



# The Flyer

## Newsletter of the Williamsburg Bird Club

Vol. 46 No. 1

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

January 2022

### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Nancy Barnhart



Greetings, friends, and a very Happy New Year! We're getting to be old hands at living with the changes COVID-19 has brought to our lives. We've learned to be flexible and tolerant. And we've learned that our passion for birds and birding has provided some "shelter from the storm." With birding one of the fastest growing pastimes in the "Covid era," we now have the perfect opportunity to share our WBC mission: to promote interest in the study of wild birds; protect birds and their habitat; and share the joy of birding. We can bring a friend on a bird walk, help a youngster identify the birds at their feeder, share the fun of spotting a tiny Golden-crowned Kinglet or finding a "lifer."

As we welcome 2022 full of hope and promise, and of course uncertainty, we know that whatever the year brings, we are brought together in our love of wild birds, birding, and camaraderie. And happily we're back to in-person bird walks and field trips.

A special welcome to our new members. We look forward to seeing you on bird walks, field trips, in meetings (both live and via Zoom), and gatherings. Please consider contributing to the newsletters and suggesting topics for presentations. Our membership is our greatest treasure and we are thrilled when we add new names and faces.

We begin 2022 by thanking Cheryl Jacobson for the past four years as our President, and four years before that as Vice-President. Among other duties, Cheryl was a true champion of the Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas, making sure we completed "our blocks;" initiated a Purple Martin conservation plan; kept us "together" and educated through Zoom meetings; and established (and will chair) the new Conservation Committee. So thank you, Cheryl, for all the hard work and passion you put into the WBC!

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### UPCOMING PROGRAMS

By Patty Maloney

**January 19, 7:00 pm (via Zoom): Dr. Daniel Cristol, "25 Years of Birding and Research at W&M."**



Dr. Cristol, Chancellor Professor of Biology, The College of William and Mary, will provide a synopsis of every study he has done with his W&M students over the past 25 years. Studies range from clam-dropping gulls, to evolving junco brains, to the effects of deer on birds, and to mercury pollution. Come

join us as we learn the impact that Dan and his students have had on the avian world.

**February 16: Bill Williams, "Birdlife of Craney Island." (This will be a joint meeting with the Historic Rivers Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists.)**

Starting with our February 16, 2022 meeting, we plan to offer an in-person as well as a Zoom option for participants. The in-person site will be the Williamsburg Library Theater on Scotland Street. The meeting will continue to be accessible via Zoom and also be recorded for those unable to attend. 🐦

### WBC MEMBERSHIP

Please welcome Laura Mae, Susan Brown Eyster, Pamela Scrima, Vance Solseth, and Caroline Bertrand, who joined our club in the past month.

**It's time to renew your membership for 2022!** You now have the option of renewing your membership and making donations online with PayPal at this link: <https://williamsburgbirdclub.org/membership/>. If you wish to donate to our club's various programs when you renew, please click the "Continue Shopping" link in the upper right-hand corner of the screen after you are taken to your PayPal shopping cart. You still have the option of renewing your membership by mailing in a check with the renewal form located online and on Page 9 of this newsletter. 🐦

## WBC EXECUTIVE BOARD 2022

<b>President</b> Nancy Barnhart	540-454-3014 <a href="mailto:barnhartnt@gmail.com">barnhartnt@gmail.com</a>
<b>Vice-President, Programs</b> Patty Maloney	703-304-7885 <a href="mailto:maloney3013@aol.com">maloney3013@aol.com</a>
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<b>Refreshments</b> Catherine Flanagan	757-879-1997 <a href="mailto:flanagan.catherine@gmail.com">flanagan.catherine@gmail.com</a>
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## President's Column, Continued from Page 1

Thank you also to Tory Gussman and Dean Shostak, our outgoing Vice-Presidents, Programs. What a great job they did lining up entertaining and educational programs for us both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Patty Maloney has taken over in the role of Vice-President, Programs and has us well on our way to some excellent presenters, beginning with two of our own: Dan Cristol on January 19, followed by Bill Williams on February 16.

And where would we be without Bill Williams, who leaves the Board as Past President? As a founder of the Williamsburg Bird Club, Bill has dedicated 45+ years to the Club, its members, the Williamsburg birding community, and the entire state of Virginia's birds and birders. We will continue to seek his expertise, opinions, and ideas. Thank you, Bill!

Back to those Golden-crowned Kinglets, some of winter's little gems. If you've ever tried to take their photo you know about their level of energy and activity. We see them in winter when they leave their northern breeding grounds for parts south where the preferred insect diet is still available. They are adept and acrobatic as they glean tiny insects and eggs from branches and leaves. Returning early to their breeding range, they are cold-hardy. They prefer spruce-fir forests where they can start nest building even before the last snows, utilizing the cover of hemlock branches. Their tiny nests can contain large clutches of up to 10 or 11 eggs. Besides being engaging they are hardy, tenacious, resilient, and efficient. They are my avian heroes and role models for a new year.



Golden-crowned Kinglet. Photographed by Carol Annis in Toano.

(Continued on Page 3)

## President's Column, Continued from Page 2

As WBC enters 2022 I look forward to serving as your President. Please let me know how the Board can help meet your needs and expectations. We welcome your ideas, suggestions, and thoughts on how we can provide the best opportunities, activities, and experiences for everyone.

Probably my favorite birding days are when fellow birders have the "OH WOW!" moment. Recently a

friend was trying to spot a distant Eastern Screech-Owl. He kept saying "all I see is a pine cone!" Then he got his camera on the "pine cone," took a photo, and turned with round-as-saucer eyes and cried out "OH WOW! May the year 2022 be filled with many shared "OH WOW" moments!

Wishing you all a happy, healthy, birdy New Year! 

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## UPCOMING BOAT TRIP to CHESAPEAKE BAY BRIDGE-TUNNEL ISLANDS, JANUARY 16

*By George Martin*

The Williamsburg Bird Club is sponsoring a boat trip to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel (CBBT) islands on Sunday, January 16, 2022, with participation limited by the size of the boat to 40 people. This article is being written well before this newsletter's publication, so it isn't clear how many spaces remain available. But the trip has been opened to other local clubs, so spaces are likely to fill up quickly.

If you would like to attend, please send a check for \$50, issued to "Williamsburg Bird Club," to:

Club Treasurer, Attention: Ann Carpenter  
PO Box 764  
Lightfoot, VA 23090

Please include your email address and cell phone number! You will be notified when your check has been received, and whether there is space on the boat. Your cell phone number is important, because that's how you will be contacted if necessary on the day of the trip. Note that the trip may be canceled if the weather is forecast to be bad. In that event, your check will be destroyed.

The Club has chartered the vessel *Nancy Anne* for this eye-level look at bay ducks, sea ducks, shorebirds, raptors, and more! The last few years, this trip has given the group some views of and photo ops of Humpbacked Whales and Harbor Seals.

Birding and photo opportunities should be very good from the boat. The boat may go as far as Fishermans Island near the Eastern Shore, and then out to the capes near the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay if the birds are there. The CBBT area tends to have smoother water than ocean trips, with many of the same exciting views of birds. It will be possible to do some birding from the cabin, but the best views and photo opportunities will be from outside on deck. Clothing that protects against wind and dampness is highly recommended. The boat also has restroom facilities.

The group should be at the dock at Lynnhaven Inlet by 8:30 am for a 9 am sailing. Upon arrival at the dock, check in with George Martin in the building, who will give you a token for boarding. Those who wish to carpool should gather at the Colony Square Shopping Center on Jamestown Road, and leave there no later than 7:30 am. The dock at Lynnhaven Inlet is at 3311 Shore Drive, Virginia Beach, VA 23451. The captain plans to return the boat to the dock at 1 pm. The seafood restaurant at the dock comes recommended for those who would like to have lunch after the trip. For additional information, please contact George Martin at [grm0803@gmail.com](mailto:grm0803@gmail.com), or by phone at 757-920-5403.




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## NOVEMBER 2021 and JANUARY 2022 BIRD WALKS at NQP

*By Scott Hemler*

We had a cold, but very nice bird walk on the morning of November 27, 2021 at New Quarter Park! Nine of us attended, including one Boy Scout (see photo Page 4). We saw 19 species of birds. The big news from the walk was the very large number of vultures we saw flying overhead! There were at least 50 Turkey Vultures and around 20-25 Black Vultures! The

birds were hard to count as they were circling around in a thermal. Quite impressive. You can view a complete list of the birds we saw on the walk on eBird at this link: <https://ebird.org/mychecklists?subID=Uzk4MTkwMjM2&s=t>. Our January bird walk will be at New Quarter Park on the 22<sup>nd</sup> at 8:00 am. 





*The hardy birders who enjoyed the WBC's November walk at New Quarter Park. Photo by Shirley Devan.*

## **BUILD A BIRD SPA and THEY WILL COME**

*By Cathy Millar*

It was a treat to have Bob Schamerhorn as our speaker at the WBC's November 17 meeting as his presentations are always a feast for the eyes. Bob's superb photography just placed him in the top ten in the video category of the 2021 Audubon National Photography Awards, the third time he's received national recognition in the last four years. Bob showed us gorgeous pictures/videos of the 82 species of birds (accompanied by their corresponding songs) that have been attracted to a water feature that he built on his one-quarter-acre suburban property on the north side of Richmond that he moved to in 2008.

From a blind placed 15 feet from his water feature, Bob photographs visiting birds bathing and drinking. He noted with amusement that Yellow-rumped Warblers are champion bathers, bathing as long as three minutes, whereas most species spend only five to ten seconds. He pointed out that because birds need clean running water for hydration and conditioning their feathers, providing an attractive water source will attract species to one's yard that are not drawn in by bird seed and suet. He emphasized that the typical bird bath is too deep, and that birds prefer water that is, at most, only 1 inch deep.

Accordingly, for approximately \$200, Bob built a bird bath featuring a rock with a shallow bowl-shaped depression that is supplied with recirculating water. He bought all the needed materials (except the rock) from a local farm supply and hardware store. He then discovered that by adding dripping water, his

bird spa became irresistible. Furthermore, this low-maintenance, mosquito- and algae-free bird bath took only about 3-5 hours to assemble. Because Bob presented the birds he showed by the seasons in which they were seen in his yard, his presentation was also an excellent review of what birds one might expect to see in our area at those times of the year.

I highly recommend watching a video of Bob's presentation, "Attracting Birds with Water," to see the variety of birds, including an amazing variety of warblers, that are attracted to his bird spa. The video can be found at this link on our club's YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/8KfZ0ROVV6k>. To build your own bird spa, go to Bob's website at <https://iphotobirds.com/index.html>, where you can purchase a booklet with illustrated step-by-step instructions as well as lovely note cards, calendars, coloring books, and more. 🐦



*Red-bellied Woodpecker photographed by Inge Curtis at a water feature she added to her yard.*





*The birders who participated in the WBC's field trip to Grandview Nature Preserve in November.*

## FIELD TRIP REPORT

*By George Martin*

### November 2021 Field Trip to Grandview Nature Preserve

Eighteen birders enjoyed a great trip to Grandview Nature Preserve on November 20, 2021. Led by Nancy Barnhart, the group saw a wide variety of both water birds and land birds. The water birds included scoters, buffleheads, loons, and a gannet, while the land birds included four sparrow species and several raptors. Most notable were the good looks a cooperative Sedge Wren provided — a life bird for at least a few on the trip! In all, the group identified over 50 species. The complete eBird checklist can be viewed at the following link: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S97838102>.

### Upcoming February 2022 Field Trip to Dutch Gap

Save the date! On Saturday, February 19, 2022, Rose Ryan will lead a field trip at Dutch Gap. In past years, birders at Dutch Gap have seen a wide variety of wintering ducks. Details on time and logistics will follow. 🐦



*Some of the birds photographed at Grandview Nature Preserve. Photo upper right: Northern Gannet, by Cindy Hamilton. Lower right: Savannah Sparrow, by Paula Perdoni. Lower left: Common Loon, photo by Paula Perdoni.*



## 2022 WBC NEW YEAR'S DAY "BIRD and BIRDER SHOW" at NEW QUARTER PARK

By Shirley Devan

With Virginia's weather, we never know whether we'll have 40 degrees or 70 degrees on New Year's Day. Year 2022 gave us a balmy 73-degree afternoon! But that did not stop us from enjoying a fire in the fire pit at New Quarter Park, thanks to Park Supervisor Jonathan Honchul. Jonathan and Kathi Mestayer provided some "hot air" to encourage the fire to take off on a damp, humid day. A light breeze provided a challenge as well. Check the before and after photos (below) to see what a great job they did. This was our first gathering at New Quarter Park for this annual event and it seems like a winning spot! I hope we can join together again next year at this location.

As usual, we tallied more people than birds, but only one dog – Rocky! Thirty-five bird club members ven-

tured out on a warm afternoon, including several new members who have joined since we last met in person in early 2020! So glad to meet you! Nancy Barnhart, Bird Club President as of January 1, tallied the birds. Highlights included hearing several Clapper Rails sounding off in the marsh plus a perched Bald Eagle and a Belted Kingfisher. These last two were cooperative enough for folks to see them in Nancy's scope.

Thanks to all who shared part of their 2022 New Year's Day with the Williamsburg Bird Club. The joy of visiting and sharing with each other again in a relaxed setting was heartwarming in this time of a new COVID-19 surge. Happy New Year to all! Stay safe and healthy in 2022. 🐦



Some scenes from the WBC's New Year's Day "Bird and Birder Show" at New Quarter Park. Photos by Shirley Devan and Jeanette Navia.

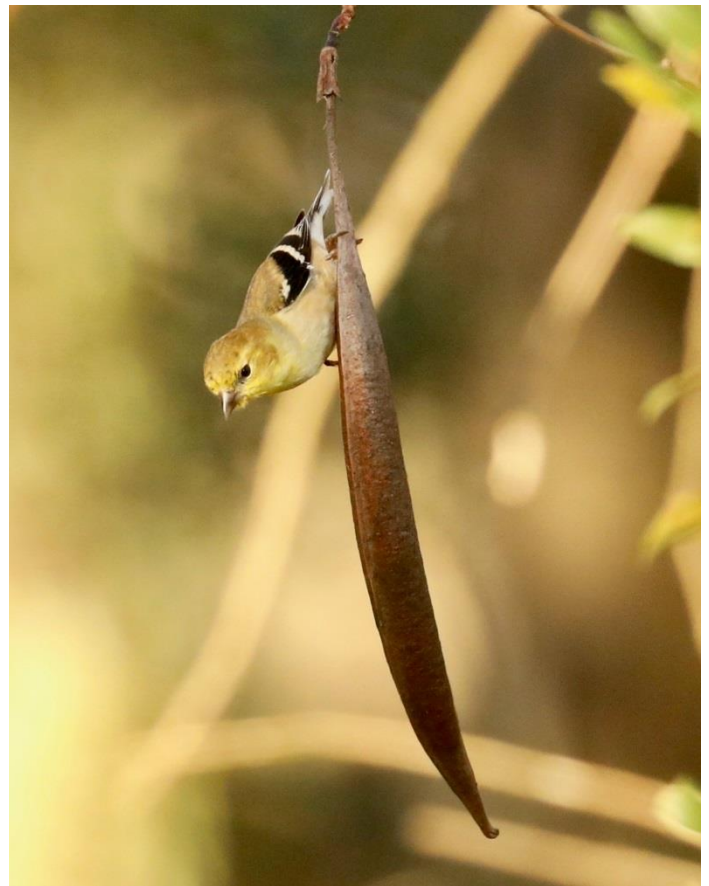


## 2021 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT UPDATE

By Jim Corliss

Despite the COVID-19 restrictions and the dreary wet and cold day on December 19, 2021, we had an excellent turn-out for the 122<sup>nd</sup> Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Over 100 participants slogged through the rain or kept vigil over their feeders to contribute to a successful count day. The count results are still being compiled, but we already know that the rain didn't deter the high numbers of Wild Turkeys, Rusty Blackbirds, and Chipping Sparrows that set CBC records for our Williamsburg count circle. In addition, the pod of American White Pelicans found at Hog Island was substantially larger this year than in any previous CBC with 114 individuals that smashed last year's count of 21 birds. Even

though these high counts are encouraging, the poor weather unsurprisingly knocked down the totals of some of the more common birds species, or resulted in complete misses on a few that we might typically find in our area this time of year. Keep an eye out for a complete summary of our Williamsburg 2021 CBC in the bird club's February newsletter. The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is also just around the corner on February 18-21, 2022. The GBBC is a great opportunity to contribute to another valuable citizen science project. Learn more about how to participate in the GBBC at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology web site at this link: <https://www.birdcount.org/>. 🐦



Two photographs Inge Curtis took two years ago, in January 2020, of birds feeding in the winter at the confluence of the James and Chickahominy rivers. Above right is an American Goldfinch, harvesting seeds from what appears to be the dried fruit of trumpet creeper, also called trumpet vine. Above left is a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Did you know that this bird drills two types of holes to retrieve tree sap, its main food source? As described on the [All About Birds](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/) website: "Sapsucker wells are neatly organized, with several holes drilled in horizontal rows. The bird first drills narrow, circular wells into the tree's xylem—the inner part of the trunk—to feed on sap moving up to the branches in early spring. Then, after the tree leafs out, the sapsucker begins making shallower, rectangular wells in the phloem, the part of the trunk that carries sap down from the leaves. This sap can be more than 10 percent sugar. These phloem wells must be continually maintained with fresh drilling, so the sap will continue to flow."

## RECENT SIGHTINGS

We want to know what you're seeing in your yard and on outings within our region. Please share with other WBC members by sending your sightings and photos to the Newsletter Editor, Mary Ellen Hodges, at [me.hodges@cox.net](mailto:me.hodges@cox.net).

**Carol Annis** shared a photo (below) of a **Cedar Waxwing** she took on December 4, 2021, in Toano. Carol noted: "I usually take a lot of pictures of Cedar Waxwings later in the winter, but it was fun seeing these birds before the leaves blew off the trees."




**Judy Jones** and **Barbara Houston** traveled to Virginia Beach on December 13, 2021, to try to find a **Western Kingbird** (see Judy's photo below) which had been sighted there, beginning on December 9, at a retention pond behind a grocery store off of Princess Anne Road. Judy reports that she and Barbara were very lucky and got several opportunities to view this beautiful visitor. The last report in eBird of the kingbird at this location in December 2021 is dated December 17.



**Laura Mae**, a new WBC member, photographed a **Black-crowned Night Heron** (below) on Harbor Drive in Hampton during the December 18, 2021 Newport News Christmas Bird Count. Laura said: "Although eBird did not flag the sighting as rare, we were surprised to see the bird, and very happy to include it on our count!"



Your editor, **Mary Ellen Hodges**, had six **Baltimore Orioles** (photo collage below, as seen on Dec. 19, 2021) regularly visiting her backyard feeders at the time this newsletter was being finalized. The earliest of these orioles to appear in her yard this fall was first seen on September 3. The last of the six birds to join the crew arrived on December 10. This will be the sixth year in a row that a group of Baltimore Orioles has overwintered in Mary Ellen's downtown Williamsburg neighborhood. 







## 2022 Williamsburg Bird Club Membership Form

Name		
Address		
City	State	Zip
Email	Phone	

Your email will be used for WBC's email mailing list. You will receive announcements of upcoming bird walks, field trips, meetings, other events, and the full color email edition of the newsletter through this mailing list.

\_\_\_\_\_ Do you also want a b&w paper newsletter sent to your physical address?

**Membership:**      \_\_\_\_\_ New\*      \_\_\_\_\_ Renewing

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual      \$20

\_\_\_\_\_ Family      \$25

\_\_\_\_\_ Patron      \$35

\_\_\_\_\_ Student      \$5

\*How did you hear about the Bird Club?

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### I wish to make a contribution to:

\$\_\_\_\_\_ the Ruth Beck & Bill Sheehan Ornithological Research Grants Fund for W&M Students

\$\_\_\_\_\_ the Bill Williams Nature Camp Scholarship Fund

\$\_\_\_\_\_ the Child Development Resources Seed/Feeder Fund

\$\_\_\_\_\_ the Bird Club Conservation Fund

### Make your check payable to the Williamsburg Bird Club and mail to:

Williamsburg Bird Club  
P.O. Box 1085  
Williamsburg, VA 23187

Your membership dues and additional contributions are important to the mission of the Williamsburg Bird Club. Thank you! If you have questions about your membership, contact Membership Chair Jeanette Navia, [jnavia@gmail.com](mailto:jnavia@gmail.com).

**The Williamsburg Bird Club is exempt from federal income tax under 26 U.S.C. Section 501(c)(3) and is a non-profit organization eligible to receive tax deductible donations. A financial statement is available on request from the VA Office of Charitable and Regulatory Programs.**



**Williamsburg Bird Club**  
**PO Box 1085**  
**Williamsburg, VA 23187**

## **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/>