



# The Flyer

## Newsletter of the Williamsburg Bird Club

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

June 2025



### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Nancy Barnhart

June greetings. It's hard to believe we're already six months into 2025. We've had a wonderful first half of the year. Our May meeting, the last indoor meeting until September, featured spectacular photography as we all journeyed to Chile with Dixie Sommers. What's cuter than a waddle of Magellanic Penguins? Also in the May meeting was the special treat of witnessing Virginia Society of Ornithology awards being presented to Dixie and to Bill Williams for their outstanding service to the VSO. Other May events included a successful field trip to Ford's Colony led by George Martin and our always fun bird walk at New Quarter Park led by Scott Hemler. This is our last newsletter until September. Mary Ellen Hodges has done an outstanding job providing us with six beautiful newsletters so far in 2025. She will have a well-deserved break in July and August, resuming in September.

As usual, spring migration was a whirlwind of great birds passing through or arriving for breeding season here in the Historic Triangle. Our area parks delivered with an impressive array of species. Twenty-nine species of warbler were recorded, thirty if you include the "displaced" Yellow-breasted Chat, once classified as a warbler, now in its own family. Worried at first about the lack of some of our more "common" warblers—American Redstart, for example—we can be happy that numbers rallied as the month went on.

Ken and I made our annual trip to the mountains of Virginia to catch up with a couple of favorite warblers seen at higher elevations. I hold my breath every year, worried their numbers will be down, but this year was encouraging. In a mile and a half walk we found at least eleven Cerulean Warblers singing from the tops of the canopy. As a "near-threatened" species it was an impressive presence for one spring morning. Cerulean Warblers have been in a precipitous decline (Continued on Page 2)

### UPCOMING PROGRAMS

By Patty Maloney

**June 18, 6:00 p.m. (In-person only), Chickahominy Riverfront Park, Picnic Shelter by the pool: Judy Jones, "Bluebird Chicks at the Chick!"**

Join us on June 18 at 6:00 p.m. for our annual outdoor gathering at the Chickahominy Riverfront Park, Pool Picnic Shelter, for socializing, snacks, and bluebirds! You won't want to miss Judy Jones and her update on the "Bluebird Chicks at the Chick!"

**Save the date:** September 17, Jamie Wick, "Costa Rica: Exploring the Osa Peninsula and the Tarcoles River".

**Note:** If you missed Dixie Sommers's presentation, "Birding in Chile", at our May 21 meeting you can watch it on the WBC's YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/3C4Rh6QfR5g>. 🐦



*The Big Bite. An Eastern Bluebird with its capture of what appears to be a type of scarab beetle. Photograph by Judy Jones.*

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

due to habitat loss in breeding, wintering, and migratory grounds. These high-in-the-canopy birds prefer mixed deciduous forests with openings or gaps in the canopy to feed and nest. Thinning the canopy and preserving white oak trees has been beneficial to this species success. Research and management have made a marked improvement in their plight.

We hope to see you on June 18 at the Chickahominy Riverfront Park where we will hear an update on the area's bluebirds. We will also learn about and see the changes at that park that have adversely affected the Purple Martin colony. We thank Cathy Flanagan for her creative planning for this fun event.

As we head into summer, please remember to take photos of your summer adventures to share in our September newsletter. I hope you all have a happy, healthy, and fun summer wherever you spend it. 🐦



*Cerulean (top) and Canada (bottom) warblers, photographed by Nancy Barnhart.*

## WBC MEMBERSHIP

Please welcome new members Anne Kirchgessner and Dorothy Geyer!

The purpose of the Williamsburg Bird Club is to promote interest in the study of wild birds and in the protection of birds and their habitats. To join our club or

renew your WBC membership for 2025, please go to <https://williamsburgbirdclub.org/membership> where you can either complete a membership form and pay your dues using PayPal online or download a form for printing and submitting by mail with a check. 🐦

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## BIRD WALKS: Next Walk is June 28

By Scott Hemler

We had 13 people come out on a beautiful morning on May 24, the Saturday before Memorial Day, for our monthly bird walk! We observed 30 species of birds. Some highlights were several Bald Eagles and Ospreys flying overhead at the dock along Queens Creek as well as hearing two Clapper Rails in the marsh. One of the most memorable moments was listening to the beautiful song of a Wood Thrush singing in the woods! Many other summer residents were also seen or heard such as Yellow-throated Warbler, Acadian Flycatcher, and Great Crested Flycatcher. It was

a fabulous morning for a walk in the woods and the birds did not disappoint!

We will continue our “4<sup>th</sup> Saturday” bird walks at New Quarter Park through the summer. The next three walks are scheduled for June 28, July 26, and August 23. Meet the group in the parking lot by the park office at 8:00 a.m. Bring binoculars if you have them, or borrow some from the office. The walk is free and open to the public. 🐦



*Some of the birders who participated in our May 24 walk at New Quarter Park. Photo by Scott Hemler.*

## FIELD TRIP REPORT

By George Martin

On Saturday, May 17, fourteen birders, including several residents, gathered at Ford's Colony to walk the community's Nature Trail and the nearby pond. And the birds did not disappoint! Flycatchers were, as usual, easy to hear and tough to see, but a Great Crested Flycatcher gave the group good looks near the start of the day. The Purple Martin colony was thriving, as many of the birds foraged over Chisel Run Pond. A Red-headed Woodpecker explored cavities in a tall dead tree near one of the main roads. A Barred Owl appeared near the long boardwalk but mostly kept its back turned to the group. Catbirds, bluebirds, and robins were plentiful. The group identified 50 species over the morning. The following link below is to the eBird checklist for the walk: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S239252917>.



*Red-headed Woodpecker photographed by Virginia Wycoff during the May 17 field trip at Ford's Colony.*

It's time to take the summer off for field trips. We'll resume in September. 🐦



*George Martin, WBC's field trip chairperson and a resident of Ford's Colony, led fourteen birders around the community for our May 17 field trip. Participants from left to right are: Jan Lockwood, Portia Belden, Babs Giffin, Hiro Imakoji, Sophie Imakoji, Sue Anderson, Tom Christensen, George Martin, Bruce Glendening, Jeanette Weinberg, Trish Stahlhut, and Mike Whitfield. Virginia Wycoff took the photograph.*

## VSO HONORS BILL WILLIAMS FOR HIS SERVICE

By Shirley Devan, Chair, VSO Awards Committee

At its annual meeting on May 1, held virtually, the Virginia Society of Ornithology (VSO) announced that WBC member, Bill Williams, is the recipient of its 2025 Myriam P. Moore Award, the VSO's highest honor. Shirley Devan, chair of the VSO Awards Committee, presented the award to Bill in person at the May 21 meeting of the Williamsburg Bird Club. This rare award recognizes the highest level of achievement in service areas, as well as long continuous service and a demonstrated devotion to the principles and objectives of the Virginia Society of Ornithology.

Bill has been elected to multiple terms on the VSO board since he joined the organization in 1972:

- Served as Treasurer (twice)
- Vice President (more than once, and his current position)
- President (twice)
- *Virginia Birds* editor and contributor
- Nominating Committee Chair (multiple times)
- Longtime leader and member of Virginia Avian Record Committee (VARCOM).

Dr. Bob Ake, who has also received the Myriam P. Moore Award, says of Bill:

No individual is more valuable to the VSO than Bill Williams. . . . For several decades he has been the glue that has held the organization together at critical times and at the same time he has been the oil that has allowed the organization to operate smoothly in its day-to-day operation.

Bill has been elected the organization's president multiple times, a strong affirmation of the support he has maintained through his leadership and constant attention to details the VSO requires to uphold the standards the organization has held through the years. Among Bill's special interests is making sure that the VSO maintains a vibrant research and education thrust. At the center of this effort is the annual award of research grants to young researchers pursuing work with the birds of Virginia and the

presentation of the results at the VSO Annual Meetings.

Much of the guidance for initiating the recent Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas came from Bill. The direction he supplied established a framework for the successful research and compilation of data leading to the formal publication of the results of the project soon.

There is no one who deserves the Myriam Moore Award for the leadership within the VSO more than Bill Williams.

The VSO is grateful for Bill's long-term commitment to the VSO as well as the birds and the birders of Virginia. Thank you! 🐦



Shirley Devan presents the VSO's 2025 Myriam P. Moore Award to Bill Williams at the WBC's May 21 meeting. Photo by Deborah Humphries.

## 2025 SPRING BIRD COUNT: FINAL NUMBERS

By Shirley Devan, Count Compiler

We had 101 participants in our Club's 48<sup>th</sup> Spring Bird Count (SBC), held on April 27, 2025! Thanks to you all for your steps in the field and your watchful eyes in your neighborhoods and yards.

The final numbers for our 2025 count across the 12 geographic sectors in our count area are a total of 9,654 individual birds representing 137 species. Per Jim Corliss, Count Compiler Emeritus, our SBC species high count is 166 and it occurred twice, in 1989 and 1996. The low species count is 133 from 2022. The average species count from 1978 thru 2024 is 151.

Highest individual birds per species in 2025: Northern Cardinal with 565 individuals. Next highest: Canada Goose (350) and American Robin (348). Our once endangered and threatened species put on a good show: 101 Bald Eagles and 121 Osprey.

Notable misses in 2025: Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Eastern Screech Owl, Night Herons (Yellow-crowned and Black-crowned), Bobolinks, and Brown Pelicans.

Below are species totals for each sector and the sector leaders. Keep in mind that not all sectors are equal. Sector sizes are different, number of field participants is not same for each sector, and habitat is different for each sector.

- Cheatham Annex – 96; Nancy Barnhart and Babs Giffin, sector leaders
- College Woods – 73 species; Bill Williams
- Ford's Colony – 57 species; Sharon Plocher
- Gloucester – 65 species; Dave Yeager
- Hog Island – 76 species; Terri Cuthriell
- Jamestown – 99; Dan Cristol
- Jolly Pond – 88; Deborah Humphries
- Kingsmill – 78; Cheryl Jacobson
- Middle Plantation – 76; Hugh Beard
- Skimino – 70; Nick Flanders
- Waller Mill – 86; Rose Ryan
- Warhill – 55 species; George Martin

Let me know if you want the Excel spreadsheet with species counts for each sector.

Thank you all! 🐦

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## MY PARTNERS IN CITIZEN SCIENCE

By Virginia Wycoff

December of 2022, I took the plunge. I finally, at long last, emailed Jim Corliss and told him that I would like to participate on a field team for the Christmas Bird Count. I had previously watched at my backyard feeders for both the Christmas and Spring bird counts, but it was time to increase my commitment. I was immediately hooked on the thrill of these events. I have volunteered for every count since then.

For the Spring Bird Count this year, Shirley Devan contacted me to see if I could substitute for Rexanne Bruno in a portion of the Kingsmill Sector that she has been leading. Of course I agreed. It is a beautiful section of our territory.

I prefer to bird with a group, since my ability to locate birds in leaf-filled trees is not my strong suit. Unfortunately, due to a variety of unforeseen circumstances, I was without team members just four days before the count. I begged my good friend, Jan Biennas—literally a first-time birder with her brand-new binoculars—to join me just after dawn. How exciting to have an

opportunity to bird with her! And thanks to a plea from Shirley Devan, I was lucky to have Ralph and Martha Moss offer to join me mid-morning for the second part of the walk. (Continued on Page 7)



*Janice Biennas on the 2025 Spring Bird Count.  
Photo by Virginia Wycoff.*

**CITIZEN SCIENCE PARTNERS, Cont. from Page 6**

I greatly appreciated having their eyes on the birds. Anyone who birds knows the value of extra eyes and ears. The more people you have, the more you hear and see. The team enjoyed the birding, identifying 53 species and 259 individual birds. Martha took some gorgeous photos, and I saw first-hand that she is also a “botanical wizard,” to use Shirley’s words.

If you are hesitant to volunteer for a Bird Count, rest assured that you could help more than you realize. Bring your eyes and ears and get ready to contribute to a fun and high-value day of Citizen Science. If you are unable or reluctant to commit a large block of time, consider volunteering to participate for just part of the day.

Note: The Christmas Bird Count this year will be on December 14. Please put the date on your calendar now, even if you are not quite ready to commit! 🐦



*Summer Tanager (top) and Black-and-white Warbler (bottom) photographed by Martha B. Moss in Kingsmill during the 2025 Spring Bird Count.*



*Ralph and Martha Moss on the 2025 Spring Bird Count at Kingsmill. Photo by Melissa Beattie-Moss.*

## RECENT SIGHTINGS

**Keith Kennedy** had some beautiful birds in his backyard during the first week of May and captured equally beautiful photos of them. Pictured below are an **Orchard Oriole** (left) and a **White-eyed Vireo** (right).



In a [news story](#) published in August 2018, Brian Watts reported on a “three-day, cursory search” for Anhinga breeding locations in Virginia conducted by the Center for Conservation Biology during that summer. The survey “resulted in the location of six breeding sites, including fifteen active nests scattered across five jurisdictions in coastal Virginia,” with Watts concluding that the Anhinga “is well-established as a breeding species in Virginia.” Still, sightings of Anhinga in Virginia remain terribly exciting for most of us. During the first week of May, **Carol Annis** had an **Anhinga** at her neighborhood pond in Toano. She was able to watch it eat some fish and captured some great photos (see next page) of the front and back of the bird as it dried off after diving. On May 23, **Deborah Humphries** captured a photo (below) of eleven **Anhingas** she and Bill Williams observed flying over Greensprings Interpretive Trail!





Joanne Andrews shared the photo below of a pair of **Summer Tanagers** visiting her feeders in her Queens Lake neighborhood in May. Lucky Joanne!

While birding Mainland Farm on May 19, **Deborah Humphries** captured a lovely photo of a **Blue Grosbeak** (immediately below). Deborah noted that "There's a family group out there now. The youngsters are sitting on top of the wheat, trying to eat it. It's pretty cute." Deborah also remarked that the **Barn Swallows** at Mainland Farm are "adorable," as evidenced by the one she photographed (second below) on May 12.





**Williamsburg Bird Club**  
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**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 5% 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/>