

## THE WILLIAMSBURG FLYER

August 1980

Remember, avian buff that there will be no meeting this month. Regular monthly meetings will commence at 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, September 17 in Millington Hall on the William and Mary Campus.

There will, however, be a field trip this month. And what a field trip it should be. On August 23 we're scheduled to depart at 7:00 a.m. from the Colonial Williamsburg Information Center for Craney Island in Portsmouth. Fall migration of shorebirds, gulls, terns and herons has been an all out event since mid-July and Craney Island is one of the most spectacular stop-over points for these birds. There are literally thousands of birds to pour over and rarities are always a possibility there. The trip should last until early afternoon so bring some munchies and/or a lunch. This is truly one of the highlight trips we offer so attend if at all possible.

With fall approaching quickly the club plans to pursue a bird sale seed in earnest. We will be especially looking for temporary storage facilities, a large truck or trailer from which to dispense the seed, and plenty of volunteers. This project can be very worthwhile financially for us, not to mention providing a unique public service. Last year's limited seed sale was quite successful and smoothly run, and provided many folks with an excellent quality bird seed. Now that we've gotten through the initial shock this year's project should prove an efficient operation.

Apparently several club members have had the opportunity to photograph some birds in the past several months. We'd like to share the slides or pictures you have. Bring 'em on down to the monthly meetings. Everyone will appreciate your stories behind the photographs.

One of the most fascinating aspects of birds is their ability to fly. However, few of us know what flight is all about. Well, our President Ruth "Sky Queen" Beck does know. She's just passed all of the rigors to be granted her private pilots license. So in the future should you see any large unidentifiable bird flapping about it's probably just our chief executive making practice flights. Actually, she's undergoing a fall moult and is itching to wing it. Hope she doesn't decide to migrate!

On the bird scene a lot has taken place. Rich Goll continues his quest for a big bird year. On July 27 he and Cindy Fletcher found an unusual ground dove at Back Bay. This tiny dove is a native of Florida so finding one in Virginia is quite noteworthy. As if this wasn't good enough the dynamic duo hustled off to Staunton to track down the state's sixth ever scissor-tailed flycatcher recently. This bird only remained for three days so I hear, and Rich and Cindy were fortunate enough to see it. Keep it up guys.

Bob Cross discovered two immature white ibis at Newport News Park during

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mid-July. Brian Taber got wind of the find and was able to take some photos of the birds. As always it will be exciting to see Brian's slides of these neat birds.

For those members who cater towards tennis; I hear that a pair of pileated woodpeckers can be found poking around the telephone poles adjacent to the city courts at James Blair Terrace near Dunbar. They probably pick off stray tennis balls. You want to argue with one?

Hey Iran! Listen to this tale of two species. Julie Hotchkiss reports that a family of chickadees took up residence in a bluebird house earlier this summer out First Colony way. A problem arose when the bluebirds decided they wanted to move in. There were some tense times as everyone thought the bigger bluebirds would simply throw the squatters out. Well animals will often find a more suitable, cooperative way of solving such conflicts. Chickadees fledge in about ten days after hatching. So in this instance the male bluebird just pitched in and helped the chickadees raise their brood. How's that for sensible solutions. You don't suppose there's a lesson to be learned here, huh?

With young birds the theme of any summer is great when a bit of the unusual occurs. A report of a nesting cedar waxwing from Camp Peary was quite surprising. This species rarely nests on the coastal plain, but lo and behold a pair certainly must have this year. The little bird was last reported in excellent condition flying about under the care of Ruth and Michael Beck. This **only** furthers our contention of the wide variety of avifauna available in our area.

Chris Glasgow has been caring for a young red-eyed vireo. I only hope that the continuous care young birdlets demand doesn't make Chris red-eyed!

One final note of business concerns the bird feeders we've been trying to place at the Pines nursing home. That feeder is now in place at the Pines and represents our memorial to Roy Trow who was so very active locally with purple martins before he passed away.

Scanning through the College of William and Mary's catalogue of special programs for fall 1980 an interesting lecture series was discovered. It's entitled "Oceanography for Landlubbers" and the first lecture will concern the "Birds of Coastal Virginia". This talk will be presented by Dr. Martin Wass of VIMS. The lecture will begin at 7:30 p.m. on September 3 and will be held in Byrd Hall Conference Room at VIMS, Gloucester Point. Admission is free. Other lectures in the series will concern whales, oil spills, sharks and general oceanography. Sounds like a pretty neat program over the fall.

#### ASK OWL

The cedar waxwing derives its name from the red tips of the secondary feathers on the wing. The red tips look and feel like they have a waxy coating.