



# The Flyer

## Newsletter of the Williamsburg Bird Club

Vol. 35, No.1

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

January 2011



### President's Corner

By Shirley Devan

Many of you who attend events on the William and Mary Campus (Christopher Wren classes or athletic events, for example) receive parking permits for campus parking. Add the Williamsburg Bird Club to the list of organizations for which you need a parking permit.

Relax— one is enclosed for you in this newsletter. If you are receiving an electronic version of *The Flyer*, a separate PDF of the permit is being sent, just print it out!

Please put it in your car and remember to place it on the driver's side dashboard when you park in front of Phi Beta Kappa Hall, the Muscarelle Museum, or Morton Hall on the evenings of Bird Club meetings. If you happen to forget it, there will be someone to greet you in the parking lot to provide you with a permit for your car.

The Bird Club members (and other community groups) are caught in the crossfire between W&M Parking Services and the W&M students who park in the parking lots at night without parking permits. The Parking Services staff is cracking down on **all** cars that do not have a parking permit from 7 AM Monday morning to Friday afternoon at 5:30 PM— including 24/7 during this period. Weekends are still open for free parking.

Of course, if you already have a W&M parking permit as a student, staff, or faculty, you have no worries as long as it is displayed!

Many thanks to Dr. Dan Cristol, Professor of Biology at W&M, who interacted with Parking Services and obtained our Parking Permits.

Parking tickets from W&M Parking Services can be expensive, so please remember your Bird Club parking permit. We want you to enjoy the Bird Club meetings without worrying about a parking ticket.

Happy New Year! I look forward to seeing you at the January 19 meeting at Millington, if not before!

### Monthly Meeting

At the January meeting, Michael Wilson, a Senior Biologist with The Center for Conservation Biology will present a program about the challenges, successes, and probable future of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in Virginia. Mr. Wilson, a native of Pittsburgh, has a B.S. in Biology from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and a M.A. in Biology from the William and Mary. He has worked as a biological scientist for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and as the Bird Conservation Coordinator for the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. His current responsibilities at the Center are to help drive novel research and conservation ideas, manage field projects, field data collection, and to produce academic and technical reports on bird communities and local threatened species.

Plan to join us on January 19 at 7:30 PM in Room 150, Millington Hall, on the W&M campus. Barb Streb will be providing the refreshments.

### January Field Trip



Join us for a Williamsburg Bird Club field trip at Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel on January 15. We will have a rare opportunity to see seabirds, shorebirds, raptors and more from a large, comfortable boat with ample heated cabin space, rest rooms, tables and indoor seating. Brian Taber will be the leader in helping identify the birds.



Join us for a Williamsburg Bird Club field trip at Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel on January 15. We will have a rare opportunity to see seabirds,

## Officers

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>President</b>                           | 813-1322   |
| Shirley Devan                              | <a href="mailto:sedevan52@cox.net">sedevan52@cox.net</a>         |
| <b>Vice-President</b> (Programs)           | 871-3418   |
| Joe Piotrowski                             | <a href="mailto:joepiotrowski@cox.net">joepiotrowski@cox.net</a> |
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| Fred Blystone                              | <a href="mailto:fmb19481@verizon.net">fmb19481@verizon.net</a>   |
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| Chuck Rend                                 | <a href="mailto:carjean39@msn.com">carjean39@msn.com</a>         |
| <b>Secretary</b>                           | 229-9764   |
| Jennifer Boag                              | <a href="mailto:Jaboag@cox.net">Jaboag@cox.net</a>               |
| <b>Member-at-Large</b>                     | 221-6683   |
| Ann Carpenter                              | <a href="mailto:gac17d@juno.com">gac17d@juno.com</a>             |
| <b>Member-at-Large</b>                     | 565-2597   |
| Jeanette Navia                             | <a href="mailto:jnavia@gmail.com">jnavia@gmail.com</a>           |
| <b>Past President</b>                      | 259-9559   |
| Bob Long                                   |  |

## Committee Chairpersons

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Field Trips</b>               | 221-8506   |
| Geoff Giles                      | <a href="mailto:tylerandal2@aol.com">tylerandal2@aol.com</a>       |
| <b>Records &amp; Bird Counts</b> | 229-1124   |
| Bill Williams                    | <a href="mailto:jwil2@wm.edu">jwil2@wm.edu</a>                     |
| <b>Library Liaison</b>           | 565-6148   |
| Lee Schuster                     | <a href="mailto:dljschuster@cox.net">dljschuster@cox.net</a>       |
| <b>Refreshments</b>              | 565-0250   |
| Barb Streb                       | <a href="mailto:gandbstreb@verizon.net">gandbstreb@verizon.net</a> |
| <b>Membership/Webmaster</b>      | 565-2597   |
| Jeanette Navia                   | <a href="mailto:jnavia@gmail.com">jnavia@gmail.com</a>             |
| <b>Adopt-A-Highway</b>           | 566-2615   |
| John Fennell                     | <a href="mailto:mafjff07@netzero.net">mafjff07@netzero.net</a>     |
| <b>Historian</b>                 | <b>Open</b>  |

## Summary of Bird Data

The latest version of Bill Williams' *Summary of Local Bird Data through 2009: Williamsburg, James City County, York County, Hog Island WMA, Surry County* can be downloaded from our website.

## Wild Birds Unlimited

Don't forget that the WBC 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.

Over 400 species of birds have been spotted from the Bridge Tunnel and Islands. This is a great opportunity to bird this prime location from up close! All are cordially invited to attend for a fee of \$25 per person. We will depart from Lynnhaven Inlet in Virginia Beach at 8AM on Saturday, January 15, and return to the dock at about noon. There is a very good seafood restaurant dockside for those inclined to have lunch on return.

Reservations will be taken on a first come, first served basis until the trip is filled. Sign up early if you wish to be included. For additional info contact Geoff Giles at [WBCactivities11@aol.com](mailto:WBCactivities11@aol.com).

Please make checks (\$25.00 per person) payable to "Williamsburg Bird Club" and mail them to Geoff. Include your email address so Geoff can get back to you.

Geoff Giles  
P.O. Box 133  
Lightfoot, VA 23090

The CBBT tends to have much smoother water than ocean trips with many of the same exciting views of birds. We will cover the area of the bridge and tunnel islands, birding a variety of habitats during a prime birding season. Our departure point and travel directions will be sent to participants by email. It is about one hour from Williamsburg by car to the dock and fifteen minutes from there to the CBBT by boat. Carpools from Williamsburg can be arranged. The trip will be cancelled and money refunded if weather does not permit a good outing. We expect this to be a great day and hope you will join us!!!

It will be possible to do some birding from the warm, dry cabin, but the best views and photos will be from outside on deck, so clothing that protects against wind and dampness is recommended



## December (and several November) 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!

**Nov. 7, 14, 21 & 28:** Joe and Grace Doyle bird Camp Peary each Sunday in November. On the 7th they identify 23 species, including a Red-shouldered Hawk, an American Coot and a Hermit Thrush. On the 14th, they have 20 species, followed by 26 species on the 21st and 24 species on the 28th.

**Nov. 14 through Dec.:** Jeanette Navia has a Red-breasted Nuthatch visit her feeder every day.

**Nov. 20:** Jim Hutchins and Lynn Collins joined the Richmond Audubon group for a day of birding in Mathews County. It was a beautiful but brisk day for the group of 15 birders led by Arthur Baker. The focus for the day was on the local beach areas with some time spent birding along the wooded areas near the beaches. The group spent the morning birding South Haven (Aaron) and Bethel Beaches where the most abundant birds were Black and Surf Scoters, Common Loons, and Dunlin. At Bethel Beach, two Marbled Godwits and two Bald Eagles sitting side by side on a tree limb were special treats for the group. After Bethel Beach the group adjourned to Southwind Cafe in the heart of the historic Mathews Courthouse for a delicious lunch and good conversation. Most of the participants stayed in Mathews for an afternoon of birding at the Piankatank River Landing. A total of 49 species were observed during the day.

**Dec. 3:** Kathi Mestayer reports seeing a Brown Creeper in her Indigo Park neighborhood.

**Dec. 5:** Virginia and George Boyles join Jane Frigo and five other birders on the HRBC walk at Newport News Park. Jane reports “Cold and Windy!!!! A light dusting of snow from the previous night left the park looking like a winter wonderland. Although beginning temperatures were in the low 30s and rose to the low 40s, the wind made the morning frigid. Only the hardy could survive and no one wanted to make the walk to the Swamp Bridge. Ducks were still in small numbers with a group of 14 Gadwall the largest. A pair of female Pileated Woodpeckers gave a long display which was appreciated. Kinglets were also very active.” A total of 45 species were seen, with the highlight being a surprise Osprey.

**Dec. 8:** Tom Armour reports 8 Bufflehead and 1 Ring-necked Duck drake on the pond at the Vineyards.

**Dec. 9:** Ruth Beck, Brian Taber, Lee Schuster, Alex Minarik and Shirley Devan spend a chilly day at Craney Island. Among the 63 species were 31 Snow Buntings, an Osprey and a Eurasian Wigeon.

**Dec. 10–13:** Lee Schuster reports having 2 female Purple Finches on Friday and Sunday. On Monday a male showed up as well.

**Dec. 11:** From Tom Armour: “Today on the York River (via the Parkway to Yorktown) there were 3 Common Loons, 1 Horned Grebe, 1 Canvasback, 1 Lesser Scaup and 400+ Ruddy Ducks.” Tom also finds more ducks on the pond at the Vineyards—19 Ring-neck Ducks, 8 Bufflehead, 1 female Hooded Merganser and 6 Canada Geese.

**Dec. 13:** Tom Armour reports his FOS Purple Finches at his feeder—2 males and 1 female.

**Dec. 17:** From Shirley Devan: “I finally saw the Hermit Thrush under the feeder. **Lots** of juncos along with the usual suspects.”

**Dec. 18:** This photo, taken by Inge Curtis, is of one of four Bald Eagles in her yard.

**Dec. 19:** Martha Briggs sends in a report of birds seen on her farm in Southampton County. She saw 27 species including towhees, nuthatches, bluebirds, sapsuckers, Brown Thrasher, Hairy, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers.



**Dec. 24:** When Tom Armour checks out the pond at the Vineyards, he finds 30 Ring-necked Ducks, 6 Bufflehead, 2 female Hooded Mergansers, 2 Mallards and 10 Canada Geese.

**Dec. 26:** From Tom Armour: “Great day for feeder birds. We had a total of sixteen species; the largest numbers were 25 Red-winged Blackbirds, next were 12 White-throated Sparrows. Best were 2 Purple Finches.” Tom is still waiting for his Red-breasted Nuthatch.

**Dec. 27:** From Shirley Devan: “Great feeder birds today. Brown Thrasher muscled the Carolina Wrens off the suet feeder. Then a wren and a Hermit Thrush scrambled for the suet crumbs dropped by the thrasher. An Eastern Phoebe breezed through for a short time to perch on the crook of the feeder pole.”

**Dec. 28:** From Martha Briggs: “about 8:30 AM, Pileated Woodpecker going up and down a tree about 15 feet from my TV room door. It stayed about two minutes and flew towards Merchant’s Square.”



Photo by Shirley Devan

**Dec. 28:** Shirley Devan reports 30 American Woodcock along the road at ESNWR.

## Nature's Give and Take

By Geoff Giles

This morning as I glanced over my laptop screen at the first light of day, there was wet snow gently falling on my yard and feeder, with a swirl of small birds already coming and going to grab suet, safflower seeds, and sunflower chips. Chickadees, titmice, cardinals and a couple of ruby-crowned kinglets were among the first sheltering in the holly beside my window and dashing out to take turns at the feeder. The male sapsucker who had worked on the three trunks of the holly the last few days was already hard at work there among snow-covered holly leaves and berries, alternately dipping into the holes he had made previously and then going to work making more.

Out of the woods beyond my yard, the familiar form of a mourning dove traced a dipping trajectory for the feeder and landed a bit clumsily on the roof. Even in the dim light I could see some unusual white color on the wing and took a closer look to see if this solitary bird was a more uncommon visitor. A look through my binoculars showed that she was a garden-variety mourning dove, but that one white feather was sticking awkwardly up from the middle of her left wing. A closer look showed considerable battle damage to the wing, with about one third of the center of it torn away, showing tender pink skin underneath.

The dove succeeded on the second flailing attempt to perch on the platform under the roof, and picked at some sunflower chips for a while before simply nestling under the roof out of the snow. A moment later she hopped around to the more sheltered side of the platform, and as she did so exposed much more damage to her belly, which was a mass of unruly fluffy white feathers, which should have been hidden under her normal well-camouflaged outer feathers, but had obviously been torn out of place. At one point I thought that the look in her eye betrayed a sad understanding that the previous night's terrifying encounter was not just another brush with fate, but a trauma that would severely change her life. Whether she had been careless or just unlucky did not matter now.

The rest of her small flock of mourning doves was conspicuously absent. Could it be that they were avoiding the company of their flock mate, perhaps their sister from yesterday? She had, by accident or by some predator's careful stalking and attack, become both damaged merchandise and tempting bait for the sharp eye of any predator in the area. Were the wounds she carried inflicted by an owl in the darkness, or by a hawk at the last or first light of day? Had that predator misjudged the effectiveness of the damage he had inflicted to immobilize his prey, so that she was able to recover enough to escape being killed and dismembered on the spot? Whatever the circumstances, the outcome was only too clear by the light of day. Nature's perfect child of yesterday had emerged from the last night as the obvious one who would lag behind her flock. She was maimed and no longer able to avoid the attention of predators or to stay out of harm's way.

A short time after she left the feeder I saw the white undersides of a large set of wings settle into the boughs of a tall loblolly in the canopy and out of my view. My curiosity did not last long, as a few moments later a large, immature red-tailed hawk descended to a bare branch about thirty feet high and began scanning the area. This may have been the one that soared above my yard yesterday, several times giving the blood-curdling shriek of his species. Not long after his departure a sharp-shinned hawk made several scorching passes, turning and burning through the lower branches of the canopy, apparently having seen something there worthy of all-out pursuit. If there was ever any doubt that alert predators were out there and on the prowl in my neck of the woods, the proof was plainly visible. I thought one more time of the stricken and lonesome dove.

## Australia and Birds

Article and Photos by Shirley Devan

Hoping I would have more than one or two birding opportunities while we visited Australia during October and November, I scoured the itinerary to see where and how long we would be at various spots as we traveled counter clockwise around the continent—from Brisbane to Cairns to Darwin, Alice Springs, Ayers Rock, Alice Springs again, Adelaide, Melbourne, Tasmania, and finally Sydney. I purchased *The Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds* early in the summer. The 7-page color “visual index” in the front turned out to be helpful. If I wanted to identify a bird, I quickly scanned the 7 pages of “types” of birds to find the one most like the bird I had seen. I turned to the page number provided and immediately had only one or two pages to review to nail the ID.

When we landed in Brisbane, our tour guide whisked us away by bus to the Sun Coast Novotel Twin Waters Resort where our instructions were to rest, relax, recover from jet lag and be ready in two days to hit the road for wonderful adventures. We did visit the Australia Zoo on one of our “down time” days and became acquainted with many types of Australian wildlife before we started our journey.

Otherwise I was free to wander around the modern, safe resort bordered by the Pacific Ocean and the Maroochy River looking for birds and wildlife. Plus the resort had a man-made lagoon.

I was immediately caught up in the joy of seeing new birds and started my bird list—no matter if they were the equivalent our own ubiquitous Carolina Chickadees. The **very first** bird I saw at the hotel resort was the Australian Brush Turkey as we headed to our room. They strolled around the grounds and resembled a combo of our turkey and vulture. Easily photographed and regularly observed though not particularly attractive.

Of course, almost every bird I saw was a life bird—but only if I could identify it! I had no trouble eventually identifying the Rainbow Bee-eater, Masked Lapwing, Willy Wagtail, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Spotted Turtle-Dove, Welcome Swallow, and the Magpie-lark that greeted me on our hotel balcony. But what species was the Button Quail I observed foraging under the well-manicured shrubbery? The shadows prevented a good look or a good photo to distinguish between what could have been any one of three species. Mmmmm. What to do? I checked with the Activities Planner for the resort? A bird list for the property? That would be a “no.” I had to be satisfied with “Button Quail sp.”

Before we left the resort Steve and I followed a trail down to the Maroochy River. At low tide I could see Pied Cormorants, Australian Pelicans, a White-necked Heron, and Australian White Ibis. All were at a distance and I reached for my scope for a better view. Oops, no room for a scope on this trip. On the walk back to the hotel, I spotted a Yellow-breasted Boatbill foraging in the mangrove swamp, which I only identified a few days later after pouring over the field guide.

I made a conscious decision to leave my field guide behind each day so I would focus on the birds instead of the book. I wrote down distinctive field marks and the size of the bird so I could have a chance at identifying it later. Most of the time this worked well. Often I could ID birds after seeing them again later in the trip.

In Cairns our hotel was about 100 yards from Trinity Bay. I could walk down to the waterfront esplanade easily and safely when I had a few free minutes. Our first visit to the waterfront was at low tide and I was thrilled to see Royal Spoonbills, Curlews, Bar-tailed Godwits, Whimbrels, Silver Gulls, Common Myna, and an



Osprey (not a life bird!). The white and black Royal Spoonbills were hanging out with the white and black Australian Pelicans very close to the boardwalk at low tide. Very convenient for my point-and-shoot camera.

Darwin on the north coast of Australia was our jumping off point to visit Kakadu National Park, a short three-hour bus ride south. I eagerly anticipated the advertised Yellow Waters boat cruise through a large wetlands. The water in the “wetlands” was quite high from the recent record rainfall so it felt more like a river cruise. Almost immediately we observed an encounter between a Whistling Kite and an immature Sea Eagle. Each retreated to nearby snags to reconsider their strategies.

The wetlands did not have as many wading birds as usual because of the high water, but we did see Eastern Great Egrets, Intermediate Egrets, Little Egrets, Brolga, Jabiru, Comb-crested Jacana as well as Pygmy Geese. Crocodiles were the main attraction for most folks on the boat ride, and the first dozen were certainly interesting. While we marveled at a good size crocodile sunning on the bank, I lifted my binoculars to the branch just above him to see a stunning, iridescent Azure Kingfisher. Our tour guide was able to identify this bird for me on the spot and saved me scouring the field guide later.

Our hotel at Kakadu National Park was built in the shape of a giant crocodile. Our room was in one of the back legs! I looked at the area map and spotted a nature trail less than ¼ mile away. I explored the area on my own the next morning and found my first kookaburra—a Blue-winged Kookaburra. Plus an Olive-backed Oriole, Red-collared Lorikeet, Crimson Finch, and Double Barred Finches. Later in a parking lot where we stopped to see aboriginal cave paintings, we flushed several Red-tailed Black Cockatoos.

When we left Kakadu and Darwin, birding opportunities were limited until we reached Kangaroo Island, off the coast of Adelaide, five days later. Those non-birding days featured Alice Springs, Uluru (Ayers Rock), the Olgas, an Outback BBQ, and an overnight ride on the Ghan Train from Alice Springs to Adelaide.

We used our free Saturday in Adelaide to tour Kangaroo Island with a private guide, Bill, in a comfy Land Rover. Bill took us to see the usual highlights plus he provided a gourmet picnic lunch complete with two wines, salad, quiche, and chocolates. A great advantage of spending the day with a private naturalist was that Bill could identify the birds we saw and he eagerly showed us where to look for unusual ones. With only three of us, we could set our own schedule, constrained only by the 7:30 PM ferry departure.

Bill took us to Flinders Chase National Park, Seal Bay, Remarkable Rocks, Cape du Couedic, and all the roads in between. Despite the name, Kangaroo Island did not show us many live kangaroos. Most were dead on the roadside—hit during the night by cars. The island has no foxes or rabbits so at least the birds have a bit of a relief from two predators. Bill pointed out the beautiful blue and black Superb



Blue-faced Honeyeater



Sulfur-crested Cockatoo



Crested Terns and Australian Sea Lions

Fairy Wren as well as the Yellow-wing Honeyeater, Silver-eye, Pacific Gull, Wedge-tailed Eagle, and the Nankeen Kestrel. I was able to identify the Crested Terns loafing on the beach behind the sea lions at Seal Bay plus a Sooty Oystercatcher on the rocks.

The best birding adventure of the trip for me was the visit to Phillip Island Nature Park near Melbourne for the sunset parade of the Little Penguins. Indeed, the entire area has been over-commercialized. No argument there. Viewing is from bleachers! Hundreds of people show up every night to watch hundreds or thousands of Little Penguins come ashore at sunset and make their way up the beach and hillside to their sand dune burrows, where, on this night, young penguins are calling to be fed.

The park service prohibited photos but I did have binoculars—the only one in our group who did. I observed the first penguins emerge from the surf and start their journey to their burrows. Only a dozen or so at first. Then hundreds emerged from the water and headed up the path adjacent to our bleachers. This night they had a long trek because of an extremely low tide. Many stopped in their tracks to rest a bit before marching up hill. Finally we left our bleacher seats and scurried over to the elevated boardwalk that paralleled the penguins' path.

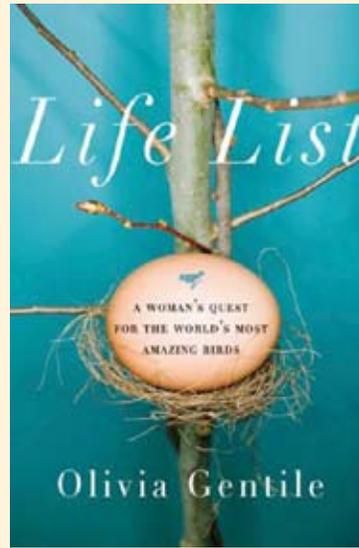
Penguins everywhere—under the boardwalk and on both sides. Most people, including Steve and me, just could not get enough looks at these intriguing little birds—the smallest penguin species. No binoculars needed when they are only 2–3 feet away. Little Penguins **rule** on Phillip Island and have the right of way in **all** circumstances. Signs in the parking lot advised visitors to check under cars to make sure no penguins were hiding. Sadly, I have no photos, but the evening was a highlight of the trip for me.

The folks on the tour did not quite know what to make of me with my ever-present binoculars and focus on birds. One friend divulged to me one night at dinner that the some of the folks called me “birdie” behind my back. He had defended me, telling them I was an “ornithologist.” I quickly explained to him that I was **not** an ornithologist but a very eager **birder** and was having a great time with my binoculars and birds.

I don't keep a life list (I may regret that later in life, but...) but I estimate that I saw over 60 life birds. Those three weeks were the trip of a lifetime plus an unforgettable birding adventure. Many thanks to my patient husband, Steve, who understood what I was up to.

## Williamsburg Bird Club Book Review

By Jeanette Navia



*Life List: A Woman's Quest for the World's Most Amazing Birds*, by Olivia Gentile. Bloomsbury, 2008. ISBN 9781596911697. \$26. 345 p. James City County Library call number 598.072 GEN.

There are folks in our bird club who travel to different countries to see birds we can't see in Virginia. There are those who fly or drive to different states to see birds rare to this area. Some keep life lists.

In a class apart are those obsessed with getting the largest life lists of anyone. What must it take to see 8674 different species? North America has about 2000 species. One would have to travel rugged terrain and endure extreme climates, employ diverse modes of travel, and enter countries where the political and social atmosphere may be hostile. This is what Phoebe Snetsinger did, and this book is an account of her travels written by an award-winning newspaper reporter, Olivia Gentile.

Phoebe's passion for birds began as many people's do, with the sight of a single bird. She was a 34-year-old housewife and mother of four in the 1950s when a neighboring housewife handed her a pair of binoculars and pointed into a tree. Phoebe saw a “black-and-white bird, no bigger than a child's hand, with a yellow head, shiny black eyes and a throat the color of a ripe mango.” It was a Blackburnian Warbler. She was hooked. She bought her own pair of binoculars and started birding the suburbs of Minneapolis. She started her life list.

A couple years later, the family moved to Missouri, where Phoebe joined the Webster Groves Nature Study Society. Weekly bird walks increased her skills and her desire to see more birds. When her children were teenagers, she started going on trips abroad. Her father, Leo Burnett, had founded what became the fifth largest ad agency in the world, and when he died, Phoebe inherited enough money to fund numerous international trips.

The book suggests that her diagnosis with a deadly form of melanoma prodded Phoebe into increasing her travels,

but she had already become addicted to the count before she was told, at age 49, that she would probably be dead within a year. Phoebe survived the year, and lived another 18. She traveled to many countries and all seven continents, putting herself at great physical risk in order to see more bird species.

As one can imagine, family problems arose because of Phoebe's obsession. Olivia Gentile delves into these family problems without overly dramatizing them, though at times Gentile's suppositions as to how Phoebe must have felt become somewhat annoying.

This is a fascinating book. It gives people who fantasize about seeing thousands of species a realistic view of the problems, both physical and social, that might occur.

*Phoebe Snetsinger wrote her own account of her birding life in a memoir titled "Birding on Borrowed Time." Regrettably, the library does not own a copy of that book.*

### **Bluebird Program on January 12**



Photo by Inge Curtis

Anne Little, President of The Virginia Bluebird Society, (VBS) will do a Power Point presentation on bluebirds entitled *Bluebird Basics—attracting and keeping bluebirds in your yard*. She will show you how to attract these beautiful birds to your yard, give hints on how to provide a safe habitat, and will provide information on plantings that provide food that will sustain them. There will also be information on other native cavity nesting birds in Virginia and how you can help increase their chances for survival. Little will also speak about the Society's efforts to preserve and increase Virginia's bluebird population and give advice on how you can help.

Anne will also talk about the 3 trails (New Quarter Park, York River State Park and a local golf course) in the Williamsburg area that need to be monitored and what's involved in the monitoring.

Anne Little is an avid bluebirder who has lived in Virginia for almost 25 years. She has been President of VBS for the past four years and just received the Bluebird Heritage Award from VBS. She was also one of the founding members of the Virginia Bluebird Society in 1996. Along with her husband Carl, she has been instrumental in setting up hundreds of bluebird trails throughout Virginia in public parks and schools. Anne and her husband Carl are recipients of the

1996 Walter Mess Award for their work in Northern Virginia Parks with bluebird trails and education. Anne lives in Fredericksburg and is Chair of the Tri-County/City Soil and Water District Board in Fredericksburg. She is also Chair of the City of Fredericksburg Clean & Green Commission, founder of Tree Fredericksburg and involved in many other organizations including the Sierra Club, Friends of the Rappahannock, American Forests and Alliance for Community Trees.

Members of the Williamsburg Bird Club are invited to attend the program January 12 at 7 PM at the Human Services Building, 5249 Olde Towne Road, Williamsburg. The meeting will be in the Multipurpose Room.

This free presentation is sponsored by the Historic Rivers Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalist Program.

## WBC December Walk

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

Geoff Giles led the December 11th walk at New Quarter Park. He was joined by 13 other birders who found the trees above the parking lot swarming with little birds—yellow-rumps, woodpeckers, titmice, chickadees, goldfinches and a bluebird.

The group then moved down to the floating dock at Queens Creek and found a Wilson's Snipe. Low tide gave everyone great looks at the snipe and two Killdeer who were also there. A total of 33 species were seen.

Seated: Shirley Devan, Jennifer Trevino, Sharon Plocher, George Boyles

Standing: Nelson Ensley, David Wright, Mary Angela Wright, Geoff Giles, Sara Lewis, Virginia Boyles



Missing: Jen Sefchick, Rick Sefchick, David Taylor and Margaret Ware (who took the photo).

## Bob's Excellent Adventure

By Fred Blystone

In the February issue of *The Flyer* I wrote an article about Bob Ake of Norfolk going for a Big Year—he was hoping to see 650 species of birds within the American Birding Association area (i.e. the 49 continental U.S. states (including Alaska), Canada and the French islands St. Pierre and Miquelon, plus surrounding waters and islands) during 2011. I enjoyed reading his many posts as he chased down 731 birds—the second highest total ever. You can read about his adventures at [www.bobsbirds.blogspot.com](http://www.bobsbirds.blogspot.com).

## Photos from Members

**Kathi Mestayer's** Great Horned Snowy Owl started as a horned monster but quickly became an owl when her niece Regina named it Hoover (the "Hoo" part was because she saw the owl in it).



Inge Curtis took these photos.



## 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.



January's bird photo

December's bird was a Caspian Tern.



## CALENDAR

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Saturday, Jan. 8    | WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, 8 AM, Hugh Beard, Leader  |
| Wednesday, Jan.. 12 | Bluebird Program, Anne Little, Speaker. See Page 7   |
| Saturday, Jan. 15   | WBC Field Trip to CBBT, see front page   |
| Sunday, Jan. 16     | HRBC Bird Walk, Newport News Park, 7 AM, Jane Frigo, Leader  |
| Wednesday, Jan. 19  | WBC Monthly Meeting, See front page  |
| Saturday, Jan. 22   | WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, 7 AM, Bill Williams, Leader   |
| Jan. 28–30          | Virginia Beach Wildlife Festival, <a href="http://www.vbgov.com/winterwildlife">www.vbgov.com/winterwildlife</a> |
| Jan. 29–Feb. 13     | Rusty Blackbird Winter Blitz, <a href="http://www.virginiabirds.net">www.virginiabirds.net</a>                   |
| Feb. 11–13          | VSO Winter Field Trip to the Outer Banks, <a href="http://www.virginiabirds.net">www.virginiabirds.net</a>       |