

The Wildfowler



JUNE 2007

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Tom Beatty

June is finally here and the winter doldrums have past. We are looking forward to an exciting and active summer season. April and early May were especially busy with a marked increase in visitors and gift shop sales. I hope this is an omen of things to come. During this time we not only maintained the operation of the Museum, but participated in the annual state Historic Garden Week, represented the Guild at the annual Gathering of the Guilds at the Francis Land House, represented the Museum in the Virginia Beach 2007 Boardwalk History Festival, procured and installed two new informational signs at each entrance to the Museum, put together a terrific promotional wildfowl exhibit at the Norfolk International Airport, hosted two bus tours, an evening social for the members of Ducks Unlimited and a tour for a group of seniors from Lighthouse Pointe. As busy as we were, all the events and projects were well organized and enjoyable, thanks in most part to all the volunteers who gave their time to insure a successful outcome. To all those who helped you have my wholehearted thanks.

We're finalizing plans for the next Museum exhibits. The main gallery will feature decoys by contemporary carvers who utilize the traditional "old" style techniques with an emphasis on Eastern Shore carvers. The art gallery will feature the works of a variety of artists including Beverly Abbott and Cary Savage-Ingram. Both exhibits are expected to be in place by early June and should be a real drawing point for visitors over the next year. As we make preparations for our new exhibits I'd like to thank Ken Trayer for allowing us to display his superb collection of factory decoys in the main gallery and Jeanie Drescher for her beautiful outdoor photography. Visitors throughout the year were thoroughly impressed with both collections.

Continued on next page

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

May 25-27

BBBC birding trip to Western VA & West Virginia

May 28

Memorial Day Observed

June 4

General Guild meeting, 6pm social, 7pm meeting/program

June 6

Show Advertising committee meeting, AWHM, 12:30

June 12

Show meeting, Law Enforcement Training Academy, 7pm

June 19

Museum Management committee meeting, AWHM, 1:30pm

July 9

Board of Directors meeting, AWHM, 7pm

July 10

Show meeting, Law Enforcement Training Academy, 7pm

August 14

Show meeting, Law Enforcement Training Academy, 7pm

August 22

Museum Management committee meeting, AWHM 10:30am

Printed on recycled paper



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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Herb Verhaagen, President	587-7281
Ken Wilson, Vice President	427-0516
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Jim Mehne	340-7702
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Herb Videll	365-2722
William M. Walsh, Jr.	498-9410

STAFF

Tom Beatty, Director	457-8452
	(atlanticwildfowl@rcn.com)
Ann Smith, Business Manager	457-8452

www.AWHM.org

Back Bay Birding Club

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The fall raffle is underway and I'd like to thank everyone who have purchased their tickets early, and a special thanks to all those who requested extra tickets. If you haven't purchased your tickets, please consider doing so, and if you lost or misplaced the ones you received give me a call or e-mail and I'll make sure you get more. The prizes are really collectible pieces and the proceeds go directly to the Museum.

It is on a sad note that I close my letter. Two long time Guild members have recently passed away – Betty Johnson and Gard Paules. They will be truly missed.

—Tom

BACK BAY BIRDING CLUB

Since the last newsletter our group has not been on any organized bird trips. Our next trip is Memorial Day Weekend and I hope to have a birdy report for you in next month's newsletter. However, interest in birds is spreading throughout the Guild especially this spring during migration. After recent Guild meetings and during my visits to the Museum I have found many people telling me of birds they have seen in their yards, on the oceanfront or in their travels. Something you may not be aware of is that we keep a list of the birds seen on or near the property of the Museum. Now you are probably saying to yourself...sure they see gulls, pelicans and all kinds

of shorebirds on the beach. Well, that statement is partially true as we do see about five varieties of Gulls (Herring, Laughing, Ring-billed, Greater & Lesser Black-backed) and as many of you read the news in the paper this winter about the wintering over Brown Pelicans, however, we usually don't see a large variety of shorebirds. Did that surprise you? Shorebirds migrate a little earlier than songbirds in the fall when they are most plentiful in our area. They actually pass through in August and September. These two months are when many tourists are on our oceanfront also. In my opinion, the two don't mix well. To see migrating shorebirds the eastern Shore is your best bet. But, let's get back to birds seen on or near the Museum. Since Tom has been the Director (2000) I have been keeping track of the birds seen on the property by myself and others who tell me what they have seen and there are presently



Black Skimmer spotted on the beach at the Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum

57 different species on our list. One of the more interesting sightings has happened for the past three years the end of April to early May and that is a Clapper Rail. This fellow hangs around for a couple days and likes to forage in the bushes on the sea side of the yard. Also in this same time frame the Seaside Sparrows show up and forage on the grass seeds in the yard. I have seen as many as 5 at one time on the ground. For the third year in a row we have seen Black Skimmers on the oceanfront as well. This year....so far.... two new birds have made the list – Eastern Towhee and Ovenbird. Both were seen on the same day (late April) near the library. When you come to the Museum and want to see the list please ask whomever is behind the counter in the gift shop to see the clipboard with the list and PLEASE feel free to add your sightings if they are not already listed!

—Karen

AMAZING WATERFOWL FACTS

Taster's Choice

In the fall, wood ducks feed largely on acorns in flooded bottomlands. Researchers who conducted a "taste test" on captive wood ducks found the birds preferred tiny willow oak acorns over larger acorns produced by other oak species. Biologists have found as many as 15 pin oak acorns packed into the gizzard and esophagus of a wood duck.

Stowaway Sprig

While migrating from Alaska, a hen pintail carrying a satellite transmitter landed on a shrimp boat off the northern Oregon coast. The surprised crew carried the duck safely to shore and released it on a nearby wetland.

Tornado Warning

In January 1999, a tornado and violent hailstorm deposited more than 3,000 dead waterfowl across a seven-mile-long swath in eastern Arkansas.

DONATIONS

In memory of Betty Johnson:

*Herb & Pat Videll
Bill & Alice Walsh
Tom & Karen Beatty
Al & Rita Brandtner
Dr. Larry Peterson
M.D. Neitzel*

In memory of Gard Paules:

*Tom & Karen Beatty
Ann & Charlie Hurd
Herb & Pat Videll
Bill & Alice Walsh*

Museum operations:

*Susan Davis
Tommy Deary*

TUPELO WOOD AVAILABLE

Guild member Sam Esleek has tupelo for sale. Various sizes. Call 468-0913 for information or visit him at Feathers-n-Wood in the Country Side Shops on Dam Neck Road near the Farmers Market.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER



2007 Festival

We are 5 months away from our Wildlife Festival October 6th and 7th. We have accomplished a lot

in our planning sessions but there is still a lot to do. We are in need of volunteers for the show to help with the setup and takedown, selling tickets, and gathering items for the auction. Please check your calendar and let us know if you will be available on these dates. It takes a lot of people to put the show on but it's worth it. The money we make is to benefit the Museum

July Picnic

We are planning our annual picnic for July. This has been a fun event for us and we look forward to it. The exact date will be in our next newsletter. I look forward to seeing you there.

June Meeting

Our June 4th meeting will be the last general meeting for the summer. Our speaker will be a representative of the Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

—Herb



Wayne Jarmen from Duck's Unlimited was our Guest Speaker at the May Meeting

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Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum
at the deWitt Cottage
1113 Atlantic Avenue
Virginia Beach, VA 23451
(757) 437-8432
atlanticwildfowl@rcn.com
AWHM.ORG
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