



THE WILLIAMSBURG FLIER  
September, 1979

The September meeting of the Williamsburg Bird Club will be held Wednesday, Sept. 19, at 7:30 P.M. in Millington Hall. We hope everyone has had an enjoyable summer and will be eager to get back to bird club activities.

We all enjoy seeing the various spring warblers, both those that are just passing through on their way to breeding grounds to the north; and those that stay in our area and breed. It seems that warblers as a family are probably the most colorful group of birds we have in North America; almost every color or combination of colors is to be found. Identifying these birds in the spring is a fairly easy and very rewarding experience. And then along comes fall migrations, and the identification of what a few months before had been a collection of feathered rainbows becomes at times a frustrating experience for even the experienced birder. How can such beautiful birds become such drab hues of sameness; and how in the world can you identify one species from another? For the answers to these and other questions you may have about fall warblers, plan on attending the Sept. bird club meeting when Dorothy Mitchell will be probing the mysteries of fall warbler identification. Dorothy is of course very active in our bird club as well as Hampton Roads Bird Club and the V.S.O. She and husband Mike have probably banded more birds than anyone else in the Peninsula area; and over the years she has amassed an astounding collection of bird slides. We hope everyone will be able to come out and attend our first meeting of the fall.

Our Sept. field trip will be an outing to Lake Matoaka on Saturday, Sept. 22. Please assemble at the Information Center by 8:00 A.M. The Aug. field trip to Hog Island was a bit warm but very nice. The goodies included an adult bald eagle, white-rumped sandpiper, mute swan, brown-headed nuthatches, and terns- caspian, royal, common, Forster's, least, and black. That's just about every tern in the book, but thanks to tropical storm David, we took a "tern" in a different direction. Wed. evening in the throes of the storm, Sherwin Beck went out to the Williamsburg airport to make sure his aircraft was securely tied down; and he noticed a pair of strange looking terns. He quickly called Ruth who came out and identified them as sooty terns. These birds are usually only found in the Dry Tortugas off the southern coast of Florida, but they had been picked up in the storm and finally came to rest at the airport. The next day two more birds were found on the Colonial Parkway; one was dead and the other is still recovering from exhaustion at the Becks. Sooty terns are sometimes called "Hurricane Birds" because it is not too uncommon for them to be caught up in tropical storms. This storm was a good example of an ill wind blowing a good tern. And as if that wasn't enough, Tom Armour of Kingsmill observed a magnificent frigatebird flying over the James River on Busch properties.

The nets are now open at Kiptopeke and Dr. Byrd is banding hawks at Fisherman

Island; if you can find the time a trip to the Eastern Shore at either of these banding operations can be a very rewarding experience.

Dorothy Mitchell spotted a Ruddy Shelduck at Chincoteague in early July. Brian Taber took a trip to Arizona this summer and came home with 70 life birds; later on a pelagic trip he saw a sooty tern and black-capped petrels. Bill Williams has had a coot on Queen's Lake since mid Aug. and a red-eyed vireo feeding a young cowbird as late as Sept. 3. Aug. 18 2 least terns were seen at Chickahominy Haven, and 12 to 15 black terns were seen at the mouth of the Chickahominy River.

Have you been keeping records for Bill Sheehan? You may not have anything as exotic as a magnificent frigatebird, but anything you have will be just as appreciated. Last spring our own Alice Springle turned in what we think is a very clever and cute record for Bill's keeping. It is too much of a work of art to be kept hidden from the rest of the club, so at the risk of incurring Alice's wrath here goes.

To Bill Sheehan who keeps records, accept this from me.  
Here's what's in my yard April 18 to May 23.  
I've got warblers - some I know and some are unknown,  
And three baby cardinals almost full grown.  
There's two crested flycatchers to eat the Mayflies,  
And several vireos with the red-colored eyes.  
I've seen a summer tanager with the prettiest call;  
And some redstarts and a cuckoo - if I stand in my hall.  
On May 3 a hairy woodpecker ate up a storm -  
I know cause I watched him - the day was quite warm.  
Some winter friends - goldfinch and chickadee  
Have to sing out quite loud to beat out the pee-o-wee.  
I've had red bellies, downies, cowbirds, and wrens,  
Bluejays and thrashers; does this make sense?  
Heard a yellowthroat and ovenbird; saw a black and white;  
And myrtles and bluebirds and a nuthatch breast white.  
Forgot thrushes and doves, robins, titmice;  
Heard a Chuck Will's Widow; really quite nice.  
On 4-25 and every day hence,  
Comes a pileated woodpecker; he's really immense.  
He lands in the trees, then attacks the front door,  
One, two, or three times, then several times more.  
The first time he hit, he scared me to death,  
Now when he comes I just hold my breath.  
He hangs on the brick, the glass, / or the screen,  
He's plain crazy. Do you know what I mean?  
He first came in mornings, but now any time,  
I proved I was sober to that husband of mine.  
I sure hope he finds a girl to adore,  
At least something smaller than my front door.  
You should see what he's doing to the dogwood and stoop,  
I'm up to my ears in pileated - - - !  
OH LORD, HE'S AT THE BACK DOOR.

No matter what form your records take, Bill will gladly appreciate them. Alice, we all appreciate your humor and your contributions to our club.

We hope to see a big turnout at our Sept. meeting.