



# The Flyer

## Newsletter of the Williamsburg Bird Club

Vol. 44 No. 6

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

July 2020

### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Cheryl Jacobson



#### Meeting via Zoom

We missed those of you who were unable to join us for our June 2020 Club Meeting held via Zoom. Because of the coronavirus, Zoom will

continue to be the only option for holding meetings at this time. Club Secretary Cathy Millar works diligently in taking minutes from our meetings. These are posted on our website under the "About" tab. Be sure to check them out.

#### Silver Lining/Cerulean Blue Lining

I am so happy to report that Katie Fallon will be the presenter during our club meeting in October. You may remember that I have been attempting to schedule Katie since 2016. Katie is the author of *Cerulean Blues: A Personal Search for a Vanishing Songbird* and *Vulture: The Private Life of an Unloved Bird*. Because of her small children, she has been unable to travel to Williamsburg; however, because we are now meeting by Zoom, she is able to present to WBC. Truly a cerulean blue lining to this virus cloud!

#### HRBT Update

At our June Zoom meeting an interesting presentation was made by Gary Carpenter, Member-at-Large on our Board, regarding the status of the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel Expansion Project. Cathy Millar's summary of Gary's presentation can be read in this newsletter. In November, Dr. Sarah Karpanty from Virginia Tech will be our guest speaker. She has been recommended by Rebecca Gwynn, from DGIF, to give additional insights into the impact on the birds. **Please know that our club's involvement in letter writing and attending meetings to support the effort can make us all feel proud.**

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### PROGRAMS

Due to continuing coronavirus restrictions in the Commonwealth of Virginia, WBC has not presently scheduled any bird walks or field trips through July 2020. In June we held one virtual membership meeting on Zoom (an online video conferencing application), and we will be holding another in July as described below.

#### **July 15, 7:00 PM: Nick Newberry on Migration**

Apart from gaining insight on where your favorite neotropical migrants may be spending their time, why learn about bird migration? Knowing where birds are and when can inform important conservation decisions, such as placement of wind turbines and reduction of building lights on specific high-migration nights to prevent the deaths of millions of birds. Accurate migration models also allow researchers to understand behavioral aspects of migration, how migration timing and pathways respond to changing climate, and whether linkages exist between variation in migration timing and subsequent changes in population size.

Our July club meeting will feature a presentation by Nick Newberry, "Tracking Bird Migration from Home: A Dive into the Vast World of Online Bird Migration Resources." Nick is an environmental scientist and a 2017 William & Mary graduate. His experience with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game studying the migration of Olive-sided Flycatchers introduced him to the fascinating world of migration tracking. Nick will introduce us to websites for tracking individual bird species and to the technologies that make this possible. He'll even tell us what to expect in the future based on an exciting new system that uses the International Space Station!

Don't miss it — look for a Zoom meeting invitation in your email. 🐦

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## President's Corner (Continued from Page 1)

Following our meeting, Paula Perdoni sent me this link that is informative and fun to read about the use of dogs to push the birds to new nesting sites: <https://www.virginiamercury.com/2020/05/21/this-4b-road-project-had-a-bird-problem-dogs-are-helping-fix-it/>. Here are a few quotes from the article:

- To attract thousands of birds to the designated sites on barges and Fort Wool — an old island fortification built in 1819 for coastal defense — workers put down sand, set up decoys, and installed a sound system playing bird calls and “colony chatter.”
- “But if I want to change [the bird's] thought process on what South Island is for them, I need to convince them that there's a predator there.”
- A herding collie might look dangerous, Gibson said, but they don't have a kill instinct.
- “It's not out there hunting,” she said. “But the birds don't know that.”
- So far, the bird relocation plan seems to be working.

## Club Donations

Two of our major donations are to the Virginia Society of Ornithology for the second Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas (VABBA2) and to Community Cloud Forest Conservation (CCFC). Dave Youker confirmed via email that we have now completed all of the 13 VABBA2 priority blocks that had been assigned to our Club! **Hurray for us!!**

CCFC is being impacted by the coronavirus, just like all of us. They have a grant from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, under the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act to plant agro-forest parcels in villages that border the cloud forest within Important Bird Areas. The money that we contributed continues to be matched \$3:\$1, so this is really exciting. Please see the email in this newsletter (Page 4) that I received with an update of their situation.

## Purple Martin Project Update

It is not too late to contribute to the Geoff Giles Memorial Fund. Geoff's wife has decided to use the fund to support one Nature Camp Scholarship and for the rest to go to the Purple Martin Project. There is currently enough money to buy two poles and baffles for two more Purple Martin set-ups: one at New Quarter Park (NQP) and the other at Chickahominy Riverfront Park. After approval from NQP grounds (Continued on Page 3)

## President's Corner, Continued from Page 2

crew, the equipment will be ordered and the poles erected by autumn. The gourds will be purchased next year.

Your Board recently voted for WBC to become a Benefactor Supporter of the Purple Martin Conservation Association. PMCA is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation of Purple Martins (*Progne subis*) through scientific research, state of the art management techniques, and public education, with the end goal of increasing martin populations throughout North America. You can learn more at [www.purplemartin.org](http://www.purplemartin.org). They also have a link to a lovely [nest cam](#) which I have repeatedly enjoyed.

### Bird Identification

One of the fun aspects of being President of WBC is being called upon to assist with identification of birds. You can read about one of those episodes written by Jim Booth (Page 8). When I took a photo of the nest in the paper box I saw a snakeskin from a shed. I knew then that it probably was a Great Crested Flycatcher nest as this species will place a shed snakeskin in its nest and leave it there until the young have fledged as a deterrent to predators. Tufted Titmouse and Blue Grosbeaks have been reported to do the same on occasion, but when I saw Jim's bird I was able to confirm it was a Great Crested.

I was also called upon to identify a bird from a photo. The bird appeared to be a Brown Thrasher but it had an extremely long bill, even much longer than that of the long-billed thrashers that I had seen in South

Texas. In doing some research I came across a blog, [Hipster Birders](#), that has documented some mutations like this in Florida and Georgia. It is interesting that a bird with this mutation has now been seen in Williamsburg.

### Hawk Watch

At our WBC Board meeting, Nancy Barnhart reported that it has been a record-breaking season driven by the huge movement of Turkey Vultures all spring. On May 13 a Turkey Vulture became the 2353rd bird to pass north over College Creek, breaking the previous record set in 2013. In addition to a big year for these vultures, it was an above-average year for Bald Eagles (counting only immature birds), Black Vultures, and Cooper's Hawks, and below average for Ospreys, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Northern Harriers, and Red-tailed Hawks. American Kestrel, Merlin, and Broad-winged Hawks continue to decline. A detailed analysis of spring raptor migration by the Hawk Migration Association of North America will help us understand the state of these birds of prey. Katie Fallon, who will be our October presenter, has a great [blog regarding vultures](#). If you subscribe to *Bird Watchers Digest* you may have read Katie's article in this month's issue.

Do stay well and be sure to join us on Zoom for our next meeting. We want to stay connected! I will continue to look for ways to keep you informed. As things change, your Board will continue to evaluate any impact on WBC, always keeping the priority of your health, safety, and well-being. 🐦

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## NEWSLETTER FOCUS — LETS LEARN ABOUT OUR BIRDS!

By Cheryl Jacobson

To be good stewards, we must know more about our birds. When you submit a photo to the newsletter, please include a few lines of information about the species. Great information can be found on the Cornell Lab website, *All About Birds*, under the "Life History" tab for each species. Here are two examples with information that is taken directly from that site.

**"Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** are numerous and their overall populations have been stable and slightly increased between 1966 and 2014, according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey. . . .The largest populations are in the southeastern U.S. Despite their high numbers, nests are very vulnerable to

cowbird parasitism." "Both sexes cooperate in building the neat, open, cuplike nest. They take up to two weeks to build the 2–3-inch wide nest, which is held together and attached to its branch with spider webbing and decorated with lichen." (Source: [All About Birds](#))


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Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Photo by Cheryl Jacobson.

## Newsletter Focus, Continued from Page 3

**"Northern Flickers** are widespread and common, but numbers decreased by almost 1.5% per year between 1966 and 2012, resulting in a cumulative decline of 49%, according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey . . . and [they] are listed as a Common Bird in Steep Decline." "Northern Flickers don't act like typical woodpeckers. They mainly forage on the ground, sometimes among sparrows and blackbirds." "Northern Flickers usually excavate nest holes in dead or diseased tree trunks or large branches." "Both sexes help with nest excavation." "Early in spring and summer, rivals may face off in a display sometimes called a 'fencing duel,' while a

prospective mate looks on. Two birds face each other, bills pointed upward, and bob their heads in time while drawing a loop or figure-eight pattern in the air, often giving rhythmic *wicka* calls at the same time." (Source: [All About Birds](#)) 



Northern Flickers. Photo by Cheryl Jacobson.

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## COMMUNITY CLOUD FOREST CONSERVATION UPDATE

*The following update was written by Rob Cahill, CCFC director, and sent in an email to Cheryl Jacobson on May 25, 2020.*

Greetings from Guatemala. Although [Community Cloud Forest Conservation (CCFC)] had to suspend all schools visiting our campus [due to the coronavirus], we continue to work in the area of reforestation and the implementation of agro-forest parcels.

Currently, CCFC has a grant from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), under the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA) to plant agro-forest parcels in villages that border the cloud forest within Important Bird Areas (IBAs). The heirloom crops and fruit trees in these parcels provide vital nutrition for Q'eqchi' Maya families in remote villages, while also providing habitat for birds, especially migratory birds. The agro-forest parcels are the core of our current project with USFWS.

Through its donations, Williamsburg Bird Club is already a *de facto* partner in this project. Your donation last year was an important step in helping us meet the required \$3:\$1 match to receive USFWS funds. Our need for matching funds continues this year. Funds that we raise for our WALC program [Women in Agroecology Leadership for Conservation]] count as matching funds for our NMBCA grant.

**Why Agro-forest Parcels:** I want to share with you the story of one of those parcels because I want you to see how important these agro-forest parcels can be for birds in general and especially migratory birds. The story I want to share with you is the story of Marta and Rosalia's parcel. They are from the village of Sebob, one of the highest elevation villages in Alta Verapaz. Coffee and cardamom, both major cash

crops in Alta Verapaz, don't grow in their village because they are too high. Before the coming of an economically viable alternative, in this case deciduous fruit trees, smallholder farmers were limited to slash and burn corn and bean cultivation. Here's their [story](#). Please take a few minutes to read it.



CCFC birding class during WALC

**WALC:** In the fall of 2019, thanks to partners like Williamsburg Bird Club, 240 young women participated in the WALC program (Women in Agroecology Leadership for Conservation). The program has many strengths but perhaps the biggest impact it has is that WALC provides young women the opportunity to continue their education, through financial support of small scholarships to cover their school expenses. Many students repeat WALC from year to year, become teachers in the program, and graduate from (Continued on Page 5)

## CCFC Update, Continued from Page 4

high school. We are proud to report that no less than 20 of these students are now in university, a major achievement in an area with an historic 75% dropout rate of girls after 6th grade. WALC is a powerful tool for bird conservation.

**Our plans looking forward:** So we don't want to drop WALC, even if we cannot host it in the same way. The virus is a real issue. We are exploring a variety of options for the fall of 2020. One option is that we organize WALC to be done remotely through internet platforms and social media networks. We are also looking at a few other options. Either way, WALC in one form or another will still take place and a large number of scholarships will still be needed for the WALC students, so we would continue to covet your support for this program.

**Our networks:** We are currently developing an alternative curriculum for WALC, one that can be shared on social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Zoom, and Google Hangouts

(all commonly used in Guatemala). We have a WhatsApp group for all our WALC 2019 students. Students use this group to share photos of their parcels, share problems and solutions in studying online, and a variety of communications. Four of our outstanding teachers are now working on making thirty second videos so that we can continue to integrate environmental education content into these networks.

So, in closing, here at CCFC, we will continue to plan on WALC 2020 taking place this fall, but it will undoubtedly take a different form. If participants are not able to come to our campus, we will use online platforms to connect with them. Either way, both the planting of agroforestry parcels, as part of our USFWs grant, and the scholarship support for WALC students will continue.

We at CCFC would be very grateful for the continuing support of Williamsburg Bird Club in our work on behalf of Q'eqchi' Maya and birds of the cloud forest. Thank you so much! 🐦

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## WHAT'S ALL THE NOISE ABOUT BLUEBIRDS?

*By Cathy Millar*

Have you ever wondered if the bluebirds nesting in your box are the same ones as last year? At our club's first-ever Zoom membership meeting, held June 16, we heard answers to that question plus other fascinating bluebird facts from Heather Kenny, who was one of the three recipients of our club's 2019 William & Mary (W&M) student ornithology grants.

For the last two years Heather has been investigating the interaction between human-caused noise and Eastern Bluebird behavior. She reported that bluebirds typically nest in artificial boxes that people have erected and are often located in places with a lot of human activity and resulting noise pollution. Researchers are continuing to investigate how much this noise pollution affects bluebird behavior and reproduction. A previous W&M study revealed that bluebirds in our area that nest in places with louder background noises raise fewer babies than those in quieter areas. Heather has been focusing on what exactly about the noise is changing their behavior. She is especially interested whether noise is affecting the timing of nest building and egg laying and where bluebirds decide to nest, and whether noise

influences the feeding rate of food being brought to nestlings.

Last year Heather banded the bluebirds in her study of 25 nest boxes set in six parks including New Quarter Park, York River State Park (which is a sample of a quieter place), and Newport News Park (which is noisier). Heather opened her presentation with some background information about the birds in her study. This spring she found that about 40% of the pairs stayed committed to last year's mate and returned to the same nest box. Of the birds that had a new mate, eight out of ten who returned to their previous year's box were the males. This is attributed to the fact that males are the ones that initially establish and defend a territory from other males to attract a female and that success in a nest box one year leads to the likelihood of selecting the same box again. Females have more flexibility in choice of nest box because there is less investment in territory selection and defense, and that allows them to see if they can perhaps do better by switching to a new mate at a different territory. Another study has shown that birds that do end up choosing new mates usually had high nest failure the previous year. Overall, (Continued on Page 6)

## Bluebirds, Continued from Page 5

91% of the birds banded by Heather that returned from last year returned to the same nest box. So, it is exciting to think that it is likely that those of us with bluebird boxes in our yards are seeing the same birds returning.

To study how noise influences the timing of nest building and egg laying, Heather set up speakers three meters in front of the nest boxes in February, before nest building had started. Half of the speakers played traffic noise recordings at 70 decibels during only the daylight while the other half were silent controls. Heather and her team of undergraduates checked the nest boxes every two days and recorded when the nests were first tagged by the males; when a nest was begun and completed; and which day the first egg was laid. Whether the box was subjugated to a noisy speaker or not made next to no difference to males claiming boxes in March and try-

ing to attract females. But there was an average difference of four days between the noise-treated and the control boxes for when nest construction, which is mostly done by females, was completed. Egg laying was also delayed by an average of four days in the noise-treated boxes. This is important to know, because bluebirds that can normally complete three or four clutches in a season may have the time to complete only two clutches per season in a noisy area. That can potentially lead to a 50% difference in fledgling output in quiet versus noisy areas. Although Heather turned the speakers off after the first egg was laid in the present study, she noted that during a different study she continued the noise treatment during the first nesting attempt of the year and found no overall difference in the feeding rate of hatchlings in the noise versus control boxes. Heather concluded by thanking our bird club for helping fund her research, and she offered to invite us to her defense of her thesis via Zoom on July 22nd. 🐦

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## UPDATE ON BREEDING BIRD STATUS AT THE HAMPTON ROADS BRIDGE-TUNNEL

*By Cathy Millar*

During our Zoom membership meeting on June 16, Gary Carpenter, Member-at-Large/Assistant Editor, shared information he'd collected regarding the displacement of breeding seabirds on the South Island of the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel (HRBT) that for years has hosted the single largest seabird colony in Virginia. It is estimated that 15,000 adults and 10,000 chicks inhabit the island. Eighty percent of Virginia's Royal and Sandwich terns nest there, and the island has supported the breeding of about 10% of the Gull-billed Terns and over 10% of Common Tern, Black Skimmer, and Laughing Gull populations in the state. This was made possible by South Island's suitable habitat, absence of predators, and abundance of food in nearby waters. For many years the late Ruth Beck, who was one of the founding members of our bird club, provided guidance for the management of this site.

Expansion of the HRBT has made the island no longer suitable for nesting. A decision was made by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) to [create new habitat in the area](#). They began by replacing the grass on the Fort Wool parade ground on Rip Raps Island, which is near the South Island, with gravel and sand and removing predators. Then two barges filled with sand and

gravel were anchored between the two islands. Decoys and sound recordings were used to encourage nesting on these new sites. Preparations were mostly completed by March. The birds arrived on schedule in late March and almost immediately began inhabiting the grounds and are already forming tightly-spaced nesting sites. DGIF and VA Tech scientists will be monitoring the seabirds closely to evaluate their progress.

In response to the Department of the Interior's recent reinterpretation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and its effect on projects like the HRBT Expansion Project, the DGIF has begun the process of [drafting regulations](#) that would govern the incidental take of migratory birds for major commercial, industrial, and construction projects in the Commonwealth. The Virginia Society of Ornithology, National Audubon Society, American Bird Conservancy, and local bird clubs, including ours, submitted comments in favor of these draft regulations. Although the comment period ended in mid-May, there will be more opportunities to provide input. WBC President Cheryl Jacobson noted that our club's involvement in letter writing and attending meetings to support the effort can make us all feel proud. 🐦

## WBC STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVENESS

By Cheryl Jacobson

The Williamsburg Bird Club was organized with the purpose of promoting interest in the study of wild birds; protecting birds and their habitat; and sharing the joy of birding with others. To do so, the Club supports the goals of many birding partners, including these listed on our website under the "Links" tab: the Virginia Society of Ornithology; Coastal Virginia Wildlife Observatory; The Center for Conservation Biology; and The Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Recently the Virginia Society of Ornithology posted the following statement which the Williamsburg Bird Club also endorses:

*The Virginia Society of Ornithology recognizes the unique challenges people of color can face in all aspects of society, and that includes birding and other outdoor pursuits. En-*

*joyment of birds and all facets of the natural world is everyone's right, equally and without bias. As our ongoing commitment, we will continue to promote participation from people of all backgrounds and ethnicities in our field trips, youth programs, and all other VSO activities. Through diversity we are stronger, wiser and better able to face the challenges of declining bird populations and environmental degradation.*

Check out this article which highlights Black Birders Week, with insightful comments from Dr. Drew Lanham, Professor of Wildlife Ecology at Clemson University:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/06/05/black-birders-week> 

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## BIRDING FORD'S COLONY, JUNE 2020

By George Martin


The Ford's Colony Birding Club, WINGS, resumed organized weekly bird walks on Tuesday, June 16, but I birded regularly and more often around the community throughout the month. As of June 21, I had identified 56 species within the neighborhood for the month, with species ranging in size from the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds which stop by my feeder to the Barred Owls I hear in the nearby bottomland woods. Here are some of my observations and musings.

**Barn Swallow Nest:** A barn swallow (one of a pair, I presume, but I've only seen one at a time) has been occupying a nest on an electrical conduit near the roof of a golf cart tunnel under St. Andrews near Montrose. As of June 19, the nest had been occupied for a week. Maybe I'll hear the chirping of hatchlings around the 26th when I walk through the tunnel?

**Four Belted Kingfishers:** Belted Kingfishers usually don't play well with other members of their species, but, on June 4, I saw four kingfishers around the Williamsburg West pond. No, they weren't having a party, but they could definitely see each other. The two closest to each other appeared to be a

male/female pair. Were the other two offspring? Unclear. Since that day I've seen only one Belted Kingfisher in that location.

**Great Crested Flycatchers Visiting the Ground:** Great Crested Flycatchers are common and vocal but typically rather difficult to see because they live at the top of the canopy. So it's a real treat when they deign to come to earth. And I've seen them three times this month in my backyard, dropping from their lofty perches and giving us humans a closer look. One even spent a few minutes on the ground — must have been some good bugs there!

**Hairy Woodpecker Field Mark?:** I also had the good fortune of having a Hairy Woodpecker make daily visits to my suet feeder in June. One thing I noticed is that the red nape patch on the male has a thin black line through the middle, unlike the solid red patch which the male Downy Woodpecker has. I've also seen that marking on Hairy Woodpeckers around my previous home in Fairfax County, but I don't see that thin black line mentioned as a field mark in any of my guides. Is the mark something unique to this area? Not universal? Has anybody else noticed it? 

## FOR NATURE LOVERS "THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME"

By Jim Booth

Thursday, May 28, 2020, started as one of those good, nature lovers' times for me, exemplifying why we are Master Naturalists and bird watchers. About mid-morning, a Great Blue Heron



*Great Blue Heron stalking voles. Photo by Jim Booth*

walked into my yard in the Kingsmill neighborhood from the golf course pond area behind the house. This bird, or another just like it, had been in the yard earlier in the week and appeared to be stalking voles near my backyard feeders. Once again, the bird seemed to stalk the flower bed behind a feeder. After a few minutes, it struck the ground and came up with a 3- to 4-inch, wriggling critter which it promptly took back toward the pond. [Wikipedia](#) notes that "the primary food of the Great Blue Heron is small fish, though it is known to opportunistically feed on a wide range of shrimp, crabs, aquatic insects, rodents, and other small mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and birds, especially ducklings . . . . Nonpiscine prey is rarely quantitatively important, though one study in Idaho showed that from 24 to 40 percent of the diet was made up of voles . . . . Individuals usually forage while standing in water but also feed in fields . . . ."

Later that same day, about 4:30 pm, I walked through my backyard toward the pond and nearly stepped on a newborn fawn bedded down in my canna lilies just beyond the feeder. The fawn didn't flinch, even when I dropped my walking stick about three feet from it while trying to take a picture. This was in the area where the Great Blue Heron had been earlier in the morning, so I don't think that the fawn had been there in the morning. My next-door neighbor said that she had seen a doe cross her yard from my yard about five or ten minutes before I discovered the fawn.

Then, on Saturday May 30, when I reached in my newspaper box I found the morning paper covered with pine straw, grass, and dirt. I brushed the paper off and took it inside. I thought about the debris on the paper throughout the day and wondered what I would find Sunday morning. On Sundays the newspaper delivery person puts the papers on the driveway. Nevertheless, I checked the paper box after picking up the paper: Nothing inside, so I turned to go back in the house. As I turned, a bird with something in its beak landed in the middle of the street.

I stopped and watched as the bird flew into my neighbor's paper box across the street. The bird flew out after a short interval and flew away. On looking into the neighbor's paper box, I saw that it contained a good amount of pine straw, leaves, grass, and dirt. After putting the newspapers in the house I returned to the front yard with my camera and over about 20 or so minutes took a number of pictures of two Great Crested Flycatchers bringing nest building materials to the newspaper box. I had never seen this species in my yard or in the neighborhood. One bird seemed to be working harder than the other bird, which seemed to land on top of the box most of the time and, if it went inside the box at all, came back out much quicker.



*Snakeskin on flycatcher nest. Photo by Jim Booth.*

At my request, Cheryl Jacobson came by on June 1 and we took a photo of the nesting materials. The most noteworthy thing about the materials was a partial snakeskin that lay on top of everything in the box. According to [All About Birds](#), Great Crested Flycatchers "quite commonly" use shed snakeskin in building their nests.

On June 4, the nest seemed to be abandoned, and the snakeskin was on the ground near the newspaper box. The snakeskin did appear back in the box a day later, and there was bird activity at the box over the next couple of



*Flycatcher bringing food to nest in box. Photo by Cheryl Jacobson.*

weeks. However, the snakeskin subsequently seems to have disappeared. I noted a depression at the right rear of the box in the nesting materials, but it was too deep to determine if there were any eggs. A couple of times a bird flew out of the box when it was approached, especially early in the morning. That went on for two or more weeks, the birds exiting  
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## Nature Lovers' Times, Continued from Page 8

the nest, especially when a pedestrian or vehicle came near the box.

By Monday, June 22, we were pretty sure that there was activity in the box, even when no adult birds were present. On Thursday, June 25, Cheryl came by, and by shining a flashlight in the box we could see at least three fluffy black chicks with yellow

maws wide open for food. Cheryl also was able to get pictures of the adults bringing insects to the box. It will be interesting to look at the nest after the birds fledge to see if the snakeskin is still there. If not, then that will remain a mystery as to why the Great Crested Flycatchers use the snakeskin and what is its purpose. 🐦

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## REPORTED BIRD SIGHTINGS



**Shirley Devan** took the photo at left on June 10, 2020 in the parking lot between Blayton and Hornsby Schools on Jolly Pond Road: "When I arrived, admittedly to look for butterflies at the polli-

nator garden there, I heard the **Killdeer** and then quickly saw the adult and then one little one . . . and then another little one. They look like puff balls on match sticks! I stayed in my car . . . and spent about 20 minutes watching . . . the adult and the little ones just beyond the parking barriers at the end of the lot. They seem comfortable with cars — after all it was a parking lot — and came fairly close to my car. After the chicks had a short nap, they were off and running again in opposite directions behind my car. Mom or Dad was keeping an eye on them.



*Great Crested Flycatcher (left) and Eastern Wood-Pewee. Photos by Inge Curtis.*

Based on member's sightings, the **Great Crested Flycatcher** has proven itself our unofficial bird of June 2020. Added to George Martin's and Jim Booth's articles elsewhere in this newsletter is **Inge Curtis'** report that she has had a pair nesting at her home. As of June 20, the birds were actively feeding their young. On June 27, Inge was in the swamp ear-

ly and stalked a couple of **Pileated Woodpeckers**, saw a **Black-and-white Warbler**, watched a **Tufted Titmouse** foraging, and admired a male **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**. Inge's fountain continues to attract a diverse array of species including a **Sum-Summer Tanager** and **Eastern Wood-Pewee**.

**Nancy Barnhart** wrote in to report that on June 20 she was in line waiting to catch the morning Jamestown-Scotland Ferry on the Williamsburg side and saw a **Black Skimmer** (photo at right by Nancy) hanging out with some Laughing Gulls. She noted: "This is enough inland that it's considered rare in the Historic Triangle. Fun to see!"



Every year **House Finches** nest in the wreath on the front door of **Mary Anne & John Fennell's** home. Mary Anne captured the photo at left of this year's nest.



*Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Photo by I. Curtis.*

## WBC MEMBERSHIP

A warm welcome is extended to new member Nina Brundle! If you would like to join our club, or need to renew your membership for 2020, download, print, and mail the membership form found on our [website](#). 🐦



**Williamsburg Bird Club**  
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### **ANNUAL DONATIONS FROM OUR LOCALLY-OWNED BIRD STORES**

The Williamsburg Bird Club wishes to express our gratitude to our locally-owned Bird Stores, Wild Birds Unlimited and Backyard Birder Seed & Supply, for their generous donations each year to the Club. Their contributions help sustain WBC's annual commitment to provide funds for the Ornithology Research Grants given annually to graduate students at the College of William and Mary as well as support other Club projects and activities.

**PLEASE CONTINUE TO 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 by donating to the club an amount equal to 5% of the pre-tax amount spent in the store by WBC members each year. Please inform them you are a WBC member during checkout. <https://williamsburg.wbu.com/>