

**Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the  
Williamsburg Bird Club**  
*Wednesday, February 19, 2014*  
Andrews Hall, Room 101, W&M, 7:30 pm

**Attendance:** 37

**President's Remarks:**

- President Geoff Giles opened the meeting and welcomed club members. There were no new members or visitors.
- Geoff thanked Dan Cristol for leading the last field trip, the Chesapeake Bay boat trip. He asked Dan to comment on highlights of the trip. Dan listed 2 Harlequin Ducks, 7 Red-necked Grebes (a high number), Gannets, 3 species of Scoters (including a specially high number of 30 White-winged Scoters), a lot of harbor seals and most exciting, the 11-12 Razorbills with a couple even coming exceptionally close to the boat for great viewing.  
Geoff also thanked Nick Newberry, W&M student, for tabulating the species.
- Geoff enquired about interesting bird sightings. Fewer Common Grackles were noted perhaps due to cold weather. Dan Cristol reported neighbor seeing Baltimore Oriole and female Western Tanager at feeder but hasn't confirmed when. A hummingbird has been seen at Fords Colony since November. 4 Wood Ducks, Green-winged Teal and Hooded Mergansers seen along Greensprings Trail. Pine Warblers on W&M campus. Common Mergansers, Horned Grebe, Redhead Ducks concentrated on ice-free patch of water on Lake Matoaka. American Woodcock seen at Beaverdam Park and Goldeneye Ducks at Yorktown.

**Announcements:**

- Geoff introduced the new co-chairmen of the Refreshments Committee, Jan Lockwood and Ruth Gordon, and asked them to come to the front of the room. Tonight's 'feeder station' is being provisioned by Virginia Boyles.
- Geoff announced that Jan Lockwood is the new Member-at-Large and encouraged members to contact her with any issues of interest.
  - Geoff also asked Lois Ullman to come to the front of the room as she and Jan Lockwood have been working on a project to monitor bluebird boxes in the area. Because there is a need for more volunteers, he asked Jan and Lois to describe the project.
  - Jan reported that this is a project that the Historic Rivers Chapter of Master Naturalists has been involved with since 2010 and started at New Quarter Park. There are now 8 trails with another soon to be added at Poquoson Elementary School (1<sup>st</sup> school trail). Trails have 5-36 nest boxes. Volunteers monitor in teams from April through August. The purpose of the monitoring is to check on the health and progress of the bluebirds and to collect data which is submitted to the Virginia Bluebird Society and in turn to the N.A. Bluebird Society.

- Lois described the duties of a volunteer monitor. There will be an orientation meeting this coming weekend. Lois reported that 660 birds fledged last year, which was down by 9% from the previous year and thought to be due to late start in the season due to cold weather. People were encouraged to join.
- Geoff asked Shirley Devan to come forward and report on this year's winners of the Nature Camp Scholarships. He also thanked the committee members Mary Anne Fennel, Deane Gordon, Sharon Plocher, and Lee Schuster that evaluated the essays.
  - Shirley reported that there were 17 worthy applicants. The winners are 7<sup>th</sup> grader, Audrey Root, who has also won the previous 2 years and 5<sup>th</sup> grader, South McDowell. Shirley proceeded to read charming excerpts from their essays. The club has been offering these scholarships for 7 years.

#### **Upcoming Events:**

- Geoff called on Jim Corliss, Field Trip Coordinator, to tell the group about upcoming field trips. Jim announced the following trips:
  - Saturday, March 2: Field trip to Curles Neck, a good waterfowl habitat. Participants limited to 20 per request of the land owner.
  - Saturday, March 15: Field trip to Chippokes Plantation
  - Dates to be announced: Jim reported that all of March is a study period of migrating Rusty Blackbirds. He is planning on organizing 1-2 half-day or three-quarter day field trips to preferred sites of Rusty Blackbirds to participate per established protocols in the identifying and counting of these birds.

#### **Program:**

Cheryl Jacobson introduced Libby Mojica who has worked for 7 years at the Center for Conservation Biology conducting research on raptor populations. Her program tonight is *PROJECT OSPREY WATCH – MONITORING OSPREY POPULATION in the CHESAPEAKE and BEYOND*. Osprey Watch is a website-based citizen science program of a global community (10 countries) of volunteers to monitor Osprey. The mission is to collect info to address 3 issues: (1) Global climate change (2) Depletion of fish stock and (3) Environmental contaminants. The current population of Chesapeake Osprey is 8-10,000 pairs. There are currently 1,335 volunteers monitoring 4,158 nests in the Chesapeake area. Data is also collected to understand nest distribution, changes in nest substrate (ie dead tree, channel marker, utility lines) and changes in reproductive rates. The population growth has been increasing and the Osprey have expanded their range from the Chesapeake into all the tributaries.

At the end of the meeting a free raffle was held.

Geoff adjourned the meeting at 8:50.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cathy Millar, Secretary, Williamsburg Bird Club  
February 20, 2014