



# The Flyer

## Newsletter of the Williamsburg Bird Club

Vol. 42 No. 2

[williamsburgbirdclub.org](http://williamsburgbirdclub.org)

February 2018

### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Cheryl Jacobson



Celebrate 2018 as the "Year of the Bird"

Happy New Year 2018! As you know, the purpose of our Bird Club is to promote interest in the study of wild birds; protect birds and their habitat; and share the joy of birding with others. As a member, one way to support our purpose is to Celebrate 2018 as the "Year of the Bird".

2018 marks the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the most powerful and important bird-protection law ever passed. In honor of this milestone, National Geographic, National Audubon Society, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, BirdLife International, and more than 100 organizations have joined with millions of people around the world for 12 months of storytelling and science to examine how our changing environment is impacting birds around the globe. Participating organizations include nonprofit and conservation groups, state and federal agencies, zoos, nature centers, and ornithological societies. The effort will document the dramatic losses among bird species around the globe and highlight what we can do to help bring birds back.

The aim is to heighten public awareness of birds because of their wonder and beauty—and because they symbolize nature's interconnectedness and the importance of caring for our shared planet. To get started, visit [birdyourworld.org](http://birdyourworld.org) to sign up and discover simple but meaningful steps that you can take to help birds each month and pledge to participate. Most of us are already doing many of the actions, but there might be more that you would like to do.

**Remember what you love about birds and that we can all make a better world for them.**

The Nature Conservancy's Migratory Bird Program works to protect critical habitat that birds need for nesting, raising young,

*(Continued Page 2)*

### PROGRAMS

By Judy Jones

#### **BUSCH GARDENS RETURNS FEBRUARY 21<sup>ST</sup> @ 7PM**

The Williamsburg Bird Club and the Historic Rivers Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists will join at our next meeting to hear (and see) the wonderful birds from Busch Gardens. Please join us on February 21, at 7:00 pm in Room 101 of Andrews Hall at William and Mary to be amazed by the beautiful wild birds of Busch Gardens. Don't forget your parking pass!

#### **FUTURE WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB (WBC) PROGRAMS**

MARCH 21st – Mark this date on your calendar! Our very own WBC member, Dr. Dan Cristol, will be our speaker that evening. It will be an exciting program and one that will captivate us all.

APRIL 18th – As always, this meeting is a very special one with the research grant recipients presenting their findings. These graduate students are working towards their master's degree in the Biology Department at W&M, and their research is just fascinating. Please come join us for an interesting and very educational evening.

#### **SAVE THE DATE FOR THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT (GBBC) – FEBRUARY 16-19**

Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the GBBC was the first online citizen-science project to collect data on wild birds. People of all ages and walks of life worldwide join the four-day count to create an annual snapshot of the distribution and abundance of birds.

## WBC EXECUTIVE BOARD 2018



**President** 303-519-0989  
Cheryl Jacobson [jcheryljoy@aol.com](mailto:jcheryljoy@aol.com)

**Vice-President (Programs)** 757-293-8297  
Judy Jones [jjones184@cox.net](mailto:jjones184@cox.net)

**Vice-President (The Flyer)** 252-259-2809  
Melinda Cousins [lbackyardbirder@gmail.com](mailto:lbackyardbirder@gmail.com)

**Treasurer** 757-221-6683  
Ann Carpenter [carpent66@cox.net](mailto:carpent66@cox.net)

**Secretary** 757-229-1775  
Cathy Millar [millar.cathy@gmail.com](mailto:millar.cathy@gmail.com)

**Member-at-Large** 757-221-6683  
Gary Carpenter [carpent66@cox.net](mailto:carpent66@cox.net)

**Member-at-Large** 757-813-1322  
Shirley Devan [sedevan52@cox.net](mailto:sedevan52@cox.net)

**Past President** 757-229-1124  
Bill Williams [billwilliams154@gmail.com](mailto:billwilliams154@gmail.com)

### Committee Chairpersons

**Membership** 757-707-3345  
Jeanette Navia [jnavia@gmail.com](mailto:jnavia@gmail.com)

**Field Trips** 757-645-8716  
Geoff Giles [tylerandal2@aol.com](mailto:tylerandal2@aol.com)  
Nancy Pledger [nancy\\_greer@msn.com](mailto:nancy_greer@msn.com)  
804-337-2323

**Bird Counts/Bird Walks** 757-565-0536  
Jim Corliss [jcorliss240@cox.net](mailto:jcorliss240@cox.net)

**Records** 757-229-1124  
Bill Williams [billwilliams154@gmail.com](mailto:billwilliams154@gmail.com)

**Library Liaison** 757-565-6148  
Lee Schuster [dljschuster@cox.net](mailto:dljschuster@cox.net)

**Refreshments** 347-742-3273  
Barbara Neiss [b.neis15@gmail.com](mailto:b.neis15@gmail.com)

**Webmistress** 757-707-3345  
Jeanette Navia [jnavia@gmail.com](mailto:jnavia@gmail.com)

**Historian** 757-229-2830  
Tom McCary [tom.b.mccary@gmail.com](mailto:tom.b.mccary@gmail.com)

**Liaison to CVWO** 540-454-3014  
Nancy Barnhart [barnhartnt@gmail.com](mailto:barnhartnt@gmail.com)

spending their winters and resting during migration. Everyone can help to assist in smart bird conservation. Here are a few things you can do right now and every day to help protect birds.

### Around the Home

- Put up a bird house (with proper ventilation) in your yard. More than two dozen different bird species including the Purple Martin, House Wren, and Eastern Bluebird will nest in bird houses. As more and more habitats disappear every year, birds have fewer places to nest each spring.
- Put a bird bath in your yard to provide a year-round clean drinking and bathing water source for birds. Use a heater in winter where appropriate.
- Erect bird feeders and nectar feeders in proper distances from windows or places where birds can't be ambushed by predators. Use quality seed and other foods.
- Limit the use of lawn chemicals and pesticides in your garden, which are harmful not only to birds, but also to a variety of wildlife and household pets.
- If you have a problem with birds striking your windows, use paint or opaque/translucent tape to create a pattern on the outside of the window glass (with vertical stripes spaced 4 inches or less and horizontal stripes 2 inches or less) or put lightweight netting or screen several inches in front of the window.
- Plant native fruit and berry-bearing bushes and trees on your property. Also, maintain ground vegetation and shrubs adjacent to water.
- At night, turn off the lights or close the blinds of your high-rise offices or apartment buildings, and spread the word to your co-workers. Thousands of migratory songbirds, which are attracted by lights, are killed each year by colliding with lighted buildings at night.

### Out and About

- When hiking, biking, going to the beach, or camping, stay on the trails and respect restricted sections of sensitive natural areas, especially during nesting season. Also, keep dogs on leashes.
- Purchase shade-grown "bird-friendly" coffee. Shade-grown coffee plantations support tremendously higher numbers of bird species than full sun (deforested) coffee plantations. Forested, shade-grown coffee plantations also benefit other wildlife and the people who live there.
- Learn to identify the common birds of your neighborhood and teach local young people the value of birds and other wildlife.
- Cooperate with your local nature preserve or park to improve wildlife habitat.
- Get involved in local and backyard bird monitoring projects and clubs. <https://www.nature.org/newsfeatures/specialfeatures/animals/birds/migratorybirds/what-you-can-do/everyday-ways-you-can-help-birds.xml>

When I awoke on January 1, 2018, I heard an American Crow calling in a tree near my window, and I decided to make crows my species of the

(Continued Page 3)

year that I would observe and study. I am reading *Crow Planet* by Lyanda Lynn Haupt. I look forward to sharing with you what I learn and hearing from you what you have selected as your species of the year.

I want to welcome our new members, Bill and Juli Ayers, Dr. Duncan Hughes, Keith Kennedy, Rose Ryan, and Frank and Lark Smith. Also, I am sorry to let you know of the sad passing of a long-term member of our club, Rick Bennett.

I look forward to seeing you at the February meeting as we continue to “Celebrate the Year of the Bird”.

## **TAKE NOTE! CHANGES IN MONTHLY BIRD WALKS**

*By Jim Corliss*

For many years we have been conducting two monthly bird walks in New Quarter Park. One walk has been held on the second Saturday of each month at 8:00 am. The other walk has been on the fourth Saturday of each month at 7:00 am. Based on suggestions from WBC members, starting in February, the bird walk schedule will change to include some walks at other local birding spots. In addition, each walk will start at 8:00 am regardless of its location. Please note that our regular field trips, which are on the third Saturday of each month, are not affected by this change.

Our planned schedule of Saturday bird walks for 2018 is posted at the end of *The Flyer*. For each month, the second-Saturday walk will be held at varying locations, and the fourth-Saturday walk will take place at New Quarter Park. The goal is to provide members with different experiences and the opportunity to explore some of the many birding spots that we are so fortunate to have right here in and around the Williamsburg area. Walks will still be roughly two hours long and open to the public at no cost.

We are looking forward to the first “new” walk on February 10th at the College Creek beach area along the Colonial Parkway. For this walk, please plan to arrive at the College Creek parking lot on the parkway at 8:00 am. The parking lot can be reached by either: a) entering the Colonial Parkway from Route 199 near South Henry Street and traveling towards Jamestown for about 1.75 miles; or b) entering the Colonial Parkway near Jamestown Settlement and traveling towards Yorktown for about 5.25 miles.

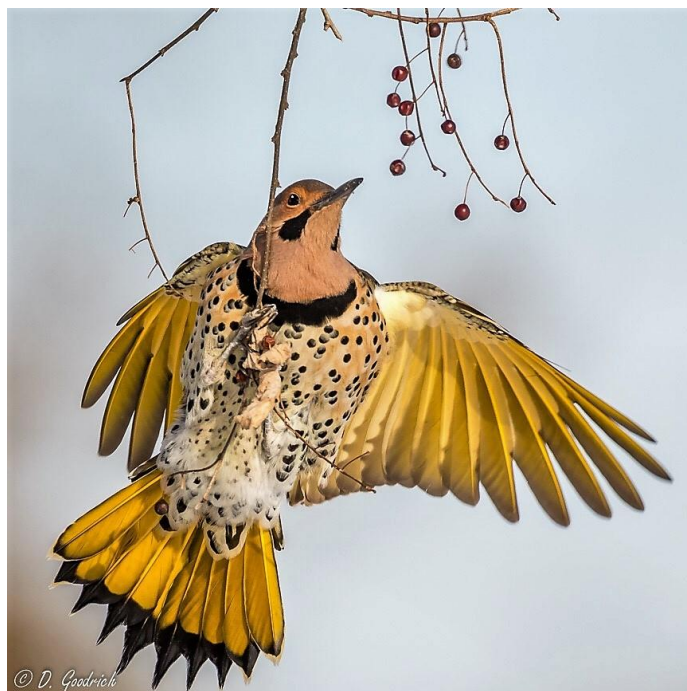
We hope that everyone enjoys the new bird walk schedule, and please continue making suggestions to help us all find the best birding here in Williamsburg.

## **REPORTED SIGHTINGS FOR JANUARY 2017**

(Photo credit is attributed to authors of the sightings, unless otherwise noted.)



**January 5th:** David Laughlin is enjoying a Pine Warbler





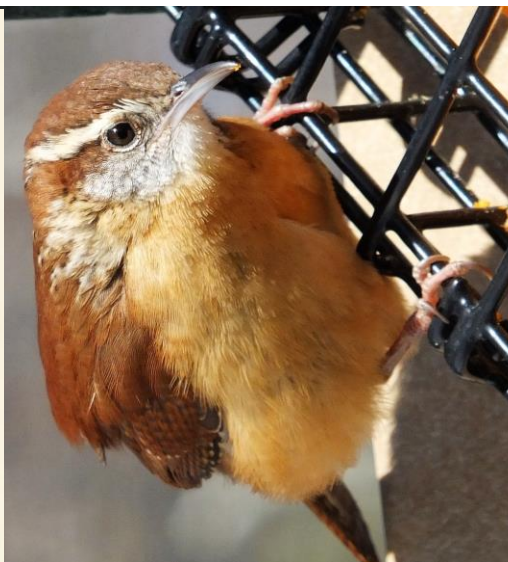
at his feeder station (pictured above left).

**January 7<sup>th</sup>:** Cathy Flanagan observes some favorites at her feeders, along with another pair of watchful eyes (pictured below: Eastern Bluebird, Carolina Wren, and Cooper's Hawk).

**January 9<sup>th</sup>:**

At Moore House in Yorktown, VA, Donnie Goodrich photographs American Robins eating berries in a cedar tree when a Northern Flicker (pictured above right) joined the fun.

Walking along the Parkway near Jamestown Island, Mac Mestayer observes an Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Towhee, and a Great Blue Heron.



**January 10<sup>th</sup>:** Kathi Mestayer reports a pair of Brown Thrashers, a Northern Mockingbird, "Herman" the Hermit Thrush, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet and tons of the usual suspects.

**January 11<sup>th</sup>:**

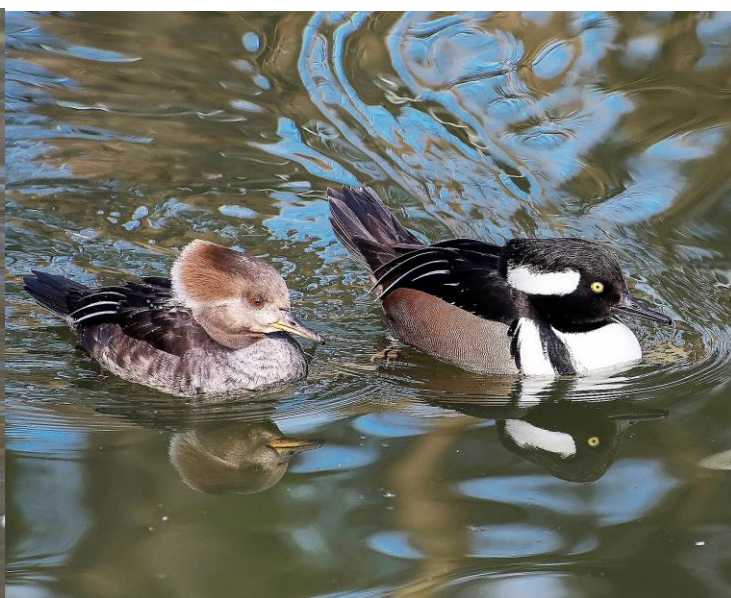
Jan Lockwood reports a Rusty Blackbird (pictured left) in her yard for a spell. It was a solitary bird and particularly enjoyed the heated birdbath, treating it as its personal hot tub to relax after snacking on peanut splits.



While birding at Lake Biggins in Hampton, VA, Craig Hill observed Hooded Mergansers. During the late morning while most of the lake was frozen over, the mergansers were swimming unusually close to the birders in an unfrozen area. They would dive under the ice and come up with the



small catfish (male pictured below left). There were five pairs (pair pictured below right) and once one got a catfish, other males would chase him around while he “tenderized” it before swallowing. A ball to watch!



In the late afternoon, Cheryl Jacobson spies a Peregrine Falcon on the Jamestown Island Causeway (pictured below left).



**January 13<sup>th</sup>:** Jim Corliss reports a Snow Goose (pictured below) at Mainland Farm foraging with a flock of 150 Canada Geese. The same day, Kathi Mestayer reports two Snow Geese and two Savannah Sparrows.



**January 15<sup>th</sup>:** Craig Hill observes the Snowy Owl (pictured left) still hanging out in West Point, VA. Craig’s caption, “Shake it off!”



**January 16<sup>th</sup>:** Nancy Barnhart observes five Short-eared Owls (one pictured right) in Louisa County. She reports that the owls were chasing Northern Harriers out of their nighttime feeding domain. Nancy also sees an American Kestrel (pictured below left), who is a regular winter resident reliably found on the wires near the Warhill HS Stadium.







**January 17<sup>th</sup>:** Kathi Mestayer reports a White-throated Sparrow taking a bath in the birdbath in the morning just as the snow began to fall.

**January 20<sup>th</sup>:** Cheryl Jacobson shares that during the WBC sponsored boat trip on the Bay Princess, birders chummed to bring in gulls and other birds by having the boat captain obtain fish guts and other yummys from the cleaning station to throw overboard. She advises never use popcorn or bread as this is harmful to birds. See more at <http://www.onegreenplanet.org/animalsandnature/feeding-white-bread-to-wild-birds-is-killing-them/>. Sightings included a Northern Gannet and Northern Harrier (pictured below by Judy Jones).



**January 26<sup>th</sup>:** Bruce and Cecile Glendening send in this picture of a Heermann's Gull taken at Del Mar, CA (pictured right).

**January 28<sup>th</sup>:** Kathi Mestayer identifies an Orange-crowned Warbler, who has been visiting her feeder since the day prior.

## **BIRDING ADVENTURES IN PORTUGAL FROM SEPTEMBER 2017**

*By Jeanne & Mike Millin*



As an addition to our eight day Basque tour of France, Spain and Portugal this fall, we decided to take five days in Lisbon. While there is plenty to do in Lisbon and its surrounding areas, we decided that at least one day should be spent outside the city birding. We booked a one day estuary trip with "Birds & Nature Tours Portugal". The Targus Estuary was about 30 minutes from our airport.



Bernado picked us up at our hotel in a comfortable air-conditioned van and spent the day driving with us to a number of different locations. He brought a scope, guidebooks and a list of potential birds found in the estuary, cork farm, and rice paddy, which was being harvested and overrun by gulls and Glossy Ibis looking for shrimp and crawfish. We brought binoculars and a camera, and by the end of the day, we had seen 66 different species, more than half new to us.



Highlights were the flocks of more than 3,000 Flamingoes, which looked like a pink line on the horizon, Black-Winged Kite, Gray Heron, which looked remarkably like a Great Blue, Squacco Heron, Marsh and Hen Harriers, an Eurasian Wryneck, and a Common Waxbill, which is an African native who has taken Portugal as one of its adopted homes. We hope to visit again and tour other parts of Portugal with this group.

### **BIRD ANTICS**

Vincent Lager joined the WBC last year. He's 12 years old and has attended a few walks and one lecture since joining. Vincent enjoys taking care of the birds in his backyard and reported a lot of bird visitors during the cold weather. He submitted this short video of a House Finch ([link below](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1P98vHzsBsg77dhAZxliEAVvNo7CC4rh9)).

Perhaps Mr. House Finch is thanking Vincent for the bird seed...or letting him know it's time for a refill!

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1P98vHzsBsg77dhAZxliEAVvNo7CC4rh9>

### **CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT ADDITIONS**

*By Sharon Plocher*

Here in Ford's Colony, birders had some fun with the Christmas Bird Count observing a total of 48 species throughout the community. Our crew (pictured below) included Renee Dallman, Barbara Neis, Sharon Plocher, Susan Powell, and Jennifer Trevino.





## NEW YEAR'S DAY BIRD WALK

*By Shirley Devan*

Frigid temperatures affected the birds but NOT the birders on New Year's Day at the 13th Annual Greensprings Boardwalk Bird Show! Only six bird species were recorded from the bridge over the frozen swamp, but at least 36 birders arrived to celebrate the new year and spend time with kindred spirits in the fresh, dare I say bracing air! Other species were seen by birders as they trekked from the parking lot to the bridge, including Dark-eyed Juncos, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, and Carolina Wren. From the Boardwalk, everyone enjoyed the two actively hunting Red-shouldered Hawks as they swooped over the swamp and landed near and far. Song Sparrows, Eastern Phoebe, Yellow-rumped Warbler and both vultures appeared near the bridge. Because the swamp was frozen, we saw no geese, ducks, or wading birds. Thanks to all who spent New Year's Day with the birds and birders.



## NEW QUARTER PARK (NQP) BIRD WALK JANUARY 13<sup>TH</sup>

*By Jim Corliss*



Eleven participants got a chilly surprise when the temperatures plummeted during the walk. Birders started out at a comfortable and calm 56 degrees, but at the end of the walk, the temperature had dropped to 44 degrees with the wind whipping through the trees. At the fire pit, we were ready for some coffee and hot chocolate. However, with a little imagination and a dose of denial, we regained our resolve by warming our hands over the cold remains of an



earlier bonfire and finished the trek back to the parking lot. The morning was filled with immature and adult Bald Eagles making themselves known at regular intervals, a beautiful Golden-crowned Kinglet foraging for five minutes just a few feet in front of us, and an unusual sighting of two Canvasbacks on Queens Creek near the floating dock. Participants from Left to Right (pictured above left): Portia Belden, Wayne Moyer, Lark Smith, Frank Smith, Bob Thomas, Rose Ryan, David Lunt, Julia Thomas, Melissa Schutte, Sue Mutell, and Jim Corliss.

### **A BIRD IN THE HAND IS WORTH...**

*By Patty Maloney*

While wildlife mapping on the Greensprings Trail, a group of WBC members and Master Naturalists spotted a Golden-crowned Kinglet in distress. The bird's wing was entangled in spider webs and vines about 10 feet off the ground. We tried using sticks and poles to bring the vine down to our reach. Finally, one of us was able to balance on the tree to reach and rescue the bird. With the beautiful bird in our hands, we cleaned the spider webs and vines from his wing. And then, the Golden-crowned Kinglet flew. It's worth...priceless! The rescuers included Scott Hemler, Patty Maloney, and Keith Navia. Others who witnessed the encounter were Sherry Brubaker, Robin Culler, Hart Haynes, Judy Kinshaw-Ellis, Les Lawrence, Patty Maloney, and Jeanette Navia. Thanks to Patty Maloney and Jeanette Navia, WBC Members, for the pictures of the rescue below.



## NEW QUARTER PARK (NQP) BIRD WALK JANUARY 27TH

By Jim Corliss



We had a great turn-out for our last 7:00 am bird walk in the park. See Page 3 for changes to future walks, which are planned to commence at 8:00 am. The weather for our walk was accommodating, which is saying a lot considering how unpredictable the temperature has been lately. Great Blue Herons continued to be oddly absent along Queens Creek, as they were on the January 13th walk. Bald Eagles made a strong showing as did American Robins and Common Grackles, which were continually flying overhead in

both small and large flocks. The next walk in New Quarter Park will be on February 24<sup>th</sup>, and we hope to see you there. Participants (pictured above) from left to right: John McGee, Sally McGee, Karen Grass, Joyce Lowry, Cheryl Jacobson, Jim Corliss, Jan Lockwood, Sue Mutell, Susan Wolfe, David Lunt, Lark Smith, Frank Smith, Joe Gerdes.

Check out the walk's eBird checklist here: <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S42300158>.

### RAPTOR RAP

by Mac Mestayer

I don't care what you think,  
standing by your kitchen sink,  
watching the feeder while you drink  
your coffee.

You stand there and ogle them,  
that buzzy nuthatch and cute little wren,  
you make them suet with margarine,  
oh gee.

While I watch from the canopy  
mobbed by crows and a panoply  
of like-minded tits and chickadees,  
oh hell.

When I bring death from on high  
to little birds, without an alibi  
I could claim "web of life", but why?  
oh well.

I don't care what you think.



## STAY WITH OUR FLOCK - PAY YOUR 2018 DUES!

**It's 2018 and our Club's 41st year!** We have 41 years of community support to celebrate and continue.



Thank you for your generosity in the past, and we hope you will give any extra donations as you are able. Each of these is an investment in the future and reflects our Club's optimism and commitment to education and research.

Please spread the joy of WBC membership. If you are an "Individual" member, consider becoming a "Family" member or "Patron." Encourage a birding friend to join the Club. We look forward to your participation in our 2018 events and your continued financial support.

If you have any questions about your membership, please email Jeanette Navia, Membership Chair, at [jnavia@gmail.com](mailto:jnavia@gmail.com).

## WITH SYMPATHY "To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die." -Thomas Campbell

WBC Member, Rick Bennett, died unexpectedly January 4, 2018. Rick and his wife, Marian joined the Bird Club in 2007 and were frequent participants in bird walks at New Quarter Park near their home. Rick was a special education teacher in York County Schools and volunteered in many public service and arts organizations in the local area.

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/dailypress/obituary.aspx?page=lifestory&pid=187781449>

## WELCOME NEW WBC MEMBERS – WE LOOK FORWARD TO BIRDING WITH YOU!

Bill and Juli Ayers, Dr. Duncan Hughes, Keith Kennedy, Rose Ryan, and Frank and Lark Smith

## SUPPORT OUR LOCALLY OWNED BIRD STORES & FELLOW WBC MEMBERS!

Backyard Birder



**Backyard Birder Seed & Supply** located in Williamsburg at the Quarterpath Crossing Shopping Center near the Kingsmill Harris Teeter gives each WBC member a 10% discount on purchases. Please inform them you are a WBC member during checkout.

<https://www.backyardbirder.org>



**Wild Birds Unlimited** located in Williamsburg at Settler's Market in New Town gives a 5% rebate to the WBC on the pre-tax amount spent in store by WBC members. Please inform them you are a WBC member during checkout. <https://williamsburg.wbu.com/>

## CALENDAR

February 10	Williamsburg Bird Club (WBC) sponsors a Bird Walk at College Creek Beach, 8 am. More details on page 3.
February 16-19	Save The Date for the Great Backyard Bird Count. More Here: <a href="http://gbbc.birdcount.org/about/">http://gbbc.birdcount.org/about/</a>
February 17	WBC Field Trip. More details to follow via separate correspondence.
February 21	WBC Monthly Meeting, 7pm, Room 101 in Andrews Hall, W&M Campus. See page 1 for details.
February 24	WBC sponsors a Bird Walk at New Quarter Park, 8 am.
March 10	WBC sponsors a Bird Walk at Ware Creek WMA, 8am.
<b>Dues, Dues, Dues!</b>	Please pay your membership dues. Thank you!

**2018 WBC BIRD WALKS**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Leader</b>
January 13, 2018	8:00 AM	New Quarter Park	Jim Corliss
January 27, 2018	7:00 AM	New Quarter Park	Jim Corliss
February 10, 2018	8:00 AM	College Creek Beach	To be Determined
February 24, 2018	8:00 AM	New Quarter Park	Jim Corliss
March 10, 2018	8:00 AM	Ware Creek WMA	Nancy Barnhart
March 24, 2018	8:00 AM	New Quarter Park	Ruth Gordon
April 14, 2018	8:00 AM	Chickahominy Park	To be Determined
April 28, 2018	8:00 AM	New Quarter Park	Jim Corliss
May 12, 2018	8:00 AM	Bassett Trace	Nancy Barnhart
May 26, 2018	8:00 AM	New Quarter Park	Ruth Gordon
June 9, 2018	8:00 AM	Powhatan Creek Trail	Nancy Barnhart
June 23, 2018	8:00 AM	New Quarter Park	Jim Corliss
July 14, 2018	8:00 AM	Warhill Sports Complex	Shirley Devan
July 28, 2018	8:00 AM	New Quarter Park	Jan Lockwood
August 11, 2018	8:00 AM	Chickahominy WMA	To be Determined
August 25, 2018	8:00 AM	New Quarter Park	Jim Corliss
September 8, 2018	8:00 AM	Ware Creek WMA	To be Determined
September 22, 2018	8:00 AM	New Quarter Park	To be Determined
October 13, 2018	8:00 AM	Bassett Trace	Jason Strickland
October 27, 2018	8:00 AM	New Quarter Park	Jim Corliss
November 10, 2018	8:00 AM	Powhatan Creek Trail	To be Determined
November 24, 2018	8:00 AM	New Quarter Park	To be Determined
December 8, 2018	8:00 AM	Chickahominy Park	To be Determined
December 22, 2018	8:00 AM	New Quarter Park	Jim Corliss