



# The Flyer

## Newsletter of the Williamsburg Bird Club

Vol. 42 No. 7

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

October 2018

### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Cheryl Jacobson



Welcome to Autumn! The Year of the Bird is quickly waning. It has been a year with multiple impacts on our beloved birds, both by politics and nature (influenced by man).

For example, in 2015 the Weather Channel reported that research published in Nature Climate Change by Florida State geography professor Jim Elsner and Namyoun Kang, deputy director of the National Typhoon Center in South Korea found that warmer ocean temperatures, caused by climate change, could be fueling stronger hurricanes.

Of course, Hurricane Florence has been on the minds of all of us. According to Audubon, the 2017 Atlantic Hurricane season was devastating for people and birds. From Hurricanes Harvey and Irma that wreaked havoc on communities to Tropical Storm Cindy that wiped out shorebirds at the height of nesting season, few places across the Gulf of Mexico were untouched by these historic storms. Hurricane Florence continued to demonstrate the need to increase coastal resiliency to protect birds and communities in a changing climate. Coastal resiliency projects that restore wildlife habitat such as wetlands, beaches, and barrier islands also protect birds, nesting habitat, and coastal communities from extreme weather events. Policies that protect and restore our coasts are needed now, more than ever.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act/Eight States Join Audubon in a legal action against the Current Administration:

At the March 21, 2018 meeting, Dr. Dan Cristol's presentation stimulated an overwhelming need for the WBC members who were present to write letters to address their concerns about the attack on the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) by HR 4239. I refer you to the March issue of our newsletter that is archived on our website for details. As an update, an article in the Washington Post on September 5, 2018, by Darryl Fears, a reporter focusing on the Chesapeake Bay and issues affecting wildlife, indicated that eight state attorneys general have filed a legal challenge to the Trump administration's bid

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### PROGRAMS

**W&M Integrated Science Center, Room 1127**

By Judy Jones

**Developing an 'Acoustic Lighthouse' to Reduce Birds' Risk of Collision in Flight by Dr. John Swaddle**  
**October 17th @ 7pm**

Dr. John Swaddle of William and Mary will be our speaker, talking about his grant to develop technology to reduce the toll wind turbines take on birds. Entitled "Developing an 'Acoustic Lighthouse' to Reduce Birds' Risk of Collision in Flight," this will be a fascinating evening.

### Future Williamsburg Bird Club (WBC) Programs

November 14th, we will join forces with the Historic Rivers Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists to hear research biologist Fletcher Smith. His talk, "Birding and Research Above the Arctic Circle," will share information about the birds and animals encountered during each summer over the three years he lived in a field camp on the tundra on Bathurst Island in the Arctic Circle.

January 16th, Bob Schamerhorn returns to share his wonderful photographs in a talk entitled 'Atlantic Coastal Birds,' discussing our favorite shorebirds, and examining their habitats, migration patterns, and the challenges each species faces.

February 20<sup>th</sup>, Sergio Harding from DGIF will discuss bird conservation programs in DGIF.

## WBC EXECUTIVE BOARD 2018



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to dramatically weaken the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, a century-old law established to protect birds.

The lawsuit, led by New York Attorney General Barbara Underwood, and supported by Maryland, New Jersey, Illinois, Massachusetts, Oregon, California and New Mexico, is an effort to stop the Interior Department from fully implementing a directive to its law enforcement division to forgive mass bird kills, even when the animals are threatened or endangered.

In accordance with a new interpretation of the act issued in April, the department informed its wildlife police that the slaughter “of birds resulting from an activity is not prohibited...when the underlying purpose of that activity is not to take birds.” For example, the guidance said, a person who destroys a structure such as a barn knowing that it is full of baby owls in nests is not liable for killing them. “All that is relevant is that the landowner undertook an action that did not have the killing of barn owls as its purpose,” the opinion said.

An even broader interpretation by the administration held that the act would no longer apply even in a catastrophe such as the Deepwater Horizon oil spill that injured and killed up to a million birds. Interior would pursue penalties under the Natural Resources Damage Assessment program, which is not specific to birds, and ignore penalties that could be levied under the act. The department had pursued claims under the act in the past, the directive said, but “that avenue is no longer available.”

In a statement related to the lawsuit, filed in the Southern District Court of New York, Underwood called the administration reinterpretation “yet another giveaway to special interests at the expense of our states.” Underwood said the current administration “gutted the Migratory Bird Treaty Act — eliminating long-standing prohibitions on injuring or killing over 300 species of migratory birds that provide critical ecological, scientific, and economic value to New York.” Birdwatchers and other observers poured \$4.2 billion into the state's economy in 2011.

The attorneys general hail from four states governed by Republicans and four by Democrats. Their lawsuit will be considered with another filed by the National Audubon Society in May.

Sarah Greenberger, a senior vice president for conservation policy at Audubon, called the state challenge a “welcome wind beneath our wings in the fight to keep this vital bird protection law intact.”

## Helping Birds in the Year of the Bird:

I have been providing suggestions on ways to help birds during this “Year of the Bird.” My suggestion for this month is to consider a contribution to Community Cloud Forest Conservation (CCFC). To protect bird populations, we must think beyond our country. Did you know that because migratory birds don’t recognize international boundaries in one year, an individual warbler may spend 80 days in the boreal forests of Canada, 30 days in the

(Continued Page 3)

United States at resting and refueling sites during migration, and over 200 days in Central America? CCFC understands that for birds to survive, the cloud forest must survive, and to do so, something must be done to improve existing agricultural practices. In the Q'eqchi' Maya language it is said "the forest draws the clouds" and "the forest catches the clouds" (li kiche' naxkelo/naxchap li choq)." This is a truly beautiful picture of the cloud forest!

Many of us are very familiar with the Golden-winged Warbler (picture right), because it can be found in Virginia and West Virginia, and we are aware that it is in decline. Over the last 40 years, the global population of Golden-winged Warblers has declined by an average of nearly 3% per year. Currently the Golden-winged is considered a Near Threatened species, according to the IUCN Red List. However, if trends continue this warbler could become endangered or even be driven to extinction. Discussions of the Golden-winged Warbler conservation have even handedly pointed to environmental degradation in both breeding and non-breeding ranges. Thanks to recent research tracking the migration routes of Golden-wing Warblers, we know now that the population that is a non-breeding resident in the central highlands of Guatemala.



In our September meeting, Dave Youker, a WBC member and VSO member who recently traveled to Guatemala presented about the birds of Guatemala and The Cloud Forest Conservation Project (CCFC). The focus of CCFC is twofold, teaching young women, Women in Agroecology Leadership for Conservation (WALC) and teaching kids (Kids & Birds). Please see the excellent minutes by Cathy Millar in this newsletter about the importance of the project. Also, please see Dave's photos of the Motmot and Ocellated Turkey (page 4) at the end of my Corner.

The dropout rate for girls moving from 6th to 7th grade in the villages of CCFC's work area is higher than 75%. WALC participants from this same demographic have a less than 5% dropout rate. This is the amazing impact that the WALC leadership training workshop and a WALC scholarship can make. Reducing a 75% dropout rate to a dropout rate of less than 5%! That's a huge difference that I, for one, want to support.

I share a quote by Rachael Carson, "We stand now where two roads diverge. But unlike the roads in Robert Frost's familiar poem, they are not equally fair. The road we have long been traveling is deceptively easy, a smooth superhighway on which we progress with great speed, but at its end lies disaster. The other fork of the road – the one less traveled by – offers our last, our only chance to reach a destination that assures the preservation of the earth."

WALC is a holistic leadership training program for Maya young women from remote mountain villages at the edge of the cloud forest corridor. Issues these young women face include: extreme poverty, chronic malnutrition, high rates of maternal and infant mortality, deforestation and ecosystem degradation. Although the program has a strong focus on agroecology, WALC students also learn about nutrition, cooking, health and hygiene, family planning, career and educational options, self-esteem and confidence building, and a large array of other life-skills. The goal is to equip each participant for a productive, healthy and happy life as well as to enable her to be an agent of positive change in her family, community, and village.

#### Kids & Birds:

The curriculum includes:

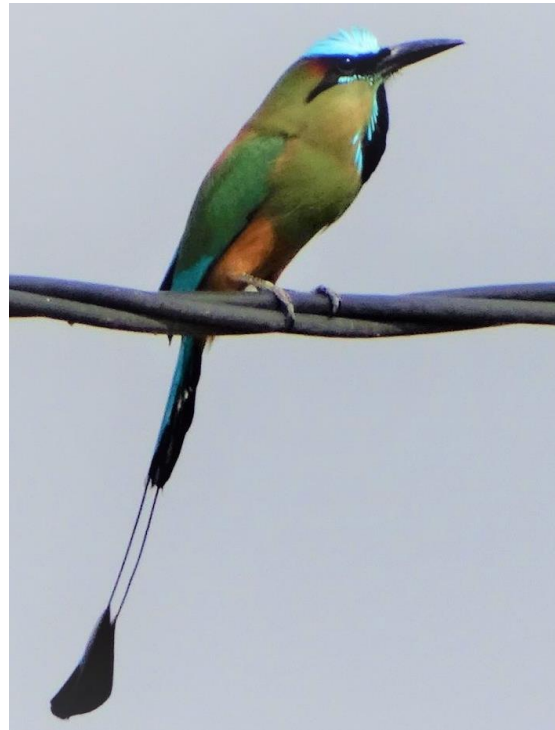
- Cornell Lab's BirdSleuth international curriculum, ten lessons
- Birding in the cloud forest
- Bio-acoustic recordings of nature sounds in the cloud forest
- Stream ecology
- Agroecology
- Artful Eyes – drawing and coloring birds
- Reforestation
- Planting of agroforestry parcels

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Students return home with starter plants & seeds of traditional crops for their family's agroforestry parcel, a coloring book of locally occurring warblers, and with a conservation ethic to protect the cloud forest. Dave told about a tradition that has developed from the class. At age 12, most children receive a slingshot for their birthday, which of course, results in many birds being killed. At the end of the Kids & Birds class, the kids are choosing to burn their slingshots to demonstrate their newly learned love of birds. You can learn more at: <http://cloudforestconservation.org/our-work/walc/>.

If you want to donate, you can either donate online at <https://donorbox.org/walc> or mail a check to:  
Community Cloud Forest Conservation  
6000 Bonnie Brae Drive  
Edina, MN. 55439

I wish you a great fall in this "Year of the Bird!"



## **FIELD TRIP TO THE EASTERN SHORE– OCTOBER 13TH**

*By Geoff Giles*

Fall and spring are magical times on the Eastern Shore for birders. Huge numbers of songbirds migrate southward from their northern nesting territories to their wintering grounds far to our south. With the songbirds travel prodigious numbers of raptors following their prey. As the Atlantic flyway is a preferred migratory route and passes along the Atlantic coastline, our Eastern Shore of Virginia is flooded with beautiful birds we don't usually get to see as easily. Our trip will be in prime time for this spectacle, and we will visit some key locations!

We will visit the Kiptopeke hawkwatch to sample the ongoing raptor counting. We will go on to the Eastern Shore Wildlife Reserve to see songbirds foraging and raptors descending to pursue them. Then it's on to other hotspots, including Magotha Road, Oyster, Cheriton landfill and Willis Wharf. We will have the expert eyes and ears of talented young birder, Andrew Rapp, to guide us and highlight what we are seeing and hearing along the way! At the hawkwatch platform, we will have Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory President Brian Taber give us a special update on the raptors we are seeing and any rarities we can expect. In short, we will be at a super birding place at the prime time!

On Saturday morning, October 13th, we will depart at 07:30 AM by caravan from the Williamsburg Crossing Shopping Center (on Jamestown Road just south of the intersection with Rte. 199). We can carpool from there. There will be comfort breaks along the way and a stop for lunch if desired. This will be a birder friendly trip to some great and accessible habitat, and we hope you'll join us!

There is no limit to the number of members who can attend this field trip, so you do not have to respond that you want to go (we aren't keeping a list), just meet us at Colony Square at 07:30 on October 13th.

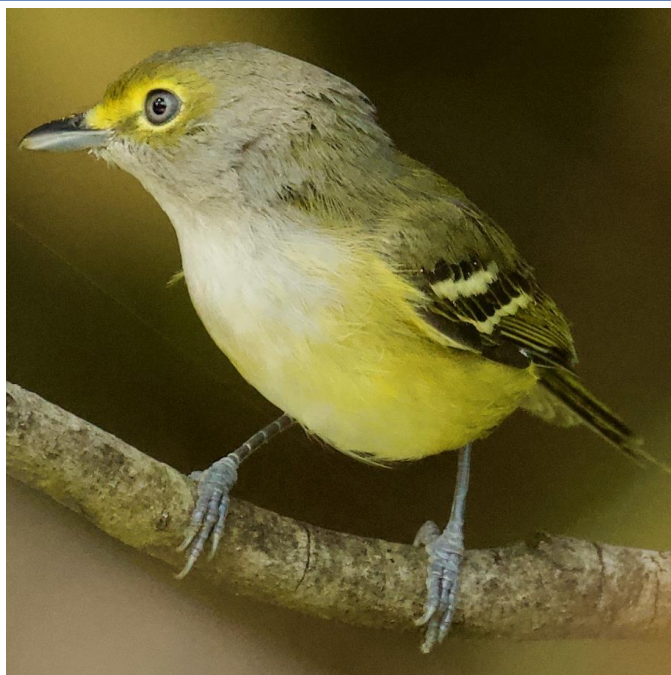
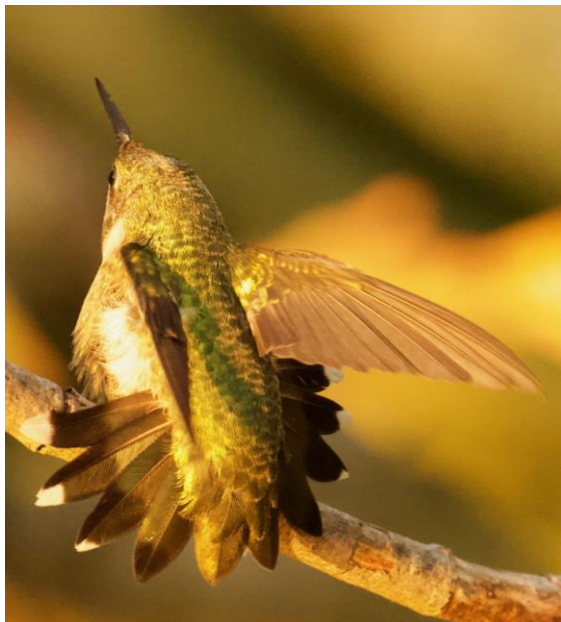


## REPORTED SIGHTINGS AND ACTIVITY FROM SEPTEMBER 2018

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

### September 21

Inge Curtis reports five hummingbirds (one below left) are still visiting her. Inge also submits photos of Roseate Spoonbills (below) and a White-eyed Vireo (far below right).



### September 17

Cheryl Jacobson reports a Great Blue Heron (left) at the Marina in Kingsmill was reported to the WBC via our website following Hurricane Florence. When the Wildlife Center of Virginia was contacted, they provided a name of a local man who only rehabilitates Great Blue Herons. He lives locally and came to the Heron's location to assist in capturing the bird in order to transport and care for it.

### September 23

Cheryl Jacobson sends this picture of a Green Heron (page 6) following Hurricane Florence walking on a rope that tied a boat to the dock at Kingsmill Marina.



## **BIRDING IN GUATEMALA AND THE WORK OF COMMUNITY CLOUD FOREST CONSERVATION**

*By Cathy Millar*

Our September program was delivered by Dave Youker. Among his many endeavors, he has been a member of Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalist since 2008 and is currently VP of Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory and a regional coordinator for the Breeding Bird Atlas. His presentation was about the VSO-sponsored birding trip to Guatemala and the Community Cloud Forest Conservation. Dave was one of a group of seven in this once a year trip organized by the VSO with hosts, Rob and Tara Cahill, who with their son serve as guides. There are 730 species in Guatemala and during his 10 days exploring a great variety of habitats including pine/oak forests, thorn forests, highlands, cloud, subtropical and tropical rain forests and coastlines, he saw nearly half of them. He showed photos of some of the spectacular birds representing each habitat. Since his visit was in March during spring migration when there are migrant, wintering and resident birds, there were three times as many birds per acre yielding a fantastic birding experience. One of Dave's interesting anecdotes was seeing the near-threatened Orange-breasted Falcon and speaking to researchers in Tikal. There are only six mated pairs in the country, and they nest on top of the Mayan Temple IV (tallest pre-Columbian structure in the Americas). A couple of years ago, the tourism department flew a drone up to take aerial photos for a marketing video, and the female nesting falcon was killed while taking the drone down and the chicks subsequently died. However, the male brought another female back from Belize and continues to nest there.

Dave stressed that the only way we can significantly help birds is by protecting their migrating stops and wintering grounds as well as breeding places. The Cahills, who are from Minnesota, are contributing so much in Guatemala since their arrival in 2001. John and Rob are both eBird reviewers, have started many bird clubs, and trained many people to be bird guides. They run the VSO tours from Community Cloud Forest Conservation which is housed in two facilities with extremely low carbon footprints in the central highlands. They grow and cook all their own food and compost everything. The Cahills are combatting the culture of slash and burn to clear forests for pasture for cows or growing corn leading to soil erosion and other ripple effects. To do so, they have entered into conservation agreements with local farmers teaching them the benefits of maintaining biodiversity of the landscape and healthy soil with crop diversification. Some of the proceeds from the VSO trips go into reforesting a half acre with native plants. They teach the farmers about traditional heirloom plants and trees and give them seeds or saplings to plant as a step toward improving the Guatemalan diet, which is 90% corn-based and leads to chronic malnutrition. Since they are discouraging corn and cow farming, they are giving the farmers market access for the other crops to generate income. These agreements with farmers come with a six-year maintenance program of funding and making sure they know how to make it work. Most of the staff are volunteers.

Two programs they also offer are Kids & Birds and WALC (Women for Agroecology Leadership for Conservation). Kids & Birds is a four-day program targeting first to ninth graders to learn about the natural world of the cloud forest using Cornell Lab's Bird Sleuth curriculum and by creating their own bird identification guide via a coloring book, birding with donated binoculars and field guides in the cloud forest, participating in re-introducing heirloom vegetables and reforestation as well as bio-acoustic recording the sounds of nature in the forest. In 2018, there have been over 1,200 attendees. Young Guatemalans are traditionally given slingshots which are often used for killing birds. At the end of this program, the kids throw their slingshots in a pile and burn them declaring they'd now rather study birds.



WALC is a 25-day program targeting 12-14-year-old girls to learn about nutrition and cooking, health and hygiene, family planning, career and educational options, as well as self-esteem and confidence building. These young women come from about 110 remote mountain villages where they face extreme poverty, malnutrition, high rates of maternal/infant mortality as well as the likelihood of not attending school beyond 6th grade. Dave noted that many aid programs worldwide aim at influencing cultures by starting with the women. They have 153 girls attending the program starting this October. The students grow their own food, cook it, wash their clothes and learn other life skills. Each girl forms a business plan and establishes an agro-forestry production parcel on her family's land. All the staff members are graduates of the program. The dropout rate for girls moving from 6th to 7th grade is normally 75% but for WALC graduates it is only 5%. Guatemalan public schools are free and mandatory for the first six years but require tuition of \$140 per year for further education, so many impoverished villages send only their boys. The Center provides scholarships for girls to continue school with two provisions: that they stay in the WALC program and get a letter from the school director with a report card. Many of the girls are starting families later now. Both programs are free to the participants and have been welcomed by the Guatemalan people. Dave concluded that despite this non-profit, non-government foundation is keeping costs as low as possible, but they are always in need of donations. There wasn't a person in our assembly who wasn't impressed and moved by the win-win mission for both nature and humans of this conservation and human development organization. For those interested in more information or who want to donate go to: <http://cloudforestconservation.org/>.

## REPORTS FROM THE NATURE CAMP SCHOLARS!

By Judy Jones



The Williamsburg Bird Club was proud to hear reports on Wednesday night, September 19th, from the three recipients of the Bill Williams' Nature Camp Scholarships. Pictured in the photo are Bill Williams and the three young women, Maya Reese grade 10, Mia Gesler grade 6, and Delaney Rantz grade 6. The three recipients presented photos, PowerPoint presentations, and summaries of their amazing experiences at Nature Camp this past summer. Applications for 2019 Nature Camp scholarships will be available

this fall at [williamsburgbirdclub.org](http://williamsburgbirdclub.org).

Thank you so so much I Loved it at camp my  
major was Herpetology it was so much fun and i  
made new friends thank you so so much.♡

— from Delaney



Dear Williamsburg Bird Club,

Thank you so much for providing me the opportunity to come to Nature Camp! I have had a wonderful experience and have made many amazing friends. I majored in Botany and learned so much about identifying plants and plant growth strategies. I was able to participate in many great hikes and activities, and I am very grateful for the generous scholarship

Maya

Williamsburg Bird Club  
PO Box 1085  
Williamsburg, VA 23187

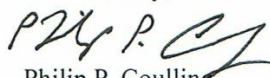
Dear Ms. Schuster,

On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors of Nature Camp, I wish to thank you and the other members of the Williamsburg Bird Club for so generously providing a scholarship for Maya Reese to attend Nature Camp this summer. Although Nature Camp has always striven to provide a camping experience of the highest quality at the lowest possible cost, we recognize that even our modest tuition is more than some families can afford. The beneficence of organizations such as yours enables young people such as Maya to enjoy a fortnight in the out-of-doors that we hope is not only educational, nurturing, and memorable, but truly life-changing as well. The Williamsburg Bird Club is one of nearly 40 organizations that have provided scholarships to 65 campers (more than one-fifth of our participants) this year.

Enclosed please find a brief but sincere letter which Maya wrote at the end of our recently completed Second Session. I hope that her words will convey how meaningful and fulfilling her experience was and how grateful she is for the support you provided her. Maya took Botany as her major class, and on the middle Sunday of Second Session, she participated in a hike to December Ridge on McClung Mountain in Rockbridge County. I have also enclosed a copy of *Woodland Echoes*, the Nature Camp newspaper, for her session so that you can read more about the classes, hikes, and other activities that she and her fellow campers were able to enjoy.

I am exceedingly grateful for the generosity of the Williamsburg Bird Club and your steadfast support of Nature Camp and our campers. We simply could not continue to serve as diverse a population of campers or transform as many lives without the magnanimity of organizations such as yours.

Sincerely,

  
Philip P. Coulling  
Executive Director

Encl.

*It was a pleasure to welcome Maya to Nature Camp for the first time, and I hope she enjoyed her experience. Thank you for making it possible for her to attend and benefit from our program.*



Thank you so much for giving me the scholarship!  
I had so much fun! The Hikes were awesome and so  
were the classes! I took entomology, and it is  
was amazing! I learned so much! I hope I can come  
back next year! Thank You!

-Mia  
😊 Gesler

### **BIRD WALK AT LAKE MATOAKA – SEPTEMBER 8TH**

*By Nancy Barnhart*

Nancy reported a wonderful turnout (almost more people than species identified) on the Lake Matoaka walk. View the group's birding checklist online at <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S48372603>.



### **NEW QUARTER PARK (NQP) BIRD WALK – SEPTEMBER 22ND**

*Photo by Andrew Rapp*

### **SHOW YOUR WBC PRIDE!**

The following items will be for sale at the monthly meeting:

Red Headed Woodpecker pins - \$5

Patches - \$5

Notecards: \$10





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

Welcome Cindy DuPuy and Eric Christenson (family membership), Katherine Louthan, George Martin, Lynn McIntyre, and Dean Shostak.

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

### Backyard Birder



**Backyard Birder Seed & Supply** located in Williamsburg at the Quarterpath Shopping Center (near the Kingsmill Harris Teeter) supports the WBC through donations and a 10% discount on purchases for WBC members. For your discount in-store, 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 supports the WBC through donations and a 5% rebate 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

October 6	October BIG Day ( <a href="https://ebird.org/news/october-big-day-6-october-2018">https://ebird.org/news/october-big-day-6-october-2018</a> ).
October 13	7:30 am: Field Trip to the Eastern Shore (See page 4). <hr/> 8 am: WBC Bird Walk, Bassett Trace.
October 17 – 7 pm	WBC Monthly Meeting.
October 21	The Flyer submissions are due for November; please submit all sightings, articles, and activity to <a href="mailto:1backyardbirder@gmail.com">1backyardbirder@gmail.com</a> . Thank you!
October 27 - 8 am	WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park.
November 10	8 am: WBC Bird Walk, Powhatan Creek Trail. <hr/> Project FeederWatch Season Starts ( <a href="https://feederwatch.org/">https://feederwatch.org/</a> ).
November 14 – 7 pm	WBC Monthly Meeting.
November 24 – 8 am	WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park.
December 8 – 8 am	WBC Bird Walk, Chickahominy Park.
December 22 – 8 am	WBC Bird Walk, New Quarter Park.
January 16 – 7 pm	WBC Monthly Meeting.