



THE FLYER

NEWSLETTER OF THE WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB

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Website: www.wmbgbirdclub.com

December 2006

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Bob Long

As 2006 draws to a close, I'd like to thank Williamsburg Bird Club members, especially the board, for their support in making my first year as president such a rewarding experience. This year we partnered with New Quarter Park and held two nature camps and twice-a-month bird walks. And the Park reached out to Bird Club officer Bill Williams to conduct several owl prowls in the park this year. These functions attracted many new birders to our club.

2007 will be the thirtieth anniversary of WBC and activities are being planned to celebrate "Thirty Birdy Years." Many activities will be family oriented and children, grandchildren, and young friends are welcome. We hope to get more young people involved in WBC and its mission.

Happy Holidays, Bob

BIRDING NEW QUARTER PARK IN DECEMBER

Bill Williams will lead the December Bird walks at New Quarter Park: December 9 at 8:00 a.m. and December 23 at 7:00 a.m., with a special "Holiday Thank You" provided by the friendly folks at New Quarter Park. At 9:00 a.m. the park will provide hot beverages and refreshments at the Fire Ring. Please RSVP to Molly Nealer at NQP, Phone 890-3513.

Bill led both bird walks in November at the Park. On November 11 the group spotted 35 species – highlighted by a Clapper Rail. Bill was joined by Joanne Andrews, Twiler Frieders, Dick Joosten, Marian and Bruce Klein, Bob Long, Chuck Rend, and Jeanette Navia.

On November 23, Thanksgiving weekend, 16 members and visitors joined Bill and found 36 species. Highlights were three Clapper Rails, six woodpecker species, six Hermit Thrush, a Ruddy Duck, and a Bufflehead. Participants were: Brendan Lentz, Fiona Dunne, Lenny Lentz (all three from New York City), Brac Bracalente,

Joanne Andrews, Bob Long, Cynthia Long, Cathy Millar, Joe Heyman, Jeremy Rosenthal (from Albany, NY), Eleanor Young, Shirley Devan, Mike Fencik, Heidi Fencik, Tehya Fencik, and Sue Furne (from Idaho).

The Saturday morning bird walks are co-sponsored by the Bird Club and New Quarter Park.

NEW YEAR'S DAY "BOARDWALK BIRD SHOW"

By Shirley Devan

Last year we started what I hope can become a New Year's Day Tradition for the Williamsburg Bird Club – a birding adventure to celebrate the arrival of a new year. Last year some of us gathered on the Boardwalk at Greensprings Trail and we enjoyed a beautiful, sunny afternoon. Ten birders spotted 30 species over the course of two hours as temperatures "soared" into the 50s. The Brown-headed Nuthatch I saw there that day was the only one I saw in 2006!

Again, I invite you to celebrate the arrival of what will certainly be a memorable and momentous year for our local area and our club by joining me on the boardwalk at Greensprings Trail Monday, January 1, 2007 between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. for the Club's Second Annual "New Year's Day Boardwalk Bird Show." (If you're a lister, then you'll be off to a great start because every bird is a first for the year!)

Come and go as you please – you don't have to be on time or stay for the full two hours. Bring house guests if they are still hanging around. As long as it's not raining or snowing, I'll be there. By 1:00 p.m. we should have slept off our previous night's revels and be ready for fresh air and BIRDS!

Enjoy the holidays. I hope to see you New Year's Day at Greensprings Trail.

BASSET TRACE NATURE TRAIL

Nineteen club members joined Alex Minarik for a trek along the Bassett Trace Nature Trail on Saturday, November 18, 2006. What began as a chilly morning with temperatures in the '40s

quickly warmed up to the mid-50s and brought out the birds looking for the warm sunshine to start their day.

Highlight birds were the numerous Red-headed Woodpeckers throughout the woods along with the Brown Creeper, the Hermit Thrush, and the Bald Eagle. Check the web site at:

www.wmbgbirdclub.com for a complete list of the species and some photos of the birders on the trail.

An awesome photo of a Northern Cardinal, taken by Joe Heyman, is on the home page.

Twenty participants were: Hugh Beard, Gary and Anne Carpenter, Shirley Devan, Chuck Engle, Susan Engle Hill, Mike and Heidi Fencik with 11-year old Troy and his friend Colin, Louise Hamilton, Joe Heyman, Dick Kiefer, Paul Leger, Lois Leeth, Bob Long, Marsha Mathews, Cathy Millar, Alex Minarik, Field Trip Leader, and Chuck Rend.

ELECTION OF WBC OFFICERS FOR 2007

At the November 15 club meeting, the following officers were elected for 2007:

President: Bob Long

Secretary: Mary Anne Fennell

Treasurer: Charles Rend

VP and Program Chair: Tom McCary

VP and Co-Editor of The Flyer: Phil Young

VP and Co-Editor of The Flyer: Shirley Devan

Member-at-Large: Bill Williams

Member-at-Large: Sara Lewis

Many thanks to Fred Blystone for his service and contributions this year as Secretary.

NEW MEMBERS

The club welcomes Patrick and Laurie Rowe. We hope to see you on a birding adventure soon.

NOVEMBER 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 encounter interesting birds on your travels, please share!

November 2: Bill Holcombe reports: "saw a tree full of Cedar Waxwings on Jamestown Road, first of the season and then found the first Juncos in my backyard."

November 3: Alex Minarik reports: "This morning I saw 20 species of birds, including a Winter Wren, a Hermit Thrush, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, a Pine Warbler, and a Blue-headed Vireo in my backyard."

November 3: Bill Holcombe reports: "On Newman Road heading toward the York River I saw a Barred Owl sitting on a telephone post."

November 5: Joe and Grace Doyle report from their trip to Camp Peary that they saw over 2000

Ruddy Ducks on the York River plus 50-60 Ring-necked Ducks, 2-3 Buffleheads, 5 Pied-billed Grebes, and lots of Double-crested Cormorants. Other highlights include a Green Heron, about a dozen Eastern Meadowlarks, and many Eastern Bluebirds. Joe reports that the 100 nest boxes at Camp Peary fledged 196 bluebirds in 2006. There would have been more except that the House Sparrows predated many nests.

November 16: Tom McCary reports the first White-crowned Sparrows of the fall at Shirley Plantation. He spotted at least 4 at twilight and suspects there were more because he heard several singing. Then on the 19th, Tom heard a Great Horned Owl hooting in his neighborhood. On the 22nd, he spotted the first Dark-eyed Juncos of the season at Shirley Plantation. The same day, Randy Carter, one of the owner's sons and one of the managers of the plantation, called Tom out to the yard to witness a small flock of Tundra Swans flying over in late afternoon.

November 24: Dan Cristol reports: "Just the day after I lamented how late they were this year, the first Ring-necked Duck that I have seen appeared in Williamsburg, a male on Lake Matoaka. He was there along with a lone, juvenile male Lesser Scaup, 30 Gadwall, and 15 Green-winged Teal."

November 24: Shirley Devan reports 26 species from the new 3.5 mile trail around the WISC property off Longhill Road. This area includes portions of Longhill Swamp. Highlights include Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Bald Eagle, Red-headed Woodpecker, Eastern Bluebirds, and Pied-billed Grebe, plus the usual winter woodland birds.

November 25: Tom Armour reports: "On the pond at The Vineyards, 6 Ringed-neck Ducks and 5 Bufflehead, first ducks there this fall. Also on College Creek at Williamsburg Landing were 4 Wood Ducks."

November 28: Tom McCary reports the return of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker to the Butternut tree in his back yard.

BIRDING WITH THE W&M ORNITHOLOGY CLASS

By Dan Cristol, Associate Prof. Biology at W&M
November 22: The William & Mary Ornithology class searched the Williamsburg area for waterfowl. They are later than usual this year. For example, no ring-necked ducks were found, which is unusual at this date. The York River produced just 300 Ruddy Ducks and 15 Bufflehead at Felgate's Creek, along with 2 Black Ducks, four Hooded Mergansers and 10 Tundra Swans at Kings Creek. The James River produced no diving ducks, but one flock of 10 Black Ducks, 4

Mallards, 3 Hooded Mergansers, and a Gadwall was found in a pond near the terminus of Treasure Island Road on the Colonial Parkway. Lake Matoaka had the usual flock of 15 Green-winged Teal and 20 Gadwall, as well as one errant Lesser Scaup. A flock of 20 Rusty Blackbirds there was smaller than in recent years, but any Rusty Blackbird is still a treat. Good numbers of Double-crested Cormorants, Hooded Mergansers, Ring-billed Gulls and Bald Eagles are congregating at the partially-drained Lake Powell, where fish are concentrated in the remaining water. A deep freeze will be necessary to the North for the local Christmas Count to produce its normally robust numbers of waterfowl.

November 28: Today's William & Mary Ornithology Class trip was to Hog Island WMA in the shadow of the Surry nuclear plant. This area is closed to the public at present, so we made special arrangements as an educational group and had an escort. There has been a White Pelican there for more than a week. It was not the same individual that was seen at Craney landfill, as we have photographs of that bird from an earlier trip.

Waterfowl were not abundant, as elsewhere in the area (due to the warm weather?) with two Red-breasted Mergansers, one Hooded Merganser, 15 Gadwall, 4 Ring-necked Ducks, 6 Black Ducks, 5 Pintail and approximately 30 Mallards, along with 300-500 Canada Geese. Fifteen Great Egrets and 35 Great Blue Herons were seen, as well as several courting Bald Eagles, a Red-shouldered, Coopers, and Sharp-shinned Hawks, 2 American Kestrels, and a Northern Harrier. A refuge biologist (and well-trained birder) reports that a White-fronted Goose has been present recently, but we could not find it.

One Lesser Black-backed Gull was seen at the Scotland end of the ferry trip, and followed the boat from a distance, along with 20 Laughing Gulls, 15 Great black-backed Gulls, 40 Herring Gulls and several hundred Ring-billed Gulls.

On the trip home along Jamestown Road at least 15 Hooded Mergansers were seen on Lake Powell, which is still draining and concentrating fish and birds. There is no good way to bird this lake legally or safely from the road, which is where most of the herons, egrets, gulls, cormorants, and kingfishers are congregating.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

By Bill Holcombe

The Club will conduct its Christmas Bird Count Sunday, December 17. This is the club's 30th CBC count. Our Christmas Bird Count covers an area within a circle of 15 miles centered on the Colonial Williamsburg Information Center. It is divided into 9 areas with an experienced birder as

leader in each section. Normally, all groups are in the field by 7:00 a.m. except for the early birds who search out the hooting owls. By 4:30 you are back home or at William and Mary for the compilation to send to the National Audubon Society. Two areas, Cheatham Annex and Hog Island, require most of the coverage by foot. The walking in the other areas is broken up by car movement to a variety of key areas within that territory.

We always hope for a clear day because it is very difficult to call off a count because of bad weather. All leaders know to continue unless the weather becomes not just unpleasant but threatening.

This count is interesting to birders because there are always some stragglers from the warm weather to mix with our winter and resident birds.

Normally, we will find 108 to 112 species. If you want join the die-hards who never miss a Christmas count, pick one of the territories listed below and call the leader to establish a meeting place and time. It's fun and a wonderful learning experience.

Cheatham Annex and New Quarter Park – Bill Williams, 229-1124

College Woods – Ruth Beck, 566-8234

Hog Island – Brian Taber, 253-1181

Jamestown Island – Dot Silsby, 596-3252

Jolly Pond – Lee Schuster, 565-6148

Kingsmill – Paul McAllister, 229-1323

Middle Plantation – Hugh Beard, 221-0499

(Roughly from Jamestown High School to Governors Land and across to Waller Mill Park.)

Skimino – Bettye Fields, 930-0177 (Above Camp Peary between Rt.64 and the York River)

Camp Peary – Tom Armour, 229-2363 (This area is closed to all except those with special clearance.)

The weather is unpredictable and can start very cold and warm up or vice versa so layering makes sense. Bring your binocs, a guide book, a good lunch, and something to drink.

VISIT OUR WEB SITE

Click over to: www.wmbgbirdclub.com The page devoted to "Thirty Birdy Years" has pictures and information about our first years (different from what's in this edition of the newsletter) and links to sites of interest to birders. You'll also see some new bird photos from this area. If you have photos or other items to share, please send them to the web master, Shirley Devan, at sedevan52@cox.net

BIRDING OUTSIDE THE AREA

Here are a few reports from members' birding expeditions outside the immediate Williamsburg area during November:

Fred Blystone's birding at Newport News Park: I went on bird walks (fellow club member Eleanor Young was also on both walks) on November 5th and the 19th in Newport News Park with the Hampton Roads Bird Club. There were 9 participants on the first walk and we saw a total of 35 species. Twelve of the species were on the lake, so it seems that ducks are starting to arrive back in the area. We had spectacular long looks at one of two Bald Eagles that were using the lake for Sunday brunch. Ten people showed up for the walk on the 19th – four of them were 3 generations of one family. I don't remember ever seeing this on a walk before. By the end of the morning we had seen 37 species. For the two walks we had a total of 40 species, the highlights being a Common Loon, American Wigeons, Bald Eagles (always a highlight), 6 species of Woodpeckers (no Hairy), and a pair of Eastern Towhees that we saw both days at the very same location. These walks start at 7 a.m. the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month. Meet at the parking lot to the left of the Ranger Station. Jane Frigo of the Hampton Roads Bird Club leads these walks.

Fred Blystone's Eastern Shore trip: I wasn't able to make it on the club's trip to the Eastern Shore in October, but did get over there on Nov. 4th with Jane Frigo of the Hampton Roads Bird Club. We stopped on the first island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel but only saw some Ruddy Turnstones, Robins, various sparrows and all the gulls you could possibly want to look at. We then spent the rest of the morning, birding at the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge, Oyster (and its landfill), Custis Tomb, and many miles of back roads. There weren't many ducks to be seen – we only ended up seeing 5 species. Highlights of the day for me were 5 immature White Ibis and an American Kestrel, which we had to search far and wide to find. By the end of the morning we had seen a total of 50 species. I hope to make some more trips over the bay when the weather gets colder and the waterfowl numbers increase.

Alex Minarik, Fred Blystone, and Shirley Devan Birding the Pamunkey River in King William County: We drove up to "The Pocket" November 15. We arrived around 8:30, but we could have waited until later because the fog didn't burn off until around 9:30. By the time we got back to Route 30, around noon, we had seen 50 species.

There were thousands of Coot and Canada Geese in the area, plus about 20 Tundra Swans. We also had about 20 Wilson's Snipe on a narrow piece of land that came out from the railroad side of the water.

Water fowl highlights were: Gadwall, American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck,

Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, and Ruddy Duck. The usual woodland birds were in evidence. Alex Minarik spotted a Barred Owl in the woods along her short walk up the road, but she was the only one to see it. (It would have been a year bird for Shirley.)

This spot is off Route 30 north of West Point on the Pamunkey Indian Reservation on the Pamunkey River. The road that leads to "The Pocket" is a public road, but land all around belongs to the Pamunkey Indians. If you go, please stay on the public road and ask permission to bird if you see any Pamunkey Indians in the area.

Shirley Devan's Birding on Fishermans Island National Wildlife Refuge, November 11: Shirley Devan joined 9 birders from the Hampton Roads Bird Club on their escorted trip to Fisherman's Island. Escorts from Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge were George and Jennifer Budd. We enjoyed a warm day – 80 degrees by the time we left the island at 12:30 p.m.

Shirley had 38 species. There was a tie for the "bird of the day." It was hard to choose between the Black-crowned Night Herons (roosting near the pond next to the parking area) and the Osprey – two in fact – hunting over the marsh. Tons of yellow rumps – we got tired of looking at them and hoping they were something else. "Mammal of the day" was the dolphin – a pod of about a dozen playing and eating close off the beach near the bridge. "Fish of the day" was the skeletal remains of a 3 foot long Drum fish on the beach. Very scary teeth. "Plant of the day" was the "globally rare Beach Heather" per our volunteer leader, Jennie Budd.

THE EARLIEST BIRD CLUB EVENTS

By Cynthia Long

These are the members who first met September 21, 1977 at Andrews Hall:

Archer, Joy d.2002	Hacker, Charlie d 2003 and Mrs.	Sheehan, Bill d.2000
Armstrong, Martha	Hernandez, Jose	Shields, Mr. and Mrs. Mark
Baker, Paul	Hotchkiss, Julie d, 2004	Smith, Dick
Beck, Ruth *	Jaffee, Norman	Springe, Alice d. 2000
Blystone, Fred *	Jones, Billy	Sturm , Susan d. 1998
Booth, Cdr. and Mrs. James	Jones, Homer	Taber, Brian *
Christman, Marina	Jones, Mrs. Rees	Thomas, Jewel
Courtney, Nancy	Makulowich, Caroline	Troth, Mr. J.R.
Coward, Audrey	Miller, Gary	Trow, Roy d. 1979
Crockett, Susan	Newman, Annie	Williams, Betty d. 2003
Davis, Burke and Evangeline	Newman, Susie Belle	Williams, Bill*
Ema, Barbara	Pence, Clifford and Paula	

The following people joined within the next few months:

Abercrombie, Dorothy	Gore, Fred	Richmond Audubon Society
Armour, Thomas and Jeanne *	Halainen, Bill	Ridd, Sue
Arthur, John	Hanlenis, Jeanette and John	Rums, Charles and Sarah
Barb, Mrs. James C.	Hart, Sam and Catherine	Silsby, Dot
Barrick, Susan	Landis, Andrew and Anna	Smith, Mrs. Anne d. 1990
Bell, Hugh and Elizabeth	Lewis, V.K.	Snyder, Bill *
Bennett, Mrs. Eileen	Martinez, Luis and Nancy	Specht, Lt. Brian
Boldt, Kathryn	Mitchell, Dorothy	Stalnaker, Evelyn
Bull, Mrs. W.J.	Moritz, Murel	Thomas, George and Jewel
Byrd, Mitchell *	Nunley, Frankie	Uppal, Christine
Connely, Mike	Pauley, Joe and Judith	Wendel, Col. (ret) George d.
Elliott, William and Ruth	Peters, Lyman and Mary	Willis, John
Ells, Susan	Rada, Mr. and Mrs. Glenn	
Fletcher, Cindy	Raynes, Everett & Shirley	

*denotes members who are still active in WBC

Bill Williams and Ruth Beck were truly the founding members of the club, which was a colonizing activity from the Hampton Roads Bird Club. Ruth, a William and Mary biology faculty member, would fill her car with interested students and take them to the meetings of the HRBC at what is now the Virginia Living Museum. Her faculty position enabled her to secure Millington Hall for our permanent nesting site.

Bill Williams, a science teacher at Lafayette High School, was treasurer of the VSO (succeeding Ruth in that office). He contacted VSO members and other interested birders in the Williamsburg area. Bill served as chairman of the organizational meeting. The minutes clearly show that these two teacher/co-founders had a serious educational purpose. They quickly organized a nominating committee, programs, a Christmas Bird Count, a newsletter, and field trips for the rest of the year. In December, the first officers were elected.

President: Bill Williams; Vice-President/
Programs: Ruth Beck; Secretary: Bill Sheehan;
Treasurer: Billy Jones; Newsletter: Susan Sturm
Bill Sheehan's brief and precise minutes are invaluable to the history of the club. Tom Armour remembers, "I met Bill shortly after I moved here at a Bird Club meeting, probably in late 1977—we birded together, in later years, almost every day for over 15 years. His favorite bird was the Red-breasted Nuthatch. I remember taking a photo of one at his feeder that really tickled him. He kept a print of it in his kitchen for years. We birded from my van a lot as he wasn't that great on hiking. Did Hog Island a lot, he had great ears and would hear much better than I. He was very good at identifying birds by sound and a great guy to be with. I still miss him very much." Bob Long and Cynthia met the two of them on the Jamestown ferry en route to Hog Island. Bill and Tom were standing on the deck in the breeze, legs braced, binoculars in hand taking it all in with great joy, still every

inch the Navy men.

Susan Sturm served as the first editor of The Flyer. Her lively newsletters kept our members informed of birds and birders – she was associated with VIMS. The Flyer sported a cardinal with binoculars for a logo, designed by Annie Newman's husband. Dues were collected once a year in January – \$3 for students, \$5 for individuals, and \$7.50 for families. Billy Jones, our first treasurer, recently celebrated her 80+ birthday with family and friends at a Florida airport. She parachuted from a plane, followed by a champagne toast.

The first Williams Presidency launched us on continuing educational projects. Bluebird and Purple Martin committees were established, with Homer Jones and Roy Trow in charge respectively. Roy was personally credited with banding 600 martins. Alice Springe and Barbara Ema regularly prepared educational exhibits at Millington. Betty Williams, Burke and Evangeline Davis served as the Publicity committee. The WBC donated books to Williamsburg Regional Library. Members assisted with the VSO conference held in Williamsburg in May, 1978. President Williams pleaded to get more members involved, observing that officers were doing all the work, particularly Ruth Beck. Ruth subsequently proposed that "Sec'y keep bird records. Secretary 'volunteered' to do so." Bill Sheehan kept records of birds our members reported for the rest of his life.

Williamsburg Bird Club Notes: Feb. 1978 by Susan Sturm, "...7 of us braved the early morning cold to go birding. Ruth Beck took the group on a birding excursion along the Colonial Parkway from Williamsburg to Yorktown. The highlights included a barred owl, red-tailed hawks, pileated woodpeckers, and numerous waterfowl in the York River. We ended with a visit to Anne Smith's feeders where we enjoyed the Baltimore orioles, house and purple finches, pine siskins, and evening grosbeaks." This entry reminded me of my old Girl Scout friend Anne Smith and her fantastic feeders. She salvaged day old donuts from the stores, especially orange frosted with coconut, and hung them on a string from her huge tulip poplars. She filled grapefruit rinds with Jello for the orioles. It also reminded me of species I don't see any more. Thanks for the memories, Anne.

Treasurer reported 60 paid members in April, 1978 and \$284.25 in bank. The president proposed that treasurer open a savings account. Constitution and by-laws were adopted at the general membership meeting in June, 1978.

A Thanksgiving window count was established for feeder birds. The Audubon Christmas Bird Count in 1977 reported 100 species on a drenching, rainy day. 108 species were listed in 1978, 110 species

were identified in 1979. There was also a spring count. In January 1979 Ruth Beck proposed a bird of the month exhibit at Williamsburg Regional Library. Fred Blystone agreed to manage bird of the month at WRL.

In October 1979 "Judy Pauley and Alice Springe agreed to spearhead the club's venture into wholesale birdseed." In November 1979 we planned our first bird seed sale. The November 1979 minutes report "the club has ordered 5,400 pounds of various seeds. Delivery will be to Fred Blystone's house. Members are asked to pick up their orders." Income from the bird seed sale allowed us to begin our graduate student fellowships.

Program Chairman Ruth Beck covered: Pandionidae, (Osprey), Picidae (woodpeckers), Fringillidae (Finches), Laridae (Gulls, and Terns), the Flora and Fauna of Kenya, Turdidae (Thrushes), Bird Songs, Hirunidae (Swallows), Ciconiiformes (Herons and Ibises), Hawk Migration, Bald Eagles, Flora and Fauna of Australia, Open-billed storks of Thailand, "Bird Inspired Poetry," Warblers, Barn Owls, and Bird Photography.

Field Trip chairman Brian Taber arranged trips to Hog Island, Kiptopeke, Chincoteague, Craney Island, a campus owl hoot, the Colonial Parkway, Cheatham Annex, Grandview Beach, William & Mary population lab bird banding station maintained by Ruth Beck, Newport News Park, Lake Matoaka and College Woods, and Waller Mill.

Note that from the start it was all about birds, but thirty years of activities reveal that it is also about the birders. We invite your memories of these early birders, whose interest and talents promoted our club. We would also like pictures of members for our history and upcoming exhibits. We will be glad to make copies and return your originals. Call Cynthia Long at 259-9559 if you have memories or pictures to share.

Alice Springe reported her bird sightings this way in the spring of 1979:

“To Bill Sheehan who keeps records, accept this from me.
Here’s what’s in my yard April 18 to May 23.
I’ve got warblers—some I know and some are unknown,
And three baby cardinals almost full grown.
There’s two crested flycatchers to eat the Mayflies,
And several vireos with red-colored eyes.
I’ve seen a summer tanager with the prettiest call,
And some redstarts and a cuckoo – if I stand in my hall.
On May 3 a hairy woodpecker ate up a storm-
I know cause I watched him – the day was quite warm
Some winter friends – goldfinch and chickadee
Have to sing out quite loud to beat out the pee-o-wee.
I had red bellies, downies, cowbirds, and wrens,
Blue jays and thrashers: does this make sense?
Heard a yellowthroat and ovenbird; saw a black and white;
And myrtles and bluebirds and a nuthatch breast white.
Forgot thrushes and doves, robins, titmice;
Heard a chuck will’s widow; really quite nice.
On 4-25 and every day hence,
Comes a pileated woodpecker; he’s really immense.
He lands in the trees, then attacks the front door,
One, two, or three times, then several times more.
The first time he hit, he scared me to death,
Now when he comes I just hold my breath.
He hangs on the brick, the glass, or the screen,
He’s plain crazy. Do you know what I mean?
He first came in mornings, but now any time,
I proved I was sober to that husband of mine.
I sure hope he finds a girl to adore,
At least something smaller than my front door.
You should see what he’s doing to the dogwood and stoop,
I’m up to my ears in pileated ----“
OH LORD, HE’S AT THE BACK DOOR.