



THE FLYER

NEWSLETTER OF THE WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB

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NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Williamsburg Bird Club will take place at 7:30 p.m. in Room 117, Millington Hall on the campus of William & Mary, on Wednesday, May 16. The program will be a workshop on learning the identifying songs of local birds. Several people will be involved in the presentation including: Hugh Beard, Dan Cristol and Ruth Beck. If you have been promising yourself to become serious about birdsong identification, this is a not-to-be-missed meeting.

SWAINSON'S WARBLER LISTED AT GREAT DISMAL SWAMP

On a brilliant, cool, spring morning during the Club's third field trip to the Great Dismal Swamp, we finally centered that elusive bird in the middle of a spotting scope where all eleven participants could claim the sighting. This was Alex Minarik's fourth effort and she was determined to not only hear this bird but to see it. To get that image in the scope took a good 45 minutes for the main participants, Alex, Tom Armour, Tom Gwynn and Don Schwab. They all heard the song and then moved up and down the path to bracket the sound and find a line of sight to the bird. It looked as though Tom and Alex locked onto the bird with their glasses at about the same time and then Alex got it into the scope. How they did this was beyond the grasp of most of the rest of us who could not find the bird in our binoculars, even after it was pinpointed on the scope!

Two cars left Williamsburg at 6:15 a.m. and arrived at the Jericho Ditch parking lot just before 7:30, where we met the day's leader, Tom Gwynn.

He was accompanied by Don Schab, whose other scheduled field trip had been cancelled. As we got out of the car a Prothonotary Warbler was singing in the tree directly above it, with the sun hitting that brilliant, butter-yellow head. It was the first of four that would be seen. A few yards away a Great Crested Flycatcher in plain sight was singing his "*wheeeep*" song. Proceeding down the path along the ditch, we picked up a Prairie Warbler, more Prothonotaries, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, White-eyed Vireos, Red-eyed Vireos, Black and White Warbler, Northern Parula. Yellow-rumped Warblers, Black-throated Green Warbler, Swainson's Warbler, Worm Eating Warbler, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded Warbler and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Some of these came quickly and some required time and patience.

On the drive into the parking lot Alex had picked up a Louisiana Waterthrush, and on returning a Nashville Warbler was discovered. Other seasonal birds included Chimney Swifts, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Gray Catbirds, Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Cedar Waxwings and Brown-headed Cowbirds. Overall, 51 species were identified during the course of the trip.

Participants in this lovely morning of birding were: Tom Armour, Jim Coomer, Kathleen Davenport, Bobby and Ron Geise, Stewart Goddin, Bill Holcombe, Alex and Mike Minarik and Chuck Rend, all of whom offer heart-felt, "thank you's" to Tom Gwynn and Don Schwab. Tom suggested that the next time, with a little more planning, we might be able to arrange a trip all of the way out to Lake Drummond in the center of the swamp.

LEE SCHUSTER TAKES US TO YORK RIVER STATE PARK MAY 17

Lee Schuster probably knows birding in the York River State Park better than any other club member and is wonderfully qualified to take advantage of any birding opportunities the park offers. Off and on for a number of years she has led bird walks for the Park management. While we all know the unpredictability of any one day at a location, Lee has seen some outstanding days with warblers and other spring migrants here. Prothonotarys, Northern Parulas, Black and Whites, Blackpolls, Yellow-throated, Black-throated Greens, Pine and Palm Warblers have been found here. Both Tanagers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and the thrushes are likely possibilities.

The York River State Park entry gate opens at 8 a.m. We will gather in the parking lot at the end of the entrance road and be ready to set out by 8:15. To get to the park continue on the same road as 199 after that highway ends. At the intersection with River Road bear left. You will eventually come to the park entrance. By the way, look for a birding stop about half way in the entrance road to the parking lot where the road dips through a swampy area.

Tom Armour provides this list of 2001 Field Trips for future planning: August 18, Craney Island; September 22, Kiptopeke; October 20, Green Springs Nature Trail; November 24, Cheatham Annex; December 16, Christmas Bird Count.

PICNIC AT RUTH BECK'S

We will gather at Ruth's house for a bit of birding at about 4:30 p.m. on June 2. The feasting will begin at about 5:30 o'clock — and this event has earned a well-earned reputation for feasting! That's because of all the good food everyone brings to share with everyone else. Jean Armour, with gentle direction and suggestions, always manages to balance the salads with the casseroles that go with the meat course (roast turkey breast provided by the club) and still has the desert table heaped with six month's worth of calories for everyone tempted to indulge.

Everyone in the Club is invited. You are asked to call Jean Armour at 229-2363 to make known

your intentions and to get a suggestion on what kind of "goody" you should bring.

Directions to the Beck home in Barhamsville: Take Interstate 64 west toward Richmond to Exit #227, Route 30 going towards West Point. Follow Rt.30 about 3 miles to Barhamsville. The center of Barhamsville extends along the road for less than a mile. Look for the firehouse on your right, then immediately start looking for a secondary paved road also going to the right, Rt 273. Follow it for about 2 miles. As the forested area to your right suddenly gives way to open fields, there will be a gravel road to your right with a sign pointing out a hunt club in that direction. Following that road you will pass a hunt club. As you continue on, the road will become the driveway into the Beck property and soon you will see the house.

FIELD NOTES FOR APRIL

We are most interested in the seasonal birds, migrating birds or the-out-of-the-ordinary. Call Bill Holcombe, 229-8057 or e-mail your report to him at bowljack@aol.com.

There were several reports of Wild Turkeys in unexpected places. Mid-month Lee Schuster saw two fly across Route 199 near the big Lowes store. Bill Holcombe ran into one in back of his house while walking the dog in Graylin Woods. Dick Reeves was surprised to see one run across his back yard in Ford's Colony. And Tom Armour reported a sighting in Kingsmill. There was another report from First Colony but the name got misplaced.

April 7 — Tom Armour sees first Rough-winged Swallow in Kingsmill.

April 9 — Lee Schuster at York River State Park, has two pairs of Red-headed Woodpeckers.

Brian Taber's College Creek Migrating Hawk-Watch Station reports year-to-date results: 17 Black Vultures, 575 Turkey Vultures, 50 Osprey, 19 Bald Eagles, 23 Northern Harriers, 21 Sharp-shinned Hawks, six Cooper's Hawks, one Red-shouldered hawk, 21 Red-tailed Hawks, 30 American Kestrel, one Merlin and one Peregrine Falcon.

April 11 — Lee Schuster finds a Wood Thrush and Ovenbirds at the Park. Bill Holcombe hears his

first Wood Thrush in Graylin Woods.

April 13 — Tom Armour has first Ruby-throated Hummingbird in Kingsmill and next day finds a Gray-cheeked Thrush there.

April 14 — Summer Tanager in Lee Schuster's back yard. In Williamsburg Landing Mr. Mulcahy sees his first Hummingbird and a stranger that he identifies as a Say's Phoebe, a most unusual sighting for this area.

April 16 — Lee Schuster finds some warblers at York River State Park — Northern Parula, Louisiana Waterthrush, Ovenbirds and Pine Warbler — plus Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Chipping Sparrows.

April 29 — Waiting in line for the Williamsburg bound ferry, Bill Holcombe sees a first year, male Baltimore Oriole. The next day a Red-headed Woodpecker arrives on his feeder, the first that he has seen in Graylin Woods.

(Please excuse me if I've missed some reports, a page of my notes is missing. Ed.)

BLUEBIRD TRAIL REPORT

By Shirley Devan

Over half the 41 nest boxes at York River State Park have nesting pairs, with 71 eggs and 16 bluebird nestlings as of April 27. Of the 71 eggs, 17 are Chickadee eggs in three boxes and 54 are Bluebird eggs in 18 boxes. The first brood should fledge the week of May 1.

The volunteers have done a lot of work this spring to improve the trail. The park allowed us to use their workshop to build six bluebird boxes back in February. Soon afterwards Tony & Chris Dion painted and mounted the new boxes, replacing some badly deteriorated ones.

The Bird Club generously funded the purchase of twelve tubular raccoon/predator guards. Wild Birds Unlimited owners, George and Val Copping, gave us a great discount on them. Volunteers Dorothy Whitfield and Shirley Devan installed the guards during April. Other volunteers who helped build boxes and will look into all 41 boxes on a weekly basis are Jack & Terry Johnston and Dorothy Geyer.

We welcome any new volunteers who would enjoy

peeking into boxes to count eggs and baby birds. If you can help out even one day a month, we would be glad to have you join us. Call Shirley Devan at 565-2352 (daytime work phone) if you want to join us at the park.

Many thanks to the York River State Park staff, the Bird Club, Wild Birds Unlimited, and the Bird Club volunteers who help make the trail so successful.

Let's Hear Three Cheers for the Blue Bird trail Workers!

SPRING BIRD COUNT

Whereas Sunday, April 29 dawned as a bright, clear, coolish and wonderful spring day, it was good news and bad news for the birders. The temperatures and wind kept the bugs down, but they also kept some birds hunkering down out of the wind. Nevertheless, the field workers on this bird count found 149 species, including 24 warblers and vireos, both tanagers, Rose-breasted and Blue Grosbeaks, Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, many swallows and thrushes and some interesting winter residents that hadn't left yet. (The complete chart is enclosed in this issue.) Some of the laggard species included a Tundra Swan, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, a couple of Blue-winged and Green winged Teal and a couple of Ring-necked Ducks. The shore birds were not as abundant as in some years, but then we were a bit earlier than usual too. Some of the less frequently reported species included Merlin, Marsh Wren, Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow and White-crowned Sparrow.

Brian Taber is the organizer of this event and reports that the 29 participants included; Joy Archer, Tom Armour, Hugh Beard, Ruth Beck, Catherine Bond, Grace and Joe Doyle, Gary Driscoll, Bettye Fields, Anne Forsman, Adrienne Frank, Jane Frigo, Ron and Bobby Giese, Bill Holcombe, Julie Hotchkiss, Carol and Paul McAllister, Alex and Mike Minarik, Sandy Petersen, Mary Pulley, Dot Silsby, Dave Shantz, Emily Snell-Rood, Jandy Strickland, Bill Williams and Marilyn Zeigler.

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	Camp Pe	Ch. Ann	Col.Woo	Hog Is.	James Is	Jolly Pon	Kingsmil	Mid-plan	Skimino	Total
Royal Tern	2	16		131	55		25	26	1	256
Common Tern										0
Forster's Tern		9		2						11
Least Tern				4						4
Rock Dove		1	1	1	8		4			15
Mourning Dove	18	17	5	7	47	12	9	7	18	140
Yellow-billed Cuckoo										0
Eastern Screech Owl		2						1		3
Great Horned Owl		2								2
Barred Owl		2	4				2	2		10
Chuck-will's-widow					2					2
Whip-poor-will										0
Chimney Swift	1	3		3	2		5	1	4	19
Ruby-throat Huming Bird		2		11		2	1	1		17
Belted Kingfisher	2	2	2	1				2	1	10
Red-headed Woodpecker	11	1						3	1	16
Red-bellied Woodpecker	8	7	12	2	11	9	10	9	6	74
Downy Woodpecker	1		4	2	3	1	2	4	1	17
Hairy Woodpecker			2					2	1	5
Northern Flicker	6	4	1	1	3		3	4	3	25
Pileated Woodpecker	2	3	3			1		3	2	14
Eastern Wood-Pewee	1	2					2	3	1	9
Acadian Flycatcher		2	2			2		1	2	9
Eastern Phoebe		1	4			2		1	2	10
Great-crested Flycatcher	9	9	6	2	11	4	5	11	5	59
Eastern Kingbird	3	4		21	13	1		6		48
White-eyed Vireo	19	7		1	6	4		6	2	45
Yellow-throated Vireo	1	3	1			2		1	6	14
Blue-headed Vireo				1				3		4
Red-eyed Vireo	26	20	21	2	9	23	5	6	16	128
Blue Jay	17	16	9		12	12	10	12	11	99
American Crow	19	6	10	2	32	25	9	14	26	143
Fish Crow		19	2	3	2	1	5	9	6	47
Crow Species		5								5
Purple Martin	2	2		2				1	9	16
Tree Swallow	19	6	6	135	104		3	11	4	284
N. Rough-wing Swallow	5	8		1	4	2	1	4	8	32
Bank Swallow										0
Barn Swallow	13	29	8	20	57	6	8	10	16	167
Carolina Chickadee	7	10	13	3	20	10	15	27	7	112
Tufted Titmouse	9	16	22	2	26	10	13	24	8	130
White-breasted Nuthatch	1	4	8		3	4	4	3	2	29
Brown-headed Nuthatch	1	1	0	4				1		7
Carolina Wren	10	11	21	11	23	5	8	11	6	106
House Wren	1				1		2			4
Ruby-crowned Kinglet								1		1
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	9	9	9	17	3	15	6	12	10	90
Eastern Bluebird	30	15	4	1	30	17	14	13	6	130
Veery						1		1		2
Gray-cheek Thrush										0
Swainson's Thrush										0
Hermit Thrush										0
Wood Thrush	7	22	7			2	1	6	1	46
American Robin	13	14	35		46	12	75	23	48	266
Gray Catbird	1	3	7	2	2	3		11	2	31
Northern Mockingbird	11	8	10	10	37	9	10	4	14	113

	Camp P	Cheat Anx	Coll Wood	Hog Isl.	James Isl	Jolly Pond	Kingsmill	Mid Plan	Skimino	TOTAL
Brown Thrasher	6	3	2		5	7	5	12	5	44
European Starling	36	34	11	22	140	20	45	27	53	388
American Pipit										0
Cedar Waxwing							14	5	24	43
Blue-winged Warbler		1								1
Northern Parula	1	3	4			7	1	1	4	21
Yellow Warbler	6			7			3		1	17
Chestnut-sided Warbler										0
Magnolia Warbler										0
Blak-throat Blue Warbler			1			1				2
Yellow-rumped Warbler	4	16	18	261	21	21	32	5	60	423
Blak-throatGreen Warbler			2			2				4
Yellow-throated Warbler	14	8		1	1	2	2	4	1	33
Pine Warbler	12	9	6	7	4	4	2	1	2	53
Prairie Warbler	17			1	8	4	1			14
Palm Warbler				1						1
Black & white Warbler	1		2	1		5		1	2	12
American Redstart						1				1
Prothonotary Warbler		2	1			4		3	1	11
Worm-eating Warbler										0
Ovenbird	19	13	2		1	14	1	13	7	70
North Water-thrush			3							3
Louisiana Waterthrush		4	5			2				11
Kentucky Warbler		2								2
Common Yellowthroat	11	3		9	11	2	2	11	31	80
Hooded Warbler										0
Yellow-breasted Chat	7			1						8
Summer Tanager	13	7				6		1	3	29
Scarlet Tanager		3	5			2			2	12
Eastern Towhee	17	14	5	2	10	6	7	4		65
Chipping Sparrow	16	13	3	3	14	8	18	6	18	99
Field Sparrow	5	1	2	2		1				10
Grasshopper Sparrow						1				1
Savannah Sparrow	5				3			1		9
Song Sparrow	5	2	5	1	20	4	14	1	5	57
White-throated Sparrow	1	5		1	2	7	8	16	1	41
Northern Cardinal	22	17	19	12	61	12	30	30	17	220
Rose-breasted Grosbeak			4							4
Blue Grosbeak		3		3	2	3	1	4		16
Indigo Bunting	4	1	2	4				1		10
Bobolink								15		15
Red-winged Blackbird	7	6	10	82	120	40	17	28	12	322
Eastern Meadowlark	1				2			2	2	7
Common Grackle	23	17	54	41	115	15	85	60	45	455
Boat-tailed Grackle		8								8
Brown-headed Cowbird	15	21	13	28	9	4	7	14	26	137
Orchard Oriole	2	2		37	3	1	4	8	1	58
Baltimore Oriole		1			2					3
House Finch	25	31	6		28		45	9	22	166
American Goldfinch	13	8	30	32	77	2	27	23	18	230
House Sparrow	2	5	2	1	20	2	8	1	35	76

OTHER SPECIES										
	Camp P	Cheat Anx	Coll Wood	Hog Isl.	James Isl	Jolly Pond	Kingsmill	Mid Plan	Skimino	TOTAL
Cooper's Hawk								1		1
Kestrel								2		2
Merlin				1						1
Yellow-bell. Sapsucker								1		1
Philadelphia Virfeo	1									1
Marsh Wren				1						1
Saltmarsh Sharp. Sp		2								2
Swamp Sparrow		3	2							5
White-crown. Sparr.					1					1