

Williamsburg Bird Club

Wednesday, September 16, 2015

Andrew's Hall, Room 101, W&M, 7:30 pm

Attendance: 48

President's Remarks:

- President Geoff Giles opened the meeting and greeted the gathering reminding everyone the importance of having the new Parking Pass displayed on their windshield.
- Geoff welcomed 2 visitors and 2 new members. One of the new members, Melinda Cousins, was introduced as the owner of the new wild bird supplies and products store, BACKYARD BIRDER, on Quarterpath Road. She is offering a 10% discount to WBC members.
- Geoff enquired about interesting recent sightings of fall migrants. Black-and-White Warblers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Magnolia Warblers, Blackpoll Warbler, Blackburnian Warblers, Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, American Redstarts, Black-throated Blue Warblers, Northern Parulas, and Summer Tanagers were among the birds reported seen locally. There were several members of the W&M Bird Club present who reported a number of the above listed. Nick Newberry, the founder, reported that the student club has been very active.
Of great interest are reports of the sighting of a Brown Booby on Kerr Reservoir in VA near the NC border.
- Geoff reported that one of the Nature Camp Students that we sponsored, Audrey Root, was declared best girl in her class. She will be giving a presentation to the club later in the year.

Announcements:

- Geoff announced that the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory is seeking a volunteer as a representative from our club. He asked Shirley Devan, who is one of their board members, to say a few words about what CVWO does. Shirley reported that among their activities are the Kiptopeke and College Creek Hawkwatches, Monarch Butterfly tagging, research efforts including outreach and educational programs, and habitat preservation and refurbishing. The annual Kiptopeke Challenge Team Birding Competition, their major fund raising activity, is coming up on September 19th. There are 2 teams with members from the Williamsburg and Hampton Roads Bird Clubs. Jan Lockwood, Nancy Barnhart and Shirley Devan are the Wren Wrustlers. Brian Taber and Dave Youker are the Wild Birds Unlimited. Shirley asked members to support one or both teams with a donation.
Nick Newberry added that there will be a team from the student bird club in the 3 hour competition.
Geoff reported that CVWO is also looking for a volunteer to manage their social media sites.
- Geoff noted George Copping's presence stating that his store, Wild Bird's Unlimited, has over the last 20 years donated 5% of purchases made by WBC members to our club. George was gratefully acknowledged by the membership.

- Geoff announced that all WBC positions are up for reelection in November. He invited members to review the positions and if they would like to serve or wanted to nominate someone to contact him.

Reports:

- Jan Lockwood delivered a brief report on the latest from the Master Naturalist Bluebird monitoring program. This year 15 local trails of bluebird boxes yielded a total of 350 fledged birds compared to 802 last year (a 44% drop). There were 95 nesting attempts compared to 220 last year. There was only a slightly less success rate from those eggs laid last year and that resulted in fledglings. This is the second year in a row of a state wide drop in Bluebird numbers. It is believed that losses suffered last winter from starvation related to a late winter freeze contributed a lot to this year's decrease.

On a positive note, the successful fledging in the bluebird boxes of Chickadees has doubled and Tufted Titmouse have nearly tripled this year.

Jan reported that the seven 2 hole-entry bluebird boxes that were tried for the 1st time on the trails seem to be successful. The 2 holes allow bluebirds being invaded by House Sparrows to escape and take the battle outside. A total of only 8 eggs were lost in the 2 hole boxes and no adults or babies were killed.

Geoff concluded noting the importance of taking care of bluebirds in our backyards especially during hard winters where our support can be crucial to their survival.

- Bill Williams reported that the Christmas Bird Count will be December 20th and that a place for compilation of data is still needed since Carrot Tree is no longer available. He urged everyone to participate and said more info will be shared as the event nears.
Bill also reported that from 2016-2021 a major state wide effort will be underway to establish a Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas funded from grant money from VA Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries. He and Shirley Devan are on the steering committee. The development of this atlas will fall largely on the efforts of Virginia's bird clubs. More details will be up-coming.

Upcoming Events:

Field Trips:

Jim Corliss, Field Trip Coordinator, briefly reported on the following upcoming trips.

- **October:** Newport News Park where we will join the Hampton Roads Bird Club.
- **November:** Back Bay Wildlife Refuge
- **December:** Dutch Gap penciled in depending on weather conditions.

Jim added that a day trip to Sylvan Heights Bird Park in Scotland Neck, N.C. may also be added. Geoff, who has been there, added that birds from around the world are on view.

Jim said that he is always open to the membership suggesting new ideas of places to bird.

Geoff also added that club members wishing to car pool to join the Hampton Roads Bird Club field trip to Hog Island on Saturday, September 19th, should meet at Old Colony Square parking lot on Jamestown Road for departure at 6:45 am.

Programs:

Cheryl Jacobson, Program Coordinator, said she appreciated members who took the time to fill out her survey evaluating the programs presented at our monthly meetings. She reported that a majority responded that they preferred science focused presentations and that she will try to accommodate this input when possible. She also invited members to submit ideas for future programs.

She enquired whether the members would be interested in a presentation from a contact she has in Arizona who is a hummingbird rehabilitator. The lady has offered to do a program on West Coast hummingbirds and their rehab during a time that she is visiting relatives here in VA. The idea was approved by the membership.

Cheryl was pleased to report that next month's presentation will be science based.

- **October 21:** Eric Walters, Assistant Professor in Dept. of Biological Science at ODU, will speak on the impact of urban fragmentation on wildlife movement and patterns and the role it plays on both resident and migratory birds. His survey encompassed 48 sites mostly on Delmarva Peninsula County and involved counting the fall migrating birds and comparing the food supply at those sites. It is hoped that the results will be useful to developers and conservation groups.

Program: Cheryl Jacobson briefly introduced tonight's speakers as we all know them as members of our club: Gary and Ann Carpenter. The illustrated presentation titled, "Birding Texas and the Rio Grande Valley with Roads Scholar", described Roads Scholar birding trips in general and then the 2 trips they took over a two week period this last winter during which they saw a total of 144 bird species. They reported that Roads Scholar is a nonprofit organization that offers educational programs all over the world at a great value.

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

Geoff adjourned the meeting at 8:45 pm.

Refreshments were provided by Shirley Devan.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cathy Millar, Secretary Williamsburg Bird Club
September 20, 2015