



# THE FLYER

NEWSLETTER OF THE WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB

Volume 31, Number 5

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

May 2007

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Bob Long

Our club staged a fabulous field trip last Saturday. More than 20 birders assembled at 6:00 am and carpooled to the Great Dismal Swamp. It was a perfect day, plenty of warblers, and best of all NO BUGS. With so many birders the group split into two sections, one led by Alex Minarik, the other by Bill Williams. In addition to great bird sightings we discovered several unusual (for me) native plants, including Carolina jessamine. Great field trips are just one of the benefits of belonging to WBC.

The club's summer picnic will be held at the Beck's on Sunday, June 3 at 4:00 p.m. This is a great opportunity to share birding stories and good food while enjoying the Beck's woodland paradise. Call Jeanne Armour, 229-2363 or Jean Rend, 220-9032 for food suggestions.

One topic our club needs to address is how much support can we provide to non-birding activities such as Wine on Wednesday, Celebrate a Day at New Quarter Park, etc. These are great opportunities to promote our club and its mission, but so far most of the support comes from WBC board members. If club members do not wish to participate, perhaps we should limit our activities to more "birdy" events. The Board welcomes your suggestions. Please call me at 259-9559 if you have suggestions.

## MAY 16 PROGRAM "RAPTOR FORCE"

Come to our next meeting to see the new video "Raptor Force" from the PBS NATURE series: "Armed with powerful beaks and razor-sharp

talons, raptors are nature's elite killing force – winged predators whose graceful beauty belies their stunning speed, acrobatics and precision. Dramatic original footage from cameras mounted on their backs shows why falcons, owls, eagles and hawks are masters of the sky, and why aeronautics engineers use their unique abilities and body designs as bases of new aircraft technology."

We'll meet Wednesday, May 16, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. in Room 117 in Millington Hall on the William and Mary campus. Treats afterwards provided by the Refreshments Committee, chaired by Barbara Streb.

## FIELD TRIP TO YRSP

Join us at York River State Park at 8:00 a.m. Saturday, May 19 as naturalist and birder Hugh Beard leads us to the birding hot spots at this wonderful state park in our county. We'll meet in the parking lot on the right just beyond the Contact Station, where you will pay a nominal fee per car (less than \$5.00) for entry.

Located 11 miles west of Williamsburg, York River State Park features the environment of a coastal estuary. This park is known for its rare and delicate environment, where freshwater and saltwater meet to create a habitat rich in marine and plant life. The park also boasts a considerable "upland forest" environment with deep ravines, some covered with rhododendron in May. The park's natural resources make it a significant place for environmental education at all levels.

The spring warblers have arrived so we'll be looking for those bright spots in the canopy plus Indigo Buntings, Blue Grosbeaks, Ovenbirds, in

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

addition to the Bald Eagles, Ospreys, and Great Blue Herons. Long sleeves and long pants are suggested, plus bug spray and water.

Directions: I-64, take the Croaker Exit 231B. Go north on Route 607 (Croaker Rd.) for one mile, then right on Route 606 (Riverview Rd.) about one and a half miles to the park entrance. Make a left turn into the park.

## **JUNE 3 ANNUAL CLUB PICNIC AT RUTH BECK'S**

This is a favorite annual event and everyone's invited to this culinary and ornithological fun feast! You can be sure of great food, great birds, and great conversation. Ruth and Sherwin Beck will graciously open their Barhamsville home and yard to us for a picnic Sunday, June 3. Time: 4:00 p.m.

You should call Jeanne Armour, 229-2363 or Jean Rend at 220-9032, and let them know that you are coming and discuss what you might contribute to the feast. If you can't reach Jeanne Armour (she and Tom are out of town a bit in May), call Jean Rend! These two ladies will keep track of salads, side dishes, and desserts. It always works out just great. Dress is casual. Bring your binoculars – there's usually a birding walk-about before dinner. Or you can sit on the deck and watch the birds on the lake.

**Directions to the Beck's house:** Take I-64 west toward Richmond to exit #227, Route 30 going toward West Point. Follow Route 30 about three miles to Barhamsville. The center of Barhamsville extends along the road for less than a mile. Look for the post office on your right. Then immediately look for a secondary paved road, Route 273, also going to the right. Follow it for 1.6 miles. As the forested area to your right suddenly gives way to open fields, look for a road sign on the left that says Farmer's Drive. Directly opposite Farmer's Drive, there will be a gravel road on the right. **Turn right on to the gravel road** and stay on it. It will turn into the Beck's driveway.

## **APRIL 2007 BIRD SIGHTINGS**

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

**April 5:** Shirley Devan reports: "Fred Blystone and I birded two locations on the VA Birding and Wildlife Trail - Plantation Loop (Coastal Area) today. The best "birdy" place was near Malvern Hill - Richmond National Battlefield Park

(CPL03) where, at 3:30 pm, we saw one Glossy Ibis and about 60 Wilson's Snipe just off State Route 156 (Willis Church Road). It was a "stomp on the brakes" type of sighting — luckily no one was behind us. Fred did a great job pulling off the road and finding a wide spot on the shoulder. We also saw two Lesser Yellowlegs and heard Killdeer. All were in a swampy, low area on the left about 1.5 miles after we turned from Route 5 onto Willis Church Road, following the signs for Malvern Hill."

**April 11:** Shirley Devan along with master naturalists in training, Kari Abbott and Judy Hansen, spotted a male Wood Duck perched atop a dead tree in the Longhill Swamp beside the Christian Life Center.

**April 13:** Bill Williams reports: "Three Cattle Egrets flew by College Creek."

**April 14:** Tom Armour reports: "the 1st **shore-birds** at the end of Treasure Island Road this morning – a Greater Yellowlegs and a Semipalmated Sandpiper, also a Common Yellowthroat was singing. The Semipalmated Sandpiper of 14 April breaks the previous early date of 22 April by more than a week!"

**April 18:** Tom Armour reports: "at Treasure Island Road marsh, 3 Blue-winged Teal and 1 Greater Yellowlegs."

**April 20:** Brian Taber reports from the College Creek Hawkwatch: "Today Fred Blystone, Tom Armour, Bill Williams and I watched a decent sized flight crossing the James River at College Creek. Birds were east and west, high and low. The 11 species tie the daily record set twice before, both times in April. The total of 60 included 6 Black Vultures, 25 Turkey Vultures, 3 Ospreys, 1 Bald Eagle (though 10+ were circling around or fishing), 3 Northern Harriers, 11 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 2 Cooper's Hawks, 1 Red-shouldered Hawk, our first Broad-winged Hawk (they are generally singles at the site), 3 Red-tailed Hawks and 4 American Kestrels. The season Kestrel total is 11, one above last year's dismal total. The Kestrel plight is evident in the east coast flyway report of Hawk Migration Studies Journal, just out, from the Hawk Migration Association of North America. There was a tremendous swallow flight of many thousands — some very high. A few Chimney Swifts were crossing the river too, and singing right beside us was an Orchard Oriole. Despite the recent long spell of rough weather, we are still a little ahead of last year's record pace, at 1252.

**April 20:** Tom Armour reports: "Today at 4:30 pm on the first puddle on the left in the field on Treasure Island Road there were 2 Buff-breasted Sandpipers, 6 Least Sandpipers, and 2 Greater Yellowlegs."

**April 20:** Lee Schuster reports her first of the

season Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

**April 22:** Tom Armour reports: "this morning at Treasure Island Road, 5 Greater Yellowlegs, 1 Lesser Yellowleg, and 2 Blue-winged Teal. The 5 Greater Yellowlegs were in the puddle on the right."

**April 22:** Grace and Joe Doyle birded Camp Peary and reported 51 species. The highlights included Ruddy Ducks, Common Loon, Green Heron, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Royal Tern, Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Kingbird, White-eyed Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Chestnut-sided Warbler (heard by Grace, but not seen), Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, and White-throated Sparrow.

**April 22:** Shirley Devan reports hearing a Wood Thrush in her yard for the first time this spring.

**April 23:** Tom Armour reports: "this morning at Treasure Island Road, 3 Wilson's Snipe in 2nd puddle, 3 Green-winged Teal and 1 Greater Yellowlegs in the Marsh."

**April 23:** Shirley Devan reports from a mid-afternoon walk around the Beaver Trail at York River State Park: "Ruddy Ducks on the York River. Then in the woods: Prothonotary Warblers, Yellow-throated Warblers, Black-and-white Warblers plus Osprey and nesting Great Blue Herons."

**April 24:** Brian Taber reports from the College Creek Hawkwatch: "The past week (April 18-24) has been excellent. The 7 days of good flight weather which followed two weeks of poor migration conditions, produced almost 350 of the 1454 birds for the season. This is the first year we have reached 1400+ before the end of April. We will certainly surpass last year's record of 1525. Variety was great too, as we saw 11 species on 2 days during the week. Most of our Sharp-shinned Hawks and Cooper's Hawks were recorded this past week; 13 of our 29 Northern Harriers were found this past week as well, as were 10 of our 17 American Kestrels and all 6 Broad-winged Hawks. We also recorded our first Least Tern today."

**April 24:** Tom Armour reports: "We had the 1st Great-crested Flycatcher at our home today. No shorebirds or Blue-winged Teal at Treasure Island Road this morning. One hen Wild Turkey, 1 Common Yellowthroat, and 1 White-eyed Vireo – we need some rain to fill the puddles."

**April 25:** Lee Schuster reports: "I had a Rose-breasted Grosbeak in my yard Tuesday (April 24). He flew down and ate safflower seeds for about 10 minutes and flew off. We also have a Louisiana Waterthrush singing, Ovenbird, and I heard Wood Thrush for the first time this morning. We have heard Summer and Scarlet

Tanagers and Great-crested Flycatcher as well."

**April 25:** Tom McCary reports a male and a female Orchard Oriole at Shirley Plantation. He first spotted the male on April 23. He also observed Chimney Swifts over Shirley Plantation.

**April 26:** Tom Armour reports before 8 a.m.: "We just had a beautiful male Rose-breasted Grosbeak at our feeder!!! First this year for me. Then later, at Treasure Island Road, 2 Greater Yellowlegs, 3 Wilson's Snipe, and 5 Semipalmated Sandpipers."

## **SUPPORT THE CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION**

Mark your calendar now for Saturday, May 5, and come out to New Quarter to enjoy spring and 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.

## **MAY/ EARLY JUNE BIRD WALKS**

In addition to our club's regular monthly field trip (described elsewhere in this Flyer) you have myriad opportunities to learn more about those wondrous warblers arriving in May (and who doesn't need more study time with those guys?). No need to call ahead – just show up! Beginners and newcomers are welcome! Plan to attend one or all of the following bird walks in our area in May and early June:

**May 6, 7:00 a.m.:** First Sunday Bird Walk at Newport News Park sponsored by the Hampton Roads Bird Club. Meet at the parking lot to the left of the ranger station. Jane Frigo's Phone #: 873-0721.

**May 12, 8:00 a.m.:** Second Saturday bird walk at New Quarter Park sponsored by Williamsburg Bird Club and New Quarter Park. Meet in the parking lot near the Park Office. New Quarter Park is located at the end of Lakeshead Drive, which lies between the Queens Lake subdivision and the

Colonial Parkway. From Williamsburg take the Colonial parkway toward Yorktown, turn right at the Queens Lake sign, then another quick right onto Lakeshead Drive, which ends at the park.

**May 20, 7:00 a.m.:** Third Sunday bird walk at Newport News Park sponsored by the Hampton Roads Bird Club. Meet at the parking lot to the left of the ranger station. Jane Frigo's Phone #: 873-0721.

**May 26: 7:00 a.m.:** Fourth Saturday bird walk at New Quarter Park. Meet in the parking lot near the Park Office.

**June 2: 8:00 a.m.** Bird Walk at Ellipse Garden at Freedom Park on Centerville Road. (Co-sponsored by the Bird Club and the Williamsburg Botanical Garden.) Hang around for the bird house judging at 10 a.m.

## **THE VSO BREEDING FORAY: AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE INVOLVED**

By Bill Williams

Members of the Williamsburg Bird Club have an exciting opportunity to participate in the 2007 Virginia Society of Ornithology's annual Breeding Bird Foray June 2-10, 2007. Unlike most previous VSO forays which have focused birders on one or more of Virginia's counties, this year's foray is statewide, targeting all of the Commonwealth's magnificent state parks. With York River State Park and Chippokes State Park close by, we have a chance to provide excellent insight into the breeding bird diversity right in our own bird-filled backyards. Please join the foray!

A breeding bird foray attempts to document all of the birds present in a given area during a time period considered prime nesting season for most species. Although there are often some late migrants encountered, the thrust of the field activity is to find and document breeding evidence for as many species as possible. Obviously the best evidence is a bird sitting on eggs in a nest or feeding young at a nest. However, there are many other bird behaviors which are sure signs of breeding. Here are several: adults feeding downy young or recent fledglings; adults carrying fecal sacks; male birds consistently singing at the same locations, essentially over their "territory"; parent birds acting "nervous" or "agitated" at a specific location.

By early June many of our local birds have probably had their first broods. Species such as Killdeer, American Woodcock, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, and House Finch come to mind right away. Great Blue Herons and our large owl species may have large

fledged young by then. Ospreys will be feeding nestlings.

What we need are eyes and ears. There is no set field protocol per se that needs to be followed, although there will be report forms to be filed for any day (or part of a day) of field work. Arrangements will be made ahead of time with the two parks for foray participant access, especially for early morning and late evening devotees. Observers will be asked to keep track of each species seen/heard and how many individuals of each species are seen/heard for each separate day of foraging. Also to be documented are the numbers of miles traveled by foot, car, bike, canoe, kayak, blimp, jet pack, or dog sled and the number of hours each team is in the field (a team being anywhere from 1 to an infinite number of people all staying together in the field.) A daily report form will be provided for each foray team/observer.

**Participation in the foray is at your own discretion. You can participate during as many days and at any time for as much time as your schedule permits within the 2-10 June foray window.** If you want to swing by York River State Park for an hour of birding on your way to the Bird Club's annual Bonanza at the Beck's June 3, that's fine and thanks in advance! Just document what birds you see and hear and let us know. A foray is as rigorous and time consuming as we make it. **There are no costs!!!** If you are interested in participating in this wonderful opportunity, even for an hour on one day, please contact Bill Williams, preferably by e-mail ([jwwil2@wm.edu](mailto:jwwil2@wm.edu)) or call at 229-1124 or 221-7741, as soon as possible. Be prepared to say when (dates and times) you plan to be in the field so that the appropriate park can be notified. Team captains are needed for each park. Those who make e-mail contact will be forwarded daily report forms and a list of species known to breed (or have bred) in the area. Other contacts will be handled via snail mail. Thanks for your participation and support.

## **THE "M" STANDS FOR MIGRANT**

By Bill Williams

Many thanks to those bird club members who let us know we overlooked identifying the "M" code on the recently released Birds of Williamsburg checklist. It would be fun to say this was done to see who was really carefully observing the list, but alas, it was a goof. The "M" status codes for a significant number of our locally recorded species which migrate to, from and/or through the area. In less than a month since its release, the checklist has already had its payoffs. A Semipalmated Sandpiper found by Tom Armour off Treasure Island Road April 14 reset the early arrival date for that species by more than a week, and Jim

Booth observed the area's sixth Yellow-headed Blackbird, a female, at his Kingsmill feeder April 21. These reports are just what the checklist was intended to accomplish, so keep them flowing!! Although not included on the checklist as currently rendered, we need specific information about the nesting habits of "our" birds. Gary Hammer carefully observed a Killdeer nest on Jamestown Island March 23, and Brian Taber reported that a pair of White-breasted Nuthatches had a nest with 7 eggs March 25 in one of his Kingswood nest boxes. Here at home Arlene and I have nesting Northern Mockingbirds, Northern Cardinals, and House Finches that we know of, with dueling American Robins taking up residence somewhere nearby. Gotta find that nest. Please report your bird sightings to me at [jwwil2@wm.edu](mailto:jwwil2@wm.edu) or call 229-1124. Anyone found a Common Grackle nest yet?? Listers blisters!

## NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to new members Harry and Teresa Danforth, Debra and Pat Costello, and Bill and Debi Schaefer. Thanks for joining! We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming event!

## BIRDING IN PUERTO RICO

By Mitchell Byrd

For those interested in island avifauna, the Greater Antilles are both close and interesting. Almost all islands have had endemic species evolve on them. The number of endemics is usually proportional to the size of the island, its isolation and the availability of ecological niches. For example, Jamaica has 30 endemic species, Hispaniola 26 species, Cuba 26 species and Puerto Rico 16 species. Since I have seen all of the Jamaican and Hispaniolan endemics, I elected to spend the first week in April in Puerto Rico with the Field Guides bird tour group.

Although about 276 species have been recorded in Puerto Rico, only about 154 species are on their regular list. We saw 106 species but our real goal was the 16 endemic species.

We were fortunate to see well 15 of the 16 endemics. These included the green mango, Puerto Rican emerald, Puerto Rican flycatcher, Puerto Rican vireo, elfin woods warbler, Puerto Rican woodpecker, Puerto Rican tody, yellow-shouldered blackbird, Puerto Rican lizard-cuckoo, Puerto Rican tanager, Puerto Rican stripe-headed tanager, Puerto Rican bullfinch, Puerto Rican screech owl, Puerto Rican pee-wee, and Puerto Rican nightjar.

The elfin woods warbler is particularly interesting, having been first described as a species in 1971. The Puerto Rican tanager differs greatly from all other tanagers in morphology,

and social and feeding behaviors. It is the only species in the Genus *Neospingus*. Interestingly, each of the Greater Antilles has its own species of lizard-cuckoo.

In a week, one can easily cover most of the major habitat types on the island. With a little work you can find all of the endemics except the Puerto Rican parrot. This species reached a low point of 18 individuals. Through intensive management, the species still numbers only about 50 individuals.

## 1<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL BIRDHOUSE COMPETITION

The Williamsburg Botanical Garden and the Williamsburg Bird Club are sponsoring the first annual birdhouse competition for children of all age groups and adults. Carpentry skills and assistance may be needed for the children's age categories; 8 & under, 9-12, and 13-17, with most of the work prepared by the entrant to reflect his or her skill level. Adults with an interest in birdhouse building are welcome to join in the fun of constructing a shelter for our feathered friends. Only one entry per category of functional or decorative is allowed, with prizes presented to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places. All winners will be contacted by phone after the judging.

Please register online at [www.williamsburgbotanicalgarden.org](http://www.williamsburgbotanicalgarden.org) or call 229-1995 and leave a message for Lori/Program Chairman. All web and phone registrations must be received by May 2nd. The birdhouse entries must be dropped off from 1-4 p.m. on Friday, May 4th, and Saturday, May 5th, at the James City/Williamsburg Community Center lobby at 5301 Longhill Road. Walk-in registrations will also be accepted on these 2 days for late participants. All birdhouses will be displayed at this location for judging until May 31<sup>st</sup> and the public is welcome to see the birdhouse creations.

Everyone is welcome to attend a Bird Walk led by the Williamsburg Bird Club, at 8 a.m., on Saturday, June 2. It will precede the prizes ceremony held at 10 a.m. at the Ellipse Garden, 5535 Centerville Road in Freedom Park. All entries must be picked up at this time. If entries are not picked up, they will become property of the Williamsburg Botanical Garden.

So get your birdhouse plan, some wood, a hammer, nails, creativity, and start building a birdhouse for the competition at the Williamsburg Botanical Garden. We look forward to seeing you!

## THIRTY BIRDY YEARS 92 TO 95

*(Compiled from Bird Club records and newsletters by Cynthia Long, Historian.)*

**1992:** Dick Mahone, WBC President; Officers: Vice President, Programs, Marilyn Zeigler; VP newsletter, Brian Taber; Treasurer, Fred Blystone; Secretary, Joy Archer, At Large Members Phyllis Johnson and Emily Sharrett. Trevor Gunton, an officer in the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, presented a program on migration of Europe's Birds. He was visiting WBC members Duryea and Peggy Morton. Former grad student Bob Anderson reported on his birding trip to Mexico. (Bob Anderson returned for a program in 2007, reporting on his sighting of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.) Tim O'Connor, twice recipient of our grad scholarship, reported on Terns and Skimmers. Bill Akers, another former Wm. & Mary grad student, described his adventures in Kenya. The 16<sup>th</sup> annual Christmas Count yielded 110 species; 26 Bald Eagles were a highlight.

James River Reserve fleet workers removed a ladder from the ship's mast where the young falcons had been stolen last year. Our club had pledged a \$500 reward leading to the arrest, but no arrests have been made.

The spring count in May yielded 164 species, just 2 short of the all time record set in 1989. There were three new species recorded: Black-billed Cuckoo, Wilson's Warbler, and Common Nighthawk.

Ellen Bentley received the graduate student grant. The club voted unanimously to double our dues to \$10 and \$15. The enormous task of the annual birdseed sale was under study, and no sale was held in 1992.

President Dick Mahone was a long-time horticulturist and naturalist with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. He initiated and organized the WBC participation in the CW Garden Symposium each year. He was a loyal member and supporter of WBC until shortly before his death in 2005.

**1993:** Ruth Beck, WBC President; Officers: Vice President, Programs, Marilyn Zeigler; VP newsletter, Bill Sheehan; Treasurer, Fred Blystone; Secretary, Joy Archer; At large members Bill Davies and Dave Schuster. Emily Sharret planned all the trips for the year, and listed them in January: Hog Island, Yorktown, Spring Bird Count, Jolly Pond/York River State Park, Emporia (where Emily's son Allen hoped to show us Mississippi Kite, Bachman's Sparrow, and Red-cockaded Woodpecker). We explored Craney Island, Waller Mill Pond, Bay Bridge Tunnel Island and Kiptopeke, plus the Beck's 26 acres in Barhamsville. Bill Sheehan made some interesting comparisons with our Christmas

Count data. Studying records for the past 15 years, he compared bluebirds, house finches, and house sparrows. In 1977 there were 60 bluebirds, 4 house finches, and 330 house sparrows. The numbers changed gradually, and by 1992 there were 237 bluebirds, 118 house finches, and 23 English sparrows. "Bravo to the Bluebirds and to Joe Doyle for being our point man for nesting boxes..." wrote Bill Sheehan. And bravo to all of our hard working bluebird committees who worked tirelessly since WBC was founded. *(Ed. Note: As I write this in 2007, we have a bluebird sitting on the deck rail checking out the houses, and a nesting pair with 5 eggs in the garden. W&M students serve as monitors of the bluebird project now.)* Appropriately, the February 1993 program was given by Joe Doyle about Bluebirds. Bill Davies litter report exclaimed, "It's becoming a social event! We picked up 8 bags of litter." VSO announced, "The Bird Observatory at Kiptopeke State Park is becoming a reality." Brian Taber, Bill Williams, and other WBC members worked hard to establish this project, and WBC members advocated for the state park just a few years earlier. Carolyn Lowe, president of the Historic Rivers Land Conservancy, and other WBC members, were promoting a regional greenways system. A workshop was presented to inform the public, with the hope that the results will lead to the development of a greenway master plan for our community. *(Ed. Note: Yes, they eventually succeeded.)* Bill Williams received the annual service award from the Hawk Migration Association of North America for his work in gathering raptor data.

WBC members reported faithfully on their travels to all parts of the globe seeking birds. Those of us who stayed closer to home could experience vicariously the beautiful countries and habitats they visited by reading *The Flyer*, our newspaper of record. Kristine Clements won the WBC grant to study Great Blue Herons along the James and Chickahominy Rivers. The Christmas count yielded 110 species, and later in December a record Lapland Longspur was reported.

**1994:** The good news was that Ruth Beck agreed to serve again as President. Officers: Vice President, Programs, Bill Holcombe; VP newsletter, Dave and Lee Schuster; Treasurer, Chuck Rend; Secretary, Dorothy Whitfield; At Large Members Marilyn Lewis and Keith Kennedy.

Bill Sheehan was honored with a lifetime membership for his service to the WBC. Bill, a charter member, served in many offices, and has been the official records compiler since the beginning years.

Bill Holcombe organized a Spring Bird Count Contest. 18 members participated. Bill Williams

led the flock with 226 identifications. The reporting period was for three months, March-May.

**News Flash: Help the Bird Club Fund Student Research and Feed Your Birds at the Same Time!**

Wild Birds Unlimited agreed to donate 5% of all purchases made by club members at the store back to WBC. It has been a painless and productive fund raiser for WBC student research fellowships, and continues to be a great asset for WBC and WBU.

The spring bird count yielded 153 species, including a rare Cerulean Warbler and first time sightings of Great Cormorant and Nighthawk. Fred Blystone was made an honorary lifetime member for his service to the club. A charter member, Fred served as the club treasurer for 14 years, until he moved to Georgia. Yes, he did return to Williamsburg, and we are fortunate to have him still watching birds with us, and volunteering in many areas.

We enjoyed stimulating programs, exciting field trips, and a great summer picnic at the Beck's home in Barhamsville. We kept picking up that highway litter, giving books to the Williamsburg Regional Library, and awarding W&M grad student scholarships. Our members continued advocating for conservation causes. WBC had become a recognized and respected voice for conservation in the Williamsburg community and the state.

The Christmas count reported 136 species, with 620,741 individual birds, of which 601,333 were common grackles.

All of the current officers agreed to serve another term, smoothing the way for a productive year of birding delights as well as community service.

**1995:** The experienced executive committee was challenged this year, as WBC hosted a joint meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Society and the VSO May 4-7, 1995.

The Historic Rivers Land Conservancy continued to gain attention – it was the first local land trust created in Virginia under the provisions of the state's Conservation Easement Act. Their goal was to identify and protect areas of ecological and historical significance through land acquisitions and conservation easements. WBC members were major players in this emerging conservation group.

WBC continued to present stimulating programs and great field trips – new this year was a trip to Presquile National Wildlife Refuge to look for Bald Eagles and other raptors. They counted 5 Bald Eagles, three of them immatures, all soaring together.

Thanks to the leadership of Ruth Beck and many volunteers, the VSO/WOS meeting was a great success. Lee Schuster wrote, "It was not until the

conference was actually under way that I truly realized the tremendous effort Ruth Beck put in the meeting. Her hard work and devotion to the VSO, WOS, WBC, and ornithology in general was the driving force behind the conference. Through her guidance, we were all able to show the people who 'know birds' how the WBC can work together and share with them the birds of our area." Once again, Brian Taber organized the spring bird count. "Even in the face of the upcoming conference" club members reported 153 species on April 30, 1995. A Lesser Golden Plover and Philadelphia Vireo were firsts for WBC records, according to our record keeper Bill Sheehan. Thirty people breathed a sigh of relief and relaxed at the annual picnic in June, hosted by our energetic Ruth Beck and husband Sherwin. Bill Davies 5 year report on the litter program listed 340 person hours, resulting in the following trash picked up: 1.25 tons of glass bottles, 331 lb aluminum cans, 184 bags of miscellaneous trash. WBC members stayed busy in the fall monitoring the Hawk Watch Station at Kiptopeke. In one day, September 19, 1995, they counted 8,757 hawks flying over.

We continued to donate several books a year to the Williamsburg Regional Library, and awarded a graduate student fellowship to Elaine Mertus. The contributions from Wild Birds Unlimited have been a major source of the funding for our awards. Thanks to members George and Valerie Copping for their generosity. Ruth Beck and her board members piloted us through three more years of growth, education, and service.

*Historian's Note: Any information you 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](http://www.wmbgbirdclub.com) for more history about the club.*