



# The Flyer

## Newsletter of the Williamsburg Bird Club

Vol. 47 No. 5

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

May 2023



### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Nancy Barnhart

Having just returned from five remarkable days of birding in Texas, I have been reflecting on the wide array of species my traveling companions and I saw. From plovers, Anhingas, cormorants, storks, spoonbills, ducks, raptors, sandpipers, gulls, terns, flycatchers, pipits, and many songbirds—warblers being the highlight—it was possible to observe the 171 species we saw because we had a plan. As a repeat trip we had personal experience upon which to draw. Had we been first-timers we would have found abundant information on the Internet and especially on eBird. Using all the eBird tools can help you enhance your birding experiences. Here in Virginia, we are lucky also to have the Division of Wildlife Resources' (DWR) Bird and Wildlife Trail as a resource.

In planning spring outings, a search on eBird can help point you in the right direction. Using eBird "Hotspots" ([ebird.org/hotspots](http://ebird.org/hotspots)) you can map out a plan that will allow you to search for the best birding wherever you are. Hotspots provide the total number of species seen in that location, the list of species, the details about sightings, as well as directions to get you there. If you need a starting point, you can explore a region, for example James City County (JCC). You will find there are 48 hotspots just within JCC with a total of 321 species observed over time. (Galveston, Texas has 140 hotspots with 439 species!) If you have a particular species you are hoping to see this spring, maybe one that is just passing through in migration, you can use the "Species Maps" (reached from eBird's [Explore](#) page) to help you find that bird. Using Bay-breasted Warbler, a rare spring migrant, as an example, you can search for it to see where it has been seen in the current year, the past ten years, or all years. You can limit your search to the area you are planning to visit or a wider area to see the species' current distribution. Again using James City County as an example and the last ten years as a time frame, (Continued on Page 2)

### UPCOMING PROGRAMS

By Patty Maloney

**May 24: 6:00 p.m. (in person at the Williamsburg Library and via Zoom): Presentation by Jan Lockwood, "The Best of Kenya."**



Join us on Wednesday, May 24 (fourth Wednesday of the month) at 6:00 p.m. as Jan Lockwood, a WBC member, shares with us her amazing birding adventure, "The Best of Kenya!" This will be a hybrid meeting (in-person and via Zoom) at the Williamsburg Library Theater on Scotland Street.

**Save the Date:** June 8 (second Thursday), 6:00 p.m. An outdoor get-together at the Chickahominy Riverfront Park picnic shelter by the pool. We will start with a short walk to visit the Purple Martin colony at the park, follow that with an update on the WBC's Purple Martin Project by Cheryl Jacobson and Judy Jones, and then we will enjoy refreshments! 🐦



*Lilac-breasted Roller (upper photo above) and Lesser Flamingos (lower photo, with Zebras in the background). Photos by Jan Lockwood.*

## WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB

### Executive Board 2023

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*Black-bellied Whistling Ducks sharing a bridge in Texas.  
Photo by Nancy Barnhart.*

### PRESIDENT'S CORNER, Continued from Page 1

eBird reports Bay-breasted Warblers occurred in five different hotspots including Greensprings Interpretive Trail, York River State Park, Freedom Park, Jamestown Island, and Chickahominy Riverfront Park. It will be a tricky bird to find, but using eBird will give you the best information about where to look.

The DWR website provides extensive information about the 65 trail loops that make up the Bird and Wildlife Trail across the state ([dwr.virginia.gov/vbwt/](http://dwr.virginia.gov/vbwt/)). Within each loop there are numerous sites to be explored. The state is divided into three regions: Mountain, Piedmont, and Coastal. Most of our local sites fall into the Lower Peninsula Loop. An example is New Quarter Park. Tapping on the link for this site will take you to a description of the site, directions, site information, birds recently seen, and a full list of the facilities. The site page includes a link to seasonal bird observations as reported in eBird. The Lower Peninsula Loop is described on the DWR website as consisting of "sites that are both out of the way and nestled among urban areas." Starting at York River State Park and ending in Hampton, many of the sites include waterfront, making them especially good for shorebirds and other waterbirds.

As we head into peak migration we're fortunate to have so many great birding spots and so many tools to help us explore them. And if you're traveling anywhere for any purpose, eBird can turn any trip into a birding trip! I hope you'll find your target or favorite birds. Maybe I'll see you out looking for that Bay-breasted Warbler!

Happy Birding! 



## MONTHLY BIRD WALKS — NEXT WALK ON SATURDAY, MAY 27

By Scott Hemler

It was a beautiful morning for our monthly bird walk at New Quarter Park on April 22! We were joined by members of the Middle Peninsula Bird Club. We saw 43 species of birds ([ebird.org/checklist/S134637499](http://ebird.org/checklist/S134637499))! Many of our summer residents had arrived. We saw or heard several Yellow-throated Warblers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Northern Parulas, Ovenbirds, and a Summer Tanager. The Ospreys are nesting on the platform by the Queens Lake Marina and one was sitting on the nest. We also got a great look at a very cooperative Great Egret! We were done with the walk before the storms moved in. It was great having the Middle Peninsula Bird Club join us! We hope to join them someday for a bird walk on the Middle Peninsula.

Our next bird walk will be on Saturday, May 27 at New Quarter Park. We'll meet in the parking lot by the park office at 8:00 a.m. Binoculars are available for check-out at the park office should anyone need them. 🐦



*Participants on the April 22 bird walk at New Quarter Park.  
Photo by Scott Hemler.*

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## UPCOMING FIELD TRIP, SATURDAY, MAY 13 – PINEY GROVE PRESERVE

By George Martin

The Club has been granted access for 15 members (maximum!) to visit Piney Grove Preserve on Saturday, May 13. This preserve is the home of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, which Chance Hines described at our March meeting. He'll be leading us around the preserve. It'll be EARLY – Chance recommends we take the **5:20 a.m.** ferry to Surry. We will

also need carpools, because space for cars is very limited in the preserve. Signups are on a first-come, first-served basis, by email to me at [grm0803@gmail.com](mailto:grm0803@gmail.com). As I'm writing this, one spot remains open. I will keep a waiting list in case anyone previously confirmed is not able to participate. 🐦

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## PARTICIPATE IN OUR SPRING BIRD COUNT ON MAY 7

The Williamsburg Bird Club will conduct our annual Spring Bird Count on Sunday, May 7. The Spring Bird Count is similar to the Christmas Bird Count, in which field teams and feeder watchers tally all of the birds

they observe within our 15-mile diameter circle over a 24-hour period. Contact Jim Corliss ([jcorliss240@cox.net](mailto:jcorliss240@cox.net)) if you have any questions about how to participate. 🐦

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## WBC MEMBERSHIP

April showers have brought May flowers, but we still have some members who have not yet paid their dues for 2023. If you need to renew your membership, or would like to join the Williamsburg Bird Club for the first time, you can do so online at <https://williamsburg-birdclub.org/membership>. While our online payment system is powered by PayPal, you do not need a PayPal account to pay by debit or credit card. Alternatively, you can download and print a membership form from the same web page which you can then mail in

with a check. We encourage you to mark the membership form to indicate that you wish to receive our newsletter only by email to save paper and allow the club to direct more of our income from dues to our programs and projects. It presently costs \$2.96 to print and mail each hard copy of *The Flyer*! If you wish to make an additional donation to our club's various programs when you pay your dues online, please click the "Continue Shopping" link in the upper right-hand corner of the screen after you are taken to your shopping cart. 🐦



## REPORT FROM THE APRIL FIELD TRIP TO NEWPORT NEWS PARK

By George Martin

On Saturday, April 15, Jason Strickland led fifteen bird club members on a walk at Newport News Park. Jason took the group through some sections of the park many hadn't seen before, and the varied habitat led to several interesting sightings. Good photography led to identification of an Eastern Kingbird at the top of a tree across the lake. After a short hike near the golf course, the group saw a Red-headed Woodpecker. Great Crested Flycatchers were heard in their usual habitat

at the top of the canopy. A walk down the power line cut yielded Field Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Common Yellowthroat, and an early Blue Grosbeak (eBird wanted documentation on that one!) In all, the group identified well over 50 species, with the complete list available via the following link: [ebird.org/checklist/S133858214](https://ebird.org/checklist/S133858214). 🐦



Scenes from the April field trip at Newport News Park. Clockwise from upper left: Great Blue Heron (photo by Lois Bridger); Trip participants gathered at the perfect fallen tree (George Martin); Great Egret (Lois Bridger); Red-headed Woodpecker (Lois Bridger); Common Yellowthroat (Lois Bridger); Brown Thrasher (Cindy Hamilton); Blue Grosbeak (Lois Bridger).

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## APPLICATIONS FOR VA MASTER NATURALIST BASIC TRAINING OPEN JUNE 1

The Historic Rivers Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists will offer Basic Training beginning September 5, 2023. Classes take place every other Tuesday evening from 6-9 p.m. starting September 5 and continuing through February, with graduation scheduled in March. Field trips are scheduled on Saturdays approximately once a month. If you have a love of nature, want to learn more about the world around you, and like to volunteer on activities benefiting nature in

your community, this course is for you. There is an expectation that members will provide at least 40 hours of volunteer service and obtain 8 hours of continuing education each year after graduation. Online applications will be available June 1 at <https://www.historicrivers.org/become-a-virginia-master-naturalist/>. If you are interested in more information, contact Shirley Devan, Co-Chair, Basic Training Committee at [shirley\\_devan@icloud.com](mailto:shirley_devan@icloud.com). 🐦

## IMPRESSIVE HIGH TECH AND COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH ARE FEATURED IN PRESENTATIONS BY STUDENT GRANT RECIPIENTS

Summary by Cathy Millar

At the WBC's monthly meeting on April 19, the three W&M students to whom our club awarded a Bill Sheehan/Ruth Beck Ornithology Research Grant in 2022 gave presentations on the questions posed by their research and their results to date. Dan Cristol, W&M Chancellor Professor of Biology, introduced each of the students, first noting how important our club's donation is toward students conducting research projects on a slim budget.

The first presentation of the evening, "Egg Vibrations in Response to Parental Calls: Genuine Feedback or Scrambled Eggs!", was delivered by 2<sup>nd</sup> year graduate student, Liz Elliot, who will soon be starting her career as a biology teacher at Phoebus High School in Hampton. Liz, who has been studying the potential communication between parent birds and the developing embryo in the egg, reported that it has been established that parents do "talk" to their developing offspring but it is not known if and how the embryos respond. She described how Zebra Finches, who are native to Australia's deserts, regularly endure heat above 100° F. When the temperature rises above 80° F, the parents emit a unique "heat" call that becomes more frequent the hotter it gets. Other researchers found that when they played this call to finch eggs in the absence of heat, the hatchlings were more heat tolerant. Liz wanted to know if there is immediate feedback from parental communication that could be measured: Do the embryo's heart rate and limb movements create vibrations that are felt by the incubating parent and nearby embryo siblings? Liz began addressing this larger issue by posing two initial questions: 1. Do eggs vibrate and, if so, how fast and how strongly? and 2. Do heat calls cause eggs to vibrate differently? Using lasers, Liz was able to measure the frequency and amplitude of movement in the egg. When she played the heat-call, she recorded variations of very low frequency vibrations resulting from the embryo's muscle movement. Collaborators in this research are planning to make robotic eggs that will vibrate at the frequencies Liz has recorded to see if and how the parent reacts and whether embryos in the nest have some response. She concluded that this ancient form of communication needs a lot more research, including how it may be affected by loud noise from human activity.

The second presentation, "Worlds Collide: Conservation and Engineering Meet in the Form of a Bird Collision Sensor," was delivered by Moira Meehan, an

August 2022 W&M biology master's graduate who currently works for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a regulator protecting our wetlands. Moira reported that collisions associated with human actions are a leading cause of bird mortality but estimates of the number of birds impacted each year range widely because of limited scientific research. The Swainson's Thrush, American Robin, Dark-eyed Junco, and White-throated Sparrow are the most frequent colliders recorded in North America and there is interest in understanding why some species are more prone to collision deaths than others. There are known factors correlated with collisions, and Moira's interest is in how birds perceive light conditions affected by weather and time of day on buildings. Because we don't have data showing when birds are likely to strike buildings, Moira decided to create a device for recording bird collisions in real time. She went to W&M's Makerspace for help in picking out hardware, sensors, programming information, and help assembling a prototype of a collision detector. The detector was further refined through collaboration with interested researchers at Indiana University and their engineering department. The detector consists of a miniature computer with a microphone and vibrometer to detect impact on a window and a second miniature computer containing a camera that records constantly and has a circular buffer that saves a video clip only when both the microphone and vibrometer are triggered. Although Moira has graduated, interested W&M undergraduate students have taken up her research and have connected the sensor to Wi-Fi so they can receive live data on their laptops. They've focused it on the Kaplan Arena. The resulting data should give us an understanding of the time and weather conditions that may influence bird collisions and the sensor may also prove valuable in testing the efficacy of products meant to prevent collisions.

The final presentation, "Full Metal Sparrow: Investigating Behavioral Adaptation to Environmental Lead Contamination in an Urban Passerine," was given by Joseph ("Joey") Di Liberto, a 2<sup>nd</sup> year graduate student who plans to continue his research while pursuing his Ph.D. He began by noting that lead, a "forever" chemical that doesn't break down and go away, is a major health concern for humans and wildlife. A study last year found that one-half of all Bald and Golden eagles in the U. S. suffer from chronic lead poisoning. Lead causes a litany of negative health effects (*Continued on Page 6*)



## STUDENT RESEARCH, Continued from Page 5

including a decrease of bone density and shifts in behavior due to cognitive and neurological damage. Amazingly, there have been recent potential signs of adaptation in fish called Mummichogs that live in heavily polluted portions of the Elizabeth River. They are showing a higher expression of genes associated with pollution resistance to help them survive. There had been no reports of similar adaptation in terrestrial animals until a 2019 study in an isolated town in Australia called Broken Hill, which is the oldest lead mining community there, started in 1893. House Sparrows were introduced there over 100 years ago and currently, despite extremely toxic lead levels in the soil and in their blood, there is a very big sparrow population that is reproducing and doing fine! Geneticists found that these sparrows have evolved to avoid lead poisoning and this finding stimulated a world-wide, multi-university research collaboration. Subsequent research has shown an apparent physiological tolerance to lead exposure in the sparrows, which has led researchers to wonder whether this adaptation also extends to behavior. Joey flew to Australia in the summer of 2022 and conducted research on House

Sparrows in Broken Hill to test for degree of aggression when he handled them; their take-off flight performance; and their activity in a novel environment. He then banded the sparrows and released them for future observation. He predicted that there would be no difference in these behaviors between these sparrows and uncontaminated sparrows due to genetic adaptation. Please refer to the video of our meeting for Joey's interesting account of how he measured behavior, which included his buying wood with the funds from our grant to build structures for his tests. The results of Joey's research in Australia showed that the only difference between the highly- and the less-contaminated sparrows was that the highly-contaminated ones were a little slower in take-off, which could affect their ability to escape a predator. Joey is currently continuing his research by dosing non-adaptive House Sparrows in the U.S. with lead to compare the results with those in Broken Hill.

It is really inspiring to hear the details of the research conducted by our grant recipients, so please check out the full presentations captured on video and posted to the WBC's YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/aq70NsKsNG0>. 🐦

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## HISTORICAL OBSERVATIONS OF RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER IN VIRGINIA

By Rexanne Bruno

I thoroughly enjoyed Chance Hines's presentation on the Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCWO) population recovery in Virginia at the WBC's meeting on March 15, 2023. I was shocked to learn that the RCWO population in Virginia was so threatened that there were only two known breeding pairs in 2002. *Virginia's Bird-life: An Annotated Checklist*, published by the Virginia Society of Ornithology (VSO) (2007), states that the RCWO population in Virginia plummeted primarily due to logging. Thanks to the partnership of the Center for Conservation Biology, the Nature Conservancy, the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the population of RCWO in Virginia has been closely monitored and managed since 2002. Chance indicated that the Piney Grove Preserve/Big Woods Wildlife Management Area (WMA) population has been growing and is stable. One of his slides showed that in 2020 over 30 RCWO fledged in Virginia.

My interest was piqued, so I went in search of any historical observations of RCWO close to Williamsburg. As the VA/DC Regional Christmas Bird Count Editor, I first looked at Christmas Bird Count (CBC) historical records. The RCWO has been spotted on only a few CBCs in Virginia. It was only recorded once each on

the Norfolk County CBC in 1967 and on the 2005 Mathews County CBC, and there was a Count Week (up to three days before or after the date of a given Christmas Bird Count) sighting on the Newport News CBC in 1985. The Back Bay CBC recorded 31 birds on 12 counts from 1923 to 1977. The five RCWOs seen in 1971 was the highest number seen on the Back Bay CBC. The Dismal Swamp CBC recorded 12 RCWOs on five CBCs from 2016 through 2022; the most RCWOs seen on the Dismal Swamp CBC was 4 in 2022. Unfortunately, there is no Virginia CBC that includes the Piney Grove Preserve or Big Woods WMA.

Then I looked at historical records in eBird. First I checked older 20<sup>th</sup>-century sightings. Records were to be expected from the Piney Grove Preserve and Big Wood WMA area in Sussex County but, interestingly, other records included the following:

- The earliest eBird record is one bird from April 4, 1970 on Pungo Ferry Road, Virginia Beach. The eBird comments for this sighting state that this is a known location for the species.

(Continued on Page 7)

## RCWO in VA, Continued from Page 6

- An eBird historical record from *The Birds of Virginia's Colonial Historic Triangle* for Dare Road in York County gives dates for two sightings: February 3, 1985 and February 13, 1985.
- There is also a June 3, 1990 record for a Cape Charles Audubon Society field trip to Gray in Sussex County.

There are numerous eBird sightings from 1973 to 2000 in the Piney Grove Preserve and Big Woods WMA area of Sussex County. After 2000, the only eBird listings are from 2015 to 2022 in the Great Dismal Swamp in Chesapeake and from 2001 through 2023 in the Piney Grove Preserve and Big Woods WMA area of Sussex County.

Next, I turned to the earliest edition of *A Checklist of The Birds of Virginia* by Joseph James Murphy and published by the VSO in 1952. This early reference states the following about the RCWO in Virginia, "Scarce resident in the southeastern corner of the State, from Richmond south to Brunswick County and east," and includes this sighting, "two at Swift Creek, near Richmond, June 17, 1937, and four, including two young, on June 18."

The May 1979 edition of *Virginia's Birdlife: An Annotated Checklist*, published by the VSO, breaks down the records to the three physiographic areas of the state:

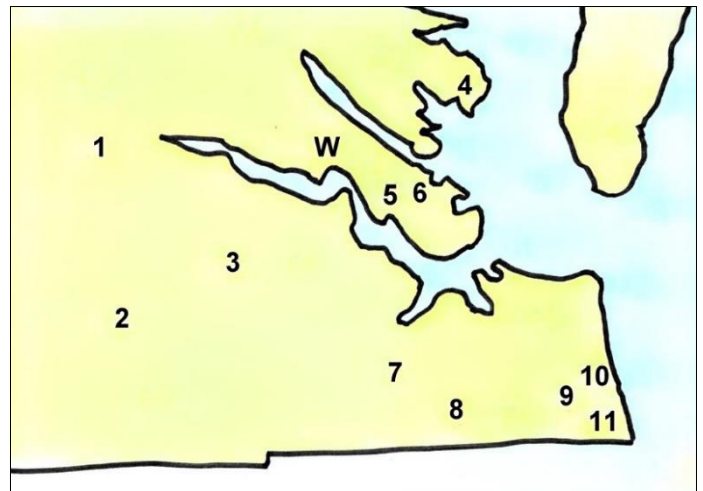
- In the Coastal Plain, the RCWO is listed as a Rare Permanent Resident south of Chesapeake Bay and James and Appomattox rivers. Apparently decreasing in recent years. (The only listed breeding records are from Sussex County.) The 1978 state population was estimated at fewer than 50.
- In the Piedmont, it is listed as a Rare Permanent Resident in eastern Brunswick County. Formerly recorded in Albemarle, Chesterfield, and Dinwiddie counties. The only known nesting sites were in eastern Brunswick County from 1972-1977.
- The only Mountain and Valleys record listed is 1 seen, 4 others heard, Cumberland Gap, Lee County, October 21, 1973.

The next edition of *Virginia's Birdlife: An Annotated Checklist*, published by the VSO in June 1987, reiterates what appears in the 1979 edition but adds this northerly record (also mentioned above), "1, Dare, York Co. 1 Mar 1985-20 Oct 1986," and also stated that the 1986 state population was estimated to be about 25 individuals.

So, the historical sightings of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers that are closest to Williamsburg geographically are:

- A fairly recent Mathews County CBC record (2005) is the closest northeast of Williamsburg (Location #4 on accompanying map).
- To the southeast, there are two that are close: the Dare Road, York County record (two February 1985 records) (#6) and the Newport News CBC Count Week sighting (December 1985) (#5).
- South of Williamsburg there are several recent Dismal Swamp CBC records (2016, 2017, 2018, 2021, and 2022) (#7).
- Piney Grove Preserve and the Big Woods WMA, southwest of Williamsburg, have numerous historical and recent records (#3).
- West of Williamsburg, the nearest sighting would be the historical one at Swift Creek, near Richmond, in 1937 (#1).

The best place to see Red-cockaded Woodpeckers today is the Piney Grove Preserve and the Big Woods Wildlife Management Area. You can venture down by yourself or there are two upcoming field trips to see RCWOs led by Chance Hines. The first one is a Williamsburg Bird Club trip on May 13, 2023. (See Page 3 of this newsletter for further information about this trip.) The second field trip is sponsored by the VSO on May 28, 2023. For more information on this trip, see the VSO field trip webpage at <https://www.virginiabirds.org/vso-events>. 🐦



*Red-cockaded Woodpecker Sightings in Southeastern Virginia. Map Key: W = Williamsburg; 1 = Swift Creek, Chesterfield County; 2 = Gray, Sussex County; 3 = Piney Grove and Big Woods, Sussex County; 4 = Mathews County; 5 = Newport News; 6 = Dare Rd, York County; 7 = Dismal Swamp, Suffolk County; 8 = Norfolk County (now Chesapeake); 9 = Pungo Ferry Road, Virginia Beach; 10 = Back Bay; 11 = Cedar Island in Back Bay.*

## BOOK REVIEW

By Gary Carpenter

### The Feather Thief

By Kirk Wallace Johnson

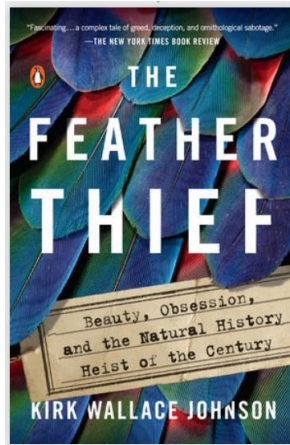
Penguin Books, 2018

(ISBN 9781101981634)

This book was given to me by a neighbor simply because she knew I was a birder and this was a book about birds. I was a bit skeptical when I first picked it up, not sure that I was going to get into a book about feather stealing. But it is, indeed, about birds . . . and so much more.

While *The Feather Thief* is not a book specifically about birding, I would suggest it is a book of interest to all birders. Its subtitle is "*Beauty, Obsession, and the Natural History Heist of the Century*." It covers numerous areas of interest: history, exploration, natural history, evolution, conservation, fly-tying, true crime, criminal detection, apprehension, a trial with psychological twists, and a hunt for lost treasures. And the events related all happened within the last 14 years. As a birder with, at least, a pop-interest in things ornithological, I wondered as I read the book why I had never heard of any of these happenings.

A quote from the jacket cover should pique your interest as it did mine:



On a cool June evening in 2009, after performing a concert at London's Royal Academy of Music, twenty-year old [American] flautist Edwin Rist boarded a train for a suburban outpost of the British Museum of Natural History. Home to one of the largest ornithological collections in the world, the Tring museum was full of rare bird specimens whose gorgeous feathers were worth staggering amounts of money to the men who shared Edwin's obsession: the Victorian art of salmon fly-tying. Once inside the museum, Edwin grabbed hundreds of bird skins—some collected 150 years earlier—and escaped into the darkness.

Reads like fiction . . . but isn't! Johnson has produced an excitingly written story that weaves the threads of these different subjects into an exciting tapestry of natural history, obsession, nature, greed, crime, and the search for justice. This is a well-written story of science, passion, detection, and treasure. Even if you know little or nothing of natural history, the science of evolution, birds, or fly-tying, this book does a wonderful job of bringing these subjects all together in a real-life page-turning adventure.

*The Feather Thief* was the American Birding Association's Best Book of the Year (2018), as well as a finalist for Best True Crime Edgar Award (2019), and it was an Amazon Best Book of the Year (2019). I think you might enjoy it. 🐦

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## TOM McCARY'S LEGACY

By Ann Carpenter, WBC Treasurer

Cathy Millar recently shared a picture that she took of longtime Williamsburg Bird Club member Tom McCary's headstone at the Cedar Grove Cemetery. The inscription "Loved Teaching, Books, Nature, Family, Friends and His Faith" led our Board to want to remind club members of the generous donation that Tom made to the club to support the Bill Williams Nature Camp Scholarship program. Tom passed away on January 6, 2021. You can read a tribute to Tom in an article written by Bill Williams in the February 2021 issue of *The Flyer*.

In early 2020, I learned that Tom was working on an estate plan that would leave a generous donation to the WBC. I was asked to research the best way to accept and invest the donation. In the past, our club has purchased CDs when extra funds became available and were not needed immediately. Considering the usual interest rates on CDs, I knew that there must be

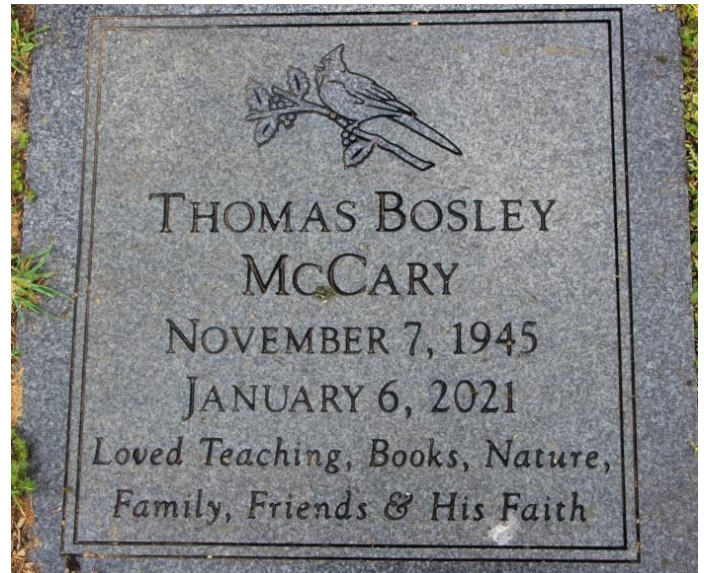
a better way to invest the amount that Tom had wanted to donate. I suggested that Tom consider setting up a fund in the Williamsburg Community Foundation (WCF). I became aware of the WCF when working with Amy Millin, Jeanne and Mike Millin's daughter-in-law, on a donation to support a Nature Camp Scholarship that she and her husband wanted to make in honor of Jeanne and Mike's 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. The mission of the WCF, a tax-exempt public charity, is to connect people who care with causes that matter in our community . . . forever. The Foundation is a collection of gifts given by local donors. The gifts are invested. Each year earnings are returned to the community in the form of grants. These funds grow with each new gift and produce income that will continue to meet local needs for generations to come. The WCF is overseen by a volunteer board  
(Continued on Page 9)



## TOM McCARY, Continued from Page 8

of leading citizens and run by professionals with expertise in knowing our community's needs.

I contacted WCF staff and then connected Tom and his attorney with them. As a result, following his death, the Thomas Bosley McCary Fund to support the WBC's Nature Camp program was established by his estate in the Williamsburg Community Foundation. Each spring the club receives a check from the WCF equivalent to 3.5% of the amount in the McCary Fund. Currently, that distribution amount is around \$1,400. Tom's contribution to Nature Camp is recognized each year in our donation transmittal letter to Nature Camp. This donation is lasting evidence of a life devoted to education, scholarship, and birds. 🐦



*The headstone marking Tom McCary's grave in Cedar Grove Cemetery. Photo by Cathy Millar.*

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## RECENT SIGHTINGS

**Lois Bridger** is a relatively new member of our club who lives in British Columbia. While recently visiting her parents, **Joanne and Alex Andrews**, also WBC members, she was able to participate in our field trip to Newport News Park on April 15. After birding in the morning at the park, Lois, Joanne, and Alex returned to the Andrews's home in Queens Lake to find a **Barred Owl** waiting for them, sitting beside the deck. Birding together at the Andrews's home continued over the next few days with Joanne capturing a photo of a dazzling **Prothonotary Warbler** near the deck on April 16.



*Barred Owl. Photo by Lois Bridger.*

**Ivan Munkres** reported an exciting find at Lake Matoaka on April 19. Ivan serves as a teaching assistant for Dan Cristol's ornithology class at W&M. On the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup>, Ivan was birding with half of the class at the Keck Lab dock, and Dan was with the remainder of the class at the Jamestown Road dam, when Ivan spotted an **Anhinga** flying south and veering off to the west above the trees. Ivan immediately called Dan, who was able to view the bird a few minutes later with his group at the dam. They relocated the bird soon after, soaring and circling many hundreds of feet up in the air. The Anhinga was a lifer for Ivan and a first for the City of Williamsburg. 🐦



*Prothonotary Warbler. Photo by Joanne Andrews.*



**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/>