

## **Williamsburg Bird Club**

October 20, 2021

Conducted via Zoom; invited by Ann Carpenter and presided by Cheryl Jacobson, 7 pm

**Attendance:** 35

**Program:** Brent Lubbock, Director of Operations and Development of Sylvan Heights Bird Park, gave an entertaining presentation about the park's missions. His parents, Mike and Ali Lubbock, moved from England to North Carolina in 1981. Bringing with them an extensive knowledge about waterfowl, they began breeding waterfowl in Sylva, NC. In 1989, they moved the entire collection to Scotland Neck, NC, where they established Sylvan Heights Breeding Center which has become a world-renowned captive breeding facility for rare and endangered ducks, geese and swans. To avoid disturbance to the important nesting birds in the Avian Breeding Center, Sylvan Heights Bird Park was opened in 2006 to present to the public their exhibit of one of the largest conservation centers and collections of exotic and rare waterfowl in the world plus many other birds totaling over three thousand birds representing 400 species. The 18-acre facility features spacious walk-through aviaries, and the birds are displayed according to the continents to which their species is native: South America, North America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australasia. A non-profit organization, at the core of their missions is teaching school children the importance of saving wildlife.

Brent showed us wooden eggs that are used to stimulate egg-laying behavior, as well as a variety of real eggs and beautiful feathers. He introduced us to one of their program birds, Woodrow, the Wood Duck. With seventeen endangered species on site, including some of the world's rarest birds, like the White-Winged Wood Duck from Sumatra, the Scaly-sided Merganser from China and our native Whooping Crane, he described the facility as an Ark of sorts as they work toward protecting these species from extinction. They participate with zoos and other facilities in Survival Species Plans that keep track of how many species are left in captivity, so that if a species disappears in the wild, they can raise offspring to be reintroduced under proper conditions. When possible, they involve the local governments and people to enlist their aid in protecting these species and saving their habitats. At Sylvan Heights, they educate people from around the world so they can bring an understanding of a species' needs back to their country.

Brent described some of the challenges of imitating the correct habitat for different species to feel comfortable nesting. The Red-breasted Goose nests in Siberia during a period of 24 hours of sunlight so the use of spotlights was set up for successful breeding. A barn has been equipped with mirrors for flamingos to breed in so that they feel like they are in a large flock.

Sylvan Heights also receives birds from zoos that can't house them and they then become educational ambassadors.

The full presentation via Zoom is available for viewing until the November meeting is recorded at <https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/a3YPIhFju0gYJfimWpzw7iDPGUzD2Tk04Wyy3bn4fxXD4oUTOIHwVduRmAWYd6uG.GZlhJFmeKulyhw>

Passcode: !!ZxR614

### **President's Remarks:**

**Cheryl noted dates that were important for the membership to remember.**

- **October 30<sup>th</sup>:** Monthly bird walk at New Quarter Park has been changed for this time only from the fourth Saturday to the fifth Saturday to avoid a 5K race.

- **December 19<sup>th</sup>:** Christmas Bird Count. Cheryl noted that we are obliged to follow the Covid guidelines posted by Audubon as we had last year. Jim Corliss will follow up with more info.
- **January 16<sup>th</sup>:** Annual Boat Trip. Cheryl noted that the boat is smaller and accommodates only 40 passengers. Accordingly, there will be a small increase in the cost of the ticket. WBC members will be offered priority for signing up during first two weeks before other groups are invited. George Martin will keep the membership updated.

**Cheryl shared with the membership the following decisions made at the last WBC Board meeting.**

- **Chimney Swift Tower:** The Board approved a donation of \$300 toward constructing a chimney swift tower on property owned by Ford's Colony Country Club and near a visitor's parking lot. George Martin, president of the Ford's Colony Bird Club, WINGS, is also requesting funds from other organizations. The labor is expected to come from volunteers.
- **Nature Camp Travel Stipend:** In hopes of getting a more diverse group of candidates, including minorities and low-income folks, for Nature Camp, the Board has established a fund of \$500 from which travel money can be drawn to assist families who would benefit from financial help. Judy Jones, who's on the review committee of all the local organizations that offer Nature Camp Scholarships spoke briefly about how this might be done. She estimated that an offer of \$100 be made to families whose need might be indicated by an address in a low-income area or a referral from a scout leader, guidance counselor, teacher, etc. This is an experiment from which we hope to learn how we can make the most positive impact.

**Programs -Tory Gussman, Co-Vice President:** Tory was absent and Cheryl reported the following upcoming programs. She had hoped that we could meet in person starting in January 2022, but feedback from membership showed that folks were not yet comfortable with the idea. So, for now, meetings will continue via Zoom.

- **Wednesday, November 17:** Bob Schamerhorn, an excellent bird photographer, will talk about how to build water features in one's back yard to attract birds.
- **Wednesday, January 19:** Dan Cristol will be our speaker. The topic is to be decided.

**Membership – Chairperson Jeanette Navia:** Jeanette noted that we've had 15 new members since August 1<sup>st</sup>. She reported that new membership and renewal memberships for 2022 can be made via PayPal on the WBC website. One may still pay by check if preferred.

**Nominations for 2022 WBC Board Officers:** Cheryl reported that the positions of President and Vice President/ Programs, were open. The rest of the Board has consented to continue for 2022. She reviewed our nominating bylaw rules with the membership. The nominating committee of Ann Carpenter, Shirley Devan and Nancy Barnhart have nominated Nancy Barnhart for President and Patty Maloney for Vice President/Programs. Members are welcome to present other consenting nominees for any of the Board Officer positions via the chat box at our November membership meeting after which the membership will vote on the slate via Zoom.

**Newsletter (The Flyer) – Mary Ellen Hodges, Vice-President, Editor:** Submission deadline is November 27<sup>th</sup>. Mary Ellen encouraged members to share seasonal bird sightings and experiences with or without photos.

Cheryl adjourned the meeting at 8:20.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Cathy Millar, Secretary Williamsburg Bird Club  
October 22, 2021