

**President's Corner
Peterson, MOS, and an
Interpretive Legacy
by Wayne Bell**



The **Maryland
Yellowthroat**
Newsletter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

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I recently finished reading *Birdwatcher, The Life of Roger Tory Peterson*, by Judith Rosenthal (2008) [reviewed in the *Yellowthroat*, May-June 2009]. This thoroughly researched biography documents the life of RTP, a person whose *A Field Guide to the Birds* (first edition 1939) undeniably changed the course of birding and of field natural history around the world. The book introduced the "Peterson method" of identifying birds by salient field marks—in the manner, as the author himself acknowledged, of the young hero Yan in Ernest Thompson Seton's semi-autobiographical *Two Little Savages* (1911). The duck illustrations in Seton's book bear a striking resemblance to those in the Peterson legacy.

My own introduction to RTP was through a small paperback, *How to Know the Birds* (1949), which I bought from a store in Silver Spring in the early 1950s. By then I had learned to recognize common yard and feeder birds, but the Peterson book introduced me to less familiar species, from shorebirds to vireos. I especially remember several pages of silhouettes (only two of which have survived to this day as end papers in *A Field Guide to the Birds*). Bird identification by shape and song opened new doors, especially as the binoculars "inherited" from my fisherman father were insufficient to reveal field mark details at a distance.

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**2010 CONFERENCE: WASHINGTON COLLEGE
JUNE 11-13**

Our annual conference was last held at Chestertown's Washington College in 2004, and several features bear repeating in 2010. For starters, the dates are the same: June 11-13. Our guest lecturer for 2004 was Dr. Doug Gill, Professor of Biology at the University of Maryland. He proved to be an exceptional speaker, energizing his audience with the ongoing story of grassland restoration at nearby Chino Farms. I am happy to report that Doug will return as keynote speaker in 2010.

We had excellent birds in 2004 — highlights included Mississippi and Swallow-tailed Kites soaring over the skies near Elkton in Cecil County—and birding in 2010 promises to be excellent as well. We will be ranging over Caroline, Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne, and Talbot Counties. This provides us with a wide variety of habitats; Maryland's Upper Eastern Shore occupies a transition zone between the piney woods and wetlands of the Lower Shore and the rolling hardwood hills of the Piedmont in northern Cecil County.

Kathy Calvert of the Frederick Bird Club, kathycalvert1@comcast.net, did an outstanding job of arranging field trips for our 2009 conference. I am very pleased to announce that Kathy has agreed to become a

permanent member of the Conference Committee and will handle field trip arrangements for future conferences. She will be looking for leaders for 2010; please contact her if you are willing to help.

For lack of a Statewide Educational Activities chair, we will not, I am sorry to say, be holding a conference workshop. However, if someone would be interested in arranging a workshop, please contact me.

Maryanne Dolan, Maryanne.dolan@gmail.com, will again work her magic with the Silent Auction and Raffle. Please keep in mind that the success of Maryanne's programs depends on getting quality donations—valuable/interesting/beautiful/quirky. If you are willing to help solicit items for the auction and raffle, please contact Maryanne.

I hope you will mark your calendars and plan to attend. We are looking forward to seeing you at Washington College in June.

Contact me with any questions.

—Janet Shields, Chair
Conference Committee
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Reminding the Art World

The 2010 Pin Contest deadline is January 15, 2010. The rules are simple: The bird must be appropriate for the conference site (Chestertown); it must contain the phrases "MOS" and "2010;" the artist must be a member of MOS; and entries must be in HARD COPY. Put your name, address, phone number, e-mail address, chapter affiliation, and the species on the back of each entry. Send entries to John Malcolm, 10205 Kindly Court, Montgomery Village, MD 20886. To see all the rules, and more tips about designing pins for the contest, visit the MOS web site or contact John Malcolm at 301-977-5788 or smudgie@comcast.net.

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Anyone is welcome to contribute articles or ideas that would be of interest to other birders. Copy may be mailed or e-mailed to Lydia Schindler by November 20, 2009 for the January/February 2010 issue.

Illustrations pages 1 and 6 ©M. Suzanne Probst.
Photograph page 4 ©George Jett.
Photograph page 8 ©M. Suzanne Probst.
Photograph page 9 ©Dave Czaplak.

President's Corner *continued from page 1*

My childhood home near Four Corners was just a few blocks from extensive woods on the Northwest Branch watershed. I remember the huge, light gray boles of dead trees that I later learned to be the remains of American Chestnut. By the time I was in 5th or 6th grade, much of this local watershed was being cleared for housing development. Eventually, what became the Capital Beltway cut through the region.

Though I loathed the transformation even then, for nearly a decade the altered landscape produced new habitat and introduced me to birds that were easier to hear and see than those of the original forest canopy. I heard and tracked down my first Yellow-breasted Chat, Indigo Bunting, and Field Sparrow during rambles across this area in 1958. Familiar birds today, hardly significant additions to a life list—but I was 12, ripe for discovery, and generally unprepared to protest this unmitigated, irreplaceable loss of a precious local environment. On January 11 of that year, so says my written note on the title page, I bought the 3rd (1947) edition of *A Field Guide to the Birds*.

My original copy of this book has been with me ever since. I followed Peterson's suggestion in the Introduction to "Make This Guide a Personal Thing," adding tabs for each of the plates and writing dates of first observations on the species accounts. Most of the hand-written tabs have fallen away but a few reminders are still in place. And for more than four decades since, Peterson's "My Life List" section was my own. I have since transferred the information to a computerized data base, but I'll admit that now and again I need to pick up the book, peruse its well-worn pages, and even brush away a tear upon reading the innocent notes of discovery written years ago.

As a pathfinder, *A Field Guide to the Birds* resulted in copies in kind and many improvements on the RTP model. I especially cherish first editions of *Birds of North America* (1966) by our own Robbins, Brun, and Zim (which Chan graciously signed following a lecture at Washington College in 2002) and *National Geographic's Field Guide to the Birds of North America* (1983).

And yet . . . and yet, I still find myself going back to the RTP original—and not just for reasons of nostalgia. The 4th edition of *A Field Guide to the Birds*, which I also possess, was completely revised and places text opposite plates. But there had to be sacrifices. The same-page format pioneered by such as Robbins et al. allowed for expanded coverage at the sacrifice of personal insight. The species descriptions in my 1947 copy of the RTP field guide are enriched by the

author's personal comments. Barrow's Goldeneye points out the crescent-shaped white patch in front of the eye, the greater amount of black of the sides, the head with a purple gloss and shape with a more abrupt forehead and low rounded crown, and then admonishes, "Try to see *all* these characters before you put this rare bird on your list." After introducing the song of the Chestnut-sided Warbler (*please please please to meet'cha*), RTP notes, "If the song comes from a streamside, a town, or a farmyard, it is the Yellow Warbler. If it comes from a dry, brushy clearing it is the Chestnut-side." In Appendix I on Accidentals, he states, "Remember, it is the 'second look' that turns up the rarities and the accidentals." During the recent Dorchester County Fall Count, Ms. Gabby Caliguirri, one of the aspiring YMOS youngsters, took a "second look" at eagles flying over Taylor's Island and identified a Golden Eagle out of a plethora of Bald Eagles in the air that day. She had never seen this species before, but thanks to her "second look," we were able to find that same bird later that day and confirm her original identification.

This brings me back to the point of this essay. Modern field guides are individually superb in their species descriptions, art work, photographs, and range maps, and they all capitalize on the field-mark emphasis introduced by RTP. But these and even the latest update of *A Field Guide to the Birds* are not necessarily the best introduction to birding for beginners of any age. That introduction still requires a spark of insight and discovery—the translation, if you will, of data and pictures into living birds. Modern field guides and Internet communications are no substitute for personal experience in awakening the joy that comes of birding.

It is my belief that MOS has a key role to fill as translator in this era of comprehensive field guides. Chapters continue to inform me of ways in which they fulfill this role, sponsoring walks and talks especially designed to encourage newcomers to join our birding community. MOS is working on a Maryland Birding Trail as well as new summer workshops for teachers and students. Birders of all ages are our best hope that vanishing habitat will be conserved and managed. Each of us can be a living update of any modern field guide. This is an admirable role for us to play, anchored as it is in a tradition originally established by Roger Tory Peterson.

MARYLAND/DC RECORDS COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT AS OF SEPTEMBER 27, 2009

BY PHIL DAVIS, MD/DCRC SECRETARY

The MD/DCRC has reached the following decisions since the last committee status report was published in *The Maryland Yellowthroat*. This report covers MD/DCRC review packages 127 through 128.

MD/DCRC report numbers are in brackets. These records will be addressed in additional detail in a future issue of *Maryland Birdlife*. No new "state" species were added with these decisions. The official species totals for Maryland and DC remain at 435 and 330, respectively.

More information on the MD/DCRC can be found on the committee's web pages at the following URL:

<http://www.mdbirds.org/mddcrc/rcindex.html>

MD RECORDS ACCEPTED:

- Tufted Duck**, *Aythya fuligula* [MD/2008-177]
Choptank River, Cambridge, Dorchester County
26-Dec-2008 through 31-Jan-2009
- Barrow's Goldeneye**, *Bucephala islandica* [MD/2009-006]
Choptank River, Cambridge, Dorchester County
07-Jan-2009 through 31-Jan-2009
- Barrow's Goldeneye**, *Bucephala islandica* [MD/2009-018]
Jefferson Patterson Museum, St. Leonard, Calvert County
07-Feb-2009
- Yellow Rail**, *Coturnicops noveboracensis* [MD/1999-208]
Croom, Prince George's County
03-Nov-1880
- Yellow Rail**, *Coturnicops noveboracensis* [MD/2009-046]
Marion Station, Somerset County
24-Apr-2009 through 26-Apr-2009
- Eurasian Collared-Dove**, *Streptopelia decaocto* [MD/2007-135]
Rockville, Montgomery County
18-Nov-2007
- White-winged Dove**, *Zenaida asiatica* [MD/2009-048]
Poolesville, Montgomery County
26-Apr-2009
- Western Kingbird**, *Tyrannus verticalis* [MD/1997-056]
Rockville, Montgomery County
16-Sep-1991
- Cave Swallow**, *Petrochelidon fulva* [MD/2007-142]
West Ocean City, Ocean City, Worcester County
14-Dec-2007
- Cave Swallow**, *Petrochelidon fulva* [MD/2009-012]
Point Lookout State Park, Scotland, Saint Mary's County
25-Jan-2009
- Lark Bunting**, *Calamospiza melanocorys* [MD/2009-002]
Union Bridge Road, Union Bridge, Carroll County
02-Jan-2009 through 14-Mar-2009

Le Conte's Sparrow, *Ammodramus leconteii* [MD/1999-166]
E.A. Vaughn WMA, Girdletree, Worcester County
02-May-1999 through 04-May-1999

Le Conte's Sparrow, *Ammodramus leconteii* [MD/2001-007]
E.A. Vaughn WMA, Stockton, Worcester County
29-Dec-2000 through 17-Feb-2001

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, *Ammodramus nelsoni* [MD/1997-564]
Broad Ford Run, Mountain Lake Park, Garrett County
01-Oct-1988

MD RECORDS ACCEPTED-GROUP:

Pomarine/Parasitic Jaeger, *Stercorarius pomarinus/parasi* [MD/2006-103]
Violette's Lock, Seneca, Montgomery County
02-Sep-2006

MD RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED:

- Swainson's Hawk**, *Buteo swainsoni* [MD/2008-096]
Cromwell Valley Park, Towson, Baltimore County
23-Nov-2008
- White-winged Tern**, *Chlidonias leucopterus* [MD/2008-053]
Ocean City, Worcester County
19-Jun-2008
- Dovekie**, *Alle alle* [MD/2008-021]
Eastern Neck NWR, Rock Hall, Kent County
16-Dec-2007
- Le Conte's Sparrow**, *Ammodramus leconteii* [MD/2005-038]
E.A. Vaughn WMA, Stockton, Worcester County
04-Jan-2003

DC RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED:

Ross's Gull, *Rhodostethia rosea* [DC/2008-077]
Potomac River, Theodore Roosevelt Bridge
21-Sep-2008

HELP WANTED

The enchanting Girl Scout **Camp Todd** in Caroline Co is updating its trail guides and wants to include birds likely to be seen on specific trails. To build a detailed seasonal list, the Caroline Bird Club and the Camp Ranger, Bob Foote, invite MOS members to visit the camp to hike and bird. Just contact Bob ahead of time (281-844-6854 or BobFoote1@aol.com), then send a copy of your bird lists, with dates and locations, to Debby Bennett, firefly5845@hotmail.com. The camp is located at 25012 Beauchamp Branch Road, Denton, MD 21629.

THE PERKS OF COUNTY LISTING

On August 15, Gwen and I received a cell phone call from John Hubbell. John, a fellow birding friend, had come to Charles County in hopes of finding a Black-bellied Plover. The plover represented a “county close-out” for him—Charles remained the only one of Maryland’s 23 counties where he hadn’t yet seen that species.

County listing is one of the games birders are drifting toward as they have more time to bird or become more competitive in their pursuits. Some might say birders who list have a deeper commitment to their passion (obsession), and a close-out is kind of a merit badge; the more close-outs, the larger the badge.

Listing of county close-outs was started back in the late 1970s by Sam Droege, and it was soon picked up by the likes of Rick Blom, Bob Ringler, and Jim Stasz. Jim Stasz currently leads the list with 182 county closeouts. Jim has spent decades and virtually every weekend combing the state and all its nooks and crannies to compile this hefty list. Consequently Jim may know more about the avifauna of Maryland than any other person.

Even though it contributes to global warming by increasing a birder’s carbon footprint, county listing does have its benefits for birders and for birds. Listing can provide some useful natural history and educational information. It teaches you to bird by habitat, since particular species use the same kind of habitat regardless of where they are. Rails and ducks use marshes, Black-and-white Warblers prefer pine forests, shorebirds use wetlands, etc. It also shows the need to protect certain kinds of habitat if we want to protect the species that we seek. By searching particular habitats for particular species, not only do you become a better birder, you can contribute information on the distribution in time and space of our birds in Maryland. Plus, occasionally these county searches turn up a rare bird; I once found a Ruff in Talbot County while trying to “close out” Eastern Wood-Pee-wee.

There is no way to find all 429 species on the Maryland state list in all 23 counties. Many species, like Ross’s Gull, have appeared in the state only once. Some species, like our more localized resident Carolina Chickadee, rarely wander over the mountain ridges into Allegany and Garrett counties. Shorebirds, gulls, and terns are also rare west of the Piedmont. Consequently, only about 200 species are potential close-outs.

There are many other games we listers play. (See “Locality Lists,” page 5, or check the “Brag Book” compiled by



This Brown-headed Nuthatch was photographed by George Jett on August 15, 2009.

Norm Saunders at <http://www.mdbirds.org/birds/mdbirds/locality/lstrep2008.pdf>). Maryland State list (Paul O’Brien currently tops the list with 402 species), county lists, total ticks (the sum of all your county lists—potential maximum is 7,022), and my favorite—the number of species photographed in the state. I have photographed 377 species in Maryland and identified 274 species in Charles County in my lifetime (number one in both categories).

The competition for “close-outs” has grown substantially since its early days. One hundred used to be the mark of excellence, but now perhaps a dozen birders have reached that plateau, and the competition is growing. John Hubbell is now in the number two slot for the “close-out” category, with 147—and he is gunning for 150 by the end of the year.

So why had John called me that August day? While seeking a Black-bellied Plover, John had found one of my most wanted species for Charles County—a Brown-headed Nuthatch. Even though the species nests just to the south, in St. Mary’s County, it does not wander far from its breeding range, and there are perhaps only three records in Charles County. I have searched for Brown-headed Nuthatch in Charles County for more than 30 years. This species is never likely to become a close-out candidate, but was a great find.

As soon as we got the call, Gwen and I packed up our gear and headed to Southern Park where John had found the bird, and John graciously offered to stay on the bird until we arrived. I owe John one; I will be on the lookout for “target” species John needs to increase his close-outs. As you can see from the photo, we were successful. Thanks to John for his prompt attention to this most wanted species.

—George Jett

HOW TO: REPORT 2009 MARYLAND/DC LOCALITY LISTS

Each year, the MOS compiles and publishes totals from members' state and local bird lists. **Forms for submitting your 2009 locality lists are provided on the MOS web site.** You are invited to submit your totals for any of the following list categories:

STATE/COUNTY CUMULATIVE LISTS

This category is for lifetime species totals identified anywhere in the state of Maryland, in DC, or within any of the 23 Maryland counties. Please submit only totals that exceed 50% of the maximum number for each locality. (The form contains the latest maximums and the 50% thresholds.) If you claim a MD life list in excess of 349 species, you **MUST** list all species added to your MD life list in 2008. If you don't fill in this box, your list will not be entered into the database.

STATE/COUNTY 2009 ANNUAL LISTS

This category is for total species identified for the same localities as above, but in 2009 only. These totals may be reported at any threshold.

YARD LIST

This category is for cumulative yard list totals, and for 2009 totals. You may count any species you have identified while in your "yard" (that is, property contiguous to your home). "Flyovers" and other birds

identified from your yard (even if they were not in your yard) also count.

ALL-COUNTY LIST

This category covers the number of species you have identified in every one of Maryland's 23 counties. For example, if you have identified a Northern Mockingbird, an American Crow, a Downy Woodpecker, and a Red-tailed Hawk in all 23 counties, your list total would be 4.

TOTAL TICKS

This category is the sum of all your Maryland County list totals. The maximum possible is 7,022. We will accept all-time-high submissions at any level greater than or equal to 2,300 (an average of 100 species per county). Total Ticks for 2009-only will be accepted at any level.

ALL-TIME-HIGH ANNUAL LISTS

This category tracks all-time-high annual lists from the current and previous years. Annual totals for prior years may be submitted. For Maryland, submitted totals should equal or exceed 297 (70% of the maximum possible number). For individual counties, totals submitted from previous years should exceed either 50% of the maximum possible or exceed one of the top totals previously published for that county.

SPECIES PHOTOGRAPHED IN MD

As the name implies, this category focuses on the number of bird species you have photographed (recognizably!) in Maryland. There are no lower limits.

Members' totals that have not been updated within the previous five years (2004-2008) will be dropped from the listings (but not from the database). If you have any questions, please contact Norm Saunders at marshhawk@verizon.net or 410-228-5066.

Please return the form BEFORE JANUARY 21, 2010 to:

Norm Saunders
107 Sailors Lane
Cambridge, MD 21613.

We hope that all who have participated will do so again, and that others will join in, especially those from localities that are currently less than well represented. If you have any comments, thoughts, or anecdotes, please include them. If you have any other categories of Maryland bird lists that are appropriate (for example, all-time or 2009 state/county "Big Day" totals), send them in. We'd like to hear from you. And remember, this is for fun!

—Norm Saunders

Christmas Bird Counts *continued from page 16*

Monday, December 28

Ocean City. Compiler: Jay Sheppard, 301-725-5559 or JMSheppard@aol.com.

Washington County. Contact county coordinator Dave Weesner, 301-302-6376, to help with the local effort. Afterwards, tally the day's observations while enjoying dinner with fellow birders. Everyone brings a dish to share. Place settings, drinks, and a main dish are provided. Dinner starts around 5 PM at the Mt. Aetna Nature Center.

Tuesday, December 29

Chincoteague NWR. Compiler: Dick Roberts, 757-336-1799 or bandbird@verizon.net.

Wednesday, December 30

Cape Charles. Compiler: Harry Armistead, 215-248-4120 or harrysteam@hotmail.com.

Friday, January 1

Bowie. Contact: Fred Fallon, 301-249-1518 or fwwfallon@earthlink.net.

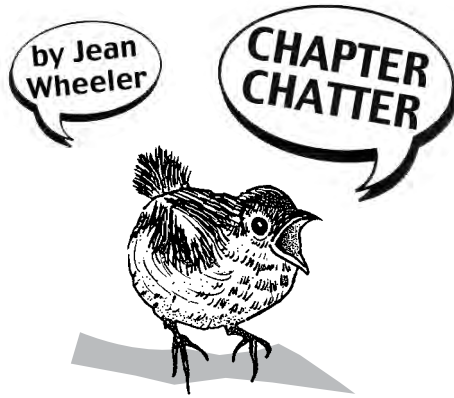
Sunday, January 3

Patuxent River. Compiler: Andy Brown, 410-535-5327 or brownaj@co.cal.md.us.

Sugarloaf. If you can help out, contact Helen Horrocks (Frederick), 301-831-6315, or Janet Millenson (Montgomery), 301-983-9337.

Fort Belvoir. MD area Compiler: Carol Ghebelian, 301-753-6754.
 VA Compiler: Kurt Gaskill, 703-768-2172 or kurtcapt87@verizon.com.

Annapolis/Gibson Island. Coordinators: Sue Ricciardi, 410-647-9513, and Lynn Davidson and Hal Wierenga, 410-647-7439.



Anne Arundel County

Pat and Juanita Tate enjoyed a productive trip to SE Arizona in early August. They managed to visit Ramsey, Miller, Ash, Garden, and Huachuca Canyons along with the San Pedro Riparian NCA and the Sierra Vista Environmental Operations Park. One highlight was seeing 12 species of hummingbird, mainly in the mountains and often while sitting on a chair or bench at a B&B: Allen's, Anna's, Berylline, Black-chinned, Blue-throated, Broad-billed, Broad-tailed, Lucifer's, Magnificent, Rufous, Violet-crowned (on nest), and White-eared. Other highlights included Acorn, Arizona, Gila, and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers along with the Red-shafted Northern Flicker; Cactus, Canyon, and Bewick's Wrens; and Sora and Wilson's Phalarope. They tallied 86 species at a relaxed pace. A Greater Roadrunner crossed the road in front of them and they heard and saw the Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher. Oh yes, they also enjoyed a visit with family.

—Pat Tate

I returned to my favorite spot in the world, the Adirondacks, for a week of visiting with friends, relaxing and, of course, some “porch” birding. The weather varied from sunny to rainy, warm to cold (35° at 5 am one morning!). From the porch I was able to see loons, one Common Merganser, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, an unidentified falcon, Double-crested Cormorant, Cedar Waxwing, Red-Eyed Vireo, and Black-capped Chickadee. One evening

I heard a Barred Owl calling. Then one afternoon I took a walk around The Loop, a trail blazed through the center of the point, and added Red-breasted Nuthatch, Dark-eyed Junco, and Hermit Thrush to my short list. Unlike years past, this year few birds were seen—no warblers and no large raptors. The exciting news in the area was the sighting of a Brown Pelican on Fourth Lake; it was there for one day, photographed, and documented as a “first.” So I spent a glorious week, enjoying the beauty of the area, falling asleep to the call of loons, and experiencing the peacefulness and serenity of nature.

—Bobbi Reichwein

I was feeling discouraged; no lifer for over a year and a half. Then suddenly two within five days in September—and good birds, too: a Lesser/Greater Sand Plover (VA) and a Hawaiian Petrel (CA). The latter came on a remarkable two days spent on Monterey Bay and was clustered among a few other good sightings, e.g., a young humpback whale. (As the cap'n explained, “There's a whale right underneath us 80 feet deep and the Fish Finder says he's still rising.” Nearby birders had curiously contemplative looks on their faces until the whale surfaced about 20 yards off the starboard, dove a few times, and bid farewell with his flukes in the air.) Then there was my first ever sighting of a pod of orcas on a kill, probably, according to a marine biologist aboard, “a family training a youngster by making a karate chop with their tail across the spine of the dolphin, then showing him how to attack the still struggling prey.” And a pair of fin whales, too—save for the blue whale, the largest living animal on the planet, and they looked it. And, oh, yes, some good birds, too. The Hawaiian Petrel was among several Cook's Petrels, Buller's and other Shearwaters, dark and white fulmars at the same time, and, at one point, a Grand Slam of all three jaegers circling the boat along with a South Polar Skua above the fish

oil slick trailing behind. Nice way to emerge from a birding dearth on the depths.

—Leo Weigant

Harford County

President Dave Webb traveled with his wife and son to the White Mountains of New Hampshire in early August. “Although we never took any trips for the sole purpose of finding birds, I always had the binocs nearby for whatever we might come upon. . . . While wilderness camping on the Appalachian Trail near Gentian Pond on August 10, Danny and I heard and briefly saw a Peregrine Falcon fly overhead. It was thrilling to find this bird in such a remote, rugged habitat. Two days later, while hiking on the Jewell Trail towards Mount Washington, we stumbled upon a flock of about 4-5 Boreal Chickadees in a dense forest of predominantly spruce at an altitude of about 4500 feet. Although the birds came in as close to us as ten feet, they remained true to their reputation of staying near the trunks of the trees. It was truly an unexpected find.”

—Dave Webb

Howard County

Arizona was a popular destination for Howard County birders. Gayle and Bill Hill spent a wonderful two weeks in SE Arizona in late May 2009. The trip started on a high note when they found a male Rufous-capped Warbler in Florida Canyon, singing near the top of a bare tree about 50 feet away. In the cooler climes of the Chiricahua Mountains, owls were a top priority, and a guide got them great looks at Elf, Western, and Whiskered Screech-Owls. Other noteworthy finds included Mexican Chickadee, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Blue-throated and Magnificent Hummingbirds, and Grace's, Olive, Red-faced (on nest), and Virginia's Warblers. Hummingbirds were primary targets in the Huachuca Mountains: Mary Jo Ballator made sure they got on the Lucifer Hummingbird at her place; a White-eared Hummingbird and a

rare Berylline Hummingbird were cooperative at Beatty's. Later they saw a Spotted Owl that was roosting on a low branch in Miller Canyon. At Patagonia, the Hills learned about a new viewing area for the Sinaloa Wren; they positioned themselves along The Nature Conservancy fence and were soon listening to the loud, close Sinaloa Wren. It managed to remain invisible for a while, but it finally gave itself up and landed on an exposed, eye-level branch less than 10 feet away. This was a bird they REALLY didn't expect to see—what a treat!! Flame-colored Tanager was the main target in Madera Canyon. Hearing Mr. Flame was easy, but they had to wait a while before he came to sample his favorite grape treat. They also hoped to spot the pair of Northern Pygmy-Owls that are often seen just above the Madera Kubo; birders at Kubo were very forthcoming about the location of the pygmy-owl nest site, and the Hills checked it several times during the day without seeing anything. But when they came back in the evening, they were rewarded with seeing the owls swap brooding responsibility just after sunset. Next they watched the Elf Owls come out of their nest hole at Santa Rita Lodge.

Having found most of their targets, Bill and Gayle traveled up Hwy 77 to the "break check area" near MP 162 to look for Gray Vireos; sure enough, they heard and saw them within minutes. On their last evening, guide Melody Kehl took them to California Gulch to see a Five-striped Sparrow. The bird didn't come down off the steep hillside until 6 PM, when the canyon floor was already in deep shadow, but they were still able to see its rich colors. Once it arrived, it was unbelievably tolerant of the six anxious birders who were less than 75 feet away, all vying for good looks. After the sparrow show, they went to the Oro Blanco Mine to wait for the Buff-collared Nightjar to appear; they didn't see it but they sure heard it. The sight of a Common Poorwill

during the drive out was a good ending to the trip.

—Kate Tufts

Kurt Schwarz enjoyed the bulk of the summer in Arizona. He attended an 8-week language class at Arizona State U and took advantage of the weekends to track down some Mexican rarities as well as basic western birds. His first lifer was, appropriately, a Greater Roadrunner. Highlights were the Patagonia Sinaloa Wren, only just accepted onto the ABA list, and the Madera Flame-colored Tanager. Kurt joined a late June field trip with Maricopa Audubon Society to Fort Huachuca, and he takes particular pride in locating and getting the group on a singing Botteri's Sparrow--this quintessential little brown job has a song that is quite distinctive, and the sparrows apparently had just begun singing with the monsoon rains.

After Kurt's class was completed, he was joined by Montgomery Bird Club member Anna Urciolo, and they spent the first week of August visiting SE Arizona hotspots, including some earlier taken in by Kurt. They successfully relocated the wren but not the tanager. Nice compensation prizes were Rufous-capped Warblers at Patagonia and Black-capped Gnatcatcher at Florida Canyon. Kurt returned home on August 8, while Anna remained for another week (see Montgomery County, below). Kurt's haul was 70 lifers for the 9 weeks. Alas, he fell two short of 500 ABA birds, but hopes to correct that soon!

—Kurt Schwarz

Montgomery County

Anna Urciolo—after dropping Kurt Schwarz off at the Phoenix Airport (he had been a fabulous guide for that first week)—headed back down to Sierra Vista. The next day, former MBC member Erika Wilson graciously helped Anna find a few more life birds at Ft. Huachuca. (Erika's strategy sometimes included pouring herself another cup of coffee

or just sitting on the ground; since her binoculars were not "at the ready," this ensured that the target birds would appear. It worked.) Anna had 70 lifers for her two weeks in Arizona. Besides the wonderful birds, the scenery in southern Arizona (such as the incredible red rock formations of Sedona, or Mt. Lemmon's climb from 5,000 feet to 9,000 feet) managed to take her breath away.

Montgomery/Frederick Chapter member Gemma Radko recently returned from a birding trip to Ecuador, where she and Howard Youth (MBC member currently residing in Quito) saw a total of 257 bird species, including the rare Jocotoco Antpitta and White-breasted Parakeet, 44 species of hummingbird, 41 species of tanager, and seven species of antpitta.

Mike and Joy Bowen spent an enjoyable week after Labor Day with former MBC members Peter and Elaine Bono at their Yarmouthport, MA home, strategically located near the mid-point of Cape Cod. They had a particularly profitable trip on a whale-watching cruise out of Provincetown; it produced 20 Humpback Whales at close range and multiple Greater, Manx, and Sooty Shearwaters, together with Wilson's Storm-Petrels, Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers, and numerous terns of several species. By coincidence, they ran into Chapter Chatter correspondent Chris Wright in the National Seashore, and they went together to the famed Beech Forest, a notable Cape Cod migrant trap (but not on that day!). On their way home, the Bowens stopped off at Sikorsky Memorial Airport near Stratford, CT, to check on a reported Northern Wheatear, which they were able to locate and photograph.

Bob Hartman and Lydia Schindler took former MOSer Bill Murphy's 10-day September trip to Trinidad and Tobago. (The third edition of Bill's *Birdwatchers' Guide to T&T*

Chapter Chatter *continued from page 7*

came out in 2004; co-leading the trip was Martyn Kenefik, an author of the 2007 *Field Guide to the Birds of T&T*.) In Trinidad their exceptionally congenial gang of nine stayed at the legendary Asa Wright Nature Center and enjoyed such specialties as Scarlet Ibis and Oilbird and rum punch, with Streaked Xenops and Spotted Tody-Flycatcher also on the docket. On Day 6, a 14-minute flight brought the group to the resort isle of Tobago, rich in marshes and mangroves and Mangrove Cuckoos; a bumpy road at day's end led to the handsome and expansive Cuffie River Nature Retreat, where Long-tailed Sabrewings sip from the feeders and Venezuelan Flycatcher and Blue-backed Manakin lurk nearby. Overlooks on Little Tobago Island offered an aerial ballet by Red-billed Tropicbirds, Red-footed and Brown Boobies, and Brown Noddies (and the by-now-familiar Magnificent Frigatebirds). The group's 200-some species included a dozen varieties of hummingbird and half a dozen antbirds.

—Chris Wright

Tri-County

Betty Pitney and Dr. Ellen Lawler took separate trips to the Dry Tortugas and both got all the target birds. Jean and Larry Fry were part of an Elderhostel bird trip to Yellowstone National Park; their leader, Terry McEaney, took them to his favorite Great Gray Owl spot, where the bird cooperated. They also had sightings of Baird's Sparrow, Sharp-tailed Grouse, and their for-many-years-"elusive" American Dipper. Sam Dyke was one of the few lucky birders to see last summer's Roseate Spoonbill in Maryland. A lot of patience was rewarded! Finally, Carol Broderick joined a bird trip to Gambell, AK with 15 members of the Brookline MA Bird Club. Lots of great eyes certainly made the birding easier.

—Carol Broderick

In Memoriam

Carol Ann Flora, former President of the Harford Bird Club, died of brain cancer July 7, 2009. Carol, a resident of Bel Air, was a retired Harford County Public School teacher and counselor and a longtime member of Christ Our King Presbyterian Church, where she sang in the choir. She loved gardening, golf, and traveling, but bird-watching was her passion. An enthusiastic member of the Harford County Bird Club for years, she served as club president from 2001-2003 and was a faithful supporter of countless club activities. Whether it was hosting committee meetings in her home, doing field work for the Atlas project, or volunteering

for ongoing jobs, she offered a willing hand. She especially enjoyed birding trips with club members to familiar Maryland and nearby hotspots as well as to far-off places such as Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, Panama, Australia, and Big Bend National Park and Lower Texas. Carol is survived by her son, Michael Flora and his wife, Trish, and their three children, Alyson, Tessa, and Charles, of New Market, MD, and her daughter, Leslie A. Flora and her husband, Mark T. Boyle, of Mt. Airy, MD. Her husband of 40 years, Charles M. Flora, died in 2002.

—Macrina Seitz

“Embrace the winter,” Cornell urges. “Count feeder birds for science.”

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology is recruiting volunteers for Project FeederWatch, which gets under way November 14 and runs through early April. Participants are asked to count the numbers and kinds of birds at their feeders on two consecutive days (week after week), and enter their information on the FeederWatch web site.

Since 1987, more than 40,000 people from the United States and Canada have taken part in the project. Last season alone, participants submitted nearly 117,000 checklists.

To learn more and to sign up, visit www.feederwatch.org or call the Cornell Lab toll-free at 866-982-2473. In return for a \$15 fee (\$12 for Cornell Lab members) participants receive the *FeederWatcher's Handbook*, an identification poster

of the most common feeder birds, a calendar, complete instructions, and *Winter Bird Highlights*, an annual summary of FeederWatch findings.



Also watching the feeder: a juvenile Cooper's Hawk, photographed by Suzanne Probst.

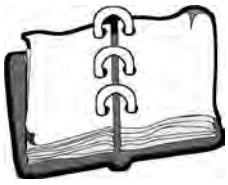


Birds of Note—by Les Roslund



Dave Czaplak photographed this Swallow-tailed Kite at Hughes Hollow on September 4, 2009.

- On July 24 our birding community was thrilled to see the first of a sequence of reports describing what may have been a BROWN BOOBY flying near the start of the ORV Zone, Assateague Island, Worcester County. The first report, from Joe Hanfman of Anne Arundel County, was soon followed by many others over the next several days. But lighting conditions and distance left all photographs as inconclusive. A vigorous debate over the species ID raged within the birding community, then fell suddenly silent when word came out that Nat Donkin of the National Park Service had photographed a BROWN BOOBY standing on the beach at Assateague on Aug 2. This bird, a Maryland first, managed to arrive just 17 days after the posting of the 2009 version of “Maryland’s Next Ten Bird Species”—which listed BROWN BOOBY as number six. Which species will be next?
- Another seabird viewing treat occurred September 1, when a flock of about 15 WILSON’S STORM-PETRELS showed up several hundred yards offshore over the Chesapeake Bay at Scientists’ Cliffs, South Beach, Calvert County. Sue Hamilton was the lucky observer, and she had the joy of getting her sighting confirmed when Joe Mihursky, formerly a researcher at Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, called her to mention that he had also seen the flock that day.
- At Hughes Hollow in Montgomery County, a SWALLOW-TAILED KITE showed up around the impoundments on September 4 and provided thrilling views for numerous birders during a two-day stay. Andy Martin and Lydia Schindler of Montgomery County were the discoverers. They passed the word quickly, and within three hours a dozen or more birders were watching the show. On Sept 5 the bird returned to feast on the numerous dragonflies of the area, much to the joy of more viewers. However, folks who waited until Sept 6 were not as fortunate; the bird was gone and it did not appear again.
- A SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER was discovered on Aug 22 near Sudlersville, Queen Anne’s County, and it stayed in the region through Sep 2. Jan Reese of Talbot County just happened to notice the bird while he was in the area for non-birding matters. He got the message out as quickly as possible and the bird cooperated by staying close to the original location, thereby providing fine photo opportunities. The supply of grasshoppers at the site offered plenty of food, as many of the viewers noted.
- Earlier in August a LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE showed up in Hagerstown, Washington County. It was first reported by Jim Green of Montgomery County on Aug 5, and it stayed in the area through Aug 17, giving good views and fine photo ops to many birders. The bird seemed content with the habitat available around some ponds that are part of the extended center of Hagerstown. In fact, a particular mullein stalk provided an excellent perch for several of the photos.
- On August 3, a YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD turned up in a DNR bird-banding operation at Indian Springs WMA in Washington County. Mark Hoffman received a report of the find from Brian Eyler of DNR and rushed to the site, relocated the bird, and obtained some excellent photographs. However, though the bird was there for Mark, it seemed skittish, and later attempts to find it were unsuccessful.
- In recent years, BROWN PELICANS have become regular visitors on or near the Chesapeake Bay, but usually they stay to the south of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. So it was quite a surprise when a BROWN PELICAN was reported above Conowingo Dam. The bird moved around, so it was observed in both Cecil and Harford Counties. The date of the sighting was August 2, and the viewers were Bob Schutsky of Peach Bottom, PA and his son, who lives in Baltimore. Bob kindly provided a report of his sighting to Kevin Graff and several other Maryland birders, and Kevin forwarded the report to the rest of the Maryland birding community. No later sightings were reported.
- As usual, the region has been filled with migrating warblers this fall. One of the highlights was of a BREWSTER’S WARBLER seen by Gail Mackiernan and Barry Cooper on Sep 10 in Wheaton Regional Park/Woodside Gardens, Montgomery County. The wind-down of warbler season is signaled by the arrival of the first of the YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS; this year the first report came from Elaine Hendricks of Prince George’s County, who saw two of them at the Governor Bridge Natural Area in Prince George’s County on Sep 14. Fortunately, the wind-down is gradual and warbler sightings were still coming in as of early October.
- The decline in warbler migration activity is usually followed by an increase in gull movement. An early gull-viewing treat occurred on Sep 20 when Peter Vankevich of DC photographed a BLACK-HEADED GULL at the Anacostia Community Boathouse near the 11th Street Bridge in DC. Let the gull-watching now begin!



MOS Calendar

November-December 2009

Sunday, November 1

H Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hours. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Early waterfowl and lingering migrants likely. Meet 8 AM at west end parking lot. Leader: Kurt Schwarz, 410-461-1643 or krschwa1@verizon.net. Facilities available.

H Talbot. Duvall Farm (Akridge property) for waterfowl, a variety of sparrows, and early winter birds. Leader: Wayne Bell, 410-820-6002. Breakfast hosts: Joyce and Wayne Bell. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM.

Tuesday, November 3

MEETING. **Baltimore.** Lecture at Cylburn Mansion, 4915 Greenspring Ave. "Using Song and Molecular Genetics to Understand Species Boundaries in the Orchard Oriole Complex." *Rachael Sturge*, PhD student at University of UMD-Balt Co. Doors open at 7 PM for socializing and snacks, show starts about 7:15 PM. For more info, contact Pete Webb at 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

Wednesday, November 4

H Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. Scope useful. Automatically cancelled in bad weather (rain, sleet, fog, etc.). [From I-95, take Hanover St exit 55, McComas St (last exit before tunnel eastbound, first after tunnel westbound), north on Key Hwy which turns west, first left Lawrence St, left onto Fort Ave, continue east to gate into Ft. McHenry. From the JFX, I-83, south to St Paul St exit, south on St Paul which becomes Light St, then left (east) onto Fort Ave, continue to

end as above.] Meet outside Visitor Center at 8 AM. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

MEETING. **Carroll.** "Cuba" by *Marcia Balestri*. 7:30 PM at the Carroll Senior Center, 125 Stoner Ave, Westminster. Contact Dave Harvey at 410-795-3117 for more info.

MEETING. **Cecil.** Program TBA. 7 PM at the North East Public Library. For more info, contact President Pat Valdata, pvaldata@zoominternet.net.

Thursday, November 5

MEETING. **Frederick.** *Wil Hershberger* will entertain, educate, and amaze us with the symphonies created by our smallest winged creatures in "The Songs of Insects." 7 PM at the C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick.

H Patuxent. Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail). The Prince George's Audubon Society (PGAS), along with members of the Patuxent Bird Club, will host mid-week bird walks every 1st and 3rd Thur at the newly-dedicated Luther Goldman Birding Trail. Meet 3 PM at the parking lot at Berwyn Rd and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Call 301-459-3375 for more info.

Friday, November 6

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** "Sixty Years of Finding and Studying Birds: My Life as a Naturalist" by *Don Messersmith*, Master Birder, Naturalist, and Professor Emeritus (Ret.), UMD. 8 PM at the Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville. Contact Peter Hanan, 410-672-5672, for more info.

MEETING. **Harford.** "When Birds Collide—Birdstrike Identification at the Smithsonian." *Dr. Carla Dove*, research scientist at the Museum of Natural History, explains the ID of bird species from feathers and feather fragments after bird strikes such as US Airways Flight 1549, aka the Jan 2009 "Miracle on the Hudson." Dinner at 6:15 PM, program at 7 PM at Churchville Presbyterian Church, MD 22 and MD 136. For info/dinner reservations, call Dave Webb, 410-939-3537.

H Washington. Lambs Knoll Banding Station. Observe *Steve Huy* band Northern Saw-whet Owls. Wear sturdy shoes, bring a flashlight, and be prepared to stay as late as midnight. Meet at the Boonsboro P&R at 9:30 PM. Last-minute cancellation possible due to wind or rain. Call Anna Hutzell at 301-797-8454 to participate.

Saturday, November 7

MEETING AND ANNUAL BANQUET. **Allegany/Garrett.** Speaker: *Jim McAnn* (MD DNR Natural Heritage Program). Jim will talk about the rare, threatened, and endangered animals of MD, focusing on the some of the state's lesser known species and those found only in western MD. 6 PM at Compton Hall, Rm 327, Frostburg State, Cumberland.

H Baltimore. Loch Raven. Waterbirds and landbirds. Possible Bald Eagle, Eastern Bluebird, and Common Loon. Scopes useful. Two-mile level walk. Meet 8 AM. [From I-695, take exit 27 Dulaney Valley Rd north, go several miles, cross large bridge over reservoir, and bear right immediately. Continue to first left, Stone Hill Rd. Go about 100 yards, turn around, and then park on your right. All cars need to park on the same side of the road.] Leader: Peter Lev, 410-823-2962 or plev@comcast.net.

H Kent. Quaker Neck and Vicinity. Half day. The southern necks of Kent Co extend into the Chester River and host large numbers of waterfowl; also good for small late-season

landbirds and raptors. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General Store parking lot, Chestertown. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net.

Patuxent. Fran Uhler NA. Meet 7:30 AM at end of Lemon Bridge Rd off MD 197, just north of Bowie State U and the MARC line. No reservations required. If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com.

Saturday-Sunday, November 7-8

WORK WEEKEND. MOS Irish Grove Sanctuary, Somerset Co. Lend a hand with sanctuary upkeep. This workday will focus on improving and extending the Rail Trail. Several strong workers are needed for shovel work, some serious pruning (including using a chain saw), and probably some small bridge construction. Saturday lunch and dinner will be provided. There is no fee for staying overnight at the house on workdays. There will also be ample time for birding. Please contact Dotty Mumford, dottymum@comcast.net, 410-849-8336, to let her know that you can help.

Sunday, November 8

Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hours. See Nov 1 listing. Leader: Joe Byrnes, LBRoller@verizon.net, 410-730-5329. Facilities available.

Montgomery. Lois Y. Green Conservation Park. Half day. Explore the varied habitats of this new 204-acre park. Songbirds, raptors, and waterfowl are possible. Meet 7:30 AM at parking lot on Snouffer School Rd, Gaithersburg. Reservations required. For detailed directions and reservations, call leader: Ed Patten, 301-948-5648.

Talbot. Wye Island for waterfowl, raptors, and winter sparrows. Leader: Danny Poet, 410-827-8651. Breakfast hosts: Margaret and Ernie Maher. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7AM.

Tuesday, November 10

MEETING. Kent. Program TBA. 7:30 PM at Wesley Hall, Heron Point, E Campus Ave, Chestertown. For info contact Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568.

MEETING. Patuxent. *Mike Raupp* will present "The Diversity Dilemma: Update on Local Invasive Insect Species." The formal program always begins at 7:30 PM, but doors open at 7 PM for informal conversation, refreshments, and exchange of birding news. Location: College Park Airport Annex. For more info, call Maureen Blades at 301-262-5148.

Wednesday, November 11

Montgomery. LBJs at Blue Mash Nature Trail. Blue Mash can be hoppin' with Little Brown Jobs, making it a good place to work on the basics of sparrow ID. This trip is primarily for beginners but all are welcome. Half day. For reservations, time, and directions, contact leader: Lydia Schindler, 301-977-5252 or lydiaschindler@verizon.net.

Thursday, November 12

MEETING. Howard. "Aimophila Adventures," by *Kurt Schwarz*. While most birders go to Southeast AZ in search of such gaudy species as Elegant Trogon and Flame-colored Tanager, this Howard Club member also pursued "little brown jobs" that are easily overlooked. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at Glenwood Community Center, 2400 MD Rte 97, Cooksville, MD 21723 (note change). Info: Tom Miller, 410-795-7005.

MEETING. Talbot. Speaker: *Craig Highfield*, Coordinator, Forestry for the Bay, Chesapeake Bay Program. Craig will discuss woodland management as it relates to bird species and the health of our waterways. 7 PM at William Hill Manor Auditorium, Easton. Info: Cathy Cooper, coopercw@goeaston.net.

Saturday, November 14

Anne Arundel. Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary. Dotty Mumford, 410-849-8336 or dottymum@comcast.net, will lead this half-day trip. Meet 8 AM at Parole P&R.

Carroll. Piney Run Park. Moderate walking around Piney Run Lake for early waterfowl and in mixed forest and along open field edges for late migrants and winter residents. Meet 8 AM at parking lot outside the gate to Piney Run Park on Martz Rd. Call leader, Bob Ringler, at 410-303-2792 for more info.

Cecil. Avalon Sea Watch. Join us for a car-pool trip to Avalon, NJ. The shoreside town of Avalon is on a barrier island at a point where the shoreline bulges outward into the Atlantic, and it is possible to get fantastic looks at a steady stream of migrating seabirds. This trip involves no walking at all. Pull your car up to the seawall at the Sea Watch site and take out your lawn chair, blanket, scope, and hot drink, and settle in for a day of scanning the seas. Meet near Dunkin' Donuts at Big Elk Mall, Rtes 40 and 213 in Elkton at 7 AM. Bring scope if you have one. Dress for possible extreme cold and windy conditions. Also bring money for tolls and gas. Leader: Richard Donham donhamr@zoominternet.net.

Harford. Swan Harbor Farm Park. A joint trip with the Harford Land Trust to highlight properties protected in part by the efforts of the Trust. This property is well-known for eagles, field birds, waterfowl, and marsh specialties. Meet 8 AM at the parking lot adjacent to the Agricultural Education Center. Contact the leader, Dennis Kirkwood at 410-692-5905 or dkirkw@verizon.net.

Howard. Howard Waterfowl Search. 8 AM to 2 PM. Plan to visit Columbia lakes and search for gulls, ducks, grebes, loons, and other waterbirds. Easy walking. Plan to carpool. Bring lunch and drinks. Scopes helpful. Facilities available. Meet 8 AM at Broken Land Pkwy parking lot at Lake Elkhorn. Leader: Bonnie Ott, 410-461-3361.

Calendar *continued from page 11*

Sunday, November 15

H Frederick. Birding for Beginners at Lilypons. We especially welcome children on this walk through Lilypons, where we will delight and inspire young (and young-at-heart) inquisitive new birders. Contact Pat Caro at 301-845-6246 for info.

H Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hours. See Nov 1 listing. Leaders: Karen Darcy and Kevin Heffernan, 410-418-8731 or KJHeff@aol.com. Facilities available.

H Talbot. Pickering Creek Audubon Center for waterfowl, Winter Wren, wintering sparrows, and other grassland birds. Leaders: Karen Harris, 410-770-8303, and Amanda Spears, 856-628-3559. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM.

H Tri-County. Chincoteague NWR for coastal migrants. Leaders: Jean and Larry Fry, 410-208-4269. Meet 7:30 AM in Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art parking lot on S Schumaker Dr on Beaglin Park Dr in Salisbury or at Refuge Visitor Center at 9 AM.

Wednesday, November 18

MEETING. **Montgomery.** "The Best of Ecuador" by *Bob Mumford*. Photographer Mumford presents the results of his eight trips to Ecuador, totaling over two months in the field. 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac. For more info, contact Steve Pretl at stevep@takomavillage.org.

Thursday, November 19

MEETING. **Caroline.** *John Bjerke and Cyndie Loeper*: "Shorebird Identification Basics." You'll learn about our most commonly seen shorebirds, including the breeding/mid-summer identification of yellowlegs, dowitchers, and peeps. 7:30 PM, Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton.

H Patuxent. Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail). See Nov 5 for details.

Saturday, November 21

H Anne Arundel. Youth Birding Trip. YMOS members lead young birders on Eastern Shore. Meet 7 AM at the Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot. Leader: David Gillum, 410-266-8775.

H Baltimore. Blackwater NWR. All-day trip to see ducks and thousands of Canada and Snow Geese. Brown-headed Nuthatch possible. Rough-legged Hawk and Short-eared Owl possible in late afternoon. Bring lunch. Meet at Nursery Rd P&R at 7:30 AM or at the Blackwater Visitor Center at 9:30 AM. No reservations necessary. Leader: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or whitemarlin2001@yahoo.com.

H Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. See Nov 4 listing. Automatically cancelled in bad weather. Meet 8 AM at Visitor Center. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

H Frederick. Waterfowl Wander. We will visit birding spots wherever there are interesting reports, possibly across the Bay Bridge. The exact itinerary will be determined by the leader as the date approaches. Please call Lois Kauffman at 301-845-6690 if you are coming.

H Harford. Harford Glen. Meet at the Glen parking lot at 7:30 AM. This trip is especially designed for beginning birders. Join two former educators who are ready to share their skills and knowledge with those who are ready to enjoy a new hobby. Bring your binoculars and your curiosity. Contact the leaders, Tom Gibson, 410-734-4135 or gibsonlld@aol.com, or Dennis Kirkwood, 410-692-5905 or dkirkw@verizon.net.

H Kent. Bombay Hook NWR, DE. Full day. The salt marshes of Delaware Bay host large numbers of waterfowl, gulls, late shorebirds, and raptors. Bring lunch. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General Store parking lot, Chestertown. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgill@baybroadband.net.

H Montgomery. Blackwater NWR. Full day (to dusk). Ducks and thousands of Canada and Snow Geese. Brown-headed Nuthatch possible. Rough-legged Hawk and Short-eared Owl possible in late afternoon. Bring lunch and drinks. Reservations required. Limit: 12. For meeting place and time, contact Leader: Andy Martin, apmartin2@comcast.net or 301-294-4805 or 301-529-2066 (cell).

H Patuxent. Governor Bridge NA. Meet 7:30 AM at the parking lot for Governor Bridge Park. No reservations required. [Park is located on Governor Bridge Rd, approximately 1 mile east of MD 301.] If you have questions, contact Leader: Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com.

Sunday, November 22

H Anne Arundel. Blackwater NWR. Waterfowl and eagles. Meet 8 AM at the Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot. Bring lunch. Leader: Bobbi Reichwein, 410-798-5940.

H Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hours. See Nov 1 listing. Leader: Joe Hanfman, auk1844@comcast.net or 410-772-8424. Facilities available.

H Talbot. Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center (formerly Horsehead Sanctuary). Leader: Danny Poet, 410-827-8651. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM.

Monday, November 23

MEETING. **Tri-County.** "The Nature Conservancy's Nassawango Preserve" by *Joe Febrer, Jr*, Land Manager, Eastern Shore Nature Conservancy. 7 PM at Asbury Methodist Church, Fox Rm, south entrance, Camden Ave, Salisbury.

Tuesday, November 24

MEETING. **Washington.** "Birds of Southern Africa." *Mark Abdy* will share photos and stories of his adventures in South Africa, Namibia, Zambia, and Botswana. 7:30 PM at the Mt. Aetna Nature Center. Call 301-797-8454 for directions.

Saturday, November 28

H Cecil. Eagles at Conowingo Dam. Half day. Meet 9 AM at Fisherman's lot below dam. Leaders: Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net. and Charley Gant.

Sunday, November 29

H Harford. Conowingo Dam. Meet 7:30 AM at Fisherman's Park below the dam. Eagle numbers are at their peak, with the possibility of Golden Eagle as well as 100+ Bald Eagles. Waterfowl and early winter songbirds should also be present. Contact Leaders: Dave Webb, 410-939-3537 or porzana@comcast.net, or Colleen Webster at cwebster@harford.edu.

H Montgomery. Lilypons/New Design Road. Half day. Wintering field birds, targeting Fox and American Tree Sparrows and possibly Sora and American Bittern. Reservations required. For more info and reservations, contact Leader: Gail Mackiernan, 301-989-1828.

H Patuxent. Piscataway Creek. One of the top waterfowl locations in Prince George's County. Meet 7:30 AM at the Beltway Plaza parking lot to carpool. Contact Dave Mozurkewich at 301-459-3375 for add'l info.

H Talbot. Wastewater Treatment Plant for sparrows, waterfowl, gulls. Leader: Dave Palmer, 410-829-3376. Breakfast hosts: Les and Joanne Coble. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM

Tuesday, December 1

MEETING. **Baltimore.** Tuesday Evenings at Cylburn Mansion. Show and Tell Night. Come prepared to share your favorite birding stories, pictures, or other tidbits of interest. You can illustrate this with old-fashioned slides, brief PowerPoint file, or any other object. Slide projector and LCD projector will be available. Doors open at 7 PM for socializing and snacks, show starts about 7:15 PM. For more info, contact Pete Webb at 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

Wednesday, December 2

H Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. See Nov 4 listing. Meet 8 AM at Visitor Center. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

MEETING. **Carroll.** "Montana" by *Mark Hoffman*. 7:30 PM at the Carroll Senior Center, 125 Stoner Ave, Westminster. Contact Dave Harvey at 410-795-3117 for more info.

MEETING. **Cecil.** Program TBA. 7 PM at the North East Public Library. For info, contact President Pat Valdata, pvaldata@zoominternet.net.

Thursday, December 3

CHRISTMAS DINNER AND MEETING. **Frederick.** Our featured speaker will be *Middleton Evans*, Baltimore native and devoted photographer of our state, who has published books of his stunning Maryland photographs. Dinner will be at the COZY Restaurant in Thurmont at 6 PM at a cost of \$15.50 per person. Please make reservations with and send money to Treasurer Nancy Parker before 11/25/09.

H Patuxent. Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail). See Nov 5 for details.

Friday, December 4

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** "Recovery of the Endangered Delmarva Fox Squirrel." *Glenn Therres*, MD DNR, Associate Director, Wildlife and Heritage Service. 8 PM at the Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville. Contact Peter Hanan, 410-672-5672, for more info.

Saturday, December 5

MOS BOARD MEETING. 10:30 AM. Hosted by Frederick Bird Club at Urbana Library. Contact Janet Shields, MOS Secretary, janetbill@prodigy.net, for add'l info.

H Anne Arundel. Sandy Point SP and vicinity for shorebirds, waterfowl, and local birds. Meet 8 AM at the Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot. \$3/ car State Park fee. For more details, contact Hal Wierenga, 410-647-7439.

H Baltimore. Southern Maryland. All-day trip to Point Lookout plus. Scoters, Long-tailed Duck, Great Cormorant, Bald Eagle, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Brown Pelican, and gannet all possible. Birding near cars with minimal walking. Meet 7:30 AM at Nursery Rd P&R. Bring lunch. Scopes useful. Bundle up for cold weather and wind. Leaders: Kevin Graff, whitemarlin2001@yahoo.com, and Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

H Howard. Blackwater NWR. Full day. Plan to stop at the Choptank River Bridge for ducks and coffee. Bring lunch and drinks. Dress warmly! Entrance fee or Duck Stamp required. E-mail the leader to reserve a spot and get details. We will carpool. Leader: Joe Hanfman, auk1844@comcast.net or 410-772-8424. Facilities at some spots.

H Kent. Eastern Neck NWR. Half day. Kent County's own National Wildlife Refuge at the mouth of the Chester River, featuring eagles, waterfowl, wintering landbirds, and possible Brown-headed Nuthatch. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General Store parking lot, Chestertown. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net.

H Patuxent. Assateague and Ocean City. Waterfowl, gulls, and other winter birds. Meet at the Bowie P&R at 7 AM for this all-day trip. Contact Fred Shaffer at 410-721-1744 for add'l info.

H Patuxent. Fran Uhler NA. See Nov 7 for details.

H Washington. Big Pool. Explore interesting area around Big Pool with Doris Berger. Call Doris at 301-739-8907 for details.

Calendar *continued from page 13***Sunday, December 6**

Baltimore. Loch Raven. See Nov 7 listing. Leader: Peter Lev, 410-823-2962 or plev@comcast.net.

Cecil. Cecil Waterfowl. Half day. Perryville Town Park, at the head of the Chesapeake Bay, annually plays host to a wide variety of wintering waterfowl that are generally easy to see, up close and personal. Meet 9 AM at Big Elk Mall, Elkton at Dunkin' Donuts parking lot area. Leader: Marcia Watson, mww@udel.edu.

Montgomery. Occoquan NWR, VA. Three-quarters day. Bring lunch and warm drink. We will look for sparrows and other field birds and early waterfowl. Located at the confluence of the Potomac and Occoquan Rivers, the refuge is about 50 percent wetlands, which are interspersed with upland meadows and mature oak-hickory-beech forest. Meet 8 AM at the refuge car park. Reservations required. [The refuge is located in Woodbridge, VA, 20 miles south of Washington. From the north: Take I-95 south to exit 161 (Woodbridge), follow Rte 1 south, cross the Occoquan River, and turn left at the light onto Dawson Beach Road. Follow road to refuge entrance and proceed to large parking lot on right.] Leader: Mike Bowen, 301-530-5764.

Tuesday, December 8

MEETING. **Patuxent.** Winter Solstice Party. The formal program begins at 7:30 PM, but doors open at 7 PM for informal conversation, refreshments, and exchange of birding news. Location: College Park Airport Annex. For more info, call Maureen Blades at 301-262-5148.

Thursday, December 10

MEETING. **Howard.** "Where's the Ice?" by *Sue Mueller*, Howard Co Rec and Parks. The Hudson Bay polar bear population is living at the southern limits of its natural habitat. Hear what biologists have to say about the bear's future. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at Howard Co Rec and Parks,

7210 Oakland Mills Rd, Columbia (note change). Info: Tom Miller, 410-795-7005.

SPRING PLANNING MEETING AND POTLUCK DINNER. **Talbot.** 5:30 PM. Host: Cathy Cooper, 410-822-3451.

Saturday, December 12

Anne Arundel. Eastern Neck NWR, Kent County. Wintering waterfowl and landbirds. Meet 7 AM at the Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot. Leader: Tom Bradford, 410-987-0674.

Carroll. Point Lookout. An all-day outing to St. Mary's County looking for winter birds. Call leader, Bob Ringler, at 410-303-2792 for more info.

Harford. Delaware Coast. Meet at the 155/95 P&R at 6:30 AM. This trip will visit several hotspots along the DE Bay for wintering specialties. Contact leader Russ Kovach for further details at 410-457-4274 or russell.kovach@gmail.com.

Monday, December 14

CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Catoctin.**

Tuesday, December 15

MEETING. **Kent.** "The Big Picture: My Big Photo Year in 2008," by *George Jett*. 7:30 PM at Wesley Hall, Heron Point, E Campus Ave, Chestertown. For info, contact Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568.

Wednesday, December 16

MEETING. **Montgomery.** "A Shade-grown and Bird-compatible Coffee Future," by *Paul Baicich*. Some coffees threaten the lives of birds, some coffees can actually benefit birds—and millions of coffee drinkers can make the difference. Paul Baicich will explore the shade-coffee/bird connection, focusing on Latin America and the Caribbean and "our" birds that migrate to the Neotropics. 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac. For more info, contact Steve Pretl at stevep@takomavillage.org.

Thursday, December 17

Patuxent. Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail). See Nov 5 for details.

Saturday, December 19

CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Oakland/Garrett.**
CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Baltimore Harbor.**
CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Caroline/Denton.**
CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Triadelphia.**
(Tentative)
CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Washington, DC.**
CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Wachapreague.**

Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. See Nov 4 listing. Automatically cancelled in bad weather. Meet 8 AM at Visitor Center. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

Patuxent. Governor Bridge NA. See Nov 21 for details.

Sunday, December 20

CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Allegany County.**
CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Jug Bay.**
CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Elkton.**
CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Lower Kent.**
CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Seneca.**
CHRISTMAS COUNT. **St. Michaels.**
CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Salisbury.**
CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Port Tobacco.**
CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Nassawadox/Brownsville, VA.**

Saturday, December 26

CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Blackwater/Southern Dorchester County.**

Sunday, December 27

CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Harford/Rock Run.**
CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Central Loudoun.**
CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Point Lookout.**
CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Chesterville.**
CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Crisfield.**

Monday, December 28

CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Washington County.**
CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Ocean City.**

Tuesday, December 29

CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Chincoteague NWR.**

H Indicates Field Trip

Wednesday, December 30

CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Cape Charles.**

Friday, January 1

CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Bowie.**

Baltimore. Loch Raven. Start the New Year birding. Varied habitats including woods, fields, and the reservoir. Probably also birding other sites for a "Big Day" in Baltimore City and Co. See Nov 7 listing but meet 1/2 hour later, at 8:30 AM. Leader: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or whitemarlin2001@yahoo.com.

Harford. Perryman Area. Launch your New Year list with a visit to the woods and fields of Southern Harford Co. Meet the leader Dave Webb at 8 AM at the Wal-Mart parking lot in Aberdeen (Rte 40). Contact Dave at 410-939-3537 or porzana@comcast.net.

Howard. Start Your 2010 List. Half day. Plan to carpool to different locations to find as many species as possible. The one day of the year where every bird is new! Meet 8 AM at boat ramp of Centennial Park. Expect moderate walking. Possibility of lunch stop depending on the weather. Facilities at some spots. Leader: Bonnie Ott, 410-461-3361.

Montgomery. Earliest Bird Walk, Georgetown Reservoir and DC Hotspots. Half day. Start the New Year right. Meet 8 AM at Georgetown Res., DC, by the gate leading to the dike between the pools. Reservations required. Limit: 20 participants. Leader: Mike Bowen, 301-530-5764.

Saturday, January 2

Montgomery. 2010 County Listers' Trip. 3/4 to full day. Let's get a good start on our 2010 Montgomery lists. Weather permitting, we will start at Violette's Lock with a walk down the canal to Blockhouse Point. From Violette's we will head up the western side of county, stopping briefly at Hughes Hollow, another walk at Edward's Ferry Horse Loop, "scope" the Patton

Turf Farm, and finish with a brief stop at the Rte 121 bridge at Black Hill RP before heading back to Violette's. Dress for the weather. Trip may involve a total of 3-4 miles walked by day's end. Reservations required. Contact leader for meeting time and place. Leader: Andy Martin, 301-529-2066 or apmartin2@comcast.net.

Sunday, January 3

CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Annapolis/Gibson Island.**

CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Sugarloaf.**

CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Patuxent River.**

CHRISTMAS COUNT. **Fort Belvoir.**

Wednesday, January 6

Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. See Nov 4 listing. Meet 8 AM at Visitor Center. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

MEETING. **Cecil.** Program TBA. 7 PM at the North East Public Library. For more info, contact President Pat Valdata, pvaldata@zoominternet.net.

Thursday, January 7

MEETING. **Frederick.** Let's escape for a few hours from our winter weather, kick back, and spend an evening birding on the Gulf Coast of Florida with *Jim Green*. Jim will take us to Ding Darling, Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, Fort Myers Beach, and much more. 7 PM at the C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick.

Friday, January 8

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** "Exploring the Wildlife and History of Five Remote Tropical Island Refuges" by *Doug Forsell*, Avian Specialist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 8 PM at the Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville. Contact Peter Hanan, 410-672-5672, for more info.

MEETING. **Harford.** "Amateur Photographers' Hour." Photographers from the chapter will share some of their favorite birding experiences through brief, theme-based, 10-photo presentations. 7 PM at Churchville Presbyterian Church, Churchville. Contact Dave Webb at 410-939-3537 for add'l info.

Saturday, January 9

ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY. **Carroll.** Once again hosted by Splinter and Sue Yingling at 70 Ridge Rd in Westminster. If you've never attended before, now's the time to start. Everyone has a good time. 7:30 PM until ? For more info and to coordinate your potluck dish, contact Sue Yingling at 410-857-0902 or syingling@mac.com.

Harford. Annual Winter Feeder Tour. Enjoy birding out of the elements as we watch feeders at three of our members' cozy homes. Contact Jean Wheeler, 410-879-7424 or jswheeler44@msn.com, for meeting time, routes, and sites.

Sunday, January 10

COVERED DISH DINNER AND LECTURE. **Baltimore.** 5 PM at BYKOTA Center in Towson (formerly Towson ES). Annual potluck dinner. Guest speaker TBA. For reservations and food coordination, contact Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or Whitemarlin2001@yahoo.com.

* **AUDREY CARROLL MID-WINTER COUNT.** **Frederick.** Meet at the Sanctuary at 6:30 AM. Dress warmly with waterproof boots. Call David Smith, 410-549-7082, for info.

Tri-County. MD and DE Coast. Full day. Search for winter specialties and perhaps a rarity from recent CBCs. Bring a lunch. Meet 7:30 AM, Ward Museum parking lot. Contact Leader, Sam Dyke, 410-742-5497, for directions and more details.

LAST CALL

...for **Research Proposals, Grants** (generally no more than \$2,000) are available for ornithological research in the state of Maryland. Applications are due by **December 1**. Notifical of awards will be made in about 8 weeks. For info, contact David Ziolkowski, 443-299-8453.

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

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 **2009 Christmas Bird Counts** 

Monday, December 14

Catoctin. Call Mike Welch, 301-874-5828, to participate.

Saturday, December 19

Baltimore Harbor. Birders of all experience levels urged to participate. For area assignment, contact Compiler: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

Oakland/Garrett. To participate, contact Connie Skipper at connieskipper@hohnet.com or call her at 301-387-5227.

Caroline/Denton. Coordinator: Steve Westre, 410-479-0338 or swestre26@comcast.net.

Triadelphia. Tentative. Seeking compiler.

Washington, DC. Compiler: Larry Cartwright. Info: Kathy Wilson at Audubon Naturalist Society, 301-652-9188, x10.

Wachapreague. Compiler: Irv Ailes, irvailles@verizon.net.

Sunday, December 20

Salisbury/Tri-County. Take a break from the holiday rush and join this traditional Christmas birding event. Compiler: Sam Dyke, 410-742-5497.

Port Tobacco. Compiler, Gwen Brewer, 301-843-3524 or Glbrewer@comcast.net.

Lower Kent County. Full day of counting, followed by countdown dinner. Contact compiler Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or borealdee@baybroadband.net, for area assignments or more info.

Elkton. Compiler: Laura Balascio, avocet@udel.edu or 302-456-0914. Tally Rally at Woody's in North East at 4 PM.

Jug Bay. Compiler: Sam Droege, 301-497-5840 (w), 301-390-7759 (h) or sdroege@USGS.GOV.

Seneca. Compiler: Mark England, 240-252-4218 (h), 240-375-4500 (m), or markengland@canamcontractors.com.

Allegany County. To participate, contact J.B. Churchill at 301-697-1223 or jchurchi@atlanticbb.net to get an area assignment. Tally will be at the Frostburg United Methodist Church Social Hall, 48 W Main St, at 7 PM. Bring a covered dish to share.

St. Michaels. Compilers: Wayne Bell, wayne.bell@washcoll.edu, and Shirley Bailey. Potluck dinner at 5:30 PM at Christ Church Parish Hall, St. Michaels. Dinner Coordinator: Margje Steffens, 410-822-1966.

Nassawadox/Brownsville, VA. 4th year of a new count in the area between Chincoteague and Cape Charles. Compiler: Harry Armistead, 215-248-4120 or harryarmistead@hotmail.com.

Saturday, December 26

Blackwater/Southern Dorchester County. Compiler: Chan Robbins, crobbsins@usgs.gov.

Sunday, December 27

Point Lookout. Compiler: Bob Boxwell, 410-394-1300, 410-610-5124 (m), or bobboxwell@Hotmail.com.

Chesterville. Compiler: Maren Gimpel, funkymoss@yahoo.com or 912-660-1541. Come out for the 3rd year of this count centered north of Chestertown on the upper Eastern Shore (Kent and Queen Anne's Counties). The circle includes parts of Sassafras and Millington WMAs as well as all of Chino Farms. All skill levels welcome.

Crisfield. Compiler: Paul Bystrak, shrike@comcast.net, 410-572-9950 or 443-783-1268 (m).

Harford/Rock Run. This annual count is part of the National Audubon Society's continent-wide effort. Contact the compiler, Mark Johnson, 410-692-5978 or mark.s.johnson@us.army.mil, to volunteer and be assigned to a group.

Central Loudoun. (This count includes 5 miles along the C&O Canal in MD near White's Ferry). Compiler: Joe Coleman, 540-554-2542 or joecoleman@rcn.com.