



The Flyer

Newsletter of the Williamsburg Bird Club

Vol. 32, No. 4

www.williamsburgbirdclub.org

April 2008

President's Corner

By Shirley Devan

The Williamsburg Bird Club awarded its first Bill Williams Nature Camp Scholarship to Joseph Voboril of Yorktown, Virginia. Joey is a junior at Grafton High School. His chemistry teacher, Ms. Jessie Christman, advised Joey to apply for the scholarship and wrote in her recommendation, "He will give his best to you, and he is a role model for others. In my 28 years of teaching, I would say he is one of the top students I have encountered."

Joey is an Eagle Scout and earned the World Conservation Award which requires that he earn the Environmental Science, Camping, and Fish & Wildlife badges. In his essay Joey says, "I am planning on taking positions of authority when I get older. I want to fight for the things I think are most important and the environment is one of those things." Joey will attend two weeks of Nature Camp in June.

The committee received nine applications for the scholarship—6 from James City County and 3 from York County. Five high school students and four middle school students applied. We will start accepting applications in the fall for next summer's Nature Camp.

Also in the coming months, the Bird Club will award its Ruth Beck and Bill Sheehan Ornithology Research Grants to William and Mary graduate students who are doing ornithological research.

These scholarships and grants represent the Bird Club's investment and faith in the future. The Bill Williams Nature Camp Scholarship will be one of the legacies of the Bob Long Presidency of the Bird Club 2006-2007. Members of the club can be proud of sponsoring these efforts with their membership dues. Many thanks to all of our members for their support, to George and Val Copping at Wild Birds Unlimited, and to Dr. Dan Cristol from the W&M Biology Department for their financial commitment to these scholarships and grants.

April 16th Meeting —*Feathered Features and Avian Adventures*

Join us in April to hear Ruth Beck's timely program which will highlight species one can expect to see this spring, with emphasis on backyard species, especially hummingbirds. The program will also include an update on her research projects, and opportunities to participate in the field and experience conservation in action.

The meeting is on Wednesday, April 16 at 7:30 PM in Room 117 of Millington Hall on the campus of the College of William and Mary. Refreshments will be provided by Jennifer Boag.

April 19th Field Trip to the Dismal Swamp

Meet leader Alex Minarik at 5:30 AM in the Colony Square Shopping Center on Jamestown Road to carpool/caravan down to the Dismal Swamp. The trip back to Williamsburg will start no later than 11 AM.

Welcome to New Members

Donnie Goodrich, Jim MacDonald and Sharon Falconer

Join the Annual Spring Bird Count

By Bill Williams

On Sunday May 4, 2008 the Williamsburg Bird Club will conduct its annual Spring Bird Count. This particular May time period has proven time and again to be **THE** best for documenting the maximum bird species diversity the local area has to offer. With a combination of north bound migrants, lots of singing birds on territory, and some lingering winter residents, one never knows what will turn up. Past Spring Counts have brought us Swallow-tailed and Mississippi Kite, Ruff, Roseate Tern, Warbling Vireo, and White-crowned Sparrow, to name but a few of the headliners.

The Spring Count is modeled after the venerable Christmas Bird Count, that is, there is a 15-mile diameter count circle within which we try to count as birds of as many species as possible in a 24-hour period. Our count circle center is the Colonial Williamsburg Information Center,

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Hawk vs Snake—

From the photographer, Gayle Fischer: “I thought you might be interested in a very dramatic event I was fortunate enough to witness and photograph in the Norfolk Botanical Garden yesterday (March 6, 2008). A hawk apparently attempted to snatch up a rat snake for an afternoon meal. However, the snake coiled itself around the hawk and they both tangled (no pun intended) for quite some time. Eventually, a couple of NBG staff members showed up and were able to free the hawk.”

If you have internet access, and haven't already seen them, the photos are at www.pbse.com/fotogrfi/new_nbg.

so we want to document the presence of as many birds as possible within 7.5 miles of that location on May 4. We have nine sections in our count circle, each with a section leader: Camp Peary, Cheatham Annex, Hog Island, College Woods, Kingsmill, Jamestown, Middle Plantation, Jolly Pond, and Skimino. Data from the Williamsburg Spring Counts played a significant role in the information contained in the Virginia Society of Ornithology's “Gold Book”—*Virginia's Birdlife: An Annotated Checklist* by Stephen Rottenborn and Edward S. Brinkley. These data are also telling us about where the severely depleted enclaves of Northern Bobwhite are clinging to existence locally, what's going on with House Finches since they arrived here more than 30 years ago, and where the migration “hot spots” for the critically threatened Rusty Blackbird are. Please help us help the birds by adding to our knowledge about them. If you are interested in participating in the count, even for only a short period of time on May 4, please let Bill Williams know at juwil2@wm.edu or call 229-1124.

Birding and More in Mexico

By Dorothy Whitfield

Traveling by air across the continent was definitely not the way I wanted to start 2008. But I couldn't ignore the opportunity to go on the only “expedition” offered this year, so far as I could discover, to both whale watch on the Sea of Cortez off the coast of Baja California and ride the Chihuahua al Pacifico Railway to Copper Canyon on the Mexican mainland.

The trip began when some from the ship's staff met passengers (but not all them because one couple arrived at their U.S. airport with outdated passports!) at the airport at San Jose del Cabo, at the southern tip of Baja California. From there we proceeded by coach to Las Paz, capital city of Mexico's state of Baja California Sur, where our ship was docked. The sea voyage was round trip from La Paz, covering more than 400 nautical miles and stopping at islands within the Gulf of California Islands Special Biosphere Preserve, some of which are part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site established just three years ago.

We anchored away from the shores of islands so as to cause the least disturbance to creatures living and feeding near or on the islands. Our ship carried several Zodiacs which were used to explore the waters closer to shore and to make wet landings onto the islands. Each day we landed on one or more of the islands, where we had the option of snorkeling, hiking with the naturalists, or simply exploring on our own. We were warned to stay clear of the spiny cactus!

The variety of mammals, birds, fish, and plant species seen during those three cruising days was overwhelming. The Undersea Specialist recorded the California Sea Lion, Blue Whale, Common Bottlenose Dolphin, Short-finned Pilot Whale, and on land, the rare Black Jackrabbit; and close to 70 fish and marine invertebrates (no octopi, this trip).

Four naturalists recorded 30 plant species, the largest number of which was, not surprisingly, in the cactus family. And the naturalist staff's bird list—you thought I would never get to it—included 43 species (*seen every day): Eared Grebe*, Black Storm-Petrel, Blue-footed Booby, Brown Booby*, Brown Pelican*, Double-crested Cormorant*, Magnificent Frigatebird*, Great Blue Heron, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Reddish Egret, Black-crowned Night Heron, Turkey Vulture*, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Merlin, Black-bellied Plover, Snowy Plover, Semi-palmated Plover, American Oystercatcher, Spotted Sandpiper, Whimbrel, Sanderling, Heermann's Gull, Yellow-footed Gull*, Royal Tern, Elegant Tern, Xantus's Murrelet, White-winged Dove, Costa's Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Vermilion Flycatcher, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Loggerhead Shrike, Common Raven, Verdin, Northern Mockingbird (in Mexico, mockingbirds are called Centzontles, "birds of the four hundred voices"), Mangrove Warbler, Black-throated Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, and Northern Cardinal. My one contribution to these sightings was a male Mangrove Warbler, making its way along the edge of a dense growth of mangroves as our Zodiac made its way through the swamps, penetrable only at high tide.

Highlights for me were: on day 1, the appearance of the largest animals on earth—two blue whales which stayed close by our ship for about two hours; on day 2, 50 or more short-finned pilot whales around our ship and many more in nearby waters; and on day 3, awakening to the barking from a colony of California sea lions; and later in the day, by Zodiac, being among the sea lions swimming just off shore, watching those sleeping and basking at the base of an islet's steep cliffs; above them, blue-footed and brown boobies congregating on the cliffs; and high above them all, frigatebirds catching the thermals.

A 0445 wake-up call on day 4 had us off the ship by 0530. By plane and coach we reached El Fuerte, a mainland town about 50 miles from Mexico's west coast. That afternoon, an hour's river float down El Fuerte River produced the Great Kiskadee, Vermilion Flycatcher, American Coot, Common Black Hawk, Turkey Vulture, Black Vulture, Crested Caracara, Osprey, Great-tailed Grackle, Great Blue

Heron, Tricolored Heron, Black Phoebe, Jacana, Bank Swallow, Belted Kingfisher, White-winged Dove, and Double-crested Cormorant. The feeder in the patio at our hotel attracted White-eared, Broad-billed, Violet-crowned and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds.

From El Fuerte we boarded the Chihuahua al Pacifico Railroad for Copper Canyon, a journey that took us from just above sea level to almost 8,000 feet, through four botanical zones, in a little over six hours. No birding here. The constant command from our guides was, "Watch where you're walking." We were always looking down, on uneven ground and to check how close we were to the mountain rim. No time to look up!

March Bird Sightings

Report your backyard birds and local sightings to Fred Blystone at 229-4346 or fnb19481@verizon.net. If you encounter interesting birds on your vacation/travels, please share!

Feb 29: While investigating the nesting Great Blue Herons at York River State Park with Alice and Seig Kopinitz, Shirley Devan spotted a nesting Great Horned Owl in a nearby pine tree with 3 heron nests from last year.



Mar 2: Shirley & Steve Devan and Fred Blystone are graciously hosted by Bart and Chandi Singer and get good looks at the Yellow-breasted Chat reported by the Singers last month. This is the

first documented February sighting of a chat in the Williamsburg area. This bird was one of only seven reported in the entire United States during this year's GBBC. There was one reported in Massachusetts and 5 in New York.

Mar 2: Joe & Grace Doyle see their first Osprey of the season at Queens Creek. Birding at Camp Peary, they have 39 species of birds.

Mar 3: Bill Snyder called to report seeing two Bald Eagles fly over his house on Powhatan Creek.

Mar 5: Shirley Devan, Alex Minarik & Fred Blystone visit Shirley Plantation, Dutch Gap Conservation Area and Malvern Hill. A total of 65 species were seen during the day, the highlights being 6 Common Mergansers at Shirley, 6 Kestrels, and great looks at Tree Swallows at Dutch Gap, and 20 Wilson's Snipe and 2 Wild Turkeys at Malvern Hill.

Mar 4: Tom Armour reports 450 Lesser Scaup on the James River at the hawk watch site, 7 Greater Yellowlegs in the marsh at College Creek and Osprey on the nest at the duck blind, also at the hawk watch site.

Mar 6: Mary Anne & John Fennell, hoping to see Bart & Chandi Singer's Yellow-breasted Chat, visit their yard and after a 45 minute wait, were treated to a nice display by the bird.

Mar 6: Duryea Morton and Tom Armour visited York River State Park to see the nesting Great Horned Owl. The bird was on the nest and quite visible. They also found a Fox Sparrow, a Gray Catbird, a Winter Wren and a singing Pine Warbler. On the river, they saw a raft of about 200 Canvasbacks, a Common Goldeneye, and a few Red-breasted Mergansers. They also had 3 Pied-billed Grebes and an American Coot on the pond.

Mar 7: Bill Holcombe reports that he finally had two gorgeous Purple Finch males join the female that has been coming to his feeder.

Mar 9: During their second birding trip of the month at Camp Peary the Doyles identify 37 species of birds.

Mar 9: Tom Armour had an American Kestrel at the Williamsburg Airport. The Purple Finches are still coming to his feeder, and have been for 24 days up to this point.

Mar 11: Tom Armour reports that at the Hawk Watch they saw their first of year Purple Martin crossing the James. In addition there were still 250 Ruddy Ducks, 175 Lesser Scaup, 10 Red-breasted Merganser and 3 Forster's Terns on the River. Tom also had a Wilson's Snipe off of Treasure Island Road.

Mar 12: Sue Brandon reports she has a female Baltimore Oriole coming to one of her feeders.

Mar 12: Shirley Devan, Alex Minarik, Bill Williams and Fred Blystone visit Surry and Sussex Counties. Highlights for the day were 3 Red-cockaded Woodpeckers at Piney Grove, over 500 Bonaparte's Gulls at Hog Island, and a Lesser Black-backed Gull and an early Royal Tern at Scotland Wharf.

Mar 14: Ann and Gary Carpenter bird York River State Park. Their first stop was at the end of Croaker Road, where they spotted no less than 59 Brown Pelicans at various spots along the river. They also saw a large raft of Canvasbacks, a couple of Buffleheads, three Great Blue Herons, a few Double-crested Cormorants, one lone Osprey and one Horned Grebe. They then went over to see the Great Horned Owl nest and could make out a chick on the nest. They also saw a Bald Eagle, three Pied-billed Grebes, and

several more Osprey.

Mar 15: The HRBC March field trip was the Colonial Parkway and the loop road at Jamestown Island. WBC members Eleanor Young and Fred Blystone joined 17 other birders for 6 hours of birding. A total of 73 species were identified. Highlights were six species of woodpeckers and a pair of Common Goldeneye seen from Black's Point.

Mar 17: Tom Armour reports seeing 6 Common Snipe in the puddles off of Treasure Island Road.

Mar 18: Shirley Devan, Fred Blystone, Alex Minarik and Bill Williams visit Chickahominy Wildlife Management Area, Willcox Wharf, Shirley Plantation & Malvern Hill. A total of 83 species are seen. The highlights are American Woodcock at CWMA, White-crowned Sparrows, early Least Sandpipers and FOS Purple Martins at Shirley Planation, and FOS Northern Rough-winged Swallows at Malvern Hill.



Mar 19: Bill Willams and Fred Blystone go to Jordan Point in Prince George County looking for White Pelicans that been reported seen there. They find 19 soaring over the James River on a very windy day.

There also was a Peregrine Falcon on the nest box on the Benjamin Harrison Bridge.

Mar 19: Ruth Beck reports a Great Cormorant on her lake (it stayed 4 days).

Mar 22: Shirley Devan reports seeing a Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher at York River State Park

Mar 24: Ruth Beck has 9 Northern Rough-winged Swallows flying over her house.

Mar 26: Alex Minarik, Shirley Devan, Bill Williams and Fred Blystone visit the Great Dismal Swamp and Craney Island. They saw several FOS birds—the best being Blue-headed Vireos, of which they were able to get great close up looks. They ended up with 75 species for the day.

Mar 28: Alex Minarik reports FOS yard birds—Louisiana Waterthrush, Chipping Sparrows & Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.

Mar 28: Ann & Gary Carpenter go to York River State Park to check out the Great Horned Owl nest again and got a good look at one of the chicks. Curiously the parent was nowhere to be seen. But while there they caught sight of Yellow-throated, Palm and Pine Warblers. Ruddies (in

large quantities) and some Canvasbacks still in the York River. They saw a pair of Bald Eagle in what appeared to be a mating flight, and Ospreys that were virtually everywhere. Other birds sited were a Belted Kingfisher, a lone Laughing Gull, Double-crested Cormorants, a couple of Tree Swallows, Dark-eyed Juncos, Tufted Titmouse, Robins, Chipping Sparrows, Bluebirds, Chickadees, a Red-bellied Woodpecker, numerous Crows and a Great Blue Heron.

Mar 29: Alice & Seig Kopinitz and Steve & Shirley Devan birded at spots along Route 5. At their first stop at Lawrence Lewis, Jr. Park in Charles City County they were able to see a Bald Eagle feeding two chicks on a nest on the right beyond the swamp. At Crewe's Channel on Route 156 in Henrico County they saw good numbers of Green-winged Teal, Wilson's Snipe, Killdeer and yellowlegs. Also seen were several Red-headed Woodpeckers and a Bald Eagle flying overhead. On the same day, Seig reported a female Wild Turkey on the side of News Road near Springhill.

Mar 30: Shirley Devan reports she still has Dark-eyed Juncos under her feeders. The Yellow-rumped Warbler (in breeding plumage) and the Rudy-crowned Kinglet are still visiting the feeders along with the Tufted Titmouse and Northern Cardinals. Their front yard nest box has a Carolina Chickadee nest with 2 eggs (as of the 28th).

Mar 30: Joe and Grace Doyle report that at their house they have 2 Osprey, Pied-billed Grebes on the pond and Red-breasted Nuthatches. Nesting Mute Swans—female on the nest and the male patrolling the territory and keeping the Canada Geese at bay.

My Favorite Christmas Present By Mary Anne Fennell

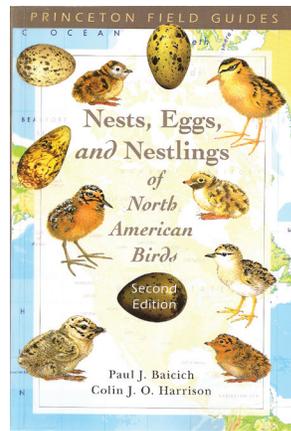


John got me a Christmas present this year that has turned out to be a real favorite: a dead tree!! We had an old dead snag in the yard for several years where we hung a suet feeder. The birds would flock to this feeder and also to the bugs hidden in the dead wood. Last summer a storm blew it down and it broke in many pieces. I mourned its loss. So before Christmas, John searched the woods until he found a suitable dead log. He drug it back to the yard, dug a hole and planted it straight. As soon as the log was properly braced with metal poles, he strung a new suet feeder on it and we watched. Within a day, the birds were back as busy as ever, including the three Pileated Woodpeckers that had

frequented its predecessor. So forget about jewelry and fancy clothes. If your spouse is a birder, think about getting them a “dead tree!”

Nests, Eggs, and Nestlings of North American Birds, 2nd ed., by Paul J. Baicich and Colin J. O. Harrison. Princeton University Press, content copyright 1978; reprinted and published by Princeton University Press, 347 p., 2005.

Reviewed by Jeanette Navia



At first glance, *Nests, Eggs, and Nestlings of North American Birds* looks like a dry field guide to nests, eggs and nestlings, but as more experienced birders may already know, differences in nest-building, eggs and the rearing of young chicks is not a dry subject at all. The 347 heavy-weight, slick pages, and 9"x6" size make this more a reference book than a field guide. The content of this

book was first published in 1978; the current volume is a repackaging of this older text.

The beginning material—sections titled ‘Please begin here’, How to use this book, Introduction and Identification keys—was fascinating to me. The strong warnings against egg collecting by amateurs and detailed cautions to readers about the importance of not disturbing nests alerted me to the need for caution when studying birds.

I knew very little about nests and eggs, and even less about nestlings. These first sections served as a very basic introduction to these areas of a bird's life. For instance, I did not know that birds such as wood warblers, wood-pewee, and gnatcatchers use spiders' webs as building materials to help adhere the small twigs and bits of other material together, or that some birds may get confused by repetition in human architecture such as identical compartments in rows which do not occur in the wild. Birds may start building one nest in one compartment, then start building others in other compartments, leaving unfinished nests in several compartments.

The book covers species breeding in continental North America, from the Arctic to the southern border of the United States. It also includes Greenland. There is information about breeding, eggs, nests and nestlings for ap-

proximately 670 species. There are photos of eggs for nearly all these species. Color drawings of approximately 240 nestlings are included. Because nestlings of related species often look alike, drawings for each species are not included. Line drawings of types of nests are interspersed throughout the text. Again, since nests are similar for related birds, only typical nests of each type are shown.

Text entries for each species detail the type or description of nest, breeding season, clutch size, egg shape, size and color, incubation period, type of nestling (altricial or precocial), nestling period and includes notes such as which parent feeds the young and how the young leave the nests. Gaps in knowledge for some species are noted. This seems to be an excellent reference book for those interested in nests, eggs and nestlings.

For the Record-Nesting Information Needed **By Bill Williams**

It was one of those comments that occur frequently when fellow birders convene. Among myriad topics the conversation had turned towards nesting records for the Williamsburg area. Somewhat curious, Linda Cole asked if we had any information for vulture breeding. It turns out through her work obligations she had been made aware of a Turkey Vulture nest at Cheatham Annex. After a little more information gathering she was able to supply the date, the specific circumstances, and an exact location for this common species, for which we had no recorded nest records.

Believe it or not, we do not have a nest record for Mallard. We know they breed locally but we do not have any egg dates or records of hen Mallards incubating.

With these anecdotes as back-drop, this is a plea for bird club members to be on the look out for evidence of any and all nesting birds. Please record the date(s), the location, the number of eggs and/or young, the names of the observers, and any other information pertinent to the nesting circumstances. Then send that information to Bill Williams at jwwil2@wm.edu or call 229-1124.

Richmond Avian Defender Award Issued to Dr. Mitchell Byrd



By John M. Roberts, RAS Conservation Chair

For a lifetime of bird conservation, Richmond Audubon Society is honored to announce that Dr. Mitchell A. Byrd receives the “Avian Defender” Award for 2008. Dr. Byrd is the

retired Chancellor Professor of biology at William and Mary College and founder of the Virginia Center for Conservation Biology.

He has not only accomplished key scientific findings about endangered species such as the Peregrine Falcon, and our country’s emblem species, the Bald Eagle, he has also worked to educate the public about why and how to protect these and other birds. The Center has said, “...likely his most lasting legacy is his commitment to convey an environmental ethic to a public audience.”

This award is only given to those who have gone beyond the pale in defending our state’s avian species. In a time when so many of our species are threatened with extinction, this award is one way to inform Virginians about an individual’s good work, and about the importance of wildlife.

Virginia is the only Eastern state to geographically encompass portions of six major ecoregions, and Southwestern Virginia is home to one of only six major U.S. biological Hotspots, so called because of extraordinarily high species diversity and endemism.

The Center states: “His contributions to the management of threatened and endangered species have been synonymous with the history of conservation in Virginia.” Dr. Byrd currently warns us to preserve habitat, or we may lose our hard won gains in protecting Bald Eagles and other species.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Announces Endangered Species Recovery Champion Award **From the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Website**

March 27, 2008

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director H. Dale Hall announced the sixteen recipients of the Service’s 2007 Recovery Champion award. The Recovery Champion award recognizes outstanding contributions of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees and their partners toward efforts aimed at recovering threatened and endangered species in the United States.

“The Recovery Champion award not only recognizes the exceptional conservation accomplishments of the honorees, it also provides the public with a unique opportunity to learn about endangered species conservation,” said Hall. “These Recovery Champions are extraordinary conservationists dedicated to protecting and restoring our nation’s wildlife and ensuring that future generations of Americans enjoy the national treasures we experience today.”

Mitchell Byrd, Ph.D., and Bryan Watts, Ph.D., are recipients in Region 5, and the news release read as follows: "Few people have done as much as Dr. Mitchell Byrd and Dr. Bryan Watts to promote the recovery of the bald eagle. In 1991, they co-founded the Center for Conservation Biology at the College of William and Mary. In the ensuing 15 years, the Center conducted extensive research focused on gaining a better understanding of the ecology and life history of the bald eagle, and helped establish protected areas specifically for this species, such as the Mason Neck and James River National Wildlife Refuges. The Center for Conservation Biology has exemplified leadership in research, advocacy, partnership development, and habitat protection that has directly led to the recovery of the bald eagle, particularly in the Chesapeake Bay region.

Titmouse 1, Dog 0

Tom McCary is recuperating from surgery at his brother's home in Midlothian. An interesting encounter occurred March 25. The family's dog, a Sheltie named Casey, was

lounging in the sun on the back deck. As Tom observed from just inside the sliding glass door, he noticed a Tufted Titmouse had landed on the corner of the brick fireplace next to the deck. Tom reports that the titmouse nervously looked all around, then dived down and plucked a tuft of fur from Casey's rump and flitted away to decorate the nest.

Tom reported that he had never seen anything like this before and he was particularly pleased to be only about 3 feet from the event on the other side of the sliding glass door.

As for Casey, he woke from his nap and turned to see what the annoyance was. But alas, the bird had made off with its treasure.

WBC Adopt a Highway Program

Alex and Mike Minarik, Dick Kiefer, Bob Long, David Monahan and Chairman John Fennell met on March 29th to pick up trash along our new location on Croaker Road. They collected 10 bags of trash from nearly two miles of roadway. Thanks to all of the participants.

March New Quarter Park Walks



On March 8th, Leader Hugh Beard and nine other birders were able to squeeze in a fun bird walk before the rains fell. There were a total of 31 species seen. Other participants were Joe Piotrowski, Chuck Rend, Bob & Cynthia Long, Margaret Ware, Jeanette Navia, Shirley Devan and Sharon Falconer.

On the March 22nd walk, Leader Bill Williams and the 13 other birders found a total of 45 species. Participants were Bill Williams, Joanne Andrews, Brac Bracalente, Linda Cole, Shirley Devan, Sara Lewis, Bob & Cynthia Long, Cathy Millar, Mike & Jeanne Millin, Betty Peterson, George Rountree and Linda Truslow.



March Field Trip at the Green Springs Trail

By Bill Williams

The Ides were most assuredly in a generous mood for the March 15 field trip. For the 28 participants who basked in the warm March breezes to find 55 species at the Green Springs Trail, the suspicion is they would all agree. The walk began with a cheerful Killdeer calling near Jamestown High School, then escalated a bit as an Eastern Phoebe bid us morning's greetings to the trail boardwalk. As we stopped to look and listen, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet flitted close at hand and a Golden-crowned Kinglet had everyone bending their necks to catch it among the yet-to-leaf-out tree branches above. Several very close Rusty Blackbirds enabled everyone to study both males and females of this seriously threatened migrant and winter resident, while 3 Brown Thrashers appeared to be feasting among the tiny blossoms of a red maple next to the railing. The skies above were filled with a dozen or more Tree Swallows, 4–6 courting Ospreys, and passing Common Grackles and Red-winged Blackbirds. Out in the beaver pond, Canada Geese made far too much noise as Mallards flew by. It wasn't long before a pair of Hairy Woodpeckers was found not far from where a just-right-for-telescoping Red-headed Woodpecker patiently sat.

As the group made its way towards the Capital Bikeway Trail, Chuck Litterst spotted a Brown-headed Nuthatch that finally presented itself quite low among several small trees for all to see. Thanks to Alex Minarik for keeping it in view as it moved about!

The bikeway view over the wetlands produced some great looks at Green-winged Teal, 4 American Widgeons, a pair of Northern Pintails, and another Red-headed Woodpecker. Even an adult Bald Eagle had to come by to see what was going on! With warming temperatures, both Black and Turkey Vultures sailed just above the tree line, making flight and plumage comparisons very easy to study. A Pine Warbler sang its slow warbling song.

By 10:00 AM, many folks peeled away to attend to other obligations. But the trail had more in store. A way-up-high soaring Sharp-shinned Hawk started it all, followed by a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks at their nest site. Not to be outdone, an incubating Barred Owl gave us only minimal, but satisfying, looks at its undertail and the tip of its left wing. Just before the last participants exited the forest, a pair of White-breasted Nuthatches was entertaining enough that when we paused to follow them, a Brown Creeper made itself known.



Participants were: Bill Williams (Leader), Joanne Andrews, Rick and Marian Bennett, Cathy Bond, Wini Buchanan, Gary and Ann Carpenter, Deb Costello, Shirley Devan, Gary Driscoll, Andrienne Frank, Twila Frieders, Dick Kiefer, Seig & Alice Kopinitz, Bill Lee, Chuck Litterst, Frances McDaniel, Cathy Millar, Alex Minarik, Jeanette Navia, Joe Piotrowski, Charles Rend, May Sligh, Peter & Lorena Walsh and Dorothy Whitfield.

CALENDAR

Sunday, April 6	HRBC Bird Walk, Newport News Park, 7 AM
Thursday, April 10	HRBC monthly meeting, Stephen Living, Speaker—"The Great Dismal Swamp", 7 pm, Conference Room, Sandy Bottom Nature Center
Saturday, April 12	WBC Bird Walk, NQP, 8 AM, Bill Williams, Leader
Saturday, April 12	HRBC Field Trip to Great Dismal Swamp, Call Jane Frigo (873-0721) for details
Wednesday, April 16	WBC Monthly Meeting—See page 1
Saturday, April 20	WBC Field Trip to Great Dismal Swamp—see Page 1
Saturday, April 26	HRBC Spring Bird Count, Contact Hayes Williams at 804-693-4417 or joyce-wms@inna.net
Saturday, April 26	WBC Bird Walk, NQP, 7 AM, Bill Williams, Leader
Sunday, May 4	WBC Spring Bird Count—See page 1
May 9–11	Great Dismal Swamp Birding Festival—Call 757-986-3705 for information
May 16–18	VSO Annual Meeting (See February's issue of <i>The Flyer</i> or go to www.mountainlake-birding.com)
Sunday, June 1	WBC Annual Picnic—more information in May issue of <i>The Flyer</i>
Saturday, June 21	VSO Piney Grove—more information to follow when available



Williamsburg Bird Club
P.O. Box 1085
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April 16th Meeting —Speaker Ruth Beck
Feathered Features and Avian Adventures