

Williamsburg Bird Club

Wednesday, January 20th, 2021

Conducted via Zoom; invited by Dean Shostak and presided by Cheryl Jacobson, 7 pm

Attendance: 55

President's Remarks: President Cheryl Jacobson welcomed and applauded everyone who attended despite the lure of the televised evening celebrations of the inauguration of President Biden.

Program – Bob Schamerhorn: Tory Gussman, Co-Vice-President, Programs, introduced the evening's speaker and program: *Web-footed Waterfowl*. Bob Schamerhorn, national award-winning nature photographer with nearly 50 years of experience, once again generously shared with us his passion for nature and photography at our Zoom January meeting, marking his seventh presentation. His talk featured stunning photos accompanied by audio recordings of vocalizations, and videos of web-footed waterfowl in the family Anatidae, a diverse group that includes our wintering ducks, geese and swans as well as resident waterfowl. Surprisingly, Loons, Grebes, Coots, Cormorants, Anhingas and Pelicans, despite having webbed feet, are not included in this family. We learned that most ducks are sexually dimorphic, meaning there is a difference of appearance between males and females, whereas there is no difference in appearance of most male and female geese. Bob shared helpful identification tips and unique aspects of each bird's life history, including habitat and behavior. Our only local breeders are Mallards, American Black Ducks, Wood Ducks and Canada Geese. Most of the others breed in Canada, Alaska and the Arctic tundra. He noted how lucky we are to see Long-tailed Ducks and Harlequin Ducks, as Virginia is their southernmost wintering range. Here's more samples of the program's interesting information: the Mallard is believed to be the ancestor of all domestic duck breeds; and which ducks are cavity nesters; and finding Red-breasted Mergansers on saltwater versus Common Mergansers on fresh water. Bob generously allowed us to make this multimedia program available until our next February meeting to our members who weren't able to attend or who'd like to see it again. So, for more, go to: https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/SDKkSkSrVBjF01yc52vIOtfEkG3_stJ5Gukt8k7qMFsAcDGsfJfksn3KuP_xuwUiz.ZGpl2yelinC2RLdy Passcode: YC*+5W*@ Members were also encouraged to view more photos and purchase beautiful notecards and calendars on Bob's website, <https://www.iphotobirds.com/>.

Programs - Dean Shostak and Tory Gussman, Co-Vice-Presidents: Tory reported the following:

Wednesday, February 17th: WBC's annual joint meeting with the Historic Rivers Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists. Dr. Bryan Watts, Mitchell A. Byrd Research Professor of Conservation Biology from William & Mary, will be the featured speaker. The topic will be tracking Whimbrels and exploring the secret life and conservation challenges of a migrant shorebird.

Wednesday, March 17th: Virginia birder extraordinaire, Bob Ake, will speak on the birds of Ghana. We'll learn about not only West African birds but also Ghana's mammals and something of the country's history.

Newsletter – Mary Ellen Hodges, Vice President, Editor (The Flyer): Mary Ellen noted that there is available space and invited members to submit bird sightings and subjects of interest such as first bird of 2021 experiences. Submission deadline is January 28th.

WBC Executive Board—Slate for 2021: Cheryl noted that this is the first WBC election held via zoom. She reported that she had presented via email to the membership the Slate of Officers for 2021. She was pleased to announce that all the current officers wished to continue. She had also invited anyone who wished to make a nomination to do so by email. As there were no email nominations, she presented the following slate:

- President - Cheryl Jacobson
- Co-Vice-President, Programs - Dean Shostak
- Co-Vice-President, Programs - Tory Gussman
- Vice-President, Editor (The Flyer) - Mary Ellen Hodges
- Treasurer - Ann Carpenter
- Secretary - Cathy Millar
- Member-at-Large/Asst. Editor - Gary Carpenter
- Member-at-Large - Shirley Devan
- Past President - Bill Williams

A motion was made by Shan Gill that this slate of officers be approved. Judy Jones seconded it. The slate was unanimously approved by the attending membership with no further discussion.

Cheryl was pleased to also report that all the Committee Chairpersons had agreed to serve another year. As president, she is confirming their continued service and complimented them on all the good work they've been doing.

Bird Counts/Walks – Jim Corliss, Committee Chairperson: Jim was absent. Cheryl reported that Jim sent the results of the Christmas Bird Count to the leaders this week and will have a report for the upcoming *Flyer*.

Membership/Webmaster – Jeanette Navia, Committee Chairperson: Jeanette reported that she's already received a lot of membership renewal dues. She reminded us that there is a membership form on the WBC website or she will email one if asked. The dues are currently \$20 per individual, \$25 for family and \$35 for patron. She also reminded us that donations to the Bill Williams Nature Camp Scholarship Fund, the Ruth Beck and Bill Sheehan Ornithological Research Grants for W&M Students, and the Child Development Resources Seed/Feeder Fund are most welcome.

Announcements:

- Cheryl reported that she had sent out an email to the membership earlier today encouraging us to express our opposition to VA Senate Bill 1390, TRAP, NEUTER and RETURN of CATS because cats kill 2.4 billion wild birds and 12.3 billion small mammals each year in the U.S. It is important that we express our opposition to Senate Bill 1390. The bill is being reviewed tomorrow so we have until the end of the day.
- Cheryl reported that there is information on our WBC FB page about a proposed Virginia regulation to address incidental take of migratory birds in Virginia to ensure that development protects migratory birds. The necessity of this legislation was prompted by the Trump administrating gutting large portions of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. We have until February 22nd to make ourselves heard on this important piece of legislation.

- Cheryl reported that the club has been working hard on establishing the 4th WBC sponsored Purple Martin house at Virginia Institute of Marine Science. The Board had approved the funding of a gently used complete set-up offered at half price that required being moved from its site in Gloucester. Sixty- five martins were fledged from this colony in 2020. The new site at VIMS is just across the river and it is hoped that the colony will relocate to it. Returning Purple Martins are already being seen in Florida and Georgia. She also announced that we now have a FB page called COVA PURPLE MARTIN PROJECT where our related activities are reported. She also noted an Audubon article that reported that bright artificial light is prompting Purple Martins to migrate a whole week sooner which can be disastrous if they arrive before there are a sufficient number of insects. More research is needed.
- Cheryl asked the membership if there were any questions or comments. None were forthcoming.

Cheryl Jacobson adjourned the meeting at 8:11pm

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Millar, Secretary,
Williamsburg Bird Club
January 24, 2021