

Williamsburg Bird Club
Wednesday, February 15, 2017
Andrews Hall, Room 101, W&M, 7:00 pm

Attendance: 64

President's Remarks:

President Bill Williams opened the meeting and welcomed the assembly. It was the annual joint meeting of the Historic Rivers Chapter of Master Naturalists and the Williamsburg Bird Club. The Master Naturalists comprised nearly half of those gathered in the hall. Bill noted there being a number of folks who were members of both organizations. He then turned the meeting over to Cheryl Jacobson and tonight's program.

Program: Cheryl Jacobson, VP and Program Chairperson, introduced Dr. Lesley Bullock who is an assistant professor at VCU and has been teaching at the Dept. of Biology and Center for Environmental Studies since 2014. . She received her PhD studying the Golden-winged Warbler from University of Tennessee.

Dr. Bullock's program, *A Tale of Two Swamps: Full Life Cycle Conservation of the Prothonotary Warbler*, presented her latest research done together with second year master's student, Jessie Reese. She described their observations of Prothonotary Warbler's breeding grounds here in Virginia and primary wintering grounds in Columbia. Their highest rate of mortality is during migration. Her studies showed that there were 8-9 year old warblers and even a 10 year old. A fascinating report was that 12% of nestlings and 26% of broods in a 5 year study were not biologically related to the mother bird but had hatched from eggs dumped by another Prothonotary into the nest. She also shared results from the study of stable hydrogen isotopes in their feathers, some of which Shirley Devan had collected for the project, that examined migratory connectivity.

Announcements:

- Bill noted that our club was founded in 1977 and asked Deane Gordon to give an account of what was happening in our club in February 1978. Deane read from *Williamsburg Bird Club Notes*...not yet called *The Flyer*. The meeting was held on Feb. 15th at Millington Hall and the speaker was Dr. Keith Bildstein from the W&M Biology Dept. who spoke on hawks and owls. Dues for students were \$3, individuals \$5 and for families \$7.50. Betty Williams (Bill's mother) had agreed to chair the club's publicity. Brian Taber was chairperson of field trips. Drawings for a club logo were being sought. Bill Williams had agreed to give a bird identification workshop. Baltimore Orioles and House Finches were noted at feeders. A Common Puffin had been seen off the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel!
Bill added to Deane's reading that Dr. Bildstein is now head of the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Pennsylvania.
He noted that that might also have been the year that our club's Christmas Bird Count had the *national* record for the number of Baltimore Orioles set at 15 with most of them seen at Anne Smith's yard here in town where she attracted them with grapefruit rinds filled with raspberry

Jell-O! He noted that Gus Hall found the first House Finches in this area in 1967 and the bird was still rare around here in 1978!

Bill reported that Deane Gordon will continue to relate our club's activities as noted in the newsletters of 1978 at each meeting as we continue to celebrate our club's 40th anniversary.

- Bill reported that the WBC Executive Committee met 10 days ago. Our treasurer, Ann Carpenter, has updated our investment funds. Bill wanted the membership to appreciate that we donate funds to Williamsburg Regional Library, Williamsburg Land Conservancy, Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory, and W&M Center for Conservation Biology and for seed for the Child Development Resources Feeder Project.
- Bill announced that Deane Gordon had met with 4H Schoolyard Outreach Habitat people at Tabb Library last week about launching a student art project celebrating our 40th anniversary and asked Deane to give a report. Deane said that he wanted to include students in the area in our anniversary celebration this coming September by inviting them to submit art work (photo, painting, drawing, sculpture, etc.) that features a wild bird found in Southeastern Virginia and the number 40. The 4H group has agreed to get the word out to all of the York County schools. Deane has made contact with John who works in JCC school district and has agreed to spread the info to all the art teachers in JCC schools. Schools from Poquoson and Gloucester have also indicated an interest in participating. Chosen art submissions will be displayed in libraries, Wild Birds Unlimited, Backyard Birders and maybe some places in Gloucester.

Upcoming Events:

Field Trips: Shirley Devan, Field Trip Coordinator, reported on upcoming field trips.

- **Saturday, February 18:** Touring the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel Islands by car. Registration is closed. We'll be looking for Razorbills and Dovekies.
- **Saturday, March 18:** Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge in Virginia Beach led by Rob Bielawski.
- **Saturday, April 15:** Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge led by Bob Ake.

*Shirley then proceeded to don her Master Naturalist vest over her WBC shirt. She asked the master naturalists to stand up and be recognized. She noted that the Historic Rivers Chapter was started in 2007 and has 155 active members in the Williamsburg/James City County area. She described what they do in the community and what they contribute to citizen science. She invited others to join the chapter and to take the basic training which is being offered this coming September.

Programs: Cheryl Jacobson, VP and Program Chairperson, reported on the upcoming programs.

- **Wednesday, March 15:** Nick Newberry, W&M undergraduate student, will share his research findings about whether the presence of a diverse population of birds can increase property value of one's home locally.
- **Wednesday, April 12:** The W&M grad students who have received grants from our club in 2016 will present their research.

Bird Counts:

- **WBC Spring Bird Count:** Jim Corliss reported that it is on April 30th.
- **Great Backyard Bird Count:** Bill encouraged the gathering to participate on any or all of the count days from Feb 17-20th. He related that the protocol is very simple and easily found on the Cornell Lab site.

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

Bill adjourned the meeting at 9:25 pm.

Refreshments were provided by members of both the Bird Club and Master Naturalist Chapter: Virginia Boyles, Marilyn Adair, Cathy Millar, Jeanette Navia, Anne-Marie Castellani, and Lou Amato

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Millar, Williamsburg Bird Club,
February 16, 2017