



# The Flyer

## Newsletter of the Williamsburg Bird Club

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

June 2011



### President's Corner

By Shirley Devan

The sounds of summer! This year we have the cicadas. Some are enjoying them more than others. I look on the cicadas as just more bird food.

Yogi Berra, the great American philosopher, once said, "You can observe a lot by just watching." Summer is a good time to observe bird behavior around your yard or garden. Most of what birds are doing this time of year is related to breeding and raising young.

Migration is over until August and the bird populations is stable—except for the new birds fledging from nests and learning to forage. These warm days are ideal for extended observations of your yard birds, i.e., a tall glass of iced tea, a comfy lawn chair, and a shady spot. Settle in and watch where the robins go when they find a worm. Watch the cardinal pair. Do they return repeatedly to the same thicket? Can you identify the newly fledged birds trying to find food on their own? Do they scurry back to the same hiding place at the slightest disturbance?

Summer provides the ideal time to bird at a slower pace. You can still learn a great deal about bird behavior with your binoculars in one hand and iced tea in the other. Enjoy!

**There are no meetings in June, July or August —the next field trip is in August.**

Check the calendar on the back page for birding activities.

### Welcome to a New Member

Gary Friedhaber

### 2011 VSO Annual Meeting and Field Trips

By Shirley Devan

The VSO Annual Meeting is always in a "birdy" area of the state. The opportunity to bird in the western part of the state at mountain elevations, plus the fact that W&M's Dr. Dan Cristol was the keynote speaker, tempted me to drive to Harrisonburg for the weekend conference May 13–15 near Shenandoah National Park.

Even though rain was forecast for the entire weekend and the conference committee had contingency plans, all field trips went off as scheduled and I don't think anyone was unhappy with the foggy, occasionally drizzly conditions Saturday. Sunday morning weather was actually clear and the rain held off until Sunday afternoon.

The conference organizers offered nine field trips Saturday morning, ranging from four in the Shenandoah National Park to five adventures in the Valley and foothills closer to Harrisonburg, including the Edith Carrier Arboretum on the JMU campus.

Saturday, May 14, I chose to join leader Diane Lepkowski and about 20 other birders to drive up to Shenandoah National Park and Skyline Drive area that included the Pocosin Cabin Fire Road and South River Picnic Area.

The skies were alternately foggy and clear on the mountain but no rain! Birds enjoyed: Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Hooded Warbler, Least Flycatcher, Wood Thrush, American Redstart, White-throated Sparrow, Veery, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, and Cedar Waxwing.

We also enjoyed good looks at a Red Squirrel. White Trillium was still in bloom and we spotted a few Jack-in-the-pulpits.

Sunday, May 15, I joined up with the folks headed to Bother Knob Trip on Shenandoah Mountain near Rockingham's southwestern border with Augusta County. The mountain ridge defines the border between Virginia and West Virginia. We sought the high elevation warblers and our leader William Leigh was skilled at identifying and spotting the tiny jewels in the canopy. The four-car caravan ventured into West Virginia on the gravel, twisting roads. With very little traffic, we were

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## 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 our members spend at Wild Birds Unlimited in Monticello Marketplace. You do have to let them know that you are a member.

able to pull off the road a bit (but not too far!!) and strain our necks to try to spot the birds we were hearing. Warblers observed on this trek up the mountain included: Blackburnian Warbler, Canada Warbler, American Redstart, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, and Black-and-white Warbler. Participants on this trip Saturday had observed Red Crossbills so we set up a stakeout at the appointed location—twice—but no luck with the Red Crossbills. Other birding highlights included Red-eyed Vireo, Gray Catbird, Indigo Bunting, Raven, Barn Swallow, and Chipping Sparrow.

Botanical highlights: Bush honeysuckle (non-native), White Pine, Table Mountain Pine, Painted Trillium and Red Trillium.

The Saturday night banquet featured Dr. Dan Cristol, Professor of Biology at William & Mary, who described the groundbreaking research he and his students have been doing along the South River (which flows north into the Shenandoah River) to determine the scope of contamination of mercury in the food web and the impacts, or lack of, on the birds in the area.



The highlight of the banquet was the announcement of the new Mitchell A. Byrd Award for Scientific Achievement and the presentation of the first award to Dr. Dan Cristol of William and Mary. Dr. Byrd was present to join in the presentation to Dr. Dan.

It was a nice moment for those of us from Williamsburg Bird Club at the conference and this alum from William and Mary.

Other members of the Williamsburg Bird Club who participated in the weekend activities: Virginia and George Boyles and Marilyn and John Adair.

We all shared quality time in the car Sunday morning as we climbed up to Bother Knob on Shenandoah Mountain and sat through the stakeout for the Red Crossbills. Many thanks to John for driving!



John & Martha Adair, Shirley, and Virginia & George Boyles

Next year's VSO Annual Conference will be a joint conference with the Tennessee Ornithological Society in the Bristol, VA/TN area. The conference will feature birding in even higher elevations than we enjoyed this year! Stay tuned for the spring 2012 dates.

### May Bird Sightings

Report your backyard birds and local sightings to Fred Blystone at 229-4346 or [fmbl19481@verizon.net](mailto:fmbl19481@verizon.net). If you encounter interesting birds on your vacation/travels, please share!

**May 1:** Marilyn and John Adair were on the HRBC Sunday walk at Newport News park where 70 species were seen during the morning and early afternoon. FOS birds included Blue Grosbeak, Eastern Kingbird, Acadian Flycatcher, Northern Parula, Blackpoll Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart and Prothonotary Warbler.

**May 1:** While birding around Lake Matoaka, Tom McCary a FOS male American Redstart, a FOS male Summer Tanager (which Tom found by the soft "chuck" notes), and two male Wood Ducks swimming on the lake.

**May 2:** Tom McCary discovered a male Northern Bobwhite foraging near the Shirley Plantation Great House. In the upper end of James City County, Barry Trott sees a Summer Tanager and a Great-crested Flycatcher.

**May 3:** A Hooded Warbler is a nice find for Barry Trott near his upper James City County home.

**May 6:** Geoff Giles was heading for the trail at Bassett Hall when he spotted a Northern Bobwhite in the parking lot for the CW taverns.

**May 9:** Martha Briggs reports that both male and female bluebirds are feeding newly hatched young in the bluebird house in her front yard.



Photo by Bill Williams

**May 10:** Birding on the Goodwin Islands, Bill Williams identifies 35 species, including 9 Willet, 8 Seaside Sparrows, 1 Sanderling, 3 Ruddy Turnstones, 12 Boat-tailed Grackles and 12 American Oystercatchers. At Shirley Plantation, Tom McCary saw his FOS Blackpoll Warbler and a male Blue Grosbeak.

**May 11:** Bill Williams and Virginia & George Boyles saw 2 Red Knots while helping with a bird survey at Grandview Nature Preserve.

**May 12:** Among the 74 species entered into eBird by Bill Williams after a survey at Craney Island were 2 Black-necked Stilts and 1 **Glaucous Gull**.

**May 15:** Brian Taber and Bill Williams were treated to a nice surprise when a **White-winged Dove** flew past them at the College Creek Hawkwatch. This is only the second record of this species in our local area. Tom McCary found 2 male Indigo Buntings on wires by the Shirley Plantation entrance road and had good looks at a calling Eastern Wood-Pewee near the Shirley Plantation Great House.

**May 16:** At the College Creek Hawkwatch, Bill Williams and Brian Taber watched a **Mississippi Kite** circle for about 10 minutes. Today Barry Trott finds a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, a Olive-sided Flycatcher, a Scarlet Tanager and an Ovenbird.

**May 18:** Tom Armour reports having a flock of 40 or more Cedar Waxwings in their trees. Barry Trott is treated to a Chuck-will's-widow near his upper James City County home.

**May 19:** Tom McCary heard a Barred Owl calling in mid-afternoon in Lake Matoaka woods.

**May 21:** Among the birds Hugh Beard saw at Goodwin Islands were 4 Seaside Sparrows and 2 Willets.

**May 22:** From Cathy Millar: "I've been visiting friends at Kingspoint who have a red shouldered hawk's nest in a giant beech tree less than 10 feet from their home. The tree is downhill from the house so there is less neck strain involved in looking up at the nest. Spending many an enthralling minute watching the 2 fluffy white chicks peering over the edge of the nest, stretching their wings and backing up over the edge of the nest for a potty break." A Orchard Oriole makes an appearance near Barry Trott's home.

**May 23:** Shirley Devan reports the first Louisiana Waterthrush she has ever seen in her yard.

**May 24:** Among the 68 species identified by Bill Williams while birding in Charles City County were 2 Chuck-wills-widows, 2 Eastern Whip-poor-wills and 1 **Anhinga**. While at the College Creek Hawkwatch, Brian Taber was fortunate enough to see a **Sandhill Crane** circle over and then land at Hog Island WMA. In Tom McCary's front yard many songbirds of various species vexed a Red-shouldered Hawk until it decided to move on.

## A Summary of the 1 May 2011 Williamsburg Spring Bird Count

By Bill Williams

What a sensational spring day May 1, 2011 was!! And making the most of that day's exceptional weather were 37 birders who probed as much of our local landscape and waterways as they could to tally a respectable 139 bird species. The final count results included an American Wigeon at Hog Island and 3 Pine Siskins, still "pigging out" at a Governor's Land feeder. While most count teams took to their territories by foot and car, graduate student Andy McGann kayaked 3.5 miles (7 miles round-trip!) of Powhatan Creek documenting 71 species along that historic, scenic blue-way.

This was the bird club's 34th consecutive Spring Bird Count (SBC). During those 3+ decades this special event has averaged 153 species, with an all-time high of 166 on 5 May 1996 and an all-time low of 135 on 30 April 2006. As close as we came to an SBC nadir there were silver-lining high counts for no less than 17 species. Some of those records had been on the books since the late 1970s!!!

Many count years we have been lucky to record even 10 Black Vultures. This year we tallied 83, thirty-two more than the previous high of 51 set last year on the May 2 SBC. Counts of soaring wanderers like vultures are always ripe for skepticism, but by accounting for timing and location this new high seems to be acceptable. Those of us who have lived in the area since colonial times can remember when Ospreys were... believe it or not...rare. Our total for the first SBC in 1978 was 12! On April 29, 2001 we counted 172, an all-time high to that point. This year we increased the record to 178! Also on the raptor front, we managed to tie the 5 May 1996 Red-tailed Hawk peak count of 23. The SBC's previous maximum count of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds was 29 established April 29, 1984 then matched 5 May 1985. On the 2011 count day we ticked 31. Wonder what a concentrated feeder watch effort would show us about this species? Always a reliable feeder attendee and woodland bon vivant, Red-bellied Woodpeckers reached a new high mark this year with 147, quite the notch above 113 from the April 29, 2009 SBC. Not to be outdone by their larger Picidae ally Downy and Hairy woodpeckers made the record books with 33 and 13, respectively. The Downy high count had stood since the 29 April 1984 SBC when 30 were found, and the Hairy total tied that of the 26 April 2009 SBC. One of the more enthralling bird sounds of early spring is the signature "wheep! wheep!" of the Great Crested Flycatcher. Well, this year 158 of them made the final accounting, 30 more than the former high of 128 for the April 26, 2009 SBC. The Carolina Chickadee count



Jennifer Trevino, Alex Minarik, Carol O'Neil, Hugh Beard and Dave Shantz go over the day's sightings.



Bill gets the tally underway.

reached an all-time high of 169, besting the 134 high mark from the 16 May 1999 SBC. White-breasted Nuthatch traveled up the tally tree with 37, an increase of 1 over the 36 found on the 4 May 2008 SBC. Here again, we query what more feeder effort would reveal about these latter two species, especially in light of how quiet the nuthatch becomes during the breeding season. American Robins were certainly bob, bob, bobbing along; 451 of them bob, bob, bobbed into the SBC records eclipsing the 366 detected on the 2 May 1982 SBC. Piling into Professor Peabody's Way-back machine to journey to May 6, 1978 we would witness the SBC peak Northern Mockingbird total of 137 being set. Speed-skate 34 years back to the future to find the total crossing this year's finish-line with 157! Brown Thrashers were not about to let their mimic thrush relatives outperform them just because the cuzs rant aspiring American Idol competencies 24/7. An impressive 90 of them teed up or snuck from the underbrush to show that the

63 on 26 April 2009 was just a teaser. The 2 May 2010 SBC set a new Yellow-throated Warbler high with 85. We topped that by 5 this spring go-round. Papal clerics throughout the realm will rejoice to learn the Prothonotary Warbler SBC peak count climbed to 25, two birds more than the 23 on 2 May 1982. How “sweet, sweet, sweet” it is!! Back on that same May 2, 1982 SBC teams detected 125 Rufous-sided Towhees. Here we are 29 years and a-name-change-to-Eastern Towhee later before a new high count came to pass with a new “tea”-total 145. And lastly, we did the Commonwealth proud with a “pretty, pretty, pretty” amazing 414 Northern Cardinals far out-pacing the 338 from the 26 April 2009 SBC.

Close, but in the no-cigar category, were 5 species seen either the day before or the day after the count day. These included Common Loon, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Spotted Sandpiper, Least Tern, and Rusty Blackbird.

Why all the new high counts, yet lower than average diversity? Who knows for sure? Obviously the count this year did not coincide with a peak flight day, especially for swallow, thrush, and warbler species. Anecdotal evidence across the region suggests that even before and after early May 2011 migrant numbers and diversity were down and/or below expectations. Note, too, that of those species recorded in all-time high numbers, all are local residents and/or migrant breeders. One has to suspect the ideal weather we enjoyed during the count made all the difference, facilitating peak, sustained bird activity throughout the day.

We would be remiss without acknowledging that the jury is still out on the single Pea Fowl “sitting in a tree” the Jolly Pond crew “saw” (uh huh?) and the Guinea Fowl reported by the Middle Plantation cadre!?

A huge round of huzzahs for Carrot Tree Kitchens' excellent goodies and delightful hospitality for the compilation crowd.



Left to right: Nick Flanders, Geoff Giles, John Lockwood, Jan Lockwood, Virginia Boyles, George Boyles and Gary Carpenter.

Participants: Tom and Jeanne Armour, Hugh Beard, Ruth Beck, Jim Booth, Virginia and George Boyles, Martha Briggs (f), Lee Bristow, Kenton Buck, Gary Carpenter, Dan Cristol, Janet and Chris Curtis (f), Gary Driscoll, Nick Flanders, Adrienne Frank, Ron Giese, Geoff Giles, Jenevieve Jackson, Les Lawrence, Jan and John Lockwood, Andy McGann, Jeanne and Mike Millin, Alex Minarik, David Monahan, Jeanette Navia, Carol O'Neil, Sandy Peterson, Lee Schuster, Dave Shantz, Brian Taber, Jennifer Trevino, Mary Smith, Bill Williams.

**Don't forget to set your bird-count calendars for the Sunday, December 18, 2011 Christmas Bird Count.**

### **Upcoming Master Naturalist Basic Training Class**

**by Shirley Devan**

The Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists will conduct its sixth basic training class this fall and winter and will sponsor volunteer service opportunities leading to Virginia Master Naturalist Certification.

The Virginia Master Naturalist program is designed to build a statewide corps of volunteers who provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the conservation and management of natural resources and areas within their communities. Interested Virginians become Master Naturalists through training and volunteer service.

The number of participants for this class will be limited to 20. Fee is \$150.00 and includes all materials, instruction, and membership dues for 2011 and 2012.

Classes, which will meet about every two weeks, begin August 30, 2011 and continue through March 14, 2012. Volunteer service hours can be started prior to completion of classes and the requirements to be a Certified Virginia Master Naturalist could be completed as early as March 2012.

The basic training course offers knowledge and skills in the following: Virginia biogeography, habitats of the Historic Rivers region, wetlands and freshwater biology, Virginia native trees and plants, Virginia birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, insects, conservation and ecological systems, citizen science and interpretation skills.

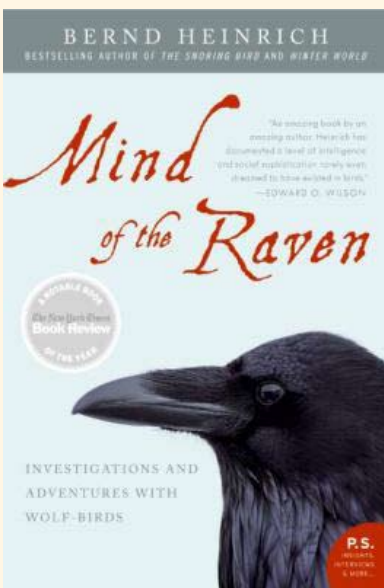
The Virginia Master Naturalist Program is jointly sponsored by VA Cooperative Extension, VA Department of Conservation and Recreation, VA Department of Forestry, VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and VA Museum of Natural History.

Class dates and schedule are included in the Application Package, which is available on line at: [www.historicrivers.org](http://www.historicrivers.org). For more info, contact Basic Training Co-Chairs, Jennifer Trevino (phone: 757-903-8983, email: [jennyt451@yahoo.com](mailto:jennyt451@yahoo.com)) or Sharon Plocher (email: [sharonjp4@cox.net](mailto:sharonjp4@cox.net)) or Membership Chair, Shirley Devan, (phone: 757-813-1322; email: [sedevan52@cox.net](mailto:sedevan52@cox.net)).

Virginia Master Naturalist programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

## Williamsburg Bird Club Book Review

By Jeanette Navia



*Mind of the Raven: Investigations and Adventures with Wolf-Birds*, by Bernd Heinrich. Harper Perennial, 1999; 2006. ISBN 9780061136054. \$14.95. 356 p. James City County Library call number 598.864 HEI.

When I read a Bernd Heinrich book, I am grateful that my husband's job as a sewage treatment plant operator is relatively clean, compared to some other

careers he could have chosen with his biology degree. I don't know if I could stand having a freezer full of cut-up roadkill. I'm not sure how I'd feel about a husband who slices up cow carcasses to see how ravens react to them, or sprays ravens with a solution of water and cow dung to see whether the birds take baths because they're dirty or simply to have fun (Heinrich concludes it's the latter).

Ravens are big, fascinating birds, and Heinrich has studied them closely for many years. He wrote a 400-page book, *Ravens in Winter*, in 1989, having patiently observed ravens for four cold winters in Maine and Vermont as a study in behavior ecology. He had wanted to understand why ravens call to each other when they discover food. Why would they want to share the location of food with others and not keep it for themselves? I have not read *Ravens in Winter*, but Heinrich writes about ravens calling

to each other (or not, at times) about food sources in *The Mind of the Raven* as well.

Heinrich's main subjects are four ravens he adopted and kept in large aviaries in Maine, observing them closely for years, manipulating their environment and speculating about why they react the way they do to novel stimuli and situations. He also observes ravens in the wild, both in Maine and in Vermont.

He writes about many different aspects of raven behavior here: foraging and hunting for food; recognition of each other as individuals; pairing up and forming social webs; dominance in groups; what makes a raven fearful, and how ravens can play. Heinrich's experiments and observations are mostly anecdotal, leading a few scientists to scoff at his methods, but Heinrich is upfront about his methods. The behaviors he observes by their nature cannot be duplicated in the scientific method, he says, but are important observations nonetheless.

Not only are the facts about ravens' behaviors interesting, but how Heinrich conducts his experiments is interesting as well. He wonders what would happen if, say, he puts a chicken egg, which ravens love to eat, in a raven nest with other raven eggs. Would the ravens eat it? Would they toss it out or try to hatch it? He is full of, and tests, many interesting questions. How would the ravens react if he puts an unfamiliar object into their aviary? Why do they seem so initially shy around carcasses Heinrich lays out for them to eat? What could their reactions of fear toward new things mean? Do ravens think? Why does it seem that ravens have a bond with wolves? Can they manipulate tools to get food they want? (A very interesting experiment with food on a string illustrates they can.)

This was one of the most fascinating books I've ever read, but then I've thought that about each of Heinrich's books I've read. The Mind of a Raven was originally published in 1999. Harper Perennial republished it in paperback in 2006 and added a short interview with the author and an eight-page "A Raven Update: New and Exciting Findings," in 2006. There are black and white photos and some drawings, the reproduction of which were probably better in the original hardback. I would recommend it to a general reader as well as scientists interested in bird/animal behavior.

## College Creek Hawkwatch Season Ends

By Brian Taber



**Bill Williams and Brian Taber making sure that nothing has gotten by on the left.**

Thanks to volunteers Tom Armour, Fred Blystone, Bill Williams and Dean Shostak, we were able to set a new season total of 1811, surpassing the previous high of 1666 set in 2007. The hawkwatch operated from February 9th through May 24th. Our 177 hours were the most in

our 15 years and our 85 days were also the most, surpassing the 82 in 2007. We had our best February, 2nd best March, 5th best April and 6th best May. The early season boosted our totals, despite much wind, rain and cool temperatures, and the second half of the season mostly saw very small flights, despite seemingly fine weather for migrating. Our biggest day was the 3rd best ever for the site, 146 on April 3rd.

We recorded 14 species and set new season highs for Turkey Vultures and Ospreys. Northern Harrier was 2nd highest. The single Broad-winged Hawk was the lowest, except for 1998 when none were seen and coverage was less than half of this year.

Rarities at the site included Glaucous Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Least Bittern, Sandhill Crane on 2 occasions and White-winged Dove.

## June 11–19, 2011 VSO Foray, Allegheny County.

The 2011 Foray will take place between June 11 and 19 in Allegheny County. As has become our custom, this time period includes two weekends to try to avoid schedule conflicts. Allegheny County is along the border with West Virginia, but is rather accessible due to the fact that Interstate 64 passes through its center.

Full details at [www.virginiabirds.net/f\\_trips.html](http://www.virginiabirds.net/f_trips.html)

## VSO Summer Field Trip New River Valley.

On June 17–19 the New River Valley Bird Club will show off some of their best birding areas in the New River Valley and Southern Appalachians for the VSO summer field trip. The varied topography and the river valley offer a wide variety of habitats and bird species. Field trips will be offered Friday afternoon, all day Saturday, and Sunday morning. Many thanks to Jerry Via and Bill Akers for working with the New River Valley Bird Club to line up these wonderful trips!

Full details at [www.virginiabirds.net/f\\_trips.html](http://www.virginiabirds.net/f_trips.html)

## Photos from Members



Cathy Millar climbed up on the roof of a friend's house on May 24 to get a closer look and photograph this Red-shouldered Hawk young. She got a photo and also what Cathy called a "proper dope slap" on the back of her head from the mom, who she didn't hear coming.

## More Photos from Members



Inge Curtis took this series of photos of a female Eastern Bluebird feeding meal worms to one of its young.



Inge Curtis also took these photos—of an Indigo Bunting and a Mallard.



**More Photos from Members Continued**



Fred Blystone took this photo of an Eastern Phoebe on Jamestown Island on May 11th.



Inge Curtis took these pictures of a Prothonotary Warbler, a Great-crested Flycatcher, and an Eastern Kingbird

Shirley Devan and Ruth Beck spoke about an Important Bird Area (IBA), The Western Shore Marshes, at the May meeting of the Hampton Roads Bird Club. Stretching from Grandview Beach north to Haven Beach, this area is being adopted in a cooperative effort between the Williamsburg Bird Club and the HRBC.



**WBC May Walks and Field Trip**

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



**May 14**—Leader Geoff Giles reports "in spite of a forecast of rain, fifteen hardy birders, including members of Scout Troop 195, enjoyed a fine bird walk in New Quarter Park. The scouts completed work on their Bird Badges and each logged more than twenty species seen. The scouts were first to spot a male Summer Tanager and a mature Bald Eagle, both of which posed for long, good looks. The scouts took careful notes and asked sharp questions about the birds they saw. Spring migrants were out, but often high in the foliage, challenging all to hear them and to look carefully for them. A total of 46 species were seen and heard, with Indigo Buntings and Osprey antics among the favorites seen!"

Left to right, first row: Sara Lewis, Cynthia Long, Kalabe Sabbler, Barbara Jackson, Kyle Robinson, Andre Gardner. Second row: Ellen Glassgow, Gail Lavingan, Jennifer Trevino, Cathy Millar, Sharon Plocher . Back row: Bob Long, David Taylor, Jeanette Navia and Geoff Giles. Photo by Sara Lewis

**May 21**—Field Trip Chairman Geoff Giles reports "on 21 May, early risers from WBC were treated to a beautiful bird walk along the banks of the James River Falls in Richmond, led by Richmond Audubon top birder Lewis Barnett. Late warblers, including blackpoll, magnolia and others were singing high in the canopy, tuning up for nesting grounds farther north. More up-close and personal were more cedar waxwings than any of us had ever seen. We first saw a large flock stuffing themselves on ripe mulberries, but more and more, and still more cedar wax-



Left to right, front row: Jan Lockwood, Cheryl Jacobson, Bev Spannuth and Ann Carpenter. Back row: Inge Curtis, Gary Carpenter, Lewis Barnett, Herb Spannuth, Geoff Giles and Donnie Goodrich.

Photo by Donnie Goodrich

wings were all through the river valley. We marvelled at one cedar waxwing so full he had the profile of the Goodyear blimp. He sat digesting his hearty mulberry breakfast most of the morning on a bare branch in the sun, oblivious to our admiring stares.





Photo by Donnie Goodrich

The show-stealers came later, in the form of a beautiful male American kestrel who sat on a bare branch of a large dead tree, generally unphased by about thirty minutes of constant mobbing by two mature male orchard orioles, two great-crested flycatchers, a Carolina chickadee and (last but not least) an intrepid blue-gray gnatcatcher! Was the kestrel digesting one of their brethren? A female orchard oriole perched nearby and watched her two male champions make repeated runs at the falcon, who dwarfed all of his pursuers in size. The male orchard orioles would perch beside the kestrel for breathers on a nearby limb between attack runs, affording extraordinary photo ops. Several bald eagles and two red-tailed hawks soared unconcerned high above this scene as we watched the action. This was an amazing show, and we were all impressed that Lewis was able to get these birds to perform for us!

Lewis encouraged us to do a rerun of this trip next May, a few weeks earlier in the month, when the heavy war-

bler traffic is coming through this gorgeous nearby habitat. We should!!"

Photo by Inge Curtis



Left to right, front row: Andre Gardner, Jordan Turner, Fred Hecht, Jeanne Millin, Tyae Depalm. Left to right, back row: Mike Millin, Bill Williams, Ellen Glassgow, Jeanette Navia, Cathy Millar, Geoff Giles, Jennifer Trevino, Jan Lockwood, Sharon Plocher and George Rountree. Missing from photo are Tory Gussman, John Swenkler, Nancy Hummel and Margaret Ware (who took this picture).

**May 28**—Leader Bill Williams was joined by 18 other participants in the walk at New Quarter Park. Once again the group included Scout Master Andre Gardner and members of Troop 195 who are working on a bird identification merit badge). During the walk a total of 6 Clapper Rails were heard calling from separate marsh locations. There were 4 active Osprey nests noted and an Acadian Flycatcher (one of eight identified during the morning) was seen incubating on a nest of the outer branches of an American Holly. There were a total of 50 species heard or seen during the walk.

## 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.



June's bird photo

May's bird was an immature Black-crowned Night Heron.



## CALENDAR

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Saturday, June 11 | WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, 8AM, Geoff Giles, Leader   |
| June 11-19        | VSO Foray, Alleghany County. Full details at <a href="http://www.virginiabirds.net/F_trips.html">www.virginiabirds.net/F_trips.html</a> |
| June 17-19        | VSO Summer field Trip to the New River Valley. Field trips are offered Friday afternoon, all day Saturday and Sunday morning.           |
| Sunday, June 19   | HRBC Bird Walk, Newport News Park, 7am, Jane Frigo, Leader  |
| Saturday, June 25 | WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, 7AM, Bill Williams, Leader   |
| Sunday, July 3    | HRBC Bird Walk, Newport News Park, 7 AM, Jane Frigo, Leader   |
| Saturday, July 9  | WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, 8am, ?????????   |
| Sunday, July 17   | HRBC Bird Walk, Newport News Park, 7am, Jane Frigo, Leader  |
| Saturday, July 23 | WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, 7 AM, ?????????  |