

**Minutes of the Monthly Meeting of the
Williamsburg Bird Club**

Wednesday, May 20, 2015

Andrews Hall, Room 101, W&M, 7:30

Attendance: 55

President's Remarks:

- President Geoff Giles opened the meeting and greeted the gathering which this evening was a joint meeting of the Williamsburg Bird Club and the Virginia Master Naturalist Historic Rivers Chapter. Geoff asked that members of the Master Naturalist please stand and be recognized. There were approximately 24.
- Geoff announced that this evening the usual order of business would be altered and that the scheduled program would be presented first so that guest, Pearl Beamer, and her raptors would not get home to Norfolk too late.

(Because of difficulty with the lighting system so that the lights could not be dimmed to see the PowerPoint presentation, Geoff continued with the meeting while waiting for Dan Cristol to arrive to trouble shoot the problem.)

President's Announcements:

- Geoff noted the unexpected death of Ruth Beck at the age of 72 and paid tribute to her remarkable commitment to ornithology and her importance to the founding of the WBC which is approaching its 40th anniversary. The annual WBC picnic hosted for many years at Ruth's home will not be held this year. An article written for the local paper by Dan Cristol detailing Ruth's accomplishments is available in the lobby.
- Geoff reported on the event at which he and Bill Williams accepted the Life Long Learner Award presented to the WBC by the Alpha Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa on Friday, May 15th at a reception held at the Sunken Garden on the campus of W&M. The handsome framed award can be seen in the lobby.
- Geoff enquired about fledglings being seen in member's yards. Bluebirds, chipping sparrows, chickadees, brown thrashers, catbirds and Carolina wrens were among those mentioned. Geoff said that Dan Cristol has reported that it will take many years for bluebirds to recover after their heavy losses from this last winter and he encouraged us to support our local bluebirds.

Other Business:

- As this was a joint meeting with the Master Naturalists, Geoff introduced their president, Shirley Devan. Shirley reported that their chapter was founded in 2006 and that the first training session was held in January 2007. There are currently 120 members and the 10th basic training sessions will begin this coming September. She listed the 'cross pollination' activities in which members from

both clubs are involved: Bluebird Trail monitoring, Osprey Watch, Spring and Christmas Bird Counts.

Co-chair of Basic Training, Jennifer Trevino, reported that the Historic Rivers Chapter is accepting new applicants. They accept only 25 and forms are available on their web site.

- Virginia Master Naturalists are seeking volunteers for a new program, the Breeding Bird Monitoring Program. Volunteers will work in teams of two and be conducting point counts in which all the birds seen and heard at preselected sites for 10 minutes in the Yorktown portion of the Colonial National Historical Park will be recorded. This is part of a multi-region initiative to understand the status of bird populations in our National Parks. Training starts June 8th. Emails detailing specifics will be sent to WBC members.
- Geoff asked the gathering what interesting birds they were seeing. Yellow-throated Vireo, Gray-cheeked Thrush and an Olive-sided Flycatcher were the most notable.

Program: Malfunction of lighting system persisted so despite a barely visible PowerPoint, it was decided to proceed. Cheryl Jacobson introduced tonight's speaker, Pearl Beamer of SACRED FRIENDS INC. which is a non-profit organization supported 100% by donations that takes in orphaned, sick or injured wildlife. She was assisted by the organization's volunteer coordinator, Katherine Byers. Pearl described the services her group offers, the training and permits required and a description of the wide variety of birds and other creatures they have ministered to. The program primarily serves Hampton, Norfolk, VA Beach, Portsmouth, Chesapeake and Suffolk but will care for any animal in need as long as you bring it in. Our local Godspeed Animal Hospital is part of their support system in taking in wild life. She also described a valuable resource called ANIMAL HELP NOW that immediately connects people with animal emergencies with the closest and most appropriate resources. She ended the program by having Katherine bring out one at a time the 3 program birds from their cages: a Barred Owl named Houdini who had a fractured wing, a male Red-shouldered Hawk who'd hit a power line and shattered a thigh, and a female Red-shouldered Hawk who had premature arthritis of the wings joints.

Upcoming Events:

Field Trips:

Jim Corliss reported on the last field trip of this season:

- **Saturday, June 6:** Mike Wilson, Center for Conservation Biology, will lead a trip to Piney Grove Preserve in Sussex which hosts the only area in VA where the Red-cockaded Woodpecker nests. Car pool will leave at 4am from Old Colony Square to catch the 4:30 ferry and arrive in time to see the woodpeckers leave their nests.

Programs:

Cheryl Jacobson reported on upcoming programs for the autumn season:

- **September:** Birding travels by members. Ann and Gary Carpenter will report on birds seen in Texas. Gus Hall and Helen Hamilton will give presentation on trip to Panama.
- **October:** John Arnold of Old Dominion University will present his research for the past 2 years assessing migrant stop-over habitat along the Eastern Shore in VA and MD.

- **November:** Patti Reum will give a presentation about the Kestrel Nest Box Project sponsored by the Virginia Society of Ornithology.

Geoff closed the meeting inviting the Master Naturalists back. A free raffle was held. It was noted that Wild Birds Unlimited in Williamsburg has frequently donated items for the raffle. Meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Refreshments were provided by Master Naturalists Lucy Manning and Amy Thornberry.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Millar, Secretary Williamsburg Bird Club
May 25, 2015