

THE WILLIAMSBURG FLYER

November 1985

The only way you'd know it was November this year would be that the Trick or Treaters didn't get all that candy you bought for them on rainy October 31. Sure the leaves are gold and brown (did they show at all this fall?) and acorns are a hazard to one's physical and mental health (a dog died in Skipwith Farms from acorn poisoning! No lie!), but there has only been one minor frosting in some areas on November 9 while the rest of the days have been somewhat balmy. Can you believe commercials for Christmas are already pawing at our conscious?

Don't let Wednesday, November 20, 1985 escape your conscious. Be on hand at 7:30 p.m. in room 117 of Millington Hall at William and Mary to learn about local birds, vote on next year's officers and hear from representatives of the Tidewater Raptor Society. This group, centered in Norfolk and Virginia Beach, will bring with them several live raptors for you to enjoy, and believe me you will be captivated by their presence. The aim of the TRS is to educate the public about birds of prey, aid in raptor rehabilitation, and help preserve habitat for raptor species. Please be sure to attend to see and hear about birds of prey close up and personal.

Since December is filled with Bird Counts and holiday festivities this will be our last meeting for 1985. Anne Beckley deserves a rousing chorus of nightingales for her stellar performance as program chairman this year. Thanks Anne!

Enclosed you will find a Thanksgiving Window Watch Bird Count form for your use. Read it over and take part in an hour of data collecting for a good cause. It's easy, fun and valuable.

One of the major items of business in November is to elect a group of officers for the following calendar year. Your nominating committee of Ruth Beck, Bill Sheehan and Tom Armour will present a slate for consideration for 1986 at the November 20 meeting.

December means the Audubon Christmas Bird Counts. The ninth annual Williamsburg count will be held on Sunday, December 22, beginning predawn and ending with a 5:00 p.m. tally. As compiler of this most important event I would like to solicit your help as early as possible. The count covers a 15 mile diameter circle centered at the Colonial Williamsburg Information Center. The circle is divided into eight sections all of which need leaders and helpers. Everyone can and should help. I cut my birding teeth on Christmas Counts and learned more in a day from them than any other experience. Please let me know (229-0098) if you can join us in the field or at a feeder on December 22. Thanks. More details will follow next month.

Don't forget that Saturday, December 21 is the Newport News Count. They help us tremendously and we should reciprocate!

The field trip for this month will be to Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge on Saturday, November 23. Departure time for the trip will be 7:00 a.m. from the parking lot of the Colonial Williamsburg Information Center on the Colonial Parkway side. Be prepared for cold Atlantic Ocean winds, a bit of walking and loads of waterfowl, sea ducks, gannets and the always possibly unexpected.

Last month's trip to Kiptopeke met with traffic delays on the Bay Bridge Tunnel and few birds. One group did manage to see a beautiful peregrine falcon on one of the tunnel islands. Lack of cold front kept bird activity to a minimum.

The Kiptopeke banding station closed shop on October 21. With no major cold front patterns for the second fall in a row banding results were limited. Hawk-watching there has also been slow though reports of goshawks, rough-legged hawks and Mississippi kites has kept everyone in a stir. The goshawks reports at Kiptopeke came before any had been tallied at more northern lookouts including Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. The Mississippi kite sightings by Dot Silsby (2 adults and 1 immature) are virtually unprecedented for any hawk count station in Virginia and were almost two months beyond their rare reported sightings at Cape May in mid-August. It just adds further evidence to Kiptopeke's vast potential and source of unusual data. Two and possibly a third golden eagle were seen feather by feather at length

at Kiptopeke on October 26 by four observers thoroughly familiar with the species. These constitute the fourth and fifth records for the count in eight years. Dot Silsby broke the state record for kestrels of 625 with over one thousand in early October. At Afton Mountain on November 7, 751 red-tailed hawks drifted aloft having waited out days of heavy rain. WOW!

A Eurasian wigeon was seen at Fisherman Island by the Virginia Beach Audubon Society on October 19. Evening grosbeaks, pine siskins, purple and house finches and red-breasted nuthatches were common at Kiptopeke through October and grosbeaks were heard here November 9. A Virginia rail protested loudly over the flooded marshes at College Creek November 2 and Dick Hines reports several bald eagles are being seen along the Chickahominy River and its tributaries lately.

At the Virginia Society of Ornithology's fall Board of Directors meeting November 9 several major decisions were rendered. The most important ones were that the Raven, the Society's journal, will go to an annual publication issue beginning with 1984 material in order to catch up one and a half years of publication. The Society will also publish a revised edition of Virginia's Birdlife: An Annotated Checklist printed in 1979 by the May 1986 annual meeting in Farmville.

Our club has purchased another book for the Williamsburg Regional Library. It's the Audubon Society Guide to Attracting Birds, a volume that is chock full of great information on feeders and plantings to get more attention to your property for our avian visitors.

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries has a new publication free for the asking entitled Planting Guide for Virginia Nectar Seekers. Write to the Game Commission, Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230.

Please welcome Lynn and Bart Walter to our growing contingent.

Ask Owl:

Owl has been heavy into migration recently but returns with these tid-bits.

Pigeons are apparently destroying bridges with their droppings. Their wasts mixed with rain to form acids that are literally eating through steel girders on bridges in Pennsylvania.

The hearing ability of a great horned owl is so acute it can detect the sound of a beetle rustling through grass more than 100 yards away!
HUH?

The VSO annual Back Bay field trip will take place November 29 - December 1, 1986. Let Ruth Beck or your truly know if you want to attend!

1. Name of observer, and address where the observations were made. (Please be sure your correct mailing address is on the other side of this sheet.)
- _____
- _____
- _____

10. Miles from post office _____ 11. Date: November 27, 1980
17. Exact hour of count: Began _____, ended _____. (Use 24-hour clock if convenient)
19. Temperature at beginning of count: _____ °F
21. Weather (Please circle or underline): 1. Sunny 2. Partly cloudy, some sunshine.
3. Partly cloudy, no sunshine. 4. Completely overcast. 5. Overcast, light drizzle.
6. Overcast, occasional showers. 7. Persistent rain. 8. Occasional snow, sleet or freezing rain.
9. Persistent snow, sleet or freezing rain.
22. Wind: 1. None or very gentle. 3. Gentle 5. Moderate 7. Strong 9. Very Strong
23. Habitat: 1. Urban, tiny yard or none. 2. Urban, large yard. 3. Suburban, tiny yard or none.
4. Suburban, large yard or gardens or fields. 5. Rural, mostly croplands nearby.
6. Rural, mostly grassy fields or pastures nearby. 7. Rural, mixed woods and fields.
8. Rural, mostly pine woods nearby. 9. Rural, mostly deciduous woods nearby.
24. Type(s) of feeding situation(s) or baths: 1. Cracked corn, only, on ground.
2. Mixed seed, with or without cracked corn, on ground. 3. Raised feeder, mixed seed with some sunflower.
4. Raised feeder, anything but thistle or sunflower. 5. Raised feeder, sunflower seed only.
6. Thistle seed in separate feeder. 7. Suet, with mixed seeds or peanuts, or other food material.
8. Suet, without mixed seeds or peanuts. 9. Bird bath or pan of water.
25. Total number of feeders, grain stations on ground, and bird baths: _____

Birds Observed

	# in circle	Others		# in circle	Others
28. Mourning Dove			65. House Finch		
31. Red-bellied Woodpecker			67. American Goldfinch		
35. Downy Woodpecker			69. Dark-eyed Junco		
36. Blue Jay			74. White-throated Sparrow		
38. Black-capped Chickadee			76. Song Sparrow		
39. Carolina Chickadee			Additional Species:		
40. Tufted Titmouse					
41. White-breasted Nuthatch					
45. Carolina Wren					
46. Mockingbird					
53. Starling					
56. House Sparrow					
62. Cardinal					
64. Purple Finch					

(Over, please)

THE THANKSGIVING WINDOW WATCH BIRD COUNT - November 27, 1980

Sponsored by the Lynchburg Bird Club and the Carry Nature Sanctuary of Sweet Briar College

Welcome to you as a Thanksgiving Bird-Counter; we hope you enjoy this type of bird count. Everyone is invited to participate, and we would be glad to supply a form to anyone who wants to help. If you have participated before, we want to express our thanks for your continuing interest. The information obtained each year is valuable when compared with that obtained in previous years, and when one locality is compared with another. Remember that your count is important whether you see many or few birds, or even if you see none at all. If you wish to do more than one count, feel free to do so, keeping each one separate.

If you would like a copy of the Thanksgiving Bird Count Newsletter in January, 1981, please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your count.

Instructions - (1) Count and record the numbers of individuals of each species of bird which visits your feeder area during any one hour (be sure it's 60 consecutive minutes) on Thanksgiving Day. (2) Please use a standard procedure for the count as follows: Select a circular area 15 feet in diameter, horizontally, in a place which you can watch conveniently. Include as many feeders, bird baths, shrubs, trees, and other attractions as you wish. Now imagine the circle extending upward, as a cylinder, to an indefinite height into the air. This is your MAGIC CIRCLE for observation. Count the birds of each species which come into this circle (or cylinder) during the hour of your count, and write the totals for each species in the chart on the front of the sheet. If you see birds which are not on the list, write the names under Additional Species and indicate how many of each you saw. The preferred form for writing the information would be as follows: Tufted Titmouse - 3/42, indicating that you were sure you saw at least three individual Tufted Titmice, and that the total number of visits of any Tufted Titmouse to the feeder during the hour was 42. If you only want to put down one number (the number of individual birds, not visits) that is perfectly all right. If you want to record the birds you saw outside the Magic Circle, write those in the separate column marked "Others". (3) Record the information about time, weather, habitat, etc., on the other side of this page. Be sure to fill in the name of the person who did the count, and the address where the count was actually done. Usually this will be the same as your mailing address, but whether it is or not please be sure that the count address is on the front of the sheet and that your correct mailing address is on this side of the sheet.

Please send your report to: Dr. Ernest P. Edwards, Thanksgiving Bird Count
Sweet Briar, VA 24595

DR. ERNEST P. EDWARDS
THANKSGIVING BIRD COUNT
SWEET BRIAR, VA. 24595

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