



The Flyer

Newsletter of the Williamsburg Bird Club

Vol. 41 No. 6 www.williamsburgbirdclub.org

June/July 2017

President's Corner

By Bill Williams



In the Eyes of the Beholder in 3 Parts Time

Part One...

When the bird club's Board of Directors got together for its first meeting of the year, it began to explore innovative pathways through our 40th anniversary celebration. Deane Gordon took on the responsibility of reaching out to local elementary and middle schools with a proposal to have students produce artwork that would capture our organization's significant milestone. As of end of May, Deane had collected 56 pieces from the following schools—Abingdon Elementary School, Gloucester (47), Coventry Elementary School, York (13), Grafton Bethel Elementary School, York (1), Waller Mill Elementary School, York (1) Grafton Middle School, York (1), Tabb Elementary School, York (3). The artwork has been divided into five groups, some of which is currently on display in the Tabb Library lobby where the works will reside until after July 4th. Subsequently, the art pieces will be moved to Wild Birds Unlimited in Williamsburg and/or the Backyard Birder in Williamsburg, the Yorktown Library, or the JCC Library on Croaker Road. In September, the student's art pieces will be

brought together for the club's anniversary celebration. What a grand way to bring student engagement into our celebratory year! Seeing our world through their expressive eyes opens ours!

Art work by Sarah Schmuck, grade 3

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September 20th – Our Next Meeting

Join us on Wednesday night for our next meeting—celebrating 40 years of birding together. Details will be in our August newsletter, but Dr. Mitchell Byrd is our guest speaker at our 40th extravaganza. As the song goes, “See you in September!”

TRIPPIN' LIKE IT'S 1977!

By Shirley Devan

When the Williamsburg Bird Club fledged in the fall of 1977, field trips to local hot spots began immediately! This fall – 40 years later – we'll recreate those field trips to the same hot spots. Not surprisingly, the 1977 spots are still “hot.” Please join us as we recreate some wonderful birding adventures.

August 11, 2017 Field Trip to Craney Island, Portsmouth.

[Note this date is a Friday.] Our Bird Club has visited Craney Island many times over the years and the birds are always phenomenal. What has changed is access and security. We'll visit on Friday because we must be escorted by staff from the US Army Corps of Engineers, who do not work on Saturday.

Meet the group **by 7 am** at Colony Square Shopping Center for a prompt departure at 7 am. Carpooling is a must for this trip – we should not have more than 10 cars. If you don't want to carpool on the drive down, you may be asked to carpool as we drive around Craney. Our tour is scheduled to start at 8:00 am and end by noon. Bill Williams and David Youker, who regularly bird Craney for the Corps of Engineers as part of the CVWO survey team, will be our leaders.

Participation is limited to 30 people and Bird Club members get first preference. Please let me know in advance if you want to go on this trip. Email me: sedevan52@cox.net. I'll keep a list and a wait list if necessary.

Here is some info from the Corps of Engineers about our morning at Craney:

- **WHAT TO BRING:** Bug spray, sunscreen, water, snacks, spotting scopes if you have one, cameras, and binoculars of course. Long sleeves and long pants plus a hat will be helpful. Be sure to wear closed-toe shoes.

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Reported Bird Sightings for April, 2017

(Send your sightings to Judy Jones at jones184@cox.net)



April 30: Brian Taber found some wonderfully rare birds on the Spring Bird Count: American White Pelican, White-rumped Sandpiper, and Black-necked Stilt at Hog Island; Clay-colored Sparrow in his backyard; and Dickcissel at Mainland Farm.

May 6: Scott and Janet Rathbun were thrilled to see this Rose-breasted Grosbeak at their feeder.



May 8: Jan Lockwood took this photo of an Eastern Towhee fledgling "resting" in a quiet bush in the Pollinator Garden at New Quarter Park.

May 9: Mary Anne and John Fennell had a male Summer Tanager in their waterer. They write, "He flew to the feeder and proceeded to sing his pretty song. He was all bright red."

May 10: Brian Taber and Bill Williams observe a Swallow-tailed Kite migrating north over the James from their perch at College Creek Hawkwatch. Per Brian, "Well, it only took 21 years to find a Swallow-tailed Kite at College Creek Hawkwatch! This morning, Bill Williams and I watched as one overtook a group of 7 Turkey Vultures crossing the James River, then circled for several minutes on the north shore, with a group of 20+ vultures, Bald Eagles and Ospreys, before gaining altitude and heading north. The bird came into view as we were tracking 7 Turkey Vultures moving north across the James River from Hog Island WMA, Surry County. It was also moving north in a steady glide at a lower elevation than the Turkey Vultures. It was not detected until it was technically in James City County. Initially seen to our left (southeast), so our views were of the kite's left side profile; very thin bodied with thin angular, pointed wings; long, thin, black tail feathers extended well beyond the body. When the kite reached the north side of the James River it began to kettle over land with the aforementioned Turkey Vultures and at least one Osprey. Seen from below the bird was white from the throat to the vent. Wings had black primaries with black at the trailing tips of the secondaries and tertiaries; underwing coverts were white; long thin, black, V-shaped retrices. Cathy Bond was present when the SWKI was in view."

(Continued on page 4)

President's Corner (continued from page 1)

Part Two

What has to be among the holy-grail finds for birders seeking to document breeding species is finding an active hummingbird nest. We can easily rationalize that these friendly birds breed near our homes, but finding out exactly where presents a significant challenge given the rapidity with which these tiny sprites come and go. UNLESS....., you are in the right place at the right time, of course, AND moreover, are very aware and familiar with what's around you. Here's a recap of just how all of those elements recently came together on the nesting hummingbird front.



Hummingbird photo by Cathy Millar

“Keith and I [Keith and Jeanette Navia] were on the [Powhatan Creek Trail] bridge on May 29th. Keith was watching a Prothonotary Warbler take off from a branch. Then a small, dark thing came and drove it off. He watched as the small dark thing looped back around and landed. Keith focused his binoculars on it, and saw it was a hummingbird in its nest.” Several days later, Jeanette and Keith led a small group to the hallowed ground. Mom was still in place. Then on June 12th, the Navias relayed this experience.

“Keith saw heads! (two)..... Keith saw the babies before the mother got back to the nest. Later, we saw her fly into the nest with food in her beak and stick her beak into the nest a few times, then just hung out on the side of the nest for a while.” Gotta love every bit of that, HUH?

Part Three

Consider this for serendipity. You are a highly skilled birder with decades of traipsing about your neighborhood, always attentive to birds because your every sense won't allow otherwise. You're on a routine June morning exercise trek, and there, in the ditch near your house, is this tall, long-legged, heavily spotted, brown bird. No way...a LIMPKIN. Because you are a highly skilled birder with decades of birding in Virginia, you know you just witnessed the second Limpkin ever found by a birder in the state (the other, found by Paul McQuarry, was in Lynchburg 20 April-9 June 1971). That's what played out for our own Dan Cristol in his Rolling Woods neighborhood the morning of Saturday, June 3. Phone calls, e-mails, Notable Virginia Birds alerts, text messages..... cooperative, understanding neighbors. Birders poured in from all over.

Limpkins are snail eaters, preferring those that frequent the Florida marshy edges and backwaters this species calls home. Many of the bird folks who saw the bird before it wandered off into the woods towards the back end of Lake



Limpkin photo by Bill Williams

Powell around 2:30 p.m., actually watched it snatch a few snails. Quite a few were fortunate to see it stand motionless along the shore, unknowingly posing for the sacred record camera shot of this extraordinary rarity. Yeah. We know. Williamsburg Rocks! For Dan.....just a soft launch for his sabbatical year!

Because inquiring minds want to know...The name Limpkin is a reference to the species awkward gait. The suffix “kin” implies small or diminutive; why it was applied to this bird is unknown.

Enjoy the next few months and remember to post your nesting birds sightings to the Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas.

SIGHTINGS (Continued from page 2)

May 11: Brian Taber reports: "For those wondering about the Clay-colored Sparrow that was at my feeder this winter, it hasn't been seen for a week. It was apparently the longest-staying one in Virginia, from Jan 16 to May 3, for 108 days. It mostly ate white millet. I enjoyed meeting the many birders who came by."

May 12: Shirley Devan spotted a Gray Catbird at her feeder at Colonial Heritage.

May 12: Shirley Devan had an unusual woodpecker at her backyard feeder: Red-headed Woodpecker!

May 15: Jim Corliss enjoyed a male Magnolia Warbler foraging in the small trees around his backyard. The bird stayed for 15 minutes singing the whole time. It was only the second Magnolia Warbler he's ever seen in his backyard over the last 20 years. In a vain attempt to get a photo, Jim writes, "I snapped dozens of beautiful close-up shots of holly leaves, but unfortunately, the bird was not visible in a single one of them."

May 26: From the College Creek Hawkwatch, Brian Taber heard a Cape May Warbler – "a little late for here; heard well, singing repeatedly from less than 25 meters".

June 3: Dan Cristol observed a Limpkin feeding on snails in a small neighborhood retention pond in James City County, adjacent to Williamsburg. Despite the difficulty of access to this private property, the cooperative bird was photographed and seen by several dozen birders. In the afternoon it wandered off into the woods towards nearby Lake Powell, which also lacks any public access. Daily checks on the original pond have revealed no sign of the Limpkin, not found in Virginia since 1971, when one spent the spring in Lynchburg. This bird was also seen by Bill Williams, Ed Brinkley, Tina Trice, Adam Bollinger, Courtney Check, and Matt Anthony.

June 14: Nancy Barnhart spotted a Seaside Sparrow at Guinea Marsh on Maryus Road in Gloucester.

MAY 20th FIELD TRIP TO BASSETT TRACE NATURE TRAIL

By Shirley Devan, Field Trip Coordinator

Thanks to those who joined us on our May field trip to Bassett Trace Nature Trail here in Williamsburg! Our leader, Nancy Barnhart, entered 51 species into eBird! Here's also a photo of Nancy intently listening for those secretive birds hiding behind the leaves. The highlight of the morning was the White-eyed Vireo on the nest. I hope everyone was able to see the well-hidden nest through the scope. Thanks to Lieve Kenney's sharp eyes for spotting this "confirmed" nesting for the Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas. Although we have no scheduled field trips till August, we hope to see you on our Saturday bird walks at New Quarter Park.



Photo by Shirley Devan

A GREAT OPPORTUNITY:

Introductory Bird Banding Course Warrenton, VA

Environmental Studies on the Piedmont, in cooperation with the Institute for Bird Populations, is pleased to conduct an introductory bird banding course designed for both amateur birders and professional biologists. Fee: \$1,000.00.

Dates: Sunday, September 17th through Saturday, September 23rd, 2017. For more information and registration, visit www.envstudies.org.



NEW MEMBERS:

We are pleased to welcome three new members to our Williamsburg Bird Club:

- **Vincent Lager**
- **Ashley Mamot**
- **Andrew Mamot**

Happy birding!!

August 11, 2017: Field Trip to Craney Island (continued)

- **RESTROOMS:** A rest room will be available to use at the start and end of the visit.
- **PARKING:** Parking will be available on Craney Island for any "non-carpool" cars once the group is granted entrance by the visit lead(s). Craney Island is a secure government site and its Project Office is located on a residential street. When you arrive, please do not block the gated entranceway, residents' driveways, or park in the grassy areas.
- **ENTRY TO CRANEY:** It is important to know that early arrival will not permit early entry. Please plan to arrive no earlier than 30 minutes prior to your visit start time. If your group could have more than 10 cars, please consider selecting a location nearby to meet and then travel to Craney as a group. This will ensure prompt arrival to your visit, easy entry and parking, and minimal interruption to the street traffic and residents.
- **PAPERWORK:** Liability waivers will be available to sign at the start of the visit. Unfortunately, these forms cannot be provided in advance. The visit lead(s) must have everyone sign the forms in front of them at the time of the visit.

New Quarter Bird Walk on May 13th

Four hardy birders braved the showers for the WBC's bird walk Saturday morning, May 13th: Shirley Devan, Nancy Barnhart, Wayne Moyer and Jan Lockwood. Shirley and Nancy teamed as co-leaders, finding a remarkable 41 species amid the raindrops and wind. By the way, no photo was taken because of the rain.

New Quarter Bird Walk on May 27th

Seventeen 'early birds' joined Jim Corliss at about 6:30 Saturday morning to enjoy cool weather and walk the trails, observing 45 bird species. Joining the "regulars" were 3 Scarlet Tanagers, 6 Summer Tanagers, and probably the most frequently seen summer visitors, 7 Osprey. It was a great morning to be out in the woods in NQP!



Front row: Anne Grayber, Portia Belden, Betty Peterson, Beatrix Woods, David Lunt, Joyce Lowry, Katie Johanson
Others: Ward Phelps, Archie Fripp, Jan Lockwood, Jeanette Navia, Barbara Neis, Nancy Barnhart, Jim Corliss

Not pictured:
Bob and
Cynthia
Long.



Both photos courtesy of Shirley Devan

New Quarter Bird Walk on June 10th

On the June 10th bird walk, 15 eager birders beat the heat to see 42 species at New Quarter Park. Led by Jason Strickland, the folks were thrilled to see 25 Canada Geese in an impressive fly-over as well as Summer Tanagers, Yellow-billed Cuckoos, and even a Clapper Rail (heard only). If you're interested in the complete list, please visit our website at williamsburgbirdclub.org/.

Participants were: Back Row: Thad Hecht, Zack Poelker, Betsy Middleton, Jeanette Navia, John Jankovick, Jim Mayfield, Tom McCary. Front Row: Lieve Keeney, Jason Strickland (leader), Jan Lockwood, Nancy Barnhart, Joyce Lowry, Janice Mayfield, Shirley Devan (Not in the photo: Raymond Harrison)

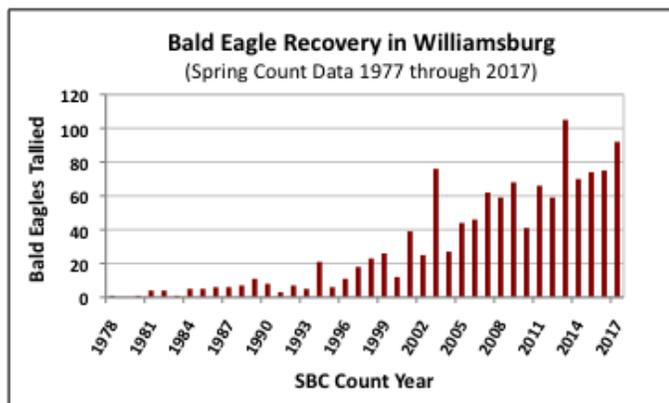
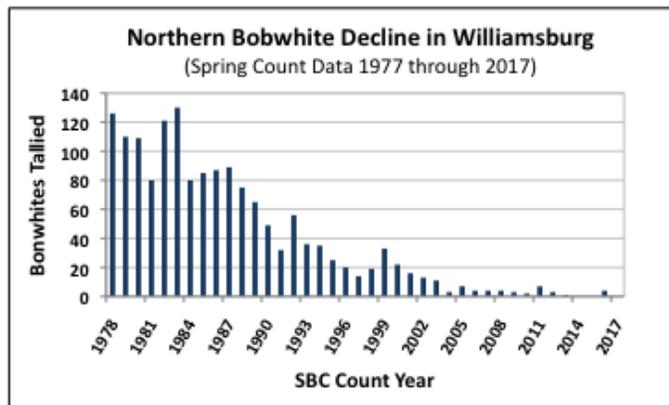
Summary of Our 40th Spring Bird Count

By Jim Corliss, Bird Count Coordinator

Thank you to everyone who participated in our 40th Spring Bird Count (SBC) on April 30th. Between observers in the field and feeder-watchers, a record 87 counters tallied 9,041 birds, which is slightly above our 40-year average. The total number of individual species sighted was 146, which is a little bit below our average of 152. The highlights of the count were two species never recorded before in our SBC, both of which were observed by Brian Taber. The first was the Clay-colored Sparrow that had been frequenting Brian's backyard feeder for several months and was gracious enough to stay in town until our count. The second was a

Dickcissel that Brian happened upon at Mainland Farm while on his way home from counting at Hog Island. We also set two high-count records this year, one for Turkey Vultures at 254 (previous record was 234 in 2009) and the other for Black Vultures at 133 (a huge increase above the previous record of 89 in 2012). It feels a little ominous that vultures are doing so well.....

It's a significant accomplishment for us to have accumulated 40 contiguous years of SBC data. I wonder how many local bird clubs around the country can make that claim. Just think of the dedication that it required of our club members to keep this citizen science project rolling along uninterrupted for four decades! Now with all of that data available to us, it's exciting to examine it more closely to understand the population trends and movements of birds right here in Williamsburg. For example, when my family moved to Williamsburg 22 years ago, we would relax on our



deck in St. Georges Hundred and enjoy the distant sound of Northern Bobwhites calling from Mainland Farm. It's been a long time since I've heard a bobwhite from my back yard, but I couldn't tell you when I stopped hearing them, or at what rate their numbers decreased. But with 40 years of SBC data at our fingertips, we can realistically answer those questions. Early in our club's history it was routine to tally more than 100 bobwhites in the SBC (can you imagine?), and now finding just a single bird is cause to celebrate. Our SBC data show that here in Williamsburg, the bobwhite decline has been similar to that estimated from the North American Breeding Bird Survey - that their numbers have dropped 85% since 1966. But there is good news also. Most of us can remember when Bald Eagle sightings were uncommon. But thanks to efforts at federal, state, and regional levels, our national bird is enjoying a spectacular recovery. It's gratifying to see that the SBC data we've gathered here, within our 15-mile diameter circle around Williamsburg, provides concrete evidence of this success story.

Using our SBC data, we're not only able to monitor population trends of our birds here in Williamsburg, but we can also begin to understand their migration patterns. For example, Yellow-rumped Warblers winter here in our area, but they eventually leave in the spring for their breeding grounds farther north. While the yellow-rumps are leaving, other warblers are also moving through our area, with the Blackpoll Warblers being one of our latest warbler migrants. With 40 years of count data available to us, we can show the timing of how these two species come and go into and out of our area. Historically, our SBC has been conducted between April 26 (the 115th day of the year) and May 15 (the 135th day of the year). Within this 20-day window of

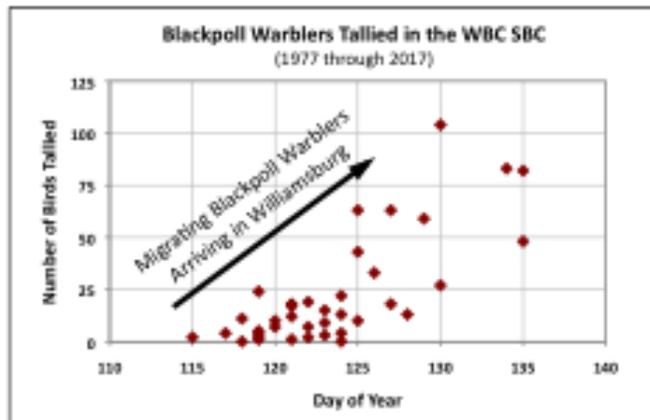
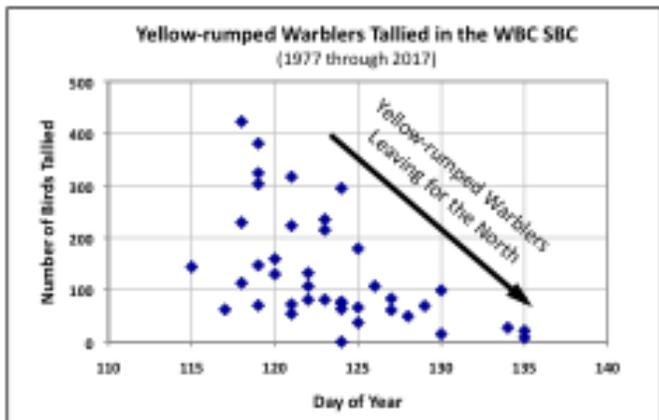
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Dickcissel
Photo by Brian Taber

Spring Bird Count (continued from Page 6)

time, our SBC records show that nearly all of the Yellow-rumped Warblers have left our area by May 15, while this is about the same point in time at which the Blackpoll Warbler numbers have peaked.



Imagine what the next generation of Williamsburg birders will uncover as they add another 40 years of SBC data to our records! Our club's count data could provide evidence of how climate change affects migration timing, or how current efforts to re-establish critical habitat enabled Northern Bobwhite numbers to rebound. The possibilities are endless, and it all started on May 6, 1978 when a small group of local birders conducted the first SBC in the name of the fledgling Williamsburg Bird Club.

So thank you to everyone who has volunteered their time and energy to keep the Williamsburg SBC rolling and gaining momentum for the last 40 years. A special thank you goes to Sara Lewis this year who arranged the room and provided the food and refreshments for our compilation meeting. Thank you also to Dave Youker who facilitated the compilation meeting in my unexpected absence.

Let's see if we can set a new SBC participation record again next year. And until then, remember that our Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will be held on December 17th this year. This will be the 41st time that our club has participated in the Christmas Bird Count, and this year will mark the 118th CBC since it began on Christmas Day in 1900. We hope to see you then!



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.



JAN LOCKWOOD IS YORK COUNTY VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

By Sara Lewis

Each year, York County Department of Community Services recognizes volunteers who have helped the county better serve its citizens. This year, New Quarter Park nominated Jan Lockwood, Virginia Master Naturalist and Williamsburg Bird Club board member, to receive the award for the Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Division. She was recognized during a ceremony held before the York County Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday, April 18.

Jan Lockwood and her husband, John, retired to the Williamsburg area in 2009 from Rockford, Illinois, where Jan had worked for the municipal park system. There, she remembers her director worked hard to secure funding for much-needed recreation programs, which people in the area, including the Lockwood family, benefitted from and enjoyed. Jan said, "I also saw the impact that a caring, passionate individual can have on a community and the value of service. And that led me to New Quarter and its bluebirds (almost my backyard) when we moved here."

Soon after discovering the bluebird trail at New Quarter, monitored by Historic Rivers Chapter Virginia Master Naturalist members, Jan volunteered to take over monitoring management responsibilities for the trail with Lois Ullman. While she heads up a group of volunteers who monitor New Quarter's trail of 19 nest boxes, she & Lois also coordinate data collection on bluebird trails throughout the area for the Virginia Bluebird Society. Jan has presented programs on bluebirds to club monitors, to the public during Saturday Walk and Talk programs, and to school children who take field trips to New Quarter.

After a year or two in the area and becoming involved as a member of the Virginia Master Naturalists and Williamsburg Bird Club, Jan initiated regular Wildlife Mapping walks at the park. Jan leads two to three 2-hour walks each month and area citizens are invited to join her. She also coordinates bird walks at the Park, held every 2nd and 4th Saturday, and led by a member of the Williamsburg Bird Club. Jan is the count circle organizer for annual Christmas and Spring Bird Counts and summer Butterfly Counts that include New Quarter. She is usually in attendance at programs like Bug Nights and other New Quarter Walk and Talk programs, too.

Bird Club and Master Naturalists chapters as well as New Quarter Park staff count on Jan for so many projects and citizen science efforts that involve the park. Because she lives in Queen's Lake and comes to the park almost every day, she's been called on to help with everything from wildlife veterinary suggestions to making sure a beaver skeleton got to the Master Naturalists for use in educational programs. Jan is indeed a caring and passionate person who is making a difference for citizens and citizen science at New Quarter Park. CONGRATULATIONS, JAN!!



THE GENIUS OF BIRDS – A TALK WITH JENNIFER ACKERMAN

Science author Jennifer Ackerman brings to light the latest research on avian intelligence in her talk about her newest book, *The Genius of Birds*. It turns out that calling someone a 'bird brain' might be a real compliment. Join her at the James City County Library (7770 Croaker Road, Williamsburg, VA 23188) on Saturday, July 22nd, at 10:00 am in the Kitzinger Room to learn more about our very intelligent avian friends.

VIRGINIA MASTER NATURALISTS BASIC TRAINING STARTS SEPTEMBER 5th

The Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists is accepting applications for its annual six-month Basic Training session. The session starts September 5, 2017 and ends March 14, 2018. The group meets about twice a month on Tuesday evenings and participates in six weekend classes/field trips over the six-month period.

People who are curious about nature, enjoy the outdoors, and want to be part of natural resource management and conservation in Virginia are perfect candidates.

Enrollment is limited to 20 people. The fee is \$175.00, which includes all materials and instruction. Deadline for application is August 15.

The application for Basic Training can be downloaded from the Historic Rivers website:

<http://www.historicrivers.org/become-a-virginia-master-naturalist/> or contact the Basic Training committee at wharper15@cox.net. Any additional information can be found at www.virginiamasternaturalist.org.

HOUSE SPARROW THOUGHTS

By Cheryl Jacobson

I read this in one of the 1988 bird club newsletters and thought you all might be interested:



Bluebird fledging from a nesting box—photo by Inge Curtis

The following ways of dealing with sparrows harassing bluebird houses have recently been proposed:

- Attach a windsock, 4 feet long, to nest box top.
- Attach steamers to nest box top—this idea is reported to have a 50 percent success rate.
- With thumbtacks, attach aluminum foil streamers, measuring approximately 5 inches by 1/2 inch, to the inside of the top of the box.
- Paint the inside of the box white using exterior grade latex paint
- Never put a perch on a nest box or roosting box as sparrows love it!

I don't think we have tried these approaches...

VABBA2 UPDATE

By Ashley Peele

June 2nd seems like an apt time for a quick Atlas update, because we've hit several major milestones for the project in the last month! First, here is a quick summary of our dataset thus far...

- **28,338** checklists submitted!
- **489** priority blocks w/ 1 or more checklist submitted (61%)
- **2,377** total blocks w/ 1 or more checklist submitted (53%)
- **179** confirmed breeding species
- **692** Atlas eBird contributors

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VABBA2 UPDATE (continued)

Our goal for 2017 is to double the amount of data collected in season one (2016). In 2016, we collected ~14,500 checklists. Since the start of 2017, we've already collected ~13,700 and it's only June 1st! This is an awesome achievement, so way to go folks!

Additionally, a number of counties/cities have more than doubled their data reporting since March of this year. These include:

Albemarle, Alexandria, Bedford, Botetourt, Buchanan, Buckingham, Caroline, Carroll, Charles City, Charlottesville, Chesterfield, Colonial Heights, Dickenson, Dinwiddie, Essex, Floyd, Fredericksburg, Grayson, Harrisonburg, Henrico, Henry, King and Queen, King William, Lancaster, Lexington, Lunenburg, Madison, Nelson, Northumberland, Nottoway, Page, Petersburg, Portsmouth, Pulaski, Roanoke City, Rockbridge, Salem, Smyth, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Staunton, Surry, Virginia Beach, Waynesboro, Williamsburg, Winchester, and Wise.

Phew! A lot to list, but I include them all to say **thank you** to the birders and clubs in these areas who are helping to boost breeding data collection. Many of these counties reported very little data in 2016, so it is AWESOME to see such a strong increase in effort.

Ok, now that we've patted ourselves on the back for killing it this spring, let's not forget about the rest of summer! **June** and **July** are prime breeding data collection months, despite having the reputation of being a slow birding season. Most breeding confirmations are logged in June and July, b/c the landscape is suddenly flooded with fledglings being chased and fed by parents. OR by resident birds working to hatch and raise second broods. OR by late breeders such as American Goldfinches getting started with their breeding season. Be sure to use these months to help check off more species as breeders in your Atlas blocks. It's hot, so don't worry about running around covering lots of ground. Instead, find a few nice shady spots with a good field of view to sit and watch from.



Photo of a male bluebird carrying food to the nest – by Inge Curtis



American Redstart male singing at Skyline Drive— photo by Barbara Houston (left)

Two Red-shouldered Hawk chicks in their nest – photo by Scott and Janet Rathburn (below)



RED-COCKADED WOODPECKERS

Article and Photos by Cheryl J Jacobson

It is worth getting up early to see the Red-cockaded Woodpeckers at the Piney Grove Preserve. Every year there is at least one or two opportunities to visit the site, either through our WBC or VSO. On May 26, 2017, I stayed at the 4H Conference Center near Wakefield in order to meet the Biologist from the Center for Conservation Biology and the VSO group at 5:15 am the next morning. We traveled to the restricted area and had a wonderful morning observing many woodpeckers returning to nesting cavities with food for the young hatchlings. Last year when I went, a bander was present who used ladders to climb to the cavities, extract the young hatchlings, and bring them to the ground to band. Here are some photos of the adult birds and newly banded nestlings that we got to observe.



This is information from the annual report of The Center for Conservation Biology.

HISTORY

“By the mid-1900’s, the great fire-maintained pine forests of the Southeast had been much reduced and old-growth pines in particular had been harvested down to 1% of historic levels. By this time, specialists like Red-cockaded Woodpeckers that depend on these trees had suffered catastrophic declines. Virginia represents the northern range limit for this unusual species and declines reached a critical level in 2002 when the population included only two potential breeding groups with 14 individuals. The purchase of the Piney Grove Preserve by The Nature



Conservancy would prove to be a turning point and through dedicated efforts, the population has been rebuilt to 13 potential breeding groups and more than 65 individuals.

The Piney Grove Preserve has intensively managed the population, monitoring every breeding attempt and marking every individual. They have moved birds into the site from southern populations and recently have moved birds into the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge in an effort to establish a second population. Because this species depends on old growth trees, recovery is a long process that will stretch out many decades.”

PHOTOS BY OUR TALENTED MEMBERS



A Red-eyed Vireo at Harrison Lake—taken by Barbara Houston



A Great-crested Flycatcher at Tucker Landing – taken by Shirley Devan



*Two beautiful raptors....A Red-shouldered Hawk by Janet and Scott Rathbun and a Barred Owl by Barbara Houston (above)
A colorful Barn Swallow at Jamestown Island, by Shirley Devan and a female Wood Duck protecting her box by Inge Curtis (below)*



CALENDAR

Saturday, June 24	Williamsburg Bird Club (WBC) sponsors a Bird Walk at New Quarter Park, 7 am. Meet at the parking lot near the office.
Sunday, July 2	Hampton Roads Bird Club sponsors a Bird Walk at Newport News Park, 7 am. Meet in the parking lot near Ranger Station.
Saturday, July 8	Williamsburg Bird Club (WBC) sponsors a Bird Walk at New Quarter Park, 8 am. Meet at the parking lot near the office.
Sunday, July 16	Hampton Roads Bird Club sponsors a Bird Walk at Newport News Park, 7 am. Meet in the parking lot near Ranger Station.
Saturday, July 22	Williamsburg Bird Club (WBC) sponsors a Bird Walk at New Quarter Park, 7 am. Meet at the parking lot near the office
Sunday, August 6	Hampton Roads Bird Club sponsors a Bird Walk at Newport News Park, 7 am. Meet in the parking lot near the Ranger Station.
Friday, August 11	WBC Field Trip to Craney Island. See page 1 for details.
Saturday, August 12	Williamsburg Bird Club (WBC) sponsors a Bird Walk at New Quarter Park, 8 am. Meet at the parking lot near the office.