



THE FLYER

NEWSLETTER OF THE WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB

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MEETINGS

The June meeting was the annual picnic at the Beck's home in Barhamsville, featuring some birding, lots of good food and niff-nawing with other birders. The next business meeting will be on Wednesday, September 27 at 7:30 p.m. in Room 117, Millington Hall, William & Mary.

RUTH BECK'S AUGUST 23 FIELD TRIP TO CRANEY ISLAND

A lot of us have great memories of other August trips to Crane Island with Ruth. And, while birding in any location is an "on again off again" sort of thing, we've seen a lot of Black-necked Stilts, Avocets, Yellowlegs, many different terns, sandpipers, and plovers and, with some frequency, a Wilson's Phalarope on these trips. On one such trip all of the Virginia swallows lined up on the same wire to illustrate one of Ruth's side talks. We will remind you again in the next newsletter but hope that you will set this day aside.

Depending upon the wind, or lack of it, mosquitoes can be a problem so long sleeves and pants plus hat and insect spray are recommended. You will also need a lunch and something to drink.

We will meet up from the Fresh Market at the top of the lot in the Colony Shopping Center at 7 a.m. and leave as soon as we've consolidated cars.

BIRDING AT PELEE ISLAND

Pelee Island sits in Lake Erie almost due north of Sandusky, Ohio and is the southernmost point in Canada. Tropical migrants from south America and the southernmost U.S. states using this flyway to reach Canadian nesting areas frequently gather near Sandusky. When the conditions are right they

take off across the lake. Then they gather to rest and feed, sometimes in very large numbers, at Pelee Island or a bit farther north on Pelee Point which juts out from the Canadian mainland.

I've heard stories for twenty years about the great birding opportunities in this area in mid-May and was on the southern tip of Pelee Island at dawn on May 15. Thousands of cormorants were streaming north in long lines joined by an occasional "V" of geese. But we waited in vain for song birds to come tumbling out of the sky as they reached the land. In due course a Canadian birder ambled up and I asked if he knew when exhausted birds would start landing on our hats and shoulders. He said that he had also read such descriptions and had even experienced them — twice in 15 years of birding Pelee Island in May. But he did tell me where the birds had gathered in the northwest corner of the island in the past.

In an old abandoned vineyard I stood pretty much in one place and identified several warblers plus Scarlet Tanagers and Baltimore Orioles. There were at least six or seven more birds that I was unable to identify. Some were the harder to identify females. I could not discipline myself to concentrate on the book and field marks of the unknowns while all of that activity was swirling around me. Then at the northwest corner of the island I saw more of the same birds plus some new ones. Having previously seen only one Black-throated Blue, it seemed incredible to be looking at a grove full of them plus just as many Magnolia Warblers. In all I counted 14 warbler species plus the tanagers and orioles.

There are at least two ways of exploring Pelee birding: go to Pelee Point on the mainland of Canada near Leamington or to Pelee Island on a ferry that leaves from Leamington. My early

morning Canadian informant said that the birding is really about the same at the Pelee Point Park but you may be accompanied there by a hundred or several hundred other birders, whereas on the island we encountered only five others. Another plus for the island is that it has the quaint charm of a rural community of many years ago. A large, comfortable ferry serves Pelee Island with an hour and a half trip. Reservations are required. Prices and schedules can be obtained at <<http://www.bmts.com/~northlnd/pelee/jiimsched2.html>>. Overnight accommodations for both the mainland Pelee Point and Pelee Island can be obtained at http://www.pelee.com/accomodation_island.asp. You can also just go to www.pelee.com via Google which will lead you into all of the other information.

The Armours and the Schusters have birded the Pelee Point Park at different times with different results. Tom Armour said that the winds were not favorable for the long flight when he was there. On the other hand the Schusters found the beaches and low shrub growth at Pelee Point heavily sprinkled with resting migrants and there were many migrants in the park's trees. Their advice, if you go to the Point, is to make motel reservations as early as possible as here are lots of birders filling up the nearby places in mid May.

A final note: Ed Talbot of the Buchanan County Bird Club posted a notice on the Va birdlist extolling the 25 species of warblers that they found on the Ohio shore of Lake Erie at Magee Marsh, where apparently the birds gather prior to crossing the lake. Unfortunately, he did not describe exactly where it was.

EATING HUMBLE PIE

Last month I described a birding trip to a beach north of Santa Barbara, CA on which I had the good fortune to see a Long-billed Curlew accompanied by what I identified as an Eskimo Curlew. Now, there was no mistaking the Long-billed Curlew and if you look at Peterson's Field Guide the picture right next to the Long-billed is the Eskimo. In general it looked like a small version of the Whimbrels standing 10 to 15 feet away and quite like the picture in Petersen. However, I soon got phone calls telling me that the Eskimo Curlew is believed to be extinct and

none have been seen in California in many years. I amend my tale to say that I saw a curlew roughly two-thirds the size of a Whimbrel and I don't know what in the world it was.

MAY REPORT ON THE BLUE BIRD TRAIL

Shirley Devan and her crew continue to do God's work by helping to produce more baby Blue Birds and, coincidentally, more Chickadees at the Bluebird Nesting Box Trail at the York River State Park. There are:

23 empty nests.

13 active nests.

17 and maybe 21 eggs being incubated (not sure what is under "mother sitting tight").

26 young birds ranging from 9 days to 21 days.

Bluebirds fledged 13.

Chickadees fledged, at least 4.

Other news: Dan Cristol's students banded, weighed and photographed the five 21-day old Bluebirds in box #25. It will be interesting to see if any of them wind up parenting on the Bluebird trail.

SPRING BIRD COUNT ON MAY 11

The weather was just about perfect on this Sunday and Brian Taber, organizer of the event, reports a total of 156 species were identified. He found that about average for the spring count. (See the accompanying chart.)

Highlights of the count included holdovers from the winter visitors, one Ring-necked Duck, one Lesser Scaup, ten Ruddy Ducks, a Bonaparte's Gull, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, an American Pipit and three Savannah Sparrows. No Cedar Waxwings were found. Some of the more interesting migrants included one Little Blue Heron, twelve species of shorebirds including a Black-necked Stilt, ten Least Terns, a Marsh Wren, a Gray-cheeked Thrush, a Philadelphia Vireo, a Chestnut-sided Warbler, nine Grasshopper Sparrows and one Seaside Sparrow. Four species of vireos and 19 species of warblers were identified. Some interesting high numbers included 72 Bald Eagles, 130 Eastern Kingbirds, 146 Red-eyed Vireos and 104 Blackpoll Warblers.

Participating in the count were: Tom and Jeanne Armour, Hugh Beard, Grace and Joe Doyle, Gary Driscoll, Bettye Fields, Adrienne Frank, Jane Frigo, Bill Holcombe, Jonathan Ivery, Shirley Lambert, Carolyn Lowe, Carol and Paul McAllister, Alex Minarik, Sandy Peterson, Mary Pulley, Lee Schuster, Dave Shantz, Denise Smith, Brian Taber and Bill Williams.

Note: The Spring Count Chart, which includes 68 species from Camp Peary, will serve as our Field Notes for May.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The Williamsburg Bird Club's awards of \$500 to deserving graduate students doing field work go to Alexandra Wilke and Catherine Markham. Congratulations ladies! We wish you luck in the conduct of your research and look forward to hearing from you about your findings next fall or in 2004.

[illegible]

	Camp P	Cheat Anx	Coll Wood	Hog Isl.	James Isl	Jolly Pond	Kingsmill	Mid Plan	Skimino	Total
Barred Owl									1	1
Chuck-will's-widow					2					2
Chimney Swift	1	14	3		2	3	6	1	12	42
Ruby-throat Huming Bird		3	1	3		1	2	1	1	12
Belted Kingfisher		3	2	2	1		3			11
Red-head Woodpecker	4			3	1	1		2		11
Red-bellied Woodpecker	4	5	11	3	9	2	2	12	6	54
Downey Woodpecker		1			1	2	2	2		8
Hairy Woodpecker		1	1				2	1		5
Northern Flicker	2	1	2	3	2	1	2	5	2	20
Pileated Woodpecker	2	3						5	1	11
Eastern Wood-Pewee	5	9	4	2	8	16	5	3	7	59
skip										
Acadian Flycatcher	17	9	1			7	1	7	6	48
skip										
Eastern Phoebe		2	1			2		3		8
Great-crested Flycatcher	10	14	4	7	8	11	10	11	9	94
Eastern Kingbird	10	10		91	8	7		1	3	130
White-eyed Vireo	11	10			4	5		4	7	41
Yellow-throated Vireo	1	2	11	1					1	16
Blue-headed Vireo					1					1
Red-eyed Vireo	33	29	9	19	6	15	6	11	18	146
Blue Jay	2	4	2	2	8	5	8	6	4	41
American Crow	13	8	18	2	11	11	13	11	38	125
Fish Crow	4	5		1	3	1	7	11	5	37
Crow Species				17						17
Purple Martin	1	8		32	3		6	8	3	61
Tree Swallow	23	2		32	6	15	2	15		95
N. Rough-wing Swallow		11	2	4	6	6	2	3	2	34
Bank Swallow									4	4
Barn Swallow	12	19		14	22	8	9	8	11	103
Carolina Chickadee	3	10	6	6	2	10	14	17	6	74
Tufted Titmouse	5	15		2	10	8	8	13	9	70
White-breasted Nuthatch	1	1	2		1	2	1	5	2	15
Brown-headed Nuthatch	3	1		5				5	2	16
Carolina Wren		12	6	14	5	5	9	17	15	83
House Wren		1	1	1			3			6
Ruby-crowned Kinglet			1							1
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	7	4	5	17	1	9	4	14	2	63
Eastern Bluebird	24	9	1	7	15	10	9	12	9	94
Veery		4				2				6
Gray-cheeked Thrush			1							1
Swainson's Thrush		3						1		4
Hermit Thrush										0
American Robin	11	14	25	2	9	3	63	31	40	198
Gray Catbird	2	6	3	7	2	3	3	4	5	35
Northern Mockingbird	6	12	7	1	8	5	4	6	4	37
Brown Thrasher	4	2	3	1	8	5	4	6	4	37
European Starling	34	49	19	1	40	16	29	19	39	245
Cedar Waxwing										0
Blue-winged Warbler										0
Northern Parula	5	7	12		2	11	7	5	1	50
Yellow Warbler		1	2	27	2	1	6	2		41
Magnolia Warbler						1		1		2
Black-throat Blue Warbler		3	3		1	8	1	1		17
Yellow-rumped Warbler		2		2		7	2	2		15

KENTUCKY WARBLER

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	Camp P	Cheat Anx	Coll Wood	Hog Isl.	James Isl	Jolly Pond	Kingsmill	Mid Plan	Skimino	Total
Blak-throatGreen Warbler	1		1							2
Yellow-throated Warbler	17	11		3		2	1	1	5	40
Pine Warbler	11	15		9	5	1	1	1		43
Palm Warbler									1	1
Blackpoll Warbler			3	44	7	9	27	12	2	104
Black & white Warbler			1		4	5	2			12
American Redstart		2	1	1		2		2		8
Prothonotary Warbler		2				3		5		10
Ovenbird	12	8	3			16	1	8	6	54
North Water-thrush		2								2
Louisiana Waterthrush		2	1			2				5
Common Yellowthroat	15	7	3	66	6	14	5	11	5	132
Hooded Warbler	3				1				5	9
Yellow-breasted Chat	10	1		1					1	13
Scarlet Tanager	4	6	1		1	2	1	2	1	18
Chipping Sparrow	12	9	2	1	2	5	6	8	17	62
Field Sparrow	1			4					2	7
Grasshopper Sparrow				3						3
Savannah Sparrow						3				3
Song Sparrow	2	3	2	4	11	1	19	5	6	53
White-throated Sparrow	2		6	2					2	12
Northern Cardinal	17	20	10	28	30	8	16	27	19	175
Rose-breasted Grosbeak		1	1							2
Blue Grosbeak	4	5		13	1	1		4	1	29
Indigo Bunting	33	7	1	18	3	14	1	15	6	98
Bobolink		2		45		30				77
Eastern Meadowlark						1		4	1	6
Common Grackle	24	23	20	102	50	11	69	90	38	427
Boat-tailed Grackle		9								9
Brown-headed Cowbird	22	15		19	1	31	8	6	6	108
Orchard Oriole	7	16		46	6	2		1		78
Baltimore Oriole										0
House Finch	6	26	2		18	6	37	6	18	119
American Goldfinch	2	5	3	11	21	8	12	10	31	103
House Sparrow	4	14	1		16		12	3	26	76

Other Species										
Little Blue Heron				1						1
Lesser Scaup				1						1
Ruddy Duck				10						10
Broad-winged Hawk				3				6		9
Black-necked Stilt				1						1
Seaside Sparrow		1								1
Grasshopper Sparrow						6		3		9