



THE FLYER

NEWSLETTER OF THE WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB

Volume 31, Number 8

Website: www.wmbgbirdclub.com

September 2007

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Bob Log

Good Birders Don't Wear White – that book title caught my eye while browsing the non-fiction shelves at Williamsburg Library. I picked it up, realizing that it's required reading. The book, edited by Lisa White, consists of fifty brief, humorous, informative essays by leading North American birders, among them Scott Weidensaul, who will be guest speaker at the Friends of the Library annual meeting October 9. I was particularly taken with Scott Shalaway's discussion of the difference between a bird watcher and a birder. He said a bird watcher is casual about the pastime and concentrates on backyard birds. A birder is more obsessed and devotes most of his spare time to watching birds – planning vacations and other trips around birding hot spots. Most birders keep a life list of all the birds identified since the obsession began. Which are you?

Our Thirty Birdy Year (TBY) celebration is approaching its climax. The extraordinary TBY planning group (Cynthia Long, Bill Williams, Barb Streb, Shirley Devan) are finalizing plans for the events, September 21 and 22. Cynthia has contacted the original WBC founders, charter members, and scholarship recipients, and many are planning to attend. Bill Williams, Hugh Beard, Ruth Beck, and Tom McCary are planning a stimulating program, as well as family activities at the picnic. Shirley has assembled more than fifty exhibits for the WBC art show at Williamsburg Library September 10 through October 19. Barb has chosen a fabulous menu for the weekend. Remember to RSVP to Cynthia or Barb (see contact info in the next article). See you there!

THIRTY BIRDY YEARS – SEPTEMBER 21 AND 22

By Shirley Devan

WE'RE 30 YEARS OLD! Most people don't celebrate turning 30, but then most people are not the Williamsburg Bird Club! The time has come to recognize our club's accomplishments and a generation of members. We've been looking forward to September 2007 for over a year and our planning and hard work will result in three events that promise to be memorable:

Join us Friday evening, September 21, 7:00 p.m. for our **PROGRAM AND BIRTHDAY PARTY** at the Williamsburg Library auditorium. Charter member Bill Williams and numerous other club members are assembling a brief, light-hearted, fond look back at the birders and the club. Expect a few surprises and special guests. Then we'll have birthday cake and refreshments in the lobby and gallery. Come early to review the Bird Club Art Show with over 50 items loaned by members. Several members will have items for sale. Virginia's own wildlife artist Spike Knuth has submitted six paintings that will be for sale. RSVP to Barb Streb at barbarastreb@starpower.net or call Cynthia Long at 259-9559.

Then plan to attend our **THIRTY BIRDY YEARS PICNIC** Saturday afternoon, September 22 at New Quarter Park from 4 – 7 p.m. At 4 p.m., there'll be nature and birding activities for adults and children of all ages planned by Bill Williams, Hugh Beard, and other science educators in our club. Then we'll eat at 5:30. The club will provide chicken, rolls, beverages, and dessert. Bring a pot luck side dish to share. The picnic will be FREE for members and their families. Again, RSVP to Barb Streb at barbarastreb@starpower.net or call

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

Cynthia Long at 259-9559. We want to make sure we have food for you!

THE BIRD CLUB ART SHOW at the Williamsburg Library will be installed Monday, September 10. Over 15 members of the club have generously agreed to share some of their favorite pieces of art featuring wild birds. The art show will continue until October 19 and features paintings, historic Mark Catesby prints, sculpture, photographs by some of our club's talented nature photographers, wood carvings, and historic toys. Be sure to come by during September and October and bring your visitors and family members. Many thanks to Patrick Golden and his staff at the Library for their assistance. Also thanks to the "installation committee" that includes Carol Goff and Terry Johnston (plus others!).

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! All items will be available at the program and the picnic!

We look forward to seeing everyone. Call Cynthia Long at 259-9559 if you have questions or need a ride to the program or the picnic. We'll make sure you get there.

FIELD TRIP: KIPTOPEKE SEPT 15

The field trip to the Eastern Shore and Kiptopeke State Park is always one of the highlights of our Bird Club's year. Susan Powell, Bird Club member and Virginia Master Naturalist, will lead the trip. Saturday, September 15, meet at the parking lot at Colony Square Shopping Center at 6:45 a.m. for a 7:00 a.m. departure. The one-day round trip toll across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel is \$17 so car pooling is recommended.

After a reconnaissance trip with Shirley Devan September 1, Susan wants to get the group to the Song Bird Banding station as early as possible because, according to Jethro Runco the Chief Song Bird Bander, they net the best birds early in the morning. Seeing the small song birds and warblers "in the hand" is unforgettable and we want to maximize that experience for those interested in that part of the trip. The hawk watch platform, butterfly garden, and song bird banding station are concentrated in one area of the park near the parking lot, restrooms, and picnic shelter.

After visiting the song bird banding station, Susan will stop by the butterfly garden to point out butterfly host plants and some of the butterflies we'll be seeing. (September 1 the garden and the

park were stuffed with butterflies!). The hawk watch platform will be in full operation and fully staffed with volunteers and paid staff. If the winds are right, they'll be pointing out migrating hawks and falcons overhead and banding those they trap. Just hanging around the platform with those knowledgeable folks can give you some tips on identifying those high-flying migrants. We may get to see some of the banded hawks at the platform before they are released. The Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory staffs and manages the Hawk Watch Platform and Songbird Banding Station at Kiptopeke. Many thanks for their efforts and research over the past decades.

Susan has added a "bonus option" to this day's trip. At 11:30 a.m., those who wish can follow her up to Oyster, VA and then on to Willis Wharf (both small Eastern Shore fishing villages) to search for shore birds and arriving waterfowl. September 1 trip yielded at least 7 Whimbrels at Willis Wharf plus many egrets, herons, and other shore birds at Oyster. Those who prefer to stay at Kiptopeke may do so or may turn for home as their schedule allows. If you join the trek to Oyster and Willis Wharf, bring a lunch and a spotting scope for those long views. We'll probably stay until mid afternoon, but you are free to return to Route 13 and head south for home whenever you wish.

UPCOMING BIRD WALKS AT NEW QUARTER PARK

Our regular bird walks at New Quarter Park are getting popular. We had 19 participants at each of the August bird walks. September bird walks are: second Saturday, September 8, at 8:00 a.m. and the fourth Saturday, September 22 at 7:00 a.m. Migration is underway and we could see almost anything. Thanks to Susan Powell and Bill Williams for leading our August bird walks. Tom McCary and Bill Williams will lead the September bird walks. Meet in the parking lot near the Park Office. To see photos and bird lists from each walk, visit our web site: www.williamsburg-birdclub.org.

NEW WEB SITE ADDRESS

Our new web master is Jeanette Navia! Thanks, Jeanette, for bringing a more professional, polished, and updated look to our site – plus links to more photos and the ability to contribute your own comments. You can send photos and notes to Jeanette at: jeanette@marfanlife.net. We've already had an inquiry from a birder in Hawaii who wanted to know the hot birding spots to visit when he attends a conference here in October. The old web address will work for a few more months

and has a link to our new site, but bookmark the new address the next time you visit:
www.williamsburgbirdclub.org.

AUGUST 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!

August 2: Bill Williams reports from Drummonds Field: "Monday's heavy rains put enough water into Drummond's Field that shorebirds are assembling there. Among the 35 Killdeer were a Lesser Yellowlegs, 5-6 Pectoral Sandpipers, maybe 8-12 Least Sandpipers, and 5-6 Solitary Sandpipers. These will change as the water dries. Fortunately the bike trail parking lot is just across the road!! The Pectorals are Killdeer sized, stockier, slightly longer billed, and quite brownish through the throat and breast. That brown demarcation is defined by an abrupt change to white through the lower belly."

August 5: Joe and Grace Doyle visited Camp Peary today and recorded 37 species: Highlights were Snowy Egrets, Wood Ducks, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Great-crested Flycatcher, Pine Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Summer Tanager, Indigo Bunting, and Eastern Towhee.

August 5: Eleanor Young reports from the regular first Sunday bird walk at Newport News Park sponsored by the Hampton Roads Bird Club. "On an extremely hot and humid Sunday," led by Jane Frigo, they found 25 species including Great-crested Flycatcher, Brown-headed Nuthatch, two Red-headed Woodpeckers, Summer Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Purple Martins, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Red-eyed Vireo, White-eyed Vireo, and Eastern Wood-Pee-wee.

August 12: The Doyles found 35 species at Camp Peary this day. In addition to the "usual suspects," highlights include Mute Swan, Red-tailed Hawk, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Eastern Wood Pewee, Eastern Kingbird, Tree Swallow, and Chipping Sparrow.

August 16: Bob Long reports that the 4 bluebird eggs in his nest box hatched today! The third brood this season!

August 19: The Doles observed 41 species at Camp Peary today. New species were Green Heron, Mallard, Black Vulture, Northern Harrier, Northern Bobwhite, Common Tern, Acadian Flycatcher, White-breasted Nuthatch, White-eyed Vireo, Blue Grosbeak, Common Grackle.

August 21: Phil Young reports Swans on College Creek with 5 young ones. First time he's seen young swans on College Creek. Evidence of nesting, perhaps? Phil says they were too far away to identify.

August 22: Alex Minarik reports: "I am pretty certain that I saw three black terns at Hog Island this morning in the same place as the Hudsonian Godwit. They had black bills, almost no fork to the tail and were uniformly darkish gray above on back, wings and tail. They had black splotches on face and neck and were circling around and dipping in the water just beyond the H. Godwit and near where the Caspian Terns were sitting on the edge of the water. This is also the area where I also saw two Wilson's Phalaropes. The Marbled Godwit was in the very first water near the entrance gate. Here is my list: Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Marbled Godwit, Hudsonian Godwit, Stilt Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Killdeer, Semipalmated Plover, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope, Spotted Sandpiper, Caspian Tern, Black Tern, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Kestrel, Eastern Kingbird, Mourning Dove, Common Yellowthroat, Barn Swallow, and American Goldfinch.

August 23: Bill Williams reports: "Among the 68 species Mitchell Byrd, Shirley Devan, and I observed this morning at Hog Island WMA in Surry County were: 2 Black Terns, 2 (possibly 4) Upland Sandpipers, 1 Hudsonian Godwit (first noted 18 Aug, fifth local record for this species), 1 Marbled Godwit (first noted 18 August, 11th local record), 1 Cliff Swallow."

August 25: Tom Armour reports: "Dave Anderton and I had great time with the large number of Shore birds at Hog Island. Highlights were 1 Marbled Godwit, 2 Upland Sandpipers, 1 Black Tern, many Stilt Sandpipers. We had a total of 11 species of Shore birds. We had a nice wind so not many bugs."

August 25: Joe and Grace Doyle found 35 species at Camp Peary. Highlights include Green Heron, Belted Kingfisher, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, White-eyed Vireo, White-eyed Vireo, Pine Warbler, Summer Tanager, and Chipping Sparrow.

August 31: Lois Leeth counted 150 Canada Geese in Colonial Williamsburg's pasture at the intersection of Route 60 and Francis Street.

August 31: Bob and Cynthia Long report that the third brood of bluebirds is still in the box. The parents have slowed down the feeding schedule – a clear sign that it's time for the kids to move on!

August 31: Tom Armour reports from Hog Island: no Godwits or Upland Sandpipers at Hog Island today, but many hundreds of shore birds. Also 25+ Great Egrets.

September 1: Susan Powell and Shirley Devan visited the Eastern Shore on a dry run for the September 15 field trip. They recorded 77 species at four locations – Kiptopeke State Park, Oyster, Willis Wharf, and Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge. Highlights were Whimbrels, Gull-billed Tern and Tri-colored Herons at Willis Wharf, Little Blue Heron and Cattle Egret at Oyster, and Peregrine Falcon at the Refuge.

September 2: Bob and Cynthia Long report that the 3 of the four bluebirds fledged before noon. They expect the fourth one to take flight any minute!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Gloria McFadden, Lucile Kossodo, Charlotte Kline, Sally Lewis, Gene Chis, Allan and Lynda Sharrett, Hayes and Joyce Williams, and Don and Loretta Back have joined during August. We look forward to seeing you at upcoming events. Welcome to the Bird Club.

BIRDING ELDERHOSTEL

Join the College of William and Mary's Elderhostel program for "Making the Most of Migration"-- a Birding adventure on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, October 7-12, 2007! During the height of fall migration on the Chesapeake Bay, Leader Bill Williams will guide excursions to Kiptopeke State Park, the Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge, Nassawadox, and Fisherman's Island. Includes a rare opportunity to view songbird and hawk banding up-close!

Program includes 5 nights at the Sunset Beach Resort, located at the southern tip of the Eastern Shore next to the bay bridge, plus all meals, transportation for excursions, and expert instruction. For costs and registration information, please visit www.wm.edu/elderhostel, call our W&M office at 757-221-3649, or call Elderhostel headquarters toll free at 1-800-454-5768 and reference program #11641. Elderhostel is a life-long learning and travel organization for adults aged 55+.

SONG BIRD BANDING STATION OPENS AT KIPTOPEKE

By Jethro Runco, Head Songbird Bander
Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory
August 16, 2007 – Another fall season has come

to the Kiptopeke banding station. Yesterday we opened our nets starting the 45th season here at Kiptopeke. The morning started off with a TRAILL'S (WILLOW or ALDER) FLY-CATCHER, but then quickly became dominated by the local bird community. NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRDS wanted to make sure they had our attention, by lining up to get banded. By the end of the morning, we had banded 28 total birds, of which half were Mockingbirds. Although nothing seemed quite ready to migrate anywhere, we did catch a BLUE-WINGED WARBLER, a species we don't catch many of in a season here.

As I was opening up the nets yesterday morning, I had no less than five CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW'S flying around the station. One was an adult male just flying all over flashing the white in his tail and growling. He was even flying around after sunrise which is something I don't see often here.

Also, there is a cluster of three Devil's Walking Stick (Hercules Club) that are just starting to bloom at the banding station and they are just FULL of butterflies! At one point, I counted 19 Monarchs, 8 Spicebush Swallowtails, 3 Tiger Swallowtails, 2 Silver-spotted Skippers, 2 Summer Azures, a Red Admiral and a Common Buckeye. Monarchs are in much higher numbers than I can recall for this time in August. They have been providing great entertainment! As side note, as I slowly get unpacked and everything situated, I will be updating a blog page that will give everyone a chance to see a few pictures and additional information of the activities at the banding station! The address is <http://www.kiptopeke.blogspot.com/>. Hope everyone is making plans to come visit the banding station this fall!!

WBC History 2003 – 2005

By Cynthia Long

Founding Mother Ruth Beck returned for another term as WBC President in 2003. VP Programs, Tom McCary; VPs Newsletter, Phil Young and Bill Holcombe; Secretary, Alex Minarik; Treasurer, Charles Rend; Members-at-Large, Tom Armour and Lee Schuster. Dan Cristol gave the first program of the year, a discussion of 35 endangered breeding species in Virginia. Tom Armour's January field trip ventured to the Chesapeake Bay-Bridge Tunnel, continuing on to the Eastern Shore. Our graduate scholar Mary Alexandra Wilke reported on declining Oystercatcher population on the Eastern Shore. Graduate scholar David desRochers reported on wetland birds in SE Virginia. He concluded that replacement wetlands were not producing the expected number of birds, as compared to original wetlands destroyed by development.

We lost two charter members in February, Julie Hotchkiss and Charlie Hacker. Julie and her husband Ty were photographers for Audubon, and did the nature photography for the Colonial Williamsburg film classic "The Colonial Naturalist." Charlie was an ardent birder and bander, and a past president of VSO. Charlie made the woodpecker door knockers we used at a VSO meeting for centerpieces and door prizes. Fred Blystone's father in law made the original model.

Wild Birds Unlimited continued their generous donations to the WBC. We raised the dues for the first time in ten years, on the recommendation of our conscientious treasurer Charles Rend.

Field trips took us to the Vineyards, the Dismal Swamp, Hog Island, York River State Park, Craney Island, Kiptopeke, Jamestown, and Newport News Park. Another fine June picnic was held at the Beck's in New Kent County, with our loyal Jeanne Armour planning the event, as she has done for years. Brian Taber reported 156 species for the spring bird count.

Ruth was awarded and honorary lifetime membership by the WBC board in December. The honorary certificate stated "The Williamsburg Bird Club is pleased upon this occasion to honor one of its most outstanding and cherished members...whereas she has breathed life, fun, joy, knowledge, and love of birds into the club..."

The Christmas bird count yielded 98 species, with 11,677 birds counted. This was the year of Hurricane Isabel, (September), which greatly affected our human and wildlife habitats.

2004: President: Alex Minarik; VP Programs, Tom McCary; VPs Newsletter, Phil Young and Shirley Devan; Secretary, David and Carol Goff; Treasurer, Charles Rend; Members-at-large, Emidio Bracalente and Diana Nolan.

Alex wrote in her first President's Corner, "for 25 years I have spent as much of my free time as possible enjoying this wonderful pastime (birding). My mentors were members of the Augusta Bird Club who helped me learn the difference between downy and hairy woodpeckers, for instance, and who encouraged me early on to learn to identify birds by ear as well as by sight. I am forever indebted to them for their time and patience with me. So as I begin my presidency of the WBC I'd like to encourage the expert birders in our club to be mentors to the novice birders among us. The constitution of the club states, "the purpose of the club is to promote interests in the study of wild birds and in the protection of birds and their habitat." And, if I may add, "to share the joy of birding." Alex immediately scheduled a workshop for novice birders at the Minarik's home, inviting birders to

bring binoculars, bird books, and donuts -- "Coffee and birds will be supplied."

Birding, the magazine of the American Birding Association, cited wetland research conducted by Dan Cristol and our grad student scholar, Emilie Snell-Rood, which concluded "until further evidence is available, it should not be assumed that forested wetland creation replaces the bird communities present on the destroyed natural wetlands."

Past-President John Hertz died in January. Shirley Devan became the co-editor of The Flyer, succeeding long-time editor Bill Holcombe (a post she continues to hold). Shirley helped to establish our web site, shortly after taking office, and WBC officially entered the electronic age of communication. Co-editor Phil Young wrote a graceful tribute to Bill, reflecting on their time together as editors of The Flyer, "Bill came forward at an important time. Officers were weary and in need of relief. He breathed life into an organization that needed revitalization."

Marc Meiring led WBC members on the highway cleanup project. Tony Dion actually saw a frog eating a bird, and described it in The Flyer. Joe and Grace Doyle continued to visit Camp Peary every week, and report on the bird species. They have compiled a fantastic record over the years. 25 birders counted 112 species of birds for the Christmas Count.

2005: Fred Blystone joined the board again as Member-at-large. Other board members remained the same. Bill Williams' notes, called "Lister's Blisters" gave us a thought-provoking way to spend "Thirty Birdy Minutes." (I just realized that must have been the inspiration for our anniversary celebration title, "Thirty Birdy Years." Thank you, Bill!)

The Spannuths reported on their trip to New Zealand, and the Flyer printed great pictures they had taken of Gannets and Penguins. Reading the Flyer takes us all over the globe as our members share their adventures in birding. The March issue included a page of marvelous color pictures from our traveling members. Our website also continued to add pictures and stories of great interest.

Dan Cristol published monthly articles in the Virginia Gazette on birds, and generously donated his stipend to the club. Wild Birds Unlimited continued to donate 5% of WBC member's purchases to the club, and combined with dues, our treasurer Chuck Rend was able to give positive financial reports to the club. Barb Streb managed the feeding station at our club meetings, providing a delicious opportunity for snacking and socializing.

The College Creek Hawk watch continued to flourish under the leadership of CVWO President Brian Taber, who reports on the Observatory programs. WBC Charter member and past-President Joy Archer, (who died in 2002), made a generous bequest to the Observatory, which created the Joy Archer Migration Studies Fund. A student grant was created from the fund, which was first awarded to W&M graduate student Elizabeth Long in 2004, to further her studies on Peregrine Falcons. Joy's bequest continues to benefit wildlife and habitat conservation in coastal Virginia.

Brian Taber reported 22 WBC members counted 151 species for the official spring count, "despite wind-driven rain and temperatures around 50, colder than many of our Christmas Counts."

The really big national birding news this year was a report of Ivory-billed Woodpecker sightings in an Arkansas swamp. More reports emerged, with WBC alumnus, Bob Anderson, adding his own sighting report later, and giving a program at our club in the following year. Bill Sheehan Research Grants were awarded to graduate students Ariel White and Caitlin Knight.

Thirty-three birders reported 113 species in the annual Christmas Bird Count. Lee Schuster reported that WBC donated 11 books and other media to the Williamsburg Regional Library in 2005.

PELAGIC TRIP REPORT

By Joe Piotrowski aboard Stormy Petrel II
August 4, 2007

I was on vacation at a beach house in Avon, NC with my family so I decided this would be a perfect opportunity take a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC with the Stormy Petrel II owned by Brian Patteson, www.seabirding.com. The cost of the trip is \$135 for one day or \$125 per day for two. They go out most weekends and all details are on the website. Though I set my cell phone to go off at 4:30 am it didn't go off and I woke up myself as I was eagerly awaiting the trip. I can use my complex digital camera and process my photos on multiple complex computer programs but apparently I need to be 14 to work a cell phone.

I packed a lunch and was going over my equipment in my car when I realized I left my binoculars in the house. All packed, I made the 15 mile trip south to Hatteras Village. There was a deli near the boat where I could gratefully get a cup of Joe. I and 20 other birders loaded on board at 5:45. It was a diverse group aged 20s to 80s from Chicago, Baltimore, and Seattle to name a few. Some great hats and tee shirts were in evidence. My favorite besides my Thirty Birdy

Year hat said "Life is simple. Eat. Sleep. Bird." The Captain Brian Patteson gave a brief briefing introducing the deckhand Jeff Ostrander and the rest of the crew (Kate Sutherland, Steve Howell, Jamie Cameron, and Chris Sloan all volunteers!) The boat was big and roomy with 2 bathrooms and easily accommodated 20 people. No food or water is available so all brought their own. We set out promptly at 6:00 am.

We chugged up the channel on the bay side of the Outer Banks and through the inlet to the ocean. On the way we were treated to flocks of Great Egrets, Great Blues, and a single Tricolored Heron flying overhead. We passed an island where 5,000 Royal Terns were roosting along with many Black Skimmers in distinct bands, the terns on top ringed by the Skimmers near the shore line. We were informed that we needed to travel about 2.5 hours to get to the Gulf Stream where all the sea birds hang out. After an hour with sea spray forcing us off the bow we passed some rafts of seaweed and saw several Audubon's Shearwaters coasting very near the water. We slowed briefly but soon headed out until at about 8:30 reached our cruising area. There was a thunderstorm off in the distance but it was sunny, in the 80s all day with a steady breeze causing 2-3 foot waves and chop all day. The water was deep blue and very clear and we saw a pod of Pilot Whales briefly about 50 yards away. The rest of the day we slowly cruised around looking for birds, of course! I had never been on a pelagic trip so I didn't know what to expect. For those of you who have not done this there are a few things which I realized right away: 1. The Ocean is huge and birds are small. 2. Many birds are far away and you only get brief glances and nearly all are in flight. 3. It is a challenge to use binocs or camera on a rocking boat. In fact I abandoned my binocs to use my camera exclusively since I could not handle both and keep from injuring myself on the side rails. Many of the frailer birders simply sat the whole time because of this danger (there was just as much to see sitting anyway). In addition motion sickness would be a drag on such a long trip. 4. Chumming for birds only brings in the Wilson's Petrels at this time of year. 5. Most birds do eventually come closer; some right by the boat but it takes endurance to keep birding for 8 hours.

The first bird we saw roosting (i.e. on the water) was a Greater Shearwater which allowed us to pull within 15 feet and get views and pictures before it took off. We saw many Black Capped Petrels, but they were more wary and the closest we got was 30-50 yards. The Cory's Shearwaters were more tolerant and we saw many near the boat. Some seemed to circle us before heading off. Wilson's Storm Petrels followed the boat consistently all day and flit about much like

swallows in flight. We had seen Royal, Sandwich, and Least Terns on the way out but here 40 miles from shore we saw mostly Sooty and Bridled Terns. They came in very close and were also approachable as they rested on floating flotsam. One was very happy on an obviously lost boogie board. It was unusual to see so many Sooty Terns per the crew. About mid-day most of the birds were on the water so we snuck up on many groups of them and were usually able to get within 50 feet or so before they spooked. Large groups of Cory's (8-10) were seen along with Wilson's in large (30-50) groups. In among the Wilson's were Band-rumped Petrels. Initially hard to identify, since they were among the Wilson's, a few distinct differences made it easy to pick them out. They were larger when seen next to the Wilson's (a lone bird on the ocean is impossible to easily size) and their behavior was distinctly different. They would fly in a straight line as apposed to the Wilson's who flit about. They are faster and in a flock with Wilson's easily outpace them. They are browner than the blacker Wilson's.

The Captain and crew were busy spotting birds to direct the boat and any birds spotted were announced over loudspeakers with a description of location "Cory's at 2 o'clock moving right." There were many times that we saw no birds for 15-20 minutes at a time. According to several old timers this was a slow day overall. No rarities seen but considering every one of these common birds was a life bird for me, so what? We did see a 300 lb Turtle that swam right up to the back of the boat since the crew was doing some fishing off the back. The full trip record is on the Website.

At 3:30 we headed back arriving about 5:15pm at the dock. In the Bay we saw several Black Skimmers which flew right in front of the bow. More terns were seen and a flock of 5-6 Glossy Ibis passed over head. Laughing gulls greeted our return. Since the crew is all volunteers, a tip is expected and I felt well deserved. I packed my car and wearily drove to the beach house. Out of 400 photos only a handful were close enough to qualify as worth keeping. I took many pictures of distant dots. Sea bird photography is very challenging. I have sent many of the better shots in for use on the club website and you can go to the website mentioned earlier in this piece to see much better photos by Brian Patteson and crew. Most of the birders were there for both days but I had some family things to do or I definitely would have gone. For some strange reason my family wanted me to spend time with them. So little time, so many TUBs (Totally Unidentified Birds). Bottom line: well worth it!