

The Wildfowler

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2008

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Tom Beatty

It is truly a pleasure for me to be embarking on another year as the Director of the Museum. The support I have received from

the weekly volunteers and dedicated guild members continues to be the key ingredient that holds our organization together and makes my job so enjoyable. This year's Christmas Party and Auction was a good example. This event has always been popular and this year was no exception. Members were very generous in donating items and likewise were extremely supportive monetarily during both the raffle and auction. The second floor main room was at capacity and the food was delicious. There was a nice variety of side dishes and some truly mouth-watering desserts. I think everyone departed comfortably full and many with some great auction items. Our dinner would not be the same without the pre-dinner food supplied by Ricky and Bobby Dunnington of the Raven Restaurant. Their generosity over the years has really been exceptional. When you're at the oceanfront and want a quality place to eat with friends and family, I hope you keep the Raven in mind.

Some members are thinking about the possibility of another such gathering in early spring before the tourist

season and moving the annual summer picnic back to a cooler month. We'll see if there is enough interest and see if we can make it happen.

Immediately following the Christmas Party we hosted the Virginia Society of Ornithology on December 7th. This has become a yearly event for the past five or six years. This is their annual birding trip to Virginia Beach and we have been able to supply some the early arrivals with an enjoyable place to go on their first night in Virginia Beach. This year we hosted about 30 birders from all over Virginia and it proved to be a pleasant time for all involved. We couldn't have done this without the help of our volunteers. The event provides these volunteers the opportunity to discuss birding and bird sightings with other birders throughout Virginia.

It's time again to RENEW YOUR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP. There are various levels ranging from \$25 for regular membership, \$35 family, \$200 for corporate and \$500 for a sponsor. Please renew your membership at what ever level suits you, but by all means RENEW. We need all the renewals and new members we can get. When renewing please include your e-mail address. We are considering e-mailing newsletters to save postage. If you know someone who has an interest in what we do at the museum and guild, invite them to a guild meeting and visit the museum and encourage them to join our group or call me to send them a brochure. My best to all in the New Year.

—Tom

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Jan 1, 2008

New Year's Day (museum closed)

Jan 7

General Guild Meeting, 6pm social, 7pm program, speaker: Sharon Meade, Whalehead Club

Jan 13

BBBC birdwalk, Mackay Island, NC

Jan 14

Board of Director's Meeting, 7pm, AWHM

Feb 4

General Guild Meeting, 6pm social, 7pm program, speaker: TBD

Feb 12

Museum Management Committee Meeting, 1:30pm, AWHM

Mar 3

General Guild Meeting, 6pm social, 7pm program, speaker: TBD

Mar 10

Board of Director's Meeting, 7pm, AWHM

Mar 15

BBBC birdwalk, Stumpy Lake Golf Course



Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum
Back Bay Wildfowl Guild
1113 Atlantic Avenue
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23451

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Herb Verhaagen, President	587-7281
Ken Wilson, Vice President	427-0516
C.J. Burns, Treasurer	587-2303
Ira Abbott, Secretary	596-0159
J. Fletcher Bryant	422-5025 (W) 422-5111
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Charlie Hurd, Newsletter Editor	460-0551 (HurdsWordsandBirds@cox.net)
Jim Mehne	340-7702
Ed Morrison	463-0891
Ann Verhaagen	587-7281
Herb Videll	363-2722
William M. Walsh, Jr.	498-9410

STAFF

Tom Beatty, Director	437-8432 (atlanticwildfowl@rcn.com)
Ann Smith, Business Manager	437-8432
Back Bay Birding Club	BackBayBirdClub@aol.com

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Time to renew your membership!!!



Top: Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum decorated for the Holidays



Left: Ed Morrison, Auctioneer Extraordinaire with Brant donated by Gentry Childress

Bottom: Everyone was generous in donating to our auction and raffle.



BACK BAY BIRDING CLUB

Last year the BBBC had three major birding trips. The trips required overnight stays in areas not close to home. We enjoyed the trips and saw a nice variety of birds, however, the number of people attending these trips were not as many as what we have had in past years. We decided this year to increase the number of our trips and make them closer to home. We will offer day trips in January, March, April, September, October and November. The BBBC also maintains membership in the VSO (Virginia Society of Ornithology). The VSO plans several overnight trips each year. So, this year we are encouraging our birders to participate in our locally planned trips as well as the VSO's overnight trips. When you look at the 2008 birdwalk schedule below, please keep in mind you will need to register for BBBC trips by either calling Karen (757-468-6997) or e-mailing the BBBC at BackBayBirdClub@aol.com. Prior to the scheduled birdwalk you will be notified by e-mail the start time and any other information you might need. To register for VSO trips follow the directions listed on their website (www.virginiabirds.net) making sure to mention that you are a member of the VSO through club membership in the Back Bay Birding Club.

Here is the 2008 schedule:

- JAN 12**
BBBC -Mackay Island
- FEB 15-17**
VSO - Outer Banks weekend, Bill Akers – leader *check VSO website for registration info.
- MAR 15**
BBBC -Stumpy Lake
- APR 26**
BBBC - Merchants Millpond * date may change as I am trying to set something up with Floyd
- MAY 16-18**
VSO - annual meeting in conjunction with: Mountain Lake Migratory Bird Festival *check the VSO website for registration info.
- JUN 7-8**
VSO - Piney Grove, Mike Wilson – leader *check the VSO website for registration info.

- Jun 27-29**
VSO High Knob, Dick Peake – leader *check the VSO website for registration info.
- SEP 13**
BBBC - Back Bay NWR * date subject to change if tram not available
- OCT 11**
BBBC - Kiptopeke State Park & Eastern Shore NWR
- NOV 15**
BBBC - Stumpy Lake
- DEC TBA**
VSO - Virginia Beach weekend

DONATIONS

(In Memory of H. Gus Mechalas)

*Bill & Alice Walsh
Tom & Karen Beatty*

*Ken & Nancy Wilson
(Museum Operations)
Gentry Childress
(Museum Operations)*

All who donated items for the Christmas raffle & auction

UPCOMING CARVING CLASS

Long time guild member and excellent carver, Bill DeLoatch would like to offer anyone interested a chance to carve a bird during the April timeframe. The exact bird and timing of the class will depend on the number of people who reply wanting to take the class. Call the museum if you're interested. We'll work out the exact details later. A note from Bill to the guild carvers; he has basswood for sale. 8"X 8"X8'. Bill can cut the wood to any size that you require. Call the museum if you are interested and I will pass the information on to Bill.

GOLDENEYE

*From Our Feathered Game
by Dwight W. Huntington, 1903*

The golden-eye, often called the whistler, is well known from the loud whistling noise made by the wings. It is a very handsome duck, but nowhere so common as many other varieties. It flies with great rapidity and goes through the branches like a ruffed-grouse. It does not come readily to decoys and more often not at all.

The golden-eye is generally seen singly, in pairs, or in small flocks. About the coast the golden-eye feeds on shell-fish, and is therefore not very good to eat, but in the interior it feeds on grasses and roots and is better. It is often seen with the little broadbill and the buffhead on bays and ponds and is a wonderful diver, going under usually before the shot reaches it. The game record of Winous Point Club (Sandusky marshes) would indicate that it is there a rare bird. In years when there were thousands of ducks killed, the record shows but one or two of the golden-eye ducks and often none. I found a few of these birds on the grounds now owned by English Lake Club on the Kankakee in Indiana, and once made a very good shot at one when mallard shooting. I heard the whistler coming from behind my back and well overhead. He was going so rapidly that I only had time to make a snap-shot at him, but he fell dead in the river. The Indians call it a spirit duck. On the Yukon they stuff the skin to make a toy for the children. The Indians of the Frazer valley tell a story of two men in one of their tribes who had a dispute as to how the whistler made the noise, one claiming it was produced by the wings, the other that it was vocal or made through the nostrils. Others joined in the controversy, which resulted in a majority of the warriors being killed without settling the question. Allan Brooks, quoted in "Birds that Hunt and are Hunted", is my authority for this story.

Barrow's golden-eye is the Western variety of this bird, but they are so much alike in appearance and habits, as to be one and the same from the sportsman's point of view.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Herb Verhaagen

Hi Everyone,
I want to wish you a Happy New Year and hope this will be a great and prosperous year for you.

I am looking forward to the New Year with great expectations for our Guild and the Museum. I hope everyone has renewed their membership for 2008 and is visiting our Museum and the Museum gift shop.

The Guild began 30 plus years ago with the objective of having a Museum to perpetuate the heritage of wildfowling and wildfowl art. Our Museum is allowing us to fulfill that objective, especially with the guidance of our director Tom Beatty.

This year will have some special challenges for us. We are now reaching a critical point in our funding, where we will not have enough funds to supplement the museum operations properly and we are pursuing ways to increase our annual funds. The city provides some financial help for the Museum but the majority comes from our Guild and other members of the Community. We are truly counting on every member to help in any way possible because it is through you that we exist.

I want to thank you for all the support you have provided and will provide in the future

—Herb

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1115 Atlantic Avenue
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(757) 437-8452
atlanticwildfowl@rcn.com
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