



The Flyer

Newsletter of the Williamsburg Bird Club

Vol. 34, No. 1

www.williamsburgbirdclub.org

January 2010

President's Corner

By Shirley Devan

Happy New Year to all! I'm beginning to get the hang of typing "2010"—it seems easier than 2009!

I want to thank Mary Anne Fennell, Secretary for the last two years, and Joanne Andrews, Member-at-Large for 2009, for their good work and commitment to the Club. We welcome to the Board new members Alice Kopinitz, Secretary, and Jeanette Navia, Member-at-Large. Many thanks to our continuing Board members: Joe Piotrowski, VP Programs; Fred Blystone, VP and Newsletter Editor; Charles Rend, Treasurer; and Chuck Litterst, Member-at-Large. Jeanette Navia will continue to manage the web site and the membership list.

We have two vacancies in our Committee Chairs: Field Trip Coordinator and Historian. Tom Armour has served as Field Trip Coordinator for the last several years and has sent us off to some incredibly "birdy" spots. Thanks, Tom! He asks to be relieved of this duty, so our Club needs a Field Trip Coordinator. Some folks think the Field Trip Coordinator has to lead every field trip. Not so! The coordinator plans the destinations, departure time and location, and arranges for a leader—and goes along if he can. The field trips for January and February are already set, so the coordinator only has to arrange trips for March through May and August through November. This is a fun job and a great way to learn about the birding hot spots and get to know more people in the Club. Call me if you can help with this task. The Board will lend assistance with suggestions for locations and leaders.

The other Committee Chair we must fill is the position of Historian. Cynthia Long has been the Historian since before our 30 Birdy Years celebration in 2007. She has worked diligently to collect and organize our official records and publications from the past 30 years. The lucky person who follows Cynthia will have an easy time—just keeping track of 2010. Cynthia will be glad to share her techniques with the new Historian.

Call me at 757-813-1322 if you have questions about either of these positions. We welcome your participation. Like most volunteer organizations, you'll receive back much more than you give. Many thanks!

January Meeting

Stephen Living, Watchable Wildlife Biologist with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries will be the speaker for the January meeting. He will present a program on the 5th anniversary of the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail.

Plan to join us on January 20 at 7:30 p.m. in **Room 150**, Millington Hall, on the William and Mary campus. Barb Streb will be providing the refreshments.

January Field Trip

Shirley Devan will be the leader for the January 16th field trip to Dutch Gap/Henricus Park in Chesterfield, Va. This is usually a good spot to see great up close views of a variety of migrating waterfowl. As you are entering the park, you pass a swamp where there are two viewing platforms which are great places for scopes and photography. The group will also walk on the Dutch Gap Trail around a James River Tidal Lagoon. (Editor—Last January, from the platforms, I saw Gadwall, Northern Shovelers, Northern Pintails, Ring-necked Ducks, Hooded Mergansers and an American Coot.

Meet at Colony Square Shopping Center on Jamestown Road by 7:30 am to form carpools. The drive is about 50 minutes up Route 5 and over the river to Route 10.

Park information: www.dgif.virginia.gov/vbwt/site.asp?trail=1&loop=CAP&site=CAP03.

Welcome to New Member—

Bob Berg

Officers

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Vice-President (The Flyer)	229-4346
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Member-at-Large	565-2597
Jeanette Navia	<i>Jnavia@gmail.com</i>
Past President	259-9559
Bob Long	

Committee Chairpersons

Field Trips	Open
Records & Bird Counts	229-1124
Bill Williams	<i>jwwil2@wm.edu</i>
Library Liaison	565-6148
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Refreshments	565-0250
Barb Streb	<i>gandbstreb@verizon.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	Open

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.

Nature Camp Scholarships

By Shirley Devan

The deadline for submitting applications for our Club's two Bill Williams Nature Camp Scholarships is January 15, 2010. If you have a middle school or high school student in your household or family, please pass along the application. You can download the application from the Bird Club's web site at <http://williamsburgbirdclub.org>, or call me at 813-1322 and I'll mail a copy to you.

The two recipients will have a great two weeks at Nature Camp in Vesuvius, VA. Check out a camp photo tour and read some of the campers' testimonials at: <http://www.naturecamp.net/>.

Many thanks to all those in the Club who support the Nature Camp Scholarships with additional contributions.

December 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!

Dec. 5: Tom Armour reports that on the ponds at Powhatan Secondary there were 20+ Ring-necked Ducks, 6 American Wigeon, 1 Hooded Merganser, 6 Mallards and 3 Pied-billed Grebes.

Dec. 6: An email from Kathi Mestayer— "Today at Greensprings, lots of birds—Green-winged Teal, Tufted Titmice, lots of bluebirds, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpeckers, female Red-winged Blackbird, Golden-crowned Kinglet and, in the back yard, titmouse, downy and jays flipping leaves up in the air.

Dec. 6: Jane Frigo reports that 44 species were seen or heard during the HRBC walk at Newport News Park. Bald Eagles were numerous and a pair of Great Horned Owls were observed at length. Two pair of loon species were seen flying overhead.

Dec. 8: Tom Armour reports on a trip down the Colonial Parkway to Yorktown where he saw 280 Ruddy ducks, 6 Bufflehead, 1 Common Loon, 1 Northern Gannet, 6 Doubled-crested Cormorants, 2 Great Black-backed Gulls and 25 Ring-billed Gulls.

Dec. 10: Lois Leeth reports White-crowned Sparrows.

Dec. 11: Tom Armour reports seeing 8 Bufflehead and 4 Ring-necked Ducks on the pond at the Vineyards.

Dec. 14: Shirley Devan emails— "in just over an hour this morning I observed 15 species around my feeder station and yard. The usual suspects were joined by a Brown Thrasher and a Hermit Thrush! Plus a Red-tailed Hawk was perched high in a tree on the other side of the yard—admittedly in a neighbor's tree but easily seen from my front steps." Bill Williams reports a Baltimore Oriole at Mainland Farm.

Dec. 17: Alex Minarik and Shirley Devan visit a home in Kingsmill where a male **Painted Bunting** had been reported earlier in the day. They are able to

see and photograph the bird. It is only the 10th record for the Williamsburg area. (Bird was present for the Christmas bird count on 12/20.)



Dec. 18: On Treasure Island Road, Tom Armour reports an American Kestrel, a Red-tailed Hawk, 6 Eastern Meadowlarks and 103 Canada Geese. On the Vineyards Pond there were 6 Bufflehead and 5 Ring-necked Ducks.

Dec. 20: Jane Frigo reports an inch or so of snow covered the ground for the HRBC walk at Newport News Park. Because of icy conditions the road was closed beyond the Ranger Station. In spite of the conditions forty-three species were seen. Killdeer were seen on the golf course and a beautiful Red-tailed Hawk was enjoying breakfast. Several extremely large blackbird flocks were observed, as were two unusually large flights of Canada Geese.

Dec. 21: Tom Armour reports a male Purple Finch at his feeder—the first one of this winter. At the Vineyards pond he sees 15 Ring-necked Ducks and 7 Bufflehead.

Dec. 22: Lynda Blair finds two Horned Larks at the Nature Conservancy's Cumberland Marsh in New Kent County.

Dec. 24: Tom McCary observed an American Pipit along the roadside in Midlothian.

Dec. 29: Mrs. Candell, who lives near the pond in Powhatan Secondary, called Shirley Devan to say she had witnessed an adult Bald Eagle attack a Great Blue Heron. One of the heron's wings was damaged and the bird likely could not fly.

Dec. 29: Tom McCary sees a Hermit Thrush in his yard. Linda Scherer reports that a small flock of Cedar Waxwings came to her small backyard pond—just for drinks,

no bathing that she observed. Tom Armour reports there were still 8 Bufflehead and 8 Ring-necked Ducks on the pond at the Vineyards and that the American Kestrel was on its usual wire on Treasure Island Road.

Dec. 30: Shirley Devan reports a male Rusty Blackbird under her bird feeders. He hopped up to the hook holding the feeders and then flew off. There was also an American Robin under the feeder at the same time—new yard bird for her. Later, while at Trader Joe's, she sees two bluebirds and 2 yellow rumps.

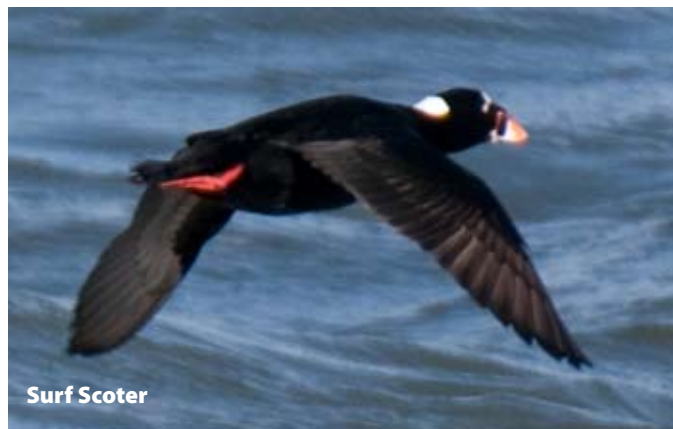
Dec. 30: Busy day for Shirley Devan. She went to the ponds at Powhatan Secondary but did not see the injured Great Blue Heron reported on the 29th. She did see 12 American Wigeon, 12 Hooded Mergansers, 8 Mallards, 16 Ring-necked Ducks, 4 Pied-billed Grebes and a Brown Thrasher.

VSO Field Trip to VA Beach, Dec 5-6

By Shirley Devan

Photos by Jeff Lemons

The chance to visit the inaccessible islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel as well as the Eastern Shore attracted my attention and registration for the annual VSO Field Trip to Virginia Beach December 4–6. I was unable to make the Friday afternoon trip to the Whitehurst Tract, so I arrived early Saturday morning to meet the group and security guards at the south end of the CBBT. Field trip leader Clark White had arranged for three security guards for the 45 people signed up. However, the driving rain and 25 MPH winds reduced the number of participants to about 33. We learned that island #2 was not available to visit, so our three hours with the security guards focused on islands 3 and 4.



Jeff Lemons from Charlotte, NC welcomed me into his car for carpooling purposes and we ended up on island 3 first. Jeff had made the trip from Charlotte with the hope of seeing eiders around the tunnel islands. When we looked out over the railings of island 3 we realized we would be lucky to see any birds floating in the water. Birding was a challenge this day—fog, cold rain, high winds, and rough waters reminded

us that we were standing in the middle of the Chesapeake Bay in a storm. The temperature was about 50 degrees but it felt much colder. Most observed birds were flying through the channel. Scoters (hard to tell what kind), cormorants (most likely double-crested), Northern Gannets (for sure!), mergansers, plus some ducks and gulls. Trying to identify birds in flight in the fog through three sets of raindrops on lenses (eyeglasses, binocular eyepieces and lenses) was a challenge. Towels wiping optics quickly became soaked.

More fun awaited us on island 4. We stared across the channel toward the other field trippers we had just changed places with. Huddled against the building out of the wind, we enjoyed the “balmy” setting of island 4 and quickly focused on a mysterious swallow circling around our end of the island. Finally, Rexanne Bruno identified it as a Cave Swallow—trying to survive a storm in the bay and definitely out of his home range. He circled our heads for the hour we were there, never landing. Arun Bose from our group called over to the other group on island 3 to report the Cave Swallow, and the group persuaded the security guards to bring them back to island 4. Definitely the bird of the day but quite unexpected. We did get good looks at a Long-tailed Duck near the rocks, and an American Robin popped up on the guardrail directly in front of us. Yea!! A few Ruddy Turnstones and Purple Sandpipers skipped around on the rocks at the water’s edge. From the warmth of her vehicle, a security guard shouted out the window: “I can’t believe you guys are out here looking at birds!” By 11 o’clock many of us felt the same way.

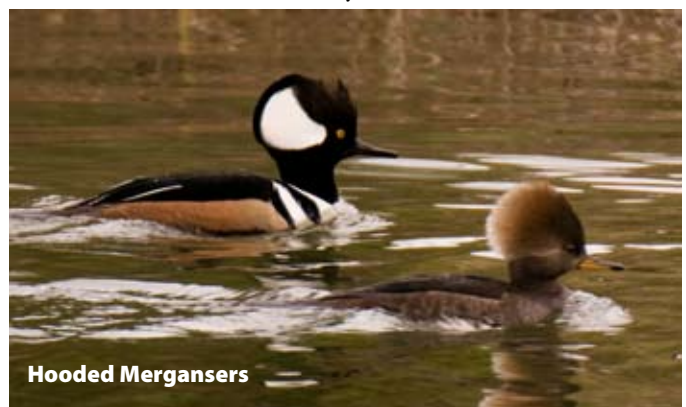


The next priority was the Eastern Shore National Wildlife Refuge, where we enjoyed warm rest rooms and compared notes. The “other group” had enjoyed great looks at a Peregrine Falcon when they initially visited island 4.

We moved around the refuge to Ramp Road and the boat launch area. The unexpected gem near the parking lot was a Saltmarsh Sparrow, well photographed by Jeff Lemons, my carpool driver, who had a long lens and knew how to use it! Or was it a Nelson’s Sparrow? Discussion continued

over lunch at Sting Ray’s as Jeff passed his camera around for all to decide for themselves. We discussed the recent renaming of two sparrow species: Nelson’s Sharp-tailed Sparrow and Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow. The experts agreed it was a “Saltmarsh Sparrow.”

We then caravanned up Seaside Road and found the Eurasian Collared Doves on Magotha Road and the usual suspects on the wires and overhead. We then headed to Oyster, where the landfill was closed. We scouted around the harbor—nothing out of the ordinary—but the temperatures were dropping and the wind was still blowing. Jeff and I decided to head back to island 1 where he had observed an unusual duck floating near the rocks Friday. We arrived there about 4 pm. The sky was spitting ice and the east wind was so fierce that we could hardly stand up. We jumped back in the car and Jeff decided he would look more closely at the photo he had taken Friday. Later he sent me a note to say that the bird was a female Black Scoter and he had found Common Eiders in South Carolina finally.



I had not reserved a spot on the tram to Back Bay and False Cape State Park for Sunday, so I ventured to First Landing State Park and met Arun Bose on the beach side of the park. Weather conditions had improved—no rain and the sun was shining. But the temperatures

had dropped about 10 degrees and the wind was STILL blowing. Brrrr... Dunlin and Sanderlings were foraging on the beach at low tide and a few species of gulls were facing into the wind—mostly Ring-billed Gulls and Great Black-back Gulls. Double-crested Cormorants were flying low over the water. We found a Brown Thrasher, Eastern Towhee, Northern Cardinals, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Northern Mockingbirds in the vegetation behind the dunes and along the boardwalks.

The VSO sponsors this field trip to VA Beach and the CBBT islands each December. I highly recommend this adventure—not just for the birds but because you’ll enjoy meeting birders from all over the state who welcome the opportunity to visit birding hot spots in our backyard.

NOTE: our February 20 Bird Club field trip will go to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel Islands. See the note below for more details.

(Editor: I want to thank Jeff Lemons of Charlotte, NC for going an extra mile to provide the pictures for this article)

Field Trip to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel Islands

The Williamsburg Bird Club’s February field trip (Feb 20) will be to the CBBT islands. The Leader will be Brian Taber. Participants are required to complete a security form in advance and pay \$10 per person to cover the cost of a security guard, who is required for each 15 people. **Very important—number of participants for this field trip is limited to 15. Security forms and money will have to be turned in by February 6. Please let me know if you need a copy of the security form—Fred at 229-4346 or fmb19481@verizon.net**

BirdingPal and Charleston, SC

By Shirley Devan

In the December 2009 issue of The Flyer, Fred Blystone described “birdingpal—a global website for traveling birders, helping you to find local contacts and information about birdwatching, and it lists many local birdwatchers around the world willing to help a visitor bird in an area they are not familiar with.”

As Steve and I planned our Christmas week vacation in Charleston, SC with Seig and Alice Kopinitz, I wanted to make the best use of my designated “one birding day.” I turned to “birdingpal” and connected with Hollace Boswell, a birder in Charleston who works part time in the hospitality industry for one of the B&Bs.

The night before our trip, Hollace called me at home with

the scoop. “Are you ready to write?” she asked. I was! She then described to me the best restaurants in Charleston for adventurous eaters, the best Charleston walking tour leader, the best places to bird, and even tracked down an organized bird walk for us on Wednesday, December 23.



Every one of her recommendations was right on target. While driving down Monday, we made a dinner reservation at one of her suggested restaurants. She also had reserved space for us on a walking tour at 11 am Tuesday with the same tour guide who does the City Slicker Tour of Charleston for the iPhone app. Wow! His name was Tommy Dew. He grew up in King and Queen County in VA and one of his ancestors, Thomas Roderick Dew, was the 13th President of W&M from 1836–1846. Tommy Dew knew Virginia well but he knew Charleston even better. He led us through churchyards, alleyways and main thoroughfares, describing the culture, economy and geology that made Charleston the city it was in the 19th century and the city it is today. After the official tour was over, we walked all afternoon in the balmy 55-degree sunshine. The bird of the day was a Red-bellied Woodpecker seemingly making a living on the side of a brick home down near the battery. Very unusual behavior.

Wednesday was our “birding day.” Hollace recommended a regular bird walk at Caw Caw County Park outside of Charleston (www.ccprc.com). Instead of giving us directions, she came to the hotel at 7:30 and led us in her car directly to the park. Such hospitality! Local ornithological legend Perry Nugent leads bird walks at this park Wednes-

days and Saturdays. About a dozen people gathered in the parking lot, including two other familiar faces. As everyone introduced himself or herself around the circle, those “familiar faces” were Tom Ellis and Anne Moore who had been members of the Williamsburg Bird Club until 2000, when they moved to Hampton. They were vacationing in the Charleston area as well.

The park was “once part of several rice plantations and home to enslaved Africans who applied their technology and skills in agriculture to carve the series of rice fields out of cypress swamps” per the web site. The walk took us around a matrix of dikes, and the old rice fields were filled with water from the recent heavy rains. The locals said they could not remember the water being so high. We followed Perry Nugent around the park until 12:30. We did not stay for the final tally, but the highlights for us were: several Black-and-white Warblers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, a Blue-headed Vireo, Pine Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Golden-crowned Kinglets, two Tri-colored Herons, a Little Blue Heron, and Red-shouldered Hawk.

By then we were **hungry**. Hollace had packed a picnic lunch with leftover ham and turkey from a family get together the previous weekend. When we protested that she had done way too much for us, she recounted her husband’s advice: “Just say yes.” So we did, and she led us to her charming second home on the nearby Edisto River where we enjoyed sandwiches and cookies on her screen porch overlooking the river.

The next stop was the Donnelly Wildlife Management Area about 10 miles west on Route 17. Reliable reports of Whooping Cranes the previous week piqued our interest. Hollace said it would be a stroke of luck to find them but we definitely should try. When we got to the WMA, we piled into her car and she drove us around for about two hours while we all scoured the fields and ponds for “big white birds” that were not egrets! No cranes to be found, but we were not the only ones looking for them!

“Donnelly WMA, an 8000-acre tract of land managed by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, is home to diverse habitats including rice impoundments of the former Mary’s Island Plantation, long-leaf pine forest, and tidal marsh. Donnelly WMA is in the heart of South Carolina’s 350,000-acre ACE (Ashepoo, Combahee, and Edisto rivers) Basin, one of the East Coast’s largest undeveloped areas of estuaries and associated wetlands. Bald eagles, turkey vultures, ospreys, wood storks, gallinules, coots, cormorants, eastern king-

birds, red-winged blackbirds, anhingas, and varieties of geese, grebes, loons, terns, vireos, ducks, sparrows, wrens, mergansers, warblers, hawks, herons, and many others make Donnelly WMA a mother lode of birds. Alligators, turtles, frogs, and otters populate the waterways; and the woods are filled with white-tailed deer, raccoons, wild turkeys, and foxes.” (http://www.trails.com/tcatalog_trail.aspx?trailid=HGD078-057)



Bobcat
Photo by Seig Kopinitz

We were chasing the light and Hollace was eager to show us her favorite spots in this wild area she visits often. We did not find the Whooping Cranes but we did spot a bobcat! A life mammal for all of us! Seig even got photos! The highlight

birds included: 15 roosting Black-crowned Night Herons with juveniles, a Red-shouldered Hawk, Anhingas, many Great Egrets, American Coots, and Common Moorhens. As the sun set and we piled out of Hollace’s car, we could not express adequately our gratitude for her sincere southern hospitality. She had given us a day of her time in a busy holiday week to help us have a birdy vacation day. To top it off, the restaurant she recommended for Wednesday night, The Fig, was as good as any we’ve enjoyed in New York City and much less expensive! We bade Hollace farewell and invited her to Williamsburg where we hope we can provide the level of hospitality she so graciously gave us.

Hollace had confirmed that Magnolia Plantation would be a good spot for us to see a true southern plantation with its elaborate gardens and natural areas. It was open on Christmas Eve, so that was a plus! We opted out of paying for the house tour and paid instead for access to the gardens and grounds as well as the adjacent Audubon Swamp Forest. We ambled through the winter gardens where many camellias were blooming. A Hermit Thrush peeked up from the leaf litter. Down by the pond, a Great Egret and a Great Blue Heron battled it out for a favorite fishing spot. The heron won this day’s battle and the photographers in our group got great photos of the heron catching a fish and swallowing it. On the bike trail near the river we found two Anhingas sunning themselves, three Bald Eagles (two adults and an immature), Blue-wing Teal, Common Moorhens, and a Red Admiral Butterfly.

After lunch we visited the Audubon Swamp Garden—a cypress and tupelo swamp that was full to overflowing

from recent heavy rains. The herp of the day was an alligator sunning himself on a perch in the swamp. We counted seven nests in the Great Blue Heron rookery, and the birds appeared to be pairing up. Other birds included White Ibis, Blue-wing Teal, Green-wing Teal, male and female Anhinga, Gadwall, American Wigeon, American Coots, Common Moorhens, and Yellow-rumped Warblers. We had the forest almost to ourselves on the day before Christmas.



Birdingpal Hollace Boswell maximized the value and fun of our stay in Charleston. We described what we wanted to do and she matched our interests with the best of her city. Without her guidance, we would have floundered around like clueless tourists wasting our precious time in a feature-rich community. Another visit is in order. Hollace reminded us several times to encourage visitors to contact her for information about Charleston and its surrounding treasures—natural and cultural. If you plan to go in that direction, contact me and I'll give you her phone and email info. Modern southern hospitality at its best!

IBA in Focus: Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers Important Bird Area (IBA)

By: David Bryan, Outreach Coordinator, Virginia IBA Program, dbryan.audubon@gmail.com

Located northwest of Williamsburg, the tidal freshwater Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers Important Bird Area provides critical forested wetland and oligohaline marsh habitats for a large variety of breeding, migrating and wintering birds. Prioritized to a level of global importance for its Bald Eagles, Prairie Warblers and Rusty Blackbirds by the National Audubon Society, this IBA contains one of

the largest riverine marsh complexes in North America!

Due largely to its low salinity marshes, it is not surprising that the Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers IBA is home to a large variety of wetland bird species throughout the year. In the spring and summer, for example, the IBA is likely home to the largest population of King Rails and Least Bitterns in Virginia. Bald Eagles and Osprey may also be found hunting for fish, while thousands of Neotropical passerines take advantage of the IBA's forested wetland and upland habitats. The Prairie Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-throated Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush and Ovenbird comprise just a handful of these beautiful species. Following the breeding season, the Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers IBA also serves as a staging ground for fall migration, especially for thousands of Tree Swallows and the secretive Soras. Finally, during the winter season the IBA hosts great numbers of Rusty Blackbirds, raptor species and waterfowl, including the Tundra Swan, American Wigeon, American Black Duck, Bufflehead, Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail and Ring-Necked Duck. A rare Eurasian Wigeon has even been spotted visiting the IBA!

Fortunately, unlike many of Virginia's other riverine IBAs, the Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers IBA historically has been relatively untouched by development. Nevertheless, recent residential development along primary shorelines has been of increasing concern as it leads to runoff pollution and the fragmentation of critical bird habitat. However, the primary threat to this beautiful IBA is the potential for sea level rise associated with global climate change. Over the past decade, many oligohaline marshes have begun to exhibit a vegetation shift as sea levels rise and natural sedimentation processes are not able to keep pace. These rare marshes thus may essentially drown, resulting in a plant community shift to emergent and submerged aquatic species that can live in deeper waters. Accordingly, bird communities may shift in potentially unpredictable manners.

Despite the Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers IBA's globally significant bird habitat, very little of the IBA is protected. The Nature Conservancy manages the Cumberland Marsh Preserve, while the Mattaponi and Pamunkey Native American tribes also play an important conservation role. Thus much work must still be completed in order to properly manage and conserve the IBA's unique habitats. The first step in this process is simply to gather more data concerning the species which fall within the IBA. The IBA Program thus relies upon citizen scientists like yourselves to bird this and other Important Bird Areas, carefully record-

ing and reporting your results through the Virginia eBird Portal: <http://ebird.org/content/va>. So, please, head on up northwest from Williamsburg and explore the marshes of the Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers IBA. . Your efforts are appreciated and hopefully will go a long way for bird conservation in the Commonwealth!

E-mail from Happy Out-of-Town Birders

Hi Shirley (Devan): Just wanted to get back to you regarding our birding in the Williamsburg area. We were in Williamsburg the week of Thanksgiving and unfortunately, we didn't have as much time as we had hoped but we did make it out to Historic Jamestown Island for a day. We arrived early and saw a pair of eagles right around the causeway leading over to the island. Even though we have lots of eagles in Florida-it is always treat to see them. On the drive around the island, we saw woodpeckers (red bellied, red headed, northern flicker), nuthatch, chickadee, red winged blackbird, lots of cardinals, titmouse, lots of small brown birds (I'm not very good at identifying them), cormorants, several hawks- which I think were Cooper's hawks—are they fairly common in that area? But the bird I wanted to check with you on was what I think was a red throated loon—we've never seen one but they sure looked loons to us according to our Sibley's book. There were three on the water. The book says they are in that area in November but have you seen them around Jamestown Island? I hope so, because that is a life bird for us and that would be fun!

Thanks again for the birding tips—we hope to be back. And if you ever need some ideas for birding in Central Florida- please just let me know. Thanks! Pat Wehman

Photos by Members and Neighbors

Gale Treiber in Ford's Colony has been lucky enough to have a Baltimore Oriole visiting his feeder.



The next three pictures were taken at Ridgeway Park in Hampton by Joe Piotrowski.



WBC December Walks

Complete list of species seen on each walk are on the club website www.williamsburgbirdclub.org

Leader Hugh Beard was joined by Bob & Cynthia Long, Cathy & Terry Bond, Susie Engle-Hill, Bill Boeh, Tom McCary, Margaret Ware, Sara Lewis, Shirley Devan, Jeanette Navia, Mary Margaret Hutchins, Lynn Collins, and Geoff Giles for the November 14 walk at New Quarter Park.

Birding highlights included a flock of Tundra Swans flying south in the distant blue sky. It was one of those Saturdays where Red-headed Woodpeckers seemed to appear on every corner. Hugh Beard tallied 5, several of which were juveniles. All the woodpecker (except the Hairy) made an appearance.

(A total of 39 species were identified during the walk)—No group picture taken but here are several snapshots taken by Shirley Devan.



Left to Right: Sue Engle-Hill, Hugh Beard, Sara Lewis, Bob Long and Geoff Giles.



Hugh Beard



Left to Right: Hugh Beard, Geoff Giles and Tom McCary.

Linda Cole, Patty Maloney and Joe Piotrowski joined leader Bill Williams for the December 26 walk in New Quarter Park. It was a pleasant morning (got up to 59 degrees), but there was a dense fog that limited visibility. Bill said it was great for hearing, but very poor for seeing. All six local woodpecker species were seen. Species list totaled 29. (No pictures were taken.)

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 photo for January.

Last month's picture was of Black Scoters.



CALENDAR

Saturday, Jan 9	WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, 8 AM, Tom McCary, Leader
Thursday, Jan 14	HRBC Monthly Meeting, Jeff Trollinger, Speaker, "Viginia Birding & Wildlife Trails", 7 pm, Conference Room of the Sandy Bottom Nature Center
Saturday, Jan 16	WBC Field Trip, Dutch Gap/Henricus Park, Shirley Devan, Leader (See Front Page)
Sunday, Jan 17	HRBC Bird Walk, Newport News Park, Jane Frigo, Leader
Wednesday, Jan 20	WBC Monthly Meeting, (See Front Page)
Saturday, Jan 23	WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, 7 AM, Bill Williams, Leader
February 5-7	VSO Winter Trip to Outer Banks, see December issue of <i>The Flyer</i>
Saturday, Feb 20	WBC Field Trip, Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel Islands, see page 4