

President's Corner

Come Out and Play!

by Janet Millenson

Ask MOS members how far they travel to look at birds and you'll get answers ranging from "across the room" to "around the world." Whether you're planning a trip to Columbia in Howard County or Colombia in South America, you can bet there's someone in the Society who'll recommend the best spots to visit. Yet people who happily go birding in Attu or Australia can be surprisingly shy about joining a field trip to an unfamiliar part of Maryland.

Remember, your local bird club is a chapter within a statewide organization. Flip to the back pages of this newsletter and you'll see dozens of upcoming activities open to all MOS members. Because Maryland is blessed with an exceptional variety of habitats in a relatively small space, you can often scratch your personal birding itch without leaving the state. Carpool with a birding buddy and explore somewhere new—I promise the natives are friendly!

Our new Statewide Educational Activities Committee, chaired by Mike Bowen, is

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The Maryland Yellowthroat

Newsletter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

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CACKLING GOOSE: A NEW SPECIES FOR MARYLAND

In the 45th Supplement to the *Checklist of North American Birds* (2004), the AOU split the small-bodied "Cackling Goose" from the large-bodied "Canada Goose" into two separate and distinct species. From DNA studies, the AOU concludes that these two species are more closely related to other species of *Branta* geese than they are to each other. The AOU follows the Delacour (1956) treatment of the former Canada Goose subspecies and separates the newly defined species into the following taxa:

Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsi*) (the "small-bodied forms") includes the following Delacour Canada Goose subspecies:

Taverner's Cackling Goose (*B. h. taverneri*)
Vancouver Cackling Goose (*B. h. fulva*)
Dusky Cackling Goose (*B. h. occidentalis*)
Aleutian Cackling Goose (*B. h. leucopareia*)
Bering Cackling Goose (*B. h. asiatica*) [extinct]
Cackling Cackling Goose (*B. h. minima*)
Richardson's Cackling Goose (*B. h. hutchinsi*)

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) (the "large-bodied forms") includes the following Delacour Canada Goose subspecies:

Atlantic Canada Goose (*B. c. canadensis*)
Todd's Canada Goose (*B. c. interior*)
Giant Canada Goose (*B. c. maxima*)
Moffitt's Canada Goose (*B. c. moffitti*)
Lesser Canada Goose (*B. c. parvipes*)

The 45th AOU Supplement also reordered the *Branta* geese. In taxonomic order, Cackling Goose precedes Canada Goose. The complete new *Branta* order is now:

Brant
Barnacle Goose
Cackling Goose
Canada Goose
Hawaiian Goose

There are some issues associated with the naming and identification of these new taxa; however, that discussion is beyond the scope of this brief note. The AOU also telegraphed that additional splits in this Cackling/Canada Goose complex may be forthcoming.

The "Richardson's" form of the Cackling Goose (*B. h. h.*) is, however, a common winter visitor to Maryland. Its winter range includes Mexico, the Gulf Coast, and the Atlantic Coast south to South Carolina.

Because of relative size differences of the various species and subspecies in this complex, as well as the possibility of hybridization, small size alone is not sufficient to identify a Cackling Goose. Local birders should look for the distinctive field marks that separate Cackling from Canada Geese. In addition to smaller size, these include bill shape (short and stubby), head shape (flat, almost square), and neck length (short). Some field guides, such as *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, depict Richardson's Goose along with the *minima* form (the latter shown as "Cackling" on his Canada Goose plate).

(Cackling Goose continues on page 3)

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

planning even more outings, workshops, and programs for 2005 to tempt you out of your home territory. Maybe you'd like to return to an area you first birded at an MOS annual conference, or you've always wanted to learn more about shorebirds, or you're curious about our sanctuaries. I encourage you to take advantage of the state's natural resources and the Society's knowledgeable members.

Now for a seasonal note. As you read this, fall migration is ending, trees are turning bare, and Christmas Bird Count compilers are emerging from their cocoons and starting their hunt for participants. If you've never been on a Christmas Count, let this be the year you try it. (See schedule on page 5.) You don't have to be an expert to join in. Contribute to science as you make new friendships, enjoy a day of intensive birding, and work off those fruitcake calories in the fresh air. Your help will be welcomed.



DNR Reports... by Glen Therres

The development of Maryland's first Wildlife Diversity Conservation Plan is well under way. The purpose is to identify the wildlife species of greatest conservation need, their key habitats, and the conservation actions necessary to sustain them in Maryland over the next 10 years. The plan will be completed by October 2005.

The first step in the process was to identify the species of greatest conservation need. That has been completed and the list of more than 500 species is posted on our website (www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/wldivplan). The list contains 136 species of birds. These include threatened and endangered species, colonial waterbirds, marshbirds, forest interior breeding birds, and high-priority Partners in Flight species.

The next step in the process was to identify the key habitats utilized by all 500-plus species of greatest conservation need. Since we need to map these habitats statewide and develop conservation actions for them, we decided to consolidate the habitats into 28 general types. This macro approach is much more manageable and appropriate at the statewide scale than a very detailed micro approach.

The proposed key habitats are as follows:

- Coastal beaches, dunes, and mudflats
- Maritime forests and shrublands
- Tidal marshes
- Tidal shrub wetlands
- Tidal forested wetlands
- Nontidal emergent wetlands
- Nontidal shrub wetlands
- Bog and fen wetland complexes
- Upland depressional wetlands
- Seepage wetland complexes
- Floodplain forests
- Northern conifer forests
- Northern hardwood forests
- Basic forests
- Dry acidic forests
- Old growth forests
- Early successional forests
- Barrens and glades
- Grasslands
- Rock outcrops, cliffs and bluffs
- Caves, mines and springs
- Marine open water
- Estuarine open water
- Fresh tidal large streams and rivers
- Freshwater medium to large rivers
- Freshwater large streams and small streams
- Freshwater headwater streams

We are now developing descriptions of these key habitats and compiling lists of the species of greatest conservation need associated with each of them. In addition, threats to these key habitats will be identified. In January, we will convene a public workshop to solicit input on the conservation actions needed for these key habitats. We will post an announcement concerning this workshop in late 2004. Your input is welcomed!

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

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Anyone is welcome to contribute articles or ideas that would be of interest to other birders. Copy may be mailed or e-mailed to Lydia Schindler by November 25, 2004 for the January/February 2005 issue.

*Illustrations on pages 1, 13, 14 and 19
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CHANGES IN WILD TURKEY DISTRIBUTION SINCE ATLAS I

BY WALTER G. ELLISON

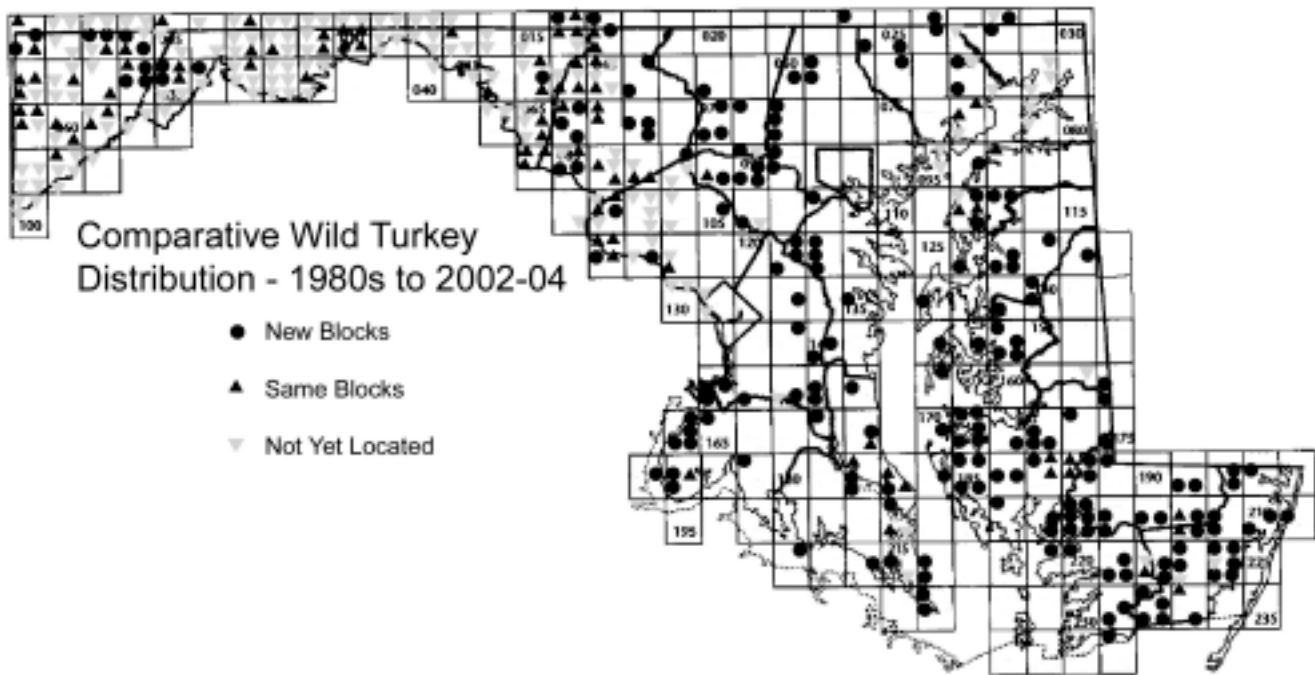
This map displays the apparent changes in distribution of the Wild Turkey between the two Maryland/D.C. atlas projects by combining data from both of them.

Triangles represent the turkey's 1983-1987 Maryland/D.C. breeding range:

- ▲ **Right-side-up dark triangles** show where the symbol of Thanksgiving has been seen in both projects;
- ▼ **Upside-down pale triangles** show where turkeys were found in the 1980s but have yet to be reported online by 2002-2004 atlas observers.

- **Circles** show blocks where Wild Turkeys were not found in the first atlas but have been found in 2002-2004.

As the map illustrates, most blocks that have "lost" turkeys are in western Maryland; it is likely that most of these blocks still host turkeys but need more searching. On the other hand, turkeys have clearly enjoyed a dramatic increase over the years in eastern and southern Maryland. Turkeys, in spite of their large size, are shy and prefer forest to open places, making them hard to find during brief visits to the block. Atlassers should make an effort to talk to landowners in their blocks to find out if they know of any local turkey flocks.



Cackling Goose (continued from page 1)

Also, since the AOU has announced the possibility of future splits, observers should attempt to separate and identify observed Cackling Goose forms. Besides the more expected "Richardson's" Cackling Goose, other forms could theoretically be found in the local area, including the even smaller and darker *minima* form.

The MD/DC Records Committee is evaluating previous Maryland reports and museum specimens related to this split, and expects to make any appropriate changes to the Official List of the Birds of Maryland before the end of 2004. No reviewable reports of Cackling Goose for the District of Columbia have yet been located. Watch the MD/DC Records Committee web pages

(<http://www.mdbirds.org/mddcrc/rcindex.html>) or the *MDOsprey* listserv for updates.

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Don Simonson says that Cackling Geese are the ones you'll find on Miniature Golf Courses.

GOLDEN EAGLES AT BLACKWATER AND ENVIRONS

Four or more Golden Eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) have spent at least part of the last several winters at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge and surrounding Dorchester County. I have seen Golden Eagles over an area of more than 60 square miles, from the intersection of Buttons Neck Road and Route 16 on the northwest, Hip Roof Road on the southwest, the intersection of Ravenwood and New Bridge Roads on the northeast, and Steele's Neck Road between Lecompte WMA and Drawbridge on the southeast. Within this area, certain refuge and private properties are favored by eagles, e.g., the Wildlife Drive/Hog Range area to the west and the vicinity of Tudor Farms farther east.

I try to ascertain a minimum number of Golden Eagles present in a winter season (actually mid-November through early April) by noting the age class (adult, subadult, or immature) and, if possible, idiosyncratic plumage characteristics of each individual seen. For example, an observation of two adults together in one place at the same time obviously compels the conclusion that two Golden Eagles were present for at least part of the winter. If an immature (hatch year) bird with large white wing patches is seen that same winter, the minimum count rises to three. If another hatch year bird without white in the wings is seen later the same season, the minimum count rises to four. I do not raise the minimum tally based on a new observation of an eagle that is indistinguishable in plumage pattern from one already counted (e.g., most adults, which usually appear almost uniformly dark), even if I have the subjective impression based on size that both sexes are present. Occasionally, individual differences (e.g., one bird missing a flight feather) permit discrimination between otherwise similar birds. (See table at right.)

Golden Eagle counts from eastern hawkwatches over the past two or three decades suggest an increasing population. A similar "trend" in the accompanying data is at least in part an artifact of increased observer effort, especially in the years 1996-97 and thereafter.

The presence of adults and subadults suggests that Golden Eagles return to winter around Blackwater NWR in successive years. An adult female, distinguishable based on a combination of appearance, behavior, and favorite haunts, was present in each of the winters 1997-98, 1998-99, and 1999-2000, probably was present in the winter 2000-01, and perhaps is present this winter (2003-04) as well.

In some years I have seen a Golden Eagle week after week in or near the same field. Golden Eagles range widely over Dorchester County, however, as evidenced by repeat observations of distinctively marked birds at points several miles apart. I see some birds only once or twice all season. For example, I saw an immature with a missing primary feather on 28 December, 2002. This bird was not reported again until Harry Armistead saw it on 9 March, 2003, more than

GOLDEN EAGLES IN BLACKWATER AREA

Abbreviations in the table are as follows: "a"—adult; "i"—immature (hatch year bird); "s (1½)"—subadult that is one and a half years old; and "s (2½)"—subadult that is two and a half years old. I have not been able to distinguish subadult birds older than two and a half years from adults (birds older than five years), so the "adult" cohort probably includes a few older subadult birds.

<u>Winter</u>	<u>Golden Eagles Present</u>
1986-87	3 (2 a and 1 i, all together on 7 February 1987; possibly a family group)
1987-88	2 (1 a, 1 i)
1988-89	2 (1 a, 1 i)
1989-90	3 (1 a, 2 i)
1990-91	4 (2 a, 2 i)
1991-92	4 (2 a, 2 i; one of the immatures was picked up at Blackwater in late November 1991 and spent the winter at a rehabilitator; at least one other immature was seen at Blackwater in December 1991 and January and February 1992).
1992-93	2 (1 a, 1 i)
1993-94	1
1994-95	2 (1 a, 1 i)
1995-96	4 (1 a, 1 s (1½), 2 i)
1996-97	5 (2 a, 3 i)
1997-98	4 (2 a, 2 i)
1998-99	5 (1 a, 1 s (1½), 3 i)
1999-2000	4 (2 a, 1 s (1½), 1 i)
2000-01	4 (2 a, 1 s (1½), 1 i)
2001-02	5 (2 a, 3 i)
2002-03	7 (2 a, 1 s (1½), 1 s (2½), 3 i)
2003-04	5 (2 a, 1 s (1½), 2 i)

two months later. Probably at least some Golden Eagles that visit Blackwater range over a wider area on the Delmarva Peninsula than the immediate vicinity of the refuge.

LOOKING FOR GOLDEN EAGLES

Finding Golden Eagles in the Blackwater area is a matter of effort and, on any given day, also a matter of luck. There is a lot of sky and countryside for 4 or 5 Golden Eagles to hide in. By way of comparison, refuge personnel estimate that more than 200 Bald Eagles winter in and around Blackwater (*USA Today*, November 30, 2001, p. 3D), suggesting that birders can expect to see 40 Bald Eagles for every Golden seen. Recent results of the NWF Mid Winter Eagle Survey suggest that the ratio of Bald to Golden Eagles is even higher.

“Golden Eagles are always present November through March, but there is no sure location. Simply do a lot of scanning and identify every large raptor.” (Henry T. Armistead, “Maryland’s Everglades,” *Birding*, April 1999.) Cold, sunny, windy days are best, as they are conducive to

the formation of thermals and deflection updrafts that enable eagles to soar and glide without effort. Bald and Golden Eagles and Turkey Vultures join each other in thermals, so every bird in a group should be checked.

Golden Eagles hunt waterfowl and nutria in impoundments and fields. Periodically waterfowl panic and take to the air. These situations should be carefully glassed since the cause may be an eagle that is still in view. Ducks and Snow Geese panic at the close approach of both Bald and Golden Eagles. When Canada Geese suddenly rise in a clamoring mass, the odds are good that they were put up by a golden.

Away from the water Golden Eagles hunt Gray and Fox Squirrels and Wild Turkeys along the edges of woods and farm fields. On windy days Golden Eagles sometimes can be seen just above treeline on the windward face of a woodlot. The eagles exploit wind deflected upward off the trees, kiting and gliding slowly upwind, searching for prey.

—Gregory A. Inskip

THE 105TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Birders of all levels are encouraged to participate in one or many of the 2004-2005 Christmas Bird Counts. Data collected on all birds seen or heard in the count circle will be submitted to the National Audubon Society for nationwide publication (\$5 donation per person requested to help defray costs).

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18

Allegheny Co CBC

Call J.B. Churchill at 301-689-8344 (jchurchi@wvu.edu) for area assignment. Tally will be at the Frostburg United Methodist Church Social Hall, 48 W. Main St. at 7 PM. Bring a covered dish to share.

Baltimore Harbor CBC

For area assignment call compiler Pete Webb, 410-486-1217. Tally at Gene Scarpulla’s house.

Denton CBC

Caroline. Contact coordinator Steve Westre, 410-479-0338 for info.

Oakland CBC

Contact Garrett Co compiler Connie Skipper at 301-387-5227 or conieskipper@hohnet.com

Triadelphia CBC

Contact compiler Jay Jones, 301-670-0516. Novices and experienced birders welcome. Tally follows catered buffet at Meadowside Nature Center on Muncaster Mill Rd, Derwood.

Washington, DC CBC

Contact Audubon Naturalist Society, 301-652-9188, during normal business hours for details. Compiler will be Larry Cartwright assisted by John Bjerke.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19

Catoctin CBC #55

Frederick. Call Mike Welch, 301-874-5828 to participate. All eyes and ears needed. Tally Rally at the Smyles’. Call Gary Smyle, 301-663-0055, for directions.

Cecil CBC

Compiler: Laura Balascio, 302-456-0914.

Jug Bay CBC

Contact compiler Sam Droege, 301-497-5840.

Kent CBC

For assignment, contact compiler Paul Tolson, 410-778-4123. Full day followed by countdown at the Library.

Port Tobacco CBC Contact compiler Gwen Brewer, 301-843-3524

Salisbury CBC

Tri-County. Compiler: Sam Dyke, 410-742-5497.

Seneca CBC

Montgomery. Compiler TBA.

St. Michaels CBC

Talbot. 7 AM. Compilers: Bill Novak, Frank Lawlor, Wayne Bell, 410-820-6002. Compilation dinner at Christ Church, St. Michaels.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26

Loudoun Co, VA CBC (including about 5 miles of the C&O Canal in Maryland at White’s Ferry).

Contact Joe Coleman (540-554-2542 or jandkcoleman@erols.com) to register and receive additional information.

Blackwater NWR/Southern Dorchester Co CBC

Contact compiler Chan Robbins, 301-725-1176.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 27

Crisfield CBC. Contact Charles Vaughn, essc@comcast.net

Point Lookout CBC

Contact compiler Bob Boxwell, 410-610-5124, bobboxwell@hotmail.com, by Dec 20. Food provided for Tally Rally in Dameron.

Rock Run CBC

Harford. Contact Jean Wheeler, 410-879-7424, to participate.

Washington Co CBC

Contact compiler Dave Weesner, 301-432-7718, to participate.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 28

Ocean City CBC

Contact compiler Jay Sheppard, 301-725-5559 or jmsheppar@aol.com

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31

Bowie CBC Contact compiler Fred Fallon, 301-249-1518.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 1

Annapolis/Gibson Island CBC Anne Arundel. Full day. Bring lunch. For details, call coordinators Sue Ricciardi, 410-647-9513 or Lynn Davidson and Hal Wierenga, 410-647-7439.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2

Fort Belvoir, VA, CBC

Compiler: Kurt Gaskill (kurtcapt87@aol.com, 703-768-2172); MD-side compiler: Carol Ghebelian (gheb@bellatlantic.net, 301-753-6754)

Patuxent River CBC

Contact for Calvert Co side is Andy Brown, 410-535-5327 (w) and contact for St. Mary’s Co side is Doug Lister, 301-342-3670 (w) or before 9 PM 301-994-2582 (h).

Sugarloaf Mt CBC

(20th Annual) Montgomery Co compiler Janet Millenson, 301-983-9337; Frederick Co compiler Helen Horrocks, 301-831-6315.

The Conservation Connection

By Richard J. Dolesh



BIRDERS AND THE FATE OF MARYLAND'S LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Maryland's birders may have had it too good for too long. Consider this: Maryland has had one of the most innovative, forward-looking, and well-funded land conservation programs in the nation. For more than 35 years, Program Open Space, the flagship of Maryland's land conservation program, has been preserving the most critical and important habitats in Maryland, as well as providing funds for parks, recreation facilities, and a number of Chesapeake Bay protection initiatives.

Best of all, Maryland funds this world-class land conservation system with a tiny tax on the sale of real estate, elegantly paying-as-we-go. As real estate is bought, sold, and developed throughout the state, the one-half of one percent state real estate transfer tax reliably produces what has been, and could continue to be, an adequate stream of revenue to purchase critical open space and to provide matching funds for parks and local recreation facility development, not to mention GreenPrint, Heritage Conservation, Rural Legacy, and the lion's share of the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF).

Maryland is now blessed with an abundance of public land, and many critical bird and wildlife habitats have been protected. In fact, few birders would remember the last time a major habitat area was lost because the state could not act in time to preserve it. But that is exactly the point—we have come to take it for granted. Why should we worry that it won't continue?

The truth is that Maryland's land conservation successes are rapidly becoming a thing of the past. Just as surely as if someone had thrown sand into the gears of a precision engine, the state's land conservation programs are grinding inexorably to a halt.

In the past two years, virtually all funding for Program Open Space and its allied land conservation programs has disappeared down the black hole of the state's spiraling budget deficits. Fully 93% of the transfer tax revenue, which by law should go to fund open space programs, was siphoned off into the general fund. While some of the diverted pay-go funds were replaced with bond funding, this was only slightly more than a quarter of what it should have been.

Why should birders care?

Some people say we have more than enough open space already. After all, the original goal of POS was to protect 10% of the state in open space. A number of local jurisdictions have already met and exceeded that goal. Some say, hey, after all, we have acquired more than 350,000 acres with hundreds of thousands more protected. Isn't that enough? After more than 35 years, you should have bought all the land you consider important.

So, really, why should birders care?

Birders should care because we have a vital interest in the protection of birds and bird habitat. The Audubon Society's 2004 State of the Birds report states, "Data compiled from 1996 to 2003 show that all habitats have species with significantly decreasing populations, although the high proportion in grasslands and shrublands is especially alarming." Do you like to bird in grasslands? Do you think Maryland's grassland habitats are being increased? Think again. How about woodlands? Think Maryland's forests aren't being fragmented and eaten up by second home development and leaping exurbanization? Do you love to catch a glimpse of the Cerulean Warbler? Look fast before it's gone. How about the Short-eared Owl? Perhaps you love the song of the Wood Thrush or the Bobwhite—listen carefully to all, because they may be going as well.

You may think that most wetlands are going to stay wetlands, whether or not they are owned or protected by the government, but that's not exactly true. Wetlands are being lost and degraded across the state. More than 75% of Maryland's forests are in private ownership, and woodland owners have few incentives to keep their lands in forest cover in the face of leap-frogging real estate values and declining timber markets.

As you bird the amazingly diverse and rich ecosystems of our fair state, you may have noticed that many of the places you loved are disappearing before your eyes. Program Open Space (and its associated land conservation programs) has been the one consistently reliable program that has protected these places in perpetuity.

The capacity of Maryland to plan prudently and act responsibly to acquire or protect critical natural habitats is now virtually nonexistent. With the continued bleeding of transfer tax revenues into the general fund, the state is losing its ability to respond to threats, challenges, or just plain opportunities (such as the one-time-only acquisitions of 58,000 acres of the Chesapeake Forest on the Eastern Shore or the Glatfelter timber lands in western Maryland).

Worse, the historic link between the transfer tax and land conservation may be irreparably severed. The present

Administration's continued diversion of the transfer tax revenue, abetted by the Legislature, with no real commitment to restore funding once the fiscal crisis eases, means that the Executive Branch's once staunch support for land conservation as a state policy that is prudent, sensible, and economically sustainable for Maryland's future may be sacrificed for expediency. The landmark programs that Marylanders take such pride in may be gone for the foreseeable future, if not forever.

The conservation of birds and bird habitat is central to MOS's mission and existence. Birders of Maryland need to heed the warning, just as they did over five decades ago when the prospect of a Silent Spring was very real. The loss of our bird habitat and the inability to protect it in the future should sound a clarion call to all MOS members.

What can you do? Three simple things: First, write, call, or e-mail your State Senator or Delegate and ask them to support restoration of funds to Program Open Space in this budget year. Second, let the Governor know how important Program Open Space has been to your community and to your state. Third, learn more about Partners for Open Space, a coalition of about a dozen Maryland conservation and recreation groups including the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Nature Conservancy, the Trust for Public Land, the Maryland Recreation and Park Association, and our own MOS, just to name a few. Check out what they are doing to be effective advocates for all of Maryland's land conservation programs. One source is the web site of the Maryland Environmental Trust's Land Conservation Center: <http://www.conservemd.org/resources/>.

BOARD BULLETINS

Motions passed at the September 11 State Board Meeting:

- Janet Millenson presented a motion to reappoint Committees and their Chairs.
- Janet Shields received Board approval to schedule the 2006 conference at Rocky Gap with the Baltimore Marriott at Hunt Valley as a backup.
- The Board approved a variety of changes, per discussion, to the Manual of Operations, while deferring a vote on several other changes.
- John Malcolm got approval to sell, at a substantial discount, all logo shop merchandise at the next Conference.

Appointments:

Tom Strikwerda, Scholarship Chair; Don Messersmith, Historian; Mike Bowen, State Educational Activities; Paul Zucker, Long-range Planning Chair; Gail Mackiernan, representative (along with Paul Zucker) to the American Bird Conservancy.

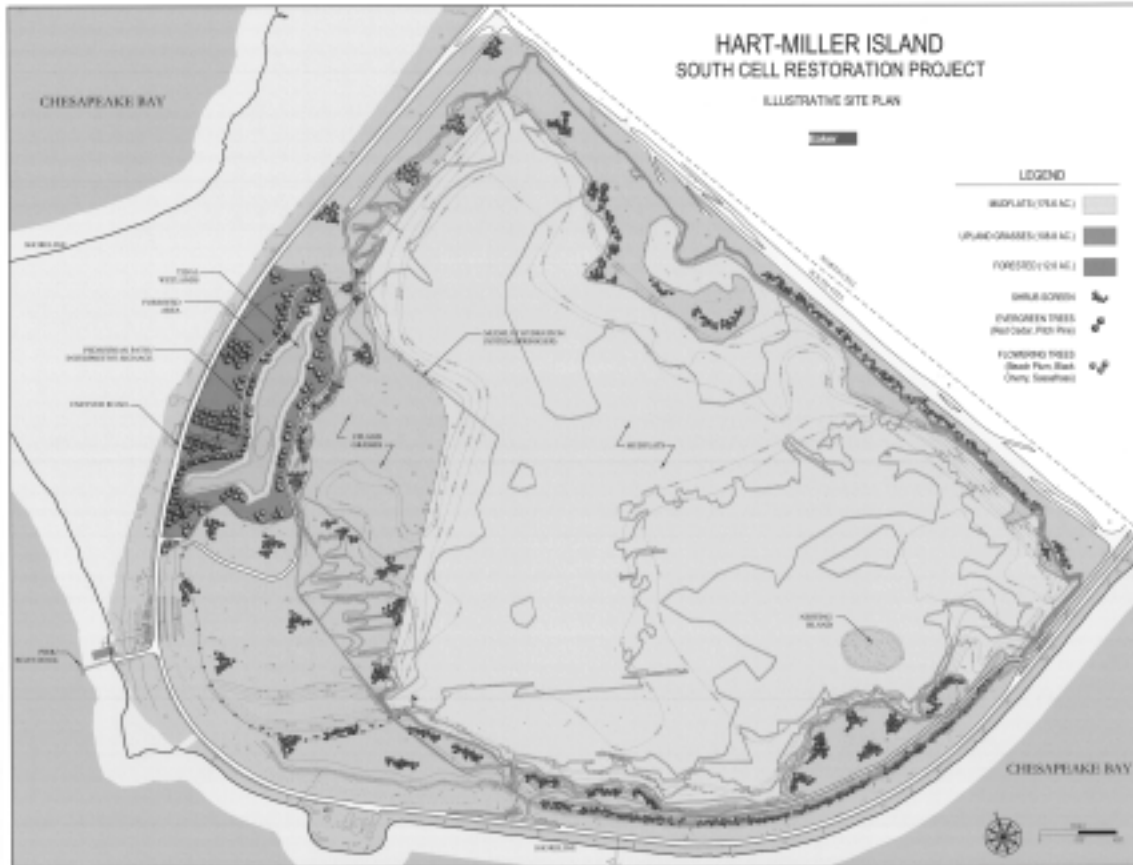
Announcements:

- The State of Maryland has approved new grants of \$40,000-\$50,000 for the Atlas.
- John Malcolm stands ready to prepare awards and plaques for Chapters.
- The Annual Conference now rests in the hands of a Standing Committee, chaired by Janet Shields, with auxiliary help from the local host chapter. The 2005 Conference is scheduled for Solomons, Calvert Co.
- *Maryland Birdlife* is getting back on schedule, with a 2000 issue delivered and a 2001 issue slated to appear before the end of this year; Bob Ringler expects it to be fully caught up by 2006.

Action Items:

- Each chapter should provide an e-mail contact for the web page.
- Chapters should recruit volunteers to lead field trips at 2005 conference and send names to Peter Hanan at peter.hanan@comcast.net.
- Each chapters needs to nominate representatives to Conservation, Sanctuary, and Scholarship Committees.
- Chapters should should raise the possibility of a central headquarters with their membership and get feedback for the Board. Janet Millenson will appoint a Task Force to look into the issue.
- Chapter treasurers will be asked their opinion of a plan for treasurers to send both checks and lists of member information to the State Treasurer. If comment is favorable, this plan will be implemented; otherwise, the issue will be brought to the board for further discussion.
- Sanctuary Committee will look into using local volunteer groups to help with sanctuary projects.
- Maureen Harvey will continue to review the American Bird Conservancy policy on wind power and recommend what MOS policy should be at the next board meeting.
- Long-range Planning, Executive Council, Research and other fund-based committees are to discuss the issue of unspent budgeted funds and work together to propose updates to Manual of Operations for next meeting.
- The Executive Council is to reevaluate the evolving role of the Executive Secretary.
- Board positions to be filled: Development, Liaison: Environmental Fund of MD, Membership, Publicity Coordinator, Sanctuary, Youth Programs.

HART-MILLER ISLAND: SOUTH CELL ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION NEARS COMPLETION



Background: Located in the open waters of the northern Chesapeake Bay in Baltimore County, Hart-Miller Island has been taking shape since 1981, when Hart Island and Miller Island were joined and designated as the authorized placement site for dredged material removed from the Federal navigation project serving the Port of Baltimore.

Hart-Miller Island is made up of two parts: Hart-Miller Island State Park and Hart-Miller Island Dredged Material Containment Facility. The State Park incorporates most of the original Hart and Miller Islands. Here the State has constructed a sandy beach, campsites, and a boardwalk that leads to a visitors contact center, restrooms, and an observation tower. The Dredged Material Containment Facility is divided into two cells, the 800-acre North Cell and the 300-acre South Cell.

In 1991, the State of Maryland closed the South Cell to further placement of dredged material. (The North Cell will

continue to receive dredged material through 2009.) Through the cooperation of Federal and state agencies and citizen's groups, and relying heavily on data collected through weekly monitoring of the island by MOS members, the South Cell is being developed as migratory bird habitat: approximately 180 acres of wetlands and mudflats for migrating shorebirds and wintering waterfowl, a one-acre nesting island for Least Terns, and 118 acres of upland for songbirds. When complete, the site will provide public access for bird watching and passive recreation.

Status: The environmental restoration of the South Cell is approximately 95% complete. A pumping system has been constructed to manage water levels. (In a wet summer, active dredged material areas can attract 10,000 shorebirds a day; in a dry year, the habitat disappears and few shorebirds are present.) The site was flooded in the fall of 2003 and will remain flooded until spring 2005 to help reduce phragmites infestation. The nesting island, interpretive trail, site work,

and water-control system have been completed. The Restoration Team is currently preparing signs for an interpretive trail. The water release spillway is undergoing redesign efforts, led by the Maryland Port Administration. Monitoring of the South Cell will begin shortly to evaluate the effectiveness of the environmental restoration.

The overall cost for the restoration project is estimated to be approximately \$6.6 million, cost-shared 75% Federal (US Army Corps of Engineers) and 25% non-Federal (Maryland Port Administration). Once the project is complete, the South Cell will be transferred from the Maryland Port Administration to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to become an additional section of Hart-Miller Island State Park. A dedication ceremony is expected to take place later this year or early in 2005.

— Gene Scarpulla
MOS Representative on the
HMI South Cell Habitat
Restoration Team

DO YOU LIST?

Each year, the MOS compiles and publishes totals from its members' state and local bird lists. The form for submitting your *locality lists* is on page 10. You are invited to submit totals for any of the following categories:

STATE/COUNTY CUMULATIVE LISTS: This category includes "lifetime" totals identified anywhere in the state of Maryland, in DC, or within any of Maryland's 23 counties. Please submit only totals exceeding 50% of the "maximum" for each locality. (The form shows the latest maximums and the 50% thresholds.) If you claim a MD life list in excess of 349 species, you **MUST** list all species added to your MD life list in 2004.

STATE/COUNTY 2004 LISTS: This category is for total species identified in 2004 for the same localities as above. These totals may be reported at any threshold.

YARD LIST: This category is for cumulative Yard List totals and 2004 totals. You may count any species you have identified while in your "yard" (that is, property contiguous to your home). "Flyovers" and other birds identified *from* your yard (even if they were not *in* your yard) also count.

ALL-COUNTY LIST: This category enumerates the species you have identified in each of the 23 Maryland counties. For example, if you have identified a Northern Mockingbird, an American Crow, a Downy Woodpecker, and a Red-tailed Hawk in each of the 23 counties, your list total would be 4.

TOTAL TICK LIST: This is the sum of all your Maryland County Lists totals. The maximum possible is 6,990. We will accept all-time high submissions of 2,300 (an average of 100 species per county) or higher. Annual Total Tick levels (2004 only) will be accepted at any level.

ALL-TIME-HIGH ANNUAL LISTS: This category tracks all-time highs from current and previous years. You may submit totals for previous years as well as for 2004. For Maryland, submitted totals should equal or exceed 289 (70% of the maximum possible number). For individual counties, totals submitted from previous years should exceed either 50% of the maximum possible or one of the top totals previously published for that county. (See the MOS website [www.mdbirds.org] for previously published totals.)

SPECIES PHOTOGRAPHED IN MARYLAND: As the name implies, tell us how many bird species you have photographed (recognizably!) in Maryland. There are no lower limits until we see what sort of responses we get. Perhaps next year we'll set a minimum.

Members' totals that have not been updated within the previous five years (1999-2003) will be dropped from the database.

Questions??? Contact Norm Saunders at marshhawk@att.net or 301-989-9035.

Please return the form **BEFORE January 20, 2005** to:

Norm Saunders
1261 Cavendish Drive
Colesville, MD 20905-7030

We hope that all who have participated will do so again, and that others will join in, especially from localities that are currently less than well represented. If you have any comments, thoughts, or anecdotes, please include them. If you have other categories of Maryland bird lists (for example, all-time or 2004 state/county "Big Day" totals), send them in. We'd like to hear from you. And remember, this is for fun.

—Norm Saunders

SCHOLARSHIPS: MAINE, MINNESOTA, OR WISCONSIN?

As announced in the September–October *Yellowthroat*, MOS is once again sponsoring 10 to 12 scholarships to week-long summer Audubon Camps in Maine, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. The Maine camps typically address field ornithology, natural history of the Maine coast, and workshops for educators. Minnesota Audubon programs cover lakes, rivers, and wetlands, and ecology. The Wisconsin camp is called Wade into Ecology. (Specific programs and dates for the 2005 sessions have not yet been finalized.) Each MOS award is valued at \$700 to \$1,000 and covers tuition and room and board.

Candidates should be individuals in a position to pass on knowledge gained to young people—teachers, park rangers, naturalists, community volunteers, or environmental educators. (They don't have to be MOS members.) Applicants must be at least 18 years of age and submit a letter of intent, a current resume, and two letters of recommendation, one from an MOS member or chapter. Deadline for receipt of applications is January 31, 2005.

Information is available on the MOS website, www.mdbirds.org; go to "Education" and click on "Scholarships." For further information, please contact your local MOS chapter president, chapter scholarship representative, or me at 301-942-2841; tstrik@earthlink.net; 9806 Culver Ct, Kensington, MD 20895.

I encourage MOS members to pass this information along to possible candidates.

—Tom Strikwerda,
Scholarship Chairperson

Telling Tales

Again it's Gail Mackiernan and Barry Cooper, on a single-day twitch to see the Red-footed Falcon at Martha's Vineyard. Alighting from the ferry, they and a fellow passenger hail a taxi, and the cabbie notifies his dispatcher: "Three more the The Bird."



MOS 2004 MD/DC LOCALITY LIST REPORTING FORM

Report List Totals as of 12/31/2004

I. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name:			
Address:			
City:		County:	
State:	Zip:	Email:	
Phones: (day): ()		(evening): ()	

II. STATE/COUNTY LIFE AND 2004 LISTS

Locality List	Max/50%	Life	2004	Locality List	Max/50%	Life	2004
Maryland State	421/211			District of Columbia	322/161		
MD Yard List	-			DC Yard List	-		
Allegany County	283/142			Howard County	294/147		
Anne Arundel County	332/166			Kent County	301/151		
Baltimore City/County	332/166			Montgomery County	315/158		
Calvert County	304/152			Prince George's County	318/159		
Caroline County	293/147			Queen Anne's County	305/153		
Carroll County	279/140			St. Mary's County	326/163		
Cecil County	294/147			Somerset County	303/152		
Charles County	285/143			Talbot County	314/157		
Dorchester County	318/159			Washington County	261/131		
Frederick County	290/145			Wicomico County	295/148		
Garrett County	276/138			Worcester County	373/187		
Harford County	299/150			All-County List	233/---		
Total Tick	6,990/2,300			Species Photographed in MD	-		

New MD State List Additions in 2004:

(This section MUST be filled in if you are claiming 350 or more species in Maryland)

III. ANNUAL ALL-TIME HIGH LISTS (for years other than 2004)

Locality List	Year	#	Locality List	Year	#

(Please submit one form per person)

GARRETT COUNTY IN NOVEMBER

My first real experience with Garrett County came at the MOS annual conference three years ago. After the whirlwind of conference field trips, I left feeling I needed to spend more time there and to learn more about the natural history of the place. When the Maryland/DC Chapter of the Nature Conservancy (TNC) offered its members a trip there on the weekend of November 15 (2003), I signed on.

Garrett County along with some of our other western counties offers a unique window on Appalachian Mountain ecology. Garrett County is especially intriguing in that it is on the western side of the eastern continental divide. Because of the mountains and climate, lots of our winter birds breed there: Hermit Thrush, Pine Siskin, Purple Finch, Dark-eyed Junco, a few Goshawk, etc. Other breeding birds include Henslow's Sparrow, Golden-winged Warbler, Canada Warbler, and Blue-headed Vireo.

I decided to take a Friday off and get there a day early to do some birding. My first stop was at Washington Monument State Park, the hawk watch in Washington County, and there I caught a Goshawk taking a whack at a Red-tailed Hawk. Continuing west, I saw a few Ravens, but as I reached the mountains the 30-mph headwinds coupled with glare from snow and salt on the road kept me too busy to bird and drive.

Once in Garrett County, I drove to Deep Creek Lake State Park where I birded the fire tower trail. After two hours I had heard a Downy and an American Crow and seen a flock of about 20 Juncos. This is definitely not the coastal plain; we do not know how bird-rich we are.

The next morning I returned to the park and birded the mountainside. Once again I heard a Downy, but it wasn't until I birded the lakefront that I finally saw some birds: lots of Goldfinch, a Song Sparrow, macho Black-capped Chickadees, more American Crows, a White-breasted

Nuthatch. The only birds on the lake were two female Bufflehead. I also sighted two Red Squirrels.

In the afternoon, I met with the Conservancy folks. Martha Roesler and Kristin Harrison from the Maryland/DC Chapter and Jonathan Harvey from the West Virginia office shepherded 15 of us through all of our activities and proved to be outstanding hosts.

As it turned out, our Garrett County guide was none other than Kevin Dodge, a field trip leader at the Garrett County MOS conference. We headed for Cranesville Swamp. This was not a birding trip, but a natural history walk. Kevin supplied us with a wealth of information about this particular preserve (which sits in both Maryland and West Virginia) and the area's climate (past and present) that makes this preserve so unusual.

Many of the plants, like the breeding birds, are typically found much further north. The forested part of the preserve was once dominated by Red Spruce, in contrast to the non-native trees that serve the needs of the animal community now. There are also Tamarack trees, a northern species of coniferous tree that loses its needles in the fall.

After dinner we regrouped for a trip to Kevin's Saw-whet Owl banding station, which has been in operation for about 10 years. When we got there about 8:30 pm, there were already were six owls in the nets, and Kevin's four assistants were busy retrieving them. Each owl was taken to a shack to be weighed, measured, and evaluated for molt stage. After the owls were examined they were re-acclimated to the forest and the dark and released.

Kevin's four volunteers were students or former students of the Garrett college where Kevin is Director of Natural Resources and Wildlife Technology. I was amazed at their ability to handle the owls and their dedication to banding. The volunteers were very professional, and it was great to see this type of science being done by volunteers and volunteer students.

The next day, Sunday, we headed for North Cherry Creek Bog, another Nature Conservancy preserve that is home to rare and threatened species of plants and animals. Again we got a tour from Kevin Dodge, who discussed the climatic conditions that created these low-nutrient bogs, where cold and highly acidic water nourishes many of these rare and threatened plants. Birds of note were Swamp, Song, and Chipping Sparrows.

Later we walked to a higher-elevation area to view the emerging hardwood forest that grew after this area was logged. The walk ended with a look at a large beaver dam.

The Nature Conservancy's primary mission is to preserve the plants, animals, and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. The Maryland/DC Chapter of The Nature Conservancy has protected more than 57,000 acres of critical natural lands in Maryland and DC.

—Parke John, Cecil County

ATTENTION MOS ARTISTS

You are invited to enter the 2005 Conference Pin Design Contest. The deadline is January 17, 2005. The basic rules are simple: entrants must be a member of MOS, and the design must contain a bird appropriate for the conference site (Solomons) and the phrases "MOS" and "2005." On the back of each entry the artist must put their name, address, chapter affiliation, and identify the species represented. The pin can be any shape. Send entries to John Malcolm, 10205 Kindly Court, Montgomery Village, MD 20886. To see all the rules and more tips about designing pins for the contest, check the MOS website (www.mdbirds.org, then activities, then Conference], or contact John Malcolm at 301-977-5788 or smudgie@comcast.net.

MINUTES, MOS BOARD MEETING JUNE 5, 2004

President: Paul Zucker
Vice President: Janet Millenson
Treasurer: Shiras Guion
Secretary: Janet Shields
Past President: Karen Morley

Atlas: Jane Coskren
Conference: Janet Shields
Conservation: Maureen Harvey
Investments: Martha Waugh
Long-range Planning: Karen Morley
Nominations: Al Haury
Sanctuary: Dotty Mumford
World Series
 of Birding: Don Simonson;
Yellowthroat: Lydia Schindler

Allegany: Barbara Gaffney; **Anne Arundel:** Al Haury, Dotty Mumford, Norm Saunders; **Baltimore:** Karen Morley; **Caroline:** *not represented*; **Carroll:** Dave Harvey, Maureen Harvey, Bob Ringler; **Cecil:** *not represented*; **Frederick:** Marcia Balestri, Michael Welch; **Harford:** Tom Congersky, Randy Robertson; **Howard:** Jane Coskren, Emmalyn Holdridge, Martha Waugh; **Kent:** Walter Ellison, Peter Mann; **Montgomery:** Sam Freiberg, Hugh Mahanes, Lydia Schindler, Rick Sussman, Ann Weeks; **Patuxent:** Fred Fallon, Chan Robbins; **Talbot:** Bill Novak, Myra Novak, Mark Scallion, Susanna Scallion; **Tri-County:** *not represented*; **Washington:** *not represented*

President Paul Zucker called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and thanked the Talbot County Chapter for hosting the meeting at Pickering Creek Audubon Center, Easton, MD. Mark Scallion, Director of Pickering Creek, gave an introduction to the Center. Judy Wink, Manager, Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center (Horsehead), updated us on their current activities.

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Shiras Guion requested a motion to amend the

budget to withdraw \$4,000 from the general fund to cover payment of the 2002-2003 audit; this was moved and approved.

President's Remarks: Paul indicated that the Financial Report for the fiscal year ending April 30 shows expenses were \$1,500 less than our income. Big Sit events in Frederick and Montgomery Counties successfully raised money for the Atlas. World Series of Birding also did very well. The year 2000 issue of *Maryland Birdlife* has been mailed. Candi Lee volunteered to produce MOS membership cards, charging MOS only for the paper and ink. The cost of having them produced by a professional printer, using Candi's design, will also be investigated.

Review of Action Items:

- Paul Zucker still needs end-of-year reports from chapter presidents and committee chairs.
- Marcia Balestri has agreed to be our candidate for Vice President.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Conference: Janet Shields reported 215 people have registered and the committee is ready.

Conservation: Maureen Harvey reported that the American Bird Conservancy has issued a statement on their wind energy policy. She will do additional study of their policy and will have a recommendation concerning MOS support of that policy at the next board meeting. Other conservation issues are addressed in the next issue of the *Yellowthroat*.

Investment: Martha Waugh handed out an abbreviated report because the treasurer has given us an excellent statement of our income via the Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2002-2003. Our fiscal year total income from investments for all funds was \$56,658.59. This reflects a 50% increase in funding for dependent committees from four years ago.

Long-range Planning: Karen Morley e-mailed a draft the current Manual

of Operations to board members; changes made at the 2002 Business Meeting were incorporated. The board approved a motion to make the changes to the Manual as discussed at this board meeting. Karen will make those changes to the Manual, which will be sent electronically to board members and be appended to the minutes as approved.

Nominations: Al Haury reported that we have a full slate of officers for next year. Janet Millenson has agreed to be our president, with Marcia Balestri as Vice President, Emmalyn Holdridge as Treasurer and Janet Shields as Secretary.

Publications/Yellowbook: Norm Saunders has come up with a team to redo the *Yellowbook* consisting of Bob Ringler, Marshall Iliff, Matt Hafner and Norm. They are considering some changes. The ordering of the species will be consistent with the latest AOU checklist. They want to add the District of Columbia to the checklist pages. They want to ensure conformance between the work that they do and the work that is done by the MD/DC Records Committee. A motion was made and passed to undertake a revision of the *Yellowbook*. Paul Zucker appointed Bob Ringler, Marshall Iliff, Matt Hafner and Norm Saunders to an ad hoc subcommittee of the Communications Committee with Bob Ringler as chair. Since we are running low on checklists, Paul also requested that the group update the state checklist.

Sanctuary: Dotty Mumford reported that the Sanctuary Committee decided last February that for now the upkeep of the buildings would be minimal but they do not need to be destroyed or replaced. The committee would like to encourage more use of the sanctuaries and is updating the sanctuary portion of the website. There is an on-going problem finding volunteers to help with work projects.

Atlas: Jane Coskren reported that Anne Arundel made an Atlas donation. Howard County has completed

their \$5,000 matching grant. Part of the proceeds from World Series of Birding will come to the Atlas. Frederick and Montgomery had successful Big Sits. We received \$45,000 from the state. Walter Ellison noted that George Jett is also raising money for the Atlas. At the NORAC meeting in April, Walter met with people in charge of other atlas projects and explored how they are dealing with some of the problems that we are having. We are looking pretty good with around 1,050 blocks covered.

World Series of Birding: Lydia Schindler reported for Don Simonson. They did quite well with an overall species count of 148 in Cape May County. The pledges to date are \$2,100.

Electronic Discussion System: Janet Millenson explained that monitors are needed to register people to use the board and to clear out old messages and threads. Having one central monitor will not work; ideally the monitor should be a member of the group he or she is monitoring. For the Executive Council, Chapter Presidents, and other groups, Janet thinks we probably should have an Executive Secretary to act as monitor.

OLD BUSINESS

Sanctuary Boundary Signs: These are available at the MOS storage shed in Columbia.

NEW BUSINESS

Yellowthroat/Chapter Chatter: Lydia Schindler announced with regret that Martha Waugh is resigning from Chapter Chatter. Give names of replacement candidates to Lydia.

New Address for MOS: The current official MOS mailing address is located at Cylburn within the City of Baltimore, which is now contemplating the possibility of tax on income of all nonprofit organizations. Because of this as well as the difficulty of forwarding our mail to various officers, Karen Morley thinks we should seriously consider getting a post office box with forwarding service. The Articles of Incorporation also will need to be examined to see whether

the organization is legally headquartered in Baltimore City. Karen will look into this and report back.

Handover to New MOS Treasurer:

Officially the outgoing Treasurer hands over to the new Treasurer on September 1. Shiras Guion requests that the handover be made early in August in order to smooth communications with local chapters, etc. This needs to be accomplished prior to dues being forwarded. It was decided that Shiras and Emmalyn Holdridge should work together, with Shiras officially remaining Treasurer until September 1 as required by the Bylaws.

Possible New Membership Class:

Rick Sussman explained that some Montgomery Chapter board members proposed a new membership class, such as an introductory or associate membership, which would allow people to join at a local level to see if they liked it without having to be burdened with state dues. The board felt that this was unnecessary, because people can go to chapter meetings and field trips without paying. Also, the chapters are part of the state organization, without separate memberships, as stated in our Bylaws.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

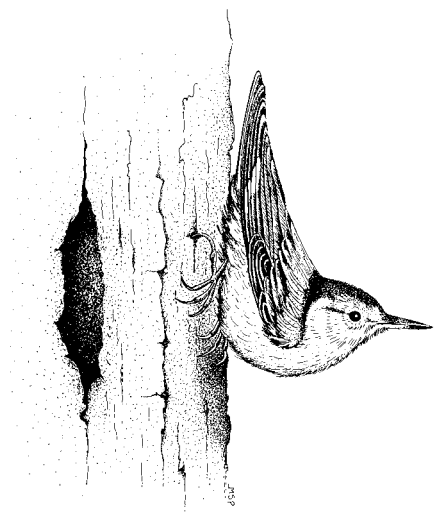
NEW ACTION ITEMS

- Maureen Harvey is still waiting for Conservation contact information for chapter representatives.
- Paul Zucker is still looking for people to fill chair vacancies.
- All officers should get contact information on new officers to Janet Shields along with their contact person for Conservation, Sanctuary, and Scholarship and other board representatives.
- Paul Zucker will arrange with Candi Lee to have membership cards professionally printed.
- Maureen Harvey will continue to review the American Bird Conservancy policy on wind power and recommend what MOS policy should be at the next board meeting.

- The electronic communications task force will work out a strategy for the website, discussion board, and role of the Executive Secretary, etc.
- Karen Morley is going to incorporate the agreed-upon changes to the Manual of Operation and propose new ones based on further discussion and input. Committee chairs need to work with Karen on this.
- Norm Saunders is going to arrange for an updated state checklist on line and in print.
- The Executive Council will discuss how to meet the needs of the sanctuaries.
- Any chapters considering Atlas donations should talk with Jane Coskren.
- Committees should propose monitors for the discussion board and give the names to Janet Millenson.
- Contact Lydia Schindler if you know of someone who might want to write Chapter Chatter.
- Long-range Planning Committee will look into the issue of mailing addresses.
- Sites are needed for the Sept 11 and March 12 board meetings. Montgomery Chapter has agreed to host the Dec 4 meeting at Black Hill.

President Paul Zucker adjourned the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Janet Shields
Secretary





Carroll County Bird Club successfully targets North Carolina birds

Five members of the Carroll County Bird Club, Mark and Amy Hoffman, Marc and Tammy Schwaab, and Laura Tarbell, along with "honorary" member Emma Frantz, ventured to southeastern North Carolina for an extended foray from April 14-18. All the target birds—Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Bachman's Sparrow, and Painted Bunting—were well seen by everyone. Several bonus lifers for various members of the group included Eurasian Collared-Dove, Loggerhead Shrike, and Sooty Tern. A Sooty Tern that followed along with the ferry on the Fort Fisher to Southport Ferry was a real delight.

Using his new Canon 10D digital SLR, leader Mark was able to get good photos of all the species listed above and share prints nightly with the gang. (Eight by ten versions of the sparrow and bunting photos were included in the silent auction at the MOS conference.) Humorous anecdotes are too many to enumerate here but rumor has it that Mark is writing a short-story documenting the misadventures of this tribe. . .and it won't be rated PG!

—Amy Hoffman

Caroline County fall count fallout

Danny Poet reports that on September 19 Tuckahoe State Park held so much bird action that he and Steve Westre had difficulty identifying everything. One large maple next to the road kept their attention for quite a while. A few highlights were Blue and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, a Nashville and Blackburnian Warblers, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and seven hummers. The final count for the Tuckahoe Group was 52 species. (The county total is not yet in.)

Harford County Bird Club scholarship winner

Colleen Webster from the Harford Bird Club was awarded the first MOS John Wortman Scholarship. She attended the Hog Island Maine camp this summer. Colleen is a Professor of English at Harford Community College. She wrote so eloquently of her experience that it was published not only in our own *Wrenderings* but also on the Friends of Hog Island Website.

—Jean Wheeler

Tri-County reports successful pelagic

The pelagic trip out of Lewes, Delaware in August not only produced great Maryland birds but also provided lifer #500 for Tri-County birder Mike Walsh with fabulous looks a White-faced Storm-Petrel. This third record for Maryland was the highlight of the trip. Tri-County world birder Eric Decker is back to traveling after a year mending a shattered ankle suffered on a trip to Mexico. This time he'll start off "easy" with a month in Brazil in November before heading to Thailand in early 2005. Welcome back, Eric!

—Carol Broderick

Claudia Wilds's tern book: back on track

Members of the Montgomery County Bird Club have long been looking forward to the publication of a book on Terns and Skimmers of the World that Claudia Wilds began in 1991. With her usual thoroughness and zeal, Claudia traveled to remote islands to study and photograph all the known terns. Cancer overtook her when she was working on the manuscript, and after undergoing surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy, her strength gave out and so she sought a co-author to complete the project.

At her memorial service in September 1997, her publisher, Christopher Helm, spoke of his hope to have the book in print within the year. He introduced the co-author Claudia had chosen, an ornithologist on the staff of the American Museum of Natural History, to whom she had turned over her computer files and slides. It must be said that he was not her first choice, but he was available, while others with greater experience and expertise had other commitments at the time.

Admittedly, stepping into Claudia's shoes would be a daunting assignment for anyone, and it soon became apparent that her chosen co-author was not up to the task. He produced nothing. He stopped communicating with the English publisher. He ignored e-mails and telephone calls. Worst of all, he did not release Claudia's materials so that someone else could be assigned to take up the unfinished work. Meanwhile, the artist's plates, produced by Christopher Schmidt and approved by Claudia, were being held unused in the publisher's files.

In desperation, to retrieve Claudia's materials, Christopher asked for my help. I recalled that Claudia had willed her ornithological papers and journals to the Montgomery County Chapter of the MOS, a fact that was confirmed by her brother, Dr. Preston Lea Wilds.

I discussed this with then president Sam Freiberg, who agreed that the missing documents were legally ours. Sam informed the delinquent co-author that the club was prepared to take legal action if he did not turn over the files. After many prodding letters, the man finally released all materials, and they have been sent on to the publisher. Christopher Helm's associate, Nigel Redman, has acknowledged receipt and promises to keep us informed of progress as they engage a qualified ornithologist to complete this long-delayed project. As Christopher Helm stated, "We want the book to be a fitting memorial to Claudia."

—Lola Oberman

Baltimore Bird Club member heads up Important Bird Areas program

In May, David Curson, an active member of the BBC, took up the new position of Director of Bird Conservation with Audubon Maryland-DC. Dave's principal focus in this job will be running the MD-DC Important Bird Areas program, which aims to identify a network of sites most essential for maintaining bird populations in the state and national capital region, and to focus conservation efforts on these sites. Although the first few IBA sites have been identified, many more remain to be nominated and documented. This fall and winter Dave will be "on tour" to bird clubs around the region with a slide show about the IBA program and how volunteers can get involved. Look for an article about the IBA program in the next issue of the *Yellowthroat*.

Fort McHenry: highlights of the five-year monitoring program

- An annual count of 189 in 2003-2004 proved to be the highest number of species in the five years.
- A Western Kingbird, believed to be the same bird, returned each spring for three years in a row from 2002-2004.
- The rarest bird sighting occurred in September of 2003—a Black-tailed Gull from Asia.
- May 4, 2004 was a good day with both a Philadelphia Vireo and a Spotted Towhee sighted on the marsh trail.
- Red-necked Grebes were fairly common in the winter of 2003 and 2004.
- It is believed that the first recorded breeding Bald Eagle in Baltimore City was raised directly across from the Fort wetlands in Masonville Cove. In spite of making a boat trip to check out the nest, the foliage was too thick to confirm. At least one juvenile Bald Eagle was sighted later in the season.
- Total species count for all five years tallied in at 226.

—Jim Peters

CLAY SUTTON

writes to Janet Shields, conference chair:

Thank you for your kind note and your concern. I'm touched that many of the MOS members have asked about me. You can assure them that I (we) were very sorry to have missed the conference.

I am doing fine, now. In the end, the "event" was probably a bout with Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. I definitely had it—tested positive for a "recent case," and that is probably (possibly in concert with the new blood pressure medicine) what caused my lengthy episodes of dizziness and lightheadedness. But, antibiotics knocked it out of me and I'm now almost 100% back to normal (or as normal as I ever am!)

So, thank you so much for thinking of me. It crushed us to have to cancel, but hopefully we can do the rain check for next year. Do you have the dates yet?

All best wishes and warm regards,
Clay (and Pat) Sutton

ANS joins as intervener against MD wind plant

The Audubon Naturalist Society will be joining as an intervener in the MD Public Service Case involving a proposed wind plant on Backbone Mountain in Garrett County. As you probably know, a company called Synergics has applied for permission to construct 23 400-ft-tall turbines between the existing wind plant in WV (Mountaineer—44 turbines—which had the largest-ever wind farm wildlife kill in 2003) and an approved-but-not-built-yet wind plant in Maryland (Clipper's 67 turbines), located just to the north of Synergics' proposed site (between US Rte 50 and the WV line). The site chosen by Synergics is bad for several reasons, chief among them the risk of adding to the incredibly high mortality of migrating bats, as well as cumulative impacts on migrating birds, the continued fragmentation of our largest blocks of forest-interior habitat, and not least of all, the harmful impact the proposed development will have on the only reliable breeding site in MD for Mourning Warbler, a state-endangered species. The news from ANS is even better because ANS will be assisted by the Georgetown Law Clinic's Institute for Public Representation.

—Dan Boone

Summer birding

Barbara Gaffney writes: This summer, at the **Isles of Shoals** off the coast of New Hampshire, we went to a Cornell Banding station on Appledore Island. The bander was David Holmes who has spoken to the Carroll County Bird Club in the past. David also gives a popular course for beginning birders at Johns Hopkins University.

Georgia McDonald of Baltimore County found **breeding Lark Sparrows** last April in Ohio. She suggests that the next time you visit Crane Creek in Ohio, you might consider going on to **Oak Openings**, which is part of Toledo Metroparks in western Lucas County. The main entrance is on the eastern side of the park, off SR 295 between Reed and Obee Roads. (DeLorme, 26 D-2. Nearest town Whitehouse. Take Rte 80/90, exit on 2 West to 295 South. Take 295 South 4-5 miles to entrance on the west.) Travel time from Crane Creek is approximately 50-75 minutes.

Chapters in the news

Baltimore SwiftWatch Team to appear on MPT's "Outdoors Maryland"

MPT was there on September 19 when 2,723 chimney swifts dropped into the Mill Center chimney in Hampden at dusk. The count went to Swift Night Out at the Driftwood Wildlife Association in Texas for a listing on their website. (See www.concentric.net/~DWA). For the past 3 years, the Hampden chimneys of Baltimore have ranked as either the second or third most active roost in the nation, with up to 17 states and 50 locations reporting.

The "Outdoors Maryland" Chimney Swift story, an 8-minute segment expected to air next Spring, may include an interview with Mark & Buttons, a chimney sweep company based in Owings Mills, MD. They will explain what they do when customers want their chimneys cleaned in mid-summer, and the chimney is occupied by nesting swifts—birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Shortly in advance of the TV show, Baltimore hopes to post the MPT schedule on *MDOsprey*. The Baltimore SwiftWatch Team includes Alice and David Nelson, Carol Schreter, Joan Cwi, and Bryce Butler.

The Sun describes a new breed of nature lover

Sandy Alexander from *The Sun* joined the Howard County Bird Club and Richard Orr for its annual August walk in pursuit of dragonflies and damselflies. Sandy's August 24 article included photographs of the walk and an informative article about odonates. She quoted Richard as saying, "When I first started this 20 years ago, nobody could care less. One to two people would show up. But those days are over. In the last three years, it has just exploded." Orr went on to say that dragonflies and damselflies are active during hot summer afternoons, when birds are less likely to be visible.

Richard Orr is an assistant director at the National Invasive Species Council, gives seminars locally, and contracts with national organizations to study the insects. He suggested that the main reason for the increasing popularity of dragonfly watching is the publication of the first field guides to odonates.



MOS Calendar

November-December 2004

Tuesday, November 2

H Baltimore. Loch Raven Self-guided Walk. Join BBC members every Tuesday in November at 8:30 AM for hike through woods and fields, with opportunity to see many migrants including Red-breasted Nuthatch, Rusty Blackbird, Fox Sparrow, Swainson's and Hermit Thrush. Scope the lake for Bald Eagles, swans and variety of other waterfowl. No designated leader. Coordinators: Elliot Kirshbaum, 410-243-1481 or Paul Noell, 410-243-2652.

Wednesday, November 3

MEETING. Carroll. Meet 7:30 PM at Senior Center, Stoner Ave, Westminster. *Melissa Boyle* will report on her MOS Scholarship to Hog Island, ME. For more info, contact Laura Tarbell, 410-857-1109.

H Howard. Bon Secours. Meet 8:30 AM in visitor parking lot for easy-to-moderate 2-hr walk on grounds of this lovely spiritual center. Woodlands and fields provide diverse habitat. Excellent view of sky for flyover hawks. Great for beginners. Facilities available. Call leaders: Michele Wright, 410-465-6057 or Eva Sunell, 410-995-0029 for info.

H Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Ft. McHenry. 9:30 AM-Noon. Meet at Visitor Center. Continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort. Canceled in bad weather. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

Thursday, November 4

MEETING. Howard. "The Broader View: What to Look for After You've Nailed the Family," by *David Holmes*. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM. Meeting/program 8 PM at Howard Co. Rec & Parks Dept, 7120 Oakland Mills Rd, Columbia. For info call Jeff Friedhoffer, 410-997-5366.

Friday, November 5

MEETING. Frederick. *Gail Mackiernan* will present "The Longest Pelagic—24 days of Seabirds in the Southern Hemisphere" and will show slides and video from her cruise last winter from Capetown to Chile via Antarctica, on Royal Princess. The best of both worlds—birds during the day and chocolates on the pillow at night! Meet 7 PM at C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick. Contact Marcia Balestri, 301-473-5098 for info.

H indicates Field Trips

H Cecil. Turkey Point Owls. Meet 7 PM at Turkey Point parking lot; 2–3 hrs. For info contact leaders: Scott Powers, 410-658-2369 or Richard Donham, 610-932-0634.

MEETING. Harford. "Why DNA Sequencing Will Help Baltimore Keep Its Oriole" by *Kevin Omland*. Dinner at 6:15 PM, program at 7 PM at Churchville Presbyterian Church, MD 22 & 136. For info/dinner reservations, call Jean Wheeler, 410-879-7424.

H Washington. Lambs Knoll to observe Saw-whet Owl banding by Steve Huy. Meet 9 PM at Rte 66 P&R and be prepared to stay as late as midnight. Limited to 14. Call 301-797-8454 for a reservation.

MEETING. Anne Arundel. "Restoring Whooping Cranes in the Wild" by *Dr. John B. French, Jr.* Meet 8 PM DNR Conference Room, Tawes Bldg, Rowe Blvd, Annapolis.

Saturday, November 6

H Montgomery. Blue Mash Nature Trail. Half day. Looking for hawks, sparrows, and other woodland edge species at this fairly new park. Trip may cover area around Rte 108 and Riggs Rd, so carpooling may be necessary. Waterproof boots essential. Meet 7:30 AM at Zion Rd parking lot. Call leader for reservations and directions. Limited to 8. Leader: Rick Sussman, 301-774-1185.

H Carroll. Saw-whet Owl Banding. Join Steve Huy at his banding station at top of South Mountain, south of Frederick. Limited to 10. For more info including carpooling possibilities, contact coordinator: Tammy Schwaab, 410-857-4913.

ANNUAL BANQUET. Allegany. Keynote speaker TBA. Meet 5:30 PM at Frostburg UMC Social Hall, 48 Main St, Frostburg. Call Charlotte Folk, 301-689-6587 for reservation. Call Charlotte or Barb Gaffney, 301-895-4646 for info. Cost of dinner (\$13, students \$10) includes tax and gratuity. Send payment to Charlotte Folk, 179 Mt. Pleasant St, Frostburg, MD 21532.

H Patuxent. Fran Uhler Natural Area. Meet 7:30 AM end of Lemon Bridge Rd, off Laurel-Bowie Rd (MD 197) just north of Bowie College and MARC line. No reservations required.

H Kent. Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center (Horsehead), Grasonville, for waterfowl and late migrants. Half day. Meet Dollar General parking lot, Chestertown, 8 AM. For info, Walter Ellison or Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or Peter Mann, 410-648-5205.

H Harford. Otter Point Woods, Parks Property and Anita Leight Sanctuary. Visit three more properties that Harford Land Trust has helped save from development with our inside man, Dennis Kirkwood. Hear stories behind the land while enjoying wintering songbirds of many varieties. Meet at Anita Leight Sanctuary on Otter Point Rd just off Rte 40 NE of Edgewood at 8 AM. Call 410-692-5905 for more info.

H Talbot. 7 PM trip for Saw-whet Owl banding at Adkins Arboretum. Bring snack and reading material. Limited space, reservation required. Contact Shirley Bailey, 410-943-8925 for reservation and meeting time and location.

Saturday, Nov 6-Sunday, Nov 7

H Frederick. Town Hill Overnight. We will stay at local B&B Saturday and visit the famous (in Maryland, anyway) Hawkwatch. This time of year is good for Northern Goshawks and Golden Eagles. Meet 10 AM at Baker Park Nov 6. For info and reservations, contact Dave Smith, 410-549-7082.

Sunday, November 7

H Howard. Centennial Park. Meet 8 AM, west end lot off Centennial Lane, for 3 hours. Easy walk around lake on paved path. Great for beginners. Facilities available. Call leader Kurt Schwarz for info, 410-461-1643.

H Anne Arundel. Blackwater NWR for waterfowl and eagles. Full day. Bring lunch. Meet 8 AM at Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot off Rte 50. Leader: Bobbi Reichwein, 410-451-2671.

H Talbot. Walk at Wye Island NRMA. Nice variety of everything. No breakfast. Leader: Danny Poet, 410-827-8651. Depart Tred Avon Shopping Ctr parking lot, front of Acme, Easton, 7 AM.

Tuesday, November 9

H Baltimore. Loch Raven Self-guided Walk. See Tuesday, November 2.

MEETING. Patuxent. Program TBA. Joint with Prince George's Audubon Society. Meet 7:30 PM at College Park Airport Annex. Call Fred Shaffer, 410-721-1744 for more info or check website at www.audubon.org.

Wednesday, November 10

H Baltimore. Hampton National Historic Site. First year monitoring this interesting site. Explore 70 acres of woods, fields, pastureland, and formal gardens. Easy walking. Canceled in bad weather. Meet at site 8 AM for 3 hours. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

Thursday, November 11

MEETING. **Talbot.** "Pacific Island Travelogue" by *Don Merritt*. Don't miss impressive display of pictures and stories from a land far, far away. Meet 7:30 PM, basement of Suntrust Bank, corner Harrison and Goldsborough Sts, Easton.

Friday-Sunday, November 12-14

EASTON WATERFOWL FESTIVAL. Talbot. Members are needed to staff Bird Club booth.

Saturday, November 13

H Carroll. Birding at Town Hill. Hawk migration in full swing! This may be an overnighter so contact coordinator Bill Ellis, 410-781-7113 for more details.

H Baltimore. Flying Hawk Demonstration by Joe Platek and his Harris's Hawk. Site TBD. In case of strong wind or rain, demo cancelled. Reservations required. For directions, contact Gail Frantz, 410-833-7135.

H Harford. Perryman and Forest Greens. Explore this locally popular birding destination well known for large fields and bayside access. Visit large wildlife pond and vernal woodland of Forest Greens Property, another preservation project precipitated by Harford Land Trust. A great opportunity to find Horned Lark, Pipit, Fox and Savannah Sparrows, and Rusty Blackbird. Meet leader Dave Ziolkowski 7:30 AM at NE of Aberdeen Wal-Mart parking lot. Call 410-679-6765 for details.

H Frederick. Point Lookout and environs for Kelp Gull, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Red-headed Woodpecker, waterfowl, and late migrants. Bring lunch and meet at Urbana P&R South at 6 AM. Call Mike Welch, 301-874-5828 for further info.

Sunday, November 14

H Cecil. Avalon Sea Watch. Meet 7 AM at Big Elk Mall Dunkin' Donuts parking lot. Full day. For info contact leaders: Chris Starling, 410-287-4223 or Richard Donham, 610-932-0634.

H Tri-County. Bombay Hook NWR. Leader: Charles Vaughn, 410-742-7221.

H Patuxent. Horsehead Sanctuary on Kent Island for waterfowl. Meet 7:30 AM at Bowie P&R, Northview Dr, just off Rte 197. Return by noon. Call leader Fred Fallon, 301-249-1518 for reservations.

H Howard. Centennial Park. Meet 8 AM, west end lot off Centennial Lane, for 2-3 hours. Easy walk around lake on paved path. Great for beginners. Facilities available. Call leader: Karen Darcy, 410-552-9342 or Kevin Heffernan, 410-418-8731 for details.

H Talbot. Ferry Neck/Royal Oak for waterbirds and more. Smorgasbord of waterbirds. Leader: Les Coble, 410-820-6165. No breakfast. Depart Fred Avon Shopping Center parking lot, front of Acme, Easton at 7AM.

H Anne Arundel. Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center (Horsehead), Queen Anne's Co for wintering waterfowl and woodland birds. Half day. Meet 8 AM at Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot off Rte 50. Leader: Wafi Rains, 410-573-0352.

H Montgomery. Lilypons-New Design Road. Half day. Wintering field birds, targeting Fox and Tree Sparrow and possible American Bittern. Call leader Gail Mackiernan, 301-989-1828 for reservations (required) and more info.

H Harford. Harford Waterfowl Tour. Marvel at thousands of Lesser Scaup and search for species tough to find locally, such as Surf Scoter, Redhead, Long-tailed Duck, and Northern Shoveler. Beginners interested in learning basics of waterfowl identification and experienced watchers searching for rarities will enjoy this morning trip to Upper Bay and Havre de Grace. Scopes helpful, although not necessary. Bring photo ID and meet leader Dave Webb 6:30 AM in rear parking lot of Rte 40 McDonald's, Edgewood. Call: 410-939-3537 for more info.

Tuesday, November 16

H Baltimore. Loch Raven Self-guided Walk. See Tuesday, November 2.

MEETING. **Kent.** Speaker TBA. Meet 7:30 PM Kent County Library, Chestertown. Info, Walter Ellison, 410-778-9568 or Peter Mann, 410-648-5205.

Wednesday, November 17

MEETING. **Montgomery.** "Back of the Outback: The Birds of the Australian Outback." *Bill Young* will show photographs of remarkable birds and habitat he saw on his camping trip to remote parts of Australian Outback desert

landscape. Meet 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac. Info: Don Messersmith, 301-593-5942.

MEETING. **Cecil.** Program TBA. 7 PM at Elkton HS media center, Elkton. Raffle, refreshments. For info contact: Rick Lee, 410-287-0415.

Thursday, November 18

MEETING. **Caroline.** "Learn About Garrett County's Savage River State Forest and the Exciting Bio Blitz" by *Eric Savage* of Savage River State Forest. Meet 7:30 PM at Caroline County Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton.

Saturday, November 20

H Montgomery. Black Hill Regional Park. Half day. Waterfowl and land birds. Meet at Visitor Center 8 AM. Bring scope and snacks. Reservations not required. Leader: Rick Sussman, 301-774-1185.

H Patuxent. Governor Bridge Park, Governor Bridge Rd. Meet at park entrance 7:30 AM. No reservations required.

H Howard. Sandy Point SP. Joint with Anne Arundel. Meet 7 AM, Rte 100/ Long Gate Pkwy P&R to carpool to meet AA club. Half day. Visit Sandy Point, "Westinghouse Pond," and Northrop Grumman property. Moderate walk. Bring scopes if possible and expect \$1-\$2 entrance fee. Snow Bunting and waterfowl expected highlights. Facilities available. Call leaders: Bonnie Ott, 410-461-3361, or Al Haury, 410-923-0881 for info.

H Baltimore. Blackwater NWR. All-day trip to see ducks, thousands of Canada and Snow Geese, Bald Eagle, and Brown-headed Nuthatch. Meet 9:30 AM at refuge Visitor Center. No reservations necessary. Leaders: Taylor McLean, 410-377-7622 (morning) and Kevin Graff (afternoon), e-mail ocean_city@yahoo.com.

H Kent. Frederick County comes to the Eastern Shore. Joint field trip in search of rare geese and late migrants. Half day. Meet Dollar General parking lot, Chestertown, 8:30 AM. For info, contact Walter Ellison or Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or Peter Mann, 410-648-5205.

H Anne Arundel. Sandy Point SP for fall and wintering birds, possible Snow Buntings. Half day. Meet 8 AM at Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot off Rte 50. Leader: Hal Wierenga, 410-647-7439.

MOS Calendar (continued from page 17)

H Frederick. Kent County Hotspots. Join Walter Ellison and Janet Shields for waterfowl, wintering birds, and maybe a Ross's Goose or two. Bring lunch (or we will stop at Citgo Deli) and meet 7 AM at Rte 75 P&R, just south of I-70. Call Janet Shields, 301-416-7109 to confirm.

Sunday, November 21

H Talbot. Chincoteague NWR. All day. Smorgasbord of waterbirds. Bring lunch. Leader: Terry Allen, 410-822-8132. Depart Tred Avon Shopping Ctr parking lot, front of Acme, Easton, 7 AM.

H Howard. Centennial Park. Meet 8 AM, west end lot off Centennial Lane, for 2-3 hours. Easy walk around lake on paved path. Great for beginners. Facilities available. Call leader Jane Coskren for info, 410-381-7344.

Tuesday, November 23

H Baltimore. Loch Raven Self-guided Walk. See Tuesday, November 2.

MEETING. Washington. "What I Have Learned from 100,000 Hours of Backyard Banding" by *Chan Robbins*. Meet 7:30 PM at Mt. Aetna Nature Center, 301-797-8454.

Wednesday, November 24

H Baltimore. Hampton National Historic Site. First year monitoring this interesting site. Explore 70 acres of woods, fields, pastureland, and formal gardens. Easy walking. Canceled in bad weather. Meet at site 8 AM for 3 hours. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

Saturday, November 27

H Cecil. Eagle Watch. Meet 8 AM at Conowingo Dam Fisherman's parking lot. Half day. For info contact leaders: Charlie Gant, 410-398-3554, Sean McCandless, 410-392-03407 or Richard Donham, 610-932-0634.

H Baltimore. Sea Watch at Ocean City Inlet. Meet 7:30 AM at Inlet parking lot for full day watch for massive flocks of scoters, brant, merganser, loons, gulls, and possible pelagic species headed south. Leader will provide snacks. Dress warmly, bring chair, scope, warm drinks, lunch (or buy at local shop.) Stay over Friday night for early start if desired. Dinner/tally to follow at local restaurant. Optional stay over Saturday night for birding Inlet, then stops on way home Sunday. Contact leader for motel reservations, meeting place, additional info: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456, ocean_city2001@yahoo.com.

H Harford. Conowingo Gull Watch. One of the best locations for mid-Atlantic winter birding as tens of eagles, hundreds of ducks, and thousands of gulls flock to this hydroelectric fish cuisinart. Join expert leader Dennis Kirkwood and learn how to pick out Lesser Black-backed & northern gulls and if you're lucky, find Peregrine Falcons, Black-crowned Night-Herons, and Golden Eagles in the process. Scopes helpful. Meet 8 AM at Fisherman's Park at bottom (east end) of Shures Landing Rd. Contact Dennis at 410-692-5905 for more info.

Sunday, November 28

H Talbot. Hooper's Island and Blackwater NWR in quest of Golden Eagle, rails, more. Bring lunch or snacks. Leader: Harry Armistead, 215-248-4120. Depart Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot, front of Acme, Easton 7 AM.

H Howard. Centennial Park. Meet 8 AM, west end lot off Centennial Lane, for 2-3 hours. Easy walk around lake on paved path. Great for beginners. Facilities available. Call leader Richard Orr for info, 410-730-7290.

Tuesday, November 30

H Baltimore. Loch Raven Self-guided Walk. See Tuesday, November 2.

Wednesday, December 1

MEETING. Carroll. Meet 7:30 PM at Senior Center, Stoner Ave, Westminster. *Greg Kearns* will present a program regarding Iceland. For more info, contact Laura Tarbell, 410-857-1109.

H Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Ft. McHenry. 9:30 AM-Noon. Meet at Visitor Center. Continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort. Canceled in bad weather. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

Thursday, December 2

MEETING & CHRISTMAS DINNER. Frederick. *Paul Lehman* from Cape May will present "Weather and Bird Migration." Cocktail punch 6 PM and dinner at 6:30. We will meet at Shamrock Restaurant and are limited to 70 people, so please make reservations with and send money to Treasurer Nancy Parker before 11/20/04.

Friday, December 3

MEETING. Anne Arundel. "Bald Eagles of Maryland" by *Glenn D. Therres*. Meet 8 PM DNR Conference Room, Tawes Bldg, Rowe Blvd, Annapolis.

Saturday, December 4

H Patuxent. Fran Uhler Natural Area. Meet 7:30 AM at end of Lemon Bridge Rd, off Laurel-Bowie Rd (MD 197) just north of Bowie College and MARC line. No reservations required.

MEETING. MOS QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING. Black Hill Regional Park, Montgomery Co. 10 AM at Visitor Center.

H Montgomery. Black Hill Regional Park. Half day. Wintering water birds at excellent local lake, and land birds. Joint MBC/ANS trip. Reservations required. Call leader Bill Elliott, 301-869-6904.

H Howard. Blackwater NWR. All day. Meet 7 AM at MD 32/Broken Land Pkwy P&R. Will stop in AM at McDonalds, Easton for pit stop and quick breakfast. Will stop at Choptank River Bridge and Oakly Rd to look at waterfowl. Majority of time spent at the refuge. Will end day at Shorter's Wharf Rd to look for Short-eared Owl and Rough-legged Hawk. Pack food and drinks and dress very warmly. Facilities available at certain spots. Call leader Stan Arnold for info, 410-768-0155.

H Baltimore. Horsehead Wetlands Center and Terrapin Nature Park. Meet 7:30 AM at Nursery Rd/Hammonds Ferry Rd P&R, or 8:30 AM at Visitor Center for winter waterfowl and passerines. Leaders: Kevin Graff, ocean_city2001@yahoo.com and Pete Webb, 410-486-1217.

H Harford. Maryland and Delaware Shore. Perennial favorite of local birders, this full day adventure takes us to some of Delmarva's birding mega-hotspots in search of early winter waifs and northern strays. Target birds include Northern Gannet, Eiders, Harlequin Duck, Purple Sandpiper, Snowy Owl, Great Cormorant, and Brown-headed Nuthatch. Bring lunch and warm, comfortable clothing. Meet at MD 155 and I-95 P&R at 6:30 AM. Contact leader Russ Kovach, 443-386-4787 for more info.

H Montgomery. Blackwater NWR and Elliott Island. Full day, equal parts at each location. Meet Blackwater NWR Visitor Center on Key Wallace Dr 8 AM. Fee to enter NWR. Bring snacks, lunch, beverages. Wear appropriate clothing; expect worst possible conditions. Scope helpful. Target birds: waterfowl, wintering land birds, raptors including Golden Eagle and Rough-legged Hawk, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Short-eared Owl. Limit 10-15, carpooling planned in advance. Reservations required. Call leader Jim Green, 301-208-2393 (H) or 301-948-1518 (W) for reservations and more info.

H indicates Field Trips

Sunday, December 5

H Cecil. Waterfowl, Loons, and Grebes of Cecil County. Half day. Meet 9 AM at Big Elk Mall Dunkin' Donuts parking lot. For info contact leader: Marcia Watson-Whitmyre, 410-392-9236 or Richard Donham, 610-932-0634.

H Carroll. Piney Run Park. Waterfowl, waterfowl, waterfowl ...and possibly, cold weather. Meet 8 AM at park's gate on Martz Rd, Sykesville. For more info contact leader: Bob Ringler, 410-549-6031.

H Anne Arundel. Eastern Neck NWR for wintering waterfowl. Full day. Bring lunch. Meet 8 AM at Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot off Rte 50. Leader: Bobbi Reichwein, 410-451-2671.

Thursday, December 9

MEETING. **Howard.** "Wildlife of Northern Canada: Gyrfalcons to Grizzly Bears," by *Bob Schaefer*. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM. Meeting/program 8 PM at Howard Co Rec & Parks Dept, 7120 Oakland Mills Rd, Columbia. For info call Jeff Friedhoffer, 410-997-5366.

Tuesday, December 7

MEETING. **Baltimore.** Show-n-Tell Night. Members and guests bring their interesting pictures of local or exotic birds and share with BBC. Doors at Cylburn Arboretum, 4915 Greenspring Ave, Baltimore open at 7 PM for refreshments and socializing. Lecture 7:45-9 PM.

Saturday, December 11

H Frederick. Eastern Shore Trip. Gary Smyle will take us to hot spots on Eastern Shore to look for winter specialties—eider, Harlequin Duck, Snow Goose, and other goodies that show up this time of year. Bring lunch and meet 6 AM at Rte 75 P&R, just south of I-70. Call Gary, 301-663-0055 for info.

Sunday, December 12

H Anne Arundel. Occoquan NWR, VA. Joint with Montgomery Bird Club for wintering waterfowl. Full day. Bring lunch. Meet 8 AM at Parole P&R. Leader: Al Haury, 410-923-0881.

H Montgomery. Occoquan Bay NWR, VA. Full day. Joint trip with Anne Arundel chapter to location new for both. Wetland habitats, bottomland hardwoods, open freshwater marsh, and tidal marshes and streams. Bring lunch, warm drinks. Meet at refuge entrance 9 AM. Call leader Mike Bowen, 301-530-5764.

Tuesday, December 14

MEETING. **Patuxent.** Program TBA. Joint with Prince George's Audubon Society. Meet 7:30 PM at College Park Airport Annex. Call Fred Shaffer, 410-721-1744 for more info or check website at www.audubon.org.

MEETING. **Kent.** Speaker TBA. Meet 7:30 PM Kent County Library, Chestertown. Info, Walter Ellison, 410-778-9568 or Peter Mann, 410-648-5205.

H Harford. Gunpowder SP at Sweet Air. Unlike most sections of Gunpowder Falls SP, this 1,250 acre parcel is known for mixture of open fields and wooded hill-sides rather than streamside access. Search for Pileated Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Fox and Tree Sparrows with experienced guide Bill Pfingsten. Meet 8 AM at Dalton-Bevard Rd parking lot. Contact Bill, 410-838-5732 for details.

Saturday, December 18

CHRISTMAS COUNT Allegany.
CHRISTMAS COUNT Baltimore Harbor/
Baltimore.
CHRISTMAS COUNT Denton/Caroline.
CHRISTMAS COUNT Oakland.
CHRISTMAS COUNT Triadelphia.
CHRISTMAS COUNT Washington, DC.

Sunday, December 19

CHRISTMAS COUNT Catocin #55/
Frederick.
CHRISTMAS COUNT Cecil.
CHRISTMAS COUNT Jug Bay.
CHRISTMAS COUNT Kent.
CHRISTMAS COUNT Port Tobacco.
CHRISTMAS COUNT Salisbury/Tri-County
CHRISTMAS COUNT Seneca/Montgomery.
CHRISTMAS COUNT St. Michaels/Talbot.
CHRISTMAS COUNT Tri-County.

Sunday, December 26

CHRISTMAS COUNT Blackwater NWR/
Southern Dorchester County.
CHRISTMAS COUNT Loudoun Co, VA.

Monday, December 27

CHRISTMAS COUNT Crisfield.
CHRISTMAS COUNT Point Lookout.
CHRISTMAS COUNT Rock Run/Harford.
CHRISTMAS COUNT Washington.

Tuesday, December 28

CHRISTMAS COUNT Ocean City.

Friday, December 31

CHRISTMAS COUNT Bowie.

Saturday, January 1

CHRISTMAS COUNT Annapolis/Gibson Island.

H Howard. "Start Your 2005 List." 3 hours. Meet 8 AM boat ramp of Centennial Park. Easy walk on paved paths and woodland trails. Plan to car-pool to different locations to find as many species as possible. The one day of the year when every bird is new! Facilities available. Call leader, Bonnie Ott for info, 410-461-3361.

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

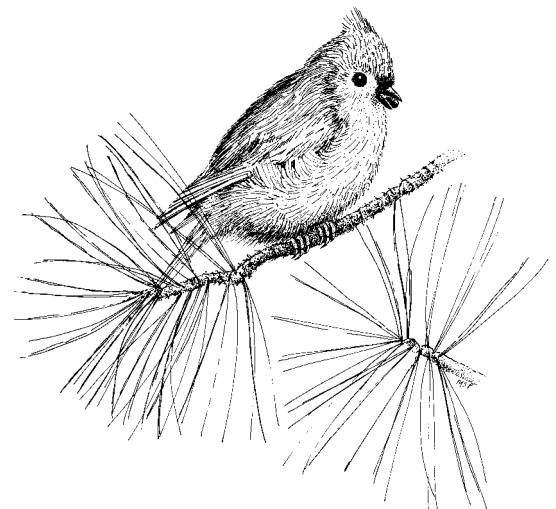
Sunday, January 2

CHRISTMAS COUNT Anne Arundel.
CHRISTMAS COUNT Fort Belvoir, VA.
CHRISTMAS COUNT Patuxent River/
Calvert. St. Mary's.
CHRISTMAS COUNT Sugarloaf/Frederick,
Montgomery

Wednesday, January 5

H Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Ft. McHenry. 9:30 AM-Noon. Meet at Visitor Center. Continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort. Canceled in bad weather. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

MEETING. **Frederick.** *Armas Hill* will present "Birds of Japan: Cranes, Eagles, and More." Meet 7 PM at C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick. For info, contact Marcia Balestri, 301-473-5098.



BOOK REVIEW

Illumination in the Flatwoods: A Season with the Wild Turkey, by Joe Hutto •The Lyons Press (2003)

Illumination in the Flatwoods is about turkeys, and it is a love story.

Deeply curious about turkey behavior, Florida naturalist/wildlife artist Joe Hutto decided to imprint and raise a few wild turkeys. Little did he dream that the experiment would dominate his days and many of his nights for months to come, and beyond—an effort “at once exhausting, often overwhelming, enlightening, and one of the most inspiring and satisfying experiences of my life.”

The turkeys become like well-loved family. But Hutto is at pains not to turn the turkeys into pets; he insulates the birds from human experience and encounter. Rather, he enters the world of the turkey.

Hutto began communicating with his charges while the eggs (some two dozen, rescued from destroyed nests) were still incubating. “In both *Wild Turkey* and *English*, I began to putt, yelp, purr, and offer soft words of encouragement.” And they talk back: “A small chorus of peeping wells up from the eggs.”

The first encounters are electric. A hatchling emerges, and Hutto—his head resting at the end of the incubator shelf—utters a soft sound. “Instantly, [the little bird] raises his shaking wet head and looks me square in the eyes. In that brief moment I see a sudden and unmistakable flash of recognition. . . . I am totally disarmed as the little creature struggles across the towel, never interrupting his gaze, and eventually presses himself against my face.”

Thus imprinted, 20-plus poults follow Papa Hutto everywhere; they relish being touched; they crowd around him; some sleep in his lap. Equipped with notebook and occasionally a video camera, he leads them out on daily foraging walks; he builds a pen to protect them from hawks and weasels and feeds them crickets and fresh greens. And when, by three weeks, they’ve learned to fly, “small wild turkeys are now landing and standing around on my shoulders and head.”

He finds the young birds smart and extraordinarily aware. “Anything soaring overhead, regardless of how imperceptibly high, brings about immediate cautionary behaviors. Many times it is only with great difficulty that I locate some telescopic speck silently moving across the sky.”

Meandering through fields and woods of the Florida panhandle, the turkeys gain mastery over larger insects, avoid snakes, learn to strut. During their long rambles together, Hutto says, “Our communication, although somewhat abstract, is completely satisfying, and our interests are identical: plants, insects, reptiles, birds, mammals, the odd bone, interesting artifacts.”

“The vitality and aggressive nature of these young wild turkeys constantly impresses me,” Hutto writes. “They are exuberant and energetic but never belie an underlying seriousness about their lives.” Compared to crows, Hutto says, “the wild turkey is simply more highly developed and intelligent.” (Sorry, Janet.)

The author increasingly assumes turkey mode. “I haven’t started eating grasshoppers yet,” he jokes, “but the smooth green ones, I notice, are beginning to look very attractive.” As the summer wears on, he finds himself “at last surrendering entirely to the moment and mindlessly allowing this experience to pass through me unimpeded by my attitude and opinions. . . . I feel as though I am seeing the world through their eyes.”

Eventually, of course, the day arrives when the birds assert their independence and refuse to follow. Hutto is stricken with sorrow. He will continue to spend time with the young turkeys, but they come and go as they please. Over time, as detailed in an Epilogue, they disperse.

Illumination, Hutto’s engaging field journal, appeared in hardback in 1995 and was, I believe, marketed wrongheadedly to turkey hunters. The 2003 paperback, which retains the original’s many charming sketches and photographs, is a gem for folks primed for zen birding.

—Lydia Schindler

LAST CALL

. . . for **Research Proposals.**

Applications for grants for ornithological research in the state of Maryland are due by December 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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