

**Irish Grove MOS Sanctuary  
Overnight Stay Regulations and  
Reservation Request Form  
For MOS Members**

- **MOS members** should use this form to request reservations for an **overnight stay of six nights or less** at the Irish Grove Sanctuary House or for tent-camping on the lawn area or overnight stay in the screened picnic area.
- **Overnight stays of more than six nights by MOS members** are permitted only if related to research or a special project. In that case, do not use this form; instead, please contact the [Sanctuary Committee Chair](mailto:sanctuary@mdbirds.org) ([sanctuary@mdbirds.org](mailto:sanctuary@mdbirds.org)).
- **At least one member of any group must be an adult MOS member** for ordinary overnight stays at Irish Grove. By “ordinary,” we mean weekend getaways, family vacations, and casual, personal birding. See #3 below. [Join MOS](#) to take advantage of this privilege.
- **Overnight visits of any length of time by non-MOS members** are permitted only if related to research or a special project. In that case, please contact the [Sanctuary Committee Chair](mailto:sanctuary@mdbirds.org) ([sanctuary@mdbirds.org](mailto:sanctuary@mdbirds.org)).

Before submitting the reservation request form below, please note the following regulations:

1. **Day Visits.** Reservations or advance notification are not required for day visits to Irish Grove. Anyone is welcome to hike the trails but access to the house and indoor bathroom will not be available. There are outdoor latrines available at all times. There is no need to submit the reservation form for day visits.
2. **Reservations to stay overnight at Irish Grove** must be made at least one week in advance.
  - a. Reservation requests are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.
  - b. Reservation requests may be made up to one year in advance.
  - c. Check-in time is 3 pm or later and check-out time is 3 pm or earlier. As long as you vacate the house by 3 pm, you are welcome to stay on the grounds until later in the day.
  - d. The house at Irish Grove is open year-round, but the water is turned off from approximately November 1 through April 1 (exact dates vary from year to year). During the winter, visitors must bring their own water for cooking, cleaning, bathing, and drinking, and cannot use the indoor toilet but instead must use the outdoor latrines. Contact the [Irish Grove Reservations Coordinator](#), for exact dates when the water is turned off and on.
  - e. MOS reserves the right to cancel reservations in the event of circumstances beyond the control of MOS, such as repairs required at the house, power outages, flooding, pandemics, and other such circumstances. In such instances, any fees paid will be returned or can be used as a credit for a future visit on a different date.
  - f. Reservations may be cancelled by the visitor up to two days before the intended stay. A full refund will be issued or the reservation fee can be used as a credit for a

future visit on a different date. The visitor should contact the [Irish Grove Reservations Coordinator](#), to cancel a reservation.

- g. No refunds will be issued if the cancellation occurs less than two days before the intended start date. The reason for this is that MOS will not be able to fill the vacancy and recoup the income on short notice.
3. **MOS Membership Requirement.** At least one person staying overnight at the Irish Grove MOS Sanctuary must be an adult MOS member and that person must agree to be designated as the MOS member in charge. "Adult" means over 18 years old.
  - a. The reservation request form must be completed by the MOS member who will be in charge.
  - b. The MOS member in charge must agree to assume responsibility for the sanctuary rules being followed.
  - c. The MOS member in charge must agree to assume financial responsibility for any damages to the house or premises that are caused by the group.
  - d. Upon confirmation of the reservation, the MOS member who will be in charge will be sent a set of rules for opening the house upon arrival and closing it when you leave. Please follow all rules.
4. **Maximum Capacity:**
  - a. The house will accommodate 14 people for overnight stays. There are 4 double beds and 6 single beds located in four separate bedrooms.
  - b. The maximum number of people in tents on the lawn is 14.
  - c. The combined total of house guests and tent campers must not exceed 28.
5. **Length of Stay.** The maximum length of time for any one MOS member visit is six (6) nights.
  - a. During your stay, you and your group will have exclusive use of the sanctuary house and tent camping area; no other individuals or groups will be permitted to stay overnight.
  - b. If a research or special project involving a prolonged stay by another party will be in progress during the week you wish to visit, it might be possible, if you are willing, for you to share the facilities with the research/special projects group. Such an arrangement might be acceptable but only upon mutual consent of the MOS Sanctuary Manager, Sanctuary Reservations Manager, the researcher/special projects manager, and yourself. The Sanctuary Reservations Manager will facilitate a discussion to see if mutual consent can be achieved.
6. **What to Bring.**
  - a. You must bring your own food and drink items. There is no food or drink stored at the house.
  - b. You must bring your own toiletries (soap, shampoo, etc.) and personal items such as sunscreen and tick repellent. Most people need insect repellent at Irish Grove except in winter. Head nets or full net suits may be advisable at Irish Grove.
  - c. You must bring your own bedding and linens. Bedding (blankets, sheets, pillows) and towels are not provided.
  - d. Other items to bring for your own use include hand soap, dishwashing liquid, paper towels, toilet paper, and trash bags.
  - e. You may also wish to bring paper plates and cups; this is optional. The house is provided with basic dishware, silverware, and pots and pans.
  - f. You must bring disinfectant wipes such as Chlorox, Lysol or alcohol wipes containing at least 70% alcohol. You will be responsible for wiping down all surfaces with disinfectant when you leave.

7. **Indoor plumbing use.** As mentioned in #2.d above, the water in the house is turned off during the winter. Even when the water is turned on from spring through fall, we encourage visitors to use the outdoor latrines in order to conserve water (the house is on a well) and to spare the septic system.
8. **Camping.** Tent camping is allowed only on the lawn in the immediate vicinity of the house. It is also permissible to sleep in the screened enclosure. Campers will be provided with access to use the indoor bathrooms and outdoor shower. "Back country" camping in the fields or woods is not permitted, in order to protect vegetation.
9. **Fires and Firewood.** If you plan to use the fireplace in the house or have an outdoor campfire in the stone campfire ring, you may gather downed wood from the surrounding woods.
  - a. Cutting of standing trees, even dead ones, is forbidden. Dead trees provide valuable habitat for birds and other wildlife.
  - b. In order to prevent the spread of insects such as Emerald Ash Borer, **do not bring firewood from elsewhere onto the sanctuary grounds.**
  - c. The utmost care must be taken to manage any fire safely, whether outdoors or indoors.
10. **No smoking.** Smoking is not allowed in the house or on the porch or in the screened enclosure. Smoking is discouraged on the grounds because of the fire hazard with our fields and woods. If you must smoke, please move far away from the house and other buildings and take extreme care when discarding the butts. The best practice would be to bring a flame-proof can with you for the butts and ashes and take it with you when you leave.
11. **Pets.**
  - a. Pets are not permitted inside the Sanctuary House. MOS understands that visitors love their pets and that dogs will likely be house-trained, but in consideration of possible damage to the house, the introduction of fleas or other parasites, and the exposure of other house-guests to pet allergens, the MOS Sanctuary Committee has decided to not allow pets inside the house.
    - i. Exception: In accordance with ADA requirements, service animals assisting a person with a disability are allowed in the house.
    - ii. "Emotional support animals" are not covered under ADA and are not allowed in the house.
  - b. Pets are allowed on the outside grounds; however, MOS does not provide a place for overnight house guests to safely keep their pets outside during the night. Therefore, MOS recommends that overnight visitors should not bring pets to the sanctuary.
  - c. Pets are welcome on day-visits.
  - d. Any pets on sanctuary grounds must be kept on a leash at all times and you must clean up after your pet. Pet waste must be taken with you when you leave.
12. **Wheelchair accessibility.** The house at Irish Grove and its outdoor latrines and screened enclosure are not wheelchair-accessible, and there is no paved handicapped parking available. Parking is on a grass lawn that is uneven and may be muddy. The trails at Irish Grove are also not wheelchair accessible; they are natural surface, have holes, and may be muddy or under water. In good weather, Rumbly Point Road and some of the sanctuary trails may be driven in a vehicle, but they are generally too soft to accommodate a wheelchair. Consult the trail map available at <https://birdersguidemddc.org/site/irish-grove-mos-sanctuary/>.
13. **Hazards.** Apart from trail-related hazards such as natural surfaces, holes, and submerged portions, visitors should be aware that ticks, chiggers, and other biting insects may be

present. Snakes are also present at the Sanctuary and may be encountered anywhere, even near the house. The only venomous snake species that occurs at Irish Grove is the Eastern Copperhead; there may also be Eastern Hog-nosed Snakes, which have mildly toxic saliva. Be aware and alert. Other snakes at Irish Grove are harmless and include Common Watersnake, Common Gartersnake, Black Rat Snake, and others. Water Moccasins do not occur anywhere in Maryland.

14. **Leave No Trace.** [Leave No Trace](#) principles apply throughout the sanctuary. See the link for more details but in general it means that there should be no evidence that you were there.
15. **Collecting of biological specimens.** Certain collecting activities require permission, and you must complete and submit the form “Request to Conduct Research or Special Project at an MOS Sanctuary.” These activities include:
  - a. Collection of specimens of any flora and/or fauna. In addition to permission from MOS, an applicable permit from MD DNR or USFWS may also be needed.
  - b. Bird netting and/or banding. In addition to permission from MOS, an applicable permit from USFWS or USGS may also be needed.
  - c. Live-trapping of mammals on the outdoor grounds, even if released. In addition to permission from MOS, an applicable permit from MD DNR or USFWS may be needed.
  - d. It is your responsibility to know what permits are required for your intended activity.
  - e. The following activities DO NOT REQUIRE permission from MOS (no need to submit the research/special project application):
    - i. Catch-and-release of insects, arachnids, amphibians and reptiles (e.g., dragonflies, butterflies, moths, snakes, frogs, salamanders, etc.). Trapped animals should be held for only the shortest time necessary, for example to allow photography and/or identification, and must be released unharmed and in good condition.
    - ii. Photography of plants *in situ* or of free-living animals does not require a research application.
16. **Sharing of photos and submission of species reports.**
  - a. We would appreciate sharing of photos to the MOS Facebook page, with identification of the species, date, location, and name of photographer.
  - b. Submission of reports to eBird, iNaturalist, eButterfly, Odonata Central, or other such citizen science public databases is highly encouraged.
    - i. The Irish Grove eBird hotspot is at <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L450231> and there is a separate hotspot for Rumbly Point at <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L467271>.
17. **Recreational fishing and crabbing** is permitted. An appropriate [fishing or crabbing license](#) is required for all those over the age of 16 and all [applicable state fishing and crabbing regulations](#) must be followed.
  - a. Commercial fishing, crabbing, oystering, or clamming is prohibited.
  - b. Note that the oyster beds formerly in existence at Irish Grove have not been active for some years.
18. **Prohibitions.**
  - a. Use of weapons, drugs, and ATVs or other off-road vehicles is not allowed.
  - b. Campfires are allowed only in the existing stone campfire ring. No fires elsewhere.

- c. Hunting and trapping are prohibited, with the exception of specific management programs approved in advance by the MOS Board of Directors. Such programs generally require a separate legal agreement or contract.
- d. No littering or dumping.
- e. In accordance with Maryland state law, balloons may not be released.
- f. Pigeons, doves, and other living animals may not be released.
  - i. Exception: Release of birds and other animals by licensed wildlife rehabilitators or state or federal personnel may be permitted upon advance request. Address such inquiries to the [MOS Sanctuary Committee Chairperson](#).

19. **Upon leaving:**

- a. DO NOT LEAVE ANY FOOD BEHIND when you leave.
- b. Take all your garbage, trash, and pet waste with you. Do not leave it in the wood stove or fireplaces or anywhere else in the house or outdoors.
- c. Do not remove any of the dishware, silverware, and pots and pans from the sanctuary house kitchen, or any other furnishings of the house including furniture, books, and decorative items.
- d. Please leave a note describing your stay in the sanctuary log book (found in the back parlor).
- e. Each group is responsible for leaving the sanctuary house clean and orderly.
- f. Please vacuum throughout the house.
- g. Please clean countertops and kitchen table.
- h. As a last step before you vacate the house, you are required to wipe down all kitchen and bathroom surfaces with disinfectant wipes.
- i. Close and lock the house in accordance with the Check-out Procedures that will be provided with confirmation of your reservation.

20. **Penalties.** Those found to violate any of the rules and regulations provided herein may have their sanctuary visit privileges revoked, temporarily or permanently, depending on the infraction. Financial penalties may be assessed for physical damage to MOS property or equipment. In cases of severe infractions that violate county, state, or federal laws, law enforcement will be notified.

### Fees

- Overnight stays at Irish Grove are a flat rate of **\$25 per night**, regardless of the number of visitors.
- **Additional donations** are always appreciated and help to maintain the MOS Sanctuaries.

We encourage payment of sanctuary fees through our online payment form. Payment is not required at the time of requesting a reservation, but is required before you arrive; the Sanctuary Reservations Coordinator will provide a link to the payment form upon confirmation of your reservation. Please wait until your reservation has been confirmed before submitting payment. Please submit payment prior to your arrival.

If not able to pay online, you may send a check, made payable to the Maryland Ornithological Society, to the [Sanctuary Reservations Coordinator](#). If you want to pay by check, please let Pat know, and she will provide her mailing address to you.