



The Flyer

Newsletter of the Williamsburg Bird Club

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www.williamsburgbirdclub.org

September 2013



President's Corner By Shirley Devan

Thank you for shopping at Wild Birds Unlimited at Monticello Marketplace here in Williamsburg! How do I know you've been shopping there? Because the Bird Club recently received a generous donation from George and Val Copping, owners of WBU, representing a 5% rebate to the Club for all purchases by Bird Club members in the first half of 2013.

George and Val have supported our Bird Club since they opened their first store in 1990. How many remember their store on Richmond Road next to Manhattan Bagels? Sometimes their small parking lot was jammed with birders' cars, and we all enjoyed exploring the wonderful treasures tucked away in the corners and shelves of that small space.



Photo by Shirley Devan

When they moved to their "new" store at Monticello Marketplace in 1998, they were able to increase their inventory

of beautiful bird-related home and gift items plus storage for seed, feeders, nest boxes, poles, baffles plus much other bird feeding equipment. How many of us have gone in to buy "just" suet or birdseed and left with a couple of charming, unexpected finds—a gift for a relative's upcoming birthday or—just as nice—a gift for ourselves!

Please remember to let the friendly sales staff, Lisa Spillane or Petra Hunt, or George or Val, know you are a Bird Club member and they will add your purchase to the "Bird Club box."

Many thanks to George and Val for their continued support of our Bird Club and the birds of Williamsburg! They make possible several of our scholarships each year. We appreciate all you do for our Club!

September Meeting.

The September meeting will be held at 7:30 PM on Wednesday, the 18th. The film *How to Turn Your Yard Into a Wild Bird Magnet* will be shown. Refreshments will be provided by Sharon and Dick Kiefer.

The meetings this year will be in Andrews Hall, Room 101. Please be sure to display your parking permit —also e-mailed to you.

September Field Trip

By Geoff Giles

Fall is coming, and with its arrival comes one of our most exciting birding trips of the year. On 21 September we will cross the James River to bird the Hog Island Wildlife Management Area. This is some of the least disturbed and best managed river's edge, marshland, coastal scrub, and forest area in our region. It is not often that an opportunity to explore it with local experts comes our way, but that is what we'll do in mid-September!

Expect to see and hear eagles, waders, marsh birds, shorebirds, songbirds, raptors and more—in a beautiful natural setting, much of which harks back to the look of our land before development and the human footprint changed our natural setting. This trip always gives us the pleasures of up-close encounters with the birds of the season in a variety of natural habitats we can't normally access—and is often good

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Updated Summary of Bird Data

The latest version of Bill Williams' *Summary of Local Bird Data through 2012: 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.

for some surprise encounters as well. The ferry ride across the James sometimes offers some birding bonuses, too.

We will depart on Saturday morning, 21 September, at 0730 hours from the parking lot of the Williamsburg Crossing Shopping Center (south of the intersection of 199 and Jamestown Road) to carpool and caravan to Hog Island. No need to sign up in advance, simply come and enjoy the trip with us. Although we will plan to conclude the trip by mid-day, if some of us choose to stay longer they are free to do so and there are good spots to enjoy a take-along lunch in the outdoors. This should be a great day, and we hope you'll join us!!

To reach the main tract of Hog Island Wildlife Management Area (WMA), you must first pass through a perfunctory security screening at Dominion Power's Surry Nuclear Power Station. Please have a photo ID with you. An access permit is also required for visitors to any Virginia Wildlife Management Area. Information at <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/access-permit>. For any further info needed or any questions, please feel free to contact Geoff Giles at tylerandal2@aol.com or by phone at 757-645-8716.

Reported Sightings For July and August

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!

July 2. Virginia Boyles, Bills Williams, and Brian Taber joined Ruth Beck and others for the Craney Island survey. There were a total of 67 species seen, including 56 Killdeer, 20 Black-necked Stilts, 304 Least Terns, and 10 Common Nighthawks.

July 4. Hugh Beard reports seeing a Ruddy Duck at Diascund Reservoir. The duck seemed to be unable to fly and Hugh said he never saw it dive, but it was occasionally feeding on things floating on the surface.

July 7. John Adair, Virginia & George Boyles, Barbara & Richard Hudgins joined leader Jane Frigo and other birders for the HRBC walk in Newport News Park. Fifty-four species were seen during the morning, including a lone Ruddy Duck and a Green Heron.

July 10. Bill Williams, Virginia & George Boyles, and Alex Minarik join Ruth Beck and others for the Craney Island survey. Sixty-nine species were identified including 84 Lesser Yellowlegs, 1 Marbled Godwit, 67 Short-billed Dowitchers, and 1 Black Skimmer. A coyote and a mink were seen as were fresh bear and coyote tracks.

July 21. Geoff Giles, George & Virginia Boyles, and John & Marilyn Adair were among the birders who joined leader Jane Frigo for the HRBC walk in Newport News Park. Forty-eight species were seen, including 2 Barred Owls.

July 25. Bill Williams, Virginia & George Boyles, Inge Curtis, and Alex Minarik join Ruth Beck and others for the Craney Island survey. Sixty-six species were identified including 16 American Avocets, 612 Semipalmated Sandpipers, 1 Western Sandpiper, and 285 Royal Terns.

July 31. Bill Williams, Alex Minarik, and Brian Taber join Ruth Beck and others for the Craney Island survey. Eighty-six species were identified in-

cluding 4 Cooper's Hawks, 1 Black-bellied Plover, 5 Willet, 2 Wilson's Phalarope and 7 Lesser Black-backed Gulls.

Aug. 2. Bill Williams spots a Cliff Swallow foraging with Barn Swallows at Drummond's Field/Mainland Farms.

Aug. 4. John & Marilyn Adair, George & Virginia Boyles, and Richard Hudgins joined leader Jane Frigo and 12 other birders for the HRBC walk in Newport News Park. Fifty-one species were identified, including Green Heron, Bald Eagle, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Hairy Woodpecker.

Aug. 7. Virginia & George Boyles, Brian Taber, Bill Williams, and David Youker joined Ruth Beck for the Craney Island survey. There were 81 species of birds identified including 2 Northern Bobwhite, 1 Black-crowned Night-Heron, 37 Black-necked Stilts, 34 American Avocets, and 3,816 Semipalmated Sandpipers.

Aug. 15. Lois Leeth reports from Florida seeing 20 Roseate Spoonbills, 5 Great Egrets, several Cattle Egrets, 5 Snowy Egrets, 1 Anhinga, and 5 White Ibis.

Aug. 15. Ruth Beck, Inge Curtis, Alex Minarik, Bill Williams and several other birders had a good day doing the Craney Island survey. Eighty-six species were identified including 16 Stilt Sandpipers, 1 Tennessee Warbler, and 1 Dickcissel.

Aug 18. On a rainy morning, Richard Hudgins joined leader Jane Frigo, and other birders for the HRBC walk in Newport News Park. Thirty species of birds were seen.

19th Annual Kiptopeke Challenge

By Brian Taber

The **Wild Birds Unlimited of Williamsburg** team is the only team to have competed in every Kiptopeke Challenge! This 24-hour team-birding competition on the Eastern Shore is the main fund-raiser for Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory, and all funds go to helping the programs for hawks, butterflies, songbirds, educational presentations, a William and Mary graduate student in biology grant, as well as other programs. See the website and Blog at www.cvwo.org for more info. This year, Paul Nasca of Fredericksburg is again on the team and another member or two might still be added for the September 21st event. Williamsburg Bird Club members have provided support as sponsors for this team over the years, which is much appreciated. Last year, the team placed first for funds raised and second for most birds found. The team has often dedicated its efforts to friends who have passed away and this year, it is dedicated to Robert Klages, who passed away in November—he was a CVWO Board member, Treasurer, hawk trapper, and much more. Sponsors may send tax-deductible donations for the team to Brian Taber at 103 Exeter Court, Williamsburg, VA 23185.

Williamsburg Bird Club Book Review

By Jeanette Navia



The Warbler Guide, by Tom Stephenson and Scott Whittle. Princeton University Press, 2013. ISBN 9780691154824. \$29.95. 560 p. Williamsburg Library call number 598.872 STE.

You might think that a bird identification guide that covers only fifty-six species would be small and easy to carry around with you in a backpack. Not

in this case. *The Warbler Guide* by Tom Stephenson and Scott Whittle is so chock-full of information about the warblers typically seen in North America that it has more pages than the Crossley ID Guide, which covers more than ten times the number of species.

The Warbler Guide is an incredible book. There is the same attention paid to the sounds warblers make as is paid to the birds' appearance. There are sonograms galore with a six-page section titled "Understanding Sonograms." Sonograms aren't the only way Stephenson and Whittle describe the sounds made by the various species. They discuss song structure, elements (a single note, a slur, a buzz, etc.), and song qualities (pitch, volume, rhythm, length). A very helpful 22-page section titled "How to Listen to Warbler Songs," replete with examples of the sonograms and notational symbols, helps the user not only understand how to use the book, but also how to listen more closely to birds in the wild.

For readers already familiar with sonograms, there is a "Warbler Song Finder Chart," where sonograms shown on several consecutive pages are separated into sections for trilled, partly buzzy, buzzy, complex, partly-trilled, and clear, and then broken into pitch (rising, variable, falling, steady). Find the sonogram of the sound you hear a warbler make and read the species' name. In addition to the sonograms that detail the species' songs and calls, the writers include a sentence to help remember a species' song. For instance, for the Orange-Crowned Warbler they write, "An orange, quickly bouncing on your crown, will eventually slow down and fall." For the Kentucky Warbler, "Can-tucky" is state of doers: 'will do, will do, will do.'"

Visual guides in two-page spreads are also extremely helpful: a "Face Quick Finder" shows a side view of each species' face; a "Side Quick Finder" shows a side view of the whole bird perching; a "45° View Quick Finder" shows the sides and heads of the birds from below; and an "Under View Quick Finder," shows the birds' butts as seen from

below. Another spread of just the birds' undertails, broken up between Eastern and Western species, is also helpful.

Then there are the pages on each individual species, ordered alphabetically. Icons show the silhouette, the color impression (blue and white for the Cerulean Warbler), the tail pattern, the range map, and what section of a tree the bird is most likely to be seen in. There are several different views of the bird (all photos) with text to point out important field marks. There are photos of similar-looking species with text showing how to compare the target species to the similar one. Also, there are photos and text showing age and sex differences.

There are other details in here—too many to list! At the end of the book, there are pages on “Similar Non-Warbler Species,” including sparrows, kinglets, verdins, chickadees and others. There is also a quiz and review with photos of mystery birds and information about habitat and behavior; you are encouraged to figure out what species is shown. A glossary and bibliography are included.

What a resource! If you have an interest in really knowing one warbler species from another, this is your book. You can't easily lug it around with you in the field, but it's definitely the most comprehensive identification guide I have ever seen.

Northwest River Park—PROW data for 2013 **From Shirley Devan**

In 2013, biologists and volunteers monitored 98 Prothonotary Warbler boxes at Northwest River Park in Chesapeake, VA.

This citizen science project is supervised by Dr. Bob Reilly, Master Bander and Professor, VCU Center for Environmental Studies, with assistance from licensed banders Stephen Living, Terrestrial Biologist with VA DGIF, and Shirley Devan, Williamsburg Bird Club and Historic Rivers Chapter, VA Master Naturalist.

The VSO Small Grant Conservation Fund awarded start up funds for this project in Spring 2011. Other sponsors and contributors were: VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Richmond Audubon Society, Williamsburg Bird Club, Ruth Beck, former VSO President, and volunteers from the Williamsburg Bird Club and Historic Rivers Chapter of the VA Master Naturalists.

This is the fifth major site of study of Prothonotary Warblers in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain of Virginia. Dr. Reilly oversees three of these five sites with about 350 nest boxes spread throughout Dutch Gap Conservation Area (Chesterfield County), White Bank Park (Colonial Heights), and Northwest River Park (Chesapeake).

Thirty-nine boxes were first installed at this site in 2009. In Spring 2011 an additional 62 boxes were installed along the shoreline of this bald cypress-lined freshwater river that flows into the Albemarle Sound in NC.

In 2013, 91% of the boxes showed nesting activity by Prothonotary Warblers. Nesting activity includes everything from a “sprig of moss” to multiple clutches. Level of nesting activity increased substantially from 2011 to 2013:

<u>Year</u>	<u>% Nests with PROW nest activity</u>
2011	54%
2012	68%
2013	91%

In 2013, 291 nestlings were banded, a 76% increase from 2012 (165).

<u>Year</u>	<u># Nestlings banded</u>
2011	136
2012	165
2013	291

In 2013, thirty-three females were recaptured, having been banded from 2009 through 2013.

Acadia National Park, August 2013 **By Shirley Devan**

I was looking forward to seeing new birds—maybe life birds?—on our mid-August trip to Acadia National Park and Bar Harbor, Maine, in addition to exploring new geography, geology, flora and fauna on the coast of Maine.



We enjoyed beautifully clear weather. Even the locals were raving about it! This was our first trip to Acadia National Park, and we were eager to explore the various habitats and features of this very large park, the only national park in Maine and the first national park established east of the Mississippi in 1916.

Even though this was not a “birding trip,” Steve and I both wore our binoculars everywhere, setting off every morning from our hotel for our mile walk into Bar Harbor with our binoculars and cameras swinging around our necks. We each wore our “Williamsburg Bird Club” caps every day, and I even bumped into a Williamsburg person on one day. Hard to be anonymous in a Bird Club hat!



On our first venture into the park Thursday morning we were surprised and excited to see five Wild Turkeys close by the roadside. “This is a great sign,” I told myself. “We will have great birds during our visit.” Steve and I each snapped photos of the turkeys from the car.

By the second day we had broken the code for the ubiquitous shuttle buses and enjoyed the free, convenient transportation. From mid-June to mid-October, the Island Explorer shuttle buses, with their eight routes, provide visitors easy access to almost every part of Mount Desert Island and Acadia National Park. Since 2002 L.L. Bean has donated over \$3 million to the Friends of Acadia to support the shuttle bus service and the Park. Thank you, L. L. Bean, for reducing traffic in Acadia National Park!

We registered in advance for the free, ranger-led Bird Walk scheduled for 7 am Sunday morning at the Sieur de Monts Visitor Center and looked forward to seeing some new birds. The person who took our reservation told us to bring a bird field guide and a pair of binoculars and that the group would be limited to 20 people. Not a problem—we had all that covered. Nevertheless at 7 am on Sunday morning several families arrived for the walk with only one pair of binoculars for 4–6 people to share! The park ranger had a couple of spare pairs of binocs in his backpack and readily shared them. But folks did not know how to use them! So the ranger spent the first hour trying to teach about a dozen people, one by one as they passed the binocs around, how to use binoculars. During that time we saw only a Cedar Waxwing and a Red-eyed Vireo. Several of us realized that the Bird Walk would not be what we expected, so we wandered off leaving the unfortunate park ranger to deal with the frustrated new birders.

Even though the Park was crowded, we found that we only had to venture about 100 yards down a trail to find quiet solitude and enjoy beautiful scenery by ourselves.

I had hoped to take a boat ride out to the island where Atlantic Puffins were nesting but we visited too late in August—the puffins had left already. Instead we scheduled a half-day boat trip to Baker Island off the southern coast of Mount Desert Island. A Park Ranger filled us in on the history of Mount Desert Island, Bar Harbor, and Acadia National Park during the 75-minute trip to Baker Island. I stood in the front of the boat to spot any birds we might encounter. The only year bird I spotted that day was a Black Guillemot flying across our path! Other birds: Common Eiders (rafts of hundreds), Great Black-



backed Gulls and Herring Gulls following the lobster boats, and a single Common Loon. Once on the island, we hiked overland to the ocean side where a few Common Terns were diving for food and a lone Spotted Sandpiper stood on a distant rock at low tide, plus large rafts of Common Eiders, rearranged several times by tour boats and lobster boats.

Since you asked, we did make it up to the top of Cadillac Mountain—but not for a sunrise. We were lucky enough to have a beautiful sunrise over the bay every morning from our hotel balcony. As folks had warned us, the view from the mountaintop was breathtaking, particularly on a clear day. There were a couple of Dark-eyed Juncos hopping around on the rocks and American Crows were perched in several snags calling.

I was keeping a bird list but I was disappointed that the birds were our regulars here in Virginia! The only difference was the state bird of Maine, the Black-capped Chickadee. Otherwise the usual suspects: Ruby-throated Hummingbird, American Crow, Double-crested Cormorant, American Robin, Laughing Gull, Mallards, Turkey Vulture, American Goldfinch, Gray Catbird, Mourning Dove, Chipping Sparrow, House Sparrow. These birds would hardly make a “highlights” list from one of our local bird walks!

I’m still puzzling over the bird list. Perhaps we were not at the right spot at the right time? Wrong time of year? I did not feel I was seeing birds I couldn’t identify. We just did not see that many birds.

So the Black Guillemot and the Black-capped Chickadee were the only year birds for me. But no life birds. We still enjoyed the stunning Maine coastline, the great food (lobster in every shape, form and sauce), and the afternoon visit with Steve’s college friend in nearby Bangor, Maine. For birds, I think I’ll go another time of the year—spring perhaps

August Bird Walks & Field Trip

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

Bird Walk on August 10th at NQP



Sandy Robertson, Betty Peterson, BJ & Liam Joiner, Cheryl Jacobson, Geoff Giles, John & Marilyn Adair, George & Virginia Boyles, Bruce Glendening, Nelson Ensley, Jan Lockwood, Ruth Gordon, Tom McCary, Becky & Ned Rose, Cathy Bond, Cynthia & Bob Long, and Joanne Andrews joined leader Jim Corliss for the August 10th bird walk in New Quarter Park. Thirty-five species were identified including 1 Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, 2 Clapper Rails, 1 Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and 2 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds.

Field Trip to Craney Island—August 24th.

By Geoff Giles All the bird photos were supplied by George Boyles



Photo by Dave Youker

Ruth Beck did it again. This time she led 27 happy birders on a day that could only be described as perfect late summer weather, with good company and good birding to match. On a sunny day with only a few clouds, the temperature reached the low eighties, but was never too warm due to a brisk breeze. That breeze was made to order, as it kept the



American Avocets

mosquitoes from being a hindrance to an otherwise perfect day. Obliging, healthy numbers of lovely birds (58 species!) were also in attendance and also visibly enjoyed the day!

As hoped for, there were goodly numbers of raptors, songbirds, shorebirds, waterfowl, waders, gulls and terns. No sooner had we entered the compound than the sightings of redtail hawks came from high, low, left and right. We could hear some songbirds, but understandably they let the redtails dominate

the visible field of view. There was nevertheless a goodly number of songbird species seen and heard, including blue crossbeaks and meadowlarks.

As Ruth led us through the compound, we also were treated to two viewings of harriers hunting over meadows and had a stunning flyby of a merlin, who seemed oblivious of anything but his hunting. Over meadows and marsh there were purple martins, plus barn and tree swallows performing their insect control patrols. On the river we spotted a couple of ospreys fishing, doubtless taking on some reserve fuel for an upcoming trip south. Lining the banks of the river were double-crested cormorants on the lookout for a fish dinner.

Craney is great for shorebirds and many of us have too few opportunities to learn the unique features of these look-alike birds and were glad for the large flocks and variety Ruth showed us. Migration was clearly in progress for the peeps,



Black-necked Stilts



Snowy Egret

particularly for the semipalmated sandpipers which covered the flats and the banks of the impoundments by the thousands. There were other sandpipers with and among them, including least, spotted, white-rumped and stilt sandpipers. Occupying their places in their respective niches on the sandbanks and shallows were other shorebirds, including lesser and greater yellowlegs, semi-palmated plover, killdeer and short-billed dowitchers. Always at a tantalizing distance, but plainly visible through spotting scopes, were several beautiful flocks of American avocets, and with them two marbled godwits. Interspersed with the above were a goodly number of black-necked stilts. The latter obliged us with some great close-up views of their foraging style, and their spectacular color patterns!

Out on the impoundments and always at a cautious distance were phalaropes mixed in with ducks, gulls and terns. Most numerous were the Wilson's phalaropes, which were active in small flocks, while red-necked phalaropes, also present, were only viewed as singles a few times. The ducks in view included northern shovelers, blue-winged teal, ruddies, black ducks, and mallards. Most of the ducks exhibited a fairly drab plumage this time of year, attesting to the long winter ahead before they will molt into their breeding finery.

Of course waders were also in evidence, including great blue herons, great egrets and snowy egrets. We also had the pleasure of up-close views of a couple of glossy ibises foraging in shallow marsh waters. One lone whimbrel made a brief appearance near the ibises and at fairly close range, but he was apparently camera-shy and waded into tall marshgrass, refusing to reappear for an encore. Gulls and terns were numerous, but usually fairly distant. Recognizable were laughing, ring-billed, herring and great black-backed gulls. Several species of terns were seen and heard, including black tern, least tern, Caspian tern and royal tern.

Brown pelicans patrolled lazily along the shoreline and at one point we took a break from spotting birds to admire a school of dolphins working lazily just offshore. The relaxed rolling of the dolphins gave no hint of the frantic terror among the school of fish they had herded and were taking turns dining on. No doubt about it, better to be the hunter than the lunch! In the not-too-distant background were the aircraft carriers and other warships for which the dredge spoils that make Craney Island are removed to keep the deep channels needed open. These fearsome grey hunters at their moorings too cast an aura of calm and tranquility over the seascape they were a part of on this gorgeous day, which had shared nature's riches with us.

We owe the privilege of our visits to this extraordinary habitat to the hard work that Ruth Beck invests in working closely with the Craney Island facility's management. She ensures that habitat value for migratory and resident wildfowl, particularly valuable nesting habitat, is preserved and optimized, with minimum impact on the work which the Craney staff is charged to perform there. Ruth led our tour expertly, making it very easy to enjoy. In addition to Ruth's expertise for our visit, we were fortunate to have along several of the experts who regularly assist her in her conservation work at Craney Island, including Dave Youker, Brian Taber, Mark Smithson, and George and Virginia Boyles. A hearty thanks to Ruth and to her team of experts for helping us to spot and identify some great birds on this beautiful day!!



Least Sandpiper



Left to right: Shirley Devan, Joyce Lowry, Rick Bennett, Marian Bennett. Not pictured: Bob & Cynthia Long.

Bird Walk on August 24th at NQP

Shirley Devan wrote: “The early birders participating in the regular 4th Saturday Bird Walk at New Quarter Park identified 26 species between 7 and 9 am on a beautifully clear morning, August 24.

We enjoyed early looks at two Clapper Rails exploring the muddy banks of Queen’s Creek. We also found an adult Yellow-crowned Night Heron perched on a piling at the marina and four Osprey still around the creek. Marian spotted the Yellow-billed Cuckoo in its accustomed spot high above the path to the fire circle.

A total of 26 species were identified during the morning—in addition to the birds already mentioned, there were 2 Bald Eagles, 2 Yellow-billed Cuckoos, and 1 Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

Photos from Members



Fred Blystone photographed this Northern Cardinal in Colonial Williamsburg on a rainy day in August.



This immature Red-headed Woodpecker was photographed by Shirley Devan in York River State Park on August 26th.

The six photos on the next two pages were sent in by Inge Curtis during May—I overlooked putting them in the summer newsletter.





Eastern Shore Birding and Wildlife Festival

From Stephen Living | Terrestrial Biologist/Watchable Wildlife | Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

There is still time to register for this year's Eastern Shore Birding and Wildlife Festival. This year's festival is scheduled for Oct 11–13th and will again be headquartered in Cape Charles. Our Keynote speaker is Greg Miller, whose own Big Year inspired the book and movie of the same name. In addition to our keynote, Greg will lead a number of trips and give a workshop in "Geeking Out!"—taking advantage of the latest technology and apps to enhance your birding experience. Photographers should take note of the Photo Contest and photo field trip. This is an event not to be missed—the fall migration along the DelMarVa Peninsula is spectacular.

Registration and the full schedule are available online at <http://www.esvafestivals.org> or like the festival on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/ESVAFestivals>

Hope arrives on St. Croix

**By Bryan Watts and Fletcher Smith
Center for Conservation Biology**

Hope the Whimbrel has been resighted by locals on St. Croix. She was observed on 23 August by Lisa Yntema at Southgate Pond. Southgate Pond is an Important Bird Area designated by Birdlife International and is part of a coastal reserve owned and protected by St. Croix Environmental Association. This is the fifth time that Hope has returned to her winter territory on St. Croix since she was tagged by The Center for Conservation Biology at Box Tree Creek, Virginia in 2009. She has traveled at least 62,500 miles (100,000 kilometers) during that time.

Hope returns this week without the transmitter that allowed researchers and the world to follow her travels. After more than 4 years the transmitter's antenna was lost in September of 2012, leading to an expedition to trap her and remove the equipment. Hope's transmitter was removed but leg bands and her identifying coded flag were left in place for future identification. This is the first time she has been seen since leaving St. Croix on April 2nd for spring migration.

Hope spends September through March on her winter territory in the mangroves of Great Pond. Great Pond is a 50-hectare mangrove wetland designated as an Important Bird Area and supports at least 72 bird species during some portion of their life cycle. Her activities are monitored regularly by local ecologist Lisa Yntema.

Hope is one of two dozen birds that have been tracked in a collaborative effort between The Center for Conservation Biology, The Nature Conservancy, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Georgia Department of Natural Resources Non-game Division, Canadian Wildlife Service, Manomet

Center for Conservation Sciences, and Virginia Coastal Zone Management designed to discover migratory routes that connect breeding and winter areas and to identify migratory staging areas that are critical to the conservation of this declining species.

CCB Annual Report now available for download

The Center for Conservation Biology's 2012 annual report titled "Saving Birds Through Science" is now available for download as a pdf (<http://www.cbbirds.org/about-us/annual-report/>). The report gives an overview of CCB's activities during the calendar year within its 4 major program areas including 1) Legacy Projects, 2) Emerging Issues, 3) Citizens in Conservation, and 4) Education and Outreach. Thirteen individual projects are highlighted each with a discussion of the conservation problem, research approach, and progress. The Center continues to be a leading advocate for the health and significance of bird populations. It is our distinct privilege to work side by side with so many dedicated partners to forge a better future for imperiled birds. **Red-cockaded**

Woodpeckers at Piney Grove Preserve

From Mike Wilson, Center for Conservation Biology

The Red-cockaded Woodpecker population at the Nature Conservancy's Piney Grove Preserve had another good year of productivity in 2013 with the successful fledging of 20 birds from 9 breeding pairs. This is the third consecutive year the population has produced at least 20 fledglings following bumper yields of 25 and 26 birds for 2011 and 2012, respectively. The slightly lower productivity for 2013 compared to the previous 2 years was due to a combination of one group not breeding and a lower than normal number of fledglings among the remaining breeding groups. However, among the successful breeders this year was a 13 year old male that has remained at his natal location and has held onto breeding status there since 2005.

The Piney Grove Preserve supports the only population of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in Virginia and is the northernmost location for the species in the world. Since 2001, the number of birds and breeding groups has tripled with the help of population management, translocation, cavity competitor control, artificial cavity installation, and a well-orchestrated regime of habitat management that includes prescribed fire and selective tree removal. Currently, the population is represented 51 adult birds and the 20 new fledglings (10 males and 10 females). We will follow up with another census in winter to determine the status and distribution of all individuals in the population. Typically, only 50-75% of the fledgling birds are still present during the winter survey.

Bird ID 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.



Photo for the September



Summer's photo was of a Northern Shoveler.

CALENDAR

Thursday, September 12	HRBC Monthly Meeting. Butterflies of Virginia—Presented by Teta Kain. See www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org for further information.
Saturday, September 14	WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, 8 AM. Bill Williams, Leader
Sunday, September 15	HRBC Bird Walk at Newport News Park, 7 AM, Jane Frigo, Leader
Wednesday, September 18	WBC Monthly Meeting. See Front Page
Saturday, September 21	WBC Field Trip to Hog Island. See Front Page
Sunday, September 22	HRBC Field Trip to Jamestown Island and the Colonial Parkway. See www.hamptonroadsbirdclub.org for further information.
Saturday, September 28	WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, 7 am, Jim Corliss, Leader
October 11–12	Eastern Shore Birding and Wildlife Festival. See Page 12