

THE WILLIAMSBURG FLYER
NOVEMBER 1981

Somewhere along the way October gave way to another month and suddenly I notice that it's quarter past November and Christmas ornaments are already in evidence. Didn't I just hear "Trick or Treat"? Better get my dyed eggs out soon! Nevertheless, no one can complain about the color of October locally. A more brilliant finale from our tree borne neighbors is hard to recollect in recent years.

You might recollect that on Wednesday, November 18, we will have our regular monthly meeting. We will meet in Andrews Hall (behind Phi Beta Kappa Hall) on the William and Mary campus at 7:30 p.m. for a program on the bird-rich area of Southeast Arizona. You will hear about gila monsters, roadrunners and rattlesnakes and hopefully partake some of the spectacular scenery of this avian paradise along the Mexican border.

Since this will be our last monthly meeting of 1981 there are quite a few important items of business to be settled. Of special interest will be the election of our 1982 officers. The following slate is offered by the Nominating Committee chaired by Alice Springe:

President: Tom Armour
Vice-President (Programs): Ruth Beck
Vice-President (Newsletter): Bill Williams
Secretary: Cynthia Long
Treasurer: Leigh Jones
Board of Directors: Cindy Fletcher, Brian Taber
Members at Large

Secondly, the present Executive Committee has gone through our Constitution and By-Laws and proposes several major changes in those documents. Enclosed with this newsletter you will find the proposed revisions. Many of these are simply clarifications of items and policies as they are currently being used and implemented. Please read over the revisions carefully and be ready to voice an opinion on them on November 18. As everyone is aware, no organization is any stronger than its membership support. By-Laws and Constitutions only serve as guidelines to the wishes of the way in which any organization's members want their group to operate. Should you have questions about the wording of the now-existing By-Laws and Constitution, let Bill Williams or Ruth Beck know.

A third major item of business will center around a financially oriented proposal made by this writer at our October meeting. Very simply it involves the establishment of a scholarship by the bird club for a William and Mary student of ornithology. The membership present at last month's meeting adopted the idea in principle. Enclosed with the By-Law and Constitution revisions is an outline of the scholarship mechanics and implementation along with a brief statement of rationale. The membership will be asked to approve the scholarship so that a 1982 award can be put in motion.

Finally, the Executive Committee, spearheaded by Ruth Beck, would like to propose that we adopt the York River State Park. Basically this means that we make ourselves available for birding assistance, for leading bird walks and providing local information and expertise to the park personnel should the need arise. The area is an excellent one for use by two of our pet projects with purple martins and bluebirds, and it is also an excellent location for gathering information concerning the status and presence for many of our lesser known bird species.

It might be mentioned here that prior to this month the State Park was to be closed for the winter season. Letters of protest were lodged by Ruth and others asking that the area remain open. Although the Visitor Center will close, the park will be open. If you haven't been there you ought to go. It is quiet and well planned, and offers many places for an introspective stroll.

The field trip for November will be to Hog Island in Surry County. We will make our usual departure from the Colonial Williamsburg Information Center south parking lot at 7:00 a.m. This should be a grand trip for the waterfowl enthusiasts. Early season frigid blasts up north have put numerous ducks and geese in our area already. Since Hog Island is a waterfowl management area the ducks rally there by the thousands and offer excellent viewing. Specialties may include white-fronted and snow geese and common mergansers. Don't forget about fulvous whistling ducks either. You never can tell! The scheduled date for the venture is Saturday, November 21. Yeah, sure you can be home before the ball game. Bring warm clothes and munchies, too.

It is with a great deal of pride that I mention that one of our very active members, Bill Snyder, has recently had a book published. For those of us who know Bill, we are well aware that the last two years have been trying ones as he attempted to get this labor of love to the marketplace. Now at last the very colorful and entertaining "Wildlife Neighbors of the Williamsburg Area" is available at local book dealers (Scribner's for sure has it). Bill's earthy, knowledgeable and business-like approach to the out-of-doors is well reflected in the work, which is superbly illustrated by Jerry Ellis of Gloucester. As a tribute, a feature on Bill, Jerry, and the new publication was run in the October 19, 1981, edition of the Times-Herald. In addition, the Virginia Game Commission is offering the book to persons who enroll ten or more new subscribers to Virginia Wildlife, and has given the book the full back cover layout for the November, 1981, issue of that magazine. With Christmas stockings beckoning for fillers I urge everyone to give Bill's work serious consideration. And speaking for all of us, Bill, congratulations on a grand effort to show the visiting public what a superb natural area we have around us.

The field trip for October to the Eastern Shore was a successful venture for the five who went. Despite cloudy and somewhat windy conditions numerous hawks were counted at Kiptokeke including red-tails, sharp-skins, Cooper's hawks, a peregrine falcon and large kettles of turkey vultures. The return trip home produced three lesser-black backed gulls and lots of common scoters off the Bay Bridge Tunnel islands. Attempts to locate the western kingbird and the iceland gull seen in the area on October 19 were unsuccessful. Nor was anyone able to roust out a great cormorant from the Bay waters.

Carolyn Lowe was among the large contingent of birders who journeyed out off Cape Hatteras on October 18 for a pelagic extravaganza. Forty-three black-capped petrels were seen along with Audubon's and greater shearwater, Cory's shearwater, and pomarine and parasitic jaegers. The real stars of the trip proved to be two very rare and as yet unidentified beaked whales that were viewed right beside the boat!

While counting hawks on Fisherman Island last month Tom Armour and Ruth saw, of all things, a white pelican. Leave it to Tom to pull out a rarity when you least expect it.

The final tallies for the Kiptopeke hawk counts are in. As of November 1, one hundred and thirty-five hours of observations had been logged there. A total of 9766 raptors were recorded on the 24 days of counting including two vulture species and 12 species of hawks. Our first ever goshawk (an extremely rare Virginia bird--especially in the east) was spotted on October 10 by Dot Silsby and her group, one member of which was Mr. James Schlesinger of White House notoriety. Sharp-skinned hawks amounted to 5141 with kestrels coming in second at 1708. Turkey vultures were third numerically at 929 while broad-winged hawks came in at a close fourth (810). Ospreys (304) were still passing over in late October as were peregrines (57). With a little more weekday help next fall Kiptopeke can easily outshine any other lookout in the state, not only in numbers but in quality of raptors available. Think hawks for Fall 1982.

Closer to home Carolyn Lowe spotted early canvasbacks and ring-necked ducks on Camp Peary October 25. Evening grosbeaks made a brief appearance the first part of November. Brian Taber recorded two common scoters near Yorktown on November 3 to provide a new local record for the area. Common loons have been seen off Jamestown Island and along the York River in recent weeks with a maximum of six near Indian Field Creek on November 1 seen by Leigh Jones.

Bill Sheehan reports a late osprey on Cheatham Annex for November 9 to compliment one the same date on the Chickahominy. Rusty blackbirds can be heard just after daybreak at several locations near water. Coots and scaup have been seen at Queens Lake and even a greater yellowlegs or two are still around. Cheatham Annex is still the best and easiest place to see old gobblers. The turkeys will be scarce once the deer season starts though.

The continued warm weather, an excellent seed crop and an abundance of winged insects are keeping most of the feeder birds active. Don't despair. The seedophiles will be all over us soon enough. Juncos and white-throated sparrows are already regularly attending some feeding stations. The rest will be along soon hopefully.

The stork seen flying over Gloucester October 13 was delivering a 3:00 a.m. baby boy to Brian and Debbie Taber. Congratulations, folks.

The annual VSO field trip to Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge will be December 5 and 6. The trip is usually a huge success due to the waterfowl of Back Bay and the lure of goodies on the Bay Bridge Tunnel. Last year at Back Bay a Brewer's blackbird was the hit while the previous year a rare sandhill crane flew over the totally stunned VSO gawkers. Who knows what will be unearthed this year. Be there and see for yourself. Contact Ruth Beck or Bill Williams for more information.

Don't forget December 20 is our Christmas Bird count. We do need everyone's help. Feeder watchers are particularly valuable. The national high count for Northern Orioles has come from our count the last two years and this is due to excellent feeder monitoring. Let me know if you want to go to one of our eight areas, even for a little while. Call 229-0098. Thanks.

Ask Owl:

Most owls have a soft, saw-toothed leading edge on their flight feathers. This reduces the noise of air passing over the wing and allows owls to fly silently.

Change: Executive Committee to Executive Board

ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS

Section 1. Elective officers of the Club shall be President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and two other elected members. The above, together with the immediate past president, shall constitute the Executive Board. The offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be combined.

Delete present Sections 2 and 3.

Section 2. Officers shall be elected for terms of one calendar year.

ARTICLE V - DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. The President shall preside over all Club and Executive Board meetings, except as provided in ARTICLE V in the absence of the President. He shall appoint all Committees except the Nominating Committee.

Section 4. Delete - The Secretary shall also serve as Chairman of the Records Committee.

ARTICLE VI - EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 4. A quorum of the Executive Board shall consist of five members present and voting.

ARTICLE VII - MEETINGS

Section 1. The Club shall hold at least eight regular meetings during each calendar year. Additional meetings may be recommended by the Executive Board for approval by the membership.

Section 2. Club business may be transacted at any Club meeting. Members present constitute a quorum; majority vote governs.

Section 3. Executive Board meetings will be held at the call of the President, but at least four times during the year.

ARTICLE VIII - ELECTIONS

Section 1. Election of officers listed in ARTICLE IV, Section 1, shall be held at the last Club meeting of the year. Any member is eligible for any office.

Section 2. At the next to last Club meeting of the year, usually October, the Executive Board will designate three members to serve as a Nominating Committee. This committee shall prepare a slate of one nominee for each office or position named in Section 1 of ARTICLE IV. The slate shall be presented to the membership

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Williamsburg Bird Club

October 10, 1981
Williamsburg, Virginia 23185

via the November issue (usually) of the Club's monthly newsletter, and from the podium during the November meeting.

Section 3. Nominations will be invited for any office and may be made from the floor at the november meeting prior to voting by the membership. All nominees must have indicated their willingness to serve, if elected.

Section 4. Officers elected shall assume office at the first Club meeting of the new calendar year.

Section 5. Vacancies occurring during the calendar year may be filled by appointment by the Executive Board, but only for the unexpired portion of the current term.

WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB
SCHOLARSHIP PROPOSAL

RATIONALE:

- 1) The club is being supported by the college which grants us a meeting place free of charge.
- 2) One of our primary goals is to educate people about birds.
- 3) The club can afford to support a scholarship presently from fund raising projects.
- 4) The club has an apparently permanent money making project in bird seed savings day.

PROPOSAL:

AWARD - An annual award of no less than \$300 and no more than \$500. Funds for this award will be derived from money making projects, not dues. Payment will be made in two installments.

TO WHOM - Any student (graduate or undergraduate) pursuing the study of Ornithology by research at the college of William and Mary. The student must have maintained no less than a B average.

- CRITERIA -
- 1) To be awarded to the student who submits the best research proposal and needs criteria in the judgement of scholarship panel. The panel will be comprised of at least 3 persons, two from the Bird Club one from the College Biology Faculty (all members are to be approved by the Bird Club Executive Committee.)
 - 2) Proposals are to be submitted no later than April 15, 1981. The award will be announced at the May meeting.
 - 3) The selected student must agree to submit to the Bird Club a list of expenses for which the money was used. All monies must be directly applied to research expenses.
 - 4) The selected student must agree to present the results of his/her research to the Bird Club, in person, at a regular monthly club meeting.