



# THE FLYER

NEWSLETTER OF THE WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB

Volume 26, Number 11

December 2002



A Very Merry Christmas

To

All of your Favorite Birds,

To

All Birders, Bird Feeders, Bird Students, Bird Scientists

And To

All who love the presence, the mystery and the excitement of  
Birds.

## THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Twenty seven birders took to the field on a bright, clear Sunday, December 15, to celebrate the 103<sup>rd</sup> Audubon Christmas Bird Count. The day began crisply cool at daybreak and wound up rather balmy by mid-afternoon.

They found 108 different species of birds and counted a total of 44,596 birds. The club's high species count was 113 in 1989. We approached that in 1998 with 112. The 108 figure is a bit better than our mathematical average.

There are almost always some pleasant surprises and this year was no exception, with findings of 1 Peregrine Falcon, 1 Merlin, 1 Marsh Wren, 1 Osprey and 1 Baltimore Oriole at Cheatham Annex. At Jamestown Island we found 4 Clapper Rails and 2 Common Snipes and at Hog Island 1 Lesser Black-backed Gull. But all of the groups had their special moments:

- Camp Peary recorded 12,080 Ruddy Ducks, 5,400 Canvasbacks and 225 Buffleheads on the York River.
- Cheatham had the only Bonaparte's Gull(1), the only Woodcock(4) and the only Eastern Screech Owl (8).
- College Woods found the only Great Egret and the only Barred Owl (3).
- Hog Island had the only Northern Pintail(12), only Greater Yellowlegs(8), and the only American Pipit(5).
- Jamestown had the only Forster Terns(4) and the only Wild Turkey(17).
- Jolly Pond had the only Blue-winged Teal(2)..
- Kingsmill found two adult Bald Eagles sitting in a nest.
- Mid-plantation found one of only two Kestrels seen.

Northern Bobwhites, which have been on a steady decline, disappeared from the count completely. Palm Warblers and Common Yellow Throats are frequently included in the count, although not in every one, were missing this year. Cedar Waxwings, regularly listed but in fluctuating numbers, were plentiful and found everywhere except Hog Island.

The most widespread birds that were found in all nine of our territories are: Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Canada Goose, Ring-billed Gull,

Mourning Dove, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Carolina Wren, Tufted Titmouse, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Eastern Towhee, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird and Goldfinch.

The teams in the field were:

- Camp Peary – Tom Armour (Leader), Grace and Joe Doyle.
- Cheatham Annex – Bill Williams (Leader), Bobbie and Ron Giese, Bart Paxton
- College Woods – Ruth Beck (Leader), Jandy and Randy Strickland, Phoebe Williams, Cindy Baker.
- Hog Island – Brian Taber (Leader), Adrienne Frank, Gary Driscoll.
- Jamestown Island – Dot Silsby (Leader), Jane Frigo.
- Jolly Pond – Lee Schuster(Leader), Alex Minarik, Marilyn Zeigler.
- Kingsmill – Bill Holcombe (Leader), John McDowell, Bab Morris.
- Middle Plantation - Hugh Beard (Leader), Sandy Peterson, Hannah Logan
- Skimino – Bettye Fields (Leader), Mary Pulley, Catherine Bond.

## FIELD NOTES FOR NOVEMBER

The winter residents kept arriving and these reports were received:

Nov. 8 – Bill Snyder called to report the arrival of his first Juncos and to note an amazing 10 Mourning Doves on his feeders.

Nov. 10 – Bill Williams reports 5 American Pipits at Mainland farms.

Nov.11 – Bill Williams reports at least 7 Red-headed Woodpeckers on the Green Springs Trail, "taking advantage of the acorn crop." 2 Pectoral Sandpipers "hanging out at the Mainland Farm with a bunch of Killdeer." Bill points out that this extends the late date for the pectorals by 5 days.

Nov. 12 – Ruth Beck sees her first Hermit Thrush on her driveway. Tom Armour gets a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in his yard.

Nov. 13 – Bill Williams now finds 6 Pectoral Sandpipers at the mainland Farm adjacent to the Greensprings Trail and points out that the late date is now extended 7 days for the species.

Nov. 15 – Bill Williams again finds American Pipits on the farm (4).

Nov. 15 - Tom Armour sees a Red-throated Loon and 350 Forster's Terns at the Kingsmill Marina.

Nov. 19 – Alex Minarik has a Fox Sparrow in her yard “all morning” and at about 11 it is joined by a Blue-headed Vireo.

Nov. 20 – Julie Hotchkiss reports many Ruddy Ducks on the James River.

Nov. 22 – Tom Armour finds 3 Chipping Sparrows still hanging around and the arrival of a Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

Dec. 1 – Joe Doyle reports a cold windy day at Camp Peary, but with Canvasbacks, Hooded Mergansers, Ruddy Ducks and lots of Cormorants on the York River. A Bald Eagle is present and a Northern Harrier is sweeping over a plowed field. Also sees Fox Sparrows, Red-headed Woodpeckers and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.

Dec.2 – Anne Young watches a pair of mature Bald Eagles perched in a tree close behind her house and eyeing College Creek.

Dec. 5 – Tom McCary finds 6 Water Pipits at Shirley Plantation.

Dec. 6 – Bill Holcombe has a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in his yard and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet a few days later.

Outgoing officers President Hugh Beard and Program Chair Dan Cristol have earned a break from their two years service and the thanks of the membership for their leadership and responsible handling of their duties.

## **RUTH BECK IS NEW PRESIDENT**

President-elect Ruth Beck headed the slate of officers for 2003, as presented at the November meeting by the Nominating Committee Chair, Julie Hotchkiss. The slate was elected by acclamation. Long time member, Tom McCarey will be a new officer face as Vice President and Program Director. Alex Minarik will continue as Secretary, Charles Rend will continue to collect and guard our money and Phil Young and Bill Holcombe will continue to get out the Flyer each month. Tom Armour continues as Field Trip Coordinator and Lee Schuster remains as Board member at Large.



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	Cp Peary	CheatAn	Coll Wd	Hog Isl.	James I.	JollPond	Kingsm.	Mid Plan	Skimino	Total
Common Grackle	772	455	403		235		254		682	2601
Brown-headed Cowbird	35	4			400					439
Purple Finch										0
House Finch	2	15	43	1	22		4	5	27	119
Pine Siskin										0
Goldfinch	5	13	17	13	21	11	10	24	18	132
House Sparrow	1	4	20					2	5	32
Additional Species										
Common Snipe					2					2
Periegrinw Falcon		1								1
Baltimore Oriole		1								1
Lss. Blk-back.Gull				1						1
									Total	44,596
									SPECIES	108