

Williamsburg Bird Club

Wednesday, February 17, 2016

Integrated Science Center, Room 1127, W&M, 7:00 pm

Attendance: 44

President's Remarks:

- President Geoff Giles opened the meeting and greeted the gathering.
- Geoff welcomed 1 new member and 2 visitors.
- Geoff enquired about recent interesting bird sightings. Shirley Devan saw an American Woodcock at Chickahominy Riverfront Park. Jeannette Navia had a male Purple Finch at her feeder. Dan Cristol reported that there are large numbers of water fowl including Redheads, Lesser Scaup, Wigeons, Ringnecks, Gadwalls, and Hooded Mergansers within easy viewing from the boardwalks. Hooded Mergansers were reported on Queens Lake. Barred, Screech and Great Horned Owls are being heard. Flocks of Lesser Scaup are seen around the Jamestown Ferry. Courting Bald Eagles are being spotted.

Program: Cheryl Jacobson introduced tonight's speaker, Dr. Bryan Watts, who in 1992 was one of the founders and is currently the director of the Center for Conservation Biology at W&M/VCU. Cheryl acknowledged our club's gratitude for the support that the CCB and Brian Watts give us in providing many high quality programs, the meeting space and many of our field trip leaders. His program tonight was: *Mortality Limits in Birds*. He examined the sustainable harvest theory, shorebird decline and offshore wind development. The use of the sustainable harvest theory was first used in 1998 for marine mammals in the Marine Mammal Protection Act. It was first used for birds, in this case the Black Vulture, in 2010. Annually 350 migratory bird species use the Atlantic Flyway. 164 are water birds and greater than 35% of these are species believed to be declining. He described the shooting in 2011 of the 2 Whimbrel being tracked by CCB scientists on Guadeloupe as a watershed moment in drawing attention to the perils migratory shorebirds endure from being hunted esp. on the French islands of the West Indies. The Fish and Wildlife Service is reaching out to other countries to change hunting policies and law enforcement to reflect sustainable shorebird harvest limits. The CCB is taking an advisory role in the proceedings by providing the needed research data. Dr. Watts also gave interesting details about the booming industry of offshore wind development and the possible impact they will have on shore birds being killed by the turbine blades. The birds least able to sustain mortality rates were the Roseate Tern, Piping Plover, Marbled Godwit, Red Knot, Common Loon. Although Northern Gannet populations are not at risk they would be prime victims as they soar at wind turbine blade height and are looking down as they hunt. He described the difficulty of collecting mortality data on offshore birds where much of it occurs at night and that much more data need to be collected. Such information can be used to point out the need to take care to avoid putting wind farms in specific waters used by endangered species.

Field Trips: Jim Corliss, Field Trip Coordinator, reported on the following upcoming trips.

- **Saturday, February 20:** Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel's 3 islands by car. 32 are going and we will car pool at Colony Square Shopping Center at 7:15 for departure at 7:30. Dan Cristol will be the leader.
- **Saturday, March_:** Curles Neck Farm with Ellison Orcutt. Jim is still negotiating with the owners to set a date.
- **Saturday, April 16:** Great Dismal Swamp with Bob Ake
- **Saturday, May 21:** Highland County with Matt Anthony

Programs: Cheryl Jacobson, Program Coordinator, reported on upcoming programs for WBC meetings.

- **March 16:** Ashley Peele, PhD., Coordinator of Virginia's Second Breeding Atlas will share plans and protocols for this 5 year project sponsored by VA Society of Ornithology and the VA Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries. We will learn how we can help as volunteers.
- **April:** The W&M grad students who have received grants from our club will present their research.
- **May:** Bob Schamerhorn will return with a new program featuring warbler identification with photos and song.

Announcements:

- Geoff Giles reported on the success of the February 6th Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel Boat field trip and encouraged others to consider signing up next year.
- Geoff acknowledged the generous contributions to our club made by the stores, Backyard Birder (owner Melinda Cousins present) and Wild Birds Unlimited, which along with support from our dues go towards the research grants we sponsor. This year we have sufficient funds to give grants to 4 W&M graduate students and 1 undergraduate.
- Geoff invited the membership to attend the bird walk he will be leading at 8am at the program "Walk in the Woods" on Saturday, March 12 at New Kent Forestry Center in Lanexa. Soon the first Kestrel nest box sponsored by our club will be erected at the New Kent Forestry Center. The box was donated by Melinda Cousins of Backyard Feeder.
- Club member, Jan Lockwood, who coordinates the Bluebird Monitoring Program, announced that she will be holding an organizational meeting soon and members interested in participating should contact her.
- Shirley Devan announced that renowned entomologist, Dr. Douglas Tallamy, has launched a citizen scientist project requesting that people send in photos of birds with insects in their beaks. He and his grad students are conducting a study on what exact insects different species of birds eat. Photos should be submitted to: dtallamy@udel.edu.

At the end of the meeting a free raffle was held.

Geoff adjourned the meeting at 8:20 pm

Refreshments were provided by Patti Maloney, Jan Lockwood and Shirley Devan

Respectfully Submitted,
Cathy Millar, Secretary Williamsburg Bird Club
February 18, 2016