

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

Attendance: 40

President's Remarks:

- President Geoff Giles opened the meeting and welcomed the assembly.
- No new members, guests or visitors were present.
- Geoff enquired if anyone had interesting bird observations to report. Gadwall and Lesser Scaup were still being observed on Lake Matoaka. An early sighting of a Green Heron was noted near its nesting spot by Dan Cristol in his Rolling Woods neighborhood. He also noted that another Western Tanager, a female, (not Bill William's male) was noted on a feeder for the second year in his neighborhood as well as three Orioles. He's also heard Turkeys gobbling. Lucille reported watching a male Oriole with a ferocious appetite for peanuts and peanut butter at her feeder at Queen's Lake. Another member observed large flocks of Cedar Waxwings as well as a Yellow-bellied sapsucker drilling holes in an oak. Someone thought they'd seen a Common Loon and heard its call at Queen's Lake. Drummond Field was noted to be full of 500 plus Wilson's Snipe and about 70 Rusty Blackbirds.

Announcements:

- Rock Moselein invited members to participate in the second annual Birding Cup sponsored by the Virginia Living Museum. This year a second cup, the Hawkeye Cup, has been added for teams of birders where the majority have 2 years or less of experience. An experienced birder is allowed on the team. Teams of three to five members count as many species of birds as can be found with the 24 hour period starting 6:30 pm April 11- 6:30 pm April 12. The majority of the team must agree on a siting for it to count. There is a \$30 fee to participate. Further information and registration is available by calling the VLM.
- Geoff Giles reported that he plans to participate in this year's Nightjar watch. Nightjars include Whip-poor-wills, Chuck-will's-widow and Nighthawks whose vocalizations at night during the month of May are a means for counting them. The count will entail being out only one night when the moon is out. Geoff asked that those interested in joining him talk with him after this meeting.
- Jan Lockwood reported on current Bluebird monitoring activity. Her team has begun checking the boxes and some nests have been started but the activity is sluggish due to the recent chilly weather.
Two new birding trails have been added: one at the Chickahominy Riverfront Park and the other at the Yorktown Sports Complex.
Geoff invited members to speak with Jan if they would like to participate in Bluebird Box monitoring.

- Cheryl Jacobson reported on Osprey monitoring activity. The Ospreys returned to a nest she's been watching on March 8th, the exact same day as last year! Two pairs are building nests at Croaker Landing.

Upcoming Events:

- Jim Corliss, Field Trip Coordinator reported on an excellent trip in early March to Curles Neck near Richmond where they saw 63 species including a female Great Horned Owl on a nest and a Barn Owl who flew out of a barn.
The field trip to Chippokes Plantation was windy which kept many of the little birds low and out of sight but there were good sightings of Bald Eagles, Red-tailed Hawks, early Osprey and a very close look at Kestrel.
- Jim announced upcoming field trips:
 - April 19, Bob Ake will be leading a trip to the Dismal Swamp
 - May field trip to Shirley Plantation is being planned
 - He advised members to keep a lookout for further info in the newsletter.
- Geoff reported that there will be a walk at New Kent Forestry Center this coming Saturday, March 22. He said he'd taken a look there yesterday and there were lots of Bobwhites and tons of Fox Sparrows. Also saw a male Osprey building his nest.
- Cheryl Jacobson, Program Coordinator, described the topics of upcoming program speakers.
 - April - The 3 W&M grad students for whose research our club has contributed funds will speak on their projects.
 - May- Bill Williams will give a presentation on the identification of warblers.

Program:

Cheryl Jacobson, introduced tonight's speaker, Fletcher Smith, whose talk was titled **Saw-whet Owls, Northern Saw-whet Owls on the Lower Delmarva Peninsula**. Fletcher is a research biologist at the Center of Conservation Biology. The CCB studied Saw-whet Owls since the mid 1990's which included a trapping operation for 19 years ending in 2012. Fletcher was an owl bander for 3 years and served as project manager for 9 years. We learned how the owls are captured in mist nests and how to determine age by the condition of the flight feathers. The studies indicated a stable population. There was an historically high count for all of North America of 1,007 owls in on season in 1995! 177 were caught in just one night in 1999. Large eruptions of Saw-whet Owls reflect ample availability of prey in their nesting grounds in the north. Their numbers are concentrated on the Delmarva Peninsula during southerly migration as the land narrows and then stops at the Chesapeake Bay. Some birds fly up and down the Peninsula which results in an unusual number of owls being recaptured after already having been banded.

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

Geoff adjourned the meeting at 8:40 pm.

Refreshments provided by Mona Overturf were served at the back of the room.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cathy Millar, Secretary, Williamsburg Bird Club,
March 23, 2014