

The Marsh Wren

SINCE 1976

THE FRIENDS OF DYKE MARSH

WINTER 2008



The Friends of Dyke Marsh

FODM Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday, March 5, 2008
7:30 p.m., Huntley Meadows
Park, 3701 Lockheed Boulevard,
Alexandria, 22306. 703-
768-2525. Free to all.

2008 Annual Cleanup

April 5 - Annual Potomac
Watershed Cleanup. 9 a.m. -
12 noon. Meet at Belle Haven
restrooms. Details on page 5.

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Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project

Wetland mitigation and other environmental aspects discussed

Join the Friends on March 5 as we welcome Alexander E. Lee, AICP Community Relations Manager, Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project and URS Corporation, and Patrick DiNicola, Environmental Mitigation Manager of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project and RK&K Engineers.

Alex will introduce the scope of the environmental aspects of this enormous project, which encompasses many different activities, from the moving of 340,000 cubic yards of dredged material to the creation, enhancement and restoration of wetlands. Pat will discuss specifics of the mitigation process: how do you create a wetland? He will also talk about the shoreline strategy program and show what has been accomplished at a few of the in-process wetlands projects, for example, Cameron Run, Hunting Point and the west side of Washington Street, as well as the inclusion of threatened or endangered wildlife in the planning process.

Alex Lee had 14 years of consulting experience, including transportation planning, project development, mega-project design team management, all aspects of NEPA documentation, engineering alternate studies and extensive pro-active public involvement. Prior to his work on the Wilson Bridge Project he consulted for the Departments of Defense and Energy in



View of a Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project wetland mitigation site (Prince William County, Virginia) on the Silver property. This site has been completed and is in the five-year monitoring phase.

environmental management. Patrick DiNicola is a Project Scientist for RK&K Engineers in Baltimore, Maryland. In his current capacity, he serves as Environmental Mitigation Manager for the \$2.4 billion Woodrow Wilson Bridge replacement project. He is responsible for construction oversight on mitigation contracts in both Maryland and Virginia, and is also tasked with managing post-construction monitoring for over 50 completed mitigation sites. Patrick began his career at the Maryland Department of the Environment and has been working in the environmental field for over 10 years.

Senator, Congressman Support Dyke Marsh

U. S. Senator Jim Webb wrote to National Park Service Director Mary Bomar this past fall urging collaboration "in protecting this important natural treasure." He said, "With our greater understanding of the importance of wetland ecosystems, it is important to preserve this national treasure and the biodiversity it promotes." She responded: "In order to appropriately

protect this extraordinary resource, we are undertaking an environmental impact statement (EIS) process . . . Internal agency funding requests have been submitted for \$500,000 in order to fund the EIS."

Congressman Jim Moran urged NPS to designate Dyke Marsh's restoration as a

(Continued on page 2)

Centennial Challenge project. He wrote, "A restored Dyke Marsh would support extraordinary biodiversity, provide more ecological services in a heavily-developed urban area and increase aesthetic, educational and recreational opportunities for the nation." Ms. Bomar responded that designating restoration of the marsh as a Centennial Challenge project is premature until the EIS is completed. She wrote, "To protect this extraordinary resource appropriately, we are undertaking an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process . . . The EIS will enable the National Park Service to develop a restoration plan for dredged areas at Dyke Marsh and a management plan for future care."

Thank you Senator Webb and Congressman Moran for your support of Dyke Marsh.

"When there is a conflict between conserving resources unimpaired for future generations and the use of those resources, conservation will be predominant."

Dirk Kempthorne, Secretary,
U. S. Department of Interior,
June 19, 2006 proclamation.

A New Look for *The Marsh Wren*

After many years of printing our newsletter with the same format and in one color, we have given *The Marsh Wren* a new look. This change is in keeping with FODM's goal of more effectively communicating with our members and the public.

In 2006, FODM commissioned *On the Edge*, a documentary film about the marsh and need for its restoration. In 2007, with the contributions of Dale Photo in Belle Haven, we redesigned and printed on a new surface our display panel, which is used at all functions where FODM is present.

The Marsh Wren editor Dorothy McManus worked to update the newsletter as well, asking FODM's web page designer Duncan Hobart for assistance. We are using readily available software for the project. Our printer, Minuteman Press in S. Pickett Street, has offered to print a full color newsletter costing only modestly more than present costs. As FODM is a friend of the environment, the newsletter is printed on recycled paper. The new design makes more efficient use of the space available. More importantly, the new process of submitting a computer file to the printer will improve the print quality of the photographs, many of which are beautiful nature shots submitted by FODM members.

And finally, we want to bring to our readers in the best way possible the news and issues important to Dyke Marsh. As always, we welcome your comments.

Friends of Dyke Marsh Board of Directors

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Visit our website at
www.fodm.org
for more information about
us, our programs and how
you can join the FODM.

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The Marsh Wren is a quarterly publication of the Friends of Dyke Marsh, Inc., a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Letters and submissions to *The Marsh Wren* are welcome. Send them to the editor at the address on the left. Board members can receive mail at this address as well. Special thanks to Duncan Hobart for his assistance with our web page (www.fodm.org), and to Paula Sullivan and Ed Eder for their photography contributions to *The Marsh Wren* and the website.

Printed on recycled paper 

President's Message

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH

As Vice President Al Gore accepted the Nobel prize in Oslo for his work to curb global warming, closer to home, both the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay got a grade of D for their health. This rating reinforces the worries that many of us have had about our environment for some time and is further ammunition for preserving, protecting and restoring Dyke Marsh. (For a restoration update, be sure to read Superintendent David Vela's message on page 6. We thank NPS for their initiative.)

Here is a brief rundown on some of our recent efforts:

Wren, Bittern Trends: In our fall newsletter, we reported Larry Cartwright's concerns about what may be a decline in the Marsh Wren and Least Bittern populations in Dyke Marsh. We have asked the National Park Service to devote some resources to this and to help us determine if in fact there are declines, and if so, the causes and solutions. Our research chairman, Walter Bulmer, is also proposing a research project to better understand the birds' status.

WPHS Crew at the Marina? The West Potomac High School Crew Team Boosters has asked the National Park Service for a permit to operate out of the Belle Haven Marina from February to late May. They propose to build a new floating dock, a ramp, a storage rack for shells (35 feet by 65 feet), a storage shed for equipment and a storage bin for gas cans. FODM will provide comments. As we go to press, we do not know what NPS will do.

New Waysides: We could have four new wayside signs installed along the Haul Road and boardwalk by Memorial Day 2008, according to Erik Oberg, the George Washington Memorial Parkway's Acting Natural Resource Management Specialist. Production is now underway. FODM provided suggestions to NPS.

Don't Flush Meds! We are helping Fairfax County prepare some options for properly disposing of unused pharmaceuticals, personal care products and pesticides, to keep them out of our waters. The U. S. Geological Survey has linked certain endocrine disrupting compounds to sexual abnormalities in fish in the Potomac River. Some communities have "take back" programs for unwanted medications. Flushing them down the toilet is probably the worst disposal option. For now, county officials suggest securing them in a can, making them unfit for use by mixing in coffee grounds or kitty litter, sealing the can and putting it in the regular trash. You might also ask your pharmacist and doctor to incinerate them with medical wastes.

Duck Hunting: Several residents of Southdown Road, near the south end of Dyke Marsh, have asked us to help address waterfowl hunting from blinds built on the perimeter of Dyke Marsh. Hunting in Dyke Marsh and shooting into the marsh are prohibited. We will try to address this with state and federal officials.

MOU: On December 12, we sent comments and proposed extending our memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the U. S. National Park Service and hope to be meeting with officials soon to discuss the details.

Reaching Out: I have reached out and allied with several groups in an effort to spread the word about "our" wetland. I made presentations to the Environment and Recreation Committee of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizen Associations and to the Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church. With help from many others, I have prepared a power point presentation on Dyke Marsh. If you know of groups that might like to hear it, let me know.

Thank You: We send a big thank you to Mary Carroll Potter, who is leaving us, for her years of work as FODM's Program Coordinator. Mary Carroll has given many hours to arrangements, assistance and attention to detail to bring us timely, interesting and inspiring lectures. If you have suggestions for programs, contact us at FODM. And again, a big thank you to Mary Carroll for her good work.

Nominate and Preserve Trees: The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on October 15 approved a new ordinance that creates a way to preserve certain trees. Under the new law, a citizen, group or the county's urban forester can recommend to the Board of Supervisors that a tree be designated as a heritage, specimen, memorial or street tree (each is defined in the law). If the Board agrees, the tree can only be removed with permission of the Board and the Board may require replacement of trees approved for removal. All supervisors voted for it except former Springfield Supervisor Elaine McConnell. For more information and application forms for nominating trees, contact the county's Urban Forestry Division at 703-324-1770.

Watershed Plans: Fairfax County will soon begin work on watershed plans for the Belle Haven, Dogue Creek and Four Mile Run watersheds. For each plan, the county will form a citizens advisory committee. Supervisor Gerry Hyland has committed to appointing at least one representative from FODM to the Belle Haven committee. If you want to help, let me know. These plans can recommend policies and conservation and restoration projects.

Speak Out and Vote for Sound Conservation Policies: The Virginia General Assembly (<http://legis.state.va.us/>) will meet until March 8. To find your legislators, go to <http://conview.state.va.us/whosmy.nsf/main?openform>. To learn about conservation issues in Richmond, visit the Virginia Conservation Network at www.vcnva.org . . . Virginia will hold its Presidential Primary on February 12, 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Check the candidates' websites for their environmental platforms.

Glenda C. Booth is President of the Friends of Dyke Marsh and active in environmental issues in Virginia.

2007 Fort Belvoir Christmas Bird Count Summary

BY KURT GASKILL

Having gotten over 90 percent of the reports on species' presence for the Fort Belvoir Christmas Bird Count (CBC), I can make the following summary:

A cool, overcast morning met the field counters; this turned to drizzle by mid-afternoon and outright rain near 3:30 p.m. Although I will not know the final participant total until the final lists are given to me by the 10 Sector Leaders, initial reports indicate a less than average turnout of volunteers. Yet the count tallied 117 species and one Count Week species. This is above the 20-year average, after discounting the "inflation years" period. Many observers reported above-average diversity of species, although absolute numbers of many species were down from last year. For example, I am sure the total scaup count will be half or less of last year's 28,000!

The highlights were dominated by eight unusual species tallied in the count. Unusual means these species have been tallied in the circle 1 to 5 years in the last 20 years. These were Forster's Terns (2 diving in Pohick Bay, 1 record in 20 years), Long-eared Owl (Sandy Run Park, 1 in 20), Northern Saw-whet Owl (Fountainhead Park, 2 in 20), Common Raven (2 in the Lorton area, 2 in 20), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (Accotink Bay area, 3 in 20), Yellow-throated Warbler (coming to a feeder in Maryland, 2 in 20), Lincoln's Sparrows (Huntley Meadows and Accotink Refuge, 1 in 20), and Baltimore Oriole (3 to a Maryland feeder, 3 in 20).

The rare, but regular species found (in 6-10 counts out of 20) were: Great Egret (8 in 20, Little Hunting Creek), Merlin (9, Huntley Meadows and near Belmont Bay), and Marsh Wren (6, Great Marsh of Mason Neck).

Species that are rare to uncommon and often local in late December in Northern Virginia (found 11-15 counts out of 20) were: Horned Grebe (15, finally after a long drought), Double-crested Cormorant (increasing in the last 15 yrs), Blue-winged Teal (12, Jackson Abbott Refuge), Black Vulture (increasing in the last 15 years), King Rail (Ocoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge), Greater Yellow-

legs (Mason Neck), Laughing Gull (100+, high count, Neabsco Creek), Common Yellowthroat (Jackson Abbott Wildlife Refuge and Huntley Meadows), Chipping Sparrow (near Burke Lake) and Pine Siskin (several locations; it's an irruption year).

Other species of interest that were found: Common Loon (off Leesylvania State Park), Northern Bobwhite (in a power line cut near Henderson Road, this is a 17 out of 20 year species), American Woodcock (present in a few locations such as Mason Neck State Park), Red-headed Woodpecker (Hallowing Point at Mason Neck and in Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge), Red-breasted Nuthatch (nearly all sectors, significant irruption year), Gray Catbird (Leesylvania State Park), Brown Thrasher (Lorton area),

Fox Sparrow (various locations), White-crowned Sparrow (Lorton, Burke and Fort Belvoir areas), and Rusty Blackbird (only at Jackson Abbott Wildlife Refuge).

Initial reports suggest that Red-breasted Nuthatch, Purple Finch and Pine Siskin were in several places in the count circle in historical significant numbers.

Many, many thank yous to the observers who came out and counted the birds! I don't have all your names but you are the heart and soul of the count. And heart-felt gratitude to the sector leaders who organized their respective territories: Mary-Carroll Potter,

Georg Morduch, Larry Meade, Sherman Suter, Greg Fleming, Bart Hutchinson, Rich Rieger, Larry Brindza, Bob Klarquist, Marc Ribaud, Carol Gheblian and Carmine Bishop. Also, special thank yous to Larry Cartwright, Ben Jesup and Jay Keller for various strategic and logistical help in the count. And additional thank yous to Larry Meade, Rich Rieger and Carmen Bishop for volunteering to lead their areas just a few weeks before the count.

And lastly, let me acknowledge the sponsorship of the Fort Belvoir CBC by Charles Studholme of One Good Tern.

After receiving all the reports, I will post a more complete summary.

Wishing Everyone A Very Birdy New Year!

Kurt Gaskill, compiler, Fort Belvoir Christmas Bird Count.



Red-headed Woodpeckers were sighted in two areas in Mason Neck. Photo by Paula Sullivan.

Message From the Superintendent, GWMP, National Park Service

BY DAVID VELA

Greetings and Happy New Year from the employees of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. This year marks the 75th Anniversary of both the George Washington Memorial Parkway and Theodore Roosevelt Island as National Park Service sites. (Last year, you may recall, 2007 marked the 75th Anniversary of the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, the precursor to what is now known as the George Washington Memorial Parkway.) As a result, 2008 will be filled with a wide variety of exciting activities, including a photo contest and an anniversary park newsletter filled with visitor programs and events.

In addition, the Dyke Marsh Wetland Restoration Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process are underway. We held an internal scoping meeting on November 14-15, 2007. The plan will ana-

lyze a range of alternatives involving the restoration of previously dredged portions of the marsh, as well as management options to address factors currently impacting the existing marsh. A Notice of Intent, which begins the process of an EIS by informing the public of what the project is and why it needs to be performed, is currently being prepared. It will be published in the *Federal Register*, the official daily publication for rules, proposed rules, and notices of federal agencies and organizations, as well as executive orders and other presidential documents. Once this has been done, the project is expected to move forward with a public meeting and comment period in 2008.

We had a very productive 2007. We look forward to working with each of you in this new year in addressing the needs and interests of Dyke Marsh and in celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Dyke Marsh Cleanups

February 16 ... 10 am - 12 noon

March 15 10 am - 12 noon

April 5 9 am - 12 noon
(The Annual Potomac Watershed Cleanup)

May 10 10 am - 12 noon

Parental Approval Forms must be signed for minors (under 18 yrs.) in advance of work. Students may obtain community service credit. Dyke Marsh cleanups are cosponsored by the National Park Service and the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program. Call 703-289-2556.

NPS Rules at Dyke Marsh

The National Park Service's George Washington Memorial Parkway unit maintains a compendium of rules and policies for managing its properties. Here are a few that relate to Dyke Marsh (this is not intended to be all-inclusive):

Boats – Vessels with internal combustion engines are prohibited in the waters of Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve without an official permit. Permits are issued only for research, maintenance, or other official government purposes.

Waterskiing – Waterskiing and jet skiing are prohibited in the waters of Dyke Marsh.

Pets – All pets must be restrained on a leash, which shall not exceed six feet, or otherwise be physically confined at all times. An invisible electronic leash is not considered restraint within the parkway. Visitors with pets in the parkway are required to remove and dispose of their pets' excrement by placing it in

a refuse can or carrying it out of the parkway. Pet owners are prohibited from allowing their pets to enter the Potomac River within the boundaries of the GW Memorial Parkway.

Bicycling – Bicycling is prohibited in the following area: Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve Haul Road.

Memorialization – The scattering of human ashes from cremation is prohibited without a permit under conditions set by the Superintendent.

Let's Attack Invasives

The National Park Service will conduct a training session this spring for volunteers to learn how to reduce invasive plants in Dyke Marsh. This is a great opportunity to partner with NPS and restore Dyke Marsh. To volunteer, e-mail Glenda Booth at gbooth123@aol.com. Check www.fodm.org for the date. Step up, FODMers!

One Of Our Own In the News

Veteran bird surveyor and FODM member Larry Cartwright was featured in a January 4, 2008 *Examiner* newspaper interview by reporter Scott McCabe that addressed the Christmas Bird Count. Larry reported that many birds "that took a huge beating with the West Nile virus have adapted to the virus and their numbers are coming back." When asked why bird counts are important, he said, "It depends on your perspective. If you value the existence of wildlife, and want something other than concrete, it's important. If wildlife is not important to you, then this has no value. The count helps people get into nature, walk the meadows, walk the streambeds and see birds living their lives. You see the wilderness of it. The beauty attracts people. It's not a hobby for control freaks because you have to do it on the birds' time, not yours."

New NPS Trail Patroller Named

BY NED STONE

Blame it on United Community Ministries. I retired from the government in mid-2006, and for a year, UCM kept me busy as a volunteer teacher of computer courses. But this year I have no teaching requests, so when I saw the item in the FODM newsletter that the National Park Service was interested in volunteer trail patrollers, I saw an opportunity for boots-on-the-ground (or tush-in-the-water) involvement with Dyke Marsh.

No Oscar the Grouch, I hate trash and like cleanups. I have also recently started to enjoy kayaking. With the Belle Haven Marina right there, it has been easy to rent a kayak or canoe and go out around the Dyke Marsh periphery and grab up floating and beached trash. I get up close and personal with hydrilla, but that's often where the trash is. A paddle stroke that will get me 10 feet of progress in open water gets about two inches in the weeds!

Being an official Trail Patroller requires two sessions of training. NPS Ranger Georgeanne Smale conducts the training. Eventually, I will get to



This removal-resistant car tire was on the shore of the island opposite the viewing platform at the end of the footpath. Photo by Ned Stone.

wear the NPS vest and hat, ta da! The patrol activity consists in large part of rendering assistance and providing information to trail users and being alert to situations that require interventions by first responders and maintenance personnel. Much of the patrol activity is something that can be done by any responsible trail user, but the vest and hat serve to convey an impression of official presence. I expect to concentrate my patrolling on the Dyke Marsh trail and vicinity. And of course, I'll have my binoculars.

(continued from back page)

several years, while Peregrine Falcons and Merlins seem to be steadily increasing. Small songbirds like Carolina Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, White-breasted Nuthatches and Eastern Bluebirds apparently have recovered from the effects of the West Nile virus. The most interesting birds reported were a Rufous Hummingbird observed at the feeders at Potomac Overlook Park in Arlington and an apparent family group of Pine Warblers consisting of an adult male, adult female and three youngsters at the LBJ Grove. Now that's odd that they would be together so late in the year!

And what about Sector 4? Although waterfowl numbers were low consistent with the rest of the count circle, the participants tallied an impressive 1,209 American Coots. Numbers for this species haven't been that high in years. Red-bellied Woodpeckers are doing well, with a total of 68 observed, and we added a Red-headed Woodpecker to the sector tally. Other highlight birds include a Peregrine Falcon, a Purple Finch and a Pine Siskin.

Get Involved - Three Ways You Can Be Active

Harvard biologist Dr. Edmund O. Wilson wrote in his book, *The Creation*, that "living Nature is in deep trouble" and that at the present rate of human activity, "half the species of plants and animals on Earth could be either gone or at least fated for early extinction by the end of the century." Here are three ways you can be environmentally active in your area:

Speak Out on Parks: The Fairfax County Park Authority is having 10 meetings across the county, including one on March 27, 7 p.m., at Walt Whitman Intermediate School, to receive views on parks needs and changes "to balance the park system and accommodate future needs and growth." See www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/plandev/greatparks.htm. FODMers may want to attend and stress the importance of parks and their role

in conserving natural resources.

Restore Huntley Meadows: Want to learn about efforts to restore Huntley Meadows Park's wetland? Park staff are having a meeting on March 27, 7 p.m., Groveton Elementary School, 6900 Harrison Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306 to present the latest plans. Huntley's wetland, unlike "ours," is inland or non-tidal. Info: <http://fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley/restorationproject.htm>.

Your Refund Can Help Nature: If you are getting a Virginia tax refund this year, you can donate it to the Virginia Non-game Wildlife Program by marking a place on your state income tax form. This program supports research and management of Virginia's native birds, fish and other non-game animals. Of course, you can donate it to FODM too.

Dyke Marsh Study

Reprints of The Dyke Marsh Preserve Ecosystem, a study of Dyke Marsh by Dr. David Johnston, are on sale. The 50-page study was published in the *Virginia Journal of Science* in winter 2000 and describes Dyke Marsh in depth. \$10.00

Documentary DVD

Purchase a DVD copy of the 2006 Dyke Marsh documentary film "On the Edge." \$25.00

Send payment along with your name and address to FODM, P.O. Box 7183, Alexandria, VA 22307. We'll send you a copy.

Membership Up July - December 2007

Please welcome the following new life members:

Valerie Gregg Sandra Hoffman

L.T. Simarski Frances Zorn

And the following new FODM members:

John and Katy Anderson, Arnetta Austin, J.A. Boyer, Scott and Mary Carpenter, Terry Chandler, Jeanne and Ceci Collier, Tom Depasquale, Rex Edwards, Minor Elson, Deborah Hammer, Herb Harris, Robert Linnenberg, Mark Moran, Jim Pravel, Dieter and Nina Rudolph, Jeffrey and Linda Samuels, Paula Tosini, Erika Vogel, Mark Warner, Ken and Pam Williams.

Cleanup Coordinator Needed

Daniel Leubecker has agreed to be the FODM coordinator for Dyke Marsh cleanups. Thank you, Daniel! We'd like to line up a second person to help and back him up. Coordinators need to be on site on the day of the cleanup and help organize volunteers, pass out supplies and recycle collected items. Several groups sponsor cleanups of Dyke Marsh and the Potomac River each year. If you can help, please contact Glenda Booth at gbooth123@aol.com or 703-765-5233.

Sunday Morning Bird Walks at Dyke Marsh



Bird walks are held every Sunday morning, all year. Meet at 8 a.m. in the south parking lot of the Belle Haven picnic area. Walks are led by experienced birders and all are welcome. Photo by Paula Sullivan.

FODM Meeting Schedule for 2008

The FODM Board of Directors has established the schedule of membership meetings for calendar year 2008. A change in the meeting start time was also approved. The meetings will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the Huntley Meadows Park Visitors Center, 3701 Lockheed Boulevard, Alexandria, VA 22306. They are scheduled for March 5, May 14, September 17 and November 19. The meetings are free and all are welcome.

FODM Membership - Dues and Contributions

Support the Friends of Dyke Marsh by becoming a member or renewing your membership. Benefits include the Friends' quarterly publication, *The Marsh Wren*; quarterly membership meetings with knowledgeable speakers; Sunday morning bird walks and notification of activities in and around the marsh. Most importantly, your membership lends your voice in support of Dyke Marsh, our local natural treasure. To renew your membership, please send your tax-deductible contribution, payable to FODM, P.O. Box 7183, Alexandria, Virginia 22307. The annual dues are \$10.00 per household; \$250.00 for life membership for an individual. Additional contributions are most welcome. These help defray FODM's operating costs and support special programs and research. The mailing label on this *Marsh Wren* indicates membership status. Next to your name, one of the following will be indicated: LM — life member; *— complimentary copy; 07, 08, etc. — the year your membership expires. If the date indicated is 07 or earlier, please renew right away to keep *The Marsh Wren* coming and to continue your support of Dyke Marsh.

DUES AMOUNT..... \$ _____
ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION..... \$ _____
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED..... \$ _____

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE ____ ZIP ____
TELEPHONE NUMBER _____
EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Please address any questions or comments about *The Marsh Wren* to Dorothy McManus and about membership to Barbara Perry. You may contact them by mail at FODM, P.O. Box 7183, Alexandria, Virginia 22307-7183, by telephone or by email (see page 2).

Preliminary Results of the 2007 D.C. Christmas Bird Count

BY LARRY CARTWRIGHT

The Washington, D.C. Christmas Bird Count (CBC), which kicked off the CBC season in our area, was conducted on December 15, 2007. The survey area is a circle that includes Dyke Marsh in the south, Arlington County and Fairfax County east of 495 in the west, the C&O Canal and Rock Creek Park in the north and Kenilworth Gardens and the National Arboretum in the east. The count circle consists of seven sectors. I was asked to lead the sector that includes Dyke Marsh in 1999 and then was “promoted” to count compiler in 2004.

As compiler, I am responsible for the entire count circle and am trying to bird in a different sector every year. It will help me develop a familiarity with the circle and the personalities in all seven sectors. Alas, it precludes my participation at Dyke Marsh. But Paula Sullivan, Dorothy McManus and Ed Eder all have participated in the count almost on a yearly basis for the past decade. And of, course there is Kurt Gaskill, who leads the team that covers the area north of Dyke Marsh from Hunting Creek to Dangerfield Island. Also, I have to give credit to Larry Meade and Rich Rieger who recruited the volunteers and organized the count for the



Peregrine falcons, like this one near the Wilson Bridge, seem to be increasing in the area. Photo by Ed Eder.

Dyke Marsh sector, aka Sector 4. The CBC would not be a success without their help.

Although I have not completely analyzed the data, I can make a few preliminary statements about the results. Waterfowl numbers still are low, a trend that has been evident for

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