



THE FLYER

NEWSLETTER OF THE WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB

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Website: www.wmbgbirdclub.com

April 2007

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Bob Long

Williamsburg Bird Club members Ann and Gary Carpenter recently invited fellow members to appear at a garden symposium at Colonial Heritage, attended by over 100 residents. I briefly summarized WBC activity and coming events. George Copping, Wild Birds Unlimited, chipped in with the latest on hummingbird feeders, bluebird houses, and optics. First Lady Cynthia displayed native plants to attract birds, and gave away seeds for habitat plantings. There was considerable interest in WBC, and most of our handouts quickly disappeared. Our club is one of the best entertainment values around. Where else can you get a monthly newsletter, three or more outings per month, nature camp opportunities, monthly meetings with outstanding speakers, and delicious refreshments for only \$25 per year?

Our twice monthly walks at New Quarter Park, with local birders as well as out of state visitors, have been well attended. Twenty birders noted some forty species on our most recent walk. Last Friday, Cynthia and I observed a mature Bald Eagle harassing a Turkey Vulture at the park's floating dock. NQ Park is a wonderful partner for our club. The Williamsburg Bird Club received a 2006 Outstanding Volunteer Award from York County as a result of our programs at the park. It will be presented at the April 17 meeting of the Board of Supervisors in Yorktown. Thank you to all our members whose volunteer activities earned this award.

APRIL 18 MEETING

Anne Condon, a graduate ornithology student in the biology department at William and Mary and a recipient of one of the club's Bill Sheehan Ornithology Research Grants, will present results of her research on "Mercury Levels in Young Eastern Bluebirds in the Shenandoah." Anne graduated from Tufts University in 1998 with a degree in environmental studies and french. William and Mary's biology graduate program and Dan Cristol's work attracted her to W&M. For an update on the research that W&M students are doing in the Shenandoah Valley, see the article inside this newsletter, written by Anne.

Join us Wednesday, April 18, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. in Room 117 in Millington Hall on the William and Mary campus. Refreshments afterwards will be provided by the Refreshments Committee, chaired by Barbara Streb.

FIELD TRIP TO DISMAL SWAMP

Set your alarm clocks for EARLY and plan to join leader Alex Minarik on our Saturday, April 21 field trip to the Dismal Swamp's Jericho Ditch. Once we arrive at Jericho Ditch, we'll park our cars and walk approximately 1 – 2 miles on flat ground. We'll be looking and listening for neotropical migrants such as Prothonotary Warblers, Common Yellowthroats, Swainson's Warblers, Louisiana Waterthrushes, Northern Parulas and some surprises!

Meet by 6:00 a.m. at the Colony Square Shopping Center parking lot on Jamestown Road (near the Fresh Market.) We'll consolidate into carpools for

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

the hour-long drive. We'll turn for home not later than 11:00 a.m. Suggested attire is long pants and long sleeves plus hats and bug spray. Water and a snack may also be helpful.

APRIL 18 WINE ON WEDNESDAY

The Bird Club will join other local organizations representing outdoor activities at the April 18 "Wine on Wednesday" at the Williamsburg Winery. Look for ads in the VA Gazette. You'll enjoy a fun-filled evening featuring interactive displays and specialists representing local Parks and Recreation, canoeing, kayaking, biking, and, of course, birding. You'll find food, wine, raffle prizes, cooking demonstrations, and other activities. Admission is \$10 per adult and includes two drinks, 1 raffle ticket, and hors d'oeuvres. Five dollars of the admission goes directly to Historic Triangle Outdoor Adventures, the local non-profit organization promoting ecotourism in the Historic Triangle and nature-friendly outdoor adventures. Here's the web address:

<http://www.historictriangleoutdooradventures.com/index.htm> We know this is the same evening as the monthly meeting, so join us at the Winery at 5:30 and then head over to the meeting at Millington at 7:30. See you there!

NQ PARK BIRD WALKS

Join us for spring birding at New Quarter Park in March. Our regular 2nd and 4th Saturday bird walks will be April 14 and April 28. Meet leader Bill Williams at 8:00 a.m. April 14 in the parking lot near the park office. Tom McCary will be the leader April 28 – 7:00 a.m. at the park office.

ABOUT THE SPECIES LIST OF THE BIRDS OF WILLIAMSBURG

Members received with this newsletter a booklet, "Species List of the Birds of Williamsburg, VA: Breeding, Abundance, and Occurrence," compiled by Bill Williams. The last edition of this document was published in 1997. The geopolitical scope of this list includes all of James City County, York County, the City of Williamsburg, and Hog Island Wildlife Management Area in Surry County.

So ... how to use this book: Compare your bird sightings in your yard and around your favorite birding spots to the information in this booklet. For example, if you see a Ruby-crowned Kinglet in your yard in April and are wondering if it's building a nest, check the booklet to see if the kinglet breeds here. (By the way, it does NOT.) Or if you see a Winter Wren at Jamestown Island on

April 28, you should call Bill Williams to let him know that you have a new "late" date for a Winter Wren in our area. (Current "late" date is April 19.) Or use it to keep track of your year birds!

Any list of this sort is a living, changing document, meant to be revised as a result of your year-round observations and feedback. If you detect errors/omissions or have more up-to-date information, please let Bill Williams know at jwwil2@wm.edu or call 221-7741 or 229-1124. Thank you for your support.

UPDATE FROM THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY

By Anne Condon, W&M Graduate Student

Spring is here! As birds are starting to build nests, some students at the College of William and Mary are also busily gathering materials and making trips out to the Shenandoah Valley. For a third season, Dr. Daniel Cristol and his students will study the nest box-using avian community of the South Fork Shenandoah River, VA. Over 300 nest boxes will be monitored for breeding tree swallows, eastern bluebirds, Carolina wrens, house wrens, and Carolina chickadees. Each student is working with a different species and on a different study, but all relate to the mercury contamination of the South River and how it is affecting nesting songbirds. The bird research by the College is part of a collaborative effort of state and federal agencies, industry, and citizen groups, called the South River Science Team (SRST). Support of students by the Williamsburg Bird Club has been extremely helpful.

Between 1929 and 1950, the South River was contaminated with mercury from an industrial source, which is surprisingly still present in the sediment, water and fish. Even more surprising is the presence of elevated levels of mercury in the insect-eating songbirds nesting near the river. Mercury contamination has historically been a concern in aquatic environments, where it is likely to change forms to methyl mercury due to many environmental factors. Methyl mercury is a chemical form of mercury that is highly toxic and available to organisms, and may accumulate through the food chain. Fish-eating species (like herons and ospreys) are thus considered to be at high risk for possible mercury poisoning, and volumes of research exist on mercury and aquatic species. Dr. Cristol and his students discovered that methyl mercury exposure has extended to land birds, despite their lack of direct exposure to the aquatic environment.

The main effect of methyl mercury poisoning is neurological damage, affecting memory, attention, language, motor and spatial skills. In birds, effects

also include kidney and liver damage, reduced reproductive success and altered behavior. The graduate students (Rebecka Brasso and Ariel White) who started this project in 2005 with undergraduates Ravi Jefferson-George and Sean Koebley, studied reproductive behavior of tree swallows and reproductive behavior and feather color in belted kingfishers. Both species had high levels of mercury compared with birds on nearby uncontaminated reference rivers. However, no major reproductive effects were found in the first year, despite the large numbers of tree swallows that were monitored.

Research on tree swallows and kingfishers continued in 2006, as well as on eastern bluebirds and two species of wren. More work meant more people, and 2 more graduate students (Anne Condon and Scott Friedman), as well as several undergraduates (Rachel Fovargue, Kelly Hallinger, Jack Reese, Adrian Monroe) were added to the field crew. The addition of a second year's worth of data showed reproductive effects in tree swallows; one less chick was produced by second-year tree swallows on the contaminated river compared to the clean rivers.

Research and analysis of the bluebirds and prey study are continuing right now. (Anne will describe her research with bluebirds at our April 18 meeting.) This field season, tree swallow nest boxes will be monitored for a third year to find out what happens to the oldest birds. Another graduate student (Mikaela Howie) will collect her first year of data – examining how far from the river the contamination spreads. Undergraduates will also continue research on bird song. For this research team, the return of Spring means waking at 4:30, driving 100 miles a day around the Shenandoah Valley, checking 100 nest boxes in 8 hours, trapping adults, banding nestlings, getting chased by cows and explaining the project to baffled observers. Thank you, Williamsburg Bird Club members, for supporting this student research.

MARCH BIRD SIGHTINGS

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

March 4: Joe and Grace Doyle report from their foray to Camp Peary: Hardly any birds about in the windy, cold conditions. They observed 25 Tundra Swans and about 200 Ring-necked Ducks on the York River. Two American Wigeons were floating in among the Ring-necked Ducks. There were only a few scattered Ruddy Ducks and Hooded Mergansers. They saw one Red-headed

Woodpecker, a Red-tailed Hawk, six Northern Cardinals, and a few White-throated sparrows.

March 5: Tom Armour reports: "This p.m. I had 3 Eastern Meadowlarks on Treasure Island Rd., first this year for me. On the pond at the Vineyards there was a Ruddy Duck with 8 Bufflehead."

March 6: Bill Holcombe reports: "Had a very good bird day. Early morning saw a flock of 60-70 Tundra Swans in a vocalizing V, very high in the sky, heading east. Then saw my first of the winter Brown Creepers. Next was a flurry at my feeders including the first Hermit Thrush to appear there this year (kept falling off of the suet cake), ditto to pair of Bluebirds, my Hairy Woodpecker, two competing female Downy Woodpeckers and many Yellow-rumped Warblers."

March 7: Grace Doyle reports about 100 Tundra Swans flying north over their Kingsmill neighborhood in the afternoon. The previous day Grace and Joe spotted their first Osprey of the season.

March 8: Gil and Jeanne Frey report: "Just a Surry update on warbler activity! We have spotted pine warblers and yellow rumps during the last 2 weeks. The only unusual thing is that so few goldfinches and *zero* purple finches appeared this year. Never happened before. We did spot a pretty little blue heron in Melbourne, FL 2 weeks ago, and an extremely tame white egret hovering in the parking lot, perching on cars, and posing for photos. Our eagles are showing nesting activity on the river."

March 8: Fred Blystone, Bill Williams, and Shirley Devan traveled to Gloucester Point to find the Red-necked Grebe reported by Dave Hewitt. "The bird was just where it was supposed to be and we were forced to extend our great looks while the Coleman Bridge opened and closed for an army tug boat."

March 8: Bill Williams spotted 120 Tundra Swans resting on the James River while at the Hawk Watch site on College Creek beside the Colonial Parkway.

March 11: Grace and Joe Doyle find 43 species at Camp Peary including many of the wintering ducks still in residence. However, this was the last date they observed Tundra and Mute Swans. This was the first time this year they found Ospreys at Camp Peary.

March 14: Tom McCary reports a Brown Creeper at Shirley Plantation.

March 18: Grace and Joe Doyle see 36 species at Camp Peary including Wood Ducks, Bufflehead, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Eastern Towhee.

March 20: Shirley Devan observed a Great Egret in the small pond at the intersection of Route 199 and Route 5 about 6:30 p.m.

March 21: Shirley Devan observed a Red-shouldered Hawk flying across the intersection (at headlight level) of Monticello Avenue and Windsor Meade Way. Luckily he was with the light and arrived safely on the other side.

March 22: Brian Taber reports from the Hawkwatch at College Creek on the Colonial Parkway: "There have only been 8 days of more than 100 birds at College Creek Hawkwatch over the 11 seasons, so today's total of 95 was excellent. The warm, southerly air mass brought a nice variety (8 species) though still mostly Turkey Vultures at this time of the season. The third week of March is typically very good at the site. After this, the hawks will build up more and the Turkey Vulture numbers will drop off. Bill Williams and I tallied, over 2-1/2 hours: 1 Black Vulture, 82 Turkey Vultures, 5 Ospreys, 1 Bald Eagle, 2 Northern Harriers, 1 Sharp-shinned Hawk, 2 Red-tailed Hawks, and 1 American Kestrel. More than 60 of the birds crossed the river in a little over 30 minutes. There were also hundreds of Tree Swallows and dozens of Bonaparte's Gulls."

March 23: Bill Williams reports the season's first Royal Tern and Yellow-throated Warbler, one of each, were at College Creek today. Bill Snyder called this afternoon (23 March) to say he'd seen a hummingbird at his house.

March 24: Tom Armour reports: "At the Hawkwatch this morning we had the season's first Purple Martin."

March 24: Shirley Devan reports a Common Loon in breeding plumage just off Yorktown beach near the fishing pier this morning.

March 25: Shirley and Steve Devan birded Jamestown Island in the morning. "The Bald Eagle nest across from the Visitor Center parking lot is very active. Female is constantly on the nest and we observed her mate bringing in fish for brunch."

March 25: Grace and Joe Doyle birded Camp Peary on their regular Sunday trip and observed 40 species, including their first Yellow-throated Warbler of the season. Birds they observed each Sunday in March: Great Blue Heron, Canada Goose, Ruddy Duck, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, American Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, European Starling, Northern Cardinal, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Red-winged Blackbird, and House Finch.

March 26: Tom Armour reports "at 4:00 PM today there were 9 Common Snipe in the 1st puddle on Treasure Island Road."

March 28: Brian Taber reports from the College Creek Hawkwatch: "I predicted a big day

yesterday at College Creek Hawkwatch with the expected record high temperatures (it reached 88 F), but ... wrong ... there were only 22 birds. So with brisk east winds, clouds and cooler temperatures today, March 28th, I predicted a slow day ... wrong again ... it turned out to be the 5th biggest day over our 11 years ... 127 birds. The east winds slowed throughout the morning and the sun came out warming things nicely. The wind pushed the birds across the river to the west of the site, an unusual track. Totals were 8 Black Vultures, 84 Turkey Vultures, 25 Ospreys (new daily high count), 4 Bald Eagles, a Northern Harrier, 3 Sharp-shinned Hawks and 2 Red-tailed Hawks.

March 28: Tom McCary reports two Red-tailed Hawks flying over his house, so he can officially add this species to his "yard list."

March 30: Ruth Beck reports that she has had five Yellow-throated Warblers feeding at her hummingbird feeders since March 25. She also reports Louisiana Waterthrushes and Pine Warblers in her yard.

April 1: Tom Armour reports: "this morning I heard an Ovenbird on Treasure Island Road in the pine woods area, first this year for me. Also, 2 Common Snipe were still in the first puddle."

April 1: Herb Spannuth reports: We have had a pair of eastern towhees in our yard the past 3 days. We had a close-up look at a red-headed woodpecker around noon today from the bridge on the new walk/bike trail near the Jamestown High School. He sat looking into a hole in a snag for 5-10 minutes before flying to other snags in the area. It's likely they are nesting there.

April 1: Tom McCary reports House Sparrows nesting in the wren's nest box in his back yard and that the female looks very exotic when she's flying around, because she appears to be partially "albinistic" – displaying a great deal of white on the wings and tail.

NUTHATCH VS THE BLUEBIRD

By Martha Briggs

For the first time last week I put out meal worms for the bluebirds. Some worms were placed in a shallow dish in a flower pot holder and hung on a tree. Other worms I put on a flat ash tray on the ground. It was not long before a White-breasted Nuthatch came scurrying down the tree to the flower pot holder. Helping himself to a juicy meal worm, he scurried up the tree, to either eat it or hide it in the tree's bark, and then return for another meal worm. Soon he discovered the ground ash tray where a bluebird was enjoying a luscious meal of worms. The nuthatch, who

considered all the meal worms his, flew at the bluebird, chased it from the dish, and continued to feast on meal worms in each place, proving that "it's the little bird that gets the worm!"

VSO's 2007 ANNUAL MEETING ON THE NORTHERN NECK

By Rexanne Bruno, VSO Publicity Chair

You still have time to sign up for the VSO Annual Meeting on the Northern Neck. "Bird Conservation in Virginia" is the theme of this year's Virginia Society of Ornithology (VSO) Annual Meeting on the Northern Neck, May 4 – 6, 2007. Dr. Bryan Watts, Director of the Center for Conservation Biology at W&M, will be the guest speaker at the banquet on Saturday evening. Dr. Watts will speak on *A Century of Avifaunal Change in the Mid-Atlantic: Using the Past to Clarify the Conservation Challenges of Today*.

For additional details about area field trips, check the VSO website, www.viriniabirds.net or the Spring issue of the VSO newsletter. You do not need to be a VSO member to attend the weekend events.

BREEDING BIRD SURVEYS

By Andrew Dolby, VSO

For this summer's VSO Foray, I am organizing a survey of Virginia's entire state park system, following the model of Josh LeClerc and Dan Cristol's successful golf course survey of 2002. Currently, no comprehensive data base exists for our state park's birds, and we now have a distinct opportunity to assist in developing one. State park personnel are thoroughly enthusiastic about the idea and are ready to coordinate with foray participants.

The foray will be June 2-10, 2007, and the plan is for small teams (2-4 people) to survey each park during that week. Park managers will assist teams in acquiring access to park properties and necessary amenities. Survey data will be published in *The Raven*, the scientific journal of the VSO, and submitted to the state park system's natural resource managers. This year's foray is an exciting chance to involve participants from around the whole state and make a substantial contribution to our superb state park system! Join in!

The Williamsburg Bird Club, led by Bill Williams, will conduct breeding bird surveys at our "local" state parks – York River State Park and Chippokes State Park. Contact Bill Williams at jwwil2@wm.edu or call 221-7741 or 229-1124 if you want to join in. The surveys can be done any day during the June 2 – 10 time frame.

A NOTE OF THANKS

By Jeanne and Tom Armour

"Jeanne and I would like to thank Williamsburg Bird Club members for the many cards and notes of condolences on the death of our son, Tom, that we have received and for the donations made to the Hospice in his honor. His passing has made this a very difficult time for us and your thoughtful actions have helped us greatly."

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to our new members: Mark and Pat Bowyer; Mike, Peggy, and Gemma Mason; Terry and Catherine Bond; Priscilla Summers; Sylvia and Jeffery Cooke; Jennifer Burrows; Dean Brummet and family; Laura and Lenny Lentz; and Barbara Cooke. We look forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming bird walks and meetings.

CLUB RECEIVES OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER AWARD

Nominated by Molly Nealer, the Williamsburg Bird Club will receive a 2006 Outstanding Volunteer Award from York County at the April 17 meeting of the Board of Supervisors. Molly, Recreation Supervisor for the York County Department of Parks and Recreation, recommended the club because: "The Williamsburg Bird Club merits recognition for:

- developing and leading bird watching walks twice a month,
- developing and conduction of two nature camps,
- contributing funds for the purchase of bird watching guides and binoculars, and promoting the birding environment at New Quarter Park to their members and the bird watching community at large."

SPRING BIRD COUNT – APRIL 29

The Spring Bird Count will be Sunday, April 29, according to Brian Taber, organizer for this annual club event. Take this opportunity to go with an experienced birder/leader to check out a location you've not birded before. You're sure to see some new spring arrivals and perhaps add a bird or two to your year or life list.

The procedure is just like the Audubon Christmas Bird Count, same areas, same leaders, but there's no fee. The groups count birds in a circular territory 15 miles in diameter. The center of our circle is the Colonial Williamsburg Visitor Center. Contact one of the area leaders listed below to join this important count and to get the details about

where and when to meet. Bring your binocs, a field guide, bug spray, lunch, and something to drink.

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. I-64 and the York River)

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

SUPPORT THE CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Mark your calendar now for Saturday, May 5, and come out to New Quarter Park to enjoy spring and to help support the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. The day will start with a Chesapeake Bay Foundation "Save the Bay" Breakfast. Tommy Leggett, Oyster Scientist with VIMS, will talk about the York River Oyster Restoration Program. Arrive early and register to participate in the Disc Golf Tournament or the Kayak Poker Run.

From 10 a.m. to noon, Greg Millsagle will lead a Walk and Talk along the Bluebird Box Trail. Informational tables will be open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. with exhibitors including York County 4-H, Appomattox Canoe and Kayak, the Waterman's Museum, the Williamsburg Bird Club, Wild Birds Unlimited, and others.

From 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dave Graft's oceanography class from Lafayette High School will be showing off their oyster farm. The Park's archaeology site will be open, with Dave Hazzard from the VA Dept. of Historic Resources sifting dirt for hidden treasures between noon and 2 p.m. All proceeds benefit the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

WILLIAMSBURG BOTANICAL GARDEN WALK & TALK AND NEST BOX JUDGING

The bird club will join forces with the Williamsburg Botanical Garden on Saturday, June 2, to lead a "Birding Walk and Talk" around the Ellipse Garden and nearby Freedom Park from 8–10 am. The Botanical Garden is also sponsoring a "Build a Bird House" competition during May and the

final judging will take place on Saturday morning at the Garden. Hope to see you there.

<http://www.williamsburgbotanicalgarden.org/index.htm>

BIRDING TEXAS – ELDERHOSTEL PROGRAM PLUS!

By Herb Spannuth

"Beverly and I recently (March 5-20, 2007) attended a five-day University of Texas Elderhostel program in Port Aransas, Texas, followed by ten days of exploring and birding on our own in areas around Harlingen, Brownsville, South Padre Island, McAllen, Roma, and Zapata.

The Elderhostel program – Exploring The Gulf Coast: Whooping Cranes, Marine Life, King Ranch – included a birding cruise to the Aransas Wildlife Refuge to see part of the migratory flock of whooping cranes and other wildlife, a visit to one portion of the King Ranch, and visits to several other birding sites in Port Aransas. At the end of our 4 days of birding with Nan Dietert, whom we highly recommend (Bird dog Birding 361-563-5621), we had recorded 121 species. In addition to the 25-30 whooping cranes that we observed (at distances ranging from 50 to 150 yards) from a 70-foot catamaran, we added a number of other new birds to our list. Some of the highlights for us during this program were seeing eared grebes, a close look at a peregrine falcon roosting on a navigation marker, cinnamon teal, Wilson's snipe, Inca doves, white-tailed hawks, crested caracara, golden-fronted woodpeckers, green jays, black-crested titmice, a vermilion flycatcher, and groups of hundreds of American avocets (some in breeding plumage), American white pelicans, and brown pelicans (most in their chocolate colored breeding plumage.)

After stopping in Corpus Christi for two nights we headed south to birding hotspots listed on the *Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail* maps (<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/-wildlife/trails/coastal/lower/index.phtml>). We also used the Birding & Butterfly Map of the Rio Grande Valley (available at every birding and information center).

We stopped at 11 or 12 of these hotspots over the next ten days. Some were much hotter than others. Our visits lasted from 30 minutes to several hours. They all revealed at least one or two new birds or other worthwhile sightings.

Despite the many birds we saw and the many new species we added to our life list, we were told by several people that we were in southern Texas between seasons and that one sees far more birds in January and February or during the mass migrations in early April. Oh well, there is always next time!"

SAVE THESE DATES – SEPTEMBER 21 and 22, 2007

Save the weekend of September 21 – 22, 2007 for two days of celebration of Thirty Birdy Years.

Friday evening, September 21, the anniversary 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. It will feature special guests, awards, an 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. This event will be this year's "Nature Camp." The picnic will be FREE for members; non-members can join the club at the door or pay a small fee for dinner!

CAPS, POSTERS, PATCHES, AND NOTE CARDS

Thirty Birdy Year caps, posters, and note cards are here. We also have a new batch of our traditional Bird Club patches. We have a few remaining Red-headed Woodpecker pins. Caps and posters (16 x 20 of the Spike Knuth painting) can be had for a \$20 donation each. Six note cards (with the image of the Spike Knuth painting) with envelopes for \$10, and pins and patches can be had for a \$5.00 donation each. They will be available at all April events and at Wild Birds Unlimited in Williamsburg.

SPIKE KNUTH WILL EXHIBIT AT OUR ART SHOW

Spike Knuth, noted wildlife artist and painter of "our" Red-headed Woodpecker displayed on our note cards and posters, has confirmed that he will exhibit at our art show at the Williamsburg Regional Library September 11 to October 18, 2007! We encourage club members to submit their own artwork of birds in their native environment. "Inclusivity" will be the rule in selection. We hope to display at least one item from each person who submits. 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. Stay tuned for more details. Meanwhile, call Shirley Devan at 220-6269 or 813-1322 if you have questions. Email: sedevan52@cox.net

THIRTY BIRDY YEARS: '89 – '91

By Cynthia Long, Historian

1989: Ruth Beck, WBC President; Officers: VP Programs, Grace Doyle; VP Newsletter, Jamie Doyle (No relation to Grace and Joe); Secretary,

Joy Archer; Treasurer, Fred Blystone; Members at large, Martha Armstrong and Cynthia Carlson. Craig Turner's field trip programs combined bird watching and work parties for bluebird boxes, as well as sign maintenance at the Grandview Beach piping plover site. Jamie Doyle and Craig were both W&M graduate students and teaching assistants. Jamie added her original wildlife sketches to the newsletter. *We would appreciate any updates on Jamie and Craig.* Joe Doyle (Grace Doyle's husband) chaired the bluebird committee. Clayton Grimes and W&M Biology Club assembled bluebird houses. Grace and Joe continue to be loyal WBC members, reporting faithfully for years on the birds at Camp Peary. Julie Hotchkiss made an eloquent plea to establish Kiptopeke as a state or national park to conserve the habitat. Throughout the year members expressed their concerns over the decline of feeder birds such as purple finches, pine siskins, and evening grosbeaks. Brian Taber co-ordinated field trips when Craig Turner graduated and moved on. Shirley Raynes and Fred Blystone continued to serve as bird seed sale co-coordinators with help from the W&M Biology Club. Ann Smith was honored with a lifetime membership. Betty Williams was also recognized for her 12 years keeping the history of the club.

1990-1991: Tom Armour, WBC President.

Officers: VP Programs, Julie Hotchkiss; Treasurer, Fred Blystone; Members-at-large, Anne Beckley and Marilyn Zeigler. The New Year began with a program given by Dr. Mitchell Byrd on the reintroduction of peregrine falcons. President Tom urged his birding buddy Bill Sheehan to edit the newsletter as well as the records. Brian Taber, Brian Patteson, and Ty and Julie Hotchkiss were often listed as field trip leaders.

Our programs took us flying with the peregrines, banding at Kiptopeke, prowling for owls, South America, Costa Rica, Malaysia, Thailand and Borneo, Pakistan and sites in the York River system. Bill Sheehan kept detailed lists of the birds identified each year.

Field trips included Hog Island, Newport News Park, Cheatham Annex, Grandview Beach, Craney Island, York River State Park, Kiptopeke, and Chesapeake Bay Bridge/Tunnel Islands. In addition to giving books to the Williamsburg Regional Library, the club also presented a Sunday afternoon program for Birding Beginners. It consisted of a lecture/slide program, followed by and exhibits of feeders and bird houses. Bob Long co-coordinated the program with the library, and Bill Williams and Bill Snyder gave the main presentation. The club also contributed to the W&M Earth Day celebration coordinated by Jamie Doyle. The celebration included nature walks, and all day workshop on Colonial Beach Nesting

Species presented by Ruth Beck. WBC adopted a highway, volunteering to keep a 2 mile stretch on Route 5 from Five Forks to Green Springs Road litter free for 2 years. Bill and Nancy Davies served as co-chairs of the project. Grad student scholarships went to Kennedy Clark, Gregory Kellor, and Timothy O'Connell. Ruth Beck wrote an extensive report on the use of Craney Island by threatened and endangered avian species. W&M Biology Department worked closely with the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries to establish and protect least tern nesting sites, as well as those of piping plovers and brown pelicans. Ruth's projects included W&M students, who all benefitted from her nurturing and encouragement. WBC was saddened by the loss of charter and lifetime member Ann Smith in September.

1991: The January *Flyer* reported that Ruth Beck became the second person in Virginia to receive the Commander's Award for Public Service, issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the protection and management of least tern colonies at Craney Island. Ruth maintained a delicate balance between the peculiar requirements of a tenuous species of breeding birds and the sometimes contrary mission of the Corps, who managed vast quantities of dredging material with minimal disturbance of fragile nesting sites. All this was accomplished in addition to mentoring graduate students, teaching, caring for her family, and working tirelessly for the WBC.

Julie Hotchkiss was also cited for publishing

"Catesby's Virginia" in *Bird Watchers Digest*. Julie and her husband Ty did the wildlife filming for the Colonial Williamsburg film, "The Colonial Naturalist" which is still a much loved film describing naturalist/artist/writer Mark Catesby's experiences in Virginia. Ty reported seeing 60,000 Tundra Swans at a North Carolina refuge, and other members reported every species of hawk, as well as evening grosbeaks, and Monk Parakeets in Newport News nesting in a martin house. Our programs took us to Kenya with Rich Goll and Cindy Fletcher, (*Historian's Note: I need their address.*) Puffins in Maine with Duryea Morton, Australia with W&M professor Jack Brooks, the Arctic Circle with Ty and Julie Hotchkiss plus reports from our graduate students. *Flyer* Editor and records keeper Bill Sheehan kept us updated on all member reports of birds in a most lively manner. President Tom Armour made special note of Fred Blystone's loyal service to WBC: "...Fred has never failed to respond to any request for assistance..." Fred managed the bird seed sale for many years, served as Treasurer, and is still (in 2007) folding, stamping and mailing our newsletter. WBC was selected by James City County for an award for outstanding efforts towards recycling and beautification. Nancy and Bill Davies organized the highway litter pickup.

Historian's Note: Any information readers may have on the members noted in this article would be much appreciated – pictures and addresses, please. Contact Cynthia Long, Historian, at 757-259-9559. Our program committee needs both for our Thirty Birdy Years Gala. Be sure to visit our website www.wmbgbirdclub.com for more history about the club.