



The Flyer

Newsletter of the Williamsburg Bird Club

Vol. 33, No. 6

www.williamsburgbirdclub.org

June 2009

President's Corner

By Shirley Devan

If you haven't heard by now: I was elected to the Board of the VSO [Virginia Society of Ornithology]. I have to admit that I can't yet remember whether it's Virginia Society OF Ornithology or Virginia Society FOR Ornithology. I have to check the web site to make sure! Luckily, the folks that elected me didn't know about my problem in advance!

I am truly pleased and honored to serve the VSO because the many good volunteers who make the VSO go perform important, good work – they are focused on the birds and birders in Virginia.

If you are a member of the Bird Club, then you should be a member of the VSO. If you pay attention to the VA-Bird List Serve, you should be a member of the VSO. If you keep track of your bird sightings in eBird, you should be a member of the VSO. If you support conservation and research into declining bird species in Virginia, then you should be a member of the VSO. If you like to bird around Virginia with knowledgeable birders, then you should be a member of VSO because ...

“The VSO conducts at least four field trips annually. Trips are designed to highlight some of Virginia's most significant birding areas, provide birders the opportunity to meet others who share their interest, and will appeal to all skill levels. It is a chance to learn from some of Virginia's top birders who generously give their time and talent to lead these trips” (from the VSO web site.) Everyone is welcome!

Visit the VSO's new web site: www.virginiabirds.net. Membership is only \$20 per year. You really oughta join!

Annual Picnic Postponed

The club picnic that was to be held at Ruth and Sherwin Beck's house has been postponed until September 6th. Ruth tripped and fell at home May 22 and fractured her pelvis. She is presently in Rehab at Sentara in Williamsburg and she would like to postpone the picnic to Sunday, September 6.

By now, all of the folks that had signed up for the picnic should have been contacted by Jean Rend and told about the new date. Anyone who is interested in coming to the picnic in September should call Jean Rend at 220-9032 to let her know that you can come and what you might bring.

Ornithology Research Grants

The club gave \$500 grants to each of these recipients: Leah Wilson—“Mate Guarding Behavior in the Australian Zebra Finch: Is it Flexible and Optimized?”; Marie Pitts—“Reproductive success of Eastern Bluebirds on Golf Courses: Habitat Effects Across Multiple Spatial Scales”; Andrew McGann—“Rusty Blackbird: Winter Ecology of a Disappearing Species”.

Welcome New Members

Jan and John Lockwood

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 3: Bill Williams adds to his year list for Greensprings Nature Trail. Of the 84 species he sees during his morning walk, 10 are new for the year. This brings the year list for the trail to 127. Alex Minarik has her first ever Indigo Bunting in her yard at the feeders.

May 4: Alex Minarik reports that chickadees fledged from the nest box in her back yard. She discovered a cardinal nest 80 feet behind the house, which had one baby bird in the nest, with one fledged bird in a tree nearby. On a walk around Jamestown Island the Minarik family counted about 54 species, including parula, black-throated blue, yellow-rumped, yellow-throated, prairie, blackpoll, black-and-white, redstart, prothonotary, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, both orioles, Scarlet Tanager, Indigo Bunting, Blue Grosbeak and Marsh Wrens. There were catbirds everywhere and many Red-headed Woodpeckers.

May 4: Tom Armour reports seeing 3 Solitary Sandpipers, 2 Indigo Buntings and a 1st year male Orchard Oriole on

Officers

President	220-6269
Shirley Devan	<i>sedevan52@cox.net</i>
Vice-President (Programs)	564-4484
Joe Piotrowski	<i>joepiotrowski@cox.net</i>
Vice-President (The Flyer)	229-4346
Fred Blystone	<i>fmb19481@verizon.net</i>
Treasurer	220-9032
Chuck Rend	<i>carjean39@msn.com</i>
Secretary	566-2615
Mary Anne Fennell	<i>maffjf07@netzero.net</i>
Member-at-Large	253-1543
Chuck Litterst	<i>clitterst@aol.com</i>
Member-at-Large	259-0867
Joanne Andrews	<i>kaiiviti37@hotmail.com</i>
Past President	259-9559
Bob Long	

Committee Chairpersons

Field Trips	229-2363
Tom Armour	<i>swiftyarmour@cox.net</i>
Records & Bird Counts	229-1124
Bill Williams	<i>jwwil2@wm.edu</i>
Library Liaison	565-6148
Lee Schuster	<i>dljschuster@cox.net</i>
Refreshments	565-0250
Barb Streb	<i>barbarastreb@starpower.net</i>
Membership/Webmaster	565-2597
Jeanette Navia	<i>jnavia@gmail.com</i>
Adopt-A-Highway	566-2615
John Fennell	<i>maffjf07@netzero.net</i>
Historian	259-9559
Cynthia Long	

New Feature on Website and in Electronic Flyer

We have added a new feature to the website and to the electronic version of *The Flyer* called “**Bird ID from Recycle Bin Photos by Joe Piotrowski**”. (It might be too difficult to identify birds from these black and white photos in the print version of the newsletter.) The answer to the “puzzle” will be given during the next club meeting and in the next electronic newsletter, as well as on the website.

Treasure Island Road. While at New Quarter Park, Tom McCary sees the following warblers—Black-and-White, Black-throated Blue and Common Yellowthroat.

May 5: Tom Armour sees 1 Lesser Yellowlegs in a field along Treasure Island Road.

May 5: Alex Minarik and Shirley Devan visited Richard Thompson WMA and Sky Meadows State Park in Fauquier County. They had a total of 58 species for the day. They found all the target birds they were looking for at Thompson WMA: Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Cerulean Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler and Black-throated Blue Warbler.

May 6: In a flooded field along Treasure Island Road, Tom Armour sees 6 Semi-palmated Sandpipers, 1 Pectoral Sandpiper and 2 Lesser Yellowlegs. He also sees an Indigo Bunting. They also found Bobolinks along Route 688 between the WMA and Sky Meadows State Park. The best birds at Sky Meadow were 10 Red-breasted Merganser and two White-crowned Sparrows.

May 6: From Shirley Plantation, Tom McCary reports—“3 male Indigo Buntings and 1 Eastern Kingbird on the entrance road, but the bird of the day was the Bobolink: there was a flock not far from the Great House in a field by the James River. Some great views!” On his morning ride down Treasure Island Road, Tom Armour sees 6 Semi-palmated Sandpipers, 1 Pectoral Sandpiper, 2 Lesser Yellowlegs and 1 Indigo Bunting.

May 7: From the College Creek Hawkwatch, Brian Taber reports the first (for 2009) Mississippi Kite and Peregrine Falcon. The site also went over 1500 birds for the year for only the 3rd time in 13 years.

May 8: Tom McCary reports sees an immature male Orchard Oriole at Shirley Plantation. There were also Blue Grosbeaks in the fields.

May 9: Chuck Rend is thrilled to see a male American Redstart in his backyard.

May 10: Bill Williams has another 80+ morning on the Greensprings Nature Trail. Two new birds for the year—Ruby-throated Hummingbird and Blackpoll, which brings the trail list for 2009 to 129.

May 10: Ann and Gary Carpenter birded York River State Park on 10 May and saw the following: Bald Eagle, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Grosbeaks (several and one pair), Eastern Bluebirds, Osprey, Cedar Waxwings, Northern Parula, Common Yellowthroat, Magnolia Warbler, Black and White Warbler, Pine Warbler, Ovenbird, Yellow-throated Warbler, Red-tailed Hawk, Great Crested Flycatcher, Carolina Chickadee, American Crow, Canada Geese, Brown-headed Cowbirds, Chipping Sparrows, Ring-billed Gulls, Tree Swallows, White-eyed Vireo, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Mockingbird, Turkey Vultures, Eastern Kingbird, Mourning Dove, Tufted Titmice, Northern Cardinals, Eastern Wood Peewee, Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, Carolina Wren, Indigo Bunting.

May 10: Chuck Rend reports—“this morning the much-awaited Blackpoll Warblers have returned to the tulip poplar trees in our backyard.”

May 11: From Treasure Island Road, Tom Armour reports at least 15 Least Sandpipers—and the martin house on Lake Powell Road has 20+ Purple

Martins. Bill Williams has a Black-throated Green Warbler in his yard. Tom McCary reports waves of Blackpoll Warblers in trees near the Great House on Shirley Plantation.

May 14: Shirley Devan finds a Brown Thrasher nest in a small holly tree near her driveway. She is now on the hunt for a Gray Catbird nest. Tom McCary reports male and female Boat-tailed Grackles near Indian Field Creek on the Colonial Parkway.

May 15: From Alex Minarik (at Chickamoniny Riverfront Park)—“I checked on the Pileated Woodpecker nest and observed both parent birds coming and going over a 45 minute period around 9 AM. I assume they are now feeding young. I saw a Magnolia Warbler while there and also heard a Northern Bobwhite calling at least 8 times from the direction of the grassy fields between the pond and the road.

May 16: On the Greensprings Nature Trail, Bill Williams adds three new birds for the year—Eastern Wood-Pewee, Gray-cheeked Thrush and American Redstart. This brings the 2009 trail list to 132 species.

May 19: Shirley Devan reports finding a Blue Jay nest in her yard. Unfortunately it's about 30 feet up in the V of a white oak tree. Probably will not be any nest pictures of this one.



Black-bellied Whistling Duck with Mallard
Photo by Diane Bumpass

May 22: Bill Williams and Fred Blystone head for the Stoney Point area of south Richmond to see the **Black-bellied Whistling Duck** that had been reported. The duck was sighted by Bill within a couple of minutes after they

arrived. On the way home they picked up Cliff Swallows at Jordan's Point and Shirley Plantation.

May 24: From Brian Taber— Today 2 male Boat-tailed Grackles were seen from the hawkwatch. One bird flew south across the river to Hog Island Wildlife Management Area. This is the first record for the species at this site and is unusually far inland.

May 25: Tom McCary writes, “Right in the middle of Shirley entrance road a large hen Wild Turkey posed and pranced. She allowed very close approach and then reluctantly took to the fields. Excellent looks! Back to the

Orchard Orioles—several are in the trees near the Great House and they stay on site all summer long.”

May 26: Bill Williams has 67 species on his Greenway Nature Trail walk. One of them is a Louisiana Waterthrush, a rare bird for the trail. Year total for the trail is now 133 species.

The 2009 Spring Bird Count

By Bill Williams

The 32nd annual Williamsburg Bird Club Spring Count gave us a chance to investigate the effects of two seemingly conflicting circumstances. The count was held on the 26th of April, the earliest date ever by two days; how would this impact the bird species diversity? Also, the count came towards the end of an extended late-April summer-like heat wave of almost a week of 90°+ days, including the count day! What would this do to the bird species diversity? With that citizen science set-up, 38 participants ventured forth to probe the local environs for every bird of every species they could find within the 15-mile diameter circle centered at the Colonial Williamsburg Information Center. At day's end the count's final tally had documented 156 species, slightly above the 32-year average of 153. To refine the context a little more, consider that 25% of our Spring Bird Counts have been held during the 26-30 April time frame. These counts have averaged 152 species with a high count of 160 on 29 April 1984 and a low of 135 species on 30 April 2006.

Although no new species were added to the cumulative Spring Bird Count (SBC) species list of 239 species (plus one hybrid), there were numerous highlights, including some particularly noteworthy all-time peak counts. The following is an overview of some of the exciting finds, beginning with the more exceptional species.

The team of Anne Marie Castellani, Gary Driscole, Adrienne Frank, David Monahan, Jeanette Navia, and Brian Taber found 2 Gadwall at Hog Island, Surry County. This is only slightly unusual in that Gadwall are typically gone by 22 April. There have been 3 previous SBC records for this duck all involving 2 individuals (pairs?); 29 Apr 1984, 3 May 1987, and 30 Apr 2006. Ron Giese spotted 2 Hooded Mergansers at Indian Field Creek off the York River in part of the Cheatham Annex count sector. Hoodies become rare locally by 1 April with records as late as 30 May. The last SBC report for this species involved 2 on 29 April 2007.



Quite out of place was a lone Horned Grebe carefully assessed at Little Creek Reservoir by the Jolly (sometimes too jolly we hear) Pond team of Inge Curtis, Shirley Devan, Alex Minarik, and Lee Schuster. Horned Grebes also become rare here by early April, although we have records for this species as late as 22 June. The Hog Island group reeled in a number of additional goodies including a Snowy Egret, 3 Glossy Ibis, a Merlin, and a King Rail. Snowy Egrets have been found during 17 of our SBCs, with a maximum of 8 on 2 May 1982. This was the 9th SBC appearance for Glossy Ibis, with a peak count of 14 on 28 April 1991. As for Merlins, this year marked the species 7th SBC occurrence, all of which involved single birds. The King Rail, our 7th SBC report, proved to be a vocal challenge resolved after much reading and call-playback analysis. But wait there's more... Hog Island also added a Horned Lark and a tardy Dark-eyed Junco, the latter knocking at the door of its local late date of 28 April. The team also noted a pair of Boat-tailed Grackles, establishing a third SBC record for that location. This species breeds at Indian Field Creek and Felgates Creek on the York River, yet has been recorded less than 10 times on James River side of our area.

Maybe one of the neatest finds of all was the 2 White-crowned Sparrows encountered by the Kingsmill group of Alice and Seig Kopinitz, Susan and Mike Powell, and Margaret Ware, 4th SBC record.

The boys named Cristol (Dan and his father Allan) were sharp as a pistol recording an oak-quivering 32 Red-headed Woodpeckers setting the stage for an SBC peak count record of 59, well beyond the former peak count of 35 set 9 May 2004. The Camp Peary contingent, Jeanne and Tom Armour and Grace and Joe Doyle, spied our only Cooper's Hawk, while the College Woods watchers, Fred Blystone, Mary Anne and John Fennell, Caitlin Kight, and Kathi Metsayer tallied a Barred Owl and 5 of our 7 SBC peak-count-matching Black-throated Green Warblers. Hugh

Beard, Ann and Gary Carpenter, Sandy Peterson, and Dave Shantz ran the extensive Middle Plantation circuit to bring in our only Northern Harrier, 3 Common Terns, and the count's 4 Bank Swallows. Way out Skimino way Nick Flanders and Lee Bristow spotted our only 2 Baltimore Orioles.

American Kestrels are struggling across their range in North America. Local evidence adds credence to the species slow demise as we have had only 5 SBC reports since 1990, and even then it was only one or 2 birds. This year there were signs of hope with a total of 5 recorded, 4 of which were on Cheatham Annex, where Kestrels were known to nest in the past.

Only 3 Northern Bobwhites were recorded for the count day; one at Cheatham Annex found by Linda Cole, one at Hog Island, and one in the Jolly Pond sector. Other disappointments included no Yellow-crowned Night-Herons or American Woodcocks. We must wonder if the Yellow-crowns have vacated their breeding sites at Queens Lake where they have been as regular as clock-work for many years.

The count's final totals revealed new SBC peak counts for no less than 11 species, with two other species tying existing high marks. Here's a recap.

The 5 May 1996 SBC Turkey Vulture count of 155 was smashed with 234 this year. Three woodpecker species peak count records were drilled into the record books, including the aforementioned 59 Red-headed Woodpeckers, 133 Red-bellied Woodpeckers (formerly 104 on 3 May 1987) and, 13 Hairy Woodpeckers (previously 9 on 3 dates; 30 Apr 2006; 29 Apr 2007; 4 May 2008). Is there a trend for the Hairys? Great Crested Flycatchers "wheeped" to a new high of 128, eclipsing the 121 from 4 May 2008. The 181 Tufted Titmouses edged out a long standing SBC peak of 178 established 29 Apr 1984. Our 137 Carolina Wrens tied the 29 Apr 2007 record and was only one more than 136 for the 4 May 2008 SBC. Another trend? How about those Blue-gray Gnatcatchers?! Most field teams bubbled over with how numerous the species was on count day. And so it proved to be with a total of 205, far in excess of the 163 from 1 May 1988. Brown Thrashers are typically quite secretive throughout much of the year. However, in spring the species becomes actively noticeable as shown by 63 this year, nudging aside the 58 counted on the rather late 16 May 1999 SBC.

Not unexpected were low numbers of migrant warblers. Nevertheless, our 7 Black-throated Green Warblers tied the 9 May 2004 and 4 May 2008 SBC peak count and our 71 Yellow-throated Warblers slipped ahead of the 67 noted 9 May 2004. The marginally early count date may have

contributed to the 279 White-throated Sparrows which bested 224 from the dark ages of 2 May 1982.

Lastly, our state bird Northern Cardinal must have been on everyone's detection radar as we posted a whopping 338, substantially more than the 257 tallied 4 May 2008. One can only guess what the counts of Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Tufted Titmouses, Carolina Wrens, Brown Thrashers, White-throated Sparrows, and Northern Cardinals would have been if we could have mustered a feeder watcher counting crew!

And finally, our totals of 39 Rock Pigeons and 22 House Sparrows suggests a great deal about where bird count data is **not** being recorded.

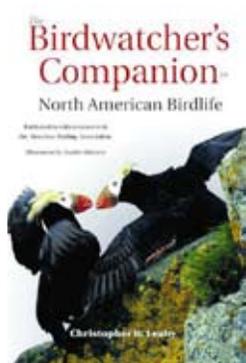
So did the weather and count date mess with our species diversity? You decide!

We must all extend many and sincere thanks to Debi and her staff at Carrot Tree Kitchens as well as a couple of spring-time secret Santas for the marvelous hospitality for our days-end compilation festivities. You are the best!!

Count Participants: Jeanne and Tom Armour, Hugh Beard, Fred Blystone, Lee Bristow, Ann and Gary Carpenter, Anne Marie Castellani, Linda Cole, Allan Cristol, Dan Cristol, Inge Curtis, Shirley Devan, Grace and Joe Doyle, Gary Discole, Mary Anne and John Fennell, Nick Flanders, Adrienne Frank, Ron Giese, Caitlin Kight, Alice and Seig Kopinitz, Bob and Cynthia Long, Kathi Metsayer, Alex Minarik, David Monahan, Jeannette Navia, Sandy Peterson, Susan and Mike Powell, Lee Schuster, Dave Shantz, Brian Taber, Margaret Ware, Bill Williams

Williamsburg Bird Club Book Review

By Jeanette Navia



The Birdwatcher's Companion to North American Birdlife. Christopher W. Leahy; Princeton University Press, 2004. ISBN: 9780691113883. \$19.95. pbk. 1039 p. Includes extensive bibliography. Williamsburg Library call number 598.0723 LEA.

Have a question about anything bird-related? I mean anything. There's a good chance you'll find the answer in the encyclopedia-like reference book, *The Birdwatcher's Companion*, by Christopher W. Leahy. Some entries are short:

Cormorantry. A breeding colony of cormorants, also called a shaggery. Other specific names for bird colonies are given under **nouns of assemblage**.

Some entries are long: Eleven pages for the entry **food/feeding**; eleven pages for **young, development of**, including a chart and illustrations; eighteen pages for **song**.

There is a chart comparing names of birds in American English with the same names in British English:

Snowy Plover = Kentish Plover
Bank Swallow = Sand Martin
Kinglets = Goldcrest, Firecrest
and others.

The **nouns of assemblage** mentioned above includes:

Cluster of knots
Congregation of plovers
Murmuration of starlings
and others.

There is a twenty-page section on **endangered birds**. Leahy discusses the history of and need for endangered species laws, and then lists and discusses some of the 78 species marked as endangered as of 2002. He is not dispassionate in his writing. "First the good news: Two of our most spectacular birds of prey have been pulled back from the brink of extinction (to which of course we pushed them)." (He's talking about Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons.)

Leahy wrote the first edition of *The Birdwatcher's Companion* in 1982. He wanted to "own a single reference book that I could hold in one hand but that would tell me, for example, whether birds have a well-developed sense of taste; what 'agonistic' means; what color a dipper's eggs are, how to pronounce 'parula'; ... how to measure a bird's bill; ... how to cook a scoter, ... and other such information, from the critical to the trivial."

The current edition is extensively revised. When the ABA and Princeton University approached Leahy and asked him to update his tome, he realized that in the last twenty years, much had changed in the avian world. "This is not," he writes, "merely a tweaked version of the old *Companion*. Many major entries have been completely rewritten and reflect present knowledge; many new entries have been added and the bibliography and appendixes have been thoroughly updated." He had to make some cuts, which he calls "painful surgery," but writes that he was guided by his original premise for the book, to emphasize the fascinating while retaining ... what the twenty-first century birdwatcher wants and needs to know."

Fascinating indeed! Everywhere I opened this 1039-page book, I found something interesting to read.

VSO Annual Meeting May 1–3, Fredericksburg

By Shirley Devan

This year's VSO Annual meeting was jointly hosted by the Fredericksburg Birding Club and the University of Mary Washington. The Annual Meeting Chair, Andrew Dolby, is an ornithology professor at UMW. He and his team of volunteers put together a wonderful weekend.

Bird Club member Jeanette Navia joined me at the meeting after I promised that we would be birding some unusually birdy spots in the Fredericksburg area.

Andrew Dolby had arranged for a trip to the Crow's Nest peninsula in Stafford County for Saturday morning, May 2. The trip maxed out at its limit of 20 people and certainly there was a waiting list. Visiting this spot was one of the main reasons I wanted to attend this weekend event. This spot is not open to the public yet and I had heard about its wonderful mature hardwood forest habitat.

Jeanette and I both got in on the trip and we eagerly set out with the group Saturday morning (6:30 a.m.) to hike this recently protected ecological jewel named for The Crow, a three-masted schooner that anchored near there in the mid-1800s. The Crow's Nest peninsula is roughly bounded by Accokeek Creek to the north, Potomac Creek to the South, and by Brooke Road to the East. Developers have been after this pristine, ideally located property for decades.

In December, a "grant of more than \$855,000 was awarded to Stafford County for the purchase of 1,100 acres of the Crow's Nest peninsula. The grant was one of 25 spread through 12 states under the 2009 National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program, which operates under the auspices of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. It was awarded for 'restoration and enhancement of coastal wetlands and adjacent upland' and will be a 'benefit to fish, wildlife, and their habitat.' Earlier this year the county had approved the purchase of 1,700 acres of the land through a low interest loan from the Commonwealth." [Source: Jim Lawrence, *The Stafford County Sun*, December 23, 2008.]

Birds and bird song surrounded us as we trekked the round trip of about three miles. The final tally for the morning was over 50 species. I got good looks at a Yellow-billed Cuckoo (my first of the season) plus Eastern Kingbirds, Northern Parulas, Ovenbirds, a Louisiana Waterthrush and a spectacular displaying Scarlet Tanager. I'm sure he found a girl friend before the day was out!

Birders, take heart! Eventually, the Crow's Nest will be operated as a State Natural Area Preserve, one of 55 such

areas in Virginia and likely will be open to the public for passive enjoyment – bird watching and hiking.

Saturday afternoon we relaxed inside the Gari Melcher Studio Conference Center and listened to VSO scholarship winners present their research findings. All three presenters were from William and Mary and had also won the Williamsburg Bird Club's William Sheehan and Ruth Beck Ornithological Research Grants in the recent past: Anne Condon, Allyson Jackson, and Andy McGann. Sergio Harding, Non-game Bird Wildlife Biologist, also addressed the group about the upcoming Breeding Bird Survey and encouraged volunteers to take active roles to fill vacant routes in the Piedmont and Mountain regions of the state.



Rexanne Bruno & Andy McGann

Photo by Shirley Devan

The Saturday night banquet speakers were Craig Thomas Naylor and Claudia Emerson, both of UMW and both with national and international reputations in the arts. Both famously incorporate nature and birds into their art.

Craig Naylor, Associate Professor of Music, is a teacher, composer, and conductor, whose works have won national awards and have been performed across America. He explained how he used bird song – specifically a chickadee's song and calls – to compose his current work in progress – "The Chickadee Symphony." The group enjoyed an intriguing 10-minute portion of the symphony, which he plans to complete and debut before the end of 2009.

Claudia Emerson, Professor of English at UMW and Poet Laureate of Virginia, described how birds, nature, and her

childhood in Southside Virginia inspire her poetry. One of her poems, “Late Wife,” won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 2006. She read several of her poems and often described the inspiration from nature that sparked her creative moment. The group listened enthralled to her readings and recitations and gave her a standing ovation. Her presentation was of the highlights of the conference for me.

Saturday morning Jeanette and I accompanied Fredericksburg birder (and former Williamsburg resident) Paul Nasca and four other birders to Ferry Farm, the historic boyhood home of George Washington along the banks of the Rappahannock River. Rain threatened but we got in a good two hours before a steady downpour set in. We spent about an hour around the old-field habitat that Paul and others have worked to restore to a bird-friendly environment. Highlights as we circumnavigated the field were four Bobolinks (a life bird for me) along with Chimney Swifts, Barn Swallows, Tree Swallows, Eastern Bluebirds (flying around several nest boxes), Prairie Warblers, and Field Sparrows.

The true highlight, at least for Paul Nasca, was our walk along the trail down by the river. To his delight, a Black-crowned Night Heron flew across the river and landed in a tree on the Ferry Farm property – a new species for the Farm checklist.

Other groups visited hot spots around Fredericksburg: City Canal Path, Toby’s Point, The Point and Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge. The Fredericksburg area has several birding “hot spots” and deserves to be on a list of birding destinations. Start with the VA Birding and Wildlife Trail and then delve into the stops on the “Fredericksburg” loop on the Coastal Trail or the “Battle for Virginia” loop on the Piedmont Trail. Here’s the link to the web site: <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/vbwt/>

WBC May Walks & Field Trip

Cathy Bond, Shirley Devan, Paul Leger, Margaret Ware and Nick Schmedding joined leader Tom McCary on the May 9th walk at New Quarter Park. A total of 45 species were seen during the walk. The highlights were a Wild Turkey seen across Queen’s Creek on the Camp Peary embankment. In addition to getting good looks through a scope of the turkey, the group was lucky enough to be able to scope a Northern Parula.



Photo by Shirley Devan



Photo by Jeanette Navia

Tom Armour, Brac Bracalente, Ann & Gary Carpenter, Inge Curtis, Bill Kay, David & Phyllis Lee, Tom McCary, Cathy Millar, Alex Minarik, Jeanette Navia, Rosanne Reddy and Margaret Ware joined leader Hugh Beard for the May 16th walk at Warhill Sports Complex. While the group was gathering to carpool they found the parking lot full of Blackpoll Warblers. They also saw a Chimney Swift and a European Starling there. On the drive to the park, a Great Egret was seen. At WSC they had some good looks at a Scarlet Tanager, an Ovenbird, and pairs of Blue Grosbeaks and Eastern Kingbirds. A family of White-breasted Nuthatches was also spotted. A total of 52 species were seen for the day.

Leader Bill Williams was joined by Joanne Andrews, Hugh Beard, Rick & Marian Bennett, Cathy Bond, Lynn Collins, Shirley Devan, Manuela George, Jim & Linda Hargrove, Paul Leger, Sara Lewis, Tom McCary, Jeanne Millin, Jeanette Navia, Jane Randall, Rosanne Reddin, George Rountree and Margaret Ware for the May 23rd walk at New Quarter Park. Highlights were Clapper Rail, Seaside Sparrow, Summer Tanager, Kentucky Warbler and Willow Flycatcher. A total of 51 species were identified during the morning.



Photo by Shirley Devan

Bird ID from Recycle Bin Photos

By Joe Piotrowski

This is a new feature on the website and in the electronic version of *The Flyer*. (It might be too difficult to identify birds from these black and white photos in the print version of the newsletter.) The answer to this month's "puzzle" will be given in the next electronic newsletter, as well as on the website. Last month's picture was of a female Red-winged Blackbird. Here is the picture for June.



Photos from Members and Friends



Brown Thrasher Nestling Photo by Shirley Devan

Eastern Phoebe
Photo by Louise Menges





Royal Tern Courtship
Photo by Shirley Devan

CALENDAR

Sunday, June 7	HRBC Bird Walk, Newport News Park, 7 AM, Jane Frigo, Leader
Saturday, June 13	WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, 8 AM, Tom McCary, Leader
Sunday, June 21	HRBC Bird Walk, Newport News Park, 7 AM, Jane Frigo, Leader
Saturday; June 27	WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, 7AM, Bill Williams, Leader
Sunday, July 5	HRBC Bird Walk, Newport News Park, 7 AM, Jane Frigo, Leader
Saturday, July 11	WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, 8 AM
Sunday, July 19	HRBC Bird Walk, Newport News Park, 7AM, Jane Frigo, Leader
Saturday, July 25	WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, 7 AM, Bill Williams, Leader
Sunday, September 6	WBC Picnic, Ruth & Sherwin Beck's home, 4 PM, see front page

No Newsletter for July

No Field Trips in June or July

No Monthly Meetings in June, July or August