



# THE FLYER

NEWSLETTER OF THE WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB

Volume 25, Number 7

August 2001

## NEXT BIRD CLUB MEETING

The next meeting of the Williamsburg Bird Club will be held on September 19, in Room 117, Millington Hall, on the William & Mary campus at 7:30 p.m. The program will be announced in the September *Flyer*.

## KIPTOPEKE CHALLENGE, SEPT. 5

With the winding down of summer come the plans for the Williamsburg Bird Club team of Tom Armour, Fenton Day, Brian Taber and Bill Williams to take to the field for another Kiptopeke Challenge. Last year and in 1999 this team found the greatest number of species in a 24-hour period in the competition to raise operating funds for the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory at Kiptopeke. This wins them another year to keep the bronze Woodcock statue. However, their friendly competitors, the Wandering Siskins from Northern Virginia, have consistently taken home the bronze Piping Plover as the reward for raising the most money. Our team would like very much to take both of the trophies home this year. And you can help them.

All money raised by supporting contributions goes to support the activities of The Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory. These include hiring seasonal research staff, buying equipment for songbird monitoring operations, fall hawk banding, fall hawkwatch and fall Monarch Migration program. CVWO also publishes a "mini-magazine," brochures and checklists of birds and butterflies. Check out their website at [www.cvwo.org](http://www.cvwo.org) for a complete list of activities.

What can you do? You can contribute money to support the team's fund raising effort. Doing that, of course, supports the CVWO. Some of our club members were instrumental in creating CVWO as K.E.S.T.R.E.L. a few years back. Since then it has become a major source of data collection on the Atlantic flyways.

Please write a generous check payable to CVWO and mail it to Brian Taber, 103 Exeter Court, Williamsburg, VA.23185.

## ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

*(From VA-Birdlist)*

An excellent birder named Mary  
Birded so well it was scary.  
Over hill, over dale  
She searched for King Rail  
But instead found a large Cassowary.

A meticulous birder named Gene  
Was considered by many the dean.  
But when he called, "Chestnut-sided,"  
He was chided, derided.  
'Twas only a Black-throated Green.

## FIELD NOTES FOR JULY-AUGUST

*All club members are urged to contribute their observations of migrating birds, seasonal changes and any unusual observations. Reports of especially rewarding field outings are always welcome. Call Bill Holcombe at 229-8057, write*

to 4705 Lady Slipper Path, Williamsburg, VA 23188, or e-mail him at [<bowljack@aol.com>](mailto:bowljack@aol.com)

July 1 – Bill Holcombe remarked to Joy Archer that he had just started hearing Yellow-billed Cuckoos singing in the trees in Graylin Woods. She pointed out that they don't start singing consistently until it warms up and the caterpillars start moving in the trees.

July 3 – Shirley Devan was using the web to brush up on bird songs and used them to identify a Yellow-billed Cuckoo singing at York River State Park.

July 6 – The Wood Ducks that Tom Armour saw playing around with his nesting box at last report were unfortunately frightened away by nearby construction. But all was not lost. Today he saw a female Wood Duck lead three newly hatched babies across the Kingmill Pond. A few days earlier a Mallard hen had a group of six chicks.

July 12 – Bill Holcombe listens to Whip-Poor-Will singing on the road to the Gospel Farm, just beyond the turn off to Lake Powell at 8:45 p.m.

July 13 – Phil and Anne Young see a Green Heron sitting in a tree overlooking College Creek, behind their house.

July 14 – Bill Holcombe hears Barred Owls hooting and young owlets squacking in Graylin Woods.

July 31 – Tom Armour reports 150 Purple Martins at the Kingsmill Marina perched on sailboat rigging, along with 25 Barn Swallows. "Looks like the fall migration is getting started," he says.

**Camp Peary in July** – Grace and Joe Doyles' monthly summary of weekly trips to Camp Peary included: Mute Swan, Black Vulture, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Red-shouldered Hawk, Wild Turkey, Northern Bobwhite, Killdeer, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Wood Thrush, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo

Bunting, Field Sparrow, Brown-headed Cowbird and Orchard Oriole. High count for the month was 57 species July 22.

**Vacation Reports:** Brian Taber: "My trip to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick was at the end of June, so temperatures were cool. The vast rocky coastlines were spectacular and the sphagnum bogs were quite unique. I saw Minke Whales, Harbor Porpoises, Gray Seals and several new butterflies. A few of many bird highlights included Common Eider chicks, Black Guillemots, Atlantic Puffins, Boreal Chickadees, Evening Grosbeaks, Merlins and Nashville Warblers."

Our reports are a bit sparse this month and the VA-Bird Line was not much better. It provided the doggerel printed elsewhere and the reports on Craney Island. Beyond that the only general news was the confirmation that the Scissor-tailed Flycatchers did not return to nest near Culpepper. The male showed up in May and hung around for a while, but when no mates appeared he left.

## UPDATE: VA BIRDING-WILDLIFE TRAIL

*(Excerpted from a news release by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries)*

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) announced July 19, that it has received \$491,000 grant to support the development of the mountain phase of the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail. In June the Commonwealth Transportation Board approved this initiative as a transportation enhancement project under federal TEA-21 legislation.

"We are most appreciative of the support and enthusiasm that the Commonwealth Transportation Board has shown for this project," said VDGIF Director William L. Woodfin, Jr. "This additional funding will allow us to move forward with development in the western portion of the Commonwealth, bringing us another step closer to creating a premiere birding and wildlife trail that all Virginians and visitors to Virginia can enjoy."

VDGIF received a \$300,000 TEA-21 grant last year that is currently being used to finalize trail development in the coastal region of the state by January 2002. During the past year the department



has worked actively with communities, businesses and citizens in areas west of U.S. Route 29 to identify potential sites to be included in the mountain portion of the trail. The agency has already received more than 300 site nominations throughout western Virginia and is currently in the process of reviewing these.

VDGIF launched the development of the state-wide Virginia Birding and Wild Life trail in 1999. The Commonwealth has one of the highest diversities of birds in the eastern United States, boasting nearly 400 resident and migratory species. According to the most recent National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation (1996) more than 2.2 million individuals are spending nearly \$700 million annually on wildlife watching in Virginia.

## **ANNUAL TRIP TO CRANEY IS.**

### **SATURDAY, AUGUST 25**

This August field trip to Craney Island, led by Ruth Beck, has given a great many club members some memorable bird outings. Recent late July reports on the Va-Bird List have been most encouraging: July 23, "18 American Avocets, dozens of Stilt Sandpipers, dozens of Short-billed Dowitchers, two Whimbrels, two Black-necked Stilts and two dozen Gull-billed Terns, plus lots of Western Sandpipers, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Willets, Dunlins and Semi-palmated Plovers." At another location, "Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, Brown Pelicans, Tri-Colored Herons, more Black-necked Stilts, Spotted Sandpipers, Black Skimmers and Least Terns." On July 27 a Piping Plover was spotted on the west side beach along with a group of seven Hudsonian Godwits near the pond. A Black Tern was seen the day before. Earlier, Wilson Phalaropes were reported.

We will gather in front of Wild Birds Unlimited (near Ukrops) at 7:15 a.m. for a 7:30 a.m. departure. The fewer cars the better on this trip. Hats, long sleeve shirts and long pants are recommended and bug spray is a good idea. You will also need some lunch and some thing cold to drink. Craney Island is in the Norfolk harbor north of Portsmouth and is more a peninsula than an island. We should be back home by 2- 2:30.

(A new letter to be mailed to all new members. It is included in the Flyer for your information.)

## Welcome to the Williamsburg Bird Club

While we realize that not all of our new members are strangers to this area a great many of them are. The purpose of this letter is to provide an orientation to the birds of the area and to the places many of us go to find them. It also provides a rough guide of the birds we like to get reports on.

### Backyard Birds:

**These are the birds that you are most likely to see at your feeder or in your yard throughout the year.**

Rock Dove	Carolina Chickadee	European Starling
Mourning Dove	Tufted Titmouse	Northern Cardinal
Red-bellied Woodpecker	White-breasted Nuthatch	Song Sparrow
Downy Woodpecker	Carolina Wren	Common Grackle
Hairy Woodpecker	Eastern Bluebird	House Finch
Northern Flicker	Brown Thrasher	American Goldfinch
Pileated Woodpecker	American Robin	House Sparrow
Blue Jay	Northern Mockingbird	
American Crow	Eastern Towhee	

### Winter Visitors You Might see in Your Yard That We Hope You Will Report:

Yellow-bell. Sapsucker	Gold-crowned Kinglet	White-throated Sparrow
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Hermit Thrush	Fox Sparrow
Brown Creeper	Cedar Waxwing	Purple Finch
Winter Wren	Yellow-rumped Warbler	Evening Grosbeak
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Dark-eyed Junco	Pine Siskin

### Within 10 Miles of Williamsburg you can also find these birds year round:

**We report all but the common water birds, common hawks and vultures.**

Double-crest. Cormorant	Cooper's Hawk	Barred Owl
Great Blue Heron	Red-shouldered Hawk	Belted Kingfisher
Mute Swan	Red-tailed Hawk	Red-bellied Woodpecker
Canada Goose	Wild Turkey	Field Sparrow
Mallard	Northern Bobwhite	Eastern Meadowlark
Black Vulture	Killdeer	
Turkey Vulture	Ring-billed Gull	
Bald Eagle	Herring Gull	
Northern Harrier	Great Black-backed Gull	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Great Horned Owl	

### Within 10 miles of Williamsburg you can find these birds predominantly in the winter months. We'd like reports of these:

Common Loon	Blue-winged Teal	Red-breasted Merganser
Pied-billed Grebe	Gadwall	Ruddy Duck
Horned Grebe	American Wigeon	American Kestrel
Tundra Swan	Canvasback	American Coot
Wood Duck	Ring-necked Duck	Field Sparrow
Amer.Green-wing. Teal	Lesser Scaup	Savannah Sparrow
American Black Duck	Common Goldeneye	Swamp Sparrow
Northern Pintail	Bufflehead	Rusty Blackbird
	Hooded Merganser	



**We won't try to list every possible warm weather migrant but we will use the Spring Count check list with out repeating any of the birds listed above. Do report these.**

Brown Pelican	Chuck-will's-widow	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Snowy Egret	Whip-poor-will	Magnolia Warbler
Little Blue Heron	Chimney Swift	Black-throat. Blue War.
Cattle Egret	Ruby-throat.Humm.B.	Pine Warbler
Green Heron	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Prairie Warbler
Black-crown. N. Heron	Acadian Flycatcher	Blackpoll Warbler
Yellow-crown. N. Heron	Eastern Phoebe	Black & White Warb.
Osprey	Great-crested Flycatcher	American Redstart
American Kestrel	White-eyed Vireo	Prothonotary Warbler
Northern Bobwhite	Blue-headed Vireo	Ovenbird
Clapper Rail	Red-eyed Vireo	Northern Waterthrush
Black-bellied Plover	Eastern Kingbird	Louisiana Waterthrush
Semipalmated Plover	Purple Martin	Kentucky Warbler
Least Sandpiper	Tree Swallow	Common Yellowthroat
Western Sandpiper	Nor Rough-wing Swal.	Hooded Warbler
Short-billed Dowitcher	Bank Swallow	Yellow-breasted Chat
Common Snipe	Barn Swallow	Summer Tanager
American Woodcock	House Wren	Scarlet Tanager
Laughing Gull	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Chipping Sparrow
Bonaparte's Gull	Veery	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Caspian Tern	Gray-cheeked Thrush	Blue Grosbeak
Royal Tern	Swainson's Thrush	Indigo Bunting
Common Tern	Wood Thrush	Bobolink
Forster's Tern	Gray Catbird	Eastern Meadowlark
Least Tern	Blue-winged Warbler	Orchard Oriole
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Northern Parula	Baltimore Oriole
Eastern Screech Owl	Yellow Warbler	

#### **Some favorite nearby birding spots:**

##### **Colonial Parkway**

A 20 mile road that runs from Jamestown to Yorktown, mostly along the James and York Rivers with many parking pull-offs. Expect almost anything in this varied habitat. York River is an excellent place for ducks and waterfowl.

##### **Jamestown Island**

A 5-mile, one-way loop road through viney woods and marshes, with parking pull-offs: excellent for woodland species and some waterfowl.

##### **Hog Island**

A wildlife management area on the far shore of the James River reached by crossing on the Scotland Ferry, proceeding straight ahead to Route 10 and turning left to the marked turnoff. Observation platforms and walking trails; great for shore birds and waterfowl and some migrant song-birds.

##### **Green Spring Nature Trail**

A 2 mile trail around a beaver pond behind Jamestown High School on Route 5; look for warblers, woodpeckers, swallows and woodland migrants; ducks and waterfowl in the marshes.

**Jolly Pond**

Located on Route 633 off of Centerville Road. Only 2 small pull-offs, but a great location for waterfowl and swampy forest dwellers such as warblers and flycatcher.

**College Woods**

On the campus of the College of William and Mary, adjacent to Lake Matoka, entered from Compton Drive off Monticello Avenue. Area supports waterfowl on the lake and species that like mature oak and beech forest.

**Waller Mill Park**

The entrance is near the intersection of Route 645 and Rochambeau Road. Picnic areas and trails through mature woods are excellent for thrushes, vireos, warblers, flycatcher, tanagers, and more.

**York River State Park**

The entrance is off of Route 606; visitor's center and extensive trails around mature forest and salt marsh; expect most anything but shore birds. Is sometimes the best location for warblers and woodland migrants.

**Bassett Woods**

Off of Francis Street in Colonial Williamsburg, behind Bassett Hall; stream, woods and a fresh water pond: look for wrens, thrushes, woodland birds; must have a Colonial Williamsburg ticket or a Good Neighbor's pass.

**Wishing you many happy birding days.**

**The Williamsburg Bird Club**