



# The Flyer

## Newsletter of the Williamsburg Bird Club

Vol. 50 No. 1

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

January 2026



### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Nancy Barnhart

Happy New Year all! I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and are ready for a whole new year of great times with the Williamsburg Bird Club. 2026 will be the 49<sup>th</sup> year of the WBC, and

thanks to all of you, we are a strong and vibrant organization as we head toward the club's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2027.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the returning WBC Executive Board: Vice-President, Newsletter, Mary Ellen Hodges; Treasurer, Ann Carpenter; Secretary, Cathy Millar; Members-at-Large, Donna Benson and Deborah Humphries; and Past President, Cheryl Jacobson. Along with Committee Chairs, the Board meets quarterly and performs many year-round behind-the-scenes jobs to keep the club running smoothly. Please see the entire Board listed on Page 2 of this newsletter.

A big welcome to our new board member Rexanne Bruno. Rexanne will be taking over from Patty Maloney as Vice-President, Programs. I would like to extend a big thank you to Patty for her many years of outstanding work as Vice-President, lining up our presentations and speakers, arranging our indoor and outdoor meeting spaces, filling in to conduct meetings, being the "MC" of door prizes and an invaluable help to me in bringing off great meetings. Job well done, Patty!

A big thank you also to all of you who braved everything winter could throw at us as we conducted our Williamsburg Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Please read more about the count in this newsletter and be patting yourselves on the back for your excellent efforts.

We are very fortunate to live in the Coastal Plain for plenty of reasons, and of course one of them is the (Continued on Page 2)

### UPCOMING PROGRAMS

By Rexanne Bruno

**January 21: Bobby Clontz with The Nature Conservancy will present on "The Restoration and Management of the Pine Savannah in Southeast Virginia."** Arrive at 6:00 p.m. for light refreshments followed by the program and meeting at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in-person at the Quarterpath Recreation Center and via Zoom.

Bobby's presentation will include information on pine savanna and other embedded habitats found in the Coastal Plain of Virginia (vernal pools, canebrakes) and the associated species. He will provide the historical context that led to the loss of pine savanna and these species (primarily in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries) and discuss the recovery efforts that began in the 1990s.



*The Nature Conservancy's Piney Grove Preserve near Wakefield, VA (Sussex County). Photo by Bobby Clontz.*

**Save the Date:** February 18. Sergio Harding, Nongame Bird Conservation Biologist with the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, will talk on the Second Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas. The results from this breeding bird atlas were recently published online. 🐦

**WILLIAMSBURG BIRD CLUB  
Executive Board 2024**

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**Committee Chairpersons 2024**

<b>Membership/Webmaster</b> Jeanette Navia	757-707-3345 <a href="mailto:jnavia@gmail.com">jnavia@gmail.com</a>
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<b>Bird Counts/Liaison to VSO</b> Shirley Devan	757-813-1322 <a href="mailto:shirley_devan@icloud.com">shirley_devan@icloud.com</a>
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<b>Conservation Committee</b> Cheryl J. Jacobson	303-519-0989 <a href="mailto:icheryljoy@aol.com">icheryljoy@aol.com</a>
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<b>Liaison to CDR/Assistant Editor</b> Gary Carpenter	757-221-6683 <a href="mailto:carpent66@cox.net">carpent66@cox.net</a>

**WBC MEMBERSHIP— RENEWALS ARE DUE  
JANUARY 31**

**Please welcome our many new members:** Kathleen O’Kane Kreutzer, Terry Doran, Samantha Parker-Fann, Meredith and Lee Bell, Robin Wollaeger, Ermei Jia, and Berrett Robison!

**To join our club or renew your membership for 2026,** please go to <https://williamsburg-birdclub.org/join-the-wbc/>, 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. Our membership form can also be printed from Page 9 of this newsletter.



**Renewals for the new year are due by January 31, 2026. In accordance with the WBC’s By-laws, membership is automatically terminated if annual dues remain unpaid by April 1.**

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

great diversity of avian species found here. Of the 500 species of birds recorded in the state of Virginia, 364 have been recorded in the Historic Triangle which includes James City County, York County, City of Williamsburg, and Hog Island Wildlife Management Area in Surry County. Without traveling far, we can potentially find almost 73% of all the birds tallied in the state. We have access to many waterways, wetlands, and marshes, as well as forested land, open areas, and suburban landscapes that are home to many of our “everyday” birds.

Our WBC bird walks and field trips will take us to many of the “birdy” hotspots. Please let us know if there are places you would like us to consider adding to the rotation. We would also love to have additional leaders for our trips. Consider leading or co-leading one of our outings. We are “team birders” when we’re out together so you don’t have to know every bird! Also please send your photos, reviews, articles, observations, and travel highlights to Mary Ellen for our monthly newsletters which highlight club activities and members. It’s fun to see how active and engaged a group we are!

Here’s to a happy, healthy, kind, and birdy New Year. I hope to see you all soon! 🐦



The video recording of James Abbott's presentation at our November 19 meeting on "Birding in New Zealand" is now available for viewing on the WBC's YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/vBvqxDFEIoY>. Accompanying James to the meeting were these cute little birds representing some of New Zealand's endemic species. Photo by Deborah Humphries.

## BIRD WALKS: Next Walk is January 24

By Nancy Barnhart

Babs Giffin led the WBC's monthly bird walk at New Quarter Park on November 22, 2025. The participants identified 31 species including Clapper Rail, almost a full array of our winter woodpeckers (Yellow-bellied Sapsucker; Northern Flicker; Red-headed, Red-bellied, Downy, and Pileated—but no Hairy—woodpeckers), and many winter residents such as Ruby- and Golden-crowned kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Dark-eyed Junco, White-throated Sparrow, and Yellow-rumped Warbler. The full checklist can be viewed online at the following location: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S285626884>.



One of the two Northern Harriers seen on the December 27 bird walk. Photo by Nancy Barnhart.



The participants on our club's December 27, 2025 bird walk at New Quarter Park. Photo by Nancy Barnhart.

We had another great bird walk at New Quarter Park on December 27 to close out 2025. The eleven happy birders who joined me enjoyed a couple of winter's treats: two Northern Harriers working the marsh and a huge flock (1000? 2000? 3000? 10,000?) of grackles with some Red-winged Blackbirds mixed in, feeding in the trees beside and over us. Quite a sight and sound! We ended the walk with 41 species on our checklist: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S290539754>.

Our next "4<sup>th</sup> Saturday" bird walk will be held on January 24 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. The walk is free and open to the public and kids are welcome. 🐦

## FIELD TRIP REPORT: Next Trip is January 17 to Dutch Gap

By George Martin

### Grandview Nature Preserve, November 15, 2025

On Saturday, November 15, Nancy Barnhart led a group of 17 birders at Grandview Nature Preserve in Hampton. The venue is usually a good location to view wintering sea birds, and they didn't disappoint. The group saw Black and Surf scoters, several Common Loons, flocks of Buffleheads and Red-breasted Mergansers, four gull species, and a couple Common Terns. The highlight may have been the Snow Bunting that circled over the group, providing good looks at this species which is a really rare visitor to the Williamsburg area. In all, members of the group identified 58 species (not a typo—White-winged Scoters were seen by a subset of the group). Here's the link to the checklist: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S284621780>.

### Dutch Gap, Saturday, January 17

For our field trip in January, we'll visit Dutch Gap Conservation Area in Chester, VA on Saturday, January 17. Rose Ryan will lead our group. Dutch Gap is a reliable location to view wintering dabbling ducks. Last year, the group identified 10 duck species, plus

Wilson's Snipe and American Coot, and 50 species in total. We'll meet at 9:00 a.m. in the parking lot of Henricus Historical Park, located at 251 Henricus Park Road, Chester, VA 23836. Google Maps provides accurate directions to the park. I expect we'll be birding throughout the morning. Now we just have to hope it's not too cold! 🐦



*Snow Bunting seen on the field trip to Grandview Nature Preserve. Photo by Deborah Humphries.*



*Club members on the November 15 field trip to the beautiful and dramatic landscape of Grandview Nature Preserve. Photo by George Martin.*

## WBC GREETS THE NEW YEAR

By Shirley Devan

Thirty-seven birding enthusiasts enjoyed the balmy temperatures at Chickahominy Riverfront Park on New Year's Day afternoon. This was the Williamsburg Bird Club's 20<sup>th</sup> "almost-annual" event on New Year's Day.

Blue skies and warm temperatures made it easy to linger, chat, stroll, and enjoy the birds and birders. Many thanks to WBC President Nancy Barnhart for leading the bird walk that most folks (35!) joined. The group observed a total of 37 species (view the checklist here: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S291694369>) with lots of "little bird" activity in the low shrubs. Nancy noted everyone agreed they enjoyed seeing some bright color, so the Pine Warbler pictured here was a crowd pleaser.



*New Year's Day Pine Warbler at Chickahominy Riverfront Park. Photo by Nancy Barnhart.*



*Club members spotted a Brown Creeper just as they set off on a bird walk during our 2026 New Year's Day get-together at Chickahominy Riverfront Park. Photo by Shirley Devan.*



Some of the birds seen on the WBC's 2025 Christmas Bird Count (clockwise from upper left): Hooded Mergansers, Jolly Pond sector, photo by Barbara Creel; Barred Owl, Kingsmill, photo by Patty Maloney; Wild Turkeys, Kingsmill, photo by Patty Maloney; Fox Sparrow, Williamsburg Botanical Garden in Jolly Pond sector, photo by Carol Annis.

## WBC's 49<sup>TH</sup> CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, DECEMBER 14, 2025

By Shirley Devan

As our thoughts turned to the December 14, 2025 Christmas Bird Count, the COLD temperatures of the 2024 count were still fresh in our minds . . . and our toes and fingers! Surely, the 2025 count would give us better weather. How could it be worse? How naïve we were!

As count compiler, I kept my eye on the weather forecast for December 14 wondering about the number of participants and birds who would show up for the predicted rain, snow, sleet, and wintry mix in the morning and then, in the afternoon, the expected increasing winds and dropping temperatures. And it was still fall, officially!

Unfortunately, the forecast proved correct and the early birders on the 14<sup>th</sup> set out in rain, snow, and wintry mix around 7:00 a.m. The tentative count for total

number of participants is 126: 70 field participants and 56 feeder watchers. Most field teams called it a day by mid-afternoon, and some were home in time to count their yard and feeder birds before early sunset.

**Total species** for our 2025 count was 114, higher than the 2024 count of 110. **The total number of individual birds** for 2025 was 23,067—almost 10,000 (30%) FEWER birds in 2025 than in 2024.

Two important numbers that the Audubon scientists pay a lot of attention to is the EFFORT expended in a count expressed in party hours and party miles. **Party hours on foot** in 2024 was 117 hours; in 2025, it was 97. **Party miles on foot** in 2024 was 87; in 2025, it was 53. These numbers are so important because Audubon weighs the number of species and birds (Continued on Page 7)

## 2025 CBC, Continued from Page 6

against the effort of the observers. That helps them determine if indeed the numbers of birds are lower than usual, or if the lower numbers are a result of the lower numbers of observers and their efforts. After all, it's the science that counts!

### The following are our new high counts for 2025:

- 507 Bonaparte's Gulls. Previous high count was 220 in 2008
- 2841 Double-crested Cormorants. Previous high was 2549 in 2012
- 232 Tree Swallows. Previous high was 14 in 1991
- 381 Chipping Sparrows. Previous high was 335 in 2021
- 16 Baltimore Orioles. Previous high was 15 in 1980. Orioles were observed in 5 of the 12 sectors!

**Highlights:** A Ruby-throated Hummingbird at a feeder in Ford's Colony and a Western Tanager at a feeder in the Rolling Woods neighborhood (which also hosted 2 Baltimore Orioles!).

### Five species had numbers in four digits:

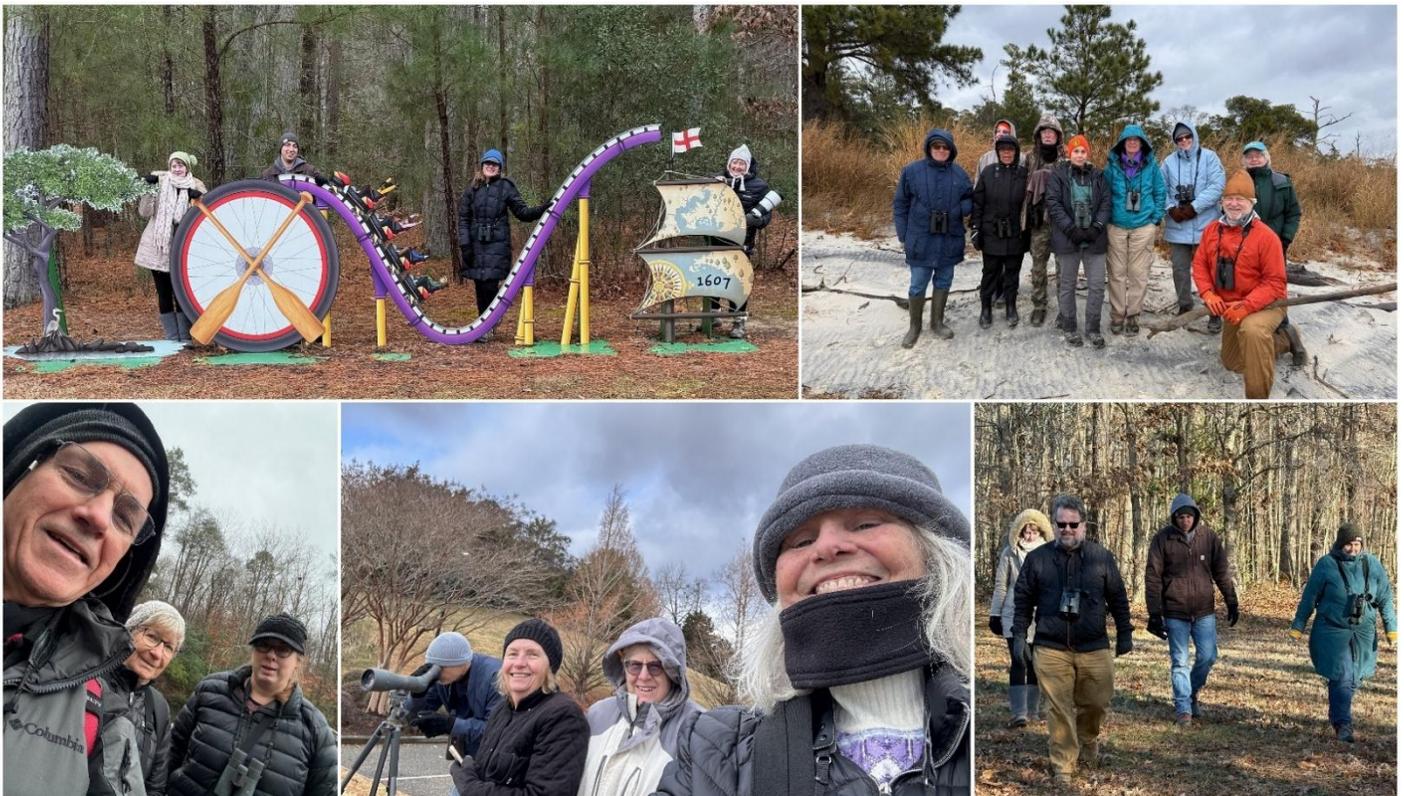
- 2,465 Canada Geese
- 2,841 Double-crested Cormorants
- 1,262 White-throated Sparrows
- 2,540 Red-winged Blackbirds
- 1,624 Common Grackles

I extend sincere and grateful thanks to the 12 sector leaders and the 70 field participants who braved the nasty weather for science! Our 56 feeder watchers are as critical as ever. Without these diligent observers (tucked into their warm homes!), we would not have our Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Western Tanager, or 10+ Baltimore Orioles for our count.

### Happy New Year! Please mark your calendars now for the 2026 Spring and Christmas Bird counts:

- Sunday, April 26, 2026 — Williamsburg Spring Bird Count (The weather WILL BE WARMER!)
- Sunday, December 20, 2026 — Williamsburg Christmas Bird Count

*NOTE: All numbers in this report are tentative until the National Audubon Society and the Regional Editor officially accept them. I'll be entering the final numbers by January 15. The numbers may change a tad, but not by much.*

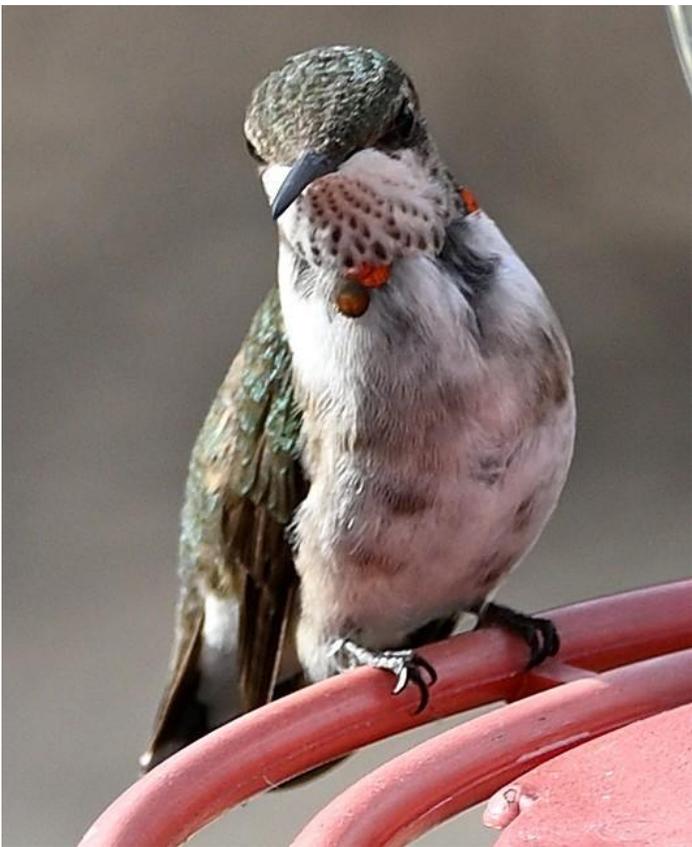


Some members of the WBC's sector teams out in the field on the 2025 Christmas Bird Count (photos clockwise from upper left; people from left to right): Jolly Pond team at Freedom Park (Hope Cook, Eli Kenyon, Deborah Humphries, Carol Annis; photo by Babara Creel); Gloucester team (Harry Colestock, Chelsea Clifford [in back], Gee Brownley, David Yeager, Shanna Ryan, Maryanna Fisher, Grace Hanners, Sven Pretzman [kneeling], Karen Duhring; photo by Ross Johnson); Jolly Pond team (Hope Cook, Chris Wilkins, Eli Kenyon, Katherine Wilkins; photo by Barbara Creel); Kingsmill (Jim Corliss, Cheryl Jacobson, Judy Jones, Patty Maloney; photo by Patty Maloney); Waller Mill team (Larry Hose, Liz George, Rose Ryan; photo by Larry Hose).

## RECENT SIGHTINGS



During a December 2025 trip near Laumotte-Beuvron, France, **Jeff Legg** saw and photographed a number of “lifers” including **Eurasian Nuthatch**, **Grey Heron**, and the **Great Spotted Woodpecker** pictured above.



**Virginia Wycoff** took this photo of a juvenile male **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** at her home in Ford’s Colony. She first saw the bird on December 9, 2025 at her snow-covered feeder and it has continued through at least January 1. Virginia described the experience saying: “What a surprise! It has survived several nights with lows in the 20s.”



**Katie Forrest** shared this lovely photo from December 5, 2025 and reported: “To my shock and delight, a pair of **Baltimore Orioles** showed up on our property in Skipwith Farms after Thanksgiving. They came for days to the Juniper tree, then one morning I saw the male in our birdbath. I started our winter offerings of mealworms and Bark Butter and they’ve come to our yard daily ever since. I think it’s safe to say they’ll be overwintering with us.”



A **Rufous Hummingbird**, far outside the usual winter range of this western species, has been seen regularly at **Brian Tabor’s** residence in the Kingswood neighborhood beginning December 18, 2025 and continuing through at least January 1. This photo of the bird was taken by **Deborah Humphries** on December 21.



# 2026 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.

**Renewals are due January 31, 2026**

If joining May-Aug—please pay half price. Sept-Dec—no dues initially. Please just fill out contact info above.

**Membership**      \_\_\_\_\_New\*      \_\_\_\_\_Renewing

\_\_\_\_\_Individual    \$20

\_\_\_\_\_Family        \$25

\_\_\_\_\_Patron        \$35

\_\_\_\_\_Student      \$5

\*How did you hear about the Bird Club? \_\_\_\_\_

### 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 in 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://backyardbirderva.com>



**Wild Birds Unlimited** (located in Williamsburg in the Monticello Marketplace Shopping Center [Publix Plaza] next to Hair Cuttery) 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/>