



The Flyer

Newsletter of the Williamsburg Bird Club

Vol. 32, No. 6

www.williamsburgbirdclub.org

June 2008

President's Corner

By Shirley Devan

When last month's "corner" gulped down a full page of the newsletter, I promised Fred that June's note would truly fit in the corner. Let's see if I can do it:

Summer is unofficially here! Smear on some sunscreen and tuck your socks into your long pants and **get out there** with the birds, the butterflies, the native plants, the frogs, and trees. Birds are plentiful in our county and city parks and recreation areas. Even if you're not taking an out-of-town vacation this summer, set out for a mini-vacation at a local habitat—and take the kids and grandkids. Then write Fred Blystone, newsletter editor, about your experience.

Keep in mind we'll be doing the bird walks at New Quarter Park the 2nd and 4th Saturday every month. Hope to see you there. Have a safe, birdy summer!

There are no Club meetings in June, July or August. There are no field trips in June or July, but the walks at New Quarter Park will continue.

There are walks in New Quarter Park. June 14 (Hugh Beard, leader) starts at 8 am. June 28 (not sure of the leader yet) walk will start at 7 am.

On July 12, a kayaking/birding trip (at New Quarter Park from 8–11 am). Fee

will be \$45 per person for a single kayak; \$20 per person if you bring your own kayak. If you are interested, please contact Jill Bieri of Chesapeake Experience at 757-890-0502 or 757-880-8018 (cell). Jill can also be reached

at Jill@ChesapeakeExperience.org—her website is www.ChesapeakeExperience.org.



Walk on July 26 will start at 7 am, and the leader will be Bill Williams.

Also see other walks and VSO field trips in the calendar section on the back page.

The 2008 Spring Bird Count

By Bill Williams

The early morning hours of May 4, 2008 looked anything but friendly for the bird club's 31st annual Spring Bird Count. Nevertheless, predawn overcast and rainy conditions gave way to a bright, cool day during which the count's 42 participants recorded a total of 146 species. Our average species number is 153 with an all-time high species total of 166 in 1989 and an all-time low of 135 in 2006.

Although the count was without any real rarities, there were several interesting finds. The Hog Island party tallied a somewhat late Dark-eyed Junco, as well as a Horned Lark. We have had Dark-eyed Juncos on four previous counts—one in 1984, a Spring Count high of 3 in 1991, one in 1992 and 2 in 1995. Horned Larks have been recorded on three previous Spring Counts, one each for the 1983 and 1989 counts and 2 for the 1991 count. A Willow Flycatcher off Treasure Island Road found by Ryan Burdge was only the second one for our Spring event, the last being one in 1989. This species, for which we have only a handful of records, typically migrates through the area later in May.

In addition to these "write-in" species all time Spring Bird Count high counts were set or tied for seven species. These included 9 Hairy Woodpeckers (ties 2006 and 2007); 121 Great Crested Flycatchers—previous high 102 in 2000; 36 White-breasted Nuthatches—previous high was 29 in 2001; a whopping 57 Black-throated Blue Warblers overwhelming the previous high of 35 in 2007; 7 Black-throated Green Warblers—previous high was 6 in 1996; 7 Worm-eating Warblers—besting the 6 in 1983; and 257 Northern Cardinals, eclipsing 230 in 2006.

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Update on Ruth Beck

From Shirley Devan

I talked briefly with Ruth this afternoon (May 29). She is still in Charlottesville at the Rehab Center. Donna Ware was with her today. Ruth still is not able to hold a telephone to her ear. Donna held the phone to Ruth's ear while we chatted for a couple of minutes. Ruth reiterated her gratitude for all your cards and letters so continue to send them to the Charlottesville address: Room 215, UVA Heath South Rehab Hospital, 515 Ray C. Hunt Drive, Charlottesville, VA 22903.

Quite disappointing were the species that were not found during the count. These included Lesser Scaup (7 were seen on the James River 5 May), Pied-billed Grebe, Brown Pelican, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, American Kestrel, Chuck-will's-widow, Whip-poor-will, Marsh Wren, Grasshopper Sparrow, Seaside Sparrow. Sadly, it appears that Chuck-will's-widow, Whip-poor-will, and Seaside Sparrow may no longer be with us. We have not had any local reports of any of these species for at least the last 2 years. The Whip-poor-will high count for the spring census was 23 in 1989. That species has not made the Spring Count list since 1996. The peak Chuck-will's-widow Spring Count total was 7 in 1985. Our local Seaside Sparrow population was confined to the salt water marsh adjacent to Queen's Lake, New Quarter Park and Camp Peary. Our best total for spring for this species was 7 in 1995. Also worth noting was this Spring Count's total of 4 Northern Bobwhite, 3 of which were on Hog Island. The low count was 3 in 2004 and we have only managed 4 in each of the last three Spring Counts (2006-2008). Compare those numbers with 121 and 130 in 1982 and 1983 respectively.

Another significant miss for this year's event was Ruth Beck. Ruth even called from Charlottesville the night before the count apologizing for having to miss the day's birding activities. Wouldn't you know.....

Many thanks to all who participated in the count, especially Kathi and Mac Metsayer and Ryan Burdge who pinch-hit for leaders unable to be with us. Those who made the day a success were: Jeanne and Tom Armour, Cherie Auckland, Hugh Beard, Ryan Burdge, Linda Cole, Ann Condon, Shirley Devan, Grace and Joe Doyle, Gary Driscoll, Mary Anne and John Fennell, Bettye Fields, Adrienne Frank, Ron Giese, Dick Joosten, Caitlin Kight, Alice and Sig Kopinitz, Cynthia and Bob Long, Kathi and Mac Metsayer, Alex Minarik, David Monahan, Michael Meyers, Jeanette Navia, Betty Peterson, Susan, Geri, and Mike Powell, Mary Pulley, Dave Schantz, Linda Scherer, Lee Schuster, San Skalak, Brian Taber, Dorothy Whitfield, Bill Williams, Joyce and Hayes Williams.

May Bird Sightings

Report your backyard birds and local sightings to Fred Blystone at 229-4346 or fmb19481@verizon.net. If you encounter interesting birds on your vacation/travels, please share!

May 1: Shirley Devan, Alex Minarik and Fred Blystone go birding in Charles City County, Dutch Gap Conservation Area and at Jordan's Point. Highlights were Cliff Swallows

at Jordan's Point, Peregrine Falcons bringing food to the nest box on the Benjamin Harrison Bridge and the 20 Orchard Orioles seen and heard during the day. Species list for the trip ended up at 76.

May 2: Tom Armour reports 3 Greater and 1 Lesser Yellowlegs at Treasure Island Road. Shirley Devan sees an American Redstart in her yard—this is a new yard bird for her.

May 3: Caitlin Kight reports two Bobolinks at Carlton Farms on Greensprings Road—a life bird for her.

May 4: Dorothy Whitfield reports a male Prothonotary Warbler on her deck.

May 5: While sitting by the window working on her computer, Shirley Devan kept a list of the birds coming to her feeders and bird baths. She had a Wood Thrush in the bird bath and taking nesting material away and singing like crazy; 2 Gray Catbirds and an American Robin, also in the bird bath; Carolina Wrens, Northern Cardinals, Mourning Doves, Tufted Titmice, White-breasted Nuthatches, House Finches, 2 Downy Woodpeckers, Carolina Chickadee, and a Brown Thrasher on her suet feeder. She also heard, but didn't see a Pileated Woodpecker.

May 6: Jeanne and Gil Frey email a Surry update—had a good look by now, and see that we have numerous tree swallows on the power lines. Last week, saw the first indigo bunting of the season. The bluebirds on our lane are busy in all of the boxes. Ruby-throated hummingbirds are at the feeder but fewer in number, so far. The usual nuthatches, chickadees, titmice, downy woodpeckers, pileated woodpeckers, cardinals, doves, Carolina wrens are hanging around. The finches are no longer at the feeders with the exceptions of a hungry purple finch female. We're off to the Florida Keys this week, so hope to see some good water birds.

May 6: Tom Armour reports a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak at their feeders.

May 10: Tom Armour reports having a beautiful male Rose-breasted Grosbeak at his feeder and a Kentucky Warbler in the woods in his back yard. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak is also reported seen by Bart Singer in his yard.

May 11: Tom Armour continues to have a male and a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak coming to his feeders. Cynthia Long reports having three singing male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at her feeders



Photo by Tom Armour

May 16: Joe & Grace Doyle's son Jeff observed a Golden Eagle at the Kingsmill Marina. They also reported the following in their yard: a Veery, 3 American Redstarts, a Chestnut-sided Warbler, a Blackpoll Warbler, a Black & White Warbler, and a Red-breasted Nuthatch that should have already been heading north.

May 17: Duryea Morton reports a White-crowned Sparrow at his feeder.

May 17: Joe & Grace Doyle report a visiting Swainson's Thrush and a Great Crested Flycatcher carrying nesting material into the duck box down by the pond.

May 18: The Doyles report from New Quarter Park, a Blackpoll Warbler and, in addition, they heard a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker—a species that is usually gone by this time of year.

May 18: George Rountree reports seeing a White-eyed Vireo at Green Springs Trail—a life bird for him. He saw a total of 21 species while on the trail.

May 14: Fred Blystone goes to Dutch Gap Conservation Area and sees the Common Moorhen that had been reported there.



Photo by Harry Brown

May 14: Shirley Devan reports that while she and Alex Minarik were in the Colony Square Shopping Center around 8 AM, they had a Yellow Warbler and a Blackpoll Warbler in a tree in the parking island in front of the Fresh Market. Shirley ended her email with "who says you have to go to exotic places to get good birds?" At Craney Island (with other members of the bird club and the Historic Rivers Chapter of VA Master Naturalist Program) they had 45 species of birds, including a Clapper Rail and three Black-necked Stilt.

May 19: Chuck Rend sees a Yellow-throated Vireo in a Tulip Poplar tree in his yard

May 21: Bill Williams and Fred Blystone visit the Humpback Rocks area of the Blue Ridge Parkway, Maiden's Landing, Dutch Gap Conservation Area and Jordan's Point. It was another very windy Wednesday, especially in the mountains. The highlights of the day were hearing Whip-poor-wills and a Ruffed Grouse and getting great looks at a Black-billed Cuckoo (all three species in the mountains) and two Least Bitterns at Dutch Gap. Species total for the day was 76.

May 21: From Brac Bracalente: A Rose-breasted Grosbeak visited our bird feeder for a couple days last week. A Carolina Wren raised and fledged 5 chicks about 2 weeks

ago from a nest built in our garage. Another one raised 6 in a rhododendron bush in the front yard. My wife watched all six leave the nest, as both the mother and father called to them. We now have a Robin sitting on a nest with 4 eggs, built on our gutter downspout. She has been there for about a week (see picture on page 10).



Photo by Brac Bracalente

May 22: Tom Armour reports a adult Mississippi Kite from the College Creek Hawkwatch.

May 23: Bill Williams reports a singing Willow Flycatcher and 21 fly by Whimbrels at College Creek.

May 24: Shirley Devan and a group from the local Nature Photography group visit Shirley Plantation. During the two hours spent around the plantation house, they had 31 species of birds, including Northern Bobwhite and Baltimore Oriole.

May 24: Shirley Devan reports watching Carolina Wrens feeding young under her feeder and White-breasted Nuthatches feeding young on a nearby tree. She also had a Gray Catbird at her feeder and a Wood Thrush in the leaf litter.

May 24: Chuck & Jean Rend observed Blackpolls in the same tulip poplar tree that held the earlier reported Yellow-throated Vireo.

Bird Sightings From Further Afield

Florida Birding in Early May

By Gary & Ann Carpenter

Ann and I drove to Florida in early May to visit friends and relatives. We have been to Florida many times in many seasons and we have to admit that this was probably not the best time, birding wise, to visit the State. Most of the migrants seem to have departed for points north. However, we did discover a birding spot that we had never heretofore visited, Merritt Island National Wildlife Reserve. Merritt Island is right beside Cape Canaveral and there we found all the birds we had ever seen over on the Gulf coast at Ding Darling. Our sightings included: Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Willet, White Ibis, Great Egret, Tri-colored Heron, Snowy Egret, Osprey, Black-necked Stilt, Black Skimmer, Anhinga, Semi-Palmated Plover, Blue Winged Teal, Reddish Egret, Common Moor-

hen, Brown Pelican, Eastern Kingbird, Glossy Ibis, and a surprising number of Roseate Spoonbills.

Our friend lives on the Sebastian River and we took a couple of slow boat cruises on the river and saw, among others: Bald Eagle, Wood Stork, Sandhill Crane, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Belted Kingfisher, Common Merganser, and Spotted Sandpiper.

Our next birding spots were over on the Gulf coast in the Sarasota area. At various spots, including the Myaka River State Park, we saw many of the birds already mentioned above, plus: Green Heron, Florida Mottled Duck, Florida Scrub Jay, Blue Jay, Short-billed Dowitcher, Sandwich Tern, Least Tern and Royal Tern, Double-crested Cormorant, Boat-tailed Grackle, Red-shouldered Hawk; and, on Siesta Key we were lucky enough to see a Magnificent Frigate Bird on the wing and a Snowy Plover on the nest.

And, finally, we visited Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary near Naples. This was our third visit and the least "birdy" of them all. However, among many others already mentioned we saw: a Northern Parula, Barred Owl, Northern Waterthrush, Hairy Woodpecker, and quite a few good looks at Swallow-tailed Kites on the wing.

Ireland in May

By George Rountree

On a recent trip to Ireland I went birding with 2 of Irelands top birders. I was able to add 17 birds to my life list out of a total of 50 birds seen (most of those were added on my last trip in November). The highlight of the trip was seeing a Grasshopper Warbler and a Spotted Flycatcher, both of which usually are very shy. Both birds are fairly nondescript and I probably would have missed them if not for Sean's and Harry's help. They have each seen a Grasshopper Warbler twice. Grasshopper Warblers' means of escape is usually to run rather than fly and they stay in very thick cover. In this case it was in a briar patch, it showed itself several times for a second or two. We tried calling and coaxed it to the top of a bush and just as I was about to get a photo Sean's phone rang. That was the last we saw of it. Sean and Harry both said it was the best look either of them have had.

I was luckier with the Spotted Flycatcher. Sean and I went to the University of Cork campus in Cork City where the flycatcher has been heard but seldom spotted. After about 20 minutes, we spotted one and got several good looks.

Surprisingly the next day I spotted one and got some poor pictures at the B&B my wife and I were staying at. If it hadn't been for seeing it the day before I probably wouldn't

have been able to ID it.

The real surprise was my wife seeing a Spotted Woodpecker in Bantry. I was trying to point out a Song Thrush to her and she keep describing a woodpecker, "Like a Downy". I didn't believe her as the Spotted, which looks like our Downy, is a rarity. I didn't see it. But the next day Sean said a Spotted had been seen on one of the islands off Bantry the day before, later that day we then heard it had been seen in Wexford on the east coast.

Eastern Shore Birding and Wildlife Festival

The Eastern Shore Birding and Wildlife Festival is changing dates! The 16th annual festival will be held on September 19th, 20th and 21st in Cape Charles. The festival continues to offer a variety of trips led by experts. Come see the natural spectacle of migration. Vast numbers of raptors and songbirds pour through the Eastern Shore on their way to southern wintering grounds. Colorful butterflies and dazzling dragonflies add to the natural wonder of the Eastern Shore. Save the date and don't miss this one of a kind experience!. For more information, contact Eastern Shore of VA Chamber of Commerce at 757-787-2460 or info@esvachamber.org.

Local Master Naturalist Program Starts August 28 **By Shirley Devan**

Do you enjoy looking at butterflies through your binoculars? Do you sit outside on wet spring nights listening to frogs? Are you interested in protecting and restoring native plants and animals? Then the Master Naturalist Program may be right for you.

The local Historic Rivers Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalist Program is now accepting applications for its Fall 2008 training class beginning August 28, 2008.

The Virginia Master Naturalist Program is a statewide corps of volunteers that provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities. Interested Virginians become Master Naturalists through local training courses and volunteer service.

To become a member of the Historic Rivers Chapter, you must complete a 50-hour basic training course as well as an additional 8 hours of advanced training. An important part of the certification process is the annual requirement of 40 hours of volunteer service.

Enrollment is limited to 15 to encourage small group learn-

ing and interaction. Applicants will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis. Tuition, which includes all materials and instruction, is \$200. Interested citizens should visit the local Historic Rivers Chapter website, <http://www.vmn-historicrivers.org>, to download the application form and to find additional information about the local chapter. To learn more about the state-wide organization, visit their web site: <http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/index.html>

If you have additional questions, contact Shirley Devan at 757-813-1322.

Managing Your Nest Boxes **By Shirley Devan**

The Virginia Bluebird Society, in its Spring 2008 newsletter, provides advice on how to manage nesting bird boxes. In answer to the question about removing old nests from boxes, the VBS advises box owners to remove dirty, used nests after the young have fledged. After removing the nest, dispose of it in a trash container. Leaving it on the ground near a nest box may attract predators. The law that prohibits collection was designed to keep humans from collecting viable eggs and active nests for native birds.

Also, it is legal to remove House Sparrow nests, eggs, and young because the federal migratory bird treaty and laws do not protect House Sparrows, an alien species.

If you find a little bird, here's a web site with advice on what to do: http://www.wildlifecenter.org/rescue/baby_bird

Bottom line: Please give baby birds the best possible chance for survival and leave them in the wild where they belong. Never attempt to treat or raise a baby bird on your own. Despite your best efforts, most hand-raised birds will die.

To find licensed wildlife rehabilitators in our area, go to: <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/injured/rehabilitators.asp>

You'll be prompted to enter your county or city. Then the site will display rehabilitators who treat birds, mammals, reptiles, etc. If you don't have a computer, call me at 757-813-1322 and I will let you know the closest rehabilitator.

If you're interested in joining the Virginia Bluebird Society, send your name and address along with a check for \$10 (individual) or \$15 (family) to VBS, 726 William Street, Fredericksburg, VA 22401. Their web site is: www.virginiabluebirds.org

VSO Piney Grove Field Trip **From Spring Issue of VSO Newsletter**

Again this summer the VSO and the Center for Conservation Biology will offer a field trip to Piney Grove, a Nature

Conservancy protected site where Red-cockaded Woodpeckers are known to nest. The CCB's Mike Wilson will lead the trip. Last year 10 adult Red-cockaded Woodpeckers were seen in four clusters of cavity trees.

Participants in this year's trip will assemble in the very early morning on June 21 and enter Piney Grove as a group. Because of the sensitive nature of the area, participation is limited to the number of participants that can go into the area at one time. If you are interested in this trip, please contact Peggy Opengari at 540 921-4340 or email gramby@pemt.net.

VSO Field Trip to High Knob

By Fred Blystone

This year the VSO early summer mountain trip June 27–29) will be at High Knob, which is in Wise County near the town of Norton.

There will be an afternoon field trip on Friday and three or four trips to pick from on Saturday and Sunday.

Some of the warblers you might expect to see on this trip are Canada, Black-throated Blue, Swainson's, Black-throated Green, Magnolia, Blackburnian and Northern Parula.

There are several motels in the area, as well as three campgrounds. More information can be found at the VSO website, www.virginiabirds.net or by calling Peggy Opengari at 540-921-4340.

Request from Caitlin Kight

I am one of two graduate students at the College of William and Mary attending the International Society for Behavioral Ecology (what a mouthful!) conference later this summer. Both of us study bluebirds and are always looking for good pictures to illustrate our talks. It's pretty easy for us to get pictures of us doing field work, but neither of us has lenses good enough to capture high-quality images of nestlings in boxes, fledglings, or adults. It's really helpful to have good pictures because many of our audience members are from the west coast or other continents, and their only exposure to bluebirds is the images we display in our Powerpoints.

That said, if any of you would like to donate digital photographs, it would be much appreciated. You'll get full credit in our slides, and the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping educate people about this beautiful species! You can contact me at specialagentCK@aol.com or crkigh@wm.edu if you'd like to send images or links.

Thanks, Caitlin Kight

Bird Report from Tom McCary

By Shirley Devan

May 25: I talked with Tom this afternoon. He's still at his brother's house in Richmond area. His surgery was postponed from May 22 to June 5 because of the doctor's schedule. Tom is very frustrated by this as you can imagine.

Tom observed a female American Redstart in the backyard of his brother's house today, May 25. He's also observed a family of 5 White-breasted Nuthatches around the yard—adults feeding young.

Also, on May 11 he observed a Magnolia Warbler in the shrubbery in the back yard.

(All this without binoculars!!)

Fourth Annual Migratory Bird Festival, May 15-17, 2008

Articles & Photos by Jeanette Navia

At the February WBC meeting, Shirley announced that the annual Virginia Society of Ornithology meeting would be held at Mountain Lake Hotel in Giles County, and that the hotel's fourth annual Migratory Bird Festival would take place at the same time. When club member Rosanne Reddin contacted me to see if I wanted to go, I said sure! We learned that Shirley and Steve Devan, and Joanne and Alex Andrews also decided to go, so we agreed to share one large cottage on the Mountain Lake estate.



Our hike was to start at noon Friday, so we spent Thursday night with Rosanne's relatives in Fairfield. We stopped in Charlottesville to see Ruth Beck, recuperating from Guillain-Barré Syndrome. Ruth looked good and was able to move her arms to touch our hands. We laughed when we learned that whenever she can get someone to take her outside in her chair, she birds the grounds of the rehab center.

We got to Mountain Lake Friday morning shortly before our bus trip left for Glen Alton, a 1930's farm and vacation retreat recently bought by the U.S. Forest Service. The nearly four-hour hike was easy—all flat land with a

gravel trail that had woods, ponds, fields and structures. We saw Northern Rough-winged Swallows, Bank Swallows, Cliff Swallows, Barn Swallows, Chipping Sparrows, an Indigo Bunting, a Black-throated Blue Warbler, several Blackburnian Warblers, a Brown Creeper, Scarlet tanagers, a Great Blue Heron, a Green Heron, and several beautiful Blue-headed Vireos.

Saturday morning we had a two-hour walk up Blueberry Ridge, an inclined road up from the hotel. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were all around, as were Chestnut-sided warblers. We also saw a Purple Finch, Pine Siskins, a female Black and White Warbler, a Magnolia Warbler, a Least Flycatcher, and a couple Red-eyed Vireos. One Red-eyed Vireo had a still-alive moth in its beak that it was trying to kill while hopping from branch to branch keeping his prize from another bird.



The four-hour rafting trip in the afternoon was a very slow, peaceful float on the New River. The river was walled in places by incredible cliffs and rock formations. There were lots of Baltimore Orioles, a Red-tailed Hawk, an Acadian Flycatcher and an Acadian Flycatcher's nest dangling over the water, and some Spotted Sandpipers. The scenery was stunning and the weather warm and perfect. The day before, we heard, the trip had ended early in cold and rain after one of the rafts got stuck and riders had to get out into the cold water to dislodge it.

Sunday morning we had one last outing, a car pool drive down the mountain. Shirley and Steve were also on this trip. The highlights of this trip included the

Golden-winged Warbler and a hybrid, the Brewster's Warbler. We also saw a Mountain Lake subspecies of the Dark-eyed Junco, and heard and saw a Veery.

Stamps Used on the Hardcopy Issue of *The Flyer* this month

The four-design, 20-stamp Pollination booklet was released during National Pollinator Week, June 24-30 2007. Depicted on the Pollination stamps by artist Steve Buchanan are four wildflowers and four pollinators. Two Morrison's bumble bees (*Bombus morrisoni*) are paired with purple or chaparral nightshade (*Solanum xanti*) (one of the bees is actively engaged in buzz pollination). A calliope hummingbird (*Stellula calliope*) sips from a hummingbird trumpet (*Epilobium canum*) blossom. A lesser long-nosed bat (*Leptonycteris yerbabuenae*) prepares to "dive" into a saguaro (*Carnegiea gigantea*) flower. And a southern dogface butterfly (*Colias cesonia*) visits prairie or common ironweed (*Vernonia fasciculata*).



The four stamps are arranged in two alternate and interlocking patterns. In one block, the pollinators form a central starburst. In the other, the flowers are arranged in the center. "These stamps are a special way to honor the beauty that is in our midst each day," said Yverne Pat Moore, Postmaster, Washington, D.C., U.S. Postal Service. "The animals featured on the stamps are beautiful ambassadors of nature."

May New Quarter Park Walks

Susan Powell led 16 participants on the May 10th Bird Walk at NQP. Eight (four scouts and their dads) of the 17 were from Boy Scout Troop 300. They are in the process of earning their bird watching badge. There were a total of 53 species seen, including good looks at Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, plus lots of Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets down by the dock. Participants were Betty Peterson, Susan and Mike Powell, Margaret Ware, Kimberly McHugh, Harry Danforth, Shirley Devan, Bob & Cynthia Long and from Troop 300; Michael & Craig Williams, Iain & Tenley Thompson, Alex & Art Webb, and Matthew & Scott Deane.



Photo by Shirley Devan

Left to right, some of the participants in the May 10th walk: Betty Peterson, Mike Powell, Margaret Ware, Susan Powell and Kimberly McHugh

Twenty-three birders joined leader Bill Williams for the May 24th walk at New Quarter Park. It was a beautiful day and the birds were very cooperative. A total of 63 species were identified—the highlights being a Downy Woodpecker feeding begging young at a nest hole and a Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow that was singing across Queen's Creek.



Photo by Cathy Millar

Participants were Dave & Ruth Anderton, Joanne Andrews, Rich & Marian Bennett, Pete Berquist, Cathy Bond, Jim Booth, Gary & Ann Carpenter, Shirley Devan, Anthony Dupree, Bob & Cynthia Long, Kimberly McHugh, Cathy Millar, Dave Monahan, Lisa & Justine Kolezar, Jeanette Navia, Connie Rush, Margaret Ware, Mike Zickle and Bill Williams.

HRBC May Newport News Park Walks & Field Trip

On the regularly scheduled Sunday park walk on May 4, 10 people joined leader Jane Frigo for a productive day that ended up with 72 species, 13 of which were new for the park walks this year. We all got great looks at the Great Horned Owl reported and photographed in April by Joe Piotrowski.

On May 18th, 14 birders joined Jane for 3 hours of birding on a beautiful day. Although some regular species were missing, like Brown Thrasher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Laughing Gull and Double-crested Cormorant, there were special treats like Magnolia Warbler and observations of Brown-headed Nuthatch, Carolina Chickadee and Downy Woodpecker nest activity. A total of 58 species were seen.

Walks are conducted the 1st and 3rd Sundays year round in the park by the HRBC.

Meet at the parking lot to the left of the Ranger Station around 7 AM. So far this year a total of 107 species have been seen during these Sunday walks.

The HRBC joined up with members of the Richmond Audubon Society for their May 10th field trip to the James River Park in Richmond. Two sections of the park were explored—the 42nd Street entrance area and the Wetlands. The species total for the days was 74, including 16 species of warblers.

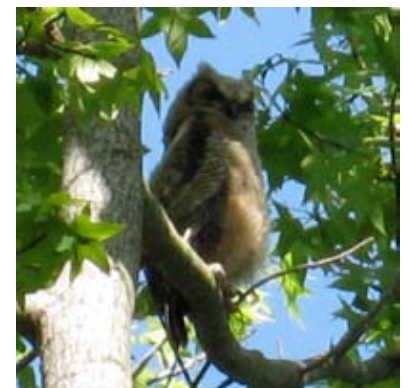


Photo by Fred Blystone



This is the photo by Brac Braclente described in Bird Sightings for May 21.



Steve Devan took this picture of a Kentucky Warbler on May 11 at Thompson Wildlife Management Area.

CALENDAR

Saturday, June 14	WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, 8 AM, Hugh Beard, Leader
Sunday, June 15	HRBC Bird Walk, Newport News Park, 7 AM
Saturday, June 21	VSO Piney Grove Field Trip—see page 6
June 27–29	VSO High Knob Field Trip—see page 6
June 28	WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, Leader TBD, 7 AM
Sunday, July 6	HRBC Bird Walk, Newport News Park, 7 AM
Saturday, July 12	WBC Kayaking/Birding, New Quarter Park—see front page
Sunday, July 20	HRBC Bird Walk, Newport News Park, 7 AM
Saturday, July 26	WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, Bill Williams, Leader, 7 AM
Sunday, August 3	HRBC Bird Walk, Newport News Park, 7 AM