprings Trail. They were seen very briefly just after daybreak, and then could not be

relocated."

July 28: Tom McCary reports a Great Crested Flycatcher has been resident in his yard on Richmond Road near the College. He also reports a Ground Hog visiting his yard this summer!

PURPLE MARTIN HOUSE AVAILABLE

Bill Snyder has a strong, well built Purple Martin house that got knocked down in a storm, that he would like to donate to anyone wishing to use it. Bill says that it needs a new floor and a coat of paint but has many years of good use left in it. Bill lives on Sandy Bay Road which is off Jamestown Road at the intersection marked by the Pie Company, the 7 - 11 and the Carrot Tree Bakery. Call him at 229-8526 if you want to adopt a Purple Martin house.

WHEN YOU GO COUNTING NESTS WITH RUTH BECK

By Bill Holcombe

I did not know what a wonderful morning that I was in for when I responded to Ruth's plea for some help with special projects. This one was a beaut. We counted bird nests totaling close to 4,500 on the service area above the east end of the tunnel that takes you under the Chesapeake Bay when driving to Norfolk.

Twenty years ago by cajoling and threatening all of the authorities with jurisdiction over that plot of land of several acres, Ruth established a protected nesting area for Common Terns and Black Skimmers that like to nest near them. While the Skimmers are not very combative, they are smart enough to know that the Terns are very aggressive at attacking intruders, so they nest in close to these birds to gain some protection.

For sixteen years this plan worked beautifully. Eventually the available nesting area was covered by 3,500 Common Tern's nests and 300 Black Skimmer's nests, with a small number of Gull-billed nests off by themselves in one corner. The biggest problem was finding ways to keep the chicks from wandering down the driveways onto the highway filled with cars going 60 miles an hour. Then Ruth worked out an arrangement with the Sheriff's Department which was looking for outside work for the jail's inmates. Now they come and create sand bag barriers that work quite well.

Then in 2000, Laughing Gulls, soon joined by some Herring Gulls, found the area to be ideal for their needs. There were no predators to attack their nests and the skimmer and tern nests offered easy pickings of food for their young. By the 2003 nesting season the gulls were by far, the most

numerous nesting birds on the island. Ruth wanted a count of the nests by species for 2004.

Ruth's son Michael and Sam Skalak got the job of counting gull nests that were off by themselves and Ruth and I set out to count the Terns and Skimmers and those Laughing Gulls that had crowded in on them. The administration buildings and roads located on the island cut it up into sections and it was clear which species were occupying which sections. In the small sections we counted all nests and in the larger section we counted half of the area and doubled the number. We started early in the morning before the sun reached full strength. While we counted a section the birds usually rose up above us. Then they returned to the nests as soon as we finished counting that section.

While the whole process and its purpose was fascinating, the impact of walking into the nesting areas with hundreds of birds screaming at you, spraying you with fresh guano (we wore hard hats), and pecking at your hats was both exciting and primitive. We not only counted the nests but identified them as 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5-egg nests. When counting the tern and skimmer areas the birds rose into the air, circled, and dove at us. When we got to the Laughing Gulls in the mixed area the nesters were tougher, louder, more defiant and more likely to peck at your hat. With all of this defiant screaming by the parents and clouds of birds just above us, and seeing hundreds of nests with one to several eggs, I felt like I was in the midst of God's creation!

After hours of steady work we were finished. Over hamburgers and sodas we compiled the resulting charts. The final count of nests was 1,178 Common Terns, 75 Black Skimmers, 12 Gull-billed Terns, 3,300 Laughing Gulls and 45 Herring Gulls. Ruth will file those results with a variety of interested organizations.

There is no easy solution to protecting the terns and skimmers from being pushed aside, or from the predation of the gulls. We don't yet know how the story ends. What I do know is that working with Ruth on her projects offers a unique opportunity for some exhilarating moments viewing nature up very close...and for contributing to the welfare of our wonderful bird population.

BARN SWALLOWS IN WILLIAMSBURG

By Tony Dion

One of the things we look forward to each year is the return of the barn swallows to our front porch in Williamsburg, VA. For those of you who haven't visited us, we have a 7'W X 24'L raised

front porch covered by the front roof, but otherwise it is open to the elements.

During our first spring here in 2000, we noticed barn swallows actively searching out the front of our house and appeared to be looking for places to build a nest. One of our neighbors told us the previous owners used to have hanging baskets that the barn swallows nested in each year.

I researched barn swallows and found out that all they need is a 5" X 5" piece of wood placed either in a corner or along a joist six inches below the roof. I cut two pieces of plywood to fit in the front corners of our porch, and they were in business!

Each year we have had two nests, this year being the exception with one nest. The last two years there were two families per nest. After the first one would fledge, the parents would lay some more eggs, and have a second brood. When the second brood hatched, the first brood would help feed them.

You learn as you go along. The barn swallows are trained by their parents that when they are old enough, they turn around, raise their tail end over the side of the nest, and let go! Makes for very little nest cleaning on the parents' part. Didn't take too long until I put a 3' X 4' piece of plastic on the porch floor under their nests, and now we're all happy. When they are done nesting, I roll up the plastic and dispose of it.

I thought we were going to have a problem this year for they couldn't seem to make up their minds as to if/when they'd build their nest. Finally they started and got it done in about 9 days. They use pieces of mud, one piece at a time, and build a VERY solid nest in the corner. When the mud dries, it looks as if it is stucco!

This year's family has five nestlings in it. Today [June 14] was a pretty special day for me. From hatching to fledging takes between 12-15 days, so based upon when your birds hatch, you can pretty well determine when they will fledge. I had some errands to run and got back home about 11:30 a.m. Sitting at the computer, about 8 ft away from the nest, I heard a rather loud commotion coming from the birds. Thinking it might be a neighbor's cat come to find a meal, I had a look. Three of the five nestlings were taking their first flying lessons! They were all fluttery and awkward, learning the finer arts of how and what to do to fly. They'd go back and forth the length of the porch, landing on railings, light fixtures, bird feeders, whatever. They'd also fly into the screens on the windows because they don't know what a screen is! I watched them for the better part of an hour, and then the three flyers decided that their siblings in the nest who hadn't attempted flying seemed to be fed more often because there were only two of them. If they wanted to partake, they'd better get

back in the nest.

Going by previous history, they will practice flying for several days until the entire brood has fledged. Then they will follow their parents in flight and learn how to catch bugs on the wing! This may take another week or so. Then they're off on their own.

Because this year's brood was a little late, we'll have to wait and see if we get another brood when these leave. But it is really enjoyable to have them come every year, raise their families, and allow us to watch them. One nest can be observed from the computer room window, while the other nest can be watched as we eat meals in the kitchen.

I was going to take some pictures of them for this year, but my timing was off. Now that they can fly, they won't sit in the nest long enough for me to get a picture!

This is more of a symbiotic relationship than one would think. We get 3-4 months' worth of up close viewing pleasure, and in return the swallows get a protected site. I watch carefully for our neighbor's two marauding cats and keep them away until all the broods have fledged. Also, swallows are insectivores who get their food "on the wing" normally at a height of 20-40 feet up in the air. Imagine my surprise two years ago when walking behind our push mower on our 1/2-acre plot when I was joined on either side of the mower, at mower height by both parent swallows! When the brood is gaining in size their food demands grow enormous. The swallows would swoop alongside the mower darting back and forth getting all the creatures disturbed by the lawn mower noise and vibration. This goes on as long as I am out in open spaces in my lawn. Takes some getting used to having barn swallows swoop alongside 2-3 feet away!

BIRDING IN RUSSIA

By Dorothy Whitfield

Or, more specifically, birding in St. Petersburg and Moscow and their surrounding areas, and along the rivers, lakes, canal, reservoir and locks (17 of them) connecting the two cities aboard the chartered ship Novikov Priboy. Our group of twelve plus our naturalist guide from Massachusetts Audubon Society was joined by members of the National Audubon Society. Together we comprised about half of the 150 passengers on this trip.

Using our ship as our "hotel" for 12 nights, we had three days in St. Petersburg, five days cruising and three days in Moscow – and 11 days of recorded sightings totally 93 species.

Four stops along the waterways gave birders and

native plant enthusiasts a chance to break away from picnic tables and souvenir stalls and check out bird and plant species. The stops included Mandrogi, a settlement on the Stiv River, destroyed during WWII and now a rebuilt village of craftsmen; Kizhi, an island on Lake Onega, an early pagan site and now an open-air architectural museum containing 18th century wooden structures constructed without nails; Yaroslavl, a city on the Volga River founded in the 11th century with a 13th century monastery and 17th century cathedrals; and still on the Volga and prior to entering the Moscow-Volga Canal, Uglich, the center of a principedom in the 13th and 14th centuries, known for its red Church of St. Dmitry-on-the Blood (built on the spot where the body of the murdered son of Ivan the Terrible was found) and its Church of the Transfiguration's five domes.

Two bird species were sighted every day of our journey: the Black-headed Gull and Hooded Crow. Close behind, in frequency (6 or more days), were (as you probably expected) the Mallard, Tufted Duck, Common Tern, Rock Dove, Common Swift, Mew Gull, Common House Martin, White (Pied) Wagtail, Fieldfare, European Starling and Chaffinch.

In the "heard only" category were the Corn Crake, Great Bittern, Common Cuckoo, Short-eared Owl, Icterine Warbler and Thrush Nightingale. The most productive hours of our birding were during the last day of our trip. The two Audubon groups took off, by bus, into the countryside north of Moscow to the Dubna Wetlands, "Homeland of the Crane." (Unfortunately, by June the cranes had left home.) The wetland, located in the southern part of the upper Volga Lowland of the Russian plain, in the temperate continental climatic zone, is composed of 40,000 hectares, about half of which are preserved in the Dubna lowland for conservation objectives. The area contains "a complex of alder-birch swamps, raised pine-moss and transitional bogs, mixed coniferous forests and farmlands."

During a half day there, with the help of our two Russian guides, 48 species were recorded. My favorite was the Bluethroat (a thrush), which obligingly remained on one shrub long enough for all to see through the spotting scope. Other species seen nowhere else on our trip were: the Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Greater Spotted Eagle, Common Wood-pigeon, Eurasian Turtle Dove, European Bee-eater, Black-tailed Godwit, Red-backed Shrike, Sky Lark, Citrine Wagtail, Eurasian River Warbler, Common Raven and Booted Warbler.

Beavers, bear, elk and lynx inhabit the Dubna, but we saw none. In fact, aside from dogs usually walking with their owners in the parks, the only animals we saw were in the Moscow Circus, an evening we all agreed was great fun. We did see

Saint Saëns's "The Dying Swan," a solo performance among seven presentations at a Gala Concert of Saint Petersburg Ballet Dancers and the State Symphony Orchestra.

And we did see horses, adjacent to Red Square, all dressed up, as were their riders, young men and women in costumes representing different regions of Russia, readying for the arrival the following morning of Putin. Red Square had already been closed. So, though we were excited to be walking among the sights and sounds of bands, military units, bridled horses and photographers, we couldn't say we had been to Red Square.

10th ANNUAL KIPTOPEKE CHALLENGE

by Brian Taber & Paul Nasca

On Saturday, September 18, 2004, we will participate in the 10th Annual Kiptopeke Challenge, 24-hour team birding competition, sponsored by Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory. Wow! Hard to believe...10 years! Many of our supporters from the Williamsburg Bird Club have helped each year and we are truly thankful for your generosity. Last year's team found 101 species, despite the rough conditions one week after Hurricane Isabel, and we raised over \$1,100. The whole event, with eight teams, raised over \$10,000, our best total so far. Several other teams had to drop out last year because of the storm, so we are all hoping that this 10th anniversary event will be even more successful.

We have had a Williamsburg team in the Kiptopeke Challenge every year, the only team that has accomplished that. This year, for the 10th anniversary, we hope to break our previous species total and our previous fund-raising total. There is a team, backed by the Northern Virginia Bird Club, that raised over \$4,000 last year – amazing! We want to show them what the Williamsburg area folks can do too! We invite each and every Williamsburg Bird Club member to help support the team for this special 10th Anniversary event.

Some exciting Observatory news is the establishment last year of the **Joy Archer Migration Studies Fund** and the **Kiptopeke Founders Songbird Study Fund**. Proceeds from the Kiptopeke Challenge will help to make those funds grow. Through these honorary funds, we will help to ensure that the important work of long-term migration monitoring and related studies can continue for many years to come. The widespread effects of habitat loss are taking a toll on birds and other wildlife, making such work essential. Through Joy's fund, we also created a new \$500 college graduate student grant, which

was awarded to a William and Mary student, Elizabeth Long, in May. She is studying Peregrine Falcons. We are proud to be contributing to her efforts and look forward to her results.

If Club members are able to support our team this year, we are very grateful. Additional information is posted on the website at www.cvwo.org.

Our team name will again be **Wild Birds Unlimited of Williamsburg**, thanks to sponsorship again by Val & George Copping, of that store, who also have donated seed for the feeders at Kiptopeke and have been great friends of the Williamsburg Bird Club. Paul and I are currently searching for another member to round out our team and are very excited about the event.

Tax-deductible donations, made out to CVWO, may be sent to Brian at 103 Exeter Court, Williamsburg, VA 23185 and "per-species" pledge amounts may be mailed there or sent by e-mail to Taberzz@aol.com. All donors will receive a full report of our long day. Thanks for supporting such a great cause!

BLUEBIRDS AT YORK RIVER STATE PARK

As of July 24, 80 bluebirds had fledged from nest boxes at York River State Park. Nineteen chickadees fledged earlier in the spring. This late in the season, there are still 12 eggs and 5 nestlings in process. 2004 has been a much better year for the bluebirds than last year when only 43 had fledged by July 26. Club volunteers will continue to check the boxes until all eggs and nestlings have fledged! Thanks to all the hardy troupers who have endured the rainy, muggy, buggy July weekends to peak in boxes and count birds.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS!

The club welcomes three new members: Carol Anne Ellett; Roger and Lucinda Gosden. We look forward to seeing you all on the August 21 field trip and at the September 15 meeting. Welcome!

WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED CONTRIBUTES TO BIRD CLUB

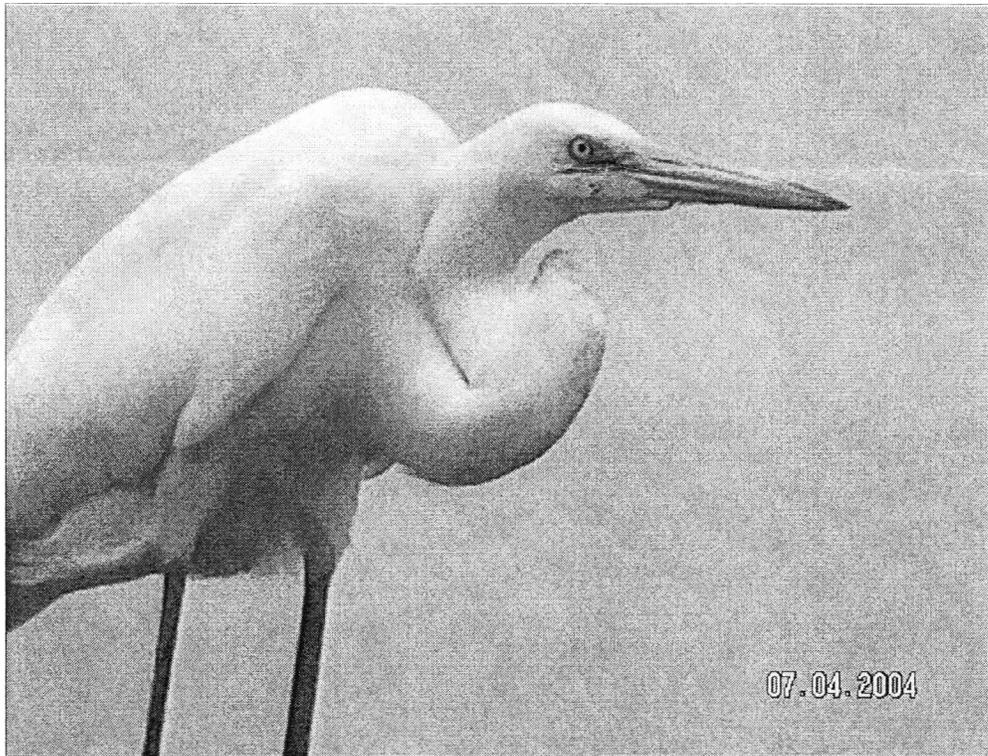
Wild Birds Unlimited in Williamsburg and owners George and Val Copping donated \$100.00 to the club in early July. This represents a percentage of the purchases by the Bird Club members from January – June 2004. George and Val have supported the club for years and are great resources for what's going on with the birds in this area. We are grateful for their continuing and generous support and we are also grateful to the club

members who patronize their store throughout the year. If you identify yourself as a member of the Williamsburg Bird Club when you make your purchase, WBU sets aside a percentage of the sales for donation to the club. Many thanks to WBU and George and Val! Be sure to say "Thanks" the next time you're in the store at Monticello Marketplace.

VSO's SEPTEMBER FIELD TRIP TO CHINCOTEAGUE

The Refuge Inn in Chincoteague, VA is the headquarters for the September 17 – 19 VSO field trip. Saturday and Sunday feature a variety of field trip

experiences, a "Confusing Warbler Walk," shore-bird watching, safari shuttles to restricted areas of the refuge, boat cruises to marshes and tidal flats of the inlet. The only charges are for the hotel room (\$81.38/night), the Safari Shuttle (\$7.00 per person) and the Boat Cruise (\$13.00/person). No charge for the expert field trip leaders, great birds and fellow birders! If you have not participated in a VSO field trip before, this is a great opportunity to join birders of all abilities for a fun, bird-filled weekend. For more info, contact Jerry Via at: jerry.via@adelphia.net. Phone: 540-951-7821. The phone # for The Refuge Inn is 757-336-5511. Make your hotel reservations by August 17 and state that you are with the VSO group.



Brac Bracalente sent us this wonderful shot he got of a Great ~~Ibis~~ Egret. Nice work, Brac!