



THE FLYER

NEWSLETTER OF THE WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB

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August 2007

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Bob Long

Our bluebird house produced nine babies in two hatches this year. After the first five fledged, we cleaned the house and within a week a new nest was built. The first egg appeared one week later, followed by three more on successive days. Two weeks later, all four eggs had hatched, and the parents began feeding and cleaning, feeding and cleaning, for another two weeks, until the babies left the nest. It was fun sitting in the shade observing the parents almost constantly bringing food and removing fecal sacs. Both parents seemed to share equally in the feeding and cleaning. Bluebird nesting habits, described in Dan Cristol's Virginia Gazette article on 7-21-07 appeared after our nesting experience. We intend to follow his recommendations next year.

Our club is indeed fortunate to have such influential birders as members, beginning with our first bluebird chair, Homer Jones, in 1978. Subsequent bluebird committees included Jewel Thomas, Paula Pence, Leigh Jones, Joe and Grace Doyle, Cynthia and Bob Long, Shirley Devan, Dorothy Whitfield, Dave and Carol Goff, Terry and Jack Johnston, Tony and Chris Dion, Greg Millslagle, and students from W&M. From 1977 to 1992, Bill Sheehan compared the bluebirds at the Christmas Bird Count and reported an increase from 60 in 1977 to 237 recorded in 1992. Our 2006 count recorded 144. We are hoping to see some of these "bluebirders" at our upcoming Thirty Birdy Years celebration in September. Mark your calendars for the weekend of September 21 – 22.

Editor's Note: On August 1, two days after Bob wrote this note, he found three bluebird eggs in

their nest box. A third brood! Such ambitious parents. He'll keep us posted on their progress.

CRANEY ISLAND FIELD TRIP

Our next field trip will be Saturday, August 18, 2007 when Ruth Beck, Professor Emeritus from William and Mary, will lead us to Craney Island in the Elizabeth River near Portsmouth. Car pooling is a CRITICAL for this trip.

Travel time is about an hour one way. Meet by 6:45 a.m. at Colony Square Shopping Center on Jamestown Road so we can sort out car pools to leave by 7:00. Bring bug spray, sun screen, hats, water, snacks and/or lunch. Consider wearing long sleeves and long pants. Craney Island has no shade and the heat and insects can be oppressive. Given all that, the birding is often wonderful. We will travel around the island by car stopping at the best spots so little walking is required.

Shorebirds likely will be on the move by mid August and we might be surprised by some rare occurrences. Ruth has been studying Craney Island birds for over 30 years and is THE expert on birds at Craney Island. Don't miss this opportunity!

THIRTY BIRDY YEAR UPDATE

By the time you receive this newsletter, the big weekend will be only seven weeks away. The Thirty Birdy Years committee has been busy – meeting, planning, calling, researching, and counting the days and weeks.

Save Friday and Saturday, September 21 – 22, 2007 for two days of celebration of Thirty Birdy Years. Friday evening, September 21, the actual

30 Birdy Years Celebration Weekend
Save the dates!! September 21 and 22!! Read more inside.

date of the first meeting of the Bird Club in 1977, will feature a birthday party and program in the auditorium at the Williamsburg Regional Library on Scotland Street, featuring special guests, awards, art show, and birthday cake!

Then Saturday, September 22, the Club will host a picnic at New Quarter Park from 4 – 7 pm. We'll have activities for the whole family – including children. So bring the children and grandchildren. The club will provide chicken, rolls, beverages, and dessert. Bring a pot luck side dish to share. The picnic will be FREE for members; non-members can join the Club at the door – free to join in September!

(Remember: These events will be in lieu of our regular third Wednesday night program in September.)

From Barb Streb, Our Food Committee Chair: Your invitation is enclosed in this newsletter!! So review for details and directions in case you're unsure. You should RSVP for two separate events – the Friday evening program at the Williamsburg Library and the Saturday afternoon picnic at New Quarter Park. RSVP contacts are Cynthia Long (phone 757-2259-9559) and Barb Streb (email: barbarastreb@starpower.net). Barb needs to know how much food to order! Remember – events and food are FREE!

Barb Streb also needs a few volunteers for the Saturday picnic: three people to help "set up" for the picnic and three who are willing to help with clean-up. Set up tasks include helping people carry items from their cars (like ice and ice chests, etc.). Contact Barb at her email address if you're willing to help out: barbarastreb@starpower.net

We also need about a half dozen volunteers who are willing to transport elderly guests or members who are reluctant to drive at night or who don't drive at all. We want as many of our members as possible to attend. Contact Cynthia Long at 259-9559 if you would like a ride or can provide a ride.

From Our Historian: Invitations to out of town guests for our Thirty Birdy Years events were mailed in late July. We sent them to all the former club members we could find, plus graduate students who received our WBC research grants. There are still many we could not trace, although Bill Williams, Ruth Beck, Dan Cristol, Shirley Devan and Fred Blystone did their best. If you have any addresses of former members and grad students, please let me know. Reach Cynthia at cynthialongw@aol.com or 757-259-9559. Thanks very much!

Request From Our Historian: Does anybody have a woodpecker door knocker from the VSO meeting held in Williamsburg? They were made

by Charlie Hacker for table decorations and prizes. We would like to exhibit it at the art show at the library. Call Cynthia Long, 259-9559.

Caps, Posters, Patches, And Note Cards: If you don't have a cap or poster yet, stop by Wild Birds Unlimited to get one ... or a few! George and Val Copping have graciously agreed to accept donations to the club and dispense gifts of appreciation – caps, posters, note cards, patches. You will definitely want a hat for the picnic!

Do You Have Bird Art? Over a dozen members have contacted Shirley Devan to loan artwork for the Art Show in the lobby of the auditorium at the Williamsburg Library. We still want more! Surely you want to exhibit your work with that of Spike Knuth – noted wildlife artist and author. We will install the exhibit September 10. The exhibit will run through October 18, 2007. We encourage Club members to submit artwork of birds in their native environment. Keep in mind that items can be paintings, photographs, sculpture, woodwork, needlework, drawings, etc. Exhibitors may place items "for sale" and should indicate such. The deadline for submitting items will be one month in advance – August 10. Call Shirley Devan at 220-6269 or 813-1322 if you have items you wish to display. Email: sedevan52@cox.net

UPCOMING WALKS AT NEW QUARTER PARK

August 11 and 25 – Bird Walks at New Quarter Park. Walks on the second Saturdays begin at 8:00 a.m. Walks on the fourth Saturdays begin at 7:00 a.m.

September 1, the regular first Saturday "Walk and Talk" at New Quarter Park, will feature Vicky Schufer "Down in the Paw Paw Patch" where she'll lead a walk around the park to find edible native plants. Walk starts at 10 am.

CLUB SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS HONORED

Caitlin Kight, recipient of the Williamsburg Bird Club's Sheehan Ornithology Grant in 2005 and 2006, is featured in the July/August 2007 issue of *Birding*, the magazine of the American Birding Association. Congratulations to Caitlin for her publication in a national publication.

According to the short biography in the magazine, Caitlin is now "a doctoral student in the applied science department at William and Mary, where for the past three years, she has studied the effects of human disturbance on cavity-nesting bird species. She has held several ornithological field jobs, which provided experiences that she has

written about in such publications as Bird Watcher's Digest and The Vermillion Literary Project."

Under the headline "When Birding and Ornithology Meet," Caitlin's "Essays on Human and Bird Behavior" are entitled: "Evolution of a Birder," "Never Sick of Birds," and "Fueling the Passion." The essays are wonderful insights into Caitlin's motivation for her research and what keeps her going after thousands of hours in the field. She's a wonderful writer. The reader also learns that she is a musician and an athlete! A Renaissance woman! Club members will remember Caitlin's fascinating presentations over the past few years about bluebird nesting around our area.

Two other Sheehan Ornithology Grant recipients, Anne Condon and Joanna Hubbard, also received research awards from the Virginia Society of Ornithology. The VSO awards, named for Rev. J. J. Murray, a charter member of the VSO and editor of its Journal, The Raven, until 1969, were announced at the annual meeting in May.

According to the article in the VSO Newsletter, "the \$1000 award is designed to promote undergraduate and graduate research, and the research must consist of field studies on Virginia birds. Proposals are judged for their scientific merit and the likelihood that the work will make a meaningful contribution to our understanding of Virginia avifauna. Since 2003, the VSO has been able to grant two such awards thanks to the generosity of the Northern Neck of Virginia Audubon Society, which has supplied a matching grant for the award for the past five years."

Anne Condon, a 2006 recipient of our Club's Sheehan Ornithology Research Grant, was recognized for her project entitled: "Do newly independent birds face risks from mercury contamination?" Anne is studying under Dr. Dan Cristol at W&M. Anne presented some of her findings at our April 2007 club meeting.

Joanna Hubbard, a 2007 recipient of our Club's Sheehan Ornithology Research Grant, was recognized for her project entitled: "Mutual mate choice in Eastern Bluebirds, *Scialia scialis*." Joanna is studying under Dr. John Swaddle at W&M. Joanna will likely present her research findings at one of our 2008 club meetings.

Congratulations to all three graduate students for recognition of their outstanding research and accomplishments!

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to new members Paul Marc Leger, and George and Pamela Rountree from Williamsburg.

We hope to see you at an event soon.

THANKS TO WILD BIRDS UNLTD

According to Treasurer, Chuck Rend, the club received \$283.00 in July from Wild Birds Unlimited as the rebate for sales to WBC members during the first six months of 2007. We are grateful to George and Valerie Copping, owners, for their continuing support of the club and its mission. Also thanks go to Bird Club members. Remember to shop for your bird seed and supplies at WBU and make sure to tell the cashier that you are a member of the Bird Club so that a duplicate of your receipt goes in the "Bird Club" box.

CAMP PEARY BIRDS FROM DOYLES FOR JUNE & JULY

Joe and Grace Doyle visited Camp Peary three times in June and spotted over 50 species each day. Highlights – Northern Bobwhites on two visits – June 10 and 25. They reported 52 species June 10; 57 species June 17; and 56 species June 25.

Birds observed on all three dates: Great Blue Heron, Canada Goose, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Red-headed Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Acadian Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Blue Jay, American Crow, Fish Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Wood Thrush, American Robin, 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, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, House Finch, American Goldfinch, and House Sparrow.

Great Egret, Snowy Egret, and Field Sparrow were seen only June 25.

In July, Joe and Grace visited Camp Peary three times as well – July 1, 18, 15. Their high count of 57 was recorded July 1. Northern Bobwhites were recorded twice – July 1 and July 15. Many of the same birds seen in June were there in July. Highlights include: Green Heron [July 15], Wood Duck [July 1], Red-tailed Hawk [July 1], Belted Kingfisher [July 8], Downy Woodpecker [July 15], Pileated Woodpecker [July 1], Prairie Warbler [July 1], Ovenbird [July 1], Scarlet Tanager [July 1], and Song Sparrow [July 1].

JUNE AND JULY 2007 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 vacation/travels, please share!

June 17: Martha Briggs called to report a Gray Catbird at her Hummingbird feeder.

July 4: Tom Armour reports: "This morning there was a female American Kestrel hunting at the Williamsburg Airport."

July 8: Tom McCary reports a Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Shirley Plantation near the parking lot.

July 14: Tom Armour reports: "This morning at the end of Treasure Island Road there was a Northern Bobwhite calling near the Colonial Parkway. First one I've heard this year. Also had a Green Heron and a Common Yellowthroat in the marsh. A small flock of Purple Martins (6+) were at the Martin houses at the corner of Lake Powell and Airport Road."

July 15: Tom Armour reports: "There were more Purple Martins at the Lake Powell Road site this morning – at least 20, maybe more. A Bobwhite was calling again on Treasure Island Road, this time just across the road from the first corn field on the right."

July 16: Tom McCary reports a Prothonotary Warbler at Shirley Plantation down by the river. The bird responded to pishing and Tom believes there was a nest nearby. Tom says he has never before seen a Prothonotary Warbler at the Plantation.

July 21: Tom McCary reports a Great Horned Owl hooting in his neighborhood in Williamsburg at 7:30 pm.

July 24: Tom McCary gets excellent looks at Yellow-billed Cuckoos at Shirley Plantation. Also seen were male and female Orchard Oriole, two male Blue Grosbeaks on a utility wire, and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher near the James River.

July 29: Bill Williams reports: "Just after day-break this morning there was a hatch year White Ibis feeding next to the Green Springs Trail boardwalk. Among a fly-over flock of a dozen Great Egrets were 2 Glossy Ibises, all headed in the Jamestown direction."

WE HAVE SEEN THE ELEGANT TROGON!

By Gary and Ann Carpenter

Ann and I have just returned from one of the birding hot spots of the world. This is the second time we have birded in southeastern Arizona and

both times have been terrifically rewarding. We birded the area in March of 2005 and enjoyed it so much that we decided to return there in June of 2007.

We were supposed to bird in Madera Canyon (in the Santa Rita's, south of Tucson) but a fire closed the Canyon just minutes before we arrived. After hanging about Green Valley, Arizona for a full day (waiting to see if the Canyon would be re-opened -- it was not) we drove across the Santa Ritas on a dirt road and birded the Patagonia/Sonoita Nature Conservancy and the world renowned (for their hummingbirds) "Paton's Feeders" in the town of Patagonia. We saw nesting Gray Hawks with their chicks and a Varied Bunting at the Conservancy. At the Feeders we saw a number of hummers with the highlight being the Violet-crowned Hummingbird.

We then drove on to what would be our headquarters for the next five glorious days of birding – the Casa de San Pedro in Hereford at the base of the Huachuca Mountains near Sierra Vista, Arizona. I cannot say enough good things about the Casa de San Pedro. I have brochures I will be happy to provide, and they have an extensive website at www.bedandbirds.com. It is a truly lovely B&B that makes one feel as if he or she is staying at an elegant hacienda, and they cater specifically to birders. Over five days at the end of June we birded the San Pedro River (the Casa is just yards away from the river and has been named one of the ten best birding spots in the world) and most of the various canyons leading up into the Huachuca Mountains. Ann and I added eleven "Life" birds: Northern Bearded Tyrannulet; Tropical Kingbird, Lesser Nighthawk, Cassin's Kingbird; White-eared Hummingbird; Scott's Oriole; Black-throated Gray Warbler, Varied Bunting, Green Kingfisher, Tropical Kingbird, and, our target bird for this trip and our grandest catch of all – the Elegant Trogon!! The latter was seen in Garden Canyon on the grounds of Fort Huachuca – right where a number of folks had told us we were likely to see one! A truly spectacular bird! Thankfully, when we found it, the Trogon proved not to be a necessarily shy or elusive bird. We were able to approach it quite closely. We saw it over an extended period of time and it re-appeared two or three times in the course of our two hour stay.

Besides those listed above and the "usual suspects" other birds that we saw included: Swainson's Hawk, Phainopepla, Acorn Woodpecker, Magnificent, Black-chinned, Broad-billed, Broad-Tailed, and Anna's Hummingbirds, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, Ladderbacked Woodpecker, Greater Roadrunner, Bridled Titmouse, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Spotted Towhee,

Vermilion Flycatcher, Black-headed Grosbeak, Bushtit, Verdin, Painted Redstart, and Abert's Towhee.

Southeastern Arizona is a birder's paradise and, if someday you find yourself south of Tombstone, north of Naco, east of Nogales and west of the Chiricahuas, take a long look around – you are going to see some different and exciting birds.

SUPPORT KIPTOPEKE CHALLENGE IN SEPTEMBER

By Brian Taber

Brian Taber, Paul Nasca, and Aimee Weldon will participate in the 13th Annual Kiptopeke Challenge team birding competition on September 22, 2007. The "Wild Birds Unlimited of Williamsburg" team is the only team to have participated every year. Thanks to the many club members who have been team sponsors over the years.

All proceeds benefit Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory, which operates such programs as: the fall hawkwatch, hawk banding, songbird banding and bird feeders at Kiptopeke State Park, spring songbird banding and Prothonotary nest box program at First Landing State Park, College Creek Hawkwatch near Williamsburg, the Monarch Migration program and the July butterfly count on the Eastern Shore. For more information, see the website at www.cvwo.org.

Sponsors for the team may send donations or pledge an amount "per species found" to Brian Taber at 103 Exeter Court, Williamsburg, VA 23185. If you want more info, write to Brian or e-mail at Taberzz@aol.com.

NESTING PROTHONOTARY WARBLERS

By Alex Minarik

This summer Mike and I enjoyed watching a pair of Prothonotary Warblers raise a family in our backyard. They started nest building in the bluebird house, which is located about 30 feet from our deck, on June 6. Both male and female carried mouthfuls of moss to the box all day long on that first day. Over the next few days, the female finished the job by herself.

In the middle of the following week it became evident that she was incubating eggs since we could see her inside the birdhouse with the aid of the spotting scope set up on the deck. We were really careful not to disturb her, going so far as curtailing lawn mowing, moving the grill to the front yard, and keeping Kate, our dog, away from the backyard. Curiosity finally got the better of

me and I looked inside the birdhouse on June 21st to find three small, speckled eggs.

Sunday, June 24, the eggs hatched, and for the next 11 days the parents were busy feeding and cleaning up after the nestlings. One day, during a one hour period, I observed that the male made seven trips with food to the female's two trips and that he removed three fecal sacs and she none.

Appropriately enough, the babies fledged on July 4th, Independence Day. I missed seeing them leave the nest even though I had gotten up early that morning in anticipation that that would be the day. I found one of the fledglings that afternoon near the birdhouse and observed the mother feeding it.

After watching them every day for a month I definitely had a case of "empty-nest syndrome" when they left. Since then I have heard the male singing a couple of times and have seen the female once.

The family seems to be doing fine.

THE SPRING 2007 BIRD COUNT

By Bill Williams

The thirtieth consecutive Williamsburg Bird Club Spring Bird Count, 29 April 2007, recorded 7625 birds among 154 species. The count, patterned after the annual Christmas Bird Count which covers an area 7.5 miles in every direction from the Colonial Williamsburg Information Center, had one first, a fascinating array of species high counts, and many other notable highlights.

New for the count was an American Bittern observed in flight at Hog Island, Surry County. Species totals which exceeded high counts from our previous 29 spring efforts (in parenthesis) included 44 Brown Pelicans (29 in 2002), 372 Ruddy Ducks (88 in 1982), 2 Hooded Mergansers (one in 1979, 1991, 2006), 266 American Coots (49 in 2005), 9 Hairy Woodpeckers (ties 9 in 2006), and 137 Carolina Wrens (133 in 1999).

Of the count's 4 Northern Bobwhites, 2 were found at Hog Island and 2 were in the Jolly Pond sector. The peak Spring Count tally for this species was 130 in 1983. From 1978-1983 the count average was 113!! Two Common Loons were found along the York River near the Naval Weapons Station. Quite unexpected was an adult Black-crowned Night-Heron at Queens Lake. Single Northern Harriers were seen at Hog Island and in the Jamestown count segment. Hog Island had the only American Kestrel and 263 of the record 266 American Coots!! The Middle Plantation group contributed 6 of the 8 Solitary Sandpipers. The College Woods contingent nailed 43 of the 44 Least Sandpipers, while Hog Island

had the count's only Bonaparte's Gull and Lesser Black-backed Gull. A calling Common Nighthawk was over Felgate's Creek off the Yorktown end of the Colonial Parkway at 4:00 a.m. (3:00 a.m. bird time!). Middle Plantation found 2 Blue-headed Vireos and 2 Bank Swallows. A Cliff Swallow was at the Felgate's Creek Bridge where they nested in 2005 and 2006. Jolly Pond had the only Blue-winged Warbler. College Woods and Jamestown each had single Black-throated Green Warblers. College Woods also had 2 Worm-eating Warblers. Seven of the 9 Yellow-breasted Chats were on Camp Peary. Hog Island had 40 of the count's 61 Orchard Orioles!

Many thanks to all of the count participants: Tom Armour and Joe and Grace Doyle (Camp Peary); Ron and Bobbie Giese and Bill Williams (Cheatham Annex); Ruth Beck, Fred Blystone, and Caitlin Kight (College Woods); Betty Fields and Mary Pulley (Skimino); Paul and Carol McCallister (Kingsmill); Audrey Word, Hugh Beard, Dave Shantz, Linda Cole, and Susan Powell (Middle Plantation); Dan Cristol (Jamestown); Alex Minarik and Dave and Lee Schuster (Jolly Pond); Adrienne Frank, Gary Driscoll, Anne-Marie Castellani, David Monahan, and Brian Taber (Hog Island).

RED-CKADED WOODPECKERS IN VIRGINIA

by Mike Wilson

Center for Conservation Biology, W&M

The 2007 breeding season marked an important milestone for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers (RCWs) in Virginia. This year, six RCW breeding clusters successfully fledged young on The Nature Conservancy's Piney Grove Preserve [in Southside Virginia]. This represents the first time in nearly 18 years that Virginia has supported 6 breeding RCW clusters. It also represents the third consecutive year that one additional pair has successfully produced young, bringing the total number of breeding clusters from 3 to 6 since 2004.

The term breeding cluster is used to describe an RCW breeding site. RCWs are cooperative breeders so a breeding site can contain a cluster of individuals including the resident breeding pair and sometimes additional non-breeding helper birds that assist in feeding young. In 2007 RCW breeding clusters at Piney Grove Preserve consisted of 4 sites with helpers and 2 sites occupied by only the breeding pair. There is also one additional non-breeding cluster occupied by a lone male RCW.

A total of 3 males and 6 females successfully

fledged this season, producing from four 2-chick broods and two 1-chick broods. This brings the current total number of adult and hatch-year birds to 36 individuals.

The latest observations punctuate a year-round effort by the Center for Conservation Biology to monitor the demographics of this population. Each year, all new chicks are banded with a Fish and Wildlife Service aluminum band and a unique combination of color bands for later identification. We will follow up with a census of the population in fall and winter to identify the status and location of each bird.

The recent successes at Piney Grove are the result of a combination of factors including the dedication and hard work by the Nature Conservancy to manage habitats important to RCWs, the control of species that compete for RCW cavity trees, and the translocation of RCWs from South Carolina to bolster the Virginia population. RCWs require open, old-growth pine forest with little or no understory. Management of this habitat requires a proficient prescribed fire campaign to reduce hardwood encroachment. The Nature Conservancy, with the help of partners from the USFWS, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the Virginia Department of Forestry, were able to burn the majority of the Preserve this season. In addition, constant vigilance by the Center for Conservation Biology and the Nature Conservancy was directly responsible in controlling cavity competitors, including flying squirrels, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, and White-breasted Nuthatches, that would have halted breeding activities at two sites this year. Finally, two of the three recent gains in the number of breeding clusters since 2004 are the result of translocated males from South Carolina that have claimed territories to breed with native Virginia birds. Other translocated males have successfully reproduced in older clusters on the Preserve and offspring from translocated birds are also beginning to reproduce. Native Virginia birds are also doing well. The new breeding cluster established just this year consists of a native born pair.

Work on this fragile population is supported by funds from the Virginia Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and the Center for Conservation Biology.

BIRD CLUB HISTORY 2000 – 2002

By Cynthia Long

2000: President, Ruth Beck; VP Programs, Dan Cristol; VPs Newsletter, Phil Young and Bill Holcombe; Secretary, Phyllis Jennings; Treasurer,

Chuck Rend, Members-At-Large, Alex Minarik and Jandy Strickland.

Sibley's Guide to Birds was published this year. We were also reading "Red-tails in Love" a popular account of Red-tailed Hawks nesting near Central Park in New York City. Shirley Devan visited the site and observed the birds in 2002.

Sadly, we lost charter member and honorary life member Bill Sheehan in February. WBC members wrote special tributes to Bill, and dedicated a bench in his memory at W&M Population Lab (near the indoor tennis center) where a lot of field studies were conducted. Two W&M scholarships were named in his honor. We also lost Alice Sprunge, another charter member and long-time officer of the club, in July. She had served as the Williamsburg Regional Library liaison since the club's founding, choosing appropriate birding books to donate to the library. Her family donated Alice's collection of bird books to the Williamsburg Regional Library.

Bill Holcombe's report on the 101st Christmas Bird Count related the following: "While we've had some cold days and some stormy days for the Christmas Bird Count, but we never before had a day quite like Sunday, December 17. As dawn approached so did thunder and lightning accompanied at times by torrential rain. The U.S. Post Office apparently decides weather questions concerning the count, as one has never been canceled. Despite the terrible conditions our 22 birders turned in 103 species – through thunder, lightning, downpours, and 20 mph wind gusts."

Emily Snell-Rood and Renae Held were awarded our graduate student fellowships for 2000.

2001-2002: President, Hugh Beard; VP Programs, Dan Cristol; VP Newsletter, Phil Young and Bill Holcombe; Secretary, Marilyn Zeigler; Treasurer, Charles Rend; Members-at-Large, Tom Armour and Lee Schuster. High School Science teacher Hugh Beard emphasized education during his term as president. A bird of the month was featured at each meeting. Hugh missed the September meeting, because he and his wife Karen added baby boy Hugh Brenner to their nest. Bill Williams missed participating in the Kiptopeke Challenge because he couldn't get out of Paris. Our country had been attacked on 9-11-2001, and we were all in a state of emergency.

Emily Sharret died in January, a gentle member who was an excellent birder, often leading field trips. Emily taught a valuable lesson on field trips, "Bird every bird." A new record for the WBC was added to our list. A Lark Sparrow had been sighted at Hog Island by Brian Taber and Bill Williams in August of 2000, bringing the WBC species list to 327.

Dan Cristol's programs included a workshop on local bird songs given by stalwarts Hugh Beard, Dan Cristol, and Ruth Beck, with assistance from W&M students. Brian Taber gave a program on migrating hawks. A Swainson's Warbler made the headlines for the Great Dismal Swamp field trip, spotted and pursued, and actually seen through the scope that Alex Minarik focused on it. WBC was urged to support the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail. YRSP bluebirds continued to prosper, under the care of Shirley Devan and Dorothy Whitfield.

Brian Taber's spring count yielded 149 species, reported by 29 participants. Brian also gave a detailed report on the 5th College Creek Hawk watch, which had been established in 1997. 938 hawks and vultures of 14 species were recorded. He gave special thanks to Bill Williams and Tom Armour for their help and noted that this was the first year the watch had become an official project of the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory. WBC Research grants were awarded to David DeRochers and Kevin Kroll.

WBC past-president Joy Archer was honored by her friends with the planting of a redbud tree on the campus, near Barksdale field where she had coached her women's field hockey teams. Joy stood straight and tall as she said, "I am so honored and so pleased and so happy."

WBC participated in the Land Conservancy Autumn Adventure with an educational booth. Bill Williams reported a Rufous Hummingbird for the Christmas Bird Count, which totaled 99 species.

The only changes in officers for 2002 was the Secretary. Alex Minarik agreed to serve as Secretary, succeeding long time officer Marilyn Zeigler.

Tom Armour reported a Rufous Hummingbird at his Kingsmill feeder; it was subsequently captured in a tiny cage and banded. Two others were banded near Lake Powell. All were first year females. Tom's January field trip to the York River also yielded a Snow Bunting.

Bill Williams's field trip to Greensprings Trail with 30 birders noted a Clay-Colored sparrow, as well as kinglets and other familiar species. WBC volunteers spruced up the bluebird trail at YRSP, adding new houses, and painting and repairing some of the 41 boxes.

Bill Holcombe took the big job of record keeping which had been done since the club's beginning by the late Bill Sheehan, alerting birders to species early and late arrival dates, and asking for their help.

Julie and Ty Hotchkiss captured a black snake which had invaded a wood duck box on Lake

Pasbehegh near their home. He had eaten one egg, but about a dozen more remained in the nest. They exiled the snake to the far side of the Chickahominy River and continued to check the box. The mother returned to care for the eggs, and eventually 11 birds fledged. Julie found one baby still in the box, gently lifted it out to the water, where it began a shrill peeping. The mother heard this, and paddled back. The chick skittered across the water and joined the brood. Mama paddled off again, now with the entire brood of twelve. What a lovely story, a beautiful tribute to Julie and Ty.

Brian Taber once again organized the spring bird count, which yielded 152 species on an extremely cold May 5. Bill Holcombe continued his Bird of the Month descriptions in each newsletter, as well as being our record keeper and organizing the Christmas count. Both Bill and Brian served 12 years as count organizers.

Charter member and past president Joy Archer died in July of Lou Gehrig's disease. She left the conservation community and her friends a wonderful legacy. The *Flyer* recounted, "Her pleasure and enthusiasm at being out in the field was obvious to anyone birding with her and that spirit was wonderfully contagious – the joy of being with Joy will be sorely missed."

Alexandra Wilke was awarded the WBC student grant in 2002. She was studying Oystercatchers on the Eastern Shore.

The September program featured Bill Williams reporting on his five years of methodical study of the Greenspring Trail birds. It was followed on Saturday by a field trip to the trail, led by Alex Minarik.

Shirley Devan and the Bluebird Committee reported a record year at YRSP, 116 bluebirds fledged from 41 boxes. Twenty-seven birders reported 108 species in the 103rd Audubon Christmas Count.