



# The Flyer

## Newsletter of the Williamsburg Bird Club

Vol. 33, No. 9

[www.williamsburgbirdclub.org](http://www.williamsburgbirdclub.org)

October 2009

### President's Corner

By Shirley Devan

Conservation and education—a tough nut to crack for small community non-profits like our Bird Club. Big challenges with limited resources. At our September meeting we heard from Alex Wilke of The Nature Conservancy who described a cooperative effort of conservation organizations from Maine to Florida to band and monitor American Oystercatchers. Achieving that kind of cooperation across multiple conservation groups is no small feat. They even agreed on the color of the bands and the number coding that each state would use to band their oystercatchers. Impressive!

Last year, our Bird Club, along with the John Clayton Chapter of the VA Native Plant Society and the Historic Rivers Chapter of the VA Master Naturalists, joined together with New Quarter Park and the Colonial Soil and Water Conservation experts to begin to restore part of a meadow at NQP for Bobwhite Quail and other bird species. A small but significant project that all agreed was important. We still have our eyes and ears on the meadow!!

So the magic word is “cooperation” among like-minded organizations with the same goal—conservation and education. Our favorites, the birds, are one part of the web of life and everything is connected! Saving and learning about birds means saving and learning about all that birds depend on—their habitat, their food, their nesting and resting places.

Speaking of habitats, Joe Piotrowski, VP of Programs, has scheduled Allyson Jackson for our October 21 program, which will feature information (i.e. education) about golf course habitats (lots of those around here!) and whether such are viable habitats for birds, particularly Eastern Bluebirds, and their food sources. Allyson monitors all those bluebird boxes you see around town! Read more about Allyson in the program description.

In November, Joe has lined up Teta Kain who will prep us for the Christmas Bird Count (a critical education and conservation project). Teta has kept the records for all the CBCs in Virginia for many years. Oh ... the stories she can tell! At

the meeting you'll have the chance to sign up for our own Christmas Bird Count on December 20.

I look forward to seeing you at an upcoming meeting! As always, thank you for your support.

### October Meeting



Allyson Jackson will be the speaker at the October meeting. Her program is titled *Are Fairways Fair Habitat for Bluebirds? Radio-tracking Fledgling Survival on Golf Courses*. Her research focuses on comparing bluebird fledglings living on golf courses with those living on more natural areas to see if fledgling survival is affected.

Allyson is a master's student at William and Mary, working with Dan Cristol. She received her undergraduate degree from Juniata College in Pennsylvania

and grew up in East Quogue, (Long Island) New York.

Plan to join us on October 21, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. in **Room 150**, Millington Hall, on the William and Mary campus. Lucile Kossodo will be providing the refreshments and Kathy Klausner will be bringing the beverages.

### October Field Trip to Newport News Park-10/17

Please meet with Bill Williams by 7:30 a.m. at the Colony Square Shopping Center. If you want to meet at the park, the group should arrive at the parking lot to the left of the Ranger Station (not the Park Headquarters) on Constitution Drive around 8 am. If you haven't been to this park before, you are in for a treat. A number of different habitats and a beautiful location. Great place for Red-headed Woodpeckers. Not unusual to be able to see a Great Horned Owl.

## Officers

|                                   |                               |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>President</b>                  | 813-1322                      |
| Shirley Devan                     | <i>sedevan52@cox.net</i>      |
| <b>Vice-President (Programs)</b>  | 564-4484                      |
| Joe Piotrowski                    | <i>joepiotrowski@cox.net</i>  |
| <b>Vice-President (The Flyer)</b> | 229-4346                      |
| Fred Blystone                     | <i>fmb19481@verizon.net</i>   |
| <b>Treasurer</b>                  | 220-9032                      |
| Chuck Rend                        | <i>carjean39@msn.com</i>      |
| <b>Secretary</b>                  | 566-2615                      |
| Mary Anne Fennell                 | <i>maffjf07@netzero.net</i>   |
| <b>Member-at-Large</b>            | 253-1543                      |
| Chuck Litterst                    | <i>clitterst@aol.com</i>      |
| <b>Member-at-Large</b>            | 259-0867                      |
| Joanne Andrews                    | <i>kaiiviti37@hotmail.com</i> |
| <b>Past President</b>             | 259-9559                      |
| Bob Long                          |                               |

## Committee Chairpersons

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

## Wild Birds Unlimited

Don't forget that the Williamsburg Bird Club receives a 5% rebate on the pre-tax amount for everything our members spend at Wild Birds Unlimited in Monticello Marketplace. Of course, you do have to let them know that you are a member. **Birdfood sale—now thru 10/24/09**

## Welcome to New Members—

Geoff Giles, Hong Trinh and Theu Le

## September Bird Sightings

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

**Sept 3:** From Kathi Mestayer— Just witnessed a border dispute between a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and a Ruby-throated Hummingbird. The gnatcatcher was sitting on a branch, and the hummer was 6–8 inches below, darting back and forth as if it was on a little pendulum (maybe trying a head fake? dodge and weave?). Soon, the hummer darted up at the gnatcatcher, who tried to hide in a highbush blueberry. No dice; the hummer chased it across the street within moments.

Makes me wonder if hawk moths mimicking ruby-throats send a signal to predators that they, by virtue of the ruby throat, are forces to be reckoned with...

**Sept 4:** Bill Williams spent part of a pleasant morning on the Colonial Parkway at College Creek. Saw 45 species, including 3 juvenile Yellow-crowned Night Herons and 12 Bobolinks.

**Sept 6:** Bill Williams had 56 species on his Sunday morning walk at Greensprings Nature Trail, including 17 Veery, 52 Bobolink passing over and 1 distant Common Nighthawk. Geoff Giles, Margaret Ware, Hong Trinh and Theu Le joined leader Jane Frigo and other birders Sunday morning at Newport News Park. They had 51 species during the walk, including great views of Red-eyed Vireo, Northern Parula and American Redstart.

**Sept 8:** Brian Taber, Bill Williams, Alex Minarik, Fred Blystone and Shirley Devan left at 5 a.m. on a rainy morning heading for Staunton to see the **Sand Plover** first reported on the 6th. When they arrived, Dan Cristol and Andrew McCann were among the people already there. The bird was in a pond in a cow pasture and was easy to spot. A decision has not been reached as to whether the bird was a Greater or a Lesser Sand Plover, but either is extremely rare bird in the United States. (Brian Taber had seen the only other record for Virginia in September of 2001.)—See 2 photos on page 8.

**Sept 9:** Jeanne and Gil Frey in Surry Co. report “a pair of Hooded Warblers seen the last week of August for 2 short days. Very bright plumage. Ruby throats are still feeding but with less intensity and smaller numbers the last few days. Guess some are on their way. We do not hear our melodious wood thrushes this week, so they're most likely migrating as well. All others are the usual sightings for this time of year.”

**Sept 11:** Alex Minarik reports the following birds in her yard: Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Black-and-White Warbler, American Redstart, a male Cooper's Hawk and Red-eyed Vireos eating pyracantha berries.

**Sept 15:** Tom Armour emails “just had a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak and a Veery in our yard. They were feeding on the fruit of our Sour Gum tree. We still have two Ruby-throated Hummingbirds coming to our flowers and feeder.

**Sept 20:** Hong Trinh & Theu Le joined Jane Frigo and nine other birders on a perfect fall day for the HRBC walk in Newport News Park. Red-headed Woodpeckers, both immature and adult, were very abundant. Hong asked to see some “big” birds and was treated to great views of a Red-tailed Hawk, Great Horned Owl and Turkey Vulture. Forty-three species were noted during the walk.

**Sept 25:** Duryea reports two Ruby-throated Hummingbirds at his feeder.

**Sept 27:** Tom Armour reports “this AM mixed in with the scores of robins feeding on the fruit in our Sour Gum Tree, there was a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and a Summer Tanager. First sapsucker this fall for me.”

**Sept 28:** Another busy day in the Armour’s yard— “this a.m. we had 2 Summer Tanagers, a Scarlet Tanager, a Gray-cheeked Thrush, a unidentified thrush and 1 unidentified warbler feeding in our gum tree. We also had a young male Ruby-throated Hummingbird feeding on the flowers on our deck.” Shirley Devan spends some time in the afternoon on Jamestown Island. She sees 14 species, including a Bald Eagle and 2 Red-headed Woodpeckers.

## **Mr. Hummingbird**

**By Arlene Sego**

April 2007 brought the beginning of a remarkable relationship with a male ruby-throated hummingbird I affectionately named, “Mr. Hummingbird.” Things were a little rocky to begin with, but we eventually worked things through. Mr. Hummingbird had a bad habit of hovering about three inches from my right ear when I would sit on our deck. The first time I thought it was a bumble bee and took a swipe at him, but he just flew over to the feeder and acted as if nothing had happened. I strongly suggested to him that wasn’t the best thing to be doing, but he wasn’t about to let a human dictate his actions.

It wasn’t long before he would come to the window in our breakfast nook almost every time I was sitting there, something no other hummingbird has ever done. On the rare occasion when the feeder was empty and needed to be refilled he would stop by the window and persistently move between there and the feeder until I went out to refill it.

That summer I found every time I worked in the yard he would land on a nearby tree and “beep” at me the entire time I was there. When my husband and I would sit on chairs away from trees he kept flying by as if to show off his great speed. We knew anytime we were outside he would be someplace close by.

That September, when we were on our deck with several friends, Mr. Hummingbird came close to the feeder and just hovered, about five feet away from me, as if to say, “Good Bye.” After a short while he took off over the house and we knew he was beginning his journey.

Obviously I was anxious to see what would happen in April 2008. Early in the month I had the nectar ready to go into the feeder, but I thought I’d wait until I saw some hummingbirds around. Then one day there he was, at the window as usual, letting me know it was time to start feeding him again.

The summer of 2008 picked up where the summer of 2007 had ended with the beeping at me from nearby branches and also stopping by the window of our breakfast nook.

As September 2008 was drawing to a close I had to have another talk with Mr. Hummingbird. He appeared to be the last hummer coming to our feeder so I strongly urged him to be on his way, especially since I haven’t the faintest idea how to keep feeding them throughout the winter. Several days later he was gone.

I looked forward to the return of the hummingbirds in April of this year, but Mr. Hummingbird was not among them. Oh how I missed the sight of a bird on the other side of the window and the constant beeping when I was outside. But I treasure the two great summers I spent getting to know a special “Mr. Hummingbird.”

## **The 12 September 2009 Eastern Shore Field Trip**

**By Bill Williams**

**(Photos by Hong Trinh)**

The last time the bird club field tripped in the direction of Virginia’s birdy Eastern Shore was this past January. It was 10°F when we left the Colony Square parking lot that day and our target stops got us only as far as the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel islands. We saw some terrific waterfowl species that day! By contrast this September excursion completely across the Bay proved to be far more temperature friendly, with pleasant skies and light winds pampering us all day. A rain-filled frontal system had departed the Delmarva Peninsula just the day before, offering the potential for wonderful flights of migrant songbirds and diurnal raptors.





Our car-pooled caravan made its first stop at Kiptopeke State Park where we hoped the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory field staff would

have plenty of birds on and in hand at its 3 research operations—the Songbird Banding Station, the Hawk Watch, and the Hawk Trapping Station. Unfortunately, the birds simply weren't there. Songbird banded Ann Gilmore did have an Ovenbird and a Prairie Warbler with which she demonstrated how and why the birds are captured, banded, and measured. Cameras buzzed, clicked, and shuttered. Get Margaret Ware to describe how it feels to have 10-11 grams of warbler in hand when it flies away!



We found Calvin Brennan and Bob Anderson scanning the northern horizons from the Kiptopeke Hawk Watch Platform, where a cloudless blue sky made migrant raptor finding a challenge. A nice kettle of 7 American Kestrels passed over and a Merlin zipped by to the east, not much more than a dark, pointed winged shape in the sunlight. Turkey Vultures drifted on the light breeze, joined at times by an occasional Osprey, a Sharp-shinned Hawk, and a Red-tailed Hawk. The platform's hummingbird feeder attracted one young Ruby-throated hummer, while the nearby shrubbery was bouncing with this summer's crop of Northern Mockingbirds and a couple of Brown Thrashers.

The group made its way along the boardwalk trail near the state park beach where the pine forest surrendered a small mixed flock of songbirds, including singing White-eyed Vireos, several Red-eyed Vireos, a Northern Parula, and a

Black-and-white Warbler. From the beach we could see a collection of kayakers paddling about as Brown Pelicans and Double-crested Cormorants foraged nearby.

Realizing that the morning was slipping away with little promise of much more bird activity at the park, the group set its sights on the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge, more specifically the reliable Ramp Road near the inland waterway. On the way on to Ramp Road a Box Turtle gave us pause until it could be moved along to safety. Once at the canoe/kayak launch area Mitchell Byrd pointed out an immature White Ibis perched nicely with 2 Snowy Egrets. The small pond adjacent to the road had 2 American Black Ducks, and later, 2 Blue-winged Teal, 2 Spotted Sandpipers, and 6 Least Sandpipers, the latter only a few feet away! Down at the public boat ramp Jan Lockwood spied what turned out to be more than 140 White Ibis roosting in the trees on a small island. While we were gushing over this remarkable sight, one of the refuge staff greeted us with a small Eastern Hognosed Snake she had arrested in one of the restrooms. This interesting little creature, all curled up in her hand, gave us quite a show feigning its false fierceness. Overhead at least 5 Bald Eagles appeared and disappeared, including 3 at once. These were joined at one point by a Cooper's Hawk. When a couple of Great Egrets and a Belted Kingfisher popped out of the tidal salt marsh, several Clapper Rails applauded. A final treat was 2 Northern Bobwhite which launched across the refuge entry road as the group's last car was leaving for home.

All in all the Northampton County trip list submitted to eBird totaled 50 species capped off by about 45 Black Skimmers that were passing over Route 13 as we exited southbound off Fishermans Island National Wildlife Refuge. Add in the 4 American Oystercatchers and a couple of Ruddy Turnstones discovered on island one of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, and you have a sense of what yet another trip to the Eastern Shore can produce even on a slow day!

### **Kiptopeke Challenge Report from Brian Taber**

Dear Kiptopeke Challenge Supporters!

We picked up a 3rd team member, our CVWO Hawk-watcher, Calvin Brennan, as a volunteer covered the Kiptopeke Hawkwatch for him that day. Some of you remember him from his earlier hawkwatching at Kiptopeke in 2001-2002 and his spring songbird banding. We also thought about Peggy Opengari throughout the day, as we dedicated this year's efforts to her. She accomplished so much and is

greatly missed. The birding was tough again this year and I think Peggy must have helped to send a few our way!



**Left to right: Brian Taber, Paul Nasca, Calvin Brennan**

As usual, we were out before 5 at Kiptopeke to listen in the dark for overhead migrants or perhaps a Chuck-wills Widow or Whip-poor-will or owl but didn't hear anything in the quite strong wind. At sunrise at Ramp Road Pond on the Eastern Shore of VA National Wildlife Refuge, we found our best bird of the day and a species new to the Kiptopeke Challenge, a Cave Swallow, among many hundreds of Tree Swallows. Clapper Rail, White Ibis, Glossy Ibis and other egrets and herons were predictably there as well.

Sunset Beach and Kiptopeke State Park were rather quiet (and windy!!) so we headed north and lucked into a Ruby-throated Hummingbird at a flowery roadside, some Horned Larks just leaving an agricultural field, several Eurasian Collared Doves huddled on a sheltered wire to get out of the wind, and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet in a dense cedar. There weren't lots of birds around, but we were steadily finding a few at each stop. We never found flocks of warblers or other migrants.

By 11:00 we reached the Natural Area Preserve just south of Cape Charles, where we found many birds at last year's Challenge, but today there was mostly silence, except for some Gray Catbirds feasting on berries. We went briefly to the Cape Charles beach, finding our only Ruddy Turnstone, then to Oyster landfill and quickly to nearby Eyre Hall, and by 1:30 headed to Chincoteague, hoping its shorebirds, waterfowl and other species would add considerably to our total of only about 85 of the most common birds. Our only warblers were Northern Parula, Pine, Palm, Blackpoll, Black and White, American Redstart and Common Yellowthroat, and we weren't likely to add many more at Chincoteague late in the day.

Chincoteague was cool, cloudy and very windy, but came through nicely as we hurriedly added more than 2 dozen species in the last 3 hours of daylight...including Com-

mon Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, several ducks, Cattle Egret, Black-bellied Plover, American Oystercatcher, Caspian Tern, Eastern Wood-Pewee (our only flycatcher), Boat-tailed Grackle. At dusk we ended with Yellow-crowned Night-Herons and a pair of Great Horned Owls. We tried for Eastern Screech Owl back at Kiptopeke again after 9 p.m. but with no luck....17 hours..whew!

We did pretty well with sparrows this year, which generally arrive in October, finding Chipping, Savannah, Seaside and Song. We missed a few species we generally find, including Lesser Yellowlegs, Eastern Kingbird, Black-throated Blue Warbler and Baltimore Oriole.

Our total of 114 species is the same as last year, when we finished in 2nd place...this year all the official team results aren't in yet as of newsletter deadline time! And..we raised more than \$3,000 so far!

Thanks for your great support! Paul, Calvin and Brian

### **Kiptopeke Challenge Report from Shirley Devan**

The forecast called for wind and rain for Saturday, September 26—the appointed day for the Kiptopeke Challenge. We only had the wind but the impact on the counts was significant.

Our team of Bill Williams, Susan Powell, Alex Minarik, Lee Schuster, and I—"Gulls Gone Wild"—was prepared for just about anything—hooded rain jackets, fleece sweaters, gloves, and hats. We had no idea we would use all of these and wish for more.



**Left to right: Bill Williams, Lee Schuster, Alex Minarik, Shirley Devan, Susan Powell**

By 6 am Saturday morning, we had piled into Susan's SUV with three scopes and junk food, ready to scour the Eastern Shore to find more birds than the other eight teams. Some of the best birders in the state were on the Eastern Shore competing in the 15th annual Kiptopeke Challenge, the annual fundraising effort of the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory.

The first species of the day was a Northern Mockingbird, heard as we packed the car. Then a Killdeer sounded off. We arrived almost an hour before dawn at the Eastern Shore of VA National Wildlife Refuge. We ran into several other teams during the hour and a half we spent there. The stop was well worth it—over 25 species including White Ibis, Glossy Ibis, Bobolinks (flying over and calling), a Clapper Rail, and numerous hawks – Cooper’s Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Osprey, Bald Eagle, plus Snow Geese flying over.

Our goal was to arrive in species-rich Chincoteague by early afternoon, so we faced the hard decisions of how much time to devote to the hot spots of Magotha Road, Oyster, and Willis Wharf. We spent over three hours birding these three spots and picked up the requisite Eurasian Collared Dove on Magotha Road plus Field Sparrows, Blue Grosbeaks, Indigo Buntings, American Redstarts [on Seaside Road], Little Blue Herons, Spotted Sandpiper, Fish Crow [at the Oyster Landfill], and Willets, Ruddy Turnstones, and Whimbrels [at Willis Wharf].



At Chincoteague

Photo by Brian Taber

Then we raced to Chincoteague and crossed the causeway at noon. A brief stop at the fishing pulloff yielded American Oystercatchers and Short-billed Dowitchers. We proceeded directly to Tom’s Cove near the beach where we tallied a dozen species including Black Skimmers, Caspian Terns, Royal Terns, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Brown Pelicans, Peregrine Falcon, Pied-bill Grebe, American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, and a Savannah Sparrow that refused to tee up in the high winds.

By then we only had 75 species. **We Needed More Birds!** We decided to go for warblers and small woodland birds, and Chincoteague’s Woodland Trail seemed to be the best spot. When we got out of the car, the mosquitoes swarmed to us. Each of us put on all the clothes we had to cover up as much skin as possible. Then we smeared bug spray on exposed skin and set off. The winds were less but the mosquitoes were impossible. Still, the “gulls” endured and

were rewarded with 18 species including Baltimore Oriole, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Wild Turkey (a not so small woodland bird), Yellow Warbler, Northern Parula, Black and White Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, and Wilson’s Warbler. In addition to the mosquitoes attached to our clothes, we swatted at mosquitoes in our eyes, noses, and ears. Then there was “warbler neck.” After two hours on the Woodland Trail, we finally made it back to the car and made a beeline for the Visitor Center for a restroom break and water. Whew! What hardships we endure for the birds and the CVWO.

We started on the Wildlife Loop at 4:30 and the mosquitoes forced us to bird primarily from the car. Not the easiest way to ID waterfowl 100 yards away. We were able to get Northern Shovelers, Blue-wing Teal, Cattle Egrets, and a few Barn Swallows. As 7 pm approached and the light faded, we cruised through a few neighborhood streets and tallied an American Robin, our 99th species.

But wait! When I returned home and reviewed the list, I realized that I had neglected to list four species everyone saw: Canada Geese, Bald Eagle, Turkey Vultures, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers.

Now our total was a respectable 103! But did we win? Again we did not win. At least four other teams beat our total with one team tallying 114 species. The official results and the winning team have not been announced as of this writing (September 30).

But did we succeed? Overwhelmingly, the answer is **yes**. The “Gulls” raised almost \$1000 for the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory and we had loads of fun. Many thanks to all who contributed so generously to support our team and the other teams. A great day for a great cause.

## **Do The Birdwalk at Shirley Plantation**

### **From the Shirley Plantation Website**

Shirley Plantation’s birding expert, Tom McCary will lead a bird walk on Sunday, October 11, 2009, beginning at 8:30 a.m. Mr. McCary will guide participating birders on a behind the scenes, private tour of areas of the plantation not open to the public. These areas are ideal for bird watching and are usually off limits to all except the Carter family. Following the guided portion of the walk, participants can tour the grounds of the historic area and continue their bird watching at their leisure.

Mr. McCary has been observing and recording his birding experiences at Shirley since 2002. Many of his published columns can be viewed on Shirley Plantation’s website at “Bird watching” on the home page.

Shore birds, ospreys, eagles, song birds, and a wide variety of waterfowl are regulars to Shirley Plantation's acreage on the banks of the James River. A new bird food patch has just been planted in millet and buckwheat within close view of the Great House and only yards from the river. Birding clubs in the area observe the plantation's extensive variety through annual bird counts and walks during the year. Mr. McCary is also available for private groups with prior reservations.

To participate in the October 11 bird walk with Shirley's own Tom McCary of McCary's Migrants, prior reservations are required. Appropriate attire and good walking shoes are strongly recommended. Field glasses, binoculars, and cameras are permitted; video cameras are not allowed.

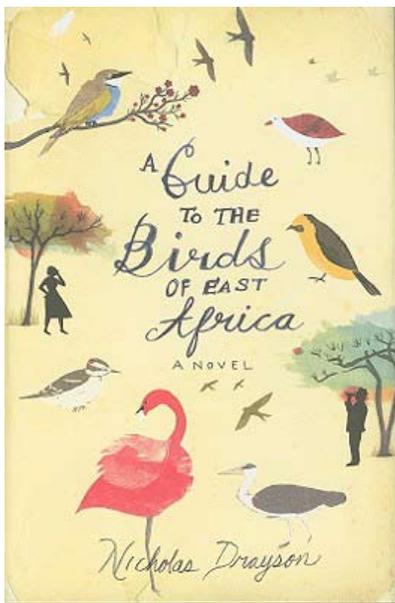
This paragraph is from the web site. [The fee for the bird walk is \$15 per person and includes admission to tour Shirley Plantation's house and grounds. Regular admission to Shirley Plantation is \$11.00 for adults and \$7.50 for youths (6-18), with discounts for AAA members, seniors, and military.]

Shirley is located on Scenic Route 5, just 10 miles east of I-295 near Richmond and 35 miles west of Williamsburg. For more information call 1-800-232-1613. Web site: <http://www.shirleyplantation.com/index.html>

**For Williamsburg Bird Club members**—The fee for our club members is \$5.00. Registration is required. Call 1-800-232-1613 and let them know you are a member of the Williamsburg Bird Club. In addition to being a beautiful place to visit, Shirley Plantation is a very interesting place to bird—you never know what will show up there.

## Williamsburg Bird Club Book Review

By Jeanette Navia



*A Guide to the Birds of East Africa*, by Nicholas Drayson. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2008. ISBN: 978-0547152585. \$22. 208 pp. James City County Library call number F DRAYSON.

The books I've reviewed for *The Flyer* in the past have all been books that the Williamsburg Bird Club donated to the Williamsburg Regional Library. I have decided to expand my selection

to review other books that may be of interest to birders. The

first is a novel set in Kenya about a contest between two rivals for the same woman.

Timid Mr. Malik has been attending the Tuesday morning bird walks led by Rose Mbikwa, a Scottish widow, for the past three years. He has had a crush on Rose, but thus far has been afraid to ask her out. The annual Nairobi Hunt Club Ball is approaching, so he buys tickets with the intention of asking her to the ball. Before he gets up enough nerve to ask, however, an old nemesis from high school, Harry Khan, bursts onto the scene. Kahn meets up with Malik at the Asadi Club, a social club to which Malik belongs. Harry is a handsome extrovert who used to taunt Mr. Malik and call him names when they were younger. He has no fear in asking women out, and after he meets Rose, he mentions to the members of the Asadi Club that he plans to ask her to the hunt club ball. Mr. Malik, appalled, sputters that he, himself, has been planning to ask her.

The social club organizes a contest. Malik and Khan will list each bird species they see in the area for a week. Whoever has the longest list by the end of the week can ask Rose to the ball. They agree. Harry is not much of a birder, and employs the help of an Australian couple, David and George, to take him to great birding hot spots within the designated area. Malik, for the most part, birds closer to home with the help of his servant.

Although this is mostly a novel about the triangle between Malik, Kahn and Rose, there is also a light layer of Kenyan politics throughout the book, written in a mostly humorous tone. The outcome of the birding contest is not certain until the final pages. There are twists and turns encountered by both men as they rack up the species on their lists. Descriptions of the birds are delightful. I loved this book. It was fun and suspenseful, and although it was primarily about birding, it was as hard to put down as many of the thrillers I've read.

## Visiting Birders

On September 23 Shirley Devan received an email from Michael O'Sullivan, saying that he would be visiting the Williamsburg area soon and was wondering if our club had a printable check list. Shirley emailed back a list of local birds and also gave him a link to information about our New Quarter Park walks, and told him that she would be interested in where he birded and what he saw while he was in our area.

Mr. O'Sullivan wrote back thanking Shirley for the check-list and also mentioned that he (and possibly his wife) planned to go to either Hog Island or Jamestown Island and asked Shirley's thoughts about both areas. Shirley responded and mentioned Jamestown Island was good for walking or biking and that Hog Island was variable and

very buggy (per a recent report). She also gave him a link to the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail web site.

On the 28th, Mr. O’Sullivan wrote to Shirley “I want to thank you for the recommendation of Jamestown Island. In spite of the drizzle and the flat dull skies, we enjoyed a couple wonderful hours driving and walking on the big loop. I include our list if you are interested. We missed being able to ID 3–4 warblers because of the flat sky. But the hi-light was 2 Redheaded W/P. One imm., one adult and an Osprey. Mr. O’Sullivan included a list of 23 species they had seen on the island. Shirley wrote back thanking him for his report and telling him that we are proud of our Red-headed Woodpecker population on the island. She also asked if it would be alright to put his experience in *The Flyer* and he agreed.

I sent an email to Mr. O’Sullivan asking where he was from and he replied that they were from Columbia, Maryland. He also wrote “we came down to Williamsburg for our 29th Anniversary. While the weather was not very cooperative, for the most part we were still able to enjoy the Yorktown waterfront, historic Williamsburg and, of course, the Jamestown peninsula. My wife and I met and were married in Northern VA, but we did not start birding until long after we moved to Maryland. So this was the first time that we actually intended to go birding in Va.

Shirley’s recommendation turned out to be perfect for birding, visiting historical sites and also for the weather we encountered (Dana, my wife, is a fair weather birder).

I also want to mention how responsive Shirley was to my request. I must tell you that when I sent a similar request to a bird club in Florida last year I got no response to 3 emails. You can’t beat southern hospitality.

PS: If your newsletter is on-line please send me the link. I would love to see what else is happening in your area because we may try to come down again around Christmas. If you ever visit our area make sure to look up the Howard County bird website. We have all the local sites listed with directions, [www.howardbirds.org](http://www.howardbirds.org), if you are so inclined.”

*Editor: I hope we all try to be helpful to visiting birders. I carry Birds of Virginia checklists and brochures of Eco-tourism sites in the Williamsburg area with me in my car and always try to hand them out when I meet out-of-town birders.*

## Photos

### Looking at the Sand Plover in Staunton, Va.

Left to right—Shirley Devan, Alex Minarik, unidentified, Andrew McCann, Dan Cristol and Bill Williams



Photo by Brian Taber



Sand Plover

Photo by Phil Davis



Roseate Spoonbill & Friends

Photo by Shirley Devan

## WBC September Walks & Field Trip

Complete list of species seen on each walk are on the club website [www.williamsburgbirdclub.org](http://www.williamsburgbirdclub.org)

Susan Powell led the walk at New Quarter Park on September 12. This is what she reported— “We had a great bird walk today. I was joined by Bill Boeh, Sharon Falconer, Barbara Seelbach, Jim Booth, Dorothy Whitfield and Cynthia and Bob Long. Our small group started our walk near the Teaching Garden Trail, and then proceeded to the boat dock. We were joined for a few minutes on the dock by the children who were talking part in the Bird Sleuth program. Mike & Jeanne Millin, Shelia Kerr Jones, and Les Lawrence assisted with the children. Of note was a juvenile Yellow-crowned Night Heron spotted by Jim Booth. Also of note were several Bald Eagles and a few Osprey.

Our small group left the children at the dock and proceeded on our walk. While birding on the loop behind the shelters, we were treated to a great look at a Yellow-billed Cuckoo. We also saw a female Scarlet Tanager and a female Baltimore Oriole.

Over, a beautiful day, and a great bird walk?”

(A total of 36 species were identified during the walk)—No group picture was taken.



There were 14 participants on the September 12 field trip to the Eastern Shore. A total of 49 species were seen. **See article by Bill Williams on page 3.**

Left to Right: Tom McCary, Jan Lockwood, Bill Kay, Susie Kay, Lynn Collins, Mary-Margaret Hutchins, Theu Le, Cathy Millar, Geoff Giles, Margaret Ware and Hong Trinh. Missing from picture are Mitchell Byrd and Gus Hall.

Ten birders joined leader Tom McCary for the Sept 26 ird walk. Tom said, “enjoyed a good day at New Quarer Park. The breeze was delightful, but perhaps it kept the numbers of species rather low. We had a fine group of birders.” A total of 25 species were seen, including 4 reat Erets, 2 adult Bald Egles and 7 Redp-headed woodpeckers.

Back row, left ot right: Tom McCary, Lois Ulman, Geoff Giles, George Rountree, Betty Peterson.

Front row: Virginia Smith and Steven David.

Missing from picture, Jeanne Millin, Mike Millen an Margaret Ware.

Photo by Jeanette Navia.



**Photos Taken by Shirley Devan at the Annual Picnic**



**Ruth Beck**



**Rosanne Reddin and Duryea & Peggy Morton**



**Chuck Rend**



**Phil and Anne Young**



**Cathy Millar and Cynthia Long**

## Bird ID from Recycle Bin Photos

By Joe Piotrowski

This feature is only on the website and in the electronic version of *The Flyer*. The answer to this month's "puzzle" will be given in the next electronic newsletter, as well as on the website.



Here is the picture for October

Last month's picture was of a Ruby-throated Hummingbird



## CALENDAR

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Sunday, Oct 4     | HRBC Bird Walk, Newport News Park, 7 AM, Jane Frigo, Leader                                 |
| Thursday, Oct 8   | HRBC Monthly Meeting, Marc Nichols, "Presque Isle State Park, 7 PM, Sandy Bay Nature Center |
| Saturday, Oct 10  | HRBC Field Trip, Beaverdam Park, Call Dave Youker, 344-9385                                 |
| Saturday, Oct 10  | WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, 8 AM, Shirley Devan, Leader                                |
| Saturday, Oct 17  | WBC Field Trip, Newport News Park, Bill Williams, Leader (See Front Page)                   |
| Sunday, Oct 18    | HRBC Bird Walk, Newport News Park, 7 AM, Jane Frigo, Leader                                 |
| Wednesday, Oct 21 | WBC Monthly Meeting, Allyson Jackson, Speaker (See Front Page)                              |
| Saturday, Oct 24  | WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, 7 AM, Bill Williams, Leader                                |