



The Flyer

Newsletter of the Williamsburg Bird Club

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March 2017

President's Corner

By Bill Williams



Barbara Neary described her reaction to what happened at her home on the morning of January 14, 2017 thusly...“I went stupid!” What happened was brought about by a hummingbird that had been visiting her feeder since “mid-September” 2016. Moreover, what happened was caused by the Chief of the United States Geological Survey’s Bird Banding Laboratory in Laurel, Maryland, Bruce Peterjohn standing on her patio. Professionally, Bruce coordinates “bird banding activities across the US and its Territories”, overseeing approximately 1,750 Master Banders and more than 5,000 bander subpermittees. If that doesn’t keep his feeder full, on his own time during late fall and winter months, he is often on the road throughout the mid-Atlantic, attempting to capture, identify, and band hummingbirds.

In early December 2016, Mrs. Neary shared photos of her hummingbird with Kevin Ernst at Wild Birds Unlimited. Knowing a December hummingbird was a rarity in our area, Kevin alerted the bird club and helped us get in touch with Barbara who, by this time, had become very in-tune with her bird’s daily routine, as noted in this anecdotal summary: “He [the hummingbird] most always sat on the feeder facing south & then flew to the southeast; his first feeding time was between 7:23 am & 7:25 am; he would come back to the feeder at roughly hourly intervals until about 4:23 pm.”

After some phone conversations and e-mails, Barbara’s pictures were forwarded to Bruce for his assessment. From the details those photos provided, he determined this was a *Selasphorus*

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March 15th Club Meeting – 7 pm – Birds and Housing Prices – Is There a Connection?

By Cheryl Jacobson

Please join us at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, March 15th, in Andrews Hall, room 101, for a program with W& M student, Nick Newberry who will share his research with us. How does having a diverse population of birds in your yard increase

the dollar value of your home? Nick will present information regarding his research findings. His study is a follow up to a study by Farmer, Wallace, and Shiroya on bird diversity and the ecological value in urban home prices.



Photo of Carolina Wren by Judy Kroeger

April 19th Meeting – Our Grant Recipients from W&M Share Their Work

By Dan Cristol

Bird Club research grant winners Ohad Paris and Juan Botero will be presenting their findings at our April meeting. Both are Masters students in the Biology Department at William & Mary, and both are working on the issue of mercury pollution. In an integrated presentation, Ohad will talk about how mercury exposure affects nesting, in particular whether a small amount of mercury at a young age is enough to hurt breeding later in life. Juan examines the effect of mercury on cell ageing, also known as oxidative stress. His findings get at the specific ways that mercury is bad for birds...and of course the same likely applies to people.

IT'S TIME TO PAY YOUR DUES!

2017 is our Club’s 40th year! And we have 40 years of community support to celebrate and continue! So send in your check and support your WBC! Remember – we can’t do anything without **YOU**. We look forward to your participation in our 2017 events and your continued financial support.



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Reported Bird Sightings for February, 2017

January 30: Corky Cutright of Lanexa was thrilled to see this Pileated Woodpecker in his backyard. He writes, “I was especially excited to see the woodpecker. My wife, Ellen, called to me and said the Pileated just landed on a stump in the backyard! I grabbed the camera which already had the long lens mounted on it and knew my only chance would be from a door in the back of the garage. The bird was within twenty feet of me and I was afraid that on seeing any movement it would fly, so I knelt on the floor and slowly cracked the door inward until the barrel of the long lens would just fit through on an extreme angle. I started clicking away as he not-so-slowly worked to demolish the stump. Every couple of minutes he would stop and look up for what seemed like a minute or so and at those times I was almost afraid to breathe.”



February 18: Linda Scherer and her husband caught this photo of a Wood Stork at the Wakodahatchee Wetlands in Delray Beach FL. The Wood Storks have taken over most of the nest areas there. This bird was sitting in a mangrove that is right up against the boardwalk. He was no more than 3 or 4 feet above my head, preening and looking around -- showing no concern about the crowd he was attracting. Nests are in an adjacent tree.



February 19: Jan Lockwood saw a group of 5 Cedar Waxwings was feasting on the berries on this vine. The following day, February 20th, there were 31 Cedar Waxwings perched on a tree in the park.

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President's Corner (continued from page 1)

hummingbird, of which there are three species native to the United States: Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*); Rufous Hummingbird (*S. rufus*); Allen's Hummingbird (*S. sasin*). His specific identification was that this was a Rufous Hummingbird. Because the club found out about it prior to our December 18, 2016 Williamsburg Christmas Bird Count (CBC), Mrs. Neary was asked to keep an eye out for the hummer that day. Sure enough, it showed up and with great enthusiasm was entered into our count's final tally as our sixth CBC Rufous Hummingbird. Over the years there have been 14 confirmed Colonial Historic Triangle (Williamsburg, James City County, York County, Hog Island, Surry County) Rufous Hummingbird records, eleven of those confirmed by Bruce and/or his colleagues through banding. Included among those 14 records were 5 that had become part of the Williamsburg Bird Club's permanent CBC data set, including 2 in Governor's Land for the 15 December 2013 count.

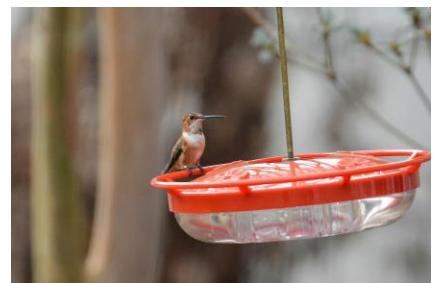


Photo by Bill Williams

Bruce had planned to do a banding-attempt run to Tidewater the weekend of January 7-8, not only for Mrs. Neary's *Selasphorus*, but also for one in Portsmouth. For those mesmerized by our recent spate of spring-time conditions, that turned out to be the weekend of Winter 2017's big snow. The timing of that weather event was potentially an unfortunate set-back, given that some *Selasphorus*, particularly males from coastal California populations, begin to establish breeding territories out there in February. So any whose gyroscopes had them overwintering in the east would have likely set their flight plans in the direction of the setting sun in January to get them back in time to meet their biological calling. Had this bird survived the storm? And if it had, would it leave ASAP on its probable cross-country return?



Fortunately, the hardy little bird survived the single-digit temperatures that followed the snowstorm's exit and was there throughout the ensuing week. When Bruce got to the Neary's home on 14 January, he was invited inside in hopes the hummingbird would feed so he could get a sense of its comings and goings as well as some initial cues about its age and identity. As soon as he saw it up close, he was pretty convinced this bird was special. It was not a Rufous!

Photo by Barbara Neary

Bruce quickly "set the trap" as it were, and within minutes had the hummer in hand, all 3.73 grams of it! Gently removing it from the trap enclosure he went right to work conducting a careful analysis of the bird's gorget, the amount and distribution of green and rufous on its back and flanks, signs of feather molt, widths and shapes of the tail feathers, and grooving on the bill. His conclusion was that this was a male **Allen's Hummingbird** that had been hatched in 2016. It was that revelation on top of the capture experience that elicited Barbara's genuinely delightful reaction. There, in his hands, and eventually hers, was Virginia's fourth Allen's Hummingbird confirmed by banding, a first record for the Colonial Historic Triangle and, as we can now claim, a first for the Williamsburg Christmas Bird Count.

To get a sense of how exceptional and significant this bird record is, consider the following description of Allen's Hummingbird normal distribution as described in Steve N. G. Howell's 2002 [Hummingbirds of North America: The Photographic Guide](#): "Nominate *sasin* a summer resident (mainly February to July) along W slope of coast ranges from Ventura, California, N to Coos County, coastal SW Oregon,....." Casual N to Washington [state] (May) and NE to Massachusetts (August). In fall and winter (mainly August to February) casual to rare but increasing (or increasingly detected?) E to SE US; casual N to Delaware." For Virginia, there had only been three Allen's Hummingbird banding records in the previous 20 years: one in Bristol in 1997; one in Cape Charles in 2005; and one in Chester in 2008. Truly this bird was as special as they come!

President's Corner (continued from page 3)

For numerous reasons, a decision was made not to put the presence of this Williamsburg area hummingbird into the birder mainstream. And it's just as well, as it turned out. Talking with Mrs. Neary about a month after all the excitement, she reported her little gentleman was not seen after January 17. So his biological imperative "to get on with it" was probably pressing him even as he was acquiring his numerically coded bling, handmade by Bruce Peterjohn, in pursuit of answers to why and how these western hummingbirds are finding their way east in winter.



Photo by Barbara Neary

SUPPORT OUR LOCAL BIRD STORES!!

Visit the **WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED STORE** in Settler's Market in New Town. The WBC receives a 5% rebate on the pre-tax amount spent by our Club members. Be sure to tell those generous owners that you are a member!



Backyard Birder



THE BACKYARD BIRDER at Quarterpath Crossing (near the Kingsmill Harris Teeter) gives each of us at the WBC a 10% discount on all merchandise. Just let the kind folks there know that you're a member to get your percentage off.

SIGHTINGS (Continued from page 2)

February 19: Cheryl Jacobson writes, "I've been doing a little back yard bird count and went to Tutter's Neck Pond (behind the Harris Teeter). There are 300 plus plus Ringed-neck Ducks there...just a blanket of them...counted to 300 and realized there were many around the corners I could not count. I've never seen them in that number before."



February 20: Linda Scherer writes, "I counted 70 Royal Terns, 34 Laughing Gulls, and 3 Great Black-backs resting on the beach (Midtown Beach in Palm Beach). There is always a group there in the morning, but this is the largest gang I have ever seen! There are miles of private (mostly empty) beach

here, but they seem to like the 4 or 5 block stretch of public beach better. If they get spooked and take off, they just land in another spot. There was also a Snowy Egret on the beach that day--and the usual Sanderlings, Ruddy Turnstones and Ring-billed Gulls wandering around."

February 20:

Jan Lockwood explained that "the two Red-shouldered Hawks regularly hunt for voles from the tennis court fence in the Queens Lake Community Park. I wonder if this pair is saying, 'You first!'"



February 22: Kathi Mestayer writes, "First Brown Creeper I've seen in our yard for at least a year! Things are hoppin' today. Or creepin'. Eastern Bluebirds (and a Carolina Chickadee) checking out both birdhouses...last year, we had a clutch of bluebirds, and one of House Wrens.

February 28: Tom McCary writes, "Today, 28 February, I had a pair of bluebirds examining my three different nest boxes. The pair seemed to like the look of a traditional bluebird box, but a starling also wanted a gander. The starling won an aerial fight and proceeded to check the real estate. He soon departed, and the bluebirds continued to observe. I have never seen a starling take interest in my bird digs before!"

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February: Dan Cristol tells us: "The ornithology class at W&M is off to a strong start, having gotten excellent looks at 150 species already this semester in the area, including Ross' Goose, Orange-Crowned Warbler, Common Merganser, Razorbill, White-crowned Sparrow, American Bittern, Common Black-headed Gull, King, Clapper and Virginia Rails, Eared Grebe and lots more. They are pursuing last year's record class list of 250 for the whole state, which seems impossible at this point, but who knows!"

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

By Shirley Devan

March 18th, 2017: Field Trip to Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge in Virginia Beach

Our leader will be Rob Bielawski of Virginia Beach who says "it's my favorite place in the state to bird." He goes on to say, "[The Refuge] is prime for unusual sightings, being located at the extreme southeast corner of the state, and right on the coast. All the species present right now (late January) will still be out there by mid-March, so a good mix of waterfowl would be expected. What makes March 18 interesting is there is some potential for catching some of the earliest arriving migrants to the state (Barn Swallow, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Purple Martin would all be somewhat likely, with perhaps Tricolored/Little Blue Herons as well as some of the early shorebirds like Pectoral or Stilt Sandpipers--maybe even a couple very early warblers like Black-and-white). Until [April 1], only the trails in the immediate vicinity of the visitor contact station are open (Kuralt Trail, Bay Trail, Dune Trail, Seaside Trail, and the gravel road that heads south towards the East & West Dike gates). Most bird clubs just do a quick seawatch on the north end of the beach near the parking lot."

Here is a link to the Refuge's web site: https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Back_Bay/about.html

If you want to see some of Rob's photos from Back Bay, click over to his website: <http://www.beachbirding.com/locations/overview/>

Carpooling is recommended. Meet at Colony Square Shopping Center, 1301 Jamestown Road, before 7 am for a prompt departure at 7:00. The trip is approximately 1.5 hours. We'll meet Rob in the parking lot at the Visitor Center. There are plenty of trails to keep our binoculars and scopes busy all morning. Before leaving we'll check the beach (adjacent to the parking lot) for a quick look to see what's flying by.

Bring scopes and cameras plus water and snacks. Dress for the weather forecast. There are restrooms at the Visitor Center. We'll aim for departure by noon to head back to Williamsburg.

April 15, 2017: Field Trip to the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge

Our leader will be our own Bill Williams. By mid-April the "Dismal" will be full with warblers (and butterflies) and we should see and hear some great birds. Bring cameras, bug spray, sun protection, water, and snacks. Check the April newsletter for more info, but save the date!

Again, carpooling is recommended. Meet at Colony Square Shopping Center by 7 am for a prompt departure at 7:00. The trip is approximately just over one hour.

New Quarter Bird Walk on February 11th

On Saturday, February 11, 2017, eighteen people joined Hugh Beard on a very quiet (birdwise), overcast and gusty morning for a bird walk in New Quarter Park. Nonetheless, we found 25 species, with 4 adult and 2 immature Bald Eagles the highlight.



Seated: Joyce Lowry, Jan Lockwood, Susan Wolfe, Cheryl Jacobson, Annmarie Wojtal, Hugh Beard, Jeanette Navia, Shirley Devan

Standing: Daniel Keener, Lynda Sharrett, Bob Wojtal, Sue Mutell, Portia Belden, Lisa Nickel, Wayne Moyer, Nancy Barnhart, Barbara Neis, a visitor from Arizona, and Tom McCary

(Sorry, our visitor from Arizona wrote her email in my notebook but not her name! But we're mighty glad she joined us.)

New Quarter Bird Walk on February 25th

By Jan Lockwood

Our hardy participants at the 2/25 Bird Walk were:

Back row: Bob Wojtal, Annmarie Wojtal, Lynda Sharrett, Jim Corliss, Cheryl Jacobson, Nancy Barnhart

Front row: Shirley Devan, Jan Lockwood, Ruth Gordon, Sue Mutell

Not in Photo: Chuck Buell (Colonial Nature Photography Club)



CBBT by Car

By Shirley Devan

Many thanks to Brian Taber, President of Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory, and to all who joined us on the Field Trip Saturday, February 18th to the CBBT Islands. Brian did a great job getting us on the rarities — and we had a few! — plus the “usual suspects” for the Chesapeake Bay, which are rarities for many of us! We also appreciate everyone who brought a spotting scope! For these locations, scopes are important and we thank you for your willingness to share with everyone.



Across the three islands, we had a total of 28 species for the morning. We had an amusing interaction with Beth, the security guard, who led us around. At the end, she said she was surprised that we had stayed the full three hours. She said some of the trips she's escorted, folks stayed 20-30 minutes and then were ready to go! I assured her that this group could have stayed the rest of the day!

Here is a photo of two Razorbills we saw particularly well at the end of the fishing pier on Island 1 as we headed home. Thank you, Jeanette Navia, for alerting us to these close-up wonders. It's the best look I've ever had of Razorbills.



Just a note....Andy Hawkins was just an hour ahead of our WBC, leading the same field trip for the Hampton Roads Bird Club. He adds these two photos to our article....the first of a Razorbill and the second of a Long-tailed Duck.



A Note about 'Etiquette'

By Shirley Devan, Field Trip Coordinator

In this issue of THE FLYER, you'll see "Williamsburg Bird Club's Guide To Field Trip and Bird Walk Etiquette." As a Club, we want to ensure that all participants have the best learning and observing experience we can provide. We are so fortunate to have wonderful leaders who give their time and knowledge so others may see and hear our delightful birds and enjoy our beautiful "hotspots". Because of our wonderful web site (thank you, Jeanette!) and our unique tourist destination, visitors from all over the US and around the world discover our bird walks and field trips. They look to our leaders for memorable birding experiences. And many new birders and new residents who find our club through our bird walks and field trips go on to join and become active members.

Please review these suggestions and try to follow these reminders as a courtesy to the birds (first and foremost), their habitat, the leaders, and fellow participants. Remember, excessive noise can flush birds so that no one observes them. It also inhibits the leader's ability to hear, identify, and find the birds to show the rest of the group. Our field trip and bird walk leaders will be gently reminding participants of these suggestions at future events. We know you'll give them your full support. Many thanks.

Williamsburg Bird Club's Guide to Field Trip and Bird Walk Etiquette

The best rule of thumb can be borrowed directly from one of the oldest codes of ethics in the world:

FIRST, DO NO HARM!!

Do no harm to the birds, to the environment, or to the enjoyment of the field trip's participants.

These are not regulations, but suggestions and reminders drawn from the experiences of participants who found their enjoyment of and rewards from field trips were enhanced by observing the following:

1. **Put the Welfare of the birds first!** Avoid harassment of any kind. While observing or photographing do nothing to endanger or stress the birds. Do not attempt to flush birds by throwing things into shrubbery.
2. **Follow the leaders** – do not precede them or explore nearby side areas. Such activity flushes birds before others can see them.
3. Once the birding begins, **be as quiet as possible.** Please leave social conversation in the parking lot. Turn off your cell phones. Keep extraneous conversation to a bare minimum and, if you must talk, do so as quietly as possible. When the leaders or participants have obviously been alerted to a bird, stop moving and stop talking. Try to avoid sudden or loud noises, sweeping gestures, or quick movements.
4. **Don't try to call the birds.** Generally leave piping, squeaking, the use of recordings and laser pointers to the leaders or, at the least, ask their permission before using any of these devices.
5. If you are photographing birds, **allow others to view the bird before moving forward to take your photo.**
6. **Please be helpful when possible.** Gently, call the group's attention to any bird they may have missed. If you are using a scope, invite other participants to view birds you have found. At the same time, as a participant, limit your time viewing through another's scope....five seconds would be a general guide...so that other group member may also get the sighting.
7. **Respect private property.** Do not enter unless you have explicit permission to do so.
8. **Protect the environment at all times.** Do not trample or otherwise damage vegetation. Stay on roads, trails, and paths where they exist; otherwise, keep habitat disturbance to a minimum. In the words of the National Park Service, while in the field "take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints."

Another Rare Species for January, 2016 "Saying Hello to an Old Friend"

By Cheryl Jacobson

When I lived in California, I loved watching a Bullock's Oriole that often came to my feeder for grape jelly. When one was reported at a neighborhood near Machipongo, I decided I needed to go see this lovely bird as it felt like visiting an old friend. The homeowners are delightful and even put out chairs in their driveway so anyone visiting the bird can wait in comfort. Below is information about him from [Audubon, Guide to North American Birds](#) and one of my photos. Perhaps you will decide to go for a visit when you see his beauty.



Bullock's Oriole

Icterus bullockii



In the west, this oriole is common in summer in forest edge, farmyards, leafy suburbs, isolated groves, and streamside woods, especially in cottonwood trees. For several years it was considered to belong to the same species as the eastern Baltimore Oriole (with the two combined under the name Northern Oriole), because the two often interbreed where their ranges come in contact on the western Great Plains. The habits of the two are similar.

Peanut Butter Joy

By Robert Fenchel

Here's a nifty and inexpensive way I found to attract birds to your backyard. I took 2 pine cones and attached them to snelled fish hooks. Then I coated the tops of them with peanut butter and hung them on one of the arms of the shepherds hook pole I use to hang my feeders on. Almost every one of the 20 plus species that comes to feed at the platform feeders also likes to take some peanut butter.



A Note from Virginia Boyles



As George was leaving for the Y, movement in the tree out front caught my eye. I was lucky enough to catch a couple of so-so photos of the little brown creeper through the window on the storm door, and thought I'd send you a smile today. We don't get one often, so it was a special treat, and rarely see them well enough to observe the curved bill. The camouflage is remarkable! Added to the Northern Flicker on the suet, Yellow-rump and Pine Warblers, an Eastern Towhee by the shed, four bluebirds, finch, chickadees, titmice, and a host of White-throated Sparrows, guess it's been a good day. If the pair of Red-tailed Hawks are still being harassed by the crows, I may have to call them to Andy's attention to add to the atlas. Spring must be coming - the cardinal was calling before dawn today.

Celebrating 40 Years

NOTE: As we celebrate our 40th anniversary, we will be having special articles about our activities of the past as well as copies of the newsletters from the first few months. Enjoy!

40 year rendition by Cathy and John Millar

Forty Years of WBC Donations to the Williamsburg Regional Library

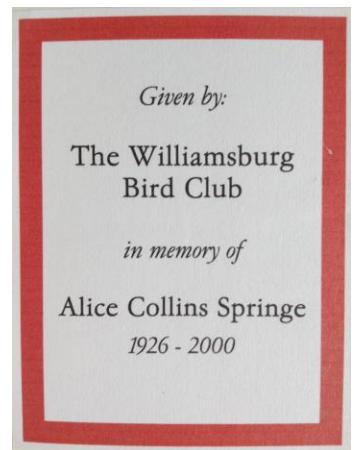
By Jeanette Navia

During its fledgling year, 1977, the Williamsburg Bird Club began an ongoing relationship with the community at large by donating books to the Williamsburg Regional Library. The first two books donated were A Field Guide to North American Bird Clubs and a Field Guide to the Birds of California. Other early donations included a subscription to *Bird Watcher's Digest* and a complete 21-volume set of Arthur Cleveland Bent series, Life Histories of North American Birds, given in memory of local conservationist Everett Raynes who died in 1980. In 1983, the Club donated The Bird Watchers Companion in memory of Marjory Sheehan, the wife of Capt. Bill Sheehan, who had acted as Club secretary. The Club's first Lifetime Member, Anne Smith, was memorialized in 1990 by the donation of an inscribed copy of The Audubon Encyclopedia of North American Birds by John Terres.

In addition to specific books donated, annual donations to the library were given: \$75 a year in the 1970s, then increasing over the decades to the current \$200 a year. These cash donations first came from proceeds of the Club's annual bird seed sales, which the Club held before the specialty store, Wild Birds Unlimited, opened in town. Once bird seed sales ceased, donations for library resources came from membership dues and other income.

In 1990, the position of Library Liason was established, and Alice Springe, a very early member of the Club, took on this task, working with the librarians to help decide what bird-related books to order. She held that position for ten years, until she passed away. Alice had also taken on other roles in the Club including Secretary/Treasurer in 1980, Secretary from 1983-1985, and coordinator of the Bird-Seed Savings Day for many years. Ever since her passing, books donated to the library have been made in Alice Springe's memory with a plaque in each book to commemorate her.

Lee Schuster, another early member, and president of the Club in 1996-97, has been the Library Liason ever since. According to library records, over the years the Williamsburg Bird Club has donated 228 books, 1 cassette of bird songs, 10 CDs, 7 VHS videos, 9 DVDs and the subscription to *Bird Watchers Digest*. While weeding has reduced the collection, many titles remain and the collection grows each year. Lists of these donations can be found in back issues of *The Flyer*. One recent donation was The Birds of Virginia's Colonial Historic Triangle: An Annotated Checklist edited by Bill Williams. To view the library's collections, go to wrl.org.



Our Very First Bill Williams Nature Camp Scholarship Recipient

In 2008, the Williamsburg Bird Club proudly presented Joseph Voboril with a \$700 scholarship to attend Nature Camp in Vesuvius, Virginia.



Our March 1978 Newsletter....scanned for March 2017 newsletter!! Enjoy!

WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB NOTES

The March meeting of the Williamsburg Bird Club will be held on WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 1978 at 7:30 Millington Hall, Room 117. Our speaker will be Dorothy Mitchell who will present on the Family Turdidae (Thrushes) and more specifically on bluebirds. Dorothy is the current Vice President of our sister club The Hampton Roads Bird Club, and is very active with bluebird trails banding projects in the Tidewater area.

MEETING - WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15 7:30 PM MILLINGTON HALL 117

Another reminder to those who have not yet paid their dues--you will be dropped from the mailing list if you haven't paid by the April meeting (April 23). If you prefer to mail a check to our Treasurer, The address is:

Mrs. Billy Jones
260 E. Queens Drive
Williamsburg, Virginia 23185

DUES:\$3.00 Students \$5.00 individuals

\$7.50 Families

If you have any news items the Newsletter

Please phone or write -

Our editor would be most appreciative.

FIELD TRIP FOR March ---SATURDAY Hog Island

We will leave at 7:00 A.M. from the Jamestown Parking Lot and take the Jamestown Ferry. Those of you that missed the earlier trip in the fall, Hog Island has much to offer, especially in winter fowl.

BIRDS OF INTEREST FOR THE WILLIAMSBURG AREA during the month of February---

Six male Redpolls have been visiting the Feeders at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Landis in Kingsmill. ~~Redpolls have been Landis in Kingsmill.~~

One Redpoll at the feeders at the home of Mel and Ginny Schiavelli at Quaker Estates.

Mrs. Dorothy Mitchell of Newport News trapped and banded a Redpoll.

This has been an exceptional winter for Pine Siskins and Redpolls in the State.

NEWS OF BIRDS OF SPECIAL INTEREST IN OTHER STATES

Six Ruddy Ducks have been observed near Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey. We thank Mr. Tom Armor for this report.

Mr. Bill Williams traveled northward to Martha's Vineyard to see a European Curlew. This Curlew is a life species for Bill. He also observed a Northern Shrike--another lifer.

Our February field trip drew the best attendance of any of the previous trips. Mr. Tom Wieboldt of Charlottesville led the owling excursion. For two hours Tom's excel lent efforts of calling went unanswered. We concluded the field trip at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Burke Davis in Queens Lake. Refreshments were enjoyed by the cozy fireplace. The highlight of the evening was Gray Phase Eastern Screech Owl just in front of the Davis home. Our appreciation to the Davises for their hospitality and to the owl for its appearance.

LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU March 15th.

VSO Meeting on May 5-7, 2017

By Eileen Geller, President, Richmond Audubon Society

The Richmond Audubon Society is excited to serve as the host chapter for the Virginia Society of Ornithology's Annual Meeting. We've scheduled the meeting for the first weekend of May, from May 5-7, 2017. Our hotel for the weekend will be the Wyndham Virginia Crossings Hotel and Conference Center located at 1000 Virginia Center Parkway, Glen Allen, Virginia. It is a beautiful property located north of the city, and the groundskeepers there tell us that they regularly have nesting Brown Thrashers and Carolina Wrens. You can visit their website here for more information about the facility: <http://www.wyndhamvirginiacrossings.com/> And, while the hotel's grounds are lovely, we are very excited to show off all the wonderful birding locations we have in and around the city of Richmond.



We are planning to host a number of field trips to some of our favorite spots. By the first weekend in May, there's a very good chance that the James River Park system will be teeming with many of the migratory species that make their way through our area every spring. You can expect the field trips to touch on a number of our hot spots in the James River Park System in Richmond, which spans some 550 acres right in the heart of the city of Richmond. You can learn more about it by clicking here: <http://jamesriverpark.org/>

Urban birding won't be our only option, either. We have field trip leaders eager to show off the many wonderful spots in the central Virginia area that our members regularly enjoy. We'll have a full list of trips as we get closer to the Annual Meeting. We're also working on a line-up of excellent speakers and presenters for the weekend. We are also planning a silent auction. If you have an item that you'd like to donate, please contact me at president@richmondaudubon.org. If you are interested in having a vendor table, or know of someone who might be interested, please also contact me at that address.

In the meantime, if you are looking to make your plans for the Annual Meeting, the Wyndham has agreed to a nightly rate of \$124 for a single (including breakfast), or \$134 for a double (including breakfast for two). To make a reservation, call the hotel at (804) 727-1400 or 1-888-444-6553 and identify yourself as a member of the Virginia Society of Ornithology group to get the reduced rate. On behalf of the members of the Richmond Audubon Society, we are looking forward to hosting you in May 2017 and showing off all the reasons why Richmond is for bird lovers!

For more information on the meeting, guest speakers, and field trips, download the Spring 2017 issue of the VSO Newsletter at <http://www.virginiabirds.org/publications/newsletter/>.

CBBT by Boat Notification--

Dear Participants on the Chesapeake Bay Birding Boat Trip (1/28/2017):

Since the boat trip was full (60 passengers), a portion of the cost of your trip can be considered a donation to the Williamsburg Bird Club. For each \$30 ticket, \$8 can be considered a charitable donation to the club. These donations are tax deductible and will be used to support the three students that we will sponsor this summer at Nature Camp through our Bill Williams Nature Camp Scholarships.

Ann Carpenter, Treasurer, Williamsburg Bird Club

RETAIN THIS EMAIL FOR YOUR TAX RECORDS

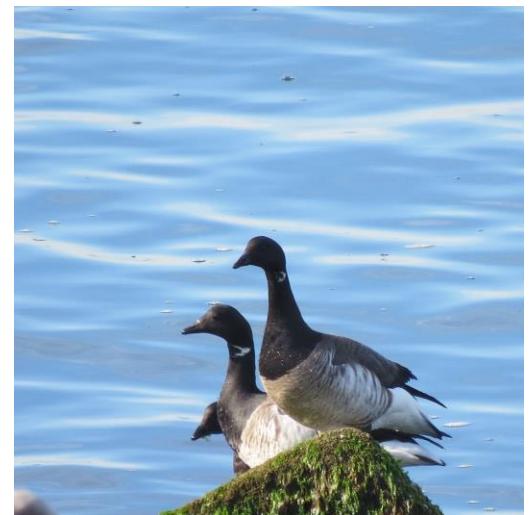


Photo by Cheryl Jacobson

The Williamsburg Bird Club is exempt from federal income tax under 26 U.S.C. Section 501(c)(3), and is a non-profit organization eligible to receive tax deductible donations. No goods or services were provided to you in return for your charitable contribution.

VABBA2 Update -- Accurate Location Post

By Ashley Peele, Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas Coordinator

One of the biggest Atlas challenges can be keeping track of block boundaries, especially if you're out birding casually and happen to note some evidence of breeding. In eBird, a hotspot location may lie across several blocks, so always remember to check where the block boundaries are. A separate checklist (or incidental observation) should be reported for species seen in different blocks.

You can check block boundaries this by checking the Atlas block map and/or downloading PDF maps on the Atlas Block Explorer (<http://vafwis.dgif.virginia.gov/BBA2/BlockExplorer/>).

Accurately reporting breeding observations is one of the most important steps in Atlasing. We need to know which block that Bald Eagle nest is in or where you heard that pair of Barred Owl's duetting. Please check out this article on our Atlas eBird portal for more guidance on accurate location reporting. (<http://ebird.org/.../atlas-data-entry-round-3-location-prec.../>)

VABBA2 Update – Regional Training Sessions

Another Note from Ashley Peele

Hi Atlas volunteers,

This Spring, the VA Breeding Bird Atlas project is offering several regional training sessions around the state. Each session will consist of morning small group field trips/walks led by experienced Atlas volunteers, followed by a large group session on data entry, reporting priority species, accurate location plotting, etc. Our intention is for these sessions to serve in two capacities: 1) getting new volunteers set up and rolling for the new field season or 2) addressing questions or areas of confusion for veteran volunteers.



Photo of Hugh Beard and fellow birders by Shirley Devan

Breeding codes can be a little tricky, knowing when and what species to apply them to. Sometimes eBird questions arise that you may not find an easy answer to. Our hope is to improve your understanding of the Atlas methods, so that we can work towards the most accurate Atlas dataset possible.

We do have **limited capacity for these events**, so **please register** if you would like to participate (links below). Once we hit the maximum head count, we'll start generating a waiting list. Your response will help us to know what need/interest there is in further training opportunities. Keep in mind that regional coordinators are always looking for feedback on training needs in their particular regions, so communicate your interest to them!

There will be four sessions this spring, as follows:

- **Eastern Atlas Training** – in conjunction with Richmond Audubon Society and the VSO Annual Meeting. Please follow VSO announcements and register for this workshop when you register for the Annual Meeting in Richmond (May 5-7). Link to meeting info: <http://www.virginiabirds.org/events/annual-meeting/2017-opening-announcement>
- **Central Atlas Training** – Co-sponsored by the Monticello Bird Club in Charlottesville (March 25th, 8am-1pm). Link to register: <https://goo.gl/forms/vzcgX15lJPBAOJAx1>
- **Northern Atlas Training** – Co-sponsored by the Fairfax County Parks. Location: Frying Pan Farm Park. Date: April 1st. Time: 8am-1pm. Link to register: <https://goo.gl/forms/gnKxoYX4yGUQXVu53>
- **Western Atlas Training** – Location and date are to be determined, but will be released ASAP. Stay tuned!

These events are free, but we are asking anyone who is able to bring along their personal laptop for the afternoon portion of the workshop. Locations will have Wi-Fi available, so we will be working in our online and smartphone tools.

Some Great Photos by Our Fellow Birders



An Eastern Screech Owl taken by Shirley Devan on January 9th at the home of Barbara Neis



Craig Hill tangles with a budgie as Donnie Goodrich takes his photo.



Cheryl Jacobson got these great shots of the 'not so common' male and female Common Mergansers at Wareham's Pond in Kingsmill.



Judy Kroeger (left) and Mike Jaskowiak (right) both got great shots of Red-tailed Hawks in February. Keep up the wonderful photography, friends!



Photo of Mallards by Judy Kroeger



Photo of a Purple Sandpiper taken by Cheryl Jacobson on 2-18-17 at the CBBT islands.



Ginny Wycoff writes: "During the Great Backyard Bird Count, I recorded sightings from our home, as I always do, and my husband (Art) and I also walked down to the pond on Williamsburg West Drive. We typically see quite a variety of birds there and we have recently noticed a pair of Blue-winged Teal in the marsh area on the eastern side of the pond. Until I entered my bird list into eBird, I didn't realize that the Blue-winged Teal are rare for our area during this time of year. I initially recorded the sighting on 2/18, and the pair has been there ever since. Having seen Blue-winged Teal hundreds of times, I didn't realize what a treat it was to see them during this time of year!" (Ginny's photo is to the right.)

CALENDAR



Sunday, March 5	Hampton Roads Bird Club sponsors a Bird Walk at Newport News Park, 7 am. Meet in the parking lot near Ranger Station.
Saturday, March 11	Williamsburg Bird Club (WBC) sponsors a Bird Walk at New Quarter Park, 8 am. Meet at the parking lot near the office.
Wednesday, March 15	WBC Monthly Meeting, 7 pm, Andrews Hall, Room 101 on W&M Campus—parking pass needed. See page 1 for details.
Saturday, March 18	WBC Field Trip – Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Details on page 5.
Sunday, March 19	Hampton Roads Bird Club sponsors a Bird Walk at Newport News Park, 7 am. Meet in the parking lot near the Ranger Station.
Saturday, March 25	Williamsburg Bird Club (WBC) sponsors a Bird Walk at New Quarter Park, 7 am. Meet at the parking lot near the office.
Saturday, April 15	WBC Field Trip to the Great Dismal Swamp Wildlife Refuge. Details on page 5.
Wednesday, April 19	WBC Monthly Meeting, 7 pm, Andrews Hall, Room 101 on W&M Campus—parking pass needed.
Sunday, April 30	Spring Bird Count – Mark your calendars now!
May 3-5	VSO Annual Meeting in Richmond— http://www.virginiabirds.org/events/annual-meeting/2017-opening-announcement