



# THE FLYER

NEWSLETTER OF THE WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB

Volume 31, Number 2

Website: [www.wmbgbirdclub.com](http://www.wmbgbirdclub.com)

February 2007

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Bob Long

Thirty years ago Ruth Beck and Bill Williams decided that Williamsburg needed a bird club. Ruth and Bill are still very active in the club, as are Tom and Jeanne Armour, Mitchell Byrd, Brian Taber, and Fred Blystone. Ninety-three year old Bill Snyder, who served as club president in 1985, is also still on the roll. The focus of the club is bird watching, but the real enjoyment for me is the opportunity to share experiences with such a fine group of people.

Cynthia and I spent a fun afternoon recently with Bill Snyder. We traveled across the James River by ferry on our way to seek out planting soil at the only remaining Southern States store in the area. It was great sharing birding stories with Bill. He has been an avid birder for 80 years. Top that, anyone! We planned to lunch at the Surrey House, but it was closed Monday. We came away with no soil, no lunch, but with a wealth of great birding adventures from Bill. He confessed his eyesight wasn't as good as it used to be, then he identified a Black-backed Gull, Ring-billed Gulls, and Double-crested Cormorants at the ferry. Bill invites our members to come by his 16 acres of habitat on Powhatan Creek and bird with him.

## FEBRUARY 21 PROGRAM

Rebecka Brasso, 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 Contamination in Tree Swallows in the Shenandoah." Date: Wednesday, February 21. Meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 117 in Millington Hall on William and Mary Campus. Refreshments afterwards provided

by the Refreshments Committee, chaired by Barbara Streb.

## FEBRUARY 17 FIELD TRIP

Join us for our field trip to Newport News Park Saturday, February 17. Bill Williams will be our leader. We'll be on the lookout for Red-headed Woodpeckers, Bald Eagles, and wintering water fowl before they take off for their warm weather climes. This is a good trip for spotting scopes because the park has numerous boardwalks and overlooks that yield good views of the lake. Meet at the Colony Square Shopping Center parking lot by 8:00 a.m. and we'll consolidate in carpools for the 30 minute trip. (Check the club's web site for pictures from the January 20 field trip along York River and Colonial Parkway: [www.wmbgbirdclub.com](http://www.wmbgbirdclub.com))

## MARCH 17 FIELD TRIP

Vice President of Programming Tom McCary has arranged for us to visit Shirley Plantation in Charles City County Saturday March 17. This is the first time our club has sponsored a field trip to this location. This large plantation has been in the Carter family since the 18<sup>th</sup> century and is one of the largest undeveloped properties on the James River. The plantation is still a working farm and provides various bird habitats – ponds, farmland, woodlands, river banks, and tended formal gardens. Tom received approval from the Carter family, the owners of Shirley Plantation, for us to bird the access roads, impoundments, and the formal gardens around the main house. We look forward to seeing those White-crowned Sparrows Tom's been telling us about for years. Look for more details about our itinerary in the March newsletter. But mark your calendar now!

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

Meet at the Colony Square Shopping Center parking lot at 7:00 a.m. and we'll consolidate in carpools for a 7:15 a.m. departure for the 45 minute trip up Route 5. We will likely head back to Williamsburg about 11:00 a.m.

## REMINDER ABOUT DUES

In your January newsletter you received an envelope to use to pay your annual club dues. If you've lost the envelope, you're not off the hook. Membership levels are: Patron - \$35; Family - \$25; Individual - \$15.00; Student - \$5.00. Make your check payable to Williamsburg Bird Club and mail to WBC, PO Box 1085, Williamsburg, VA 23187. To those who have already renewed, a BIG thank you!

## NEW QUARTER PARK BIRD WALKS

Join us for winter birding at New Quarter Park in February. Our regular 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday bird walks will be February 10 at 8:00 a.m. and February 24 at 7:00 a.m. The group of 15 people found 32 species January 27. Check the club's web site for photos and the complete list of species: [www.wmbgbirdclub.com](http://www.wmbgbirdclub.com)

## NEW MEMBERS

The Club welcomes new members: Joseph Piotrowski, David Shantz, Jennifer Boag, Samuel Skalak, and Lauren Willis. We look forward to seeing you all at an upcoming event.

## BOARD APPROVES CLUB'S DONATIONS FOR 2007

At its January 16, 2007 meeting, the Board of the Williamsburg Bird Club approved the club's donations for 2007 to the following organizations: Virginia Society for Ornithology, Williamsburg Regional Library, Williamsburg Land Conservancy, Center for Conservation Biology, and Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory. Club will continue to fund research grants for graduate students at William and Mary. The club is also considering sponsoring a scholarship for a local youth to attend Nature Camp in Vesuvius, VA. Bob Long will investigate the details for this scholarship and come back to the Board with a recommendation. Your membership dues support our contributions to these local nature conservation organizations. Thank you!

## NEW YEAR AT CANOPY LODGE, PANAMA

By Dr. Mitchell Byrd

I had the pleasure of spending 6 days over New Year at the recently opened Canopy Lodge in El Valle, Panama. This new lodge opened a year ago and should be a model for more to come. It was conceived and designed by Raul Arias, now famous for his successful lodge at the Canopy Tower, also in Panama. It is characterized by a high level of service, great cuisine, and great birding on the grounds.

I went on a special invited trip by Field Guides, an outstanding bird tour group. Although birding is great on the grounds of the lodge, it also serves as a base for trips into the surrounding mountains. Hummingbird feeders and banana feeders are positioned for observation from the dining area or when simply relaxing on the sofas or chairs. Birds which occurred regularly at the feeders included blue-crowned motmot, rufous motmot, red-crowned woodpecker, clay-colored robin, thick-billed euphonia, Tennessee warbler, dusky-faced tanager, white-lined tanager, red-crowned ant tanager, hepatic tanager, crimson-backed tanager, blue-gray tanager, red-legged honey creeper, buff-throated saltator, and numerous hummingbirds including white-necked jacobin, violet-headed hummingbird, rufous-tailed hummingbird, snowy-bellied hummingbird, and the magnificent little rufous-crested coquette. A black hawk eagle used a perch just beside the lodge.

Two field days were spent on the ridge tops, part of the continental divide, of Altos del Maria. These ridges are covered by mature cloud forest. The forest harbors some interesting species such as black-faced ant thrush, tody motmot, black-crowned antpitta, scale-breasted pigmy tyrant, white-ruffed manakin, and on and on.

Because of its mountain locale, the Canopy Lodge does not harbor a great diversity of species. There were 307 species on our checklist of which we saw nearly 200. There were 21 species on the checklist which I did not have on my life list. I managed to see 19 of them, missing rosy thrush-tanager and scaled antpitta.

I highly recommend this lodge and would suggest one of the Field Guides trips to Panama which stays at both the Canopy Tower and Canopy Lodge. You will not be disappointed.

## CBC '06 – FINAL RESULTS ARE IN

The final tally for the December 17, 2006 Christmas Bird Count is in. The species total was 106 – just a few below our average over the years. If you want a paper copy of the complete tally and



totals, please call Shirley Devan at 220-6269. She'll mail it out at no charge. The three-page document is also available in PDF format and can be sent via email. If you prefer to receive it by email, send a note to: [sedevan52@cox.net](mailto:sedevan52@cox.net).

Last month your editors omitted the names of two CBC participants who are crucial to the Christmas and spring counts we do EVERY year. Joe and Grace Doyle are responsible for our access to Camp Peary and have lead the Camp Peary team for years! Thanks, Joe and Grace.

## 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, 18, 20 & 22 CENTS

By Fred Blystone

I learned that some of you are wondering why there are often so many stamps on your copy of The Flyer. I am using up stamps that I purchased between 1961 and 1986 while I was collecting US stamps. I started collecting stamps in 1956, and I still collect stamps from the United Nations, Ireland, Channel Islands, and the Netherlands. I don't really remember why I stopped collecting US issues, but while putting them on our club newsletter, I have relived some of the enjoyment the collection gave me at one time. We used to get a pretty good history lesson from collecting US stamps. Now often they are more likely to be more commercially oriented – with multiple Disney stamps, comic book characters, and the like. Soon I will run out of the older stamps I am using (for now I am keeping my pre-1961 collection), but as long as I am the person mailing The Flyer, the chances are very slim that you will receive your issue with just a regular stamp on it. I will always try to use one that reminds me of something from our country's past, is seasonal, or commemorates a famous person who is no longer with us. For example...

The stamp on this February issue of The Flyer is the 2007 Love stamp. The shape of the Kisses chocolate mirrors the form of the passionate red heart that rises behind it. The stamp also commemorates the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hershey's Kisses. The familiar shape of Hershey's Kisses chocolates has not changed since The Hershey Company introduced this chocolate candy in 1907. Wrapped by hand until the process was automated in 1921, Kisses chocolates have been available year round for 100 years with only one exception: production ceased from 1942 to 1949 due to the rationing of silver foil during and after World War II. During the war, the ingredient mixing units in the Kisses moulding department were used for tempering military ration bar chocolate paste. Kisses chocolates wrapped in red and silver foil were introduced in 1986 in honor of

Valentine's Day.

*Editor's Note:* I have a feeling Fred's stamps are moving from one collection to another in a few cases! Fred Blystone is an important part of the newsletter preparation process. It starts with Shirley Devan who mashes together all the information and member contributions and emails a text document to Phil Young on the first or second of each month. Phil lays out the newsletter in its familiar two column format and prepares the mailing panel. Phil also prints out the mailing labels and takes everything to Staples for printing. Two days later, Fred Blystone picks up 130+ copies and mailing labels at Staples, folds, seals, stamps, and labels the individual newsletters, and then drives them to the Post Office for the final leg of the trip to your mail box. A delicately choreographed dance!

## GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

*Excerpted from Cornell's Lab of Ornithology Birdsource Web site* What mid-winter activity is fun, easy, free, and helps bird conservation? What can parents and teachers do with children that connects them to a whole new world of natural wonders? This February, the tenth annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, will give everyone a chance to discover the birds in their neighborhood and "Count for the Record."

During February 16–19, 2007, people of all ages, from beginners to experts, are invited to join this event which spans all of the United States and Canada. Participants can take part wherever they are – at home, in schoolyards, at local parks or wildlife refuges. Observers simply count the highest number of each species they see during an outing or a sitting, and enter their tally on the Great Backyard Bird Count web site at [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc). You can also take your results to our local Wild Birds Unlimited and ask one of it's staff to enter your data. "The Great Backyard Bird Count is a community celebration of birds, birding, and nature," said Janis Dickinson, director of Citizen Science at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. "We often fail to notice how rich our surroundings are, but counting birds, even for just 15 minutes, is not only educational — it can provide a lasting source of enjoyment, turning a daily walk into a treasure hunt." This year marks the tenth anniversary of the GBBC, and Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology are challenging people everywhere to "Count for the Record," by participating in greater numbers than ever before. Greater participation, with more checklists submitted, provides more

information about bird population trends – and helps to better inform conservation efforts. Last year, participants submitted more than 60,000 checklists – and reported 7.5 million birds overall and 623 different species. The count helped chronicle the early spring migratory routes of Sandhill Cranes, documented lingering migrants such as Orange-crowned Warblers and Tree Swallows, revealed the ongoing range expansion of introduced Eurasian Collared-Doves, and recorded declining numbers of American Crows.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is a free event, sponsored in part by Wild Birds Unlimited.

## **JANUARY 2007 BIRD SIGHTINGS**

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

**January 3:** Bill Williams and Fred Blystone went to the Eastern Shore and birded the first island and then north as far as Willis Wharf. There were a total of 81 birds species seen. The highlights were 229 Marbled Godwits and 243 Willets at Willis Wharf, a Peregrine Falcon both at Willis Wharf and Kiptopeke State Park and a Fox Sparrow at two locations. On the way back they stopped in Denbigh and saw about a dozen of the flock of Monk Parakeets that nest there.

**January 6:** Tom Armour reports: “At the Vineyards this morning, 30 Ring-necked Ducks, 30+ Bufflehead, 1 Greater Scaup, 4 Mallards, 25 Canada Geese. Jeanne and I are just back from scoping the York River and got some good birds and great light: 1 Red-necked Grebe at Yorktown, 2 Red-throated Loons, 15 Common Loons, a flock of 25 Horned Grebes, 1 Northern Gannet, 5 Brown Pelicans, 6 Lesser Scaup, 10 Bufflehead, 2 Common Goldeneye at Yorktown, 3 Red-breasted Mergansers, 700+ Ruddy Ducks, 15 Bonaparte's Gulls, and 25 Ring-billed Gulls.”

**January 6:** Kari Abbott reports: “We were out at New Quarter Park, saw a Bald Eagle just before we left, but also the thrill for me was a baby rat snake sunning itself on a jagged tree stump, on one of the paths ... way cool. Everything was out enjoying the sunshine.”

**January 7:** Gary and Ann Carpenter report from their neighborhood, Colonial Heritage: “We went birding in the wooded area behind the development. Birds spotted: Dark-eyed Junco, Red-tailed Hawk, White-breasted Nuthatch, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Northern Flicker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Song Sparrow, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, American Kestrel, Mourning Dove, American Crow, Swamp Sparrow. Other birds seen about Colonial Heritage are: Ring-

billed Gull, Carolina Chickadee, Eastern Bluebird, Eastern Meadowlark, White-throated Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Turkey Vulture, Red-shouldered Hawk (heard), Canada Geese, and Downey or Hairy Woodpecker (too far away to be sure).”

**January 7:** Gail Mann and Pieter Buning report: “We were driving west on 64 and we had passed the main Williamsburg exits (can't remember exactly how far we had gone). I was gazing out the window to the right when I saw on the ground, off to the side, a Bald Eagle – full white head, large size. He was just standing there, looking around. It surprised us – we've certainly never seen an eagle on the ground, by the highway, before!”

**January 7:** Shirley Devan reports seeing two adult Bald Eagles in the large nest on Jamestown Island across the creek from the new Visitor Center.

**January 8:** Hugh Beard reports: “I have 43 species so far [this year]. I really need to get out more. My highlights were Swamp Sparrows, Fox Sparrows, and Rusty Blackbirds on a short trip to the Greensprings Trail on Sunday. Bill Williams tells me there are Pintails there, so I went looking for them. No luck.”

**January 9:** Both Tom Armour and Shirley Devan observed the Greater Scaup at The Vineyards lake. Also about 15 Bufflehead.

**January 13:** Tom McCary reports from Shirley Plantation: “More than six White-crowned Sparrows feeding near the gift shop. Also spotted was an Eastern Meadowlark singing in a tree near the parking lot.” Tom heard other meadowlarks as well. Down by the James River he spotted an Eastern Phoebe bobbing its tail near a tangle.

**January 17:** Tom Armour reports the first Kestrel of the year at the Airport this morning.

**January 19:** Tom Armour reports: “This morning at The Williamsburg Landing, a flock of 200+ Cedar Waxwings was feeding on a Crab Apple tree. And this afternoon on Jones Pond I had a Pied-billed Grebe and 2 Mute Swans.”

**January 20:** Mary Anne Fennell reports: “We too have a Pileated Woodpecker who visits our suet feeder. He comes every day between 9 and 10 AM, tears off chunks of suet while looking around suspiciously, then calls loudly and flies away.”

**January 20:** Shirley Devan reports from a late afternoon trip to Jamestown Island: “No sign of the Great Horned Owl seen just before Christmas. I did see 4-5 Red-headed Woodpeckers in the area around the pull out marked by the sign “Island House.” Also observed a mature Bald Eagle perched high in a deciduous tree overlooking the causeway and the low tide.

**January 21:** Shirley Devan reports a Red-shouldered Hawk in her Seasons Trace neighborhood – her first sighting of the year and



her 107<sup>th</sup> species for 2007. Also saw about three dozen Dark-eyed Juncos, two pair Northern Cardinals, several White-throated Sparrows, a Northern Mockingbird, and a Blue Jay.

**January 22:** Tom Armour reports "50+ Cedar Waxwings were again feeding at the Crab Apple tree at Williamsburg Landing at 8:30 this morning."

**January 26:** Duryea Morton at Williamsburg Landing reports 2 Rusty Blackbirds at his feeders this morning.

**January 29:** Tom McCary reports a magnificent Red-shouldered Hawk watching over his neighbor's feeder from his butternut tree. Tom also reports a Red-winged Blackbird perching briefly on the wren house in his backyard.

**January 29:** Shirley Devan reports a mature and an immature Bald Eagle soaring over her neighborhood on Longhill Road near Lafayette High School.

**February 1:** Tom Armour reports: "this afternoon at Newport News Park, 12 Tundra and 2 Mute Swans plus some ducks but couldn't make them due to the snow."

**February 1:** Sara Lewis reports: "I'm having a hard time getting my work done today because the birds are flocking to my feeders and they are so much fun to watch, especially in the snow! Here are two pictures with a Blue Jay, Downy Woodpecker, and Brown Thrasher."

**February 1:** Cynthia Long reports from her backyard: Red-shouldered Hawk looking over the bird and mammal buffet, Brown Thrasher, White-throated Sparrows, Eastern Towhees, Cardinals, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, Blue Jays, Pine Warbler, Carolina Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch.

## **BIRDS AT CAMP PEARY**

Joe and Grace Doyle visited Camp Peary every Sunday but the last one in January. On January 7, they reported 32 species highlighted by Canvasbacks, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, and Northern Mockingbird (only seen this Sunday). On January 14, they spotted 33 species, highlighted by Common Loon, Tundra Swans, Mute Swans, American Kestrel, Killdeer, Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, and Common Grackles. On January 21, 31 species showed themselves, with highlights being American Wigeon, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel (a highlight any day!), and Eastern Meadowlarks (seen all three Sundays).

## **LARGEST BIRD CLUB COMMITTEE**

Barb Streb is in charge of the largest committee in the Williamsburg Bird Club – the Refreshments

Committee!! She and her team never fail to provide a lavish and tasty feeding station after each club meeting in Millington Hall.

In 2007, Barbara will receive assistance from Beth Morgan, Sue Brandon, Mary Anne Fennell, Carol Goff, Jean Rend, Grace Doyle, Dorothy Whitfield and Alex Minarik. Phyllis and David Lee served as "backup." In 2006, Barbara Streb had assistance from: Beth Morgan, Gail Mann and Janet Curtis, Marilyn Zeigler, Fred Blystone, Carol Goff, Jean Rend, Grace Doyle and Mary Anne Fennell. Ruth Beck served as "backup." Not only do these generous folks prepare the treats, they also carry them from the parking to Millington Hall. Thanks to all for sharing your time and talents!

## **A COMPLAINT**

By Mary Anne Fennell

We also have a bird complaint. I need to complain to someone about the problem, and who better than our friends at the WBC? We have approximately 100-120 Turkey Vultures who have decided that the VERY BEST place to roost every night is in the trees in our front yard. They start to settle in about dusk every evening. John goes out several times every evening to bang pan lids and shout. [This gives the neighbors something to endlessly speculate about]. The banging and yelling doesn't faze them much, they just return in a few minutes. Our front yard is beginning to resemble the "Munsters" of TV fame. Also, they are killing the azaleas planted under the trees with the prodigious amounts of guano they drop. You haven't really lived until you go out to get the paper at 6 AM in the dark in your PJ's, and hundreds of vultures begin to lift off, flying just over your head. It's Alfred Hitchcock's "Birds" revisited. So that is our complaint. If anyone has any ideas to get them to move on, (maybe to our neighbors, fellow bird club members, Bobbi & Ron Geise's yard), please let us know.

## **WOODPECKER PINS FOR SALE**

By Chuck Rend

We have only 11 Red-headed Woodpecker pins left for sale. These are usually available for purchase at monthly meetings. But some members who do not come to the meetings might want to purchase one of these attractive pins. If you want to buy a pin, just send me \$5.00 and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Mail to WBC, PO Box 1085, Williamsburg, VA 23187.

## **THIRTY BIRDY YRS. 1983 – 1985**

By Cynthia Long

Thom Blair and Bob Cross, 1983 Presidents  
Officers were: Bob Cross, VP Programs; Bill Williams, VP Newsletter; Alice Springe,

Secretary; Leigh Jones, Treasurer; Fred Blystone and Carolyn Lowe, Members-at-large. "Save 20 cents by bringing your dues to Leigh Jones in person." Patches were \$1.50. Members who joined at the patron level of \$25 got a WBC patch. Family memberships were \$7.50, individuals \$5, students, \$3. Fred offered 25 lb bags of sunflower seed for \$8.25, one number that has not changed significantly. The Purple martin committee, chaired by Bob Cross, banded 430 martins, and reported a roosting area in Hampton with an unbelievable 80,000 birds! Leigh Jones and the WBC tool guys continued to build and plant bluebird houses, with help from the Veterans Hospital, who built 100 of them. They sold out quickly at \$5 each. Chairman Leigh reported banding 138 bluebirds from 60 boxes.

Carolyn Lowe arranged trips to Hog Island, False Cape State Park and Back Bay Refuge, Presquile National Wildlife Refuge, Camp Peary, Newport News Park, Grandview Beach, Craney Island, Kiptopeke, Kingsmill, Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, and Ruth Beck's Red-cockaded Woodpecker site in Sussex County. Bob Cross's programs included: W&M professor Gus Hall on his trip to South America, Oystercatchers, Bird Songs, Ruth Beck on Red-cockaded woodpeckers. Ruth was described by the Virginia Gazette as "Williamsburg's first lady of Birds."

President Blair, Bruton Parish clergyman, was called to a parish in New Orleans in mid-year. VP Bob Cross added the duties of President to his responsibilities. Our Priest was followed by a Cross. Fred Blystone reported \$800 in profits from the winter bird seed sale, and was relieved to announce, "It's over." Our membership stood at 90.

Our members were working on birding projects throughout the community, and reported faithfully to the club on their expeditions to other parts of the globe. Tom Armour and Brian Taber had pictures and articles published, Bill Snyder wrote a weekly wildlife column for The Virginia Gazette, as well as publishing a book on local wildlife. We also contributed books to the Williamsburg Regional Library, a program that began at Betty Williams' suggestion in the first year of the WBC.

*Thom Blair died in 2006. His wife, Rochet, continues to live in Charlottesville. I would appreciate information on Bob Cross. He served WBC in many areas at this time.*

### **John Hertz, 1984 President**

Officers were: Cynthia Long, VP Programs; Bill Williams, VP Newsletter; Fred Blystone, Treasurer, Alice Sprunge, Secretary; Anne Beckley, Ruth Beck, Members-at-Large. Mitchell Byrd and Bruce Reid, flying with pilot Sherwin Beck, found 63 bald eagles along the James River.

The next day they found 26 nests on the Potomac. The February 1, 1984 issue of The Daily Press had a picture of John Hertz installing 12 new window feeders at the Pines Nursing Home. WBC also bought "Audible Audubon" units for 6 of our local elementary schools. Graduate scholarships went to W&M students Chuck Rosenberg and Tim Kinkead. Tom Armour and Bill Sheehan spotted a rare goshawk at Hog Island, a local first. Fred Blystone and Barbara Ema spotted a black-headed grosbeak at their feeders (they lived nearby), another local first. A Barnacle goose was spotted at St. George's Farm.

Membership now stood at 126. Spike Knuth, Virginia Wildlife artist and writer, wrote us after his popular program, "I can not remember being so warmly received and getting such positive responses from a group as I did from the Williamsburg Bird Club." Programs began with Bird ID quizzes with pictures and calls. Teta Kain's program in May was delayed for 25 minutes while we rounded up a projector bulb. The following month the club bought a new projector, plus 2 bulbs. One bulb was presented to the college in gratitude for the loan the previous month.

John Hertz guided us through another successful campaign. First Lady Eleanor Hertz continues to live in Williamsburg, where she attends the Chambrel Bird Club, which Bill Williams helped organize when his parents lived there. Eleanor and John had been married 62 years when he died in 2002. She recently published *Virginia Indian Women in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. John and Eleanor had retired in Williamsburg after college teaching careers in Pennsylvania. Tom and Jeanne Armour introduced them to the WBC. They loved going on bird trips, meeting and talking to everybody, and hearing the speakers at our meetings. Eleanor remembers a tufted titmouse that banged at their kitchen window for bread crumbs – it would only eat rye bread.

### **Bill Snyder, 1985 President**

Bill Snyder is an enthusiastic naturalist and writer, having published *Wildlife in the Williamsburg Area* in 1981. He later published *Wild Animals of Jamestown Island*, and *Chesapeake Bay Nature and Country Cooking*. His interest in birding began as a young Boy Scout, when he was determined to get his Bird merit badge. He grew up in Newport News, where he loved to explore bird habitats. He remembered "I spotted a vulture nesting on a low stump – stuck my hand under the bird to pull out an egg. It was a little bigger than a chicken egg. She didn't seem to mind until I tried to put the egg back in the nest. She regurgitated all over my hand – everything in her stomach!" At 93, he still lives on 16 acres on Powhatan Creek, where he enjoys watching the wildlife along the creek and marsh.



He invites birders to come by to share the view. Officers were: Anne Beckley, VP Programs; Bill Williams, VP Newsletter; Alice Springe, Secretary; Fred Blystone Treasurer; Carol Hall and Gary Frazer, Members-at-Large. Committee chairs: Bill Sheehan, Records; Cynthia Long, Publicity; Bob Cross, Field Trips and Purple Martins; Leigh Jones, Bluebirds. The most exciting bird record in the Williamsburg area was a Red-cockaded Woodpecker nesting near a school bus stop—the location was not disclosed to protect the bird. Ruth Beck and Tom Armour were organizing local activities for the Breeding Bird Atlas.

Our bluebird chairman, Leigh, moved on to Charlottesville. Leigh and her committee had established an amazing eighteen bluebird trails locally. They also produced more than 100 bluebird boxes, enlisting the help of the WBC tool guys, plus Veterans hospital patients. Joe Doyle succeeded Leigh as Bluebird Chairman, and Shirley Raynes took responsibility for the Bird Seed Sale, giving the long-time Sultan of Seed, Fred Blystone, a respite. Dr. Mitchell Byrd was named by the Virginia Wildlife Federation as Conservationist of the Year. Bill Williams bade goodbye as The Flyer editor, a post he had filled for 5 years with interesting and detailed accounts of birds and birders. Jeanne Armour and Doris Eubanks also assisted, typing most of The Flyers (before the days of computers). The Flyer remains our most important historical record of club activities. The standards of the early editors guaranteed its success. The Longs joined the Williamsburg Bird Club on the recommendation of members Ruth and Clay Hudson. Ruth told us, "They have a newsletter that is really a newsletter." Bill Snyder's enthusiastic leadership maintained our club's momentum as a conservation organization.

*Editor's Note: During 2007 we will be looking back at the people, birds, and club activities over the past 30 years of the club. Many of the names will be familiar to you and some will bring back memories for some of our veteran members. Those of you, who are new to the club or to the area, please bear with us while we reminisce. When you read these accounts, you're sure to smile and we're certain you'll appreciate the efforts of those who have come before and contributed so much to our club.*

## **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 actual 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 to 7 pm. We'll have activities for the whole family – including children. Bill Williams, Hugh Beard, and their committee are planning the learning activities for the afternoon. This event will be this year's "Nature Camp." The picnic will be FREE!

## **T-SHIRTS, CAPS, FLAGS, AND POSTERS!!**

By Shirley Devan

Check the home page of our web site for the stunning image of a Red-headed Woodpecker in its natural habitat – a dead Red Oak tree. It is so beautiful I can't bring myself to pull it down so soon. This painting, by renowned wildlife artist Spike Knuth, and shared with the club by President and First Lady, Bob and Cynthia Long. Together, they (and artist Spike) have given the club permission to use this image to commemorate our 30 Birdy Years.

We are finalizing the design of caps and long-sleeved T-shirts to commemorate our 30 Birdy Years! We'll also likely order garden flags and posters, so stay tuned.

## **BIRDING NORTHAMPTON COUNTY**

By Fred Blystone

Brian Taber and I went to the Eastern Shore January 14<sup>th</sup>. We birded Island Number 1 both in the morning and on the way home for a total of nearly 3 hours. We didn't see the Harlequin Duck that had been seen as recently as the day before. We did see Gannets, Brant, Long-tailed Ducks, a Lesser Black-backed Gull as well as normal species you would see there. The best sighting of the day was a Manx Shearwater seen by Brian – I wasn't fast enough to get a look as it flew by. On the Eastern Shore the best birds we saw were Eurasian Collared Doves, a Horned Lark, and at least 50 Eastern Meadowlarks in a field along Route 600. By the end of the day I had seen 43 species, Brian probably had closer to 50.