



# The Flyer

## Newsletter of the Williamsburg Bird Club

Vol. 39, No. 7

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

September 2015

### President's Corner

By Geoff Giles



Hope the summer has treated you kindly and, in spite of some uncomfortable heat and humidity, has afforded you some time for relaxation and enjoyment of nature. Some familiar voices in the local

avian chorus have been heard less frequently than usual. Among those are our beloved bluebirds, glaringly scarce in the bluebird box trails in our local parks this year. Some of us have been fortunate enough to have successful nesting in boxes in our backyards. As of 22 August I am expecting my third clutch of bluebirds this summer to take off any day. My mealworm offerings are still in hot demand. The parents come to my feeder for suet and no mess blend bird seed, but save the mealworms and bugs, as far as I can see, for their chicks. The male has worked like a one-armed paperhanger to keep all his offspring well fed this summer. Good man!

Just now the bluebirds and many of the others look a bit out of sorts, as they are molting some of their worn feathers and replacing them with new ones. Post nesting is a good time to get that necessary task done, as they have endured the rigors of breeding and feeding their nestlings (fifteen in about three months for my bluebirds), food is still relatively plentiful, and they are not yet having to deal with the rigors of scarcer food and shelter in winter and, for some species, the energy-intensive work of migration.

Speaking of migration, it is nearly time again for migrant species surprises to come almost daily. Some of those surprises will be birds seldom seen and enjoyed here which will be passing through briefly and just pausing to pack in some energy to continue a longer journey. Some few of those will

### September 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting

Please join us for our next meeting on Wednesday, September 16<sup>th</sup> in William and Mary's Andrews Hall, Room 101, beginning at 7:30. The presentation that evening will be by Gary and Ann Carpenter, describing Roads Scholar bird trips in general and then highlight the more unusual birds that the two of them saw during their Roads Scholar travels in Texas. Many of the birds they saw can be seen anywhere on the US Gulf Coast, which is why they will focus on the "highlight" birds of the trip. Please remember to have a parking pass on your dashboard. If you need a new one, it can be downloaded on our website at [www.williamsburgbirdclub.org](http://www.williamsburgbirdclub.org).

### October 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting

Our October speaker will be Eric Walters, Assistant Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at Old Dominion University. He will be speaking on the impact of urban fragmentation on wildlife movement patterns. This understanding is critical to providing long-term conservation of species that use such areas. One of North America's most important migration routes, the Atlantic Flyway follows a path directly over an urban area of 1.6 million people. Hampton Roads, the 2nd largest port in North America, provides important stopover habitat to millions of birds each year. Fragmented patches of protected habitat are critically important to many migratory species. His work examines the role that these habitat patches play for both resident and migratory species within the urban matrix. He will also speak on the significant public outreach component of this project.

### November 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting

On November 18<sup>th</sup>, we will have Patti Reum speak of American Kestrel population concerns and her project installing nest boxes to address these concerns. The "Kestrel Nest Box Project" is sponsored by the Virginia Society of Ornithology and headed up by Patti Reum and Dan Bieker of the VSO's Conservation Committee. At our meeting, Patti Reum will describe the plight of the American Kestrel, the project to install nest boxes in appropriate habitat around Virginia, and what individuals and bird clubs need to do to get a kestrel nest box (or two or three...) installed in their areas.

*Continued on Page 4.*

## 2015 Officers

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<b>Historian</b> Tom McCary	229-2830

## Wild Birds Unlimited

Visit the new Wild Birds Unlimited Store in Settler's Market. The WBC receives a 5% rebate on the pre-tax amount our Club members spend at WBU. Remember to let them know you are a member.

## A Note from Audrey Root, Bill Williams Nature Camp Scholarship Recipient

The Williamsburg Bird Club has been so kind to me and I'm so thankful they have given me the opportunity to go to Nature Camp with the Bill Williams Scholarship. It taught me so much about science, birds, and the environment, but also about how to be a better person and budding naturalist. Going there brings great joy to many people, and I'm glad you are investing in our generation, but also our future. Attached I have an article about my experiences at Nature Camp for an upcoming newsletter. I hope you can include it because Nature Camp and my scholarship mean so much to me. Thank you,  
*Audrey Root*



Photo provided by Nature Camp

Nature Camp is filled with so many fun people and fun times. I wrote reports, took classes, and majored in ecology--the study of ecosystems. This focused on the importance of trees and how invasive species can destroy ecosystems. While the focus wasn't on our avian friends, it never stopped me from asking about them, or striving to have the best ornithology report. Some of the birds around camp were memorable because of their uniqueness, like the male Scarlet Tanager my class saw bathing in a small waterfall just outside of camp. However, some birds made it into my memories because of the lessons that came with them. On the second to last day of camp, we were given the opportunity to take a class of your choice. I, of course, decided on the bird walk. We drove to McCormick Farm and saw many bluebirds and cardinals, an Eastern Towhee, and even a Killdeer accompanied by a White-rumped Sandpiper (in the middle of the mountains!!) But my favorite part was when we saw a Black Vulture. I enjoyed it so much because I learned how to tell a Turkey Vulture from a Black Vulture by the markings on their wings. Learning is such an important aspect of life, and Nature Camp allows knowledge to be something exciting to explore and discover instead of a required chore to receive and forget. The Williamsburg Bird Club is truly amazing for granting people the opportunity to go to Nature Camp.

Turkey Vulture Photo by Inge Curtis



## Kiptopeke Challenge Coming Soon

The Kiptopeke Challenge is Coastal Virginia Wildlife Organization's "big birding day event" to call attention to avian migration on the Eastern Shore, as well as supporting numerous other conservation efforts. Teams of birders will scour the Eastern Shore during a 24 hour period on September 19 to see which team can record the most species.



*Prothonotary Warbler Photo by Judy Jones*

CVWO also sponsors the College Creek Hawkwatch plus the Kiptopeke Hawkwatch, which will start very soon. The Kiptopeke Challenge funds also support public education and research programs, including studies of songbirds, hawks, sea birds, waterbirds, Northern Saw-whet Owls, Monarch butterflies, and Prothonotary Warblers, including our project at Northwest River Park in Chesapeake.

Currently there are two teams with members from Williamsburg and Hampton Roads Bird Clubs... Wild Birds Unlimited with Brian Taber and Dave Youker and the Wren Wrustlers with Jan Lockwood, Nancy Barnhart, and Shirley Devan.

Since this is a fund-raising event as well as a birding challenge, we hope you might be willing to support one or both teams with a donation. If so, please make your checks payable to CVWO and send to:

- For Wren Wrustlers, send donations to Shirley Devan, 6227 Tucker Landing, Williamsburg VA 23188.
- For Wild Birds Unlimited, send donations to Brian Taber, 103 Exeter Court, Williamsburg, VA 23185.

To learn more or to form your own team, visit the CVWO website or contact Dave Youker, the Kiptopeke Challenge Coordinator at [Youkerd@aol.com](mailto:Youkerd@aol.com). Thanks for supporting this important effort. All donors will receive an account of the teams' day in the field! We always have interesting stories to tell!

## Prothonotary Warblers Do Well on the Northwest River Shirley Devan

Prothonotary Warblers enjoyed a record-breaking nesting season at Northwest River Park in Chesapeake, VA this year. From early April to early August, volunteers visited the park 19 times, monitoring the 99 boxes, and banded 305 Prothonotary Warbler nestlings, 19 females, and 2 males. Twenty-one different banded females were recaptured. Thirty-nine boxes were first installed at this site in 2009. In spring 2011 62 more boxes were installed along the shoreline of this bald cypress-lined freshwater river that flows into the Albemarle Sound in NC. Looking at the records kept since 2011, the level of nesting activity increased substantially from 2011 to 2015, going from 54% in 2011 to this year's 97%. (Nesting activity includes everything from a "sprig of moss" to multiple clutches.) Additionally, the number of nestlings banded has increased from 136 in 2011 to 305 this current season.



*PROW Nestling Photo by Shirley Devan*

Some notable surprises were that, in 2015, twenty-one different females were recaptured (four more than once), having been banded from 2009 through 2015. Notable recaptured females included a female banded as a second-year adult June 14, 2009 at box #5. This seven-year old Prothonotary Warbler shows remarkable longevity for a migrating songbird. She was recaptured twice in 2014, once in 2013, and once in 2012 at Northwest River.



## President's Corner (continued)

find our area to their liking (as we do!) and will decide to stay with us for the winter. Others will be our familiar birds of winter which left us last spring for nesting in more northerly climatic zones, returning to pass the winter with us.

It's always exciting to see that first Yellow-rumped Warbler, Brown Creeper or Yellow-bellied Sapsucker – or to hear that first White-throated Sparrow of the season paging Sam Peabody. And, oh yes, how about those beautiful waterfowl? It takes a little imagination just now to conjure up a chill in the air, but thoughts of those species help to do so.

But even before those appearances tell us that we have finally put a long, hot, and humid summer behind us, there are some other unmistakable signs. Our ospreys, which seemed unusually evident this summer, have mostly slipped southward. A few stragglers remain of our prosperous and vocal population, but most have left us. For a while those that started their migration farther north may be drifting through to fatten up on some of our fish before the fish leave the cooling waters of the bay for winter. Similarly, purple martins, chimney swifts and others also have made themselves scarce and appear to have moved south. Looking



back on this summer, unpleasant heat and humidity kept some of us from going out as much as we otherwise might have, but in our outings there seemed fewer of some of our usual summer birds of some species. For me, those included Red-eyed Vireos, Phoebe's, and Belted Kingfishers in particular. I can only hope that the brutal conditions of last winter did not severely reduce their numbers, as it apparently did the bluebirds. Let's keep our feeders going this winter, as they are visibly a lifeline at times for our birds!

*Belted Kingfisher and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker Photos by Barbara Houston*



And beyond our home patches, Jim Corliss has got some great field trips up his sleeve as usual. Great destinations near and slightly farther, including Kiptopeke, Dutch Gap, Beaverdam Park, CBBT and the Eastern Shore and our Chesapeake Bay boat trip are all in Jim's sights. If you have a special idea or wish for a field trip, please contact Jim and let him know. And for armchair travel, Cheryl Jacobson has planned some great programs for our WBC meetings on the William and Mary campus. She has some great speakers lined up for us. We'll also have some great opportunities to participate in citizen science bird programs, our pride and joy being participation in the Christmas bird count from your home or in one of our count teams. Bill Williams has made this a terrific event annually that ends our year with a super experience, not to be missed!

For those of us who are keeping a list of the Virginia birds we have seen this year, there is a special treat in store on 6 September. Birder Clark Olsen of Norfolk has chartered a boat out of Rudee Inlet in Virginia Beach to go 60 miles offshore to Norfolk Canyon for a pelagic birding day. He has the two foremost Virginia trip leaders for pelagics aboard, Bob Ake and Ned Brinkley, for a chance to see Virginia birds you otherwise can't. If you want details or to sign up, contact Clark at 757-855-3450. If you're like me and think birds are what it's all about, and that sleep is overrated, this is a trip you won't want to miss!

We look forward to lots of good things happening this year, and will continue and increase our partnerships with William and Mary, the Center for Conservation Biology, Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory, Virginia Society of Ornithology and the Hampton Roads Bird Club. We look forward to good company and good times with our fellow birders and welcome all who wish to join us for our meetings and activities. We are particularly excited to welcome young and/or new birders to join us, as we all have known the thrill of discovery of the birds that share our natural world. We all love sharing those moments. Our upcoming meeting is on Wednesday, 16 September on the campus of William and Mary. Hope to see you there and wish you a great end of this summer 'til then!!



## VSO Annual Meeting – Save the Date!

The Roanoke Valley Bird Club is hosting the 2016 Virginia Society of Ornithology's Annual Meeting April 29-May 1, 2016. You don't have to be a VSO or RVBC member to attend. In addition to lots of field trips around the Roanoke area Saturday and Sunday mornings, you can also enjoy keynote speaker Pete Dunne at Saturday night's banquet. Pete is a renowned author and speaker, longtime director of the Cape May Bird Observatory, New Jersey Audubon's Birding Ambassador, and founder of the World Series of Birding. Home base for the weekend is the Sheraton Roanoke Hotel and Conference Center at 2801

Hershberger Rd. Room reservations can be made at 540-563-9300, 800-325-3535, or

[www.sheratonroanoke.com](http://www.sheratonroanoke.com). Rates are \$99 plus tax, but you must use the "Virginia Society of Ornithology Annual Meeting 2016" designation when reserving your room. More details will be forthcoming as they become available, so check our Facebook page or our website at [roanokevalleybirdclub.com](http://roanokevalleybirdclub.com) often. But for now, make plans to attend this fun event! For more information, please contact Alyce Quinn, General Chairman, at [twoquinns@yahoo.com](mailto:twoquinns@yahoo.com).

## July 25<sup>th</sup> Bird Walk

Ten folks joined together for the July 25<sup>th</sup> bird walk at New Quarter Park. Pictured are Jan Lockwood, Bob and Cynthia Long, Tom McCary, Sue Mutell, Betty Peterson, Courtney Shaw, and Nigel Shaw. Not pictured is Joanne



Andrews. Among the ten people who participated in the Saturday, July 25 2015 New Quarter Park Bird Walk were father-daughter duo, Nigel and Courtney Shaw, from Toronto, Canada. They found us on social media and wanted to spend part of their last day as temporary tourist-migrants in Williamsburg with us!

Nigel had Summer Tanager as a target bird. Because we aim to please we got him one; a blend-in-to-the-foliage female Nigel was very pleased to declare was a life bird. It was a lifer for Courtney too, one of 4 for her this day. What captivated all of us, however, was to learn that Nigel's full-time job up north is banding birds! He's ringed 204 species, including some in Africa. The

stories he told of the places, projects, and species he and fellow banders work with in Canada was fascinating. But get this. Daughter Courtney has banded 100 species under Dad's tutelage. Pretty fabulous given that she's just about to turn 14!! Oh, yeah. Her other 3 life birds..... Tricolored Heron (we had 2), Yellow-crowned Night Heron (there were at least 4), and a fly-by immature White Ibis. See the early worms do get the birds and get to meet the most wonderful bird people.

## VSO Fall Field Trip to Chincoteague, VA on September 11-13, 2015

Every fall is different at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, so come discover the surprises that await on this year's annual fall VSO trip, September 11-13. Last year the species tallied 142, including a terrific combination of waterfowl, shorebirds and migrating songbirds. For more information and registration details, go to [http://www.virginiabirds.net/f\\_trips.html#chinc2015](http://www.virginiabirds.net/f_trips.html#chinc2015). (\$20 Field Trip Fee for non-VSO members. This fee will be applied to an individual membership that will be active until the end of 2015.)

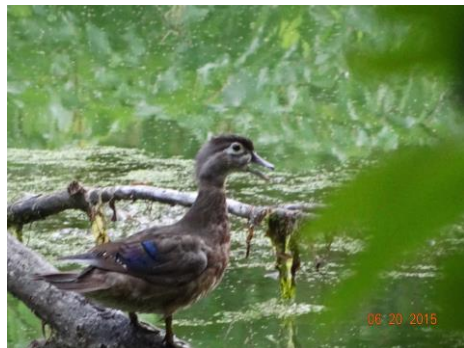


## Reported Bird Sightings for Summer 2015

*We want to know what you're seeing in your yard and travels. Please share with Club members by sending your sightings to Judy Jones [jjones184@cox.net](mailto:jjones184@cox.net) or Shirley Devan [sdevan52@cox.net](mailto:sdevan52@cox.net).*

Members reported these sightings during the summer months:

**June 17:** Jan Lockwood saw a Green Heron on the shoreline in Queens Lake. She saw a second one flying near the Queens Lake dam on June 30.



**June 20:** Jan Lockwood spotted a male Belted Kingfisher and a female Wood Duck perched briefly in a cove in Queens Lake

(several folk on the June 13 New Quarter Park Bird Walk had commented that it was difficult to find a Kingfisher this summer.) She also saw a Kingfisher on June 30.

*Wood Duck photo above and Louisiana Waterthrush photo below both by Jan Lockwood*

**June 20:** Jan Lockwood saw a beautiful bird but says she's not sure we can report this one. This Louisiana Waterthrush died due to a window strike. She had seen a pair of Louisiana Waterthrush here in April 2014, but failed to find them this year until June 20.



**June 26:** Jan Lockwood saw an Eastern Phoebe in her yard, but not in New Quarter Park, which bears out Dan Cristol's report about sinks and sources.

**July 22:** Jan Lockwood observed a "congregation" of 18 Great Egrets plus 1 Snowy Egret flying back and forth between two trees overlooking the lake, perhaps discussing foraging sites for the day. (A Great Blue Heron was also perched near the top of one tree and a Green Heron hung over the water from a branch near the bottom of the tree.) On several evenings since she's seen at least 17 Great Egrets fly in to roost for the night,

rather than the customary 9 or 10.

**July 25:** During the NQP Bird Walk, Bill Williams spotted two Tri-colored Herons and a juvenile White Ibis fly over Queens Creek. That evening he saw two Tri-colored Herons perched on some snags near the dam. Alas no ibis. Sunday evening there were three Tri-colored Herons at the lake as well as the juvenile Yellow-crowned Night Herons.

**July 27:** Bill Williams reported a juvenile White Ibis at College Creek.

**July 30:** Bill Williams reported a Sora at Craney Island on their regular survey.

**Early August:** Joanne Andrews writes, "Here's some bird sightings by my daughter and her husband during their 10 day visit here in Queens Lake. "It is always a pleasure when we (Howard and Lois Bridger) visit Lois's parents (Joanne and Alex Andrews) here in Williamsburg, traveling from our home in Kingston, Ontario, Canada as we see quite a different profile compared to back home. Birds we see occasionally or rarely back home we have seen in good numbers down here—Great Egrets, Rusty Blackbirds, Carolina Wrens, Carolina Chickadees, Green Herons, Great-crested Flycatchers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Laughing Gulls, Bald Eagles, Northern Mockingbirds, Scarlet Tanagers, Brown Thrashers, and a rare sighting back home; Tufted Titmice. Some other highlights included a Connecticut Warbler, a Hooded Warbler, a Yellow-crowned Night Heron, a Black Skimmer (in Hampton) and a very active and noisy family of just fledged Broad-winged Hawks. You're lucky to live in such a colourful, bird-rich environment. We also love all of your butterflies and the tall, lush Carolinian Forest, a real treat for us northern visitors."

**August 2:** Bill Williams reported a Prothonotary Warbler at his feeder.

**August 6:** Kathi Mestayer was excited to see two American Redstarts together in the camellia outside her bathroom window! She says they were flashing their tail feathers, like, "Check it out, man!"

**August 6:** Linda Scherer and her husband enjoyed watching a Great Horned Owl in their backyard at around 6:30 pm. It was the first owl they had ever seen in the yard during their 15 years living there. Linda's husband, Ben (the alleged non-birder), actually found it. (continued on page 7)

## TAKE NOTE!

### Pay Your 2015 Dues!

We still need your dues for 2015!

Individual: \$15              Family: \$25

Patron: \$35                 Student: \$5

Make your check payable to WBC and mail to:

**PO Box 1085, Williamsburg, VA 23187.**

Our membership dues are lagging behind last year's levels. We still need your support for our Bill Williams Nature Camp Scholarships, our Ruth Beck and Bill Sheehan Ornithology Research Grants to Biology Graduate Students, and feeder stations at the Child Development Resources campus. We can't do it without you!!

### Snacking Simplified

We have decided to make things easier for those who provide our snacks at our WBC meetings. It's just become so daunting to provide such an amazing spread as our hosts have done in the past. So don't be surprised when you see how we've cut back. Many thanks to Shirley Devan who has volunteered to bring our cookies for our September meeting. Jan Lockwood will bring them in October and Judy Jones in November.

### Welcome to Our Newest Members

A warm welcome is extended to our two new members, Joan & Tom Christensen.

### A Rare Bird Indeed

*Photo and sighting by Inge Curtis*



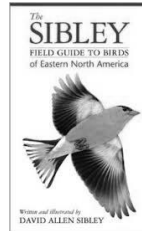
This Warbling Vireo showed up in the yard at Inge Curtis' house in Williamsburg on the morning of May 25<sup>th</sup>. Confirmed by Bill Williams, this is a rare sighting here as it is usually found only mountain regions.

## Reported Bird Sightings for Summer 2015 (continued)

**August 15:** Carol O'Neill reported a White-throated Sparrow in Governor's Land.

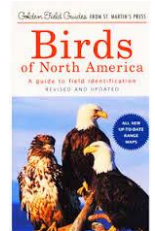
**August 21:** Bill Williams reported a Common Tern at Jamestown Island. "This species has become uncommon to rare here in late summer/early fall."

**August 23:** Bill Williams spotted a Tennessee Warbler in his neighborhood.



### Book Bags Now Available

Don't forget we have Sibley's Field Guide to Birds as well as Golden Books Birds of North America. Labeled and bagged, these titles are now available to use with groups of students. Sibley's is appropriate for students grades 4 and up; the Golden Book is appropriate for younger students. Check these out by emailing Judy Jones at [jjones184@cox.net](mailto:jjones184@cox.net) or calling her at 293-8297.

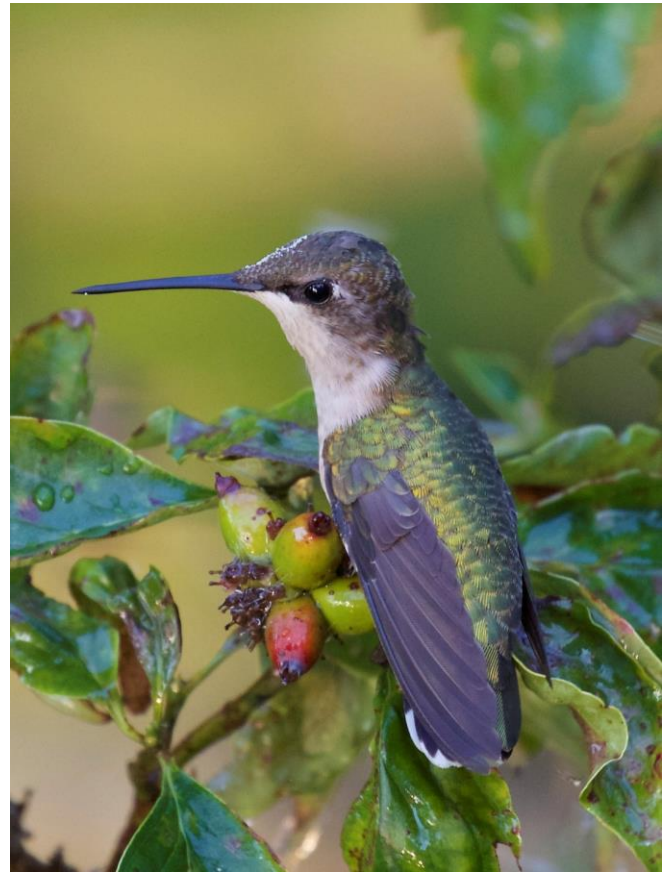


### August 22<sup>nd</sup> Bird Walk

Can you believe the turn-out for the Bird Walk at New Quarter Park on August 22<sup>nd</sup>? It was wonderful to see the different ages and stages of the group. Pictured are: Adriano Kid Azamboja, The Beaty Family, (Eric, Heidi, Karissa, Kimberly, Nathan, Ryan, Stephen, and Theo) Lynn Collins, Geoff Giles, Jan Lockwood, Cynthia and Bob Long, David Lunt, Ricci Madden, Cathy Millar, Sue Mutell, Tom McCary, and Betty Peterson.



Ann and Gary Carpenter write, “These mature and immature Red-headed Woodpeckers have been regular visitors at our suet feeder lately. These pictures are taken through a window with a point and shoot but are still exciting.”



This beautiful Ruby-throated Hummingbird was captured on ‘film’ by Inge Curtis.

## CALENDAR

Saturday, September 12	Williamsburg Bird Club Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, 8 am. Jim Corliss, Leader
Sunday, September 6	Birder Clark Olsen leads a boat tour 60 miles out to Norfolk Canyon for a pelagic birding day (more information on page 4 and in upcoming emails)
Sunday, September 6	HRBC Bird Walk at Newport News Park, 7 am. Jane Frigo, Leader
September 11-13	VSO field trip to Chincoteague (more information on page 5)
Wednesday, September 16	WBC General Meeting, 7:30 pm, Andrews Hall Room 101. Ann and Gary Carpenter presenting (more information on page 1)
Saturday, September 26	Williamsburg Bird Club Bird Walk, New Quarter Park, 7 am Bill Williams, Leader
Sunday, September 20	HRBC Bird Walk at Newport News Park, 7 am. Jane Frigo, Leader
Wednesday, October 21	WBC General Meeting, 7:30 pm, Andrews Hall Room 101. Eric Walters presenting (more information on page 1)
Wednesday, November 18	WBC General Meeting, 7:30 pm, Andrews Hall Room 101. Patty Reum presenting (more information on page 1)