



THE FLYER

NEWSLETTER OF THE WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB

Volume 29, Number 6

Website: www.wmbgbirdclub.com

June 2005

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Alex Minarik

My non-birding family and friends think that my hobby is a bit odd, although they have never said that to my face. But I have succeeded in piquing their interest, if only a little, when we are together for various occasions. Down in Florida, it is easy to point out beautiful wading birds almost anywhere you go. Around here, the bald eagles are always a huge hit. And in my neighborhood, the barred owls have served me well in spreading the birding fever. Smaller birds are also good at exciting non-birders, especially bluebirds and hummingbirds. I got a coworker interested in the peregrine web cam last year. She was so excited to report to me that she saw a live peregrine one day on her commute over the James River Bridge. Although I haven't made avid birders out of anyone, I do believe that I have given them a new awareness and appreciation of nature and in some way have enriched their lives.

SUMMER BREAK

The club takes an activity break in the summer. After the club picnic June 5 at Ruth Beck's house, there are no programs/meetings in June, July or August. The next field trip will be in August and the next meeting will be the third Wednesday in September. Look for your next newsletter the first week in August as your newsletter editors take a month off. The August and September information will be on the web site as soon as it is available: www.wmbgbirdclub.com. Have a safe and birdy summer!

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

Each spring the Club awards two scholarships known as William Sheehan Ornithology Research Grants. This spring Ariel White and Caitlin Kight each received a \$500.00 award to help in funding their research projects in the graduate biology program at William and Mary. We look forward to hearing about their research at one or more of our programs next year. Congratulations to both Ariel

and Caitlin!

BIRD SIGHTINGS – MAY (and APRIL) 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!

April sightings by Tom McCary:

April 11: A few Cedar Waxwings in the trees by the James River at Shirley Plantation.

April 13: White-crowned Sparrow in formal garden at Shirley Plantation.

April 18: Male Boat-tailed Grackle at Indian Field Creek kept flying to a car in the parking lot there and pecking the sunroof. His reflections, perhaps? What a huge bird! His various loud notes and cries seem so different from the Common Grackle. At least three buff-colored females seen in the trees by the York River. I read that the fellow is polygamous. Also saw and heard a White-eyed Vireo near Indian Field Creek – across the road from the grackles.

April 23: First Catbird in my yard – late this year!

April 25: House Wren sings with great enthusiasm at my wren house.

April 26: Two sightings of handsome White-crowned Sparrows at Shirley Plantation.

April 28: A pair of Orchard Orioles at Shirley Plantation.

First week in May: Joe Doyle reports two tragedies. On separate days, a Wood Thrush and then a Veery flew into their windows and died. Joe reports that it is unusual to see these birds around their yard at all and he and Grace were quite dismayed to find them dead after flying into the window.

May 2: Tom McCary reports a beautiful Blue Grosbeak at Shirley Plantation. At his home, a House Wren enters his wren house and an Indigo Bunting perches in the backyard trees.

May 3: Male and female Orchard Orioles chase each other around the Shirley Plantation. Tom Armour reports: This AM at Treasure Island Rd. 3 Greater Yellowlegs, 4 Lesser Yellowlegs, 3 Solitary Sandpipers, 1 Least Sandpiper.

May 4: Marilyn Zeigler reports Rose-breasted Grosbeaks have been in her yard feeders for six straight days (since April 29). One of the females is very similar to the female Black-headed Grosbeak shown in Peterson's Field Guide, which states that the Black-headed Grosbeak "sometimes hybridizes with Rosebreast where ranges overlap. Strays occasionally to Atlantic states where it has wintered at feeding trays." Marilyn reports that her neighbors also have Red-breasted Grosbeaks in their yards.

Tom Armour reports: this PM on Treasure Island Road – 4 Wild Turkeys, 2 Greater Yellowlegs, 1 Indigo Bunting, 1 Green Heron. Alex Minarik reports: "This morning I heard and then saw a Blue-winged Warbler in the woods behind the parking lot at Bassett Hall. I heard Black-throated Blue Warblers, Hooded Warblers and Blackpoll Warblers too."

May 5: Bill Williams reports at 10:13 a.m.: "Within the last hour the following were noted at Gospel Spreading Farm – 4 Semipalmated Plovers, 1 Least Sandpiper, 1 Solitary Sandpiper. And at Drummonds Field – 1 Cattle Egret, 7 Semipalmated Plovers, 9 Least Sandpipers."

May 7: Bill Snyder reports: Three Canada Goose families on Powhatan Creek, one with six young, one with 4 and one with 2. Adults wandering about the house, looking in doors and wanting corn bits. Herb Spannum reports that a Wild Turkey ran across the back yard. "This is the first turkey we have seen on our property in the 6 ½ years we have lived in the Jamestown area."

May 8: Joe and Grace Doyle report from their weekly foray to Camp Peary: 53 species, including Clapper Rail, Spotted Sandpiper, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Wood Thrush, White-eyed Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo. Six warblers: Yellow-throated, Pine, Prairie, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat. Also, Summer Tanager and Scarlet Tanager, Indigo Bunting, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Orchard Oriole, American Goldfinch.

Week of May 9: Joe Doyle reports a Northern Parula, a Blackpoll Warbler, a Prairie Warbler and a Barred Owl around the yard. The same week, Joe and Grace noticed two Prothonotary Warblers building a nest in a duck box in their yard. Joe investigated the box and found a layer of

moss on top of the wood chips. Later in the week the warblers abandoned the nest in the duck box, but clearly nested nearby because they continued to see them in the yard. Joe also reports a Worm-eating Warbler around his yard.

May 9: Tom Armour reports: at Treasure Island Road, 6 Lesser and 3 Greater Yellowlegs. Alex Minarik reports: "a Black-throated Blue Warbler in the trees beside our property. The next day, a Blackpoll Warbler appeared in the oak beside the deck and two American Redstarts were feeding in the nearby trees. I also heard a Louisiana Water-thrush in the swamp behind our house."

May 10: Tom Armour reports: at Treasure Island Road, 2 Greater Yellowlegs, 4 Indigo Buntings, 1 Yellow-breasted Chat, 1 Belted Kingfisher, 1 Philadelphia Vireo, 1 Common Yellowthroat and both Tree and Barn Swallows. Later in the morning he reports: in the pasture pool on the parkway there were 3 Greater Yellowlegs, 4 Pectoral Sandpipers, 5 Least Sandpipers and 1 Sanderling. Bill Snyder reports: The pair of Mute Swans returns to Powhatan Creek for first time this year.

May 11: Bill Williams reports: 2 Least Terns at College Creek.

May 14: Bill Holcombe's dog walking includes first spring sightings of Great-crested Flycatcher and Catbird.

Marilyn Zeigler reports a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak at her feeder today as well as May 10 and 13.

Tom McCary reports the return of his "pet" woodchuck, "Woody," to his yard.

May 15: Alex Minarik reports: "This afternoon before the storm, I saw a Magnolia Warbler and a Chestnut-sided Warbler in my backyard. The chestnut-sided was a first ever for my yard. There was also a Blackpoll Warbler, singing non-stop, foraging among the oak and hollies." Joe and Grace Doyle report 58 species from their weekly trip to Camp Peary: Birds not seen the previous week: Wood Duck, Mallard, Black Vulture, Bald Eagle, Wild Turkey, Killdeer, Royal Tern, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Brown-headed Nuthatch, American Robin, Brown Thrasher and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

Shirley Devan reports: Biking along Colonial Parkway around the two ponds at the Gospel Spreading Farm between Jamestown and Williamsburg: Right pond — Green Heron, Yellow Legs (greater and lesser), female Wood Duck with young ducklings, Eastern Kingbird, Red-wing Blackbird. Left pond — Green Heron (two sitting up on fence posts, preening and sunning,) Canada Geese, some shore birds I could not ID

May 16: Strange story. Bill Snyder stops his feeder program April 1. Today he becomes aware of something hitting on his window and investigation reveals a female American Goldfinch alternating between sitting on the empty feeder and pecking at his window! Later this scenario repeats but the pecking comes from two male Goldfinches. This was still going on May 19!

May 17: Herb Spannuth reports: "Beverly and I saw a male Summer Tanager (new bird for us) near our home today and were able to watch it and listen to it call for 5-10 minutes before it flew away." Bill Williams reports 1 Red-breasted Merganser at College Creek; and on the Green Springs Trail was 1 Magnolia Warbler and 2 Swainson's Thrushes

May 18: Alex Minarik reports: "This morning I investigated a song that I had been hearing from the swamp behind my house for over a week. I thought it was a Northern Waterthrush and was finally able to find and confirm it."

May 21: Dorothy Whitfield reports a juvenile Summer Tanager around her deck. "The young one is getting its adult plumage and matches the picture in Peterson's Field Guide of the immature changing to adult." Tom McCary reports a Blackpoll Warbler in his front and back yards. Brac Bracalente reports "a male Summer Tanager singing in New Quarter Park in the trees by the kid's play area. Also, saw Bluebirds on their bird house along the park's main road and Great Crested Flycatcher flying around my front yard in Queens Lake."

May 22: Bill Williams reports a Glossy Ibis at Gospel Spreading Farm. Tom McCary reports a Wild Turkey crossing the road at Shirley Plantation, plus an American Redstart, Blackpoll Warblers, Orchard Oriole, Cedar Waxwing, Eastern Kingbird.

Joe and Grace Doyle report 59 species at Camp Peary: Notables not seen on previous May week-end visits include: Double-crested Cormorant, Red-headed Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Parula, Worm-eating Warbler and Hood Warbler.

Shirley Devan reports a White-breasted Nuthatch family of about 5 enthusiastically feeding around her sunflower tubes. "Adults grab seeds and take them to nearby branch to give to young ones. Then all five fly around the feeder and settle down and then the adults again take seeds to the youngsters. Teaching youngsters is hard work!" Dorothy Whitfield reports the same immature Summer Tanager – "but today he has more red and less yellow."

May 24: Dorothy Whitfield reports two Summer Tanagers at her suet feeder – a female and the

immature which has lost almost all its yellow coloring. Grace Doyle reports a Magnolia Warbler in her yard at Kingsmill.

Alex Minarik reports: "A female Hooded Merganser flew into the swamp next to Longhill Rd. beside Lafayette high school. This is almost a month later than the date given in the annotated book. She stood on a fallen tree for a while and I got a very good look at her. Other birds seen were one Red-headed Woodpecker, a Green Heron, a male Wood Duck and a pair of Flickers at a nest hole."

May 25: Dorothy Whitfield reports that the adult and juvenile Summer Tanagers are still feeding around her feeding station. The adult breaks off large chunks of suet and flies to the deck railing to feed the juvenile. She also has Purple Finches, Carolina Wrens feeding their young, and an unidentified nest in her bird box. She reports that it looks like a bluebird nest but has one white egg.

MAY FIELD TRIP

Alex Minarik led 15 birders on the May 14 field trip at York River State Park. Participants included: Cynthia and Bob Long, Mary Anne and John Fennell, Brac Bracalente, Dorothy Whitfield, Chuck Rend, Tom McCary, Dick Kiefer, Gary Driscoll, Adrien Frank, Hugh Beard, Shirley Devan and Mike Minarik.

The group met in the parking area at 8:00 a.m. The cool morning quickly warmed up and the birders recorded 51 bird species. These included Bald Eagles, Osprey on nest, Cedar Waxwings, Indigo Buntings, Blue Grosbeak, Orchard and Baltimore Orioles, Summer and Scarlet Tanagers and 11 warbler species – Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-throated Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Northern Parula, Blackpoll Warbler, American Redstart, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Hooded Warbler and Black and White Warbler.

Several lucky birders got looks at the Magnolia and Chestnut-sided warblers, the "finds" of the day. Bobbie Whitehead, a reporter from The Daily Press, observed and interviewed several of us as we birded the park. She is trying to arrange a photo shoot of club birders out in the field. Look for an article and photos about the club in The Daily Press in the coming weeks.

MONITORING PURPLE MARTINS

By Bill Williams

Center for Conservation Biology

Data from more than a quarter of a century of Williamsburg Bird Club spring bird counts indicate that our local Purple Martin population

has declined by more than 95%. However, because of the geographically defined scope of the spring counts (a 15-mile diameter circle centered at the Colonial Williamsburg Information Center) we have no way of determining if in fact the Purple Martin is really disappearing from our area or has merely retreated to places not censused during the spring count. The count strategy for that day is biased towards species that can be found in less developed habitats. Observers tend to maximize their count-day time in areas which offer the best chances of finding not only the most species but the more unusual ones as well. Little time is spent in neighborhoods, especially those within our large gated communities, or along city streets where Purple Martin motels may be thriving. On the other hand, locations which historically yielded dozens of this largest of our swallows each spring now have none. What is going on and what can be done?

During this June please take some time to scout neighborhoods near you (Williamsburg, James City County, Bruton District of York County) to see if there are any Purple Martin nest boxes. If you find them, note their exact street address and determine as accurately as you can the number of birds present at each. Purple Martins may raise 1-3 broods each summer, so getting a feel for their numbers in June will avoid numbers inflation with fledged young stirring about later. Please post your information to Bill Williams at jwwil2@wm.edu or call to report your data at 221-7741. If snail mail suits, send it to The Center for Conservation Biology, College of William and Mary, P.O. Box 8795, Williamsburg, 23187-8795. Thanks in advance for your time and effort!

MORE ON IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER

By Shirley Devan

As I was browsing around at the Friends of the Library book sale, a friend who was working the event for the Friends advised me to check out the "old" books in the other room. I was delighted to find the "Audubon Land Bird Guide," sponsored by the National Audubon Society. The copyright date was 1946, 1949. Formerly known as the Audubon Bird Guide. The author was Richard H. Pough and the over 400 full-color illustrations of 275 species were by Don Eckelberry. For only \$3.00, it was a treasure, and I added it to my pile of "treasures" from the sale.

I paged through it later and the description of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker caught my eye because of the recent find in Arkansas of this almost extinct bird. The listing described its identifying marks, habits (not habitats!), voice, nest and range. The author also included some advice for

the reader and post-WWII bird watcher (not called "birders" back then). The advice: "It is so rare that any record of one is noteworthy and should be passed on at once to the National Audubon Society, which is trying to save the bird from extinction." So now you know what to do. Bill Holcombe's excellent reference book, "The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds (1996)" by John K. Terres, reports the Ivory-billed Woodpecker "Probably very close to extinction ... only recent records are for southeast Texas, southern Louisiana and central South Carolina. Considerable effort has failed to produce reliable records elsewhere in its range" according to the Office of Endangered Species, 1973.

FIRST LANDING STATE PARK WITH CVWO BANDERS

(This is the note Jethro Runco posted to the VSO's List-Serve for May 22, 2005.)

"Finally after a week of low numbers, we caught a few more birds today. The highlights came early in the morning. A Bicknell's Thrush on 6 am net run made for some good pictures. This was the best looking Bicknell's I have seen. All the field marks were quite prominent. If you saw this bird out of hand (in the wild), this would have been maybe the easiest Bicknell ID possible. Great looking bird. Also early this morning we caught not one but two Wilson's Warblers. Towards the end of the day we caught our first Yellow-Billed Cuckoo of the season as well. Migration seems to be winding down here but you wouldn't know it by the Blackpoll numbers!

Here are the totals for the day: 3 Magnolia Warblers, 2 Wilson's Warblers, 2 Redstarts, 1 Yellow Warbler, 3 Common Yellowthroats, 12 Blackpoll Warblers, 1 Eastern Wood-Pewee, 2 Red-Eyed Vireos, 1 Veery, 1 Bicknell's Thrush, 4 Gray Catbirds, 1 Yellow-Billed Cuckoo, 4 Common Grackles. Total: 37

Tomorrow is my last day at the banding station. My last chance for Swainson's and Cerulean Warblers! I am sure they will be there too! Right? Nonetheless, it has been a good season. I think we have banded 79 species so far of 1,126 individuals. We have had a lot of repeats from this season which is what we want and to top it off, we had two foreign recaptures as well. I can't wait to see what tomorrow holds! Cheers, Jethro Runco" (Shirley Devan continues:) "I have been reading Jethro's postings from the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory's bird banding station at First Landing State Park since early March when Jethro and volunteers set up their nets and began banding spring migrants for the first time in the this location. Every week I told myself to make the trip to Virginia Beach to check out the birds

and get some photos. March turned into April and April turned into May and here it was the middle of May and I still had not trekked to the beach. I had lots of excuses – bad weekend weather (lots of it!) plus “stuff” that always kept me from getting up extra early on a weekend morning to get to First Landing State Park by 8:00 a.m. or so, the latest that “good” birds would be in the nets. My sister was visiting the weekend of May 22 and had expressed “interest” in making the trip with me. But Sunday morning at 6:30 she was no where to be found (outside the guest bedroom) so I headed off alone. After a quick stop at 7-11 for caffeine and carbs, I made the trip in about an hour and arrived at the park about 8:00. Perfect timing ...or so I thought.

I bounced back and forth between the contact stations at the park (two on either side of Shore Drive), trying to find someone who knew where the bird banding station was located. The employees at the Contact Stations looked at me like I was from another planet when I asked where they were banding birds. By now it was almost 8:30. Time is wasting and the good birds are getting fewer and fewer. Finally, another park employee knew what I was asking about and circled the trail on the map where I could find Jethro.

So I found a parking spot near the Trail Center and headed off, map in hand, thinking the station was just around the corner. Two miles later (and 10 degrees warmer) I washed up at the banding station where Jethro and volunteer Jerri Howe were cooling their heels in between net runs. It was about 9:30. Yow! I was way later than planned. And yes, the good birds had been netted earlier (see Jethro’s note above about the Bicknell’s Thrush and the Veery). Jethro arrives every morning about 5:30, raises the 20 nets set up out in the woods, and sets up the equipment to weigh, measure and band the birds. He and volunteers, if he has any, check the nets every 45 minutes starting at 6:00 a.m. and continue for 6 - 8 hours, depending on the weather and the birds. This day volunteer Jerri Howe arrived about 7:00 a.m. by bike from her home in Virginia Beach. The only way to get to the station is by bike (about ½ way) or by foot.

I accompanied Jethro and Jerri on one of the net runs. By late morning, the numbers of birds in the nets had dropped to just a few. I was able to see and photograph Jethro as he measured and banded a male and female Common Grackle, a Red-eyed Vireo, a Common Yellowthroat and male and female Blackpoll Warblers.

Oops – time to head back – promised my family I would be home by noon. I didn’t take the 2+ mile hike to the station into account when I estimated my arrival time at home. Oh well. I could always blame it on the traffic on I-64 which WAS heavy

coming back.

I hope the Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory sets up camp there again next year. The location of the station is perfect – deep in the woods. The cold spring weather this year was an anomaly and Jethro hopes the numbers will be better next year with normal warmer spring weather.

I highly recommend a visit to the banding station next year. I know I’ll start out even earlier on my next visit and take a bottle of water with me on the trek in.

LIPS

By Capt. Albert J. Booth

Bird Club Member

It is May 11, 2005. This evening as my granddaughter and I were on the deck in back of our house, a female mallard came into the yard, came to the bottom of the steps to the deck, and stared at me until I recognized her as “LIPS.” She followed me to the garage to get some corn when went to her special dish to eat.

I live in Kingsmill, with the pond for the 14th hole of the Plantation Golf Course to the rear of our lot. I have numerous bird feeders and enjoy observing wildlife in the area. Over the years I have fed many ducklings and goslings as the parents bring them to the yard to feed under the feeders. The ducks and ducklings will come in to the yard, stand by the kitchen window, and wait until I come out to feed them.

LIPS has about ½ inch of the end of the top part of her bill missing. I assume a turtle bit her while she was dabbling in the pond. She was probably one of the ducklings I fed with her siblings.

LIPS first appeared in our yard 9 June 2001. She came in to the yard making a lot of noise (sort of a nasal quack). She could not eat corn or grain from the ground because the lower part of the bill would just push the food away. LIPS made a lot of noise as she pushed corn around the yard and I realized that she wasn’t getting anything in to her crop. As LIPS walked around making her nasal quack I put a planter dish on the ground, put a brick in the center of it, and poured corn alongside the brick. LIPS cautiously approached the dish, tried to eat and soon realized that she could trap the corn against the brick and eat. That was four years ago. LIPS came into the yard almost daily that summer and I fed her in her special dish.

LIPS was ostracized by the healthy ducks and at times I had to stand guard while she ate, so that the other ducks didn’t chase her away from the feeding dish. LIPS and the other ducks stopped coming to the yard by 28 September of that year. I wondered how she would survive over the winter and really did not think I would see her again.

However, she came to the yard 24 June 2002. This was a different feistier LIPS who chased the other ducks from her special feeding dish. She visited

the yard on and off all summer and departed the area with the other ducks toward the end of September.

2003 was the same story as the previous year. We saw LIPS in the yard for the first time 26 June. She continued to eat out of her dish throughout the summer. On 6 September of that year a female Red-tailed Hawk took and ate two female mallards in the back of our property. I feared that one may have been LIPS since I didn't see any ducks in the yard after that date. Hurricane Isabel 12 days later completely chased away any wildlife that would have been in the yard through September.

2004 was another pleasant surprise as LIPS showed up on 24 May. She stayed in the area feeding out of her special dish until the end of September.

As I add to this story in May 2005, LIPS is four years old. Pretty good for a wild duck. I wonder if she has another friend where she spends the winter because she seems healthy enough when she arrives in the spring. She evidently gets enough to eat over the winter to sustain her until she returns to my yard where she has a well-trained staff of one to put corn in the special dish for her.

Editor's Note: Jim Booth is curious to know if any other members have had similar experiences with Mallards.

MAYA, MANAKINS AND MOTMOTS: BIRDY BELIZE

By Bill Williams

Members of the Augusta County and Monticello Bird Clubs made this Don Corleone kind of offer – Would you serve as a guide when we go to Belize in April 2005? What's a birder to do? Faster than a hummingbird wing beat, that offer was not refused.

March 29, 2005, 3:45 a.m., found 14 of us at the Dulles Airport Holiday Inn loading a shuttle to our Miami flight. By 1:00 p.m. (CST) we had ticked Mangrove Swallows and Great-tailed Grackles at the Ladyville Airport outside Belize City. A 2-hour van ride over rugged unpaved roads delivered us to the remote Hidden Valley Inn, an impressive facility near the pine forested Maya Mountains. We had barely opened the doors to our comfortable rooms when great birding began. Outside, a Yellow-tailed Oriole sang as a pair of Acorn Woodpeckers cavorted near the lodge dining room.

Hidden Valley sits in the midst of a vast 7,200-acre pine forest preserve. Yet all is not well there. As far as the eye can see more than 75% of the trees were dead, the results of an immense pine bark beetle infestation. A more serious fire hazard

could not have been designed. Nevertheless, the birding was terrific. Within an hour of our arrival we are delivered to a Stygian Owl's roost. Its piercing orange eyes registered its concern over our intrusion which it seemed to express by coughing up a pellet. The next day our guide, Israel, led us to King Vulture Falls where 11 birds of that name sat waiting for appropriate thermals. Suddenly, the air was sliced by a passing Orange-breasted Falcon that cooperatively perched nearby allowing us see the exceptional size of its bright yellow bird and bat catching talons. But Israel had one more surprise for us as he whistled in a spectacular soaring Black Hawk-Eagle.

From Hidden Valley a day trip to Caracol, an ancient Mayan ruin overwhelmed us with the size of the stone structures and visions of the thousands of advanced culture peoples that inhabited this area 2 millennia ago. Black Howler Monkeys lounged in nearby trees interested in our excitement of having all four of the country's trogon species, Collared, Slaty-tailed, Black-headed and Violaceous in view simultaneously. They were not to be out done by an Emerald Toucanet near the temple or the Swallow-tailed Kites soaring across the valley. Fascinating was the song of the Rufous-breasted Spinetail which encouraged us to "eat cerviche."

The next night we were nested at Chan Chich Lodge which sits among Mayan ruins not far from the Guatemalan border. One can drive to Chan Chich, Mayan for "little bird", but flying is best because a drive there is unforgiving in terms of travel time. Small planes land at Gallon Jug the site of a coffee and sugar cane plantation that is carved out of a subtropical forest reserve of hundreds of thousands of undisturbed acres. From Gallon Jug to the lodge is a 20-minute drive that often produces sightings of Great Curassow, Plain Chachalaca, Collared Aracari and Keel-billed Toucan. At night the same road would surrender Northern Potoo, Yucatan Poorwill and Common Parakeet.

There are nine miles of paths in Chan Chich country, all of them birdy and surprising. One of our party watched Belize's smallest feline, a jaguarondi, slink quietly along a wooded edge and a jaguar was seen less than a mile from the lodge by another party. Oscellated Turkeys adorn the lodge walkways as Montezuma Orependulas chortle overhead. The Thrush-like Shiffornis sings "Hey Ricky" to a Red-capped Manakin picking fruit from a bush right beside the dining table. As dawn unfolds at Chan Chich Blue-crowned Motmots offer the brightening day a quiet "whoop-whoop." At nearby water pools dusk is the best time to drink in the gorgeous Purple-crowned Fairy hummingbird, or Magnolia, Hooded, and Prothonotary warblers bathing before heading north to breed. Then it's time to

suffer through another of Chan Chich's gourmet meals served by the most delightful staff you can imagine. Chan Chich's exceptional birding yields such tongue twisters as Stub-tailed Spadebill, Scaly-breasted Leaftosser, White-whiskered Puffbird, Chestnut-colored Woodpecker, Rufous-tailed Jacamar and Black-headed Saltator. From the porch of your cabana you can watch a Bat Falcon and a Plumbeous Kite hunt. The marsh at Laguna Seca gave us leisurely studies of 3 Pinnated Bitterns and an Anhinga.

At the Audubon Sanctuary, Crooked Tree, a morning boat ride has us ease up beside a 9-foot Morelet's crocodile. Limpkins and Northern Jacanas seem to be around every turn as we search for and find the shy, retreating Agami Heron. A Collared Forest Falcon flies overhead then perches so we can study it and the large lizard it grasps in its talons. We watch Black-collared Hawks waiting for surfacing-fish, then get knock-out views of an American Pygmy Kingfisher and several Gray-necked Wood Rails. These are followed by superb looks at a common though rarely seen, Ruddy Crake, as it skulks among the shoreline tangles.

The final 3 days of the trip were spent in San Pedro on Ambergris Caye (pronounced key). Here a morning stroll along the narrow beach padded the 300-plus species trip list with Black Catbird, Magnificent Frigatebird, Hooded and Orchard orioles, Tropical Mockingbird and dozens of White-winged Doves to name but a few. Many of the group spent their afternoons snorkeling on the world's second largest barrier reef, before shopping in town where the main transportation mode is golf cart and bicycle.

To say Belize is captivating is understating its allure. It is an English speaking country, though that is the second language, and its currency, the dollar, two for every one US, makes transactions more than simple. The warm, delightfully friendly people are very proud of their small nation. A visit there will prove why. And, Oh! What excellent birds and places to be among them.

Williamsburg Bird Club Spring Count

May 1, 2005

Species	Camp P	C. Annex	Coll. Woods	Hog Is.	Jtown	Jolly Pond	Kmill	Mid. Plan.	Skimino	Total
Pied-billed Grebe			2	2						4
Brown Pelican	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
D.C. Cormorant	5	23	2	67	16	2	1	16	4	136
Great Blue Heron	14	15	5	15	16	2	1	1	0	69
Great Egret	1	4	0	11	0	0	1	1	0	18
Little Blue Heron	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Cattle Egret	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	4
Green Heron	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	3	0	6
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Glossy Ibis	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Black Vulture	2	5	4	2	5	10	1	0	0	29
Turkey Vulture	23	14	9	5	26	6	5	6	33	127
Canada Goose	22	138	55	62	20	10	4	47	5	363
Mute Swan	2	46	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	52
Wood Duck	2	2	9	0	3	0	2	3	0	21
American Black Duck	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Green-winged Teal	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Mallard	0	4	5	7	5	8	11	17	7	64
Blue-winged Teal	0	4	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	10
Osprey	18	40	2	9	15	1	6	10	17	118
Bald Eagle(Adult)	5	2	1	2	2	0	0	1	4	17
Bald Eagle(Imm.)	3	3	1	7	7	0	2	0	4	27
Northern Harrier	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cooper's Hawk	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	4
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	1	6
Red-tailed Hawk	1	2	1	0	1	2	1	1	1	10
Wild Turkey	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
Northern Bobwhite	0	0	0	3	2	2	0	0	0	7
Clapper Rail	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
Sora	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
American Coot	0	0	0	49	0	0	0	0	0	49
Semipalmated Plover	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	4
Killdeer	4	1	2	6	0	4	0	10	0	27
Greater Yellowlegs	0	1	0	16	5	1	1	0	0	24
Lesser Yellowlegs	0	0	0	93	3	0	5	0	0	101
Solitary Sandpiper	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	6	0	12
Spotted Sandpiper	4	2	0	6	1	3	0	0	1	17
Least Sandpiper	0	0	0	86	7	1	10	9	0	113
Pectoral Sandpiper	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Wilson's Snipe	0	0	0	4	3	0	0	0	0	7
Laughing Gull	3	34	5	48	4	0	10	1	4	109
Bonaparte's Gull	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Ring-billed Gull	0	6	3	122	10	0	18	38	1	198
Herring Gull	0	3	0	5	0	0	6	0	0	14
Great Black-backed Gull	0	2	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	6
Caspian Tern	0	2	0	10	9	0	0	0	0	21
Royal Tern	7	14	0	6	6	0	35	8	1	77
Common Tern	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Forster's Tern	0	0	0	11	1	0	0	0	0	12
Least Tern	0	0	0	14	2	0	0	0	0	16
Rock Dove	0	0	14	2	1	0	5	0	0	22
Mourning Dove	10	4	11	9	18	17	13	28	38	148
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	4
Eastern Screech Owl	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Great Horned Owl	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	3
Barred Owl	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Chuck-will's Widow	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

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Chimney Swift	1	3	7	8	75	1	2	13	0	110
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	2	0	4	0	1	2	2	2	0	13
Belted Kingfisher	3	2	3	0	0	1	0	1	2	12
Red-headed Woodpecker	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	7	1	11
Red-bellied Woodpecker	4	5	6	3	7	12	9	7	3	56
Downy Woodpecker	1	3	4	1	1	1	2	4	1	18
Hairy Woodpecker	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	5
Northern Flicker	3	2	3	2	6	0	1	4	3	24
Pileated Woodpecker	1	1	7	0	3	0	3	4	1	20
Eastern Wood-Pewee	1	4	2	1	3	2	0	0	0	13
Acadian Flycatcher	1	3	9	0	0	3	0	0	0	16
Eastern Phoebe	0	0	6	0	4	0	1	2	2	15
Great Crested Flycatcher	9	4	7	4	12	8	8	18	7	77
Eastern Kingbird	8	2	0	16	4	1	1	2	0	34
White-eyed Vireo	14	6	5	2	3	5	1	8	3	47
Yellow-throated Vireo	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	7
Blue-headed Vireo	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Red-eyed Vireo	29	12	16	0	9	20	9	10	26	131
Blue Jay	5	5	16	13	6	6	1	8	16	76
American Crow	15	7	9	6	5	7	15	10	18	92
Fish Crow	1	6	6	2	9	3	8	6	4	45
Crow species	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	6
Purple Martin	2	5	21	0	3	0	0	1	2	34
Tree Swallow	20	7	3	105	12	3	4	8	3	165
No. Rough-winged Swallow	0	3	3	2	5	0	0	5	0	18
Bank Swallow	0	0	0	19	6	0	0	1	0	26
Barn Swallow	16	21	8	103	15	10	5	7	0	185
Carolina Chickadee	2	3	9	2	21	8	15	9	3	72
Tufted Titmouse	10	7	14	2	15	13	11	21	10	103
White-breasted Nuthatch	0	1	7	0	2	4	3	1	2	20
Brown-headed Nuthatch	3	0	0	5	4	0	0	0	0	12
Carolina Wren	17	15	10	4	14	6	12	16	16	110
House Wren	0	1	3	2	3	1	7	0	1	18
Marsh Wren	0	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	6
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	3
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	7	7	9	16	13	19	8	15	1	95
Eastern Bluebird	29	12	6	1	2	10	7	3	3	73
Veery	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	5
Swainson's Thrush	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Hermit Thrush	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Wood Thrush	10	3	5	0	3	3	0	5	2	31
American Robin	9	6	21	0	3	8	40	38	34	159
Gray Catbird	4	5	4	5	2	3	12	17	6	58
Northern Mockingbird	4	11	6	2	5	6	8	8	11	61
Brown Thrasher	1	2	5	0	11	5	1	4	14	43
European Starling	40	12	9	19	10	7	28	25	39	189
American Pipit	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cedar Waxwing	0	0	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	17
Northern Parula	0	5	7	0	6	7	5	10	6	46
Yellow Warbler	0	3	0	5	0	0	3	8	3	22
Black-throated Blue Warbler	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	3	0	8
Yellow-rumped Warbler	0	4	2	77	13	19	15	7	22	159
Black-throated Green Warbler	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Yellow-throated Warbler	8	9	4	7	3	5	0	3	4	43
Pine Warbler	7	7	2	9	8	3	3	1	4	44
Palm Warbler	2	0	1	3	0	2	0	0		8
Prairie Warbler	14	0	5	2	0	4	0	0	0	25
Blackpoll Warbler	0	0	0	1	3	0	6	0	0	10

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Black-and-white Warbler	0	0	2	0	4	7	0	3	1	17
American Redstart	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	5
Prothonotary Warbler	0	2	2	0	0	3	0	4	0	11
Worm-eating Warbler	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Ovenbird	7	4	5	0	0	11	2	5	8	42
Northern Waterthrush	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Lousiana Waterthrush	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	2	0	7
Kentucky Warbler	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Common Yellowthroat	16	3	2	5	26	1	2	21	2	78
Hooded Warbler	3	2	3	0	0	2	0	1	2	13
Yellow-breasted Chat	7	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	11
Summer Tanager	17	7	5	1	5	5	1	1	0	42
Scarlet Tanager	3	3	8	0	3	3	2	2	0	24
Eastern Towhee	13	10	8	2	21	2	13	6	2	77
Chipping Sparrow	14	14	29	1	1	0	0	21	0	80
Field Sparrow	2	0	5	1	1	0	0	21	0	30
Savannah Sparrow	2	0	0	2	0	5	0	0	0	9
Grasshopper Sparrow	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Seaside Sparrow	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Song Sparrow	0	3	11	1	3	1	5	7	4	35
Swamp Sparrow	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	4
White-throated Sparrow	13	19	14	16	37	3	22	30	19	173
Dark-eyed Junco x White-thrt	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Northern Cardinal	23	24	30	6	45	9	33	36	15	221
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	0	0	5	0	2	0	1	0	0	8
Blue Grosbeak	0	2	2	9	0	1	0	6	1	21
Indigo Bunting	8	1	3	7	8	2	1	2	0	32
Bobolink	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	8
Red-winged Blackbird	10	8	17	281	70	13	40	82	2	523
Eastern Meadowlark	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	0	6
Rusty Blackbird	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	4
Common Grackle	24	9	11	71	5	24	50	95	78	367
Boat-tailed Grackle	0	4	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	6
Brown-headed Cowbird	15	29	16	36	26	11	9	10	2	154
Orchard Oriole	3	5	2	14	13	1	0	4	2	44
House Finch	13	14	15	0	6	0	17	4	10	79
American Goldfinch	12	21	94	9	9	12	27	9	20	213
House Sparrow	3	3	4	0	4	0	0	1	8	23