

## Williamsburg Bird Club

April 16, 2025

Hybrid meeting, Conducted in person at Quarterpath Rec. Center, room 2, Quarterpath Rd, Williamsburg and via Zoom hosted by Ann Carpenter at 6 pm.

**Attendance:** 29 in person, 14 via Zoom.

**President's Remarks:** President Nancy Barnhart welcomed everyone to what she described as her favorite yearly program: hearing what bright young minds have been researching. She announced that there would be brief announcements after the presentation followed by a free raffle and refreshments.

**Program:** Dr. Dan Cristol introduced the following W&M graduate students who'd been awarded a WBC Bill Sheehan/Ruth Beck Ornithology Research Grant students who presented their research updates.

• **Samuel Arnold – “Waterbird Use of Living Shorelines across the Gradient of Urbanization”**

Early findings: Urbanization seems to matter; Food does not seem to matter; Herons still present at urban shorelines.

• **Sophie Rabinowicz – “The Movement of Mercury from Aquatic Ecosystems to Terrestrial Songbirds”**

Overview: Pollution from river poisoning songbirds; Birds getting pollution from food, mostly ground spiders (esp. wolf spiders); What do you clean up, the river or the floodplain?

• **Max Rollfinke – “The Lateral Extent of Mercury Contamination in Songbirds and Their Prey.”**

Exploring the missing link: Are wolf spiders eating terrestrial or aquatic prey on a mercury contaminated flood plain?

Dr. Cristol reported that Samuel and Sophie presented the finest example of collaborative research. Dan commented that all three students were awaiting completion of their research which was impressive and pointed to probable conclusions.

### **Announcements:**

#### **Field Trips – George Martin:**

- **Saturday, April 19:** Chippokes State Park with Nancy Barnhart as leader. The trip from Williamsburg will require a ride on the Jamestown-Scotland ferry. It was recommended that we arrive at the ferry dock by 7:10 a.m. to catch the 7:20 a.m. departure.

#### **Bird Walks – Scott Hemler:**

- **Saturday, April 26:** “4th Saturday” New Quarter Park bird walk will meet in the parking lot by the park office at 8:00 a.m.

#### **Basset Trace Nature Trail Bird Walk:**

**Thursday, April 17:** beginning at 8:00 a.m. Nancy Barnhart, leader. Open to the public and no RSVP is necessary. Parking at the Gold Wing of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation's Griffin Hotel.

#### **WBC's 48<sup>th</sup> Spring Bird Count:** – Shirley Devan reported the following:

**Sunday, April 27:** The 12 sectors are the same as those used in the Christmas Count: Cheatham Annex, College Woods, Fords Colony, Gloucester, Hog Island, Jamestown, Jolly Pond, Kingsmill, Middle Plantation, Skimino, Waller Mill, and Warhill. Shirley invited members to join teams in the field or at home at the feeder. One can also count birds flying overhead.

**Newsletter, The Flyer:** Mary Ellen Hodges, editor, has set a deadline of the 26<sup>th</sup> for articles and 29<sup>th</sup> for photos (hopefully from Spring Bird Count). She's also interested in submissions of book reviews, articles, and recent sightings.

**Programs:** Patty Maloney reported the following:

- **May 21** at 6:30 pm: Dixie Sommers on birding in Chile in November 2023. She saw 258 species.
- **June 18** at 6:00 pm: Outdoor social gathering at Chickahominy Park. Cheryl Jacobson and her team will give us an update on Purple Martins.

#### **Updates**

- As a CVWO project, 8 new nest boxes have been added to the Prothonotary Trail at Greensprings Interpretive Trail.
- At College Creek Hawk Watch, 2 Sandhill Cranes were reported. This is the 8<sup>th</sup> record in our historic area.
- The Rufus/ Allen Hummingbird left our area the day before the professional bander was available.
- Nancy has not heard any Whip-poor-wills yet.
- Nancy reported that someone had had a hummingbird die when it got its foot caught in the triangular portion of the feeder's hook. We were asked to check our feeders for safety issues.
- Dan Cristol reported that he and his neighbors had 6 Baltimore Orioles all winter (2 from last year). He lives 3 miles away from Mary Ellen Hodges who also has a loyal following of Baltimore Orioles at her feeders every winter.

**End of Meeting:** A free raffle was held and refreshments enjoyed.

Nancy Barnhart adjourned the meeting at 7:47 pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Cathy Millar, Secretary Williamsburg Bird Club  
April 21, 2025