

President's Corner Bills and Birds

by Marcia Balestri

In March, I attended the national spring meeting of the Bird Conservation Alliance. Being a scientist, I am not one for the ambiguity of politics, so I wasn't particularly thrilled to find that the main topic on the agenda was the upcoming Farm Bill. I consoled myself with the knowledge that there was also going to be a brief presentation on climate change and an interesting talk on birding in Northern Peru.

What does the Farm Bill have to do with birds and birding? I already knew that the Farm Bill had conservation money that was important to us birders, but I didn't realize just how much or how important this money is. The last Farm Bill provided as much as \$4 billion, yes that's billion with a "b," through conservation programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and others aimed to improve the environment, wildlife, and water resources. Money from these programs can be used to develop and improve wildlife habitat primarily on private land, so these programs are critical to the continued health of our migrant and resident birds.

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MAY/JUNE 2007

VOL. 27, NO. 3

CONFERENCE 2007

JULY 27-29

SALISBURY UNIVERSITY, WICOMOCO COUNTY

This is an exciting time for volunteers working on the Salisbury Conference. Things are taking shape, and they promise a fun, interesting experience. Everyone is looking forward to hearing Scott Weidensaul's talk Friday night. There will be two boat trips, a two-hour covered pontoon boat ride from Ocean City to Skimmer Island and the bay side of Assateague Island on Saturday morning, and a six-hour trip out of Crisfield on Saturday, followed by afternoon land birding at various Somerset County locations,

Friday afternoon's Shorebird Workshop, with a follow-up field trip on Saturday to Bombay Hook NWR, will provide an excellent opportunity to improve your skills. Space is limited, so be sure to tick off the shorebird workshop and field trip on your conference registration form and mail it back quickly. See Mike Bowen's description below for more detailed information.

Dave and Claire Horvath, owners of Wild Bird Centers in Columbia, Severna Park, and Silver Spring, have again agreed to display birding products at the conference. Dale Johnson is putting together the Art Exhibit. Local MOS member Ellen Lawler, whose Piping Plover graces the registration pamphlet, will be one of the artists displaying her work. The Silent Auction, along with the Artist Exhibit and Wild Bird Center display, will be opening at 11:00 a.m. on Friday. This year the Silent Auction and Raffle will benefit the Ward Museum

of Wildfowl Art; if you have never seen this magical Salisbury institution, try to make time for a visit.

Birders who prefer a more leisurely pace can opt for a day-long field trip to Blackwater NWR on Saturday. It will begin with a 25-minute video about Blackwater, then proceed with a birding-by-car tour of the the refuge's Wildlife Drive. The new indoor observation area on the Visitor Center's second floor will be a perfect place to enjoy an air-conditioned Big Sit (bring your own chairs) and a box lunch. (Folks who haven't signed up for lunches can get a list of nearby restaurants.) Participate in all or some of the Blackwater activities—it's up to you—and return to Salisbury University whenever you wish.

Sign-up information for lodging at Salisbury University will be on your conference registration form. Each unit contains either two or four single bedrooms, plus a living room and a kitchen area. Four configurations are available: 2 bedrooms/1 bath, 2 bedrooms/2 baths, 4 bedrooms/2 baths, and 4 bedrooms/4 baths. To view floor plans go to www.myownapartment.com and click on Salisbury University.

Hope to see you at Salisbury University in July.

—Janet Shields, Chair
janetbill@prodigy.net

(Conference continues on page 2)

CONFERENCE (continued from page 1)

VOLUNTEERS

are still needed for

- **the Silent Auction:**
Maryanne Dolan,
Maryanne.dolan@gmail.com
- **the Art Exhibit:**
Dale Johnson, KADJ@juno.com
- **field trip leaders:**
Sam Dyke, 410-742-5497,
cell 410-603-7615

Incentive: Volunteers get to pre-register for field trips.

SILENT AUCTION

Watch the mail for your conference registration information; you don't want to miss this fun and informative event. There are friends to meet, great birding locations to explore, art exhibits, a nature store, and the Silent Auction—the not-to-be-missed event of the year!

The auction opens at 11 a.m. on Friday. Be sure to swing by early to drop off your own tchotchkes and to scope out the treasures deposited by others. There will be bargains galore,

and you want to be sure you get first pick!

And if you've thought of something you, and perhaps a friend, might offer as a "personal" auction item, just contact me.

See you in July and see you at the auction!

—Maryanne Dolan
202-483-8188
Maryanne.dolan@gmail.com

SHOREBIRD ID WORKSHOP

The MOS Statewide Educational Activities Committee is sponsoring a two-hour identification workshop on shorebirds on Friday afternoon, July 27. Entitled "Shorebirds: ID Challenges," the workshop is aimed at beginning and intermediate birders who are confident of straightforward identifications such as Killdeer and Avocet, but who have trouble sorting out the much tougher species such as the yellowlegs, the dowitchers, and those pesky little "peep" and their look-alikes. The workshop will not attempt to cover all shorebird species that can be found in Maryland, but will concentrate on the difficult IDs. The workshop will be presented by long-time shorebird enthusiasts Cyndie Loeper and John Bjerke, assisted by SEAC Committee Chair Mike Bowen. A limited participant, all-day field trip to Bombay Hook NWR on Saturday, led by the workshop presenters, will be offered for those attendees who want to practice newly learned skills in the field. Late July is an excellent time to study shorebirds in the Mid-Atlantic area, with many adults and juveniles moving south from their breeding grounds.

WINNING PIN

The 2007 MOS conference pin will feature a beautiful Snowy Egret. The winning artist is **Teri Christensen** of the Tri-County Chapter. Teri also created the 2005 pin design, a Great Blue Heron set against a dramatic sunset. Congratulations, Teri. Keep those designs coming.

—John Malcolm
Chair, Pin Contest

CALL FOR POSTERS

At this year's Salisbury conference, the MOS Research Committee will again sponsor poster-format research presentations. The posters will be displayed during the Wine and Cheese Social on Saturday, starting at 4:30 p.m., and presenters are encouraged to stand near their posters at that time to field questions about their work.

If you have carried out research activities involving the natural history of Maryland bird life—banding activities, hawk watches, or small research projects—please take advantage of this opportunity to share your findings with other MOS members. Some presentations may describe the results or current status of research projects that MOS has funded.

This event has been well attended in the past, and both conference attendees and the presenters have enjoyed this chance to exchange ideas about birds. If you have data to present, please contact Gwen Brewer (Chair) as soon as possible by e-mail at gwbrewer@comcast.net or by phone at 301-843-3524.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

will take place at the annual business meeting, Saturday, July 28.

The slate of candidates for 2007-2008, all incumbents:

President: Marcia Balestri,
Frederick Bird Club
Vice President: Wayne Bell,
Talbot Bird Club
Secretary: Janet Shields,
Frederick Bird Club
Treasurer: Emmalyn Holdridge,
Howard Bird Club

Respectfully submitted,

—Helen Patton
Chair, Nominating Committee

The Maryland Yellowthroat Newsletter of the Maryland Ornithological Society, Inc.

Editor:	Lydia Schindler lydiaschindler@verizon.net 301-977-5252
Designer:	Suzanne Probst msprobst2@verizon.net 410-992-3489
Calendar Editor:	Andy Martin apmartin2@comcast.net 301-294-4805
Chapter Chatter:	Jean Wheeler jswheeler44@msn.com
Proofreader:	Ann Weeks annweeks@erols.com
Mailing list:	Helen Horrocks hlh_37@yahoo.com 301-831-6135
MOS web site:	http://www.mdbirds.org
Webmaster:	Taylor McLean taylormcl@comcast.net

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 July 20, 2007 for the September/October 2007 issue.

Illustrations pages 1, 6 and 7 © M. Suzanne Probst.
Photographs pages 13 and 14 © George Jett.



DOTTING i'S AND CROSSING t'S: COMPLETING THE MINIROUTES

BY WALTER ELLISON

The main product of a breeding bird atlas is a collection of distributional maps documenting, in a well-defined block grid, where birds are found and what their breeding status is. A second atlas has the additional advantage of showing how things have changed, and which birds have lost or gained ground. A drawback is that the maps show only a bird's presence; they don't indicate how common a bird is. The likelihood of confirmed or probable nesting may correlate very roughly with the bird's abundance, but this is confounded by a bird's conspicuousness and association with human habitation. One would be hard pressed to detect much difference in abundance between the atlas maps of birds with similar ranges, such as Eastern Wood-Pewee or Red-eyed Vireo, although the vireo is far more common.

It is to address this shortcoming that we in Maryland and D.C. are conducting miniroute surveys in a subset of our atlas blocks. Relative abundance information is essential if we are to know when a bird that remains widespread has nonetheless declined *within* atlas blocks—for instance, bobwhite on the Eastern Shore.

About 167 priority miniroutes have yet to be run; the table shows the county-by-county breakdown. **We will need a lot of help from birders with decent birding-by-ear skills** to get these routes covered during the short survey season. Miniroutes can only be run in June, with a short extension into late May on the Eastern Shore and Southern Maryland, and a short run into July in Western Maryland. Each route requires one-and-a-half hours and involves identifying birds for three minutes at each of 15 stops spaced at half-mile intervals. A surveyor does not count birds, the birds reflect relative frequency: robins, for instance, might occur on 60 percent of the stops.

We will be reimbursing observers for their mileage at the standard IRS business rate for roundtrip travel to the route and for route mileage. Please note that we will need invoices from observers who take advantage of this offer. Observers also need to keep track of the time it takes to travel to and complete routes to help us meet matching requirements for our grant from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

It is important that we finish collecting the relative abundance information for our breeding birds. We hope many of you will answer this call and help us reach our goal of 660 blocks with the miniroute data. If we could recruit just 83 observers we could assign each person just two routes apiece. Although we do not expect 83 to volunteer, we will be happy to accept help from any qualified observer. Please contact miniroute coordinator Nancy Martin (borealdee@baybroadband.net; 23460 Clarissa Rd, Chestertown, MD 21620; 410-778-9568) to volunteer.

Miniroute "To-Do" Summary

County Breakdown

Allegany	7 routes
Anne Arundel	3 routes
Baltimore	21 routes
Calvert	6 routes
Caroline	4 routes
Cecil	9 routes
Charles	12 routes
D.C.*	4 routes
Dorchester	4 routes
Harford	7 routes
Howard	1 routes
Montgomery	11 routes
Prince George's	5 routes
Queen Anne's*	2 routes
Somerset	8 routes
St. Mary's	16 routes
Talbot*	11 routes
Wicomico	16 routes
Worcester*	20 routes

* Some routes have been completed but not officially submitted and recorded.

President's Corner *(continued from page 1)*

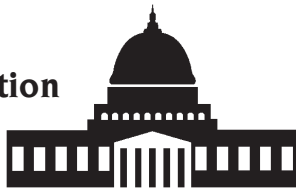
The Farm Bill is also important to us as citizens. Even if you live in the middle of a big city, provisions in the Farm Bill affect you. Everyone is concerned about water quality and a safe food supply, both major components of the Farm Bill. The need for open space is being debated throughout Maryland (and other states) as a quality of life issue, so the Farm Bill indeed affects us all. If you are interested in more detailed information, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has a good website (<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/>).

As I listened to the presentations on the Farm Bill and other upcoming legislation, it occurred to me how the political landscape resembles the interconnectivity of the web of life. For example, we all know that energy independence is important for the future of this country. In order to solve this problem, some want the Farm Bill to encourage and subsidize the expansion of biofuels programs. This emphasis could lead to increased corn and other feedstock production, potentially taking land out of CRP programs. Untilled land sequesters more carbon than agricultural land. In addition to losing the future carbon sink provided by the untilled land, tilling will release carbon already sequestered, adding more carbon to the atmosphere. This release will have to be addressed by the upcoming Climate Change Bill (reduction of atmospheric carbon by 2% per year). These actions also have international implications. Countries in South America, Brazil in particular, expect to pick up the slack, growing corn to feed our citizens and livestock, losing valuable rainforest to agriculture, releasing more sequestered carbon, and losing the potential for future sequestration. These consequences will have to be addressed in the Tropical Forest Conservation Act and future "debt for nature" plans. And so it goes, each bill affecting the next, all interconnected.

Of course, there are other ways to become energy-independent, and the above scenario is just a simplistic example, but even though I don't particularly care for politics, I will be watching what happens with the Farm Bill, as well as the rest of the interconnected web of political actions. I also urge you, whichever side of the fence you are on (or sitting on top!), to stay informed on the issues. You never know how that interconnectivity might affect birds and birding.

The Conservation Connection

by Maureen F. Harvey



Opposing Loopholes in Wind Power Legislation

Maryland House Bill 1072 and Senate Bill 566 would change the MD Annotated Code to exempt wind generation facilities from obtaining a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) from the Public Service Commission (PSC). Such facilities would need only a construction permit from the PSC. This loophole is desired by wind power facility developers to avoid public hearings and potential restrictions on their plans.

It is not in the best interest of the citizens of MD to allow any public project to proceed without public input. On Feb 27, at the request of the Conservation Committee and with the approval of MOS President Marcia Balestri, two MOS members testified in Annapolis in opposition to these two bills. MOS Past President Janet Millenson testified before the House Economic Affairs Committee and Baltimore Bird Club Conservation Committee member Carol Schreter testified before the Senate Finance Committee. Janet's main points were:

- * MOS favors clean energy and the economic incentives to encourage it. However, major energy generation projects have environmental and economic impacts that affect many parties beyond the facility and its direct customers. Public comment is essential for PSC decisions on wind power plants; there should not be a loophole exempting this industry. Nuclear plants provide clean energy of proven economic value, but no one's asking for them to be exempted from current laws.

- * This bill would exclude input from local land owners (whose property values and recreational uses can be damaged), the conservation community (whose data can supplement DNR recommendations), and other interested parties. Remember that DNR can only issue guidelines, which developers can ignore. Ridge-top wind facilities pose a danger to night migrants, and their construction threatens key wildlife habitats.

- * The proposed loophole is of particular concern for projects that may involve public lands. Remember the outcry two years ago when it was revealed that public lands were being disposed of without public oversight!

An action alert was e-mailed to Chapter Conservation Committee Representatives urging MOS members to write, e-mail, or phone legislators to oppose these two bills. However, as of press time, the bills had passed the MD Assembly with an amendment to require local public hearings. The amended bill was presented to Governor Martin O'Malley, and his spokesman Rick Abbruzzese stated that the Governor is inclined to sign it into law.

The Latest "Poop" on Anacostia Geese

Steve McKindley-Ward of the Anacostia Watershed Society has been tracking the progress of the National Park Service (NPS) response to letters written last fall by several concerned organizations, including MOS, regarding the need to control resident Canada Geese at Kingman Marsh. The MOS letter described the destruction caused by the geese and urged the NPS to complete their environmental assessment (EA) and implement control measures as soon as possible.

The good news is that things are moving forward again, and our letter was among those that were instrumental in making this happen. In December 2006, the chief biologist for the NPS National Capital Region (Jim Sherald) tapped the NPS Environmental Quality Division, located in Colorado, to write a description of the goose situation on the tidal Anacostia, add a few preliminary ideas on how to manage geese in Anacostia Park, send it out to interested parties (everyone from Audubon to PETA), and ask for feedback. NPS may host a meeting to receive feedback. Next, they'll re-draft the document and possibly include a preferred alternative for managing geese, and invite interested parties and the general public to comment a second time. Their idea is to include the public in the formation of the management alternatives in a fair and unbiased way.

Finally, NPS staff will synthesize all the comments, determine what they believe is the best management option (or set of options), then forward the final EA and management plan to their Regional Director for his signature. This approach—putting the public comment period at the beginning of the process—is novel and well-appreciated. However, this may mean that NPS will seek the "middle road" management option (i.e., something between doing nothing and significantly reducing the adult Canada Goose population). The Colorado team might be in DC in as soon as the beginning of April. Steve thinks that all organizations that wrote last fall will be invited to participate, and that it will be important to show up at the public meeting to voice our concerns.

Support Funding for Midway Atoll Clean-up

In March 2007, First Lady Laura Bush visited Midway to highlight the creation of the Northwest Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument (recently renamed the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument) and a number of conservation issues, including marine debris and invasive species that threaten the island's fragile environment. She agreed with the American Bird Conservancy representative there that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) should spend the estimated \$5.6 million to clean up the lead paint chips that pose a threat to Laysan Albatross chicks.

MOS members can help by calling the following members of Congress and urging their support for full funding (\$5.6 million) to be included in the Interior Appropriations bill to the USFWS for this purpose: Sen. Diane Feinstein, D-CA, Chairman, Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, 202-228-0774; Sen. Larry Craig, R-ID, Ranking Member,

Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, 202-224-7233; Rep. Norm Dicks, D-WA, Chairman, House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, 202-225-3081; Rep. Todd Tiahrt, R-KS, Ranking Member, House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, 202-225-3481; Sen. Daniel Inouye, D-HI, 202-224-3934; Sen. Daniel Akaka, D-HI, 202-224-6361; Rep. Neil Abercrombie, D-HI, 202-225-2726; Rep. Mazie Hirono, D-HI, 202-225-4906.

Grenada Dove Update

A letter requesting that Four Seasons Resorts and Hotels not develop a four-star hotel project in Mt. Hartman National Park, the home of the main population of the endangered Grenada Dove, was signed by a variety of Bird Conservation Alliance (BCA) members, including MOS. The BCA provided the following information in its March 2007 bulletin to illustrate that international pressure on the government and developers is having an impact.

The Government of Grenada issued a press release stating that “the Government has not abolished the sanctuary nor will it do so. . . . The Government is as determined to

realize, after many years, a flagship resort as it is to ensure the preservation of the Grenada Dove by maintaining an adequate restricted zone and by creating enhanced habitat, management, and maintenance conditions for the Doves therein.”

During a press conference, Grenada’s Environment Minister, Senator Ann David Antoine, stated that the government stands committed to proper environmental management for development projects on the island, and she sought to allay fears about the future of the Grenada Dove project. She maintained that Grenada stands to benefit in several ways, and that a balance can be found to allow Grenada to reap the benefits of both. Four Seasons Vice President Peter Hodgson stated, “The objective of Four Seasons is to play a role . . . that results in a positive outcome for the doves, for the people of Grenada, and for the country as a whole. We, and everyone involved, are committed to protecting the doves—we do not want to be involved in a process that damages a species or causes it to become extinct. On the contrary, we want to play a role in a positive outcome for the doves and for Grenada.”

WORLD SERIES OF BIRDING

The MOS Yellowthroats are heading back to Cape May to participate in the World Series of Birding on May 12. This 24-hour birding event in New Jersey raises money for conservation projects, and we’d like to thank everyone for supporting us the past two years and helping raise money for the Breeding Bird Atlas Project.

As you may know, participants can compete in a number of categories, including statewide, Cape May County, Big Sit, and even digiscoping. Last year, our team—**Jim Brighton, Zach Baer, Hans Holbrook**, and myself—took first place in the Cape May County competition, and we are looking to repeat our success. This year Hans Holbrook will unfortunately not be able to join us, but we are proud to announce **Bill Hubick** as his replacement.

The Yellowthroats will again be raising money for the Breeding Bird Atlas Project, which MOS members have worked so hard on for the past five years. If you, or someone you know, would like to make a pledge, please send an e-mail or letter with your name and pledge amount to Jim Brighton (jdbrighton3@hotmail.com). Your support is greatly appreciated and makes us proud to represent the Maryland Ornithological Society at the World Series of Birding. (More information on the competition can be found at www.njaudubon.org/wsb.)

—Matt Hafner

Maryland Yellowthroats Pledge Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Pledge Amount: \$ _____

Mail to: **Jim Brighton**
107 Myrtle St
Oxford, MD 21654
jdbrighton3@hotmail.com



DNR Reports by Glenn Therres:

Insects: Those Other Magnificent “Flying Machines”

As birders, we appreciate the variety among the birds that breed or overwinter in Maryland or migrate through. In many species, males are a different color than females, and juveniles look different than adults; for other species, plumage changes with the breeding cycle. With more than 400 species of birds recorded in Maryland, identification can be challenging—and that is what makes birdwatching fun!

Birds comprise the most diverse group of terrestrial vertebrates in the state. However, the diversity of bird species in Maryland is dwarfed by the diversity of our insects.

Maryland is home to more than 300 species of bees alone, not to mention the thousands of other insect species. Like birds, many insects show sexual differences in appearance, and larval stages look much different than the adult forms. Some species can be distinguished from close relatives only under a microscope. Some species can only be seen with the aid of a microscope!

Because the challenges of identifying insects are so overwhelming, entomologists and others interested in insect identification specialize in certain groups of insects. Some groups—including beetles, butterflies, moths, dragonflies, and damselflies—are “easier” to identify. Like birds, many of these are colorful species that can be distinguished by sight. In fact, a number of experienced birders have become butterfly and dragonfly enthusiasts and are contributing valuable information on the distribution and natural history of these insects. (See “Buggin’ at Hart-Miller” on page 14.)

These same groups of insects have received increased attention by DNR biologists over the past few years. With federal funds made available by Congress through State Wildlife Grants, and with the help of several

local experts, we have been conducting surveys for rare butterflies, dragonflies, and damselfies. We will be starting work soon on moths.

We identified a total of 24 butterfly species as targets for inventory and monitoring surveys. Most are currently on the state’s list of rare, threatened, and endangered species. Others, once relatively common, are now thought to be declining, and we need current information to evaluate their status. Despite a fairly intensive survey effort, we failed to detect *any* individuals for 11 of the 24 target species, even at locations where they had been previously documented. For another five species, we found no new populations, and for three of them, only a single occurrence.

The news was better for seven of our target species, where we found one to four new populations. Highlights included the discovery of several new sites for the state-endangered Edward’s Hairstreak in the Catoclin Mountains. We also observed the state-threatened Rare Skipper at two highly disjunct sites in Somerset County, the first occurrences outside of southern Dorchester County. New populations were also found for Baltimore Checkerspot, Giant Swallowtail, West Virginia White, Atlantis Fritillary, and Harris’s Checkerspot.

In addition to our butterfly studies, we recently compiled all available information related to the status and distribution of the state’s odonates (dragonflies and damselflies). We’ve also conducted intensive surveys, focusing on high-priority species associated with headwater streams and seepage wetlands. These efforts have yielded a tremendous amount of new information, including 223 records of 69 species. Many of these records (86 occurrences for 30 species) represent newly discovered populations of some of the state’s rarest odonates, including several

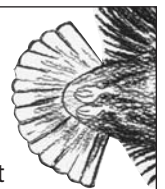
globally rare species as well as species considered highly rare in the mid-Atlantic region. Targeted surveys also resulted in the rediscovery of two species last observed in the state more than 80 years ago, plus the documentation of two species that represent state records. We also gained much needed site-specific data on the population status, extent, and threats for species known from just one or a few locations.

While a great deal is known about the butterflies of Maryland, moths have been largely overlooked. When one considers how butterflies have added to the protection of quality habitats and the designation of important areas for conservation, it is staggering to consider how much moths, being the larger and more diverse constituent of the Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths), can contribute. Moths serve many vital ecological functions, the most essential of which may be pollination. We are starting work on Maryland’s moths this year.

The information we gain from these efforts will help target conservation actions for these invertebrates and expand our abilities to conserve Maryland’s full array of biodiversity.

Telling Tales

Corresponding with a potential host for the state conference, Janet Shields received a proposal addressed to the MD Hornological Society. “This was not a typo,” Janet says. “I found the same spelling in several places. Wonder what they think we birders do at our conference?”





ALLEGANY-GARRETT COUNTIES

Barbara Gaffney of Allegany reports the Allegany Club is now known as the **Allegany-Garrett Counties Bird Club**, since so many of the members live in Garrett County.

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY Annual Winter Weekend

As the wheels of our plane touched down on the snow-surrounded tarmac, I questioned my sanity for coming to Cleveland in the winter. I couldn't think of any winter birding hotspots or really rare bird sightings that would bring me here. What was I doing? Peter Hanan had planned a winter weekend in Cleveland for the Anne Arundel Bird Club. By the way, where was Peter? He said something about his wife and a broken ankle. What were we going to do in this windswept, frigid city?

As it turned out, we had a wonderful time. This trip had what good birding trips have—good company, challenging birding, and a sense of discovering the unfamiliar. Imagine the excitement of arriving at a local birding hotspot, the warm-water release of power plants on Lake Erie, and seeing 50,000+ gulls in water and on the ice. We easily identified the usual gulls—Great Black-backed, Herring, and Ring-billed. The rarer gulls—Iceland, Glaucous, and Lesser Black-backed—were there, too. Did I mention the crowds of ducks in the warm water? Red-breasted and Common Mergansers, both scaup, Canvasback, Ruddy, Black, Mallard, Common Goldeneye, American Wigeon, Gadwall, and Bufflehead were jammed together at close range. Using spotting scopes, we could see

Bald Eagles out on the Lake Erie ice fighting over a carcass until driven away by a pair of supersonic Peregrine Falcons.

Winter birding around Cleveland can also include driving through Amish county and seeing mixed flocks of Horned Larks and Snow Buntings plus the occasional Lapland Longspur. It includes seeing a beautiful soaring Rough-legged Hawk over a snow-covered field. It is finding a vagrant Harris's Sparrow, with the help of a teenaged Amish girl, along a stream in her backyard.

My fellow Winter Weekend participants were Bobbi Reichwein, Jean Wheeler, Bob and Karen Madison, Marian Argentino, Sue Hamilton, Kim Hudyma, and Kathy Neugebauer.

Flying out of Cleveland, I concluded that I need to expand my birding trips to the paths less traveled more often. Now if I can just warm up my feet.

—Larry Zoller

BALTIMORE COUNTY

Baltimore MOS Chapter Director Dave Curson and his wife Kate McElderry welcomed their son, Seamus Curson, born February 20 (6 weeks early) and weighing 4 lbs 15 oz. Dave was sorry to miss the last MOS board meeting, but he's been a little busy lately with other important matters. All our best to Dave and Kate and Seamus!

CAROLINE COUNTY

Danny Poet reports that former Caroline County Club member Diane Cole, who now resides in Dorchester County, just returned from an Alaskan trip. Diane was born in Alaska but left as an infant and had no memory of the state, and she always wanted to return. Although she didn't see the polar bear she was hoping to see, she had an exciting trip nonetheless. She had a memorable dogsled ride in which her sled side-swiped another, causing a tumble. Diane assured Danny she was not the driver of the sled and no one was injured. Bird-wise, she saw many magpies and ravens.

HOWARD COUNTY

In January, Kate and Dick Tufts went to Scottsdale, AZ to escape our winter weather. While they were there, Scottsdale experienced 4 inches of snow. The locals were very excited, and it was fun for the Tufts to watch them build snowmen in their flip-flops. Better yet was the Streaked-back Oriole that Kate saw at the Gilbert Water Ranch. Area birders were excited about the Harris's Sparrow in Gilbert—though it wasn't new to Howard birders.

Jane and Ralph Gueder traveled further afield, to Trinidad and Tobago, for their winter getaway. They stayed at the famed AsaWright Lodge on Trinidad and the Cuffie Lodge on Tobago. They racked up around 150 bird sightings, most of them life birds. A very good look at the Bearded Bellbird proved to be a highlight of the trip. Spotting a Collared Trogon and the rare Piping Guan were bonuses, as was a trip to see the Oilbirds roosting in their caves.

Sixteen birders joined Stan Arnold on March 10 for a waterfowl search around the Columbia lakes. The delightfully crisp morning didn't bring forth a lot of species—just shy of 50, and most of those were non-waterfowl. Still, who doesn't love to watch Hooded Mergansers displaying? A few new birders joined the group and their awe and enthusiasm proved contagious.

—Kate Tufts

HARFORD COUNTY

Bill and Mary Jo Collins spent two weeks (Feb 1-15) in Thailand on a tour from Bird Treks. Kamol Komolphalin from Nature Trails, Bangkok, led the tour. Kamol, an owner of Nature Trails, is an accomplished bird artist who has illustrated one of the Thailand Field Guides. Key birds seen were Spoon-billed Sandpiper, Collared Falconet, Siamese Fireback (the National Bird of Thailand), Coral-billed Ground Cuckoo, and Ratchet-tailed Treepie.

MINUTES OF THE MOS BOARD MEETING DECEMBER 2, 2006

President: Marcia Balestri
Vice-President: Wayne Bell
Treasurer: Emmalyn Holdridge
Secretary: Janet Shields
Past President: Janet Millenson

Atlas: Jane Coskren
Budget: Shiras Guion
Conference: Janet Shields
Conservation: Maureen Harvey
Investments: Martha Waugh
Scholarship: Tom Strikwerda
Statewide Education Activities:
 Mike Bowen
Yellowthroat: Lydia Schindler
Youth Programs: George Radcliffe
Allegany: *not represented*
Anne Arundel: Linda Baker,
 Susan Zevin
Baltimore: David Curson,
 Roberta Ross, Gene Scarpulla
Caroline: Danny Poet
Carroll: Maureen Harvey
Cecil: Marcia Watson
Frederick Helen Horrocks,
 Michael Welch
Harford: Thomas Congersky,
 Randy Robertson
Howard: Mary-Jo Betts,
 Jane Coskren, Karen Darcy,
 Shiras Guion, Kevin Heffernan,
 Tom Strikwerda, Kate Tufts,
 Martha Waugh, Paul Zucker
Kent: Walter Ellison,
 Nancy Martin
Montgomery: Michael Bowen,
 David Gray, Judy McCartney,
 Helen Patton, Lydia Schindler
Patuxent: Fred Fallon
Talbot: George Radcliffe
Tri-County: Elizabeth Pitney
Washington: *not represented*

President Marcia Balestri called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and thanked the Kent Chapter for hosting the meeting at the Toll Science Center, Washington College, Chestertown, MD.

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as corrected, with the addition of Maureen Harvey to the list of board members attending.

Treasurer's Report: Emmalyn Holdridge submitted the treasurer's report. There were no questions.

President's Remarks:
 Marcia Balestri announced that Helen Horrocks accepted the job as office manager with the exception of the listserv part; we are still looking for a listserv person. Marcia Watson has accepted the role of heading up the MD Birding Trail Project. Chapter presidents should check the MOS website to make sure their chapter information is correct. Gene Scarpulla gave an updated presentation on Hart/Miller Island, summarizing the history of his data since 1998.

CHAPTER REPORTS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Atlas: Jane Coskren stated that the Atlas Committee still needs funds as Walter Ellison is still working. They are starting on the writing portion of the Atlas. Jane asked that every chapter president check with their atlas coordinator to make sure they have finished their data. There will be one more year of miniroutes; all of the data is needed before they can plan for miniroutes. Walter Ellison passed out charts with information of atlas results in the 1980s and results as of 9/18/06. There will be an atlas book for publication, but smaller than previously. The layout and content are being decided. There will also be a disc.

Budget: Shiras Guion needs each committee chair to send her their estimates for next year's budget by January 1. Even if there is no change, a budget request should be sent to Shiras. The 2007/2008 budget will be presented to the board at the March meeting.

Conference: Janet Shields announced that contract details for the 2007 conference at Salisbury University are being finalized. There will be a shore-bird workshop. It is looking like the 2008 conference will be held at Edgewood in Harford County.

Conservation: Maureen Harvey noted that the Public Service Commission did a preliminary study for tower applications, which was approved with several stipulations. The state of Maryland bought 754 acres near Blackwater, saving them from development. MOS sent a letter supporting a ban on harvesting horseshoe crabs; there is now two-year ban on the crab harvest. The Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act has been renewed. See the January/February issue of *Yellowthroat* for more detailed information.

Bird Conservation Alliance: Janet Millenson gave highlights from the November meeting of the Alliance with respect to things MOS might want to consider doing. The president of the National Wildlife Refuge Association stated that 54% of U.S. Important Bird Areas are National Wildlife Refuges, which are in a funding crisis. A Congressional National Wildlife Caucus has been formed. MOS members need to encourage their House representatives to join this caucus. Also, the Duck Stamp raises \$25 million a year for refuges. The BCA's 2007 project is "Saving the Cerulean Warbler" and it is seeking to raise \$100,000 to purchase over 1,000 acres of significant wintering habitat in Columbia to expand an existing bird reserve.

Investments: Martha Waugh reported that the committee met with its stock broker, reviewed the entire portfolio, and made some adjustments. So far during this fiscal year (as of 12/2/06) the income is \$41,728.

Scholarships: Tom Strikwerda has received reports from all of the scholarship participants from last year. All were very positive. Things are on track for next summer; he has already heard from 6 or 7 possible candidates. He just sent out scholarship information to private schools across Maryland, and he will do a second public-school mailing as well. Scholarship applications need to reach Tom by January 30, 2007.

Statewide Education Activities: The committee's first workshop was given by Mike Bowen and Linda Friedland at the Rocky Gap Conference in June. Mike Bowen noted that over 60 people attended that Warbler Workshop. At the 2007 conference, Mike is arranging for a shorebird workshop concentrating on difficult identifications to be presented by Cyndie Loeper and John Bjerke. There will be a field trip to Bombay Hook lead by Cyndie and John on the following day.

Yellowthroat: Lydia Schindler requested that people give her their opinions on *The Maryland Yellowthroat* of what they like and don't like, what works. Lydia is also looking for submissions of chapter events, expanded reports given at board meetings, etc. The next deadline is January 25. It was suggested that chapters with newsletters should put chapter presidents on their distribution list to give them a sense of what other chapters are doing.

Youth Programs: George Radcliffe announced that a raptor day is being planned with Mike Callahan in conjunction with Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center. A youth team will be sponsored for the World Series of Birding. A science fair award is available. The best way for George to reach the environmental education world is through the Mayo Conference, held in Ocean City in early February. YMOS will have a table at the conference. George still needs each chapter to identify a youth group in their area and send him their information.

OLD BUSINESS

Rainforest Challenge: Contributions are still needed for the Rainforest Challenge with George DuBois contributing \$1,500 to be matched by MOS members and donated to the Cloud Forest Conservation Project in Ecuador.

MOS Brochures: The brochures have been reprinted and are available from Helen Horrocks.

NEW BUSINESS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- Chapters – Funding is still needed for the Atlas Project; contact Jane Coskren, coskren@erols.com.
- Chapters – Volunteers are still needed for Atlas miniroutes; contact Nancy Martin, rossgull@baybroadband.net.
- Committee chairs need to submit their 2007-8 budget requests by January 1, 2007.
- Chapters – Encourage national representatives to join the Congressional Wildlife Caucus.
- Chapters – Per George Radcliffe, chapters should try to “adopt” a local youth group and work with them to interest young people in YMOS.
- Chapters – Scholarship applications need to reach Tom Strikwerda by 1/30/07.
- Chapters – Opinions regarding likes and dislikes of *Yellowthroat* content should be sent to Lydia Schindler, lydiaschindler@verizon.net.
- Chapters – Lydia Schindler is soliciting articles along with information on chapter and individual activities appropriate for the *Yellowthroat*.
- Chapters – The next *Yellowthroat* deadline is January 25, 2007.
- Chapters – Chapter presidents and vice presidents should be included on the mailing lists of all chapter newsletters.
- Chapters – Donations are urgently needed for the DuBois/Rainforest Challenge.
- Chapters – Volunteers are needed for the new MD Birding Trail Project. Contact Marcia Watson, mww@udel.edu.
- Still need Publicity, Research, and Development Chairs.

President Marcia Balestri adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
—Janet Shields, Secretary

MARYLAND BIRDING TRAIL

Marcia Watson will be leading a newly formed task force to develop a Maryland Birding Trail, borrowing a concept that has already been used in many other states nationwide. The Maryland Birding Trail will not be a specific footpath in any one location. Rather, the concept involves identifying reliable, established birding locations throughout the state and developing literature that includes directions, species lists, best times to bird, etc. Nationally, the literature for individual birding trails varies from one-page annotated maps to elaborate, multi-volume booklets. At this time, the MD Birding Trail Task Force is still in the early stages of organizing its work, but has already amassed a collection of materials from other states.

Members of the Task Force are Michael Bowen, Sarel Cousins, David Curson, Shirley Ford, Kevin Graff, Barbara Hopkins, Helen Patton, and Marcia Balestri (serving *ex officio* in her role as MOS President). The Task Force will soon be meeting to organize its work and develop a plan.

To learn more about the Birding Trail concept and how it has been implemented in other states, see <http://www.americanbirding.org/resources/birdingtrails.html>.

CHAPTER CHATTER *(continued from page 7)*

The group visited three national parks: Kaeng Krachen, Khao Yai, and Doi Inthanon. Half of the tour was spent in Northeast Thailand. Specialty birds sighted from this area included Crimson-bellied Woodpecker and Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch. The 349 birds seen on the tour included 12 woodpeckers, 4 hornbills, 4 kingfishers, 8 barbets, 5 bee-eaters, 3 parrots, 4 owls, 13 doves, 25 shorebirds, 17 raptors, 4 orioles, 16 bulbuls, and 26 warblers. Bill and Mary Jo spent 3 days in Bangkok sightseeing prior to the tour.

REMEMBERING DONALD BRODERICK

When Donald Broderick passed away in February, the Tri-County Bird Club and MOS lost a dear friend, fine birder, and active member. Throughout his 26-year membership, Don's contributions to Tri-County and MOS were many. He and his wife Carol served as Wicomico County coordinators for the recent Breeding Bird Atlas, and Don's e-mail reminders and cajoling at bird club meetings kept us all working hard on our atlas blocks. Donald maintained Tri-County's birding hotline, keeping club members informed of the rarities on the Lower Shore and further afield. He recently completed a term on the MOS Records Committee, a job that involves much time, commitment, and an excellent knowledge of bird identification and distribution. Don was indeed an excellent birder; in fact, he and Carol are among Tri-County's star birders. As members of the American Birding Association, they took part in a number of ABA workshops and spent as much time as they could birding throughout the US, but primarily in Maryland. Impressive as these birding accomplishments are, they are all the more impressive considering that a serious spinal cord injury while serving in the US Navy in the 1950s left Don dependent on using a wheelchair.

And Don's birding activities were only one part of an extremely active life. Donald worked for Paralyzed Veterans of America for over 25 years, holding many offices, including executive director and national president of the organization. In this capacity he worked tirelessly to improve the quality of care for Veterans Administration

patients, and he established one of the nation's foremost funding foundations for spinal cord injuries. He served on President Jimmy Carter's Advisory Committee for National Health Insurance Issues from 1978-1980. Donald was also one of the founders and early leaders of the Maryland Wheelchair Games, held first at Salisbury University in 1982. Don himself was a former national record holder in field events. Along with Carol, he was very active in his church and the local orchid society. For a number of years, Carol and Don have hosted an annual bird club picnic at their lovely home, and club members were treated to seeing not just the bird activity in their backyard but also some of their lovely orchids in bloom.

Those of us who knew Donald have fond memories of him and have learned from him lessons about grace, humor, and patience. On many a bird club trip, we would return to the parked cars and find that Don, sitting quietly in his van, had had more exciting bird observations than those of us who had just trekked along the trail, probably disturbing as many birds as we had seen. At club meetings, Don always had a wry comment to enliven the meeting or bring us back to reality. And although he pushed us to keep working on the atlas, he always reminded us that first and foremost it was supposed to be fun. We are very fortunate to have known Donald and to have had the opportunity to share, just a bit, in his remarkable life.

—Ellen Lawler

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS 2007

The MOS Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce the selection of 14 scholarship winners this year. They're a cross-section of science and environmental educators and volunteers from across Maryland, people who share their interest in nature with children and young people. The Committee and MOS congratulate them and hope they will find their summer experience rewarding and helpful as they interact with young people in the years ahead.

Seven scholarship recipients will attend the Workshop for Educators on Hog Island sponsored by the Maine Audubon Society. **Shawna Chesto**, a park ranger at Kinder Farm Park in Millersville, won the Orville Crowder-Donald Messersmith Scholarship. The Chandler Robbins Scholarship was awarded to **Laurie Meister**, a middle school science teacher at the Roland Park Country School in Baltimore. Helen Miller Scholarships went to three winners: **James Frank**, a naturalist at Marshy Point Nature Center in Chase, **Sally Loercher**, a pre-first science and math teacher at Saint James Academy in Monkton, and **Ann Matheson**, a fourth and fifth grade teacher of technology, conservation, and mathematics with the Frederick County Board of Education. **Angela Lawrence**, a second grade science teacher at Annapolis Elementary School, won a Doris Oakley Scholarship. The Frances Covington-Etta Wedge Scholarship was awarded to **Normita Zamudio**, a sixth grade science teacher at Chinquapin Middle School.

Three scholarship winners opted for the Maine Audubon workshop on Natural Heritage of the Maine Coast. Doris Oakley Scholarships were given to **Catharine Dawson**, Director of Education at the Ward Museum in Salisbury, and **Melissa Dietz**, a naturalist intern at the Irvine Nature Center and visitor education aide at the National Aquarium in Baltimore. **Megan McMenamin**, a zoo educator at the Salisbury Zoo, received the Daniel and Helen Gibson-Dorothy Mendinhall Scholarship.

Three scholarships winners will attend the Field Ornithology workshop on Hog Island. The two Helen Miller Scholarships went to **Mary Schmidt**, a park naturalist at the Bear Branch Nature Center in Westminster, and **Donna Yorkston**, a volunteer with the Anita Leight Center for Estuarine Studies in Harford County. The John Wortman Memorial Scholarship was awarded to **Leesa Sorber**, an environmental science, marine biology, and zoology teacher at Edgewood High School in Edgewood.

Tom Westcott, an advanced placement biology instructor at Worcester Preparatory School in Berlin, received a Doris Oakley Scholarship and will attend the Superior Adventure workshop run by the Audubon Center of the North Woods in Minnesota.

—Tom Strikwerda
Chair, Scholarship Committee

MARYLAND/DC LIST REPORT, 2006

The Maryland List Report was begun—as a way to have fun with our listing mania—by Harvey Mudd in 1986, taken on by Phil Davis in the early 1990s, and then passed on to Norm Saunders in 2001. Ninety birders participated in 2006 (up from 82 in 2005).

And what a year it was! Some 8 or 10 years ago, Mark Hoffman was speculating about what would be necessary for someone to reach 400 bird species on their Maryland Life List. At the time, I thought it a silly question about an unreachable goal. Silly me. For the first time three of our top birders are within striking distance of this incredible feat.

What were the best new birds in 2006? Well, **Townsend's Warbler**, **Varied Thrush**, **Inca Dove**, and **Tropical Kingbird**, to name just a few. Also, a cooperative **Eurasian Collared-Dove** finally found its way onto many of the top and not-so-top lists this past year. How about the newly split **Cape Verde Shearwater** on a pelagic trip out of Lewes, DE, a **Southern Lapwing** discovered in the Worcester County marshes during an Atlas survey, an **Anna's Hummingbird**, and a "**Snowy-bellied**" **Martin sp.** (species still being researched)? The mob of **American White Pelicans** at Blackwater was new to many lists, as was the **Sabine's Gull** at Conowingo Dam and the **White-faced Ibis** in Worcester County. What a year, indeed.

A bit of a shakeup took place in the **Maryland Life List** standings this past year. Paul O'Brien (Montgomery County), surged to the top of the list once again, with 8 new species, lifting him to 397, followed by Mark Hoffman (Carroll County) and Jim Stasz (Calvert County) at 396 species each. In a not-so-distant fourth place is Virginian Paul Pisano with 384 species. Top lister for the year was Jim Stasz, with 308, followed by Matt Hafner (Harford County) with 301 species and Kevin Graff (Baltimore County) with 292, Bill Hubick (Baltimore County) with 290, and Dave Powell (Montgomery County) with 279. The coveted "Maryland 300 Club" added nine new folks this year and now includes 87 of our current reporters. The "All-Time 300 Club"—the folks who have reported more than 300 species in Maryland—now numbers 111. Those adding the most new birds to their lists this year include Parke John (Cecil County) with a whopping 36 new species, Duvall Sollers (Baltimore County) with 17 new birds, and Bill Hubick with 16.

Rob Hilton (Montgomery County) continues to hold down the top spot on the **District of Columbia Life List**, with 267 species, followed by Paul Pisano with 263, Gail Mackiernan (Montgomery County) with 248, and Barry Cooper (Montgomery County) with 247. Highest counts for 2006 in DC were Paul Pisano with 198 species and John Beetham (DC) with 168.

In the **Maryland Yard List** category, the highest "Home" list is held by Philadelphian Harry Armistead, with 266 species at his weekend hangout in Talbot County, followed by Maryland expatriate John Gregoire, who has 218 species in his parents' Prince George's yard, and Jim Stasz, with 216 species in his Calvert County yard (which includes a large chunk of the Chesapeake Bay!). In the "Work/Other" category, leaders are Kyle Rambo (St. Mary's County), with 294

species on the grounds of the Patuxent River Naval Air Station, Patty Craig (St. Mary's County), with 266 species at her second home, Point Lookout State Park, and by Dave Webb (Harford County), with 224 species on Aberdeen Proving Grounds property. Highest 2006 count in the Maryland Home/Work/Other Yard list was Harry Armistead, with 168 species, followed by Jeff Shenot (Prince George's County) with 160 species.

In DC, new reporter Michael Jennison leads the "Home" category of the **DC Yard List**, with 76 species, while Norm Saunders has 89 species from 15 years of rambling through the parks of Capitol Hill, for the top "Work/Other" DC list.

The **Maryland Total Tick List** continues to grow in popularity, with 31 individuals now reporting their total ticks: the sum of their lists for all 23 counties. These folks have a total tick of at least 2,300, an average of 100 species per county. The purpose of this list is to demonstrate a breadth of experience finding bird species across the entire state. Top lister is Jim Stasz, with a county average of 265 species and the only total tick in excess of 6,000. Bob Ringler (Carroll County) has an average of 234 species per county, and Marshall Iloff (Anne Arundel, then California, then Massachusetts) has an average of 220 species. For 2006, top honors go to Bill Hubick, with an average of 113 species per county, followed by Kevin Graff, averaging 110 species.

Jim Stasz's specialty, the **Maryland All-County List**, also known by many as the **County Closeout List**, is led, of course, by Jim Stasz; Jim has seen 178 species in all 23 counties. Bob Ringler has 127 closeouts and Marshall Iloff has 118. Bill Hubick reported 24 new closeouts for 2006, a number that is inversely correlated with age and directly correlated with enthusiasm!

George Jett (Charles County) and Jim Stasz are now tied for the **Birds Photographed in Maryland List**, with 360 species each. George added 20 new species to his list in 2006 and contends that he really should be in the lead since NONE of his photographed birds were "in the hand," something, he points out, which cannot be said for Jim's total. George was the only one to report his annual photograph totals for 2006—he framed 210 bird species in his view finder last year.

I'm leaving the top county listers for you to discover on your own. Browse the county lists of listers to your heart's content. Following are some of the personal highlights and comments sent to me this year.

John Beetham did a Big Day in DC on May 13, when he and two others tallied 101 species while roaming the Aquatic Gardens, Kenilworth Park, and Rock Creek Park.

Gwen Brewer was excited about adding her namesake bird to her MD Life list—Brewer's Blackbird! Oh, and the guy with the camera is still dogging her every move.

Kevin Graff's 2007 goal is to see a minimum of 100 species per county and get his year list back over 300.

Patty Craig exults in a Black Vulture nest she found on her property this past year, which she located entirely by smell.

LIST REPORT, 2006 (continued from page 11)

Barbara Gearhart reminds us, as we reflect upon 2006, to not forget our friends Hugh Mahanes, Jay Smith, and Gary Smyle who passed away last year. They were good men, good birders, and they will be missed by all who knew them.

Matt Hafner's highlights included getting all of his Eastern Shore County lists over 200. He didn't mention getting married, but I assume that was a highlight as well.

Rob Hilton, a stickler for detail, noted that he saw 9 new species in Maryland, 2 in DC, and 5 in Montgomery County. His "work/other" list is made up of birds seen from his office window and from the parking lot.

John Hubbell had two red-letter days in 2006: on July 4, he got total tick #4,000, a Northern Bobwhite in Anne Arundel County, and his 90th closeout species, a Great Egret in Calvert County; and on December 30, he saw Maryland State bird #345, Tropical Kingbird, and county closeout #100, Hooded Merganser, in Wicomico County. He still insists he lives in DC.

Hank Kaestner's goal for 2007 is to find a Sandhill Crane.

Andy Martin discovered the pleasures of listening to and recording overhead migrants at his Gaithersburg home this past year, adding Dickcissel, Bobolink, Greater Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Barn Owl, and Virginia Rail to his yard list.

Joel Martin writes: "Great birds like Sabine's Gull, Tropical Kingbird, and Townsend's Warbler notwithstanding, the highlights of my year had to be ticking two birds that I thought might elude me forever: one a declining species that I nearly waited too long to pursue (Black Rail), and the other a reclusive migrant (Connecticut Warbler). These are mythical creatures no more!"

Lou Nielsen reports adding Rock Pigeon to his Baltimore yard list after 21 years of patiently searching the skies! He also had a flyover kingfisher, probably the most unexpected addition to his yard list.

Peter Osenton's "Pin Oak tree list" in his Howard County back yard has numbers 60 species. "Late in 2006 I had a 'close, but, no cigar' when a Red-shouldered Hawk landed ON my deck railing! It was just a few feet from ANY portion of that Pin Oak, but, it did not land on the tree."

Paul Pisano hadn't planned to do a big year in DC in 2006, but "after seeing so many great birds in the wake of Tropical Storm Ernesto, including DC's first Long-tailed Jaeger, I realized that I was in striking range of 200. So I tried a little harder in the fall, though clearly not hard enough because I ended up missing many birds that others found in Rock Creek Park (e.g., Connecticut, Wilson's, and Orange-crowned Warblers). To add to the frustration, I've already seen 2 birds in January, 2007, that I missed in 2006. Oh well, such is DC birding. And I'm not going to try for a big year in 2007 either. . . ." Paul missed his 2006 goal by only 2 species.

Dave Powell exults in having a three-jaeger year!

Derek Richardson and his wife Frances moved from College Park to a new home in Laurel over the summer. Up went the feeders and in came a first state record Inca Dove.

After undergoing cochlear implant surgery early in 2006,

Fran Saunders can now hear birds for the first time in her life! She retired from the State Department on October 31 and Norm Saunders retired from the Labor Department December 1. The two sold their Montgomery home of 20 years and relocated Cambridge, MD—the better for Fran to see those birds she can now hear!

Jim Stasz's highlights for 2006 included passing Matt Hafner in Harford County again. His lowlight was the discovery that he had misidentified an Anna's Hummingbird two years ago.

Mark Hoffman's take: "2006 was a truly remarkable year for state listers. My total of 8 new state birds ties my most adds (counting since 1984) from 1992, when my state list was some 40 species lower. From December of 2001, I went 2 1/2 years without any state birds; in the past 2 1/2 years I have added 15 species. That shows just how remarkable the year was. Five of the adds were first state records. I am happy just to get one new state bird per year, though after being spoiled in the recent past (8, 3, and 4 in the past 3 years), one might not seem that great!"

I guess this closes the books on 2006. Thanks to all of you who shared your list totals and your experiences. Here's to a safe and birdy 2007 for all! I hope to hear from all of you (and more) next January.

—Norm Saunders
MOS List Report Compiler

For the full account, see <http://www.mdbirds.org/birds/mdbirds/locality/lstrep2006.pdf>.

Those reporting for 2006:

Henry Armistead, Elaine Arnold, Stan Arnold, Marcia Balestri, John Beetham, J. Tyler Bell, Wayne Bell, Joy Bowen, Michael Bowen, Gwen Brewer, Jim Brighton, Carol Broderick, Don Broderick, Rod Burley, Greg Butcher, Sandra Byrd, J.B. Churchill, Clifford Comeau, Barry Cooper, Patty Craig, Jeffrey Culler, Barbara Davis, Phil Davis, Sam Dyke, Walter Ellison, Fred Fallon, Jane Fallon, Diane Ford, Barbara Gearhart, Kevin Graff, Matt Hafner, Rob Hilton, Mark Hoffman, Hans Holbrook, Emy Holdridge, John Hubbell, Bill Hubick, Kye Jenkins, Michael Jennison, George Jett, Parke John, Hank Kaestner, Ray Kiddy, Dennis Kirkwood, Kathy Klimkiewicz, Jane Kostenko, Ellen Lawler, Gail Mackiernan, Hugh Mahanes, Andy Martin, Joel Martin, Carol McCollough, Taylor McLean, Harvey Mudd, Marion Mudd, Dotty Mumford, Jim Nelson, Lou Nielsen, Paul O'Brien, Peter Osenton, Bonnie Ott, Helen Patton, Dave Perry, Paul Pisano, Danny Poet, Dave Powell, Kyle Rambo, Derek Richardson, Bob Ringle, Arlene Ripley, Les Roslund, Steve Sanford, Fran Saunders, Norm Saunders, Frank Schaff, Kurt Schwartz, Fred Shaffer, Lisa Shannon, Jeff Shenot, Don Simonson, Jo Solem, Duvall Sollers, Jim Stasz, Warren Strobel, Deborah Terry, Marcia Watson, Dave Webb, Dave Weesner, Leo Weigant, Winger West.



Birds of Note—by Les Roslund

- A remarkably cooperative THICK-BILLED MURRE treated birders to splendid views for three weeks at the Ocean City Inlet in Worcester County. The first Maryland report of the bird was provided by Jennifer Elmer of Pocomoke City, who saw the bird and took photos of it in one of the Shantytown Canals on Feb 17. Numerous other birders enjoyed close views of this bird as it rode with the tide back and forth through the inlet each day. The bird was last seen on Mar 3. A late Feb report from Virginia birders stated that the murre had been seen on Feb 10 by several people. Somehow that sighting was not widely reported.
- As often occurs, searchers for one nice bird get rewarded by finding other nice birds. Such was the case for Jeff Gordon of Lewes, DE who ventured down the coast on Mar 11 to look for HARLEQUIN DUCKS in Ocean City. After finding the two HARLEQUINS that had been wintering near the fishing pier for several weeks, Jeff continued to the inlet where he was treated to a sighting of a LITTLE GULL in his scope. Before he could announce the gull to his three birding friends, a RAZORBILL floated by, nearly crashing into the LITTLE GULL. The gull remained around long enough for his friends to share the enjoyment, but the RAZORBILL quickly lifted up and departed.
- Also at the Ocean City Inlet, Chris Starling of Cecil County reported a drake KING EIDER on Feb 18. Though up to nine COMMON EIDERS were regularly observed along the south jetty through the winter, the Feb 18 bird was the only KING EIDER reported for 2007.
- Elsewhere in the state there were some other delightful birds. A NORTHERN GOSHAWK decided to spend several weeks of winter in the yard of Gayle Bach-Watson of Frederick County. This bird, a beautiful male, showed up the first week of January and remained until Jan 31.



Thick-billed Murre photo taken by George Jett on February 24, 2007.

- In mid-February, two MONK PARAKEETS made a brief stop in the village of Neavitt in Talbot County, where they were spotted by Forrest Bogan. They flew away from the village while he watched, but may have been the same two that had been seen by one of his neighbors several months earlier.
- In far southern Worcester County, Jennifer Elmer of Pocomoke City reported a YELLOW-BREADED CHAT in her yard on Feb 17. This bird remained until early March, then left, but was back again on Mar 17 to enjoy the shelter and victuals of her compost pile.
- LONG-EARED OWLS are known to occasionally winter in Maryland but these secretive birds are rarely seen. This winter a pair of them decided to winter at Morgan Run NEA in Carroll County. Their chosen roost trees were sufficiently dense and sufficiently remote from pedestrian paths to conceal them from normal passing traffic. But the sharp eyes of Bob Ringler fell upon them Mar 4 as he led a Carroll County bird walk in the area. Over the next several days scores of birders were carefully guided along the trail to attain scope views of the owls, and for many of the viewers these were life birds. Great care was taken to minimize disturbance of the owls. After Mar 12 the visiting was terminated, in order to let these birds proceed with the pair bonding activities suited to this time of the year.

Good Neighbors...

The Delmarva Ornithological Society is seeking to raise \$15,000 to purchase 10 acres of Delaware Bayshore adjacent to Prime Hook NWR. They are partnering with the Conservation Fund, a national non-profit dedicated to purchasing vital wildlife habitat, which will make the actual purchase. The land will then be turned over to Prime Hook for management. The DOS is organizing a bird-a-thon to raise funds for this project. They plan to make this an annual event, with the ultimate intent of purchasing four miles of bayshore.

The primary beneficiaries of this purchase would be the horseshoe crabs that breed there and the shorebirds that feed on horseshoe crab eggs. The rufa subspecies of the

Red Knot—which has been in a precipitous decline for some time—uses the Delaware Bay as a major staging and refueling stop on its trip to Canadian breeding grounds.

The Red Knot is also a Maryland bird. This is a chance to benefit an endangered (albeit unofficially) subspecies that is one of our own. If you wish to support this effort, you can make a check payable to “DOS Bird-A-Thon.” Send it to PO Box 4247, Greenville DE, 19807. For further details see <http://www.dosbirds.org/bird-a-thon/bat.htm>.

—Kurt Schwartz
Howard County

MAY COUNT 2007

The 2007 May Count on Saturday, May 12, marks the 45th consecutive year that Maryland birders have conducted this survey of the bird populations in the state in the first half of May. By the second week in May, many of the species that nest in Maryland have returned to their breeding grounds, and they are temporarily joined by an array of warblers, vireos, and other migrating species whose numbers peak around this time.

Because species diversity is at its highest point, plumages are the brightest, and bird songs fill the air, there is no better time to bird in Maryland than the first half of May. If you are willing to slap on some sunscreen and insect repellent, you will be rewarded with a great day of birding.

More volunteers mean better coverage. For those interested in participating for the first time, each county has an assigned compiler, who can provide you with maps of territories that need coverage and pair you up with experienced

birders who will show you the ropes. You will learn new spots to bird that you didn't know existed. See page 15 for the list of County Compilers. A field checklist for species seen during May Count can be downloaded from the MOS web site at www.mdbirds.org/counts/namc/namcchecklist.pdf.

Due to their rural nature and smaller populations, counties on the Eastern Shore and in Western Maryland need additional assistance with May Count. Volunteers from the more populous parts of the state can explore new territories in these rural areas and will likely see species that they do not see in their home county.

Please join us in the field on May 12 for a great day of birding!

—Mike Welch
Statewide Compiler

Buggin' at Hart-Miller

In 1983, MOS members began doing regular bird surveys at Hart-Miller Island, Baltimore County. This remained the modus operandi until the late 1990s, when a few birders, mainly Bob Ringler and Debbie Terry, started looking at butterflies. At that time, I thought this behavior a bit odd, but if they were enjoying themselves, who was I to question? In succeeding years, more butterfly watchers came to the island. Again I left this activity to this fringe group.

During the drought years of 2000 through 2002, shore-bird habitat on the island was virtually non-existent, and I found myself with a lot of time on my hands while doing my weekly surveys. I started noticing the butterflies and bought a copy of "Butterflies through Binoculars" (Glassberg). I became hooked and began including butterflies in the weekly surveys.

Then even stranger things began to happen. Birders like Jim Stasz and George Jett started observing dragonflies on the island. I was not as resistant this time; I obtained a copy of "Dragonflies through Binoculars" (Dunkle) and began including dragonflies each week. The next step was a logical progression; the dragonfly watchers started observing damselflies. I bought "Damselflies of the Northeast" (Lam) and added damselflies to the survey.

I thought this might be the limit but then, thanks to Hans Holbrook, moths and caterpillars entered the picture. I bought "Moths of Eastern North America" (Covell) and "Caterpillars of Eastern North America" (Wagner) and began observing both. (Late summer and early fall caterpillars are strikingly colorful.)

Was there no end to this diversity? The answer was a resounding "NO." Again thanks to Hans, I was introduced to "Grasshoppers, Katydid, and Crickets of the United States" (Capinera, Scott, and Walker). This led to



"Northeastern Longhorned Beetles" (Yanega), "Tiger Beetles of the United States and Canada" (Pearson, Knisley, and Kazilek), and "Biology of Tiger Beetles and a Guide to the Species of the South Atlantic States" (Knisley and Schultz). The time has now come for a pack mule to carry all of the field guides.

In recent years, the island has given rise to some amazing observations. In September 2005, a Palamedes Swallowtail butterfly was found. This is an "S1/E" species: "Highly State Rare/Endangered." The following week, it was a Giant Swallowtail butterfly that was observed and photographed. This is a "S2/I" species: "State Rare/In Need of Conservation." In September 2006, a damselfly known as Atlantic Bluet was collected. This is even rarer, an "SH" species: "Historically Known in Maryland." There had been only two known sightings during the entire previous century, Montgomery County in June 1900 and Prince George's County in August 1916.

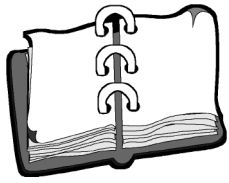
In late 2007, the next issue of "The Maryland Entomologist" will be devoted to articles about Hart-Miller Island. Bill Hubick will author the Giant Swallowtail; Debbie Terry and Marcia Watson will author the Palamedes Swallowtail; and Richard Orr will author the Atlantic Bluet. Timothy Foard will write about the ants of the island (16 species and counting), and I will produce an annotated checklist of all of the insect life that has been observed on the island over the years. Who would have thought that after these many years, my three college entomology courses would finally be put to good use?

—Gene Scarpulla

Photo of **Familiar Bluet**, close cousin of the rarer Atlantic Bluet, courtesy of George Jett. To enjoy the bluet's true blues, check out the *Yellowthroat* on the MOS web site.

MAY COUNT 2007 COUNTY COMPILERS

Allegany	John Churchill		301-689-8344 (h)	jchurchi@atlanticbb.net
Anne Arundel	Dotty Mumford	1900 General's Hwy, Annapolis, MD 21401	410-849-8336	dottymum@comcast.net
Baltimore	Joel Martin		410-744-9211	jcldmartin@aol.com
Calvert	Arlene Ripley	3513 Smithville Dr, Dunkirk, MD 20754	301-855-2848	arleneripley@comcast.net
Caroline	Debby Bennett	P.O. Box 404, Denton, MD 21629	410-479-2978	firefly5845@hotmail.com
Carroll	Bill Ellis		443-402-9033 (w) or 443-402-9490 (fax)	ellisw@saic-abingdon.com
Cecil	Parke John	57 Virginia Ave, Red Point Beach North East, MD 21901	410-287-6037 or 410-506-3874	parke@del.net
Charles	George Jett	9505 Bland Street, Waldorf, MD 20603	301-843-3524	gmjett@comcast.net
Dorchester	Harry Armistead	523 E. Durham Street Philadelphia, PA 19119-1225	215-248-4120	harryarmistead@hotmail.com.
Frederick	Michael Welch	8619 Burnt Hickory Circle Frederick, MD 21704	301-874-5828	manddwelch@adelphia.net
Garrett	Fran Pope	503 F Street, Mt. Lake, MD 21550	301-334-4908	fpope@gcnetmail.net
Harford	Mark Johnson	3204 Bryson Ct, Baldwin, MD 21013	410-692-5978	mark.s.johnson@us.army.mil
Howard	Kevin Hefferman	9775 Diversified Lane, Ellicott City, MD 21042	410-418-8731	KJHeff@aol.com
Kent	Walter Ellison	23460 Clarissa Road Chestertown, MD 21620	410-778-9568	rossgull@baybroadband.net
Montgomery	Rick Sussman	17917 Ashton Club Way Ashton, MD 20861	301-774-1185 (h) or 301-502-0018 (w)	Warblerick@aol.com
Prince George's	Fred Fallon	1700 Pomona Place, Bowie, MD 20716	301-249-1518	fwfallon@earthlink.net.
Queen Anne's	Glenn Therres	207 Johnny Lane, Stevensville, MD 21666	410-643-7422	gtherres@dnr.state.md.us
St. Mary's	Bob Boxwell		410-414-3311 or 410-610-5124	robertjohnboxwell@yahoo.com
Somerset	Charles Vaughn	1306 Frederick Avenue Salisbury, MD 21801	410-742-7221	essc@comcast.net
Talbot	Les Coble	9317 High Banks, Easton, MD 21601	410-820-6165	lescoble@friend.ly.net
Washington	Dave Weesner	6618 Zittlestown Road, Middletown, MD 21769	301-432-7718	dweesner@dnr.state.md.us
Wicomico	Ellen Lawler	412 Monticello Avenue Salisbury, MD 21801	410-546-9056	emlawler@salisbury.edu
Worcester	Mark Hoffman	7263 Norris Ave, Sykesville, MD 21784	410-409-5777	wcbirding@adelphia.net
District of Columbia	<i>No assigned compiler. Please contact: Michael Welch manddwelch@adelphia.net</i>			
Statewide Coordinator	Michael Welch	8619 Burnt Hickory Circle Frederick, MD 21704	301-874-5828	manddwelch@adelphia.net



MOS Calendar

May-June 2007

Tuesday, May 1

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. Habitats include woods, lake, streams, and marsh. Meet 8:30 AM at footbridge. Directions: from I-695, take Jones Falls Expy (I-83 south) to Northern Pkwy exit, and go left (east) to next light, Falls Rd. Go left (north) and stay in right lane; pass second light (Lake Ave), turn right (east) before south end of Falls Rd bridge (just north of Lake Ave), follow right-left-right turns to avoid Light Rail entrance, and go 0.5 mile to intersection. Park and walk to footbridge. Leader: Shirley Geddes, 410-377-6583 or srgeddes@comcast.net.

MEETING. **Baltimore.** "The Miracle Pond." Author and photographer *Middleton Evans* illustrates the birdlife of Patterson Park in downtown Balt, with a focus on the reconstructed boat lake. Middleton has photographed nearly 115 species in the park over the past 6 years. 7:30 PM at the Cylburn Arboretum, 4915 Greenspring Ave. Info: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

Wednesday, May 2

H Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Ft. McHenry. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. Folding chair and scope useful. Cancelled in bad weather (rain, sleet, snow, fog, etc.). Meet 8 AM outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

H Baltimore. Evening Walks at Ft. McHenry. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. Folding chair and scope useful. Cancelled in bad weather (rain, sleet, snow, fog, etc.). Meet 6 PM at main gate. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

MEETING. **Carroll.** "The Final Exam." 7:30 PM at Senior Center, 125 Stoner Ave, Westminster. Info: Karen Mobley, karenm657@comcast.net.

H Howard. Bon Secours. 2 hrs. Meet at visitor parking lot. Easy walking around the lovely grounds of this spiritual center. Woodlands and fields offer a variety of habitats. Contact leader, Michelle Wright, 410-465-6057 for more info and meeting time. Facilities available.

H Montgomery. Flag Ponds, Calvert County. Two-thirds day. Local expert Arlene Ripley leads us through woods, bog, and beach of this limited-access nature park to see migrants as well as arriving breeders, notably Yellow-throated Warbler. Limit 12. Reservations required. Get details and directions from coordinators, Lydia Schindler, 301-977-5252, or Linda Friedland, 301-983-2136.

Thursday, May 3

MEETING. **Frederick.** *Mary Wood*, our scholarship winner from Kemptown ES, will report on her experiences at the ME Audubon Workshop last summer. 7 PM in the Community Rm, C. Burr Artz Library in downtown Frederick.

Friday, May 4

MEETING. **Harford.** Local biologist *Dr. Kim Derrickson* shares highlights of his research on the Wood Thrush and other local favorites. Contact Russ Kovach, 443-386-4787 or visit www.HarfordBirdClub.org for add'l info. Meeting at Harford Glen Outdoor Environmental Education Center, Bel Air, MD.

H Montgomery. Pennyfield Lock, C&O Canal. Half day. Birding by ear (with specified intervals for talking). Migrant and nesting landbirds. Meet at the end of Pennyfield Lock Rd at 7

AM. Reservations required. Leaders: Cyndie Loeper, 301-530-8226, and Ann Lucy, 301-229-8810.

Saturday, May 5

H Anne Arundel. Pickering Creek Audubon Center, Talbot County. Director Mark Scallion will lead us to all habitats and birds. Meet 7 AM at the Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot off Rte 50 on White Hall Rd. For info, contact Tom Bradford at 410-987-0674.

H Baltimore. Soldiers Delight. Warblers, flycatchers, and tanagers are featured as spring migration heats up in this globally rare ecosystem. Meet 7:30 AM. From I-695 exit 18, Liberty Rd, go west 4 miles, bear right onto Deer Park Rd just before traffic light and water tower, go 2 miles to historical marker, overlook, and gravel lot on left. Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6849 or oriolekec1@comcast.net.

H Carroll. Towpath off Norris Ave in Sykesville. Looking for orioles. Leader: Amy Hoffman, 410-549-3598.

❁ FRED ARCHIBALD MAY COUNT. **Frederick.** Meet at the Sanctuary at 6 AM. Contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660 or rjs30@erols.com, for info.

H Howard. BIG DAY. Intense birding to garner as many species in the county as possible. Bring food and drinks and plan to bird from dawn to dusk. Facilities at some areas. Expect all types of terrain and difficult walking in some areas. Limit 12. Call Bonnie Ott, 410-461-3361, to reserve a spot.

H Montgomery. Upper Watts Branch, Rockville. Half day. Migrant warblers, vireos, thrushes, and assorted woodland residents, including possible Red-shouldered Hawks. Meet 7:30 AM at corner of Princeton Pl and Fordham St in Rockville. Limit: 12. Reservations required. Leader: Paul O'Brien, 301-424-6491.

H Patuxent. Fran Uhler NA. Meet 7:30 AM at the end of Lemon Bridge Rd off MD 197, just north of Bowie State U and the MARC line. No reservations required. Info: Fred Shaffer, 410-721-1744.

H Harford. The "Gulch" and Hidden Valley. Joint trip with the Harford Land Trust. Join Dennis Kirkwood on a trip that highlights an important area that has been preserved by the Harford Land Trust. Prepare to see migrant warblers, Scarlet Tanagers, and orioles. Meet at the IWLA parking area on Onion Rd off Rte 136 at 8 AM. Contact Les Eastman for more info at 410-734-6969.

Sunday, May 6

H Baltimore. Patuxent Research Refuge, North Tract. Bring lunch for all-day trip to Anne Arundel Co site for Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, chat, and other southern specialty birds. Prothonotary Warbler possible. Meet 8 AM at Nursery Rd P&R, I-695 exit 8. Leader: Steve Sanford, 410-922-5103 or scartan@verizon.net.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Arboretum. Self-guided walk. Meet 8:30 AM at porch of mansion for easy birding without a designated leader. 4915 Greenspring Ave. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H Baltimore. Spring Butterflies at Soldiers Delight. Butterfly expert Dick Smith will lead us through this globally rare ecosystem. In addition to spring butterflies such as the orange falcate and eastern pine elfin, expect many native grasses and flowers. Meet 1 PM at Visitor/Nature Center. For directions, see May 5 listing. Cancelled if raining. Call or e-mail to confirm date. Coordinator: Gail Frantz, 410-833-7135 or guineabird@aol.com.

H Cecil. Cecil Migrant Hotspots. Meet 8 AM at Big Elk Mall parking lot (corner of Rtes 40 and 213) Elkton, near the Dunkin' Donuts. Leader: Marcia Watson, mww@udel.edu.

☼ Frederick. AUDREY CARROLL MAY COUNT. Meet at the Sanctuary at 6 AM. Call Dave Smith, 410-549-7082, for info.

H Howard. Beginners Bird Walk. 2 hrs. Meet at Meadowbrook parking lot near pavilion at 8:30 AM. Walk the paved paths of this new county park. Learn basic bird identification skills and binocular use. Leaders: Mike and Grazina McClure, 410-531-2780. Facilities available.

H Montgomery. Little Bennett RP. Half day. Near peak migration for warblers and vireos, including those breeding in this varied habitat. Reservations required. For time and directions, contact the leader, Gemma Radko, 301-607-4374.

H Talbot. Pocomoke Swamp Stream Bottoms. Warblers and other migrants. Bring lunch. Depart 6:30 AM from Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot in front of Acme, Easton. Leader: Terry Allen, 410-822-8132.

H Harford. Susquehanna SP. Known to draw traveling birds and birders alike, this trip annually reaffirms the park's reputation as one of the preeminent local birding spots. Veteran leader Dave Ziolkowski will help you pick through a myriad of songbirds in hopes of getting good looks at northbound migrants, including Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Blue, and Black-throated Green Warblers, as well as Baltimore and Orchard Orioles. Meet 7 AM at the Rock Run Mill. Contact Dave at 443-299-8453 for more info.

Tuesday, May 8

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. See May 1 listing for details and directions. Leader: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or ocean_city2001@yahoo.com.

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

H Indicates Field Trip

MEETING. **Patuxent.** "The Birds and Natural Areas of Florida" by Bob Mumford. 7:30 PM at the College Park Airport Annex. Call Fred Shaffer at 410-721-1744 for add'l info.

Wednesday, May 9

H Baltimore. Evening walks at Ft. McHenry. See May 2 listing for details.

Thursday, May 10

H Montgomery. Patuxent River Drift Boat Trip, Prince George's County. Half day. Joint trip with ANS. Peak migration time for songbirds; also marsh and waterbirds. Waterproof footwear and insect repellent advisable. See ANS News for directions to the park. Meet 6:30 AM at park entrance gate. Possible Patuxent Park fee. Reservations required. Leader: Paul DuMont, 703-931-8994.

MEETING. **Howard.** "Birding in Belize," by Kevin Heffernan and Karen Darcey. Hospitality and club bookstore, 7:30 PM; meeting/program, 8 PM at Howard Co Rec and Parks, 7210 Oakland Mills Rd, Columbia. Info: Kevin Heffernan, 410-418-8731.

Saturday, May 12

☼ MAY COUNT. Allegany. To participate in *Allegany Co*, contact J.B. Churchill, 301-689-8344 (h), 301-697-1223 (m), or jchurchi@atlanticbb.net. To participate in *Garrett Co*, contact Fran Pope, 301-334-4908 or fpope@gcnetmail.net. There will be no tally rally this year.

☼ MAY COUNT. Anne Arundel. Compiler: Dotty Mumford, 410-849-8336.

☼ MAY COUNT. Baltimore. All-day count of birds in Balt City and Co. For area assignments, contact compiler Joel Martin at 410-744-9211 or jcdlmartin@aol.com.

MOS Calendar (continued from page 17)

☼ **MAY COUNT. Caroline.** Contact Debby Bennett, 410-479-1343 or dbennett@carolib.org, for more info.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Carroll.** Contact Bill Ellis, 443-402-9033, to coordinate count locations. Tally rally to be held at Laura and Jerry Tarbell's. RSVP to Tarbells at birdersforever@erols.com if you plan to attend the rally, and please bring a \$ donation or a food item.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Cecil.** Coordinator, Parke John, Parke@del.net.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Frederick.** Join the crowd for our local countywide count. Contact Mike Welch, 301-874-5828, to assist.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Harford.** Contact Mark Johnson, 410-692-5978, for more info.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Howard.** Contact Kevin Heffernan, KJHeff@aol.com, for more info.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Kent.** An all-day effort to census all birds in Kent Co. Join a field party or count in your neighborhood. Contact Nancy Martin/Walter Ellison, 410-778-9568, for more details.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Montgomery.** Compiler and contact person: Rick Sussman, 301-774-1185 or warblerick@aol.com.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Patuxent.** Contact Fred Fallon at 301-249-1518 for add'l info.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Tri-County.** Everyone can participate. Contact Ellen Lawler for details and checklist, 410-546-9056.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Washington.** Contact Dave Weesner at 301-432-7718 to help with this annual spring census.

🏠 **Baltimore.** Saturday Monitoring Walks at Ft. McHenry. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. Folding chair and scope useful. Cancelled in bad weather (rain, sleet, snow, fog, etc.). Meet 8 AM outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

Sunday, May 13

🏠 **Baltimore.** Milford Mill Park. For migrant warblers, thrushes, and other songbirds. Wilson's Warbler possible. Meet 7:30 AM on Milford Mill Rd. Directions: from I-695 exit 18 (Liberty Rd), proceed west to first light at Washington Ave. Turn right, proceed to light on Milford Mill Rd just after the overhead bridge. Leader: Bryce Butler, 410-728-0646 or capitano.bryce@verizon.net.

🏠 **Baltimore.** Cylburn Arboretum. Self-guided walk. See May 6 listing for details.

🏠 **Talbot.** Thendara 4-H Camp/Hurlock WWTP. A new walk for us! Expect migrants in a variety of habitats. Breakfast hosts: Nancy and Marty O'Connor. Depart 7 AM from Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot in front of Acme, Easton. Leaders: Chuck Mock and Shirley Bailey, 443-249-0153.

🏠 **Harford.** Gunpowder SP. A reprise of last year's popular new outing for Mother's Day. Join Mark and Denise Johnson as they lead birders through the Sweet Air area of Gunpowder SP. Meet at the end of Dalton Brevard Rd at 7:30 AM. Contact Mark for more info at 410-692-5978.

Monday, May 14

🏠 **Baltimore.** Poplar Island. Poplar Is. is an environmental restoration project similar to Hart-Miller; when completed, it will provide approximately 570 acres of wetland and 570 acres of upland habitat. Following the 20-30 minute boat ride from Tilghman Is., we will enjoy a 2-hour bus ride around Poplar Is., stopping wherever birding looks good. Meet 7 AM at Nursery Rd

P&R or meet 9 AM at Tilghman Is. Scopes helpful. Facilities available. Bring snacks if desired. Lunch will be at a local restaurant. Reservations required. Leader: Chrissy Albanese. Coordinator: Gail Frantz, 410-833-7135 or guineabird@aol.com.

Tuesday, May 15

🏠 **Baltimore.** Lake Roland. See May 1 listing. Leader: Paul Noell, 410-243-2652 or myconut@verizon.net.

Wednesday, May 16

🏠 **Baltimore.** Evening walks at Ft. McHenry. See May 2 listing for details.

🏠 **Montgomery.** Green Ridge SF, Allegany Co. Full day. Target birds include Ruffed Grouse, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and nesting vireos and warblers (Hooded, Cerulean, Worm-eating, etc). Meet 7 AM at Sideling Hill VC parking lot off I-68. Bring snacks, beverages, lunch, and insect repellent. Wear sturdy shoes; some hiking involved. 4-wheel drive or pickup truck recommended (but not necessary). Prior arrangements to car pool via leader highly suggested. Trip limited to 12 people. Make reservations (required) by May 13. Leader: Jim Green, 301-208-2393 or jgreen@smokeyglennfarm.com.

MEETING. **Montgomery.** "Results of the 2002-2006 MD-DC Atlas Project." Speaker: *Walter Ellison*, MOS Atlas Coordinator. After 5 years, an amazing amount of information has been gathered by atlasers in MD and DC. Although the project is not yet officially wrapped up, Walter will cover the highlights as he sees them and make some comparisons with the previous Atlas, conducted in the 1980s. 7:30 PM. Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac.

Thursday, May 17

🏠 **Baltimore.** North Central Railroad Trail. We will visit a spot north of Monkton where migrants and nesters are (usually) easy to find. Minimal walking. Meet 8 AM. Reservations required. Limit 12. Contact the leader by May 16 for

reservations, directions, and info. Leader: Debbie Terry, 410-252-8771 or gt5s@bcpl.net.

Friday, May 18

H Howard. Henryton Rd. 2 hrs. Easy walking along the river for nesting Worm-eating and Yellow-throated Warblers. Wonderful area for a variety of woodland birds. Leader: Joe Byrnes, 410-730-5329 and Jeff Culler. No facilities.

Saturday, May 19

H Baltimore. DE Bay. Full-day trip for a wide variety of migrating shorebirds. Possible spectacular assemblage of breeding-plumaged Ruddy Turnstones, Sanderlings, and Red Knots. Curlew Sandpiper possible. Be prepared for heat and biting insects. Minimal walking involved. Scopes very useful. Bring a lunch. Meet 7 AM at Nursery Rd P&R, I-695 exit 8. Alternatively, meet 9:30 AM at the Bombay Hook VC lot. Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

H Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Ft. Mc Henry. See May 12 listing for details.

H Anne Arundel. DE Bay. Gerald Winegrad will lead this all-day trip to a number of DE Bay locations for migrant shorebirds and songbirds. Meet 7:45 AM at the Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot off Rte 50 on White Hall Rd. Bring lunch, or one can be purchased. Plan on a dinner stop on the way home. For more info, contact Gerald at 410-280-8956.

H Frederick. Gambrill SP. Barbara Gearhart will lead us to all the good spots in Gambrill for spring migrants and other goodies. Walking may be uphill and vigorous depending on where the warblers are. Meet at Gambrill SP parking lot at 8 AM. Reservations required. Please contact Barbara at 301-473-9889 for more info and to make reservations.

H Harford. Susquehanna SP. Bird list could include Yellow- and Black-billed Cuckoos, Olive-sided and Empidonax Flycatchers, Cape May and Cerulean Warblers, with zebra swallowtails and other butterflies to boot. Meet at 7 AM at the Rock Run Mill. Contact Les Eastman, 410-734-6969, for more info.

H Patuxent. Anacostia River. Join park naturalist Mike Donovan at Bladensburg Marina for a morning of birding along the Anacostia River and surrounding wetlands and fields. Meet 7:30 AM. Call Fred Shaffer at 410-721-1744 for directions and meeting place.

H Patuxent. Governor Bridge Park. Meet 7:30 AM at Governor Bridge parking lot. No reservations are required. Park is located on Governor Bridge Rd, approximately 1 mile east of MD 301. Call Fred Shaffer at 410-721-1744 for add'l info.

Sunday, May 20

H Baltimore. Owings Mills Mall Wetland. Willow Flycatcher, Green Heron, Blue Grosbeak, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Orchard Oriole are just a few of the birds that breed in and around this mall's wetland area. Meet 7:30 AM at Macy's lot across from the gas station on Red Run Blvd. Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6489 or oriolekec1@comcast.net.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Arboretum. Self-guided walk. See May 6 listing for details.

H Carroll. McKeldin. Half day. Looking for migrant warblers. Meet 7:30 AM at the gravel parking lot off of Marriotsville Rd. Leader: Bob Ringler, 410-549-6031.

H Harford. Harford Shorebird Tour. Marvel at flocks of peeps and search for species that are tough to find locally, such as Black-bellied Plover, Dunlin, Red Knot, and Whimbrel. Beginners interested in

learning the basics of shorebird identification and experienced watchers searching for rarities will enjoy this morning trip to Havre de Grace and neighboring sites. Scopes are helpful, although not necessary. Meet at the Tydings Marina at 6:30 AM. Leader: Dave Webb, 410-939-3537.

H Kent. Andelot Farm. An exemplary property with well-managed fields, woodlots, bay access, and small wetlands. Birdlife is diverse, featuring Wild Turkey, Pileated Woodpecker, and several nesting warbler and vireo species. Meet 7 AM at Dollar General parking lot, Chestertown. Leader, Wayne Bell, 410-820-6002 or wbell2@washcoll.edu.

H Talbot. Easton Stream Bottoms. Searching for waterthrush and other migrants. Breakfast host: Joan Coble. Depart Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot in front of Acme, Easton at 7 AM. Leader: Jan Reese, 410-745-2875.

H Tri-County. Night Birds at Truitt's Landing. Meet 5 PM in Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art parking lot on S Schumaker Dr just off Beaglin Park Dr in Salisbury. Leader: Sam Dyke, 410-742-5497.

Monday, May 21

MEETING. **Tri-County.** Program TBA. 7 PM at Asbury Methodist Church, Fox Rm, south entrance, Camden Ave, Salisbury. Contact Betty Pitney at 410-543-1853 for more info.

Tuesday, May 22

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. See May 1 listing. Leader: Mary Jo Campbell, 410-584-7696 or camp1940@aol.com.

MEETING. **Washington.** Join us for "Watching Sparrows," a film that explores the lives of 46 species of sparrows, towhees, juncos, and longspurs. Meet 7:30 PM at the Mt. Aetna Nature Center, Hagerstown. Contact Anna Hutzell at 301-797-8454 for more info.

MOS Calendar *(continued from page 19)***Wednesday, May 23**

H **Baltimore.** Evening walks at Ft. McHenry. See May 2 listing for details.

Saturday, May 26

H **Anne Arundel.** Piney Orchard Nature Walk. Woods, fields, ponds, birds, and refreshments. Meet 6:30 AM at Parole P&R for this half-day trip. Leader: Peter Hanan, 410-672-5672.

H **Montgomery.** Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship. Nesting Blue-winged and Cerulean Warblers. Meet 8 AM at the Neersville, VA, Volunteer Fire Station on Rte 671. Leader: Joe Coleman, 540-554-2542 or jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org.

H **Howard and Montgomery.** Hot Spots for Red Knots. Full-day. Joint chapter trip. This year we will look for Red Knots first, not last. Trip will explore a variety of DE Bay sites for shorebirds, waterfowl, etc, starting at Prime Hook and working our way north to at least Ted Harvey WMA and hopefully Bombay Hook. Meet 9 AM at Prime Hook NWR VC. Pack food, water, insect repellent, and other items needed for a full day in the field. Kurt Schwarz will co-lead. Reservations required. Limit 12 individuals or 3 cars per chapter. Leader: Cyndie Loeper, 301-530-8226.

Saturday-Sunday, May 26-27

H **Talbot.** Cape May, NJ. Enjoy Cape May during the peak of spring warbler migration. Depart from Easton at 7 AM on Sat May 26 and take the first available ferry boat from Cape Henlopen to Cape May. Watch for gannets and jaegers during the boat ride. Bird in Cape May through Sat afternoon, spend the night, and bird other sites through most of the day on Sun May 27. For birders who choose not to stay overnight on Sat, come anyhow, and return to Cape Henlopen late Sat evening. Participants will need to make their own lodging reservations in Cape May. Contact leader Charles Hopkins, 410-763-8742, for more info.

Sunday, May 27

H **Baltimore.** Cylburn Arboretum. Self-guided walk. See May 6 listing.

H **Baltimore.** Halethorpe Ponds. Half day. Diverse habitats of this little-birded area include river, ponds, floodplain woods, and a powerline. Possible side trip to Mears Farm area and Patapsco Valley SP. Bring insect repellent, water, and snacks. Paths may be wet and muddy. Meet 7:30 AM at Nursery Rd P&R, I-695 exit 8. Leader: Joel Martin, 410-744-9211 or jcdimartin@aol.com.

H **Harford.** Conowingo Dam. If you have been hankering for a peek at an oriole who is not out-earning you yearly, now is your chance! Join Les Eastman for what should be a profitable outing in terms of orioles and Warbling Vireos, among others. Meet 8 AM at the dam parking lot for a leisurely walk along the greenway trail. Call Les at 410-734-6969 for more info.

H **Talbot.** Special TBA Local Trip. Leaders: TBA. Contact Mark Scallion, mscallion@pickeringcreek.org for more info.

Monday, May 28

H **Harford.** Hidden Valley/Upper Deer Creek. Join local resident and natural historian Dennis Kirkwood to search for Worm-eating Warbler, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and Scarlet Tanager. Meet at Hidden Valley (north end of Madonna Rd) at 7 AM. For further info, contact Dennis at 410-692-5905.

Tuesday, May 29

H **Baltimore.** Lake Roland. See May 1 listing. Leader: Patsy Perlman, 410-466-3998 or pattonyp@juno.com.

Wednesday, May 30

H **Baltimore.** Evening Walks at Ft. McHenry. See May 2 listing.

Friday, June 1

H **Baltimore.** Whip-poor-wills at Soldiers Delight. Come assist with our annual count of calling "whips" at the best site for this species in Baltimore Co. We will stay until after dark and finish by 10:15 PM. Meet 8 PM at Soldiers Delight. For directions, see May 5 listing. Leader: David Curson, 410-675-4963.

Saturday, June 2

MOS BOARD MEETING. 10 AM. Hosted by the Carroll Co Chapter at Piney Run Nature Center, 30 Martz Rd, Sykesville, MD 21784, 410-795-6043. Contact Janet Shields at janetbill@prodigy.net for more info.

ANNUAL SPRING POTLUCK PICNIC.

Anne Arundel. 4PM. Location TBD. For more info, contact Tom Bradford at tabslab@aol.com.

H **Cecil.** Elk Neck SF. Meet 7 AM at Elk Neck SF (at the entrance to the maintenance area parking lot just off Irishtown Rd). Leader: Parke John, parke@del.net .

H **Harford.** DE Shore. Day-long adventure to Bombay Hook and some of the adjacent birding mega-hotspots. The muddy impoundments, fresh and saltwater marshes, and beaches afford great numbers and good views of shorebirds and waterbirds. Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, and Red Knot are local specialties but that's not all, as European waifs, western strays, and windblown pelagics commonly occur. Bring lunch and meet at 7 AM at the MD 155 and I-95 P&R. Contact leader Russ Kovach at 443-386-4787 for more info.

H **Howard.** Patapsco Shrubland. 7:30 AM. Moderate walking in fields along mowed paths through brush. We'll be searching for shrubland warblers, vireos, thrushes, and other edge species. The bluebird/swallow nestboxes should also be occupied. Bring bug repellent and sunscreen. Facilities available. Contact leader, Felicia Lovelett, 410-489-7169, for directions.

H Indicates Field Trip

Sunday, June 3

H Baltimore. Soldiers Delight for Nesting Birds. Possible nesters include Summer and Scarlet Tanagers, Yellow-breasted Chat, White-eyed Vireo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Field Sparrow, as well as Hooded, Prairie, and Pine Warblers. Meet 7:30 AM. See May 5 listing for directions. Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6849 or oriolekec1@comcast.net.

H Kent. Tuckahoe SP and Adkins Arboretum, Queen Anne's/Caroline Cos. A diverse area of wetland, woods, and meadows. Nesting birds include Wood Duck, Wild Turkey, Pileated Woodpecker, Barred Owl, Grasshopper Sparrow, Prothonotary Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Prairie Warbler, both orioles, and Scarlet Tanager. Meet 7 AM at Dollar General parking lot, Chestertown. For info, contact Nancy Martin/Walter Ellison at 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net.

Thursday, June 7

ANNUAL PICNIC AT LILYPONS. **Frederick.** Bring binoculars, a dish to share, plate, drink, and utensils. We'll meet at 6 PM for birding and eats.

Friday, June 8

CHAPTER PLANNING MEETING. **Frederick.** Everyone please come to our 2007-2008 planning meeting, and volunteer to give a program or lead a field trip. We need new ideas and suggestions. Meet at 7 PM at Mike Welch's house. Call Mike at 301-874-5828 for info and directions.

Saturday, June 9

H Baltimore. Carroll County Field Birds. Full day. Bird the fields of Carroll and/or Frederick Cos for nesting Vesper, Grasshopper, Field, and possibly Savannah Sparrows, Bobolink, Dickcissel, Horned Lark, meadowlark, Willow Flycatcher, and Red-headed Woodpecker. Bring lunch. Rain date: June 26. Meet 7:30 AM at P&R lot, extreme east end of I-70 (inside I-695). Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

H Harford. Susquehanna SP Bird Count. Calling all birders, new and experienced, county residents or visitors, to help. Bird club members who are willing to lead small groups, please call Craig Patterson at 410-734-9035 by May 25. All volunteer participants meet at Rock Run Mill at 7 AM.

Sunday, June 10

ANNUAL CLUB PICNIC. **Kent.** 5 PM. Join us for a potluck picnic at the lodge at Eastern Neck NWR. Contact Nancy Martin/Walter Ellison at 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net for more details.

Tuesday, June 12

MEETING. **Allegany.** Planning Meeting 7 PM. Location TBD. We'll be deciding about the schedule for 2007/2008, so bring your ideas for speakers, field trips, and other projects. For more info, contact Barbara Gaffney, gaffneyg@mindspring.com.

Sunday, June 17

H Harford. Harford Glen. Visit this easily accessible Harford Co natural gem to hike the forests and wetlands with leaders Lynn Davis and Betsy Reeder in search of shorebirds like Spotted, Solitary, and Least Sandpipers and migratory songbirds including warblers, vireos, and orioles. Follow Wheel Rd to its western end and meet at the upper parking lot at 7 AM. Contact Lynn at lynnd@iximd.com or 410-569-0504 for more info.

H Montgomery. Woodpecker Alley (North Branch of Rock Creek). Half day. Nesting woodpeckers and other woodland birds. Meet at Swim Center car park at Olney Manor Recreational Park on east side of Georgia Ave opposite Emory Ln promptly at 7 AM, and plan to car pool from there. Reservations required. Limit 10. Leader: John Williamson, 301-654-5312.

Thursday, June 21

POTLUCK/FALL PLANNING MEETING. **Talbot.** 6 PM. Potluck Dinner celebrating a year of great birding!

All members welcome. Hosts: Bill and Karen Harris, 410-770-8303. Take Rte 328 north off of Rte 50. Go approx 6 miles and turn right onto Kingston Landing Rd. Drive approx 1.5 miles and take a left onto Discovery Rd. Go another 1.5 miles and take first left on to May Apple Ln. Bill and Karen's house is the second on the right.

Saturday, June 23

H Harford. Champion Trees of Harford County. Join forester and birder Tom Gibson to tour some of the truly great trees that stand among us. See, also, what birds are lucky enough to snag such swanky living quarters. Contact Tom at 410-734-4135 for meeting place and time.

Sunday, June 24

PICNIC. **Washington.** Picnic at Camp Harding Park starting at 4 PM. Bring a lawn chair, plate, utensils, drink, and a dish to share. Call Anna Hutzell at 301-797-8454 for directions.

Saturday, July 7

H Montgomery. Adventure Banding Station. Half day. Meet at 8 AM at the Adventure Banding Station on Glen Rd, Potomac. Reservations required. Limit 10. Leader: Gemma Radko, 301-514-2894.

Saturday, July 14

SUMMER PICNIC. **Carroll.** Meet 1 PM at the Hoffman residence. Please contact Amy Hoffman at 410-549-3598 to coordinate your potluck dish.

H Harford. Rocks SP. Join Carol Flora and Randy Robertson for a nice cool walk along the water and over the hills, hoping for good looks at Spotted Sandpiper, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Acadian Flycatcher, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Wood Thrush, vireos, Pine Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and even Orchard Oriole. Meet at the Rocks Crome Hill Rd parking lot at 7 AM. Call Carol at 410-638-8220 for more info.

MOS Calendar (continued from page 21)**Friday-Sunday, July 27-29**

MOS CONFERENCE. This year's state conference will be held at be at Salisbury University, Wicomoco Co.

Saturday, July 28

H Harford. Owl Prowl. If anyone can get the owls out to meet the birders, it is the "King of Calling Owls," Dave Ziolkowski. Head out on a summer evening trip for all you late-sleepers to canvas the county for Great Horned, Eastern Screech, Barred, and Barn Owls at various sites. Meet at C. Milton Wright at 8:15 PM. Call Dave at 443-299-8453 for more info.

Saturday, August 4

H Harford. Butterflies and Dragonflies of Harford Co. Join Rick Cheicante for this very leisurely half-day foray to one of Harford Co's butterfly and dragonfly haunts. Butterflies may include showy swallowtails, monarch, and viceroy as well as diminutive hairstreaks and challenging grass skippers. Odonate hopefuls include common green darner, eastern pondhawk, black saddlebags, and halloween pennant. Call Rick Cheicante, 410-803-2712 for details.

H Montgomery. DE Coastal Areas. Three-quarters day. Joint trip with ANS. Pack a lunch. Meet at 7:30 AM in the Visitor Center parking lot at Bombay Hook NWR. Have breakfast before meeting. (The Hollywood Diner in Dover and the Smyrna Diner in Smyrna, both along Rte 13, are open all night.) Shorebirds, waterbirds, and some songbirds along wood/marsh trail edges. Reservations required. Leader: John Bjerke, 240-401-1643.

Saturday, August 11

HUMMINGBIRD HAPPY HOUR.

Harford. 6 PM. Join Les and Beth Eastman at 4 PM at their gracious home to experience the buzz and flight of dozens of hummingbirds enjoying their many feeders. Participants are invited to bring a dish to share and a beverage of their choice to enjoy in the early dusk.

Contact Les Eastman, 410-734-6969, for more info.

Saturday, August 18

H Harford. Bombay Hook NWR. Join Dennis Kirkwood on a three-quarter day adventure to this birding hotspot for shorebirds and the hottest rarities. Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Stilt Sandpiper, and Wilson's Phalarope possible. Bring sunscreen, insect repellent, and lunch. Scopes helpful, but not necessary. Meet 7 AM at the MD 155 and I-95 P&R. Contact Dennis, 410-692-5905, for further info.

Sunday, August 19

H Harford. Harford Shorebirds. Join experienced shorebirder John Gallo to search for southbound shorebirds such as Semipalmated Plovers and Solitary and Pectoral Sandpipers. Scopes are helpful though not necessary. Meet 8 AM at Swan Harbor. Contact John Gallo, 410-459-0548, for details.

Saturday-Sunday, August 25-26

H Montgomery. Bombay Hook and Nearby Beaches. Joint trip with ANS. This is a terrific time of year to study adult and juvenile shorebirds, with the possibility of a large number of species. Lunch will be in the field both days, dinner at a local restaurant. Make hotel reservations in advance. Bring plenty of water, insect repellent, hat, sunscreen, and snacks. Co-leaders: Frank Witebsky and Cyndie Loeper. Contact Cyndie at 301-530-8226 or cyndieloeper@comcast.net for reservations and meeting time.

Saturday, August 25

H Baltimore. DE Bay. Full-day trip for herons and a wide variety of migrating shorebirds, including avocets. Be prepared for heat and biting insects. Minimal walking involved. Scopes very useful. Bring a lunch. Meet 7 AM at Nursery Rd P&R, I-695 exit 8. Alternatively, meet 9:30 AM at the Bombay Hook Visitor Center lot. Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

H Indicates Field Trip

H Harford. Twilight Canoeing at Eden Mill. Take in a warm summer evening of natural history and easy exercise along one of upper Deer Creek's most scenic stretches. Dave Ziolkowski and natural historian/expert canoeist Frank Marsden interpret the sights, sounds, and smells to make this a multi-sensory experience. Trip meets at 4:30 PM. Space is limited so make reservations beforehand. \$5 fee goes towards club's donation to nature center. Contact Dave Ziolkowski, 443-299-8453, for info and reservations.

Sunday, August 26

PICNIC. **Washington.** Picnic at Washington Monument SP, 4 PM. Bring a dish to share, along with plate, utensils, and drink. Call Anna Hutzell at 301-797-8454 for directions.

A Cautionary Tale

It has always troubled me that I (and others) have a tendency to accept reports from birders we know to be reliable without asking for details. It seems to discriminate against the unknown birder who may be a perfectly astute observer. But what if someone reports a flamingo?

Strangely enough, that happened to me about 20 years ago on a Chincoteague Christmas Count. I was birding the Hook with two novices. I sent them over to Tom's Cove to take a look, while I finished counting the 5,000 or so Yellow-rumped Warblers. Back they came with a report of flamingo, this during a year when the cove was mostly frozen.

I chuckled and walked over to take a look at the bird that could have caused such a mis-identification. (I suspected a partially leucistic Great Blue Heron.) There to my amazement was a flamingo. Assuming it was an escape from a Jersey theme park, I reported it at the tally rally to accompanying laughter. Months later we heard that a Chilean Flamingo was wandering up and down the East Coast; its provenance was unclear.

—John Bjerke
Montgomery County

LESSON IN HAVRE DE GRACE

BY COLLEEN WEBSTER

Mike works at the City Marina. When he showed up at my door at 7 am, exclaiming, “Oh good, you’re home,” I was happy I could bring him such joy for just being in my kitchen. When he explained he had an injured bird, and that it was a Great Blue Heron, I began to worry.

“Where is it?” I asked, mindful that these magnificent waders could kill a man with the strength of their neck and sword-like beak.

“In the back of my truck.”

The poor creature was still in the dock cart it had been transferred to when two fishermen brought it to the marina. I eyed it up. The bird eyed me back. I could see no signs of injury, but Mike assured me his legs seemed badly hurt, bloody. The fishermen had netted him out of the shallows when they realized he was floundering and unable to stand.

I pulled my Jeep next to Mike’s truck. We both kept our heads as far from the dock cart as we could as we lifted it out and fit it snugly in place in the rear of my car. I was going to drive alone with this four-foot, injured, scared, and maybe aggressive bird. I admit, I was wary of that neck, that great beak, but this bird seemed in shock, and my desire to help it outweighed my fear. I also calculated that the distance from the back to my driver-side self was too far to reach as I bumped the bird down the road—to where? Who would accept such a possibly difficult patient?

Several phone calls later, my charge and I were on our way to Fallston Animal Hospital. It was warming into a clear, sunny spring day and I was buoyed by the weather and my Good Samaritan start to the May morning. I kept the radio tuned to music, playing at low volume, dimly recollecting that music calms animals in distress. I wasn’t sure if that held true for birds, but I figured it couldn’t hurt. Whenever we stopped at a light, I turned and spoke softly to my heron, reassuring him he would be all right, that we were almost there. I told him this enough that I eventually began to believe it myself.

The closer I got to the animal hospital, the more sure I was that my blue heron would be fine. He gazed at me with that unwavering focus that large birds can have; this creature had to stare for hours each day into river or bay to find and then catch enough fish to survive. I was in awe of what seemed his careful patience as I drove him in completely unfamiliar surroundings to a place I trusted would help him. Not many veterinarians have certification to work on wild birds, so I was grateful I had found one, even if it meant a half-hour drive. I just hoped my heron wasn’t suffering, that he would live, that I would have a wonderful story to tell at the next Harford Bird Club meeting.

Soon enough I was pulling into a small gravel lot off Route 1. I knew I was going to like the people in this practice when I saw the fenced-in pond for what I assumed were incapacitated waterfowl, rehabilitated and now swimming around in safety. I whispered one more kind promise to my heron and went through the doors to report my bird’s arrival.

A young vet came out with a towel to lift my heron into the examining room. I feared for his safety, and for the possible suffering of the heron, but the vet calmly lifted up the gray-blue, perfectly still creature—perfect all but for the legs: a shredded, broken, bloody mess. They dangled, there is no other way to say that. They had no connection in places, but hung down in ripped strands.

I gasped, and the vet bit down hard. “This bird is not going to make it.”

“No,” I protested weakly, though the logical side of me knew the truth of his words.

Back in the waiting room, I numbly re-evaluated my morning. Nothing good was going to come of this. I would not be visiting my healing heron and eagerly awaiting his return to the Susquehanna. There would be no joyful announcement at the next Bird Club gathering. Instead, I had brought a bird to spend his final hour inside a vehicle and his final minutes in a white room. By the time the young vet reappeared, the spring day no longer looked so sunny.

“That bird was a healthy young male. He had even eaten recently,” he started. “I examined his legs after I put him down and those injuries stump me. Do you know if he landed in some kind of motor?”

“All I know is that fisherman found him in the Susquehanna up near the dam, in shallow water. How could this have happened?”

We talked for another few minutes, neither of us finding an acceptable conclusion as to the source of the bird’s injury. But the waiting room was filling with women holding cats, mothers and children with leashed dogs.

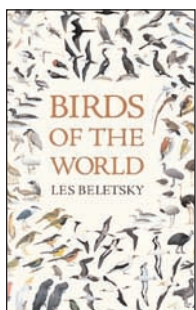
“I should let you get to your day.” I sighed and turned to leave. “I just wish I could have helped that bird to live.”

“We don’t always have that possibility,” he sensibly said, “but that bird would have died a long, slow death, first digesting his meal and then living for days, unable to stand or feed himself. He would have eventually starved. You did save him from that.”

Back in my car and headed home, I made a list of what I needed to rush through to get to school in time to teach my first class: feed dog, feed cats, grab books and coffee. Damn. I had raced around and still had no bird to show for my time. I hated that my efforts had not resulted in saving that heron, although I knew the vet was right. To appropriate a Thomas Lynch poem title, *a good death, even when it kills you*, is better than a horrible death. What I had to accept is that those fishermen, just after dawn, had interrupted their activities to bring a bird into their boat, and then bring their boat into a marina, hoping someone there could help. Mike took in that heron and came to find me, asking for help. We were some kind of chain of trust and hope on behalf of a scared and, although we did not know it, dying creature. Sometimes, giving a bird a peaceful death is the best we can hope for on a spring morning.

BOOK REVIEW

Birds of the World, by Les Beletsky • Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006. 528 pages. \$50.00.



Unless your interest in birds is strictly limited to North America, you'll want to make room on your shelf for this handsome volume. The preface says that the intended audience is "fairly new bird-watchers [who] begin to wonder about birds around the rest of the world." But even experienced birders may have questions about exotic species glimpsed on vacation or admired in photos. *Birds of the World* aims to provide enough information to stimulate

readers to go out and learn more about the diverse families of birds. Think of it as the CliffsNotes version of the vast, still-unfinished *Handbook of the Birds of the World*.

The brief chapters follow a consistent format: introductory comments describing what makes the group distinctive, followed by information on taxonomic classification, distribution, morphology, ecology, behavior, and conservation status. Obviously a 500-page book has limited space to describe and illustrate the world's 200+ families of birds. As a result, some families (e.g., guineafowl and turkeys) share a chapter. There's also a supplemental Q&A on avian diversity, abundance, and geography.

Each attractively laid-out chapter typically consists of two pages of text and one to three pages illustrating representative species within the family (not necessarily the ones mentioned in the text). The mix of original and previously-published artwork—by 11 accomplished contributors—is generally of high quality, although sometimes colors are a bit off, and many birds are oddly posed with feet curled around an invisible twig.

Drawings on the same page are not to scale; tiny captions provide size ranges and other information. There are no distribution maps.

The text is refreshingly lively, packing a lot of information into brief yet readable accounts. This is a book to browse for enjoyment, not a dry reference tome. Author Les Beletsky, ornithologist and series editor of the *Travellers' Wildlife Guides*, injects frequent touches of light humor. Pittas, for instance, are "perennial favorites of bird-watchers, favorite in this case meaning 'highly sought after but rarely spotted.'" On the other hand, he makes a few too many references to LBJs (little brown jobs), and it's arguable that motmots are "saddled with a ridiculous name."

Unfortunately, allotting equal space to each bird family means that some accounts contain frustrating generalities. For example, in the five paragraphs devoted to the family Anatidae (157 species of ducks, geese, and swans) we learn that "in some species male and female look alike, but in others there are differences." To his credit, the author acknowledges up front that this book only "provides the essentials." Birders interested in delving deeper can consult the excellent list of references in the two-page bibliography.

So if you've ever wanted to become better acquainted with babblers, barbets, bee-eaters, bulbuls, or bustards, *Birds of the World* is the place to start. And if you're already quite familiar with those birds, I bet you know someone who'd love to get this book as a gift.

—Janet Millenson
Montgomery Bird Club

POSTMASTER: TIME-DATED MATERIAL—PLEASE EXPEDITE!

LAST CALL

... for **Chapter and Committee annual reports**. Submit them to MOS President Marcia Balestri (mebalestri@comcast.net) by May 15.

... for **Research Proposals**. Applications for grants for ornithological research in the state of Maryland are due by June 1. Notification of awards (generally not exceeding \$2,000) will be made in about 8 weeks. For application guidelines and info, contact Gwen Brewer, glbrewer@comcast.net.

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