

# THE WILLIAMSBURG FLYER

June 1983

The person of my maternal parentage long ago dubbed me, her oldest, the Old Buzzard. Like many of my ilk there comes a time and circumstance that prevails on us to seek a new roost. Hence my recent departure from the quiet, sylvan elegane of Queen's Lake to my own domicile in Shellis Square off Route 143 beyond the "Tell-a-Friend" store. My new mailing address is 285-49 Merrimac Trail and the C&P connection conveniently remains 229-0098. For those who are considering moving, don't. It's a pain! Shaking the very foundations of a life-style is hard to cope with. For those of you who enjoy moving you have my deepest regards. How birds manage two changes a year is unbelievable.

I am not the only translocated bird person, however, Brian and all the Taber's have taken up a permanent nest on Druid Court (off Jamestown Road) after residing in Gloucester Point. Leigh Jones our treasury lady has found solice and refuge at Queen's Lake.

All of this hustle and bustle of resettlement plus the closure of another school year found the bird club destined for back-burner status. So some of the "news" may seem a bit old.

Remember for the months of June, July and August there will be no regular monthly club meetings. Our meetings will resume on the third Wednesday in September.

We will, however, continue to provide monthly field trips throughout the summer as follows. Early risers are in for a rare treat on Saturday, June 18, when Ruth Beck will lead our monthly field trip to Sussex county to observe the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpeckers. Please plan to meet at 5:45 a.m. at the Information Center from where we'll proceed to the Jamestown ferry for the 6:05 a.m. crossing. This early departure time is necessary in order to arrive at the nesting sites when the woodpeckers are most active. We'll cap the morning's venture with a bountiful breakfast at Surry House before returning by ferry around mid-morning. So join us for a truly different and fascinating birding experience.

On July 23, a Saturday, Bob Cross will lead a trip to Grandview Beach in Hampton and on Saturday August 20 Brian Taber will guide us through the shorebird confines of Craney Island in Portsmouth. Please mark these down on your must-do list. They'll be worth it.

Question: How could you tell which Saturday in May was the one our field trip was on? Right again hummingbird brain! The one on which it rained. Consequently Tom Armour's trek to the heron colony at Newport News City Park was scrubbed. The herons didn't miss a thing, don't you know.

Our Spring Count of May 15 was quite successful. Under Brain Taber's skilled direction the day ran like a well oiled clock (cuckoo-type of course). We tallied 152 species including both loons, a singing warbling vireo found at Camp Peary by Teta Kain and Carolyn Lowe and practically all of the warblers along route 614 as scoped out by Fenton Day. Fenton, by the way, along with Joe Garvin and Paul Cabe had been working 614 very closely in preparation for their assault on the state's Big Day record (how many species you can record in a single 24 hour day of birding). Their efforts were successful as they tallied 161 species, 8 better than the old record. Three hoots and whip-three-beers for you guys!

The VSO's "Appalachian Spring" annual meeting in Roanoke May 20-22 was deluged by rain. This didn't dampen the hilarity of Friday's local chapters

workshops on birding apparel, pelagic birding and bird photography. The slapstick presentations had everyone in stitches. The following night Myriam Moore of Lynchburg was honored for her years of untiring dedication to the VSO. The good times had a few good birds too including golden-winged warblers.

Fred Blystone just can't seem to get away from Bird Seed Sales. In August he'll be sending out 2 seed order forms to everyone for their Fall and early Winter orders. Use the extra form sent you as an introduction to a friend or neighbor about our sale as well as our exciting club.

On the bluebird front we find that York River State Park has 2 active bluebird nests and two boxes are housing chickadees. Other areas where nesting activity is well underway include the grounds of Eastern State Hospital, the Williamsburg Country Club golf course, Carter's Grove and New Quarter Park. Bob Morris is in the process of getting 100 bluebird boxes built for us at the Veteran's Hospital. He reports they're coming along slowly, but nicely. We'll sell these boxes (about half of them) for a nominal fee.

The Purple Martin Committee put up 2 new martin motels in May, one at the Governor Spotswood Inn and another for a Mrs. Burruss, and lo and behold they were occupied the next day! That's hard to believe when you consider Bob and Cynthia Long recently got their first two "honeymooning pairs" in their box that had been up 5 years! The latter is extreme to some extent, but represents the norm. No one knows the magic required to lure martins in quickly, although Bob Cross seems to have found some secret!

No sooner had our graduate student scholarship award for 1983 been announced than it was returned. The recipient decided to pursue other fortunes, and it was decided to put the money back in place for use in 1984.

Rich Goll, Cindy Fletcher, Bettye Fields and Dot Silsby were part of a fortunate group to spend the first three weeks in May birding Texas. They saw an astounding 327 species in that time (more than most of them has seen in Virginia). Among the goodies were a nesting clay-colored robin, ferruginous and flammulated owls, Lucifer hummingbird, brown jays, black-capped vireo, Sprague's pipit, greater prairie chicken, Colima and golden-cheeked warblers and cave swallows. Color me envious green!

Ken Esler hied away to Point Pelee National Park in Ontario May 13-15. He was able to catch the peak of spring warbler movement and recorded 102 species including; Bell's vireo, Philadelphia vireo, lark sparrow, and 25 species of warblers. What a super way to spend a mid-May weekend!

Charlie Hacker reports that he and Mitchell Byrd ascended to an osprey's nest recently to check the young and were stunned to find three great horned owl chicks instead of fish hawks!

Bob Morris had a prothonotary warbler successfully raise a brood in a bottle attached to a tree at his Kingsmill home. But this doesn't top the young barred owl that landed at his front door. Who was more bewildered do you suppose? The owl or Bob?

Glossy ibis were seen over College Creek around May 3 and an unusual Wilson's phalarope was seen at St. George's Farm May 9 along with a water pipit (late) yellowlegs, least and solitary sandpipers. On May 24 a single white-rumped sandpiper was seen at St. George's.

May 10 through 20 found the woods around our area chiming with the lyrical songs of veerys and Swainson's and gray-cheeked thrushes. Seldom are we so lucky to have them so vocal and visible.

Mitchell Byrd relates that there are 3 young peregrine falcon hatchlings being raised by a pair of proud adult birds at a tower near Chincoteague. This makes two years in a row of successful nesting in Virginia.

Up to 48 bald eagles were counted recently on a short stretch of James River near Hopewell recently. The group was 50 percent adult birds. The speculation is that these are Florida birds which have dispersed northward following their breeding season earlier in the year.

Please welcome the club's newest members, Robert and Mary Nell Morris and William Cook. We're glad to have you in our flock!

Ask Owl:

Owl sadly reports that our dynamic and invigorating President, Thom Blair, left June 13 for a tour of interim ministry at a Parish in New Orleans. He'll be back though and we can't wait to hear about creole birding cajun style.