



THE FLYER

NEWSLETTER OF THE WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB

Volume 29, Number 7

Website: www.wmbgbirdclub.com

July & August 2005

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Alex Minarik

I have a confession to make. Two cowbirds were raised in my yard right under my very nose! Here is the whole story. The Carolina wrens built a domed-nest in the flower box outside my living room window like they did last year. I observed their comings and goings during incubation and feeding but could not see the eggs or hatchlings. I did not become suspicious that the nest had been parasitized until I witnessed the fledging of a rather large young bird. Two weeks passed and then my suspicions were confirmed. But it was even worse than I originally thought. The adult wrens were feeding not one but two begging cowbirds. Ugh! About two weeks ago the wrens started a second nesting in another flower box. I was determined to prevent a repeat outcome. I monitored the egg-laying period to ensure that there were no cowbird eggs. Three brown-speckled, pinkish eggs about the size of jellybeans were laid over a period of five days and the female is incubating them. It appears that everything will be okay this time.

P. S. I hope you all can forgive me.

AUG. FIELD TRIP TO CRANEY IS.

Ruth Beck will lead the field trip to Craney Island near Portsmouth Saturday, August 27, in search of shore birds. This is a good location for spotting scopes. Ruth suggests we bring hats, snacks, drinks and bug spray. Wear clothing to cover arms and legs. Car pooling is a must for this location. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the Colony Square parking lot on Jamestown Road (location of the Fresh Market.)

CLUB FEATURED IN DAILY PRESS

Williamsburg Bird Club and President Alex Minarik were featured in the June 2, 2005 issue of The Daily Press. Bobbie Whitehead, reporter for the paper visited Alex at home and accompanied

the group on its May field trip to York River State Park where she talked with several field trip participants – Adrienne Frank, Hugh Beard and Dorothy Whitfield. She also interviewed Shirley Devan by phone. The article included a list of backyard birds Williamsburg area residents are most likely to see and advised readers to check the club web site for the complete list.

JUNE 5 PICNIC

Ruth and Sherwin Beck welcomed almost 30 club members to their home in New Kent County for the annual Club picnic Sunday, June 5. Ruth lead a walk in search of yard birds but it seems that most had taken Sunday afternoon off. The hummingbird feeder near the house did produce a Yellow-throated Warbler. The group enjoyed the smoked turkey (prepared by Lee and Dave Schuster) and all the "sides" brought by club members. Many thanks to Ruth and Sherwin for sharing their home and yard. And thanks to those who brought such wonderful dishes to round out a memorable afternoon.

SIGHTINGS – JUNE & JULY 2005

Report your backyard birds and local sightings to Shirley Devan at 220-6269 (evening phone) or sedevan52@cox.net (home email). If you encounter interesting birds on your vacation/travels, please share!

May 16: Bill Snyder reports a male Goldfinch regularly flapping his wings against the window of his sitting room. The noise is so loud and annoying, Bill says it's impossible to get his afternoon nap in. (There's more to the story, so read on!)

May 29: Brian Taber reports: Fred Blystone and I watched as a group of 3 Broad-winged Hawks tied and then broke the season record of 1414 birds set in 2003. We have spent a few more days watching in 2005 than in 2003. Today's total of 36 birds was very good for the tail end of the season. A few Bald Eagles are still steadily moving north almost every

day. Yesterday there were only 2 birds, both Northern Harriers, the first for that species since May 2.

May 30: Brian Taber reports 2 pairs of American Oystercatchers headed up the James past the College Creek Hawkwatch on May 30.

Last week in May: Bill Holcombe reports from Hatteras Island: Birds on the beach — “Sanderlings, Ruddy Turnstones and very handsome Black Plovers in bright breeding plumage. There were Royal Terns and Laughing Gulls patrolling the shore line. At Pea Island Sanctuary: 100's if not 1,000's of Short-billed Dowitchers and Dunlins; many, many peeps with Western, Least and Semipalmated identified. Also, there were Snowy Egrets, Great Egrets, beautiful Avocets, White Ibis, Royal and Least Terns, Semipalmated Plover and a life bird for me, Wilson's Plover. There were also scattered Cattle Egrets.”

June 5: Eleanor Young reports from the Hampton Roads Bird Club's bi-monthly field trip at Newport News Park: 26 species. Highlights were Prothonotary Warblers, Yellow-rump Warblers, Northern Parula, Yellow Warbler, Great-crested Flycatcher, Kingfisher, Bluebirds, Chipping Sparrow, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Grosbeak, Eastern Kingbird.

June 12: Joe and Grace Doyle report 55 species on their weekly field trip to Camp Peary. Highlights include: Osprey, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Killdeer, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Belted Kingfisher, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Wood Thrush, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Indigo Bunting, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Orchard Oriole, American Goldfinch.

June 13: Eleanor Young reports that a couple of female Northern Orioles visited her yard for ½ day.

June 19: Joe and Grace Doyle report 52 species on their weekly field trip to Camp Peary. Species not seen the previous week: Black Vulture, Clapper Rail, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Blue Jay, Brown-headed Nuthatch.

June 19: Eleanor Young reports from the Hampton Roads Bird Club's bi-monthly field trip at Newport News Park: 25 species. Highlights were Red-headed Woodpecker, Northern Rough-wing Swallow, Pine Warbler, Prothonotary

Warbler, Summer Tanager, Tree Swallows, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Red-tail Hawk, Barn Swallows.

June 20: Bill Snyder reports that the male Goldfinch is STILL bashing into the window at his house — “all day long.” (There's more to the story, so read on!)

June 23: Bill Holcombe reports a Yellow-billed Cuckoo dead on his deck, apparently after hitting a window. Also saw two Great-crested Flycatchers near CW's bowling green. Also in the first part of June, Pale Male, New York City's most famous Red-tailed Hawk, became a grandfather when his son's nest produced 2 chicks. At last report all were doing well.

June 26: Joe and Grace Doyle report 61 species on their weekly field trip to Camp Peary. Species not reported so far in June: Northern Harrier, Wild Turkey, Laughing Gull, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Tree Swallow, Fish Crow, Field Sparrow, Brown-headed Cowbird.

July 3: Bill Williams reports an adult male Black-and-white Warbler on the Green Springs Trail.

July 1: Bill Snyder was surprised to see a Lesser Scaup paddling up Powhatan Creek instead of raising chicks in northern Canada.

July 3: Joe and Grace Doyle report 48 species on their weekly field trip to Camp Peary. Highlights for the first Sunday in July: Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Mute Swan, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Wild Turkey, Clapper Rail, Laughing Gull, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-headed Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Great-crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Wood Thrush, White-eyed Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, Indigo Bunting, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, American Goldfinch.

July 10: Bill Williams reports: A Gray Catbird and 2 singing Scarlet Tanagers at the Green Springs Trail are clear signs birds are getting the itch to be on the move!

Joe and Grace Doyle report 53 species on their weekly field trip to Camp Peary. Species not reported so far in July: Green Heron (first this year!), Black Vulture, Northern Bobwhite (also first this year!), Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Tree Swallow and Blue Grosbeak.

July 13: Bill Snyder reports an amazing story from a friend who lives on Ironbound Road. His friend has 2-3 Purple Martin houses in his yard, all

inhabited by Purple Martins – and House Sparrows on one level of one house. Today, July 13, a Red-tailed Hawk perched on a Purple Martin house and started pulling nest material and birds out of the holes with his talon. He pulled out a baby House Sparrow and ate that. Then pulled out a baby Purple Martin and ate that. One of the birds he pulled out escaped and fell to the ground. The bird took refuge under a trailer parked in the driveway near the Purple Martin boxes. All the adult Purple Martins started feeding the refugee under the trailer! Bill said his friend ventured out to the yard to look under the trailer and had 15-20 Purple Martins attacking him.

July 14: Bill Snyder reports the male Goldfinch thrashed himself against the window EVERY DAY ALL DAY from May 16 to July 5. That's 51 straight days. After July 5, the bird is nowhere to be seen! Bill says he's never seen such bird behavior. Perhaps the bird finally succumbed to an extraordinary number of concussions! Or perhaps he migrated?

July 17: Joe and Grace Doyle report 48 species on their weekly field trip to Camp Peary. Species not reported so far in July: Red-shouldered Hawk, Purple Martin, Barn Swallow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Orchard Oriole.

July 24: Joe and Grace Doyle report 50 species on their weekly field trip to Camp Peary. Unquestioned highlight was a Glossy Ibis! Other species not reported so far in July: Killdeer, Red-bellied Woodpecker and Brown Thrasher.

July 27: Linda Scherer reports: "We have had a very handsome red-headed woodpecker coming to the sunflower feeder every day for at least the last 2 weeks. House wrens have 3 or 4 babies in the bluebird box – I think they hatched on July 21. Red-bellied woodpeckers, both adults and 2 youngsters, are still emptying the more easily accessible hummingbird feeder regularly. And, while I was foolishly working outside in the heat last Sunday, an adult Bald Eagle flew through the woods in my back yard well below treetop level."

July 29: Brac Bracalente reports: "In early July I saw a number of birds at the Queens Lake boat dock. Three Ospreys were flying overhead along with a Bald Eagle, while three young Ospreys were sitting on a nest right across from the boat house. Also saw a Great Egret catch a crab in its beak while standing in water at low tide. Also saw Blue Heron and Barn Swallows. The same day saw a Blue Bird pair on Nottingham Road in front of my house. A few days ago while floating on my back in the Queens Lake swimming pool, which is right next to the boat dock, I saw two Osprey circling about 300-400' directly above me. It looked cool watching them in the hot humid air

lazily circling around above me."

July 30: Grace Doyle reports a Black-and-white Warbler sitting on the deck rail outside the sun room of their Kingsmill home.

July 31: Joe and Grace Doyle report an extraordinary sighting on their weekly visit to bird Camp Peary – an immature Wood Stork in Beaverdam Pond. The local annotated list indicates only 5 records of a Wood Stork in this area. Now there are at least six!

BIRDING THE CHESAPEAKE BAY BRIDGE TUNNEL

by Bill Williams

One day last winter Mitchell Byrd and I decided to bird the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel (CBBT). We did what all among the birding flock have become accustomed to doing for the privilege of access to the CBBT islands. We stopped at the south plaza toll offices, showed security our car registration and drivers' licenses, which they dutifully copied, then proceeded on our way after paying the \$12 toll. The birds and our visit were routine with nothing unique until we got to the northernmost, or fourth, CBBT island. With more than 300 bird species recorded from this internationally advertised birding destination, the unexpected is always expected. Great gobs of gannets, were we in for a surprise!

Of interest to us was that fencing had been placed across the pavement on both sides of islands 2, 3, and 4. The gates to these fences were open so we proceeded without giving them much thought. (Weeks later we learned that the CBBT received a grant from the Department of Homeland Security to erect this restrictive fencing.) Easing along the east side railing on island 4 we saw minor construction was under way near the brick maintenance facilities building. Once out of the car we were approached by a gentleman, the work crew foreman we surmised, who inquired if we needed any help. As if binoculars around our necks and telescopes in hand were not evidence enough of our intentions, we cordially informed him we were birding, to which he responded we were not allowed to be on islands 2, 3, or 4 and that we would have to leave. We related that we had permission, to which he reemphasized the denial of public access to the northern CBBT islands and that we had to leave the island the way we came in. Rules governing birder use of the CBBT make it quite clear that only right hand turns on or off the islands are permitted. If we departed the island via the route we had entered we would have had to make a left turn across northbound traffic to get to the southbound lane! By this point Mitchell and I were convinced that the individual we were talking

to was confirmation that a population of Dodo was still extant ... right here in Tidewater!

Fortunately, after a little more conversation the man, who remains anonymous to us to this day, got in his white car and drove off telling us, ok you can bird the island and exit to the south. Little did we know how truly prophetic the gentleman's statements about CBBT birder access would become.

Within weeks of our unique experience the birding public was told that the 3 northernmost bridge tunnel islands would no longer be birding accessible, allegedly for security reasons. This created a flurry of queries and proactive protests, eventually leading to a public hearing before the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel Authority Commission, and the subsequent appointment of a negotiations team which included Bob Ake of Norfolk, Ned Brinkley of Cape Charles, and Mitchell Byrd. That team did extensive research into the security issue, and how other facilities, military and private, were handling their security. They spent considerable time and their own money attending meetings and proposing strategies to the CBBT for compromise. Ned did a superb job of posting reasoned, insightful information to the Virginia birds list-serve. Over and over it was emphasized to the tunnel authority decision makers how valuable the watching eyes of birders would be for security. Nevertheless, as of June 30, 2005, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel Authority curtailed all birder access to its northernmost islands. Effective the next day, July 1, a new set of regulations for its "birding program" was put in place. These you will find enclosed in this newsletter.....an unpopular partial cure for lister's blisters.

TOM ARMOUR REPORTS ON JULY TRIP TO IDAHO

We just returned from a driving trip to Idaho. A real kick!! We saw 87 bird species. Highlights were a short visit to the Bear River NWR in Utah where we saw great numbers of White Pelicans, American Avocets, Black-necked Stilts and White-faced Ibis and two visits to the Birds of Prey Conservation Area in Idaho. There we saw Burrowing Owls, four Prairie Falcons, a family of Rough-legged Hawks, Red-tailed, Ferruginous and Swainson's Hawks. Check out the club's web site for photos from the trip.

THE 11TH ANNUAL CVWO KIPTOPEKE CHALLENGE

By Brian Taber

This increasingly popular "bird-a-thon" will be

held September 17. I will have a "Wild Birds Unlimited of Williamsburg" team again – thanks to George and Val Copping! Also, Bill Williams may have a W&M team – stay tuned!

This 24-hour birding challenge is the annual fund-raising event used by the CVWO to support its research program. Volunteers participate by either raising funds or joining a team which obtains sponsors. Prizes for all participants, special venues open to teams, trophies and prizes for top fund raisers.

All Club members are once again invited to make a pledge to a team or other donation to the event. All proceeds go toward field research and public education. Much of the yearly operating budget for CVWO is gained through this event. There's more info on the website at www.cvwo.org and people can contact me through the web site, or my regular e-mail or mail me at 103 Exeter Court, Williamsburg 23185, or contact Kurt Gaskill, Kiptopeke Challenge Coordinator through his e-mail, which is Kurtcapt87@verizon.net.

CVWO greatly appreciates all pledges of support and teams will send each donor a report of the day.

JAMES RIVER HAWKWATCH SETS NEW RECORD

By Brian Taber, CVWO

The College Creek Hawkwatch has finished its 2005 season. It's located on the James River near Williamsburg and is sponsored by Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory. It's the only regularly operated late winter and spring hawkwatch in Virginia. The information is turned in to the Hawk Migration Association of North America for their global database. Special thanks to regular volunteers Tom Armour, Bill Williams and Fred Blystone who were a great help.

Thanks to the dedicated volunteers, we increased coverage to the most days (79) and most hours (133) in the 9-year history of the count. The previous highs were 71 and 127 respectively. The station operated from February 5th to May 30th. The usual count period is between about 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. as the birds generally move across the river on the first warming air of the day.

We also tallied the most birds at 1445. Previous highs were 1414 in 2003 and 1368 in 1997.

Species totals are as follows:

Black Vulture	55	(3rd highest)
Turkey Vulture	852	(2nd highest)
Osprey	155	(highest)
Bald Eagle	81	(2nd highest)
Harrier	40	(2nd highest)

Sharp-shin Hawk	99	(2nd highest)
Cooper's Hawk	41	(highest)
Red-shouldered Hawk	2	(2nd lowest)
Broad-winged Hawk	34	(highest)
Red-tail Hawk	65	(2nd highest)
American Kestrel	15	(tied for lowest, despite the heavy coverage)
Merlin	5	(highest)

The birds-per-hour rate of 11 is right on the average for the site. Cooper's Hawks were much more evident than in any previous season. The Red-shouldered numbers were low, but they are rarely seen migrating past the site. The American Kestrel total is disturbingly low and reflects the downward trend that fall sites have been experiencing lately.

ANNUAL BALD EAGLE BREEDING SURVEY

By Bryan Watts, CCB

Bryan Watts and Mitchell Byrd from The Center for Conservation Biology at the College of William and Mary have compiled the results of the annual bald eagle breeding survey for Virginia's Chesapeake Bay and major coastal tributaries. The number of known breeding pairs has increased 5.8% from 428 pairs in 2004 to 453 pairs in 2005. This represents the highest number of pairs ever recorded in the state. The 2005 survey is the 50th consecutive survey conducted in Virginia. The survey was initiated as a volunteer ground survey in 1956 but has been an aerial survey from 1962 to the present. A mild spring and high number of breeding attempts led to the production of a record 657 chicks, surpassing the previous high of 612 chicks set in 2004. The upper reaches of the James and Rappahannock Rivers continue to provide the most significant breeding habitat for bald eagles in the state.

The 2005 survey was funded primarily by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and the Center for Conservation Biology, with additional support from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Department of Defense and the Army Corps of Engineers.

We thank all of those in the community who have contributed information to the 2005 survey. The Center for Conservation Biology is always interested in information on the location of nesting pairs, particularly in the Piedmont and mountain regions of the state. We may be contacted by phone at 757-221-1645 or by the

contact information provided on our website, <http://www.ccb-wm.org>.

NESTING MISSISSIPPI KITE IN SOUTHSIDE VA

By Brenda Tekin – June 26 posting to the VSO List Serve

For years, Mississippi Kites have been observed in good numbers in Southside VA, with highest counts in Greenville and Southampton Counties between the town of Emporia and the North Carolina border. So it seems surprising the only two nesting records in Virginia for this species are from Northern Virginia and not Southside! Then again, if you've ever been to this area, there is a lot of excellent MIKI habitat to scout out and finding nesting kites can become the proverbial needle in a haystack. Recent observations would indicate MIKI are nesting in Southside VA!

Last weekend my husband and I traveled to Southside VA in search of Mississippi Kites and to hopefully observe possible nesting (if located). On Saturday, June 18, we located two adults that I felt certain were a bonded pair. For several hours I was able to observe them during feeding forays and disappearing into canopy of trees. Attempts to locate nests were unsuccessful; however, I felt certain I had at least narrowed it down to a manageable sector. The area is perfect MIKI habitat that includes all the key ingredients – small track of tall, old-growth mixed deciduous and coniferous in swampy lowland, adjacent to a pond with nearby crop fields (peanut).

Today (June 25) I returned and I'm happy to report the pair is still there. Throughout the day one adult, which I believe to be the male, typically would perch on nearby exposed dead snags. Aerial and perch hunting was observed over nearby open field. Several times it would flap for extended periods in pursuit of prey. After grabbing up insects, the kite would fly low, disappearing into a canopy of trees for several minutes before flying back out to either hunt or perch on open snag. On two separate occasions a second adult kite appeared from the same area and the two would fly in short circles low over the canopy, aerial hunting, grabbing up primarily high-flying, copper-brown colored dragonflies. Several times the adult male would fly from the perch with burst of speed out over open field and swoop down to the ground, quickly grabbing up an insect.

In the area where I suspect they are nesting, twice today I observed their behavior with a Fish Crow that came too close. The first encounter involved 2 crows that flew over open field toward the perched male MIKI in suspected nesting area. The kite immediately flew out of top of tree with one crow

in pursuit. A second crow landed in the top branch of adjacent tree and the second adult kite flew up to upper branch in same tree the first kite was in. The male kite flew back and took after the perched crow; the first crow was nowhere to be seen! The second kite, presumed to be the female, flew off and in less than a minute returned to trees and disappeared into thick canopy. The male, after chasing off the second crow, flew across the road away from suspected "nesting" kite. Several minutes later I relocated the male kite perched atop dead snag some 50-60 yards away on other side of road.

During the second crow event, a crow flew in too close to the suspected nesting area and one of the kites flew out giving chase. Whack! I don't think that crow knew what hit it!

More times than I wish to count, I drove and walked up and down this short stretch of road looking for the nest or signs of kites in the trees. Quite a few times the male would be perched on an exposed dead snag not far off the road and I would stop to photograph. The kite seemed "tolerant" even when I photographed while it was sunning. That "tolerance" must have worn thin.

By 6 p.m. it was overcast and I had not seen the kites for over 20 minutes and decided to call it a day. Slowly driving back along same stretch of road I spotted the adult male perched in what seems to be its favored spot maybe 30 yards from the road. I pulled completely off the road as I had done countless times today and began photographing from driver's window. For several minutes the kite appeared to be looking around. It then swooped down with wings pulled in close to its body and bowed downward giving it tight "M" shape coming straight toward the road. By now the kite was eye level to me sitting in the van, heading straight towards the driver's window where I was sitting. By the time it reached the road I was preparing for impact. In a split second maneuver, it stalled and its talons seemed to almost touch the middle of the road just a few short feet away before veering away from the van. That kite was so close I actually heard the wind in its wings! It made a wide circle and returned to the dead snag and was there maybe a few seconds before it made a second swoop toward the van. I pulled the camera back inside the window and threw my arm up to keep the kite from coming in the open window! Again, it stalled and veered away, but this time closer! I still can't believe it didn't hit the van! The kite returned back to same perch and started to preen. Several minutes passed with no more "aggressive" behavior on the kite's part. Hoping to get a digiscoped picture, I opened the rear side door from inside without a reaction from the kite. I then slowly opened my door and no sooner had I stepped out of the van when the

kite swooped down coming at full speed.

Expecting I was about to get "whacked" like that crow, I ducked! This time it came in so close I actually felt the wind on my face! Message received loud and clear! Kite returned to sentry duty, I got back inside van, closed van door, rolled up window and slowly slunk away.

If hatching has already taken place, I suspect young should be making their presence known to the outside world in a week or two. I'm hoping to return in the upcoming weeks to document young with the adults.

Web Link to pictures of MIKI:

http://www.birdsofvirginia.com/image_links/MississippiKite-8_link.htm

SHINY NEW QUARTER

By Bill Williams, Center for Conservation Biology

There is something about an unexpected discovery that lifts the spirit like a warm thermal does a soaring raptor. Such was the experience Bob and Cynthia Long shared with Sara Lewis of the York County Parks Department this past June 8 at New Quarter Park. Many of us will remember that this superb piece of property next to the York County community of Queens Lake was not that long ago threatened to become yet another link in the links of greater Williamsburg. Cherished birdies there would have been White-dimpled Hole Runners with such subspecies as Top Flight, Maxfli, Titlelist and Slazenger. For us birders that eventuality would definitively not have been up to par with the avian diversity one can find there now.

Our group of 4 assembled at 12:00 noon under quintessential tidewater summer conditions – 92 degrees, hazy, humid and not a waft of air. Nevertheless, the birds and their park companions did not disappoint. In just over an hour and a half we recorded 42 bird species including Bald Eagle, Osprey, Acadian Flycatcher, Wood Thrush, Kentucky Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Seaside Sparrow and Indigo Bunting. We were told that Wild Turkeys are routine. Eastern Bluebirds were making effective use of nest boxes along the entry drive put there by club members Gregory and Pamela Millslagle. Several Fowler's Toads plump from the wealth of their forest floor hopped off the trail. A pair of Five-lined Skinks played territorial tag along a tree trunk not far from the view of a less common Broad-headed Skink. Zebra Swallow-tail butterflies flew about in search of their Paw Paw host plant.

We walked along trail loops 6, 7 and 8 which offered us views of Queens Creek and its marshes across to Camp Peary and down towards Cheatham Annex and the York River. Nearby channel

markers that had an Osprey nest were easy to see into from our vantage point. These trails pass through the rich flora of a mature deciduous forest where, in places along the way, the fury of Hurricane Isabel had created openings that have enriched wildlife habitat diversity. Here species less inclined to be in the forest such as Common Yellowthroat were encountered. But there were also several man-made grassy clearings, which were perfect for the Bluebirds and American Goldfinches.

New Quarter Park has ample parking, almost 6 miles of bike trails, a softball field, picnic shelters and a volleyball court that Bob Long was itching to bound around in. A canoe and kayak launch puts you right into Queens Creek. To add to its natural history wealth, this site has historical significance as a battle ground and there are geological stories in the park just waiting to be told. So next time you are in the mood for an adventure check out this shiny New Quarter. Your spirits will be lifted and it may add to your lister's blisters.

Program and CVWO. For more information or to sign up, contact Dot Field, Natural Heritage Eastern Shore Region Steward at 757-787-5576.

Monarch Butterfly Tagging begins September 11. For more information contact Larry Brindza at [<mailto:ljbrindza@earthlink.net>](mailto:ljbrindza@earthlink.net)

CVWO SUMMER AND FALL SCHEDULE

By Kurt Gaskill

Fall Barrier Island Shorebird Surveys: CVWO is partnering with Virginia Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries to survey various coastal routes for shorebirds. These trips will take place August 6, August 20, September 3, September 18 and November 5, weather permitting – rain dates available for some trips. Space is limited to 5 for each trip. Contact Ruth Boettcher at 757-442-2429 or [<ruth.boettcher@dgif.virginia.gov>](mailto:ruth.boettcher@dgif.virginia.gov) to reserve a seat.

Fall Raptor Banding and Count at Kiptopeke State Park starts September 1. For more information or to arrange group visits contact Brian Taber at [<mailto:taberzz@aol.com>](mailto:taberzz@aol.com) or 757-253-1181.

Wreck Island Field Trip: September 10 (rain date September 17). Enjoy a day of birding while exploring the unique coastal communities on this pristine barrier island that provides critical nesting habitat for a variety of shorebirds. Observe restored and submerged aquatic vegetation beds and an oyster reef sanctuary and learn how natural forces are continuously reshaping the island. Boats will leave Oyster Harbor at ca. 7 a.m. for the 20-minute ride to Wreck Island and return about noon; limited to 12, bring your lunch and water. Note: This preserve is managed as a Natural Area and no public facilities are available. Trip is co-sponsored by The Virginia Eastern Shorekeeper

CHESAPEAKE BAY BRIDGE-TUNNEL BIRDING PROGRAM

Regulations for Increased Security and Continued Access

Effective July 1, 2005

I. INDIVIDUAL BIRDERS OR GROUPS

- Individual birders or groups of not more than 15 must be accompanied by security staff at all times.
- Visit must be arranged in advance with CBBT Administration for a fixed date/time.
- Prior to the visit, a manifest of all group members and leaders must be sent to CBBT, including names, identification data, addresses, etc.
- Photo identification cards (driver's license, etc.) issued by state/federal government will be checked for all adults against the manifest if need be.
- Vehicles, belongings, and persons may be checked at any time during the visit, not just check-in.
- Individual birders and groups will pay in advance a fixed hourly fee of \$50 to cover costs associated with booking and with police escort who will remain with them for the entire time they are on the island.
- All individuals are required to understand and obey all rules and regulations associated with birding the three northern islands.
- Groups understand that the number of visits by larger groups per day may be limited by staff resources.
- No cars are allowed beyond the gates.

II. RESEARCHERS & SCIENTISTS

- Researchers and scientists who visit will be required to possess and present a CBBT-issued identification card issued annually for a fee of \$50. This may involve a background check and references; a database of applicants/cardholders will be maintained by CBBT.
- Check-in and check-out procedures may involve a check of vehicle, persons, and belongings, and photo identification cards issued by state/federal government as well as by the CBBT will be required; check-in and check-out will require that all people sign a ledger with personal information.
- A system of placards, passes, or stickers to identify birders' vehicles may be used.
- Individuals will not be required to have police escort but agree to be checked by security staff at any time during the visit.
- Access past the security gates on the three northern islands will be possible only on foot, through the pedestrian gates. Individuals will be escorted in by security personnel who will return at an agreed upon time to escort the individuals out.

III. The Bridge-Tunnel reserves the right to change any of these procedures at any time. The Bridge-Tunnel will conduct a formal review of the procedures by January 1, 2006 with the birding committee. (6/05)