

President's Corner SuperNaturalists

by Janet Millenson

Harry Plover always knew he was different. No matter how many starlings roosted in the branches overhead, his car stayed clean. At the beach, his blanket was the only one left alone by pesky gulls. And much to the annoyance of his relatives, he delighted in hearing owls calling from the tree outside his window. Then one day a mysterious letter arrived, inviting him to attend the Hawkwarts School of Ornithology. Harry scanned the course list excitedly. Soon he would be initiated into the ancient secrets of those who wield binoculars, and he would learn the powerful "pishing" spell that magically summons birds from thin air. . .

Jane was an ordinary child until that fateful day when she fell into the river. Carried miles by the tumbling waves, she was saved when a powerful eagle plucked her from the raging waters. In gratitude, Jane vowed to devote her life to protecting birds. Gradually she built a secret identity as Catbird, enemy of feral felines, excessive pesticide use, and invasive species. Disguised in a gray cloak and mask, she testified against turning parklands into highways. Greedy politicians and developers would find a single feather lying on their desks and quake with fear. Yet Catbird always made time to chat with

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The Maryland Yellowthroat

Newsletter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2005

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MOS CONFERENCE WRAP-UP

MAY 20-22, 2005

Conference 2005, hosted by the Anne Arundel chapter of MOS and the Southern Maryland Audubon Society, opened with a storm that brought 40-mph winds and more than 3 inches of rain—and some wonderful birds—to Calvert County. By the time of Sunday's tally, some 220 MOS-ers had ticked 172 species, including a totally unexpected Swainson's Warbler.

Just a handful of intrepid birders braved Friday's storm to visit Flag Ponds Nature Park; they were rewarded with a stunning show of shorebirds, including the park's first Red Knot and Stilt Sandpiper. Jefferson Patterson Park scored its first Glossy Ibis, and also showcased breeding-plumaged Horned and Eared Grebes.

Meantime, back at the Holiday Inn Select in Solomons, weather-wary registrants clipped on their conference pins—a Great Blue Heron silhouetted against a stunning background of primary colors—and streamed through the indoor attractions.

The buzz at the Silent Auction centered around a new feature: Auction Chair Maryanne Dolan persuaded some top birders to donate bird-related services and specialized field trips (think Bonnie Ott and sparrows, Dave Brinker and owls). The Silent Auction and Raffle netted \$2,710, to be divided between the Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Education Center and our Maryland/DC Breeding Bird Atlas Project. Dale Johnson did a superb job, as usual, of organizing the Artists display. John Malcolm and Joy Aso manned the



Highlight of the weekend: Swainson's Warbler. Photo courtesy of George Jett.

MOS merchandise table, selling off everything except basic stock items and a few coffee mugs and generating more than \$1,250.

Following Friday evening's banquet, MOS historian Don Messersmith traced the organization's beginnings 60 years earlier; he recapped early field trips by streetcar and showed photos of the legendary Annual Conferences in Ocean City. (One picture included a youthful Chan Robbins. This year's meeting was one of the few that Chan and Eleanor Robbins have ever missed; they were attending granddaughters' graduations.)

By Saturday morning, storm clouds had cleared and the field trips—wonderfully organized by Peter Hanan, with the help of Gwen Brewer, George Jett, Helen Patton, Sue Hamilton, and Arlene Ripley—spread out through Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties. In addition to the birding trips, there were trips specializing in butterflies, dragonflies, and geology, along with sparrow identification.

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CONFERENCE 2005 (continued from page 1)

The undisputed highlight was the Swainson's Warbler discovered Saturday morning at American Chestnut Land Trust. This very cooperative male sang almost constantly Saturday and Sunday, giving most attendees a chance for excellent views. Other birds of note on Saturday: breeding plumaged Horned and Eared Grebes and Red-throated Loon at Jefferson Patterson, Black Skimmer at Point Lookout.

The day-long listers' trip to St. Mary's County, led by Tyler Bell, found 107 species; best birds on the chase, reports Tyler, were Northern Bobwhite in two locations, the Ruddy Turnstone loafing on the Sea Breeze pier, and a Red-headed Woodpecker in St. Inigoes. George Jett's trip to Charles County tallied 108 species; highlights included Barn Owl young in nest and a nice mix of shorebirds at Allen's Fresh.

Saturday evening brought the Wine and Cheese Social, accompanied by the Research Posters Session, beautifully organized by Gwen Brewer. Displayed to advantage in sunlit exterior corridors, the posters

drew a steady stream of engaged observers. It is interesting to note that some of the poster presenters were former MOS scholarship winners. So were both Mike Callahan and Paula Batzer of the Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Educational Center, one of the Silent Auction beneficiaries. It is very gratifying that this circle of giving money, time, and knowledge continues to go around.

At Saturday night's business meeting, President Janet Millenson gave an entertaining and informative briefing on the events of the year and introduced new chairs. The new Scholarship Chair, Tom Strikwerda, took the occasion to introduce four of this year's scholarship winners who were in the audience.

On Sunday morning, many field trips diverted to look for the Swainson's Warbler (see "Telling Tales" on p. 10). The trip to the banding station struck gold with not one but two Mourning Warblers, as well as five other warbler species; the ensuing walk, reports leader Dave Harvey, added six more. The final formal activity was the lunchtime tally conducted by Bob Ringler.

Many people helped organize the conference. Conference Committee members, many of them in their third year, did an outstanding job. Members of the Anne Arundel chapter as well as the Southern Maryland Audubon Society provided lots of help, leading field trips, graciously helping to organize them, and making themselves available for questions or suggestions. Thanks go to all of the field trip leaders; many of these people lead trips year after year. Our 2005 Conference was a resounding success because of the efforts of all these people.

—Janet Shields, Chair

CONFERENCE AWARDS

At Saturday night's business meeting, President Janet Millenson presented several awards:

- Plaques went to **Don Messersmith** for environmental education, and to **Jan and Kristen Lawyer** of Thurmont for graciously hosting the lapwing seekers.

- Valued Service Awards went to **Bill Guion** for managing the mailing list for 15 years, and to **Gwen Brewer** for chairing the Research Committee.

- Attagirl/Attaboy awards to outstanding newcomers went to **Emy Holdridge**, Treasurer; **Helen Horrocks**, membership list; and **Tom Strikwerda**, Scholarships Chair.

- Blood, Sweat & Tears awards for handling a tough task went to **Maureen Harvey**, Conservation Chair; **Fred Shaffer**, for arranging the WOS/AFO conference field trips; and **Barbara and George Gaffney** and **Doug and Nancy Parker**, for maintaining our Carey Run sanctuary.

- **Janet Shields**, Secretary, received the "Montgomery County Nitpickers Seal of Approval" [with the second p in approval inserted as a correction], "for enduring without complaint the slings and arrows of the MOS Board members who take great pleasure in proofreading . . . her minutes of the Board meetings before pronouncing them acceptable."

2005 CONFERENCE POSTERS

Threats to Neotropical Migratory Songbirds and Action for their Conservation. Melissa Boyle, Hood College, Frederick.

Possible Distributional Changes Detected by a Second Breeding Bird Atlas in Maryland and the District of Columbia. Walter G. Ellison, MOS, and Mark Wimer, USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel.

The Genetic History of Maryland's Lesser Snow Goose. Elizabeth M. Humphries*, Jeffrey L. Peters, and Kevin E. Omland, U. Maryland Baltimore County.

Orchard Orioles: A Tale of Two Pigments. Christopher M. Hofmann*, Kevin J. McGraw, Thomas W. Cronin, and Kevin E. Omland, U. Maryland Baltimore County.

Possible Double Brooding in Temperate-Breeding Orioles: Breeding Behavior of Baltimore Orioles in Maryland. Spring Ligi* and Kevin Omland, U. Maryland Baltimore County.

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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 September 25, 2005 for the November/December issue.

Illustrations on pages 1, 10, 11, 13, and 14
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Photo on page 1 courtesy of George Jett



DNR Reports... by Glenn Therres

After 18 months of work, the Maryland Wildlife Diversity Conservation Plan is nearing completion. The 10-year plan summarizes the current knowledge of the status of Maryland's wildlife and identifies necessary conservation efforts. DNR's Wildlife and Heritage Service took the lead in the plan's development, with significant assistance from the Maryland Biological Stream Survey (MBSS) and Fisheries Service, and other public and private stakeholders.

The plan was developed, in part, to fulfill obligations to the federal government, which is developing a new source of funding for state fish and wildlife agencies, State Wildlife Grants. By October 1, 2005, all 50 states are required to develop comprehensive wildlife conservation strategies, emphasizing species at risk. As required by the U.S. Congress, the plan addresses the needs of both "species of greatest conservation need" (GCN) and the "full array of wildlife."

Congress identified eight elements to be examined in the plan: (1) information on the distribution and abundance of GCN species; (2) locations and relative condition of key habitats and community types essential to conservation of these species; (3) problems that could adversely affect these species and their habitats, and priority research and survey efforts needed to identify factors that could assist in restoration and improved conservation of these species and habitats; (4) conservation actions proposed to conserve GCN species and their key habitats; (5) plans for monitoring identified species and their habitats; (6) procedures to review the strategy at intervals not to exceed ten years; and (7) plans for coordinating the development, implementation, review, and revision of the plan with federal, state, and local agencies.

The eighth element: broad public participation in developing and implementing these plans. We held public workshops to solicit input in June 2004 and July 2005; MOS was adequately represented at both workshops. We also posted updates on the DNR webpage (www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/divplan), and we solicited comments throughout the process.

We identified more than 500 GCN species. These are animals, both aquatic and terrestrial, that are at risk or are declining in Maryland. In addition to threatened and endangered species, the list includes many species whose populations are of concern in our state. Birds comprise a big portion of Maryland's GCN species, but the list includes all animal forms, including 240-plus invertebrates.

Developing a statewide plan for over 500 species, with various life histories and requirements, would be nearly impossible. Instead, we used a habitat approach, since the distribution and abundance of wildlife species are directly related to the condition and location of their habitats. While some species can be found in a variety of habitats, many are less adaptive and are restricted to one or relatively few habitats. This is especially true for the rarest and most vulnerable wildlife species.

Habitats that support GCN species are referred to as "key habitats." Examples of key habitats include tidal marshes and floodplain forests. This more holistic approach makes it possible to conserve entire assemblages of species at the same time.

We identified 35 key habitats, including 8 forested types, 9 wetland types, and 9 types of streams and rivers. These habitats capture most of the wildlife species residing in Maryland, other than strictly urban or agricultural species. For each habitat, the plan includes a description of the habitat, a map depicting its distribution throughout the State, a list of GCN species associated with it, threats to the habitat, and actions necessary to conserve the habitat in Maryland. The conservation actions are broad-based and include such things as minimizing and reducing habitat fragmentation, incorporating conservation actions into land use and land

President's Corner (continued from page 1)

average citizens as she traveled about in her hybrid vehicle. In fact, that's how she met Robin. . .

Getting permission to bird the grounds of the top-secret military base was a privilege and a thrill. Afterwards, though, the field trip participants started to feel rather strange. Remembering the three-legged Ospreys nesting on the cooling tower, several birders grew concerned that they'd been exposed to dangerous chemicals or radiation. Indeed, the transformations had already begun. New identities and super powers emerged: Hawkeye could spot birds a mile away without binoculars; Phoebe could distinguish among silent *Empidonax* flycatchers; and Woody could cling to vertical walls. The team united to fight an arch-villain known as The Mocker, whose song imitations lured many an unwary birder to doom. . .

I guess you can tell I didn't spend the summer reading Dostoevsky.

MOS really is a "super" society, and we have achievements to be proud of. Last year, a lot of terrifically talented people agreed to serve as committee chairs. We met our budget and we improved our administrative processes. MOS chapters organized hundreds of field trips and sponsored dozens of bird counts for scientific and fund-raising purposes. MOS stayed deeply involved in conservation issues affecting the state and the nation. We were offered 80 wooded acres in southern Prince George's County as a new bird sanctuary. Thousands of volunteer hours were devoted to the fourth year of the Atlas Project.

This year promises to be exciting, too. Although we don't have a plan for world domination, we do plan to be a more dominant presence in Maryland birding. Our statewide educational activities and youth programs will be starting up soon, and we're looking at other innovative ways to attract and retain members. We'll keep seeking a suitable headquarters location to use for meetings and storage. We want MOS to be known as the group to join if you want more birds, more birding, and more birders.

Your continued support is vital and much appreciated. Whether your identity as a birder is secret or not, MOS welcomes you!



OTHER VOICES, OTHER ATLAS BLOCKS

BY WALTER ELLISON

I have often written about the adventures that ensue when one goes afield during an atlas project. I have also often enjoyed reading the accounts shared by many atlas workers with readers of the Maryland birding e-mail listserv *MDOsprey*. It is about time that I let others speak for me on the pleasures and excitement of atlasing; I herewith offer five excerpted *MDOsprey* accounts from the 2005 field season, ranging from the Allegheny Plateau to the Atlantic Coast. Thanks to the atlasers for permission to publish their words here, and thanks to *MDOsprey* listserv owner Norm Saunders for permission to use these accounts.

—Walter Ellison

We begin with some comments from **Glen Lovelace** on birding inland at night on the central Eastern Shore. (The Atlas still needs a lot more nocturnal work to truly represent the ranges of our owls and nightjars.)

5/26/2005. I got out last night to do several hours of night atlasing on my Rhodesdale NE, Rhodesdale CE, and Sharptown CW atlas blocks. First stop was Wesley Rd (south of MD 392) where there was at least a Chuck or a Whip at every stop I made, with a total of 4-5 Chucks and 3 Whips (including one in Rhodesdale NW). But oddly, all of their calling was done between 9 and 9:30 PM; after that I met with silence. Additional birds were a calling Barred Owl on Puckum Rd about .5 mile south of the stream and a calling Screech-owl on Jones Thicket Rd approx 1.5 miles west of the Indiantown Rd pig farm. Also a Great Blue Heron fishing at the Sharptown boat ramp at 10:30 PM.

6/15/2005. Rhodesdale NW: Sharp corner of Wesley Rd, 2 Chucks and a Whip, both for upgrades to probable. I also had a visit from a state trooper. I was driving along slowly, pulling off the side of the road and turning my lights off, all suggesting a drunk driver in his eyes. Instead it was some nut out listening for birds in the middle of the night. He was very nice about it and went on his way.

Elise Kreiss describes some of the pleasures of suburban and urban park birding on the fall line in the Baltimore area.

6/5/2005: Of the five active [Yellow-crowned Night-Heron] nests on Windsor Mill Road across from the Leakin Park trailhead that remained when the dust settled this year, one has a visible nestling. We saw two adults at the nest and a head visible above the nest.

Also, we took a short trip to Gwynn Oak Park on Thursday and found an Eastern Kingbird nest and Cedar Waxwings at a very early stage of nest-building. One bird was wrapping a piece of what might have been fishing line around a tree limb. You do wonder how the birds ever get done; the beginning stage of nest-building looks so awkward. We also found our first Killdeer within safe dates,

and four Great Blue Herons, including two flying in together, and happened to see a fifth further downstream on our way home. We have hopes of finding nests at some point. There was also a Black-crowned Night-Heron.

We continue the theme of urban birding with **Rob Hilton's** account of block-busting in Washington, D.C.

6/11/2005: Highlights from this morning's blockbusting with Paul Pisano and John Hubbell. Fort Dupont Park in Southeast DC, from around 6:45 to 8:15 am. We spent our time in and around the picnic area loop road, which runs on top of a hill with mature trees and lots of undergrowth. We heard a calling Yellow-billed Cuckoo and a singing Ovenbird and saw a male Scarlet Tanager and a male Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Off in the distance we may have heard a Pileated Woodpecker calling.

We then spent about an hour along Fort Circle Park Hiker and Biker Trail. The segment south of Pennsylvania Avenue was rich! There are a lot of mature trees and much undergrowth. The best bird there was a Worm-eating Warbler that sang twice. We also heard a singing Ovenbird, Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager, and several Acadians and pewees. Another nice sight was a pair of Great Crested Flycatchers fluttering around a hole that seemed to hold a nest.

Moving from the fall line to the Atlantic Coastal Plain and Assateague Island, we follow Worcester County Coordinator **Mark Hoffman** during part of a long and successful day of atlasing.

6/17/2005: Tingles Island SE: I wasn't planning on doing this block, which roughly includes the area on Assateague from Hungerford to the north end of the Fox Hill Levels, but noted again I still needed chickadee—just too much to take! I had a great trip working the Hungerford woods, adding 6 species for the block (Brown Pelican, Northern Bobwhite, Clapper Rail, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Cedar Waxwing). No chickadee, however. The nuthatch was a real surprise, as I have worked this area several times and not had one here. It seemed to be a lone individual, right near the old house. The Clapper was in the marsh just west of the house, and while working this area I flushed a meadowlark, as if from a nest. It took me 4 minutes of looking in the clump of grass, but I finally found a nest with 4 eggs, the first I had ever seen. Two Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were near the Hungerford house as well; I confirmed them here last year as the first breeding record for Assateague. They were not found on the Island during the prior atlas.

Whittington Point NW: up to day, I had 69 species for this block and wanted to get it over the 70 threshold. In the Green Run woods, a total surprise was a single Blue Jay—heard, seen, and photographed. There was a record

from this block in the prior atlas, but it would seem hard to believe that Blue Jays nest on Assateague, where they are otherwise scarce migrants in spring and fall. I did have a number of birds (in the woods) in this general area during my trip here at the end of May this year. Two other adds (Great Blue Heron and American Goldfinch) brought the list up to 72.

Whittington Point CW: Here my goal was to better the prior atlas. I had 64 species; the prior record was 66. Working the woods south of Green Run, I added Purple Martin (how close could the nearest colony be?), Common Grackle, and American Goldfinch—67 in the bag. Still no chickadee in this one either. A single Common Nighthawk continued the many records I have had of this species on Assateague this year and last. I now have recorded it in 5 atlas blocks (4 probable), while in the prior atlas there was only one record (a possible) on the Island. Given that this species can be tough to find in Worcester (and would appear to be declining elsewhere in the state), this has been a real pleasant surprise of atlas-ing.

Finally we have an account of a very productive evening hike by **Stan and Elaine Arnold** in the mountains of Maryland's far west.

6/26/2005: After two nights in Indianapolis, we returned to our atlas-ing in the Barton NE block of Garrett County with an early evening hike to the top of Four-Mile Ridge, accessed from one of the yellow Forest Service gates on the west side of Avilton-Lonaconing Rd. By far our best find of the outing came just as we crossed the dilapidated bridge across the Little Savage River. Here we heard some very forceful chip notes that caused us to pause in our tracks. I did not know to what species these utterances belonged until a little song revealed the bird as a Canada Warbler. In short order, a fledged youngster flitted into and then out of my field of view, as an alarmed parent scolded the youngster out of harm's way and then proceeded to fly circles around us, chipping the entire time. It was difficult for Elaine and me to get a good look at the bird as it constantly changed position, but we were, in time, able to get a fairly satisfying look at the bright yellow underside, black necklace, and bold eye-ring. We then hiked up the trail, where Hermit Thrush could be heard singing in the distance, and where a Chestnut-sided Warbler scolded us from a perch over the trail but didn't seem to be defending a nest. Then as we came back down, a male Black-throated Blue Warbler came bursting out of a thicket and noisily flew circles around us, certainly leading us away from his nest. When we returned to the Canada Warbler location, we were given the third degree. This time we had both parents in the alarm-mode, with one of them making two kamikaze runs at me. I thought I was going to get hit both times. We left them to their business, feeling quite smug at this wonderful atlas confirmation.

Yet Another Atlas-ing Lesson

21 June 2005. I spent three hours atlas-ing this first morning of summer. I found myself at the end of a road, listening to an odd Orchard Oriole song and trying to find the bird to make sure that's what it was. I stopped here because of the large field—I hadn't realized this much habitat was left in this part of Prince George's County and I was optimistically hoping for a Field Sparrow. I search the large sycamore for the oriole, eventually finding it and a silent female. Along the way I find silent waxwing and kingbird in the tree. Then I realize I'm hearing Field Sparrows singing in the background. Wow, this is a good stop. I find one of the Field Sparrows perched in a nearby bush, then hear a familiar song that's so out of place in this part of the county it had to sing a couple of more times before I realize it's an Eastern Meadowlark. That's a bird no longer on my well-it-COULD-happen list.

I see no "No Trespassing" signs, so I decide to chance the ticks and walk around a little. A group of trees halfway across the field are swarming with Indigo Buntings plus a silent Song Sparrow with a bill full of dry grass. What a lovely place. Behind the trees is a small pond with four species of swallows, two species of herons, Mallard, geese, and a Killdeer.

How much better can this get? I see a dense growth of saplings beyond the pond; can I hope for White-eyed Vireo and maybe a Prairie Warbler? I don't have either in this block yet. I cross the field, finding neither target bird, but while I'm walking back toward the pond, a chat sounds off in the distance. The walk is through thick, waist-high grasses which are pretty devoid of birds and, thankfully, of ticks. A Red-tailed Hawk screams from overhead. I get to an area of thinner, shorter growth with last year's dried weed stocks and suddenly I'm surrounded by Common Yellowthroats. I figure there's four pair, one feeding young.

I set off in yet another direction but stop when a bird flies by carrying food. It lands in one of the trees near the pond. I think it's an oriole but all I got was a silhouette. That should be an easy confirmation, but instead of trekking off after it, I decide it's easier to wait for the bird to make another pass by me. While standing there, I find a few more kingbirds, a pair of Blue Grosbeaks and then I hear it—Grasshopper Sparrow! The best bird of the day. The immature male Orchard Oriole makes a few more passes carrying food. I think there are two sparrows singing. I locate one perched on a twig. It throws its head back and with its bill opened wide, it looks like a mute opera singer.

This place seems too good to be true. I walk up a small hill and see even more fields beyond. There, running across the far side of those fields, is a bulldozer.

Perhaps Fairview Estates will have a Meadowlark Lane.

—Dave Mozurkewich

This first appeared on *MDOsprey*.

MOS CONFERENCE 2006

The keynote speaker at the 2006 Conference will be **Tim Gallagher**, one of the first successful searchers for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker and author of *The Grail Bird*.

The conference will take place **June 9-11** at **Rocky Gap Lodge**, Cumberland, Allegany County. (See review of *The Grail Bird* on page 24.)



Great Blue Heron pin design by Teri Christensen of the Tri-County Chapter.

MOS PIN CONTEST

Attention Artists! You are invited to enter the 2006 MOS Conference Pin Design Contest. The deadline is January 16, 2006. The basic rules are simple: entrants must be members of MOS, and the design must contain a bird appropriate for the conference site (Rocky Gap) and the phrases "MOS" and "2006." On the back of each entry the artist must put name, address, and 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, visit the MOS website, or contact John Malcolm at 301-977-5788 or at smudgie@comcast.net.

MARYLAND FALL COUNT 2004

The annual Fall Seasonal Count sponsored by MOS will be held Saturday, September 17, 2005 and/or Sunday, September 18. Several counties have traditionally held counts on the third weekend in September, but the MOS Board has left the choice of Saturday or Sunday to local chapters and coordinators. Chapters that have not included a formal count in their programs this year are urged to plan to do so in future years.

Everyone is urged to participate, no matter his or her skill level. Identification is only part of being successful; you have to spot the bird first, so every pair of eyes helps.

The guidelines for this count are the same as those for all seasonal counts. Local coordinators will assign volunteers to areas, honoring requests whenever possible. Party leaders are responsible for tracking party miles and times, names of participants, and documentation for unusual sightings. A checklist compilation form is available in the "Annual Counts" section of the MOS website: <http://www.mdbirds.org/counts/fall/fallcount.html>. The list includes those species one would expect to find in Maryland and DC during this season. Species requiring further written documentation are noted with asterisks. All write-ins require full details.

County coordinators who have volunteered so far are listed on the website and in the Calendar (page 18). Anyone already organizing a count or interested in volunteering as a coordinator for another county can contact me.

If you don't have web access or you are interested in counting in a county without a coordinator, you can contact me directly. Individual parties or other groups (e.g. Hawk Watch sites, field trips) who count in areas without a coordinator are asked to submit their data, along with details on the area that was covered, directly to me by October 11.

Deadline for submitting completed reports to your county coordinator is no later than October 10, 2005. County compilers are asked to submit compilations by November 1.

Plan to join the fun and have a great day birding!

Chuck Stirrat
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CONFERENCE 2005 (continued from page 2)

The Function of Call Length

Variation and Vocal Overlapping Behavior in Carolina Chickadees (Poecile carolinensis). Jennie M. Niewood, mentored by Jordan Price, St. Mary's College of Maryland, St. Mary's City.

Presence and Impact of

Environmental Lead on Breeding Passerine Birds. Karin E. Roux* and Peter P. Marra, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, Edgewater.

Water Quality and Foraging Behavior in Wintering Common Loons

(Gavia immer). Stephanie Thompson, mentored by Jordan Price, St. Mary's College of Maryland, St. Mary's City.

The Important Bird Areas Program in Maryland and the District of Columbia. David Curson, Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon MD-DC.

*Recipient of an MOS Research Award

SILENT AUCTION

Thanks to the enthusiastic support of conference attendees and my terrific volunteers, this year's Silent Auction and Raffle were once again huge successes. A big "thank you" goes to Joy and Tom Loomis, Laddie Flyger, and Sherry Zucker. It may be commonplace to thank volunteers and ascribe to them all manner of marvels, but in this case it's true. Tom, Joy, Laddie, and Sherry bring calm and good sense to a hectic day and a half. I simply could not run the auction/ raffle without them.

New to this year's Auction were "personal" items, and they were a huge success, bringing in over \$500. We hope to expand on this concept next year, so put on your thinking caps and come up with something you, too, can "sell."

—Maryanne Dolan
Auction/Raffle Chair

Congratulations!

Congratulations to **George Radcliffe**, winner of a 2005 Disney Teacher Award for Middle School Science Education. George, who teaches science at Centreville Middle School (Queen Anne's County), was chosen from more than 50,000 nominations nationwide. The award recognizes "creativity, innovative teaching methods, and ability to inspire students while actively engaging them in learning."

In birding circles, George is renowned for nurturing a love of birds and birding in his students. In particular, he has for years fielded student teams that compete in the World Series of Birding, teams whose alumni constitute some of Maryland's best young birders. (See *World Series of Birding story*.) He is also the chair of the newly formed MOS Youth Programs Committee.

The Disney award includes \$10,000 for George and \$5,000 for his school—plus a week of festivities at Disneyland.

DNR Reports (continued from page 3)

planning efforts, and minimizing human disturbance to habitats by limiting access and by educating the public about the value of these habitats. For this initial plan, we could not get too detailed, as much more analysis is required at the site-specific and species levels. Such details will be incorporated into future revisions. The plan also includes inventory, monitoring, and research needs for the habitat and associated GCN species.

The conservation actions identified need to be implemented not only by DNR but by all those interested in conserving Maryland's diverse wildlife resources. This includes state, federal, and local government agencies, private conservation organizations, and the public at large. The plan is ambitious. It will need adequate funding, support, and collaboration among conservation partners, stakeholders, and the public. This plan is only the beginning! Please help to implement the necessary actions for conserving Maryland's wildlife.

World Series of Birding

Maryland again exerted a strong presence in the 2005 World Series of Birding sponsored by New Jersey Audubon. The MOS team, the **Maryland Yellowthroats—Matt Hafner, Hans Holbrook, and Jim Brighton**—scored 172 species over the 24 hours of the competition, coming in second in the Cape May County division. This was only 5 species behind the winning team, Cape May residents—but former Marylanders—**Mark Garland** (still a member of MOS) and **Michael O'Brien**, and Michael's wife, **Louise Zemaitis**.

Birders from the Montgomery Bird Club, competing as **The Holy Order of Loggerhead Shrikes**, took third place in the County division with 150 species. The Shrikes team—**Gordon "Golden Plover" Gover, John "Laughing Falcon" Hubbell, Andy "Raptor" Rabin**, and captain **Don "Lord High Loggerhead" Simonson**—gathered over \$1,200 in pledges for Pronatura Veracruz.

In the youth competition, Queen Anne's County shone, with three teams from Centreville Middle School (see article about George Radcliffe at left), a Queen Anne's County high school team, and an independent high school team sponsored by Steiner Optics. In addition, QA resident **Zach Baer** competed on the winning high school team, **Space Coast Coastal Cuckoos**, whose 212 species statewide would have been good enough to earn them third place in the adult division, and was only 10 species behind the grand winner.

In the Middle School Division, top honors went to four girls from Centreville Middle School who competed as the **Chick-burr-ders** and tallied 150 species. In second place was CMS's **The Peeps**, with 144, and in fourth place, CMS's **Butcher Birders** with 108.

Among High School teams, the Queen Anne's County HS **Saw-What Owls** scored fourth, with 168 species, and the independent QA Steiner **Team Merlin** placed sixth with 150.

THE OTHER CENTRAL AMERICAN PARADISE—PANAMA

BY MARCIA BALESTRI

This year the Frederick County Chapter picked Panama for our annual “big” trip, and last March, 11 birders—Gary Smyle, Mike Welch, Linda Keller, Lois Kauffman, Kathy Calvert, Katherine Grandine, Dave Smith, Elinor and Stauffer Miller (former MOS-ers now living on Cape Cod), and my husband Bob and I—set out for eight days of exciting tropical birding at Canopy Tower and El Valle de Anton. Panama has some of the most accessible forests anywhere in the tropics and a checklist of 944 species.

One of the easiest and best introductions to tropical birding in Central America is at Canopy Tower on top of Semaphore Hill, in a well-preserved semi-deciduous forest in the heart of Soberanía National Park, a 55,000-acre wilderness reserve bordering the Panama Canal. The tower is 900 feet above sea level, and from its roof you can see the Pacific entrance to the Panama Canal and the skyline of Panama City. Raúl Arias de Para, a prominent Panamanian businessman and conservationist, opened the ecolodge in January 1999. (Raúl was also opening Canopy Lodge in El Valle in August 2005.)

The Canopy Tower has five levels that offer different views of the surrounding forest. Levels two and three house bedrooms. On the fourth level, panoramic windows surround the dining area and kitchen (wonderful food); hammocks add a relaxed touch, as does a library and a comfortable lounge area. For the wildlife viewer, the upper level is where most of the action is. Just 20 steps up from the dining area, you are on top of the world with a 360-degree view. Sturdy chairs and tables let you rest your morning coffee or afternoon tea and your weary bones as you watch the parade of wildlife. Decadent birding at its best!

Imagine being awakened every morning by the throaty roars of Howler Monkeys, the raucous chatter of toucans and parrots, and the tew-tew-tew of the Green Shrike-Vireo! And providing a break from the onslaught of fantastic birds are other critters—mammals, reptiles, butterflies, and bugs. Our typical day started at 6 AM with coffee, tea, and birds on the observation deck. One could easily spend all day, every day, captivated by the rooftop birding, or enchanted by the well-maintained hummingbird feeders below. But the forest and the birds always beckoned. After breakfast at 7, off to a morning of birding. More delicious food for lunch at the Tower, with a siesta until about 3 PM, when we would leave for our afternoon adventures. Hors d’oeuvres and checklist at 6 (unless we got sidetracked by a good bird) and a wonderful dinner at 7.

Most of us arrived the afternoon of March 21. After settling in, we enjoyed birding around the Tower and up on the observation deck with our guides while we were at the Tower, Carlos Bethancourt and his very able assistant. I think Carlos is the best birder in Panama; certainly no one

is faster at getting a scope on a bird in dense tropical forest, and his eyes, ears, and knowledge of Panamanian birds are phenomenal.

Spring migration brought hundreds of Broad-winged and Swainson’s Hawks, as well as smaller numbers of other migrating hawks, over the Tower most every day. Among the numerous local residents were Chestnut-mandibled and Keel-billed Toucans; Palm, Plain-colored, Blue-gray, and White-shouldered Tanagers; and Lesser Greenlets. The feeders downstairs welcomed White-necked Jacobin, Long-tailed Hermit, White-vented Plumeleteer, and Violet-bellied, Blue-chested, and Snowy-bellied Hummingbirds.

The first morning we were treated to a Blue Cotinga, a signature bird, atop the Tower. After breakfast we walked down narrow, windy, and birdy Semaphore Hill Road; best birds were Bright-rumped Attila, Oscellated Antbird, the elusive Green Shrike-Vireo, Great Jacamar, Dusky Antbird, Common Potoo, and Broad-billed Motmot.

That afternoon we all piled into the Tinamobile, a truck with benches in the back bed, and headed to the Ammo Dump. It sounds awful, but it’s a nice marshy area surrounded by secondary growth scrub areas. This was the birdiest area I’ve ever seen, with close to 60 species in about 2 hours—and we didn’t even move much. Tanagers, warblers, euphonias, flycatchers, and seedeaters were everywhere. We also heard White-throated Crake—one of the target birds at the Ammo Dump—but it chose not to show its face.

On March 23, we spent the whole day on Pipeline Road, known for its specialty birds and ant swarms. We did not encounter a spectacular swarm, but thanks to Carlos’ keen eyes and ears, we saw close to 70 species, including Black-tailed, Slaty-tailed, and Black-throated Trogons; Spotted, Dusky, and Chestnut-backed Antbirds; Streak-chested Antpitta; Spot-crowned Antvireo; White-whiskered, Pied, White-necked, and Black-breasted Puffbirds; and several species of manakins, honeycreepers, woodcreepers, and woodpeckers. The highlight of the day was a Common Potoo mother and her baby perched on a snag right next to the trail.

The next morning before breakfast, we heard a Pheasant Cuckoo near the Tower. We had been hearing it since we arrived, but it was an elusive bird. Several of us tried to find it from the top level, from the bottom, and even along the road, but no luck. Then Carlos spotted it from the kitchen window, and much to the kitchen staff’s chagrin, we all crowded in for a lovely scope look.

After breakfast, we hiked Plantation Trail, narrow and about 2.5 miles long, passing through forest and paralleling

a stream. The highlight was a very cooperative Great Tinamou; it posed while we all had great looks and took bunches of pictures. (You can hear Great and Little Tinamous all around the Tower, but this is the first one I have actually seen!)

In the afternoon, we visited Summit Park, a large park with a small zoo and with different habitat. The Park houses a state-of-the-art Harpy Eagle exhibit, including two live birds in a gigantic aviary. Around the park we found Panama Flycatcher, Common Tody-Flycatcher, Masked Tityra, and Streaked-headed Woodcreeper. Nearby Summit Ponds held Amazon, Ringed, and Green Kingfishers; Blue-crowned Motmot; and Yellow-headed Caracara.

That evening we went on a night-creature drive, using large spotlights to scan for eye shine. At first things were a bit slow, only the occasional Three-toed Sloth, but eventually we managed wonderful looks at Pauraque, Great Potoo, and a Crested Owl that flew right over the truck and landed just so we could see him. What a treat!

The next morning we set off along Old Gamboa Road, one of my personal favorites. The road passes through scrubby and secondary growth habitat as well as pastures and other open country areas. Highlights were American Pygmy Kingfisher, Rufous-breasted Hermit, Violaceous Trogon, Spectacled Owl, Orange-chinned Parakeets, Garden Emerald, and Rufous Nightjars (very unusual here—even Carlos got excited about them). Old Gamboa Road ends back at the Summit Ponds, where this time we found Striated and Boat-billed Herons.

That afternoon we visited the feeders of a Gamboa resident. We brought our own fruit and loaded up the feeders, to the delight of honeycreepers, tanagers, parakeets, and oropendola. Next, on the grounds of Gamboa Resort and the Chagres River, we added Southern Lapwing, Streaked and Buff-throated Saltators, and Flame-rumped Tanager. We had time to revisit the Ammo Dump, hoping to see the elusive crake, but still no luck! We did have great looks at a Rufescent Tiger-Heron and a Least Bittern.

On March 26, we took our leave of Canopy Tower, and six of us continued on to the forested foothills in El Valle de Anton, a couple of hours away. We were met by Tino and Danilo, our guides for the next 3 days, checked into the hotel, and birded around the motel before a delicious lunch (this and every day in El Valle) at Raúl's guesthouse, on a delightful veranda filled with birds. It was hard to eat with tanagers, honeycreepers, dacnis, hummers, motmots, saltators, oropendola, migrating warblers, and other birds scrambling about on the bird feeders and flowering shrubs! And imagine having a Chestnut-headed Oropendola colony in your backyard. On the way back to the hotel, a stop at

Cara de Iguana found Black-chested Jay, Lance-tailed Manakin, Rosy Thrush-Tanager, and Rufous-capped Warbler.

The next two days we birded areas on and around La Mesa Road and Cerro Gaital Natural Monument, seeing a variety of foothill species: Black-headed Saltator, Silver-throated Tanager, Gray-headed Kite, Long-billed Starthroat, White-ruffed Manakin, Emerald Toucanet, Plain Antvireo, Barred Hawk, Bran-colored Flycatcher, Tawny-crested Tanager, and Black-faced Anthrush. We also managed to find Green Hermit, Pale-vented Thrush, Black-faced Grosbeak, Tawny-capped Euphonia, and Gray-necked Wood-Rail.

At a private refuge with a beautiful 150-foot waterfall called Chorro Macho, we watched as two Sunbitterns enjoyed the rushing water and spray. The trail around the waterfall held Violet-headed Hummingbird, Eye-ringed Flatbill, and the showstopper of the day—a Tody Motmot, the smallest motmot in the world.

We had the pleasure of touring Raúl's exciting, new (but not quite completed) Canopy Lodge. This soon-to-be-open facility has eight large guest rooms and is nestled between the base of a forest-shrouded mountain and a pristine babbling stream. The scene is nothing short of idyllic—can't wait to go back and stay there!

Unfortunately, we had to leave this paradise and head back to civilization. But even around the airport in Panama City we added shorebirds and a few other species, bringing our list to 304. We had also had wonderful looks at a variety of mammals and other animals including Giant Anteater, Agouti, White-nosed Coati, Geoffroy's Tamarin, Capuchin Monkey, and Blue Morpho butterfly.

Linda Keller summed up our Panama experience very nicely. "I felt as if someone had put me in a time machine and I was back in the Garden of Eden, when we humans considered ourselves one of them, the animals, on an equal basis. Very much at peace with the world I'd come to enjoy, I anticipated, just as the first humans must have, each new wonderful creature I was about to see. Sometimes I feel like the first adventurers exploring the region, and I could name the flora and fauna on my own."

Telling Tales



On Sunday morning, before Arlene Ripley left to take her group to look for the Swainson's Warbler, I asked her to call me on my cell phone if they found it. When nobody showed up for my Patterson trip (everyone was looking for the warbler), I called Jane [Kostenko] and we went to the American Chestnut Land Trust. We were there, looking at the bird, when Arlene called my cell—then muttered something disparaging about it being out of service. As she started to leave a message, I called over to her. She looked around and burst out laughing; I was standing 6 feet behind her.

—Tyler Bell

BOARD BULLETINS

From the June 4 meeting in Columbia, Howard County

- Newly appointed chairs: Brent Byers, Sanctuary Committee; Cecily Nabors, Publicity Committee.
- New Nominating Committee: Helen Patton, Chair; Peter Mann, Mike Bowen, Mary-Jo Betts, Barbara Gaffney.
- Liaison with Important Bird Areas program: Matt Hafner.
- Wind power facility in western Maryland has changed plans, from 23 towers to 12 larger towers; persons interested in dates of hearings should contact Maureen Harvey, maureen.harvey@jhuapl.edu.
- The Atlas will again be receiving a \$50,000 grant from DNR, tied to matching volunteer hours.
- President Janet Millenson and Sanctuary Chair Brent Byers are continuing to explore the pros and cons of the potential Piscataway Sanctuary.
- President Janet Millenson seeks Chapter feedback on the idea of a central headquarters for the Society.
- The Board warmly applauded Dotty Mumford, retiring from the Board after more than 20 years of service, much of that time as Sanctuary Chair. Dotty will continue to play an active role at Irish Grove.
- The Board agreed to reprint Field Checklists.

Travel Notes

The MOS web site is now carrying members' trip reports, starting with an Icelandic saga by Tom Marko (Montgomery). Check the "What's New" section to track down this new feature. Travelin' birders can send their write-ups directly to webmaster@mdbirds.org.

WANTED:

Fran Saunders, Director of MOS's award-winning web site, is looking for one or two persons to train as her backup and eventual replacement.

This is a stellar opportunity to learn a valuable skill at the hands of an expert. You can contact Fran at fcsaunders@worldnet.att.net.

The Birder's Vest

or "What's in YOUR Jacket?"

Okay, I admit it. I have one of those 21-pocket birder's

vests, full all sorts of nooks and crannies to hold and hide things. If you have one, too, you may have wondered, "What do I put in all those pockets?" This new column will explore the possibilities by reviewing some of the gadgets and gizmos that can make birding more fun. If you have a favorite birding "toy," feel free to write a review for a future column or send me your ideas or comments (warblerick@aol.com).



Samsung Sports Camcorder (Model SC-X105L)

This tiny camera (2.3x3.6x1.0 inches, about the size of a cigarette pack) has five separate functions, four of which make it a useful birding tool: a digital video camera with 10X zoom, a digital still camera with up to 800X600 pixels, a digital voice recorder with built-in left and right microphones, and an MP3 player with a small external speaker and volume controls. [The fifth function is a combination web-cam/remote cam attachment that can strap to your arm or head and shoots basically just what you see; it looks like fun for sky-diving, white-water rafting, roller-coasters, etc. It can also be set up on your computer as a web-cam.]

The camera has a built-in 512MB memory chip with an expandable (up to a gigabyte) external memory, using Memory Stick Pro. It has a flip-out high resolution color screen, and its function buttons, located along its slim front edge, are easy to

use. It is well designed and very intuitive, with easy-to-change functions and menus and a surprisingly easy-to-understand instruction manual. It fits neatly into a weather-resistant case that straps to your belt or fits easily into a pocket, or, with the included carabiner, clips to nearly anything.

The camera comes with everything you need right in the box, including USB and A/V cables, battery and charger, earphones, lens cover, hand strap, software CD, and more. Retail price is around \$599 and it is available locally at Best Buy.

To get an idea of its usefulness as a birding tool, I field-tested it at Blue Mash Nature Trail in Montgomery County. While the digital still camera is adequate, its resolution isn't as good as your average 3.0 MP digital camera. Still, you can get good shots of your birding pals, wildflowers, mushrooms, toads, insects, etc. I took close-ups of plants so I could identify them later at home with help from a field guide.

Digiscoping works well with this camera, too, though video images are of better quality than stills. I shot some excellent footage of a displaying male Yellow-breasted Chat through my scope at 20X from quite far away by simply holding the camera against the scope's eyepiece. Played back on my TV at home, it was really amazing.

If a singing bird remains hidden, you can record it using the digital voice recorder and then later try to identify it at home. If you have loaded one of the many available birdsong CDs onto the MP3 player (I have the entire *Stokes Guide to Eastern Songbirds* on mine), you can use it to make identifications right in the field.

With so many great features in one small device, you can now record rare bird sightings in both video and still images, record field or atlas notes or directions to a hot spot, note the name and number of a new birding acquaintance, take photos of a nest you've found, or shoot live action footage of a Yellow Warbler feeding a cowbird chick at the nest. Let your imagination run wild!

Where does it fit in my tool kit? I wouldn't give up my Nikon 5400 camera just yet. Though the Sports Camcorder is a great tool, and its tiny size means I can carry it always without a second thought as to weight/bulk, etc., it just won't replace a quality camera for quality still shots. I haven't tested its videos against any larger video camera, but I'll bet they would hold up; the video images are very good. And I still haven't stopped carrying my Radio Shack digital voice recorder, because it has a better external speaker for playback in the field.

Having said all that, on about 70%-80% of my field trips (the ones where I am mostly alone), I will be carrying this and not all that other equipment. It offers insurance should something unusual show up, and any picture (especially through the scope) is better than no picture. This camera is an excellent field tool for birders. You can check out all of its features online by typing in Samsung Sports Camera and hit "search."

—Rick Sussman
Montgomery Bird Club

MINUTES OF THE MOS BOARD MEETING MARCH 12, 2005

President: Janet Millenson
Vice-President: Marcia Balestri
Treasurer: Emmalyn Holdridge
Secretary: Janet Shields
Past President: Paul Zucker

Atlas: Jane Coskren
Budget: Helene Gardel
Conference: Janet Shields
Conservation: Maureen Harvey
Bird Conservation Alliance: Paul Zucker
EFM: Gayle Bach-Watson
Investments: Martha Waugh
Long-range Planning: Paul Zucker
MD/DC Records: Phil Davis
Nominations: Al Haury
Research: Gwen Brewer
Sanctuary: Dotty Mumford
Scholarship: Tom Strikwerda

Allegheny: Gwen Brewer
Anne Arundel: Linda Baker, Phil Davis, Al Haury, Dotty Mumford, Paul Speyser
Baltimore: Helene Gardel, Kevin Graff, John Landers, Pete Webb, Joy Wheeler
Caroline: *not represented*
Carroll: Maureen Harvey, Bob Ringler
Cecil: Marcia Watson-Whitmyre
Frederick: Gayle Bach-Watson, Helen Horrocks, Michael Welch
Harford: Thomas Congersky
Howard: Mary-Jo Betts, Jane Coskren, Karen Darcy, Jeff Friedhoffer, Tom Strikwerda, Kate Tufts, Martha Waugh
Kent: Walter Ellison, Nancy Martin
Montgomery: Hugh Mahanes, Don Messersmith, Ann Weeks
Patuxent: Fred Fallon, Linda Keenan, Chan Robbins
Talbot: *not represented*
Tri-County: *not represented*
Washington: *not represented*

President Janet Millenson called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. and thanked the Baltimore Bird Club for hosting the meeting at Back River Waste Water Treatment Plant, Baltimore, MD.

Minutes of the previous meeting were corrected. Under Long-range Planning, Page 2, the following was added at the start of the approved motion: "In considering the budgets for the endowed committees for the coming fiscal year." The minutes were approved as corrected.

Treasurer's Report: Emmalyn Holdridge is now giving quarterly reports to all committee chairs containing a record of their expenses for that period.

President's Remarks: Janet Millenson announced that the following positions were filled: EFM, Gayle Bach-Watson; Mailing List, Helen Horrocks; Membership, Linda Keenan; and Youth Programs, George Radcliffe. Our former World Series of Birding team now has corporate sponsorship. Matt Hafner has agreed to lead our new WSB team, the Maryland Yellowthroats. Norm Saunders will help solicit pledges via *MDOsprey*. A developer would like to donate 85 acres in southern Prince Georges County for an MOS Sanctuary.

PAST ACTION ITEMS

- Executive Council to create a list of MOS Board vacancies with brief descriptions. Board positions still needing to be filled: Publicity Coordinator and Sanctuary Chair.
- Executive Council to request chapters to schedule one birding field trip/workday each year at a sanctuary.
- Chapters to request an MOS member with statewide birding knowledge to volunteer as our liaison to the Important Bird Areas Program.

- Chapters should name representatives to Conservation, Sanctuary, and Scholarship Committees. Should no names be submitted, it will be assumed that the Chapter President is the point of contact for these committees.
- Chapters should get feedback on the idea of a central MOS headquarters location.
- Sanctuary Committee to draft "wish list" for items to be donated for the sanctuaries. This will be posted in the *Yellowthroat*.
- Treasurer to call Fred Shaffer to coordinate with Chan Robbins on field trips for the WOS/AFO meeting.
- Janet Shields, Marcia Balestri, and Janet Millenson to provide MD checklists, "Yellowbooks," MOS pamphlets, and *MD Birdlife* CDs to Chan Robbins for the WOS/AFO meeting.
- Maureen Harvey will continue to review the American Bird Conservancy policy on wind power and at the next board meeting will recommend what policy MOS should adopt.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Atlas: Jane Coskren reported that people are needed to host blockbusters overnight in order to alleviate motel expenses. It looks like the state will contribute \$50,000 this year in return for matching volunteer time. Walter Ellison indicated that there is ongoing work with the atlas on-line data entry program and talked about improvements made to the program. Blockbusters are needed.

Budget: Helene Gardel presented the proposed 2005-2006 budget. After general discussion, it was approved by the board.

Conference: Janet Shields reported there are currently 93 people registered for the conference. So far, 6 posters are to be presented and 5 artists have agreed to display their work. A contract with Rocky Gap, Cumberland, MD, has been signed for June 9-11, 2006.

Conservation: Maureen Harvey's report will appear in the May/June issue of *Yellowthroat*. She has a sample letter on the Open Space Program and sale of public lands to be sent to legislators for the use of MOS members.

Bird Conservation Alliance: Paul Zucker attended their meeting, which gave an update on important bird areas. The group is still getting organized.

EFM: Gayle Bach-Watson will be distributing a letter to chapter presidents. It is to be presented to chapter members to improve EFM charity campaign access to businesses.

Investment: Martha Waugh's written report was distributed to board members. Total income so far this fiscal year is \$52,848.33, and the total portfolio value is up considerably to \$1,405,841.24.

Long-range Planning: Paul Zucker announced that the updating of the Manual of Operations is almost finished. The Executive Council decided to leave the Executive Secretary position in place even though it is not presently necessary to have the position filled. If the situation changes in the future, the position may, at the board's discretion, be reinstated. There are some descriptions still needed for some of the new committees to complete the Manual.

MD/DC Records: Phil Davis gave an update on the Records Committee annual business meeting held last week. Review lists and the Official Lists of the Birds of MD and DC have been updated. Three new members were elected for 3-year terms: Hans Holbrook, John Hubbell, and George Jett. A motion was passed to have the MD/DC Records Committee Decision Reports, including Marshall Iliff's subspecies manuscript, published in a CD-ROM with PDF copies available from the MOS web site.

Nominations: Al Haury announced the following slate of officers to be presented to the membership at the business meeting in June: President, Janet Millenson; Vice President, Marcia Balestri; Secretary, Janet Shields; and Treasurer, Emmalyn Holdridge. Nominations Committee

member Mary Byers is stepping down and a replacement will need to be found.

Research: Gwen Brewer said that 4 research grants have been made this year. There are currently 6 posters coming to the MOS conference.

Sanctuaries: Dotty Mumford reported that the Sanctuary website is being expanded and pictures of the sanctuaries are being included. Janet Millenson reported on the potential Piscataway Sanctuary, giving both pros and cons to MOS accepting the 85 acres in southern Prince George's County from a builder. Questions must be answered regarding the conservation easement, homeowners association, legal review, etc. A motion was approved to proceed with the investigation and negotiations with the donor to obtain the land subject to satisfactory answers the board's questions.

Scholarship: Tom Strikwerda has had 9 scholarship applicants. All were offered scholarships but one had to withdraw because of a schedule conflict.

OLD BUSINESS

MOS Headquarters: Bob Ringler brought to Janet Millenson's attention that the Natural History Society of MD is looking to develop a MD Naturalist Center. This would have meeting space with other small, like-minded organizations. They are investigating a possible location in SE Carroll Co in an abandoned former state mental hospital. We will keep in touch.

Former Orville Crowder Property:

Don Messersmith reported that since the state has put a hold on giving away properties, nothing more has been done to try to acquire the property. It was found that the value of the property, according to state tax assessments, will go up about \$200,000 this year and continue to rise for the next 6 years. This puts it beyond the means of MOS to purchase.

NEW BUSINESS

Corporate Sponsorship: Janet Millenson asked whether MOS should accept corporate sponsorship.

It was decided that each sponsorship needs to be looked at and evaluated on its own basis.

Lapwing: The situation with the lapwing was discussed. Various ideas of how to manage rarities were given. Local Frederick people who were helpful with parking should be recognized by MOS.

The MOS "business cards" need to be reprinted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Linda Keenan announced that Prince George's County, in looking for a site for a new school, is considering 3 county parks. Anyone wanting more information should contact Linda.

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- Executive Council to review language on MOS "business" cards and reprint for distribution.
- Chapters to ask members to send letters to the Governor and State Legislators about Program Open Space.
- Chapters to present forthcoming EFM letter to their members to improve charity campaign access to businesses.
- Chapters to distribute our MOS "business" cards.

President Janet Millenson adjourned the meeting at 1:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Janet Shields
Secretary





The Adak Experience

Adak may well be the next big birding hotspot for North America's most extreme listers. With Attu currently (temporarily) inaccessible, Tri-County Bird Club president Sam Dyke traveled 4,700 miles to check out Adak. Adak is a 28-mile-long island in the Aleutian chain, 400 miles east of Attu and 1,300 miles southeast of Anchorage.

Sam's "most wanted" bird was the Whiskered Auklet. And so it was, one glorious sunny day, when the bird made a close-up appearance for a delighted group of birders. During his one-week stay at Adak, despite no major migrant fallout, Sam and fellow birders had plenty to keep them busy. They were thrilled to see Asian vagrants like the Far Eastern Curlew, Hawfinch, Common Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper, Tufted Duck, and Ruff. They observed several part-time Aleutian residents, the previously mentioned Whiskered Auklet, Arctic and Yellow-billed Loons, Laysan Albatross, Emperor Goose, Gyrfalcon, Bar-tailed Godwit, Aleutian Tern, and Kittlitz's Murrelet. Also seen were subspecies of Rock Ptarmigan, Rock Sandpiper, Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch and outsized Ravens, Winter Wrens, and Song Sparrows, all of them endemic to the Aleutians.

Adak accommodations, reported Sam, were former military townhouses that he described as "excellent." An old high school cafeteria provided good food service. Getting around the island seemed decent enough, with a network of good gravel roads that could be traversed by renting some ex-military vans. There are three scheduled flights per week to Adak,

depending on weather conditions, which Sam describes as "iffy."

"It was," he pronounced, "just a really great experience."

Talbot Countians at Point Pelee

One-hundred and twenty-nine species, including twenty-five warbler species and a Brewster's hybrid; that was the tally for four Talbot county birders. From May 11 to 16, Wayne Bell, John Snyder, Carolyn Mills, and Les Coble were in Warbler Wonderland, otherwise known as Point Pelee, Ontario, a southern most sliver of Canada that extends into Lake Erie.

Where else would anyone see warblers 10 feet away at eye level? The group was treated to Blackburnian, Wilson's, Cape May, and Bay-breasted, all of them in one small shrub, decked out in glorious breeding plumage, darting about at a distance too close for most binoculars to focus. They also encountered a little female Scarlet Tanager, exhausted from her 10-mile marathon across Lake Erie, and wondered how far she would travel before settling down to raise her brood.

And there was the Close Encounter of the Kirtland's Kind. "He flitted so close that I lost my cool," said Wayne. "Les said there was one point when it looked like the warbler was feeding in my ear. I would like to meet any birder who has had a Kirtland's pecking out of his/her ear during one of its rare migratory appearances. It would sure tickle me." (So, gentle birdwatcher, if you've had a Kirtland's Warbler hovering near your ear, please reach out to Wayne Bell and tickle him!)

At a deli at Pelee Island, the group got their most unexpected surprise; the deli hostess asked if they had seen the rare bird. And she wasn't talking about the Kirtland's that buzzed Wayne. "I think it's called a Great Tit." Sure enough, at a feeder about a mile away, they found the wayward European chowing down on sunflower seed. It had no leg band, so it was probably not a local exotic escapee. How did it get there? Only the bird knows.

"The real highlights of this trip," said Wayne, "were the great camaraderie of our group and the wonderful friendliness of

almost everyone we met. . . . I am grateful for all such people in this world and, especially, that so many of them care about birds. There is no better company."

Speaking for the Birds at Cromwell Valley

A group of birdwatchers in Baltimore County are advocating the interests of birds at the Cromwell Valley Park, a 371-acre park that has been under the control of the Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks since 1993. It is a diverse habitat of crop fields, gardens, pasture, open fields, orchards, and wooded Piedmont hills, with a stream, Minebank Run, that flows through the park. The area is enjoyed by many groups, such as naturalists, hikers, joggers, and dog-walkers.

According to Georgia McDonald, "A group of bird-oriented park visitors has formed a committee, the Wildlife Habitat Conservation Committee CVP (Cromwell Valley Park), to be represented on the Recreation Council as a voice for habitat protection for birds and for wildlife in general. Mark Miller is President of the Committee and has been attending the various meetings regarding the Rec Council formation. I am a member of the committee and will act as liaison with the BBC. Other members are Jim and Joanne Meyers, Joe Meyers, Joe Platek, Larry and Anne Craig, Kate Manrodt, and Bill Brakey."

If anyone is interested in learning more about their efforts, please contact Georgia McDonald at the Baltimore Bird Club.

Cylburn makes "Best of Baltimore" list!

Baltimore Magazine's August issue, featuring "Best of Baltimore" lists, singled out the Baltimore Bird Club's Birds of Maryland Museum at the Cylburn Arboretum Mansion as a "best-kept secret."

"Hidden Treasure: Something to Crow About. . . . In the fashion of a 19th-century museum, the building houses a collection of, uh, formerly living specimens unequaled this side of Chicago's famous Field Museum. . . . Among the 275 birds in the collection are the Peregrine Falcon from a nesting family who had lived at the Legg

Mason building since the 1970s, a Wild Turkey, and the Bald Eagle who lived at the Maryland Zoo in Baltimore for 23 years." BBC members Patsy Perlman and Joy Wheeler are quoted in the article, and the turkey and eagle are shown in a photograph. "All of the birds are salvaged, from roadsides and backyards where they are found in excellent condition . . . well, except for the fact that they were dead."

Terrapin Treasures

Chrissy Albanese, who as Tour Coordinator for the Maryland Environmental Service leads MOS Chapter trips to Hart-Miller Island, sent us this terrapin report. On April 14, Dr. Willem Roosenburg of Ohio University was on Poplar Island continuing his research on Diamondback Terrapin, when he uncovered quite a surprise: 12 over-wintering terrapin nests, as well as 89 live terrapin hatchlings!

Explained Chrissy, "In late-season-laid nests, it is not uncommon for the hatchlings to technically hatch out in September or October and not want to venture out into the cold. So, the newly hatched babies will hibernate right in their nests to then dig their way out in the spring when the weather warms up. I guess they don't like stepping out onto cold floors either!" She added, "All 89 babies have been weighed, measured, and tagged and will be released on the next warm, calm day."

Correction

The good-natured Ed Smith, former MOS member now living in Arlington, Virginia, wrote asking for a copy of the May-June *Yellowthroat*, "which, according to my friends, reports my recent demise." The accounts on Ed's exploits with Earthwatch expeditions in Venezuela, as described by Bill Oberman in Chapter Chatter, inadvertently slipped in a "late." My misdoing, my apologies.

—The Editor

Do you have any news or interesting stories that you wish to share with fellow MOS-ers? Send your contributions to Shireen Gonzaga at whimbrel@comcast.net.

LUTHER CHASE GOLDMAN

1909-2005

On January 12, longtime Montgomery club member and icon Luther Goldman died peacefully, with his family by his side. While Luther was known to much of the world as the originating manager of the Laguna Atascosa and Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuges in Texas, and for his stunning nature photography, we in Montgomery County were privileged to enjoy a much closer relationship with him, and with his late wife, Betty. Luther led field trips—for several years an "intergenerational trip" to Huntley Meadows; he presented numerous programs featuring his wonderful slides; he was a regular at our monthly meetings; and his charm was especially on display at the annual Socials. In 1999, the Club celebrated Luther's 90th birthday with a party at Brookside Gardens.

Born in Washington, DC, to an eminent biologist, Luther "was exposed early in life to the natural world." While still in his teens, he accompanied his father on working trips to Arizona and Mexico. At the University of Maryland, he earned a degree in biological sciences and lettered in football—indeed, he was drafted into the pros where he played a season or two.

In 1939, he married his college sweetheart, and he also launched his 20-year career as a manager of national wildlife refuges. It was at the refuges, Luther said, that he developed "a deep, all-absorbing interest in birds." And wildlife photography: his pictures were soon appearing on the cover of government documents. In *Wild America*, the account of Roger Tory Peterson's and James Fisher's 30,000-mile birding exploration of North America, Fisher called Luther "one of the best field men I have ever encountered."

In 1959, Luther took a staff position in the Fish and Wildlife Service in Washington and he, Betty, and their son Edward moved to College Park.

After his 1974 retirement, Luther led more than 20 birding tours, hitting US hotspots, East Africa, Central America, and Trinidad. At age 85, he had participated in 57 years of Christmas Counts.

In a 1994 interview in the Montgomery Bird Club newsletter, Luther discussed his favorite style of birding: "I've always liked early morning best for bird songs, quiet waters, and good light for pictures, sometimes with a companion and sometimes on my own. In either case, I move slowly, go prepared for all day, and seldom quit early."



MOS Calendar

September-October 2005

Thursday, September 1

MEETING. Frederick. *David Curson* will present "The Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program in MD and DC." 7 PM at the C. Burr Artz Library in downtown Frederick. Info: Linda Keller, 301-834-6977.

H Montgomery. Wakefield Park, Fairfax Co, VA. Half day. NoVa birder and Wakefield neighbor Mike Collins will lead us along this power line cut and adjacent woodlands in search of hard-to-find migrants. Start at daybreak. Waterproof footwear advised. Limit 8. For reservations, time, and directions call MBC coordinators Lydia Schindler, 301-977-5252, or Linda Friedland, 301-983-2136.

H Baltimore. Beginner/Novice Walks, Fall Migration at Cromwell Valley Park. Sept-Oct (times TBA, depending on your schedule). Small group walks to be scheduled at the convenience of you and the leader (and the weather). Walks can be as long or short as desired, and can be fairly level walking or moderately steep. Diverse streamside, woodland, and field habitats. Call 3-5 days in advance. Leader: Georgia McDonald, 410-821-6956 or dangeo@erols.com.

Saturday, September 3

H Montgomery. Meadowside Nature Center and Area. Half day. "Challenging" fall warblers and other migrant land birds. Meet at 7:30 AM at Nature Center. Call for directions; no reservations necessary. Leader: Rick Sussman, 301-774-1185.

H Frederick. Mason-Dixon Ponds. Fall migrants at the Mason-Dixon Ponds and surrounding area. Meet at 7:30 AM at Baker Park. Leader: Mike Welch, 301-874-5828.

H Cecil. Turkey Point. Hawk Watch kick-off combined with a warbler walk. Meet at the Turkey Point parking lot 7 AM. Leader: Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

H Howard. Butterflies through Binoculars. 2-3 hrs. Easy walking on paved path by the lakeside. Enjoy expert instruction on butterfly identification.

Study some butterflies in the hand. Binoculars helpful. Meet 9:30 AM at west end parking lot of Centennial Lake. Leader: Dick Smith, 410-997-7439.

H Baltimore. Hart-Miller Island. Meet 6:45 AM sharp at boat dock. Eight-mile, ten-hr hike on level ground under open sky with no shelter or shade. One rest stop (bathrooms) halfway around the trek. Wear a hat and long pants. Carry scope, drinks, lunch, sunscreen, and insect repellent. MD's best shorebird hotspot. Possible rare gulls, Merlins, and Peregrine Falcons. Possible Baird's and Buff-breasted Sandpipers and American Golden-Plover. Reservations required. For reservations, directions, and info: e-mail Gene Scarpulla by Thurs evening, ejscarp@comcast.net, or call 410-388-0852 after 7 PM.

H Baltimore. Cromwell Valley Park. Diverse habitat that includes stream, woods, and fields. Expect a variety of resident and migrant birds. From I-695 take Exit 29A Cromwell Bridge Rd. Turn north (away from the city) onto Cromwell Bridge Rd. At 1.3 miles, turn left at the "Sherwood Farm Entrance." Follow entrance road, then turn right at the sign to the Willow Grove Farm parking lot. Meet at the farm parking lot at 8 AM. Leader: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or ocean_city2001@yahoo.com.

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

Sunday, September 4

H Baltimore. Cylburn Arboretum Self-guided Walk. Meet Sunday mornings 8:30 AM at the Mansion's front porch for easy birding in Cylburn's gardens and urban forest. Beginning birders welcome. Expect to find a variety of migrant and resident birds. No designated leader. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H Baltimore. Butterflies of Soldiers Delight. 2 hrs. Join butterfly expert Dick Smith for a field trip at this globally rare ecosystem. Dick will begin the afternoon with a 20-minute slide show. After that, a trip to the fields of Soldiers Delight will provide an opportunity to see these beautiful insects up close and personal. Meet 1 PM at Soldiers Delight Visitor/Nature Center. Cancelled if raining. Call or e-mail to confirm date. Coordinator: Gail Frantz, 410-833-7135 or guineabird@aol.com.

H Harford. Winters Run Rd (SW Harford Co). Leisurely stroll along quiet and scenic county road. Meet leader Lynn Davis at the P&R on MD 24 just 0.5 mile south of I-95 at 7 AM. Call 410-569-0504 for more info.

H Talbot. Tilghman Island. Warblers, flycatchers, gulls, terns, and more. Meet 7 AM at St. Michaels Village Shopping Center parking lot adjacent to Talbot Bank, St. Michaels. Leader: Jan Reese, 410-745-2875.

Tuesday, September 6

H Baltimore. Lake Roland (Robert E. Lee Park). Meet 8:30 AM. First in a series of weekly walks to follow the progress of fall migration. Habitats include woods, lake, streams, and marsh. This park has an impressive bird list, including songbirds, herons, shorebirds, and raptors. From I-695 north of the city, take exit 23 south, I-83 Jones Falls Expy. Exit at North Ave, proceed east (left), and get in left lane. At traffic light at Falls Rd, turn left (north). Just past Lake Ave traffic light, turn right (east) at south end of Falls Rd bridge, follow tight curve to right, go 0.5 mile through streamside woods to intersection. Park and walk to footbridge. Leader: Patsy Perlman, 410-466-3998 or pattonyp@juno.com.

MEETING. Baltimore. "Hawkwatching at Cromwell Valley Park." *Jim and Joanne Meyers* will discuss the park's new hawkwatching facilities and the hawks that fly over on their way south. 7:30 PM at Cylburn Arboretum, 4915 Greenspring Ave.

Wednesday, September 7

MEETING. Carroll. *David Curson*, Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon MD-DC, will discuss "The Important Bird Areas Programs in MD and DC." 7:30 PM at the Senior Center,

H indicates Field Trips

125 Stoner Ave, Westminster. Info: Laura Tarbell, 410-857-1109.

H Baltimore. Hampton Historic Site. 3 hrs. A series of casual fall bird walks on Wednesdays in September and October. Meet 8 AM at the parking lot on the Farm property of the Hampton National Historic Site, 535 Hampton Ln, near Towson, to explore 70 acres of woods, fields, and formal gardens. Easy walking. Beginning birders welcome. Expect to find a variety of migrant and resident birds. Good chance for Fox Sparrow in late October. After the walk, participants should check in at the farm house to register and pick up bird lists and program schedules. No designated leader. Cancelled in bad weather. Coordinator: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

H Baltimore. Greenmount Cemetery. 1501 Greenmount Ave. The first of two cemetery walks to investigate bird life in Baltimore City. These pockets of green space are relatively undisturbed and unexplored. Meet 9:30 AM at main gate. Leader: Joy Wheeler, 410-825-1204.

Thursday, September 8

H Montgomery. Rock Creek Park, DC. 3 hrs. Migrant warblers, vireos, and sparrows. Meet at 7 AM at Picnic Area 18 (on Ridge Rd half mile below Nature Center). Reservations required. Leader: Rob Hilton, 301-587-6136.

MEETING. **Howard.** "The Important Bird Areas Program in MD and DC," by *David Curson*, Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon, MD-DC. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM, meeting/program 8 PM at Howard Co Rec & Parks, 7210 Oakland Mills Rd, Columbia. Info: Jeff Friedhoffer, 410-997-5336.

Friday, September 9

H Baltimore. Chimney Swifts at dusk in Hampden. Join the BBC Swift Watch Team for "Swift Night Out" as Chimney Swifts pour into the Bookbindery and/or the Mill Center chimneys. Cancelled if raining. Meet 7 PM. Directions: From I-695 north of the city, take exit 23 I-83 Jones Falls Expy south to Cold Spring Ln exit. Go east (left) 1/4 mile to light at Falls Rd. Turn right (south) onto Falls Rd and go 1.2 miles. At 36th St, follow left lane. At stop sign, turn left, one short block uphill. Take first right onto Falls

Cliff Rd. Follow arrow leftward around the curve to dead end. Right onto Elm St. First left onto Mill St. First left into Mill Center parking lot. Co-leaders: Carol Schreter, 410-664-5151, and Joan Cwi, cwijjs@battelle.org.

Saturday, September 10

MOS STATE BOARD MEETING. 10 AM. Hosted by the Patuxent Chapter at the College Park Airport Annex.

H Frederick. Gambrill SP. Fall migrants. Meet at 8 AM at Gambrill SP. Leader: Barbara Gearhart, 301-473-9889.

PICNIC. **Harford.** Annual picnic. Reservations required. Info: Jean Wheeler, 410-879-7424.

H Howard. Beginners' Bird walk at Lake Elkhorn. 2-3 hrs. Easy walking on paved path around the lake to learn tips on bird identification. Advice on binocular and field guide selection and use. Combination of water, woodland, and fields should provide a wide variety of species. Meet 8:30 AM at Broken Land Parkway lot. Leaders: Mike and Grazina McClure, 410-531-2780.

H Baltimore. Half day. Fall Warblers at Turkey Pt. Philadelphia Vireo, Tennessee, Cape May, and Bay-breasted Warblers possible. If songbirds disappoint, there are always hawks. Moderate walking. Bring water and snacks. Meet 6 AM at Cromwell Bridge Rd P&R, Beltway exit 29-A. Or join us at "the Point" parking lot at end of Rte 272, Exit 100 south off of I-95 at 7:30 AM. Leader: Joel Martin, 410-744-9211 or jcdlmartin@aol.com.

H Baltimore. Chimney Swifts at dusk in Hampden. 7 PM. See Sept 9.

PICNIC. **Anne Arundel.** Annual fall picnic at Marilyn Taylor's. 410-923-0069.

Sunday, September 11

H Montgomery. Presidents' Walk at Seneca. Half day. Participation of all former Club Presidents is encouraged and everyone is welcome. Bring lunch for a post-walk picnic. Meet 7:30 AM at parking lot at end of Riley's Lock Rd off River Rd. Honorary leaders: Current and former presidents. Contact Hugh Mahanes at 301-564-0780 or hembuteo@comcast.net.

H Anne Arundel. Terrapin Park/Cross Island Bike Trail. Half day. Migrating land birds, some shore birds, waterfowl, and butterflies. Bring your bike and ride along the Cross Island Bike Trail to Kent Narrows and back. For those who wish, we will be going to Holly's for lunch. Meet at Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot at 7:30 AM. Leader: Paul Speyser, 410-266-5669.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. See Sept 4.

H Baltimore. Chimney Swifts at dusk in Hampden. 7 PM. See Sept 9.

H Talbot. Tilghman Island. Warblers, flycatchers, gulls, terns, and more. Meet 7 AM St. Michaels Village Shopping Center parking lot adjacent to Talbot Bank, St. Michaels. Leader: Jan Reese, 410-745-2875.

Tuesday, September 13

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. Meet 8:30 AM. See Sept 6. Leader: Adelaide Rackemann, 410-823-4709.

MEETING. **Kent.** 7:30 PM at Wesley Hall, Heron Point, E. Campus Ave, Chestertown. Speaker TBA. For info contact Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568, or Peter Mann, 410-648-5205.

Wednesday, September 14

H Baltimore. Hampton Historic Site. See Sept 7.

Thursday, September 15

H Montgomery. Triadelphia Area. Half day. A morning of woodland birding along the Patuxent River watershed, with an excellent chance for early fall migrants. Meet 7:15 AM at Ashton Village Center (near the 7-11) at intersection of Rtes 108 and 650. Reservations are required. Leader: Hugh Mahanes, 301-564-0780 or hembuteo@comcast.net.

MEETING. **Cecil.** "Turkey Point Hawk Watch—Tips, History, and Recruitment." 7 PM at the Elkton Library. Richard Donham, donhamr@zoominternet.net.

MEETING. **Caroline.** "Birding basics for the novice and those needing a refresher." Presenter: TBA. 7:30 PM Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton.

MOS Calendar (continued from page 17)

H **Howard.** Centennial Park. 2-3 hrs. Easy walking on paved path around the lake. Migrants of many species will be moving through. Trip leader is an expert on birding by ear and will provide tips on bird sound identification. Meet 8 AM at west end lot. Leader: David Holmes. Info: Bonnie Ott, 410-461-3361.

Saturday, September 17

H **FALL COUNT.** **Anne Arundel.** Take the day off from your usual Saturday chores and spend the time at your favorite birding spot counting all the birds you can find. Coordinators: Tom and Sharon Bradford, 410-987-0674.

H **FALL COUNT.** **Caroline.** Debby Bennett, 410-479-2978, dbennett@caro.lib.md.us.

H **FALL COUNT.** **Dorchester.** Henry Armistead, 215-248-4120, harryarmistead@hotmail.com.

H **FALL COUNT.** **Washington.** Contact Doris Berger, 301-739-8907.

H **FALL COUNT.** **Frederick.** Seventh countywide fall census. Contact Gary Smyle, 301-663-0055, to be placed with a team or assigned a territory.

H **FALL COUNT.** **Carroll.** Contact Bill Ellis, 410-781-7113, to coordinate a location. Tally Rally hosted by Dave and Maureen Harvey. RSVP to the Harveys, 410-795-3117. Food or \$ donation, please.

H **FALL COUNT.** **Howard.** Mike McClure, 410-531-2780, Michael.McClure@jhuapl.edu.

H **FALL COUNT.** **Baltimore.** We will tally all birds seen within the city and county during this calendar day. Birders of all levels of experience are welcome and urged to participate. Contact compiler Debbie Terry, 410-252-8771 or gt5s@bcpl.net, for assignment.

H **Baltimore.** Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. A continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort. Meet 8 AM at the Visitor Center. Cancelled in bad weather (high winds, fog, rain, snow). From I-695 southwest of the city, take exit 11, I-95, north towards the city. Get off at exit 55, Hanover St. Turn east (right) on McComas St, left (north) on Key Hwy. First left Lawrence St and left onto Fort Avenue; continue through gate-

way into the park. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

PICNIC. **Tri-County.** 4 PM. Bring a covered dish and start the year with a get-together and picnic at the home of Donald and Carol Broderick. RSVP to 419-742-8920.

MEETING. **Talbot.** *Dixie Birch*, Supervisory Wildlife Biologist, Blackwater NWR, will present "Restoration at the Refuge." Discussion and slides of restoration of approximately 8,000 acres with clean dredge material from Chesapeake Bay shipping channels. Meet 7:30 PM upstairs at the Easton Welcome Center, South Harrison St, Easton.

H **Patuxent.** Governor Bridge Park. Meet 7:30 AM at the parking lot for Governor Bridge Park. Park is located on Governor Bridge Rd about 1 mile east of MD 301. No reservations are required.

H **Harford.** NW Harford Co, Dry Branch and Jolly Acres Rds. Leisurely stroll along quiet and scenic county roads. Meet at 7 AM at the Ayres Chapel United Methodist Church at Ayres Chapel Rd and MD 23. Contact leader Dave Ziolkowski at 443-299-8453 for more info.

H **Kent.** Beginners' bird walk around Heron Point, Chestertown. 8:30-10:30 AM. Leader: Walter Ellison, 410-778-9568.

Sunday, September 18

H **FALL COUNT.** **Allegany.** Chuck Hager, 301-689-5344.

H **FALL COUNT.** **Kent.** Contact Walter Ellison, 410-778-9568, or Peter Mann, 410-648-5205, for more info.

H **FALL COUNT.** **Harford.** Mark Johnson, 410-692-5978, mark.s.johnson@us.army.mil.

H **FALL COUNT.** **Prince George's.** Dave Mozurkewich, 301-459-3375, dave@mozurkewich.com.

H **Cecil.** Turkey Point Warbler walk combined with a stop at the Hawk Watch. Meet at the Turkey Point parking lot 8 AM. Leader: Leslie Fisher, 410-658-2427.

H **Baltimore.** Cylburn Self-guided Walk. See Sept 4.

H **Baltimore.** Chimney Swifts at dusk in Hampden. 6:45 PM. See Sept 9.

H **Talbot.** "Harleigh," Chip and Sally Akridge's beautiful estate on Oxford Rd. No Breakfast. Meet 7 AM Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot in front of Acme, Easton. Leader: Wayne Bell, 410-820-6002 or wbell2@washcoll.edu.

H **Harford.** Turkey Point Hawk Watch. Join co-leaders Russ Kovach and Spike Updegrave for a visit to this great Elk Neck site for Red-headed Woodpeckers and migrating hawks. Timed to coincide with the peak of Broad-wing and falcon migration. Kestrels, Merlin, and Sharp-shinned hawk also likely. Meet 8 AM at the MD 155/I-95 P&R. Call 443-386-4787 for more info.

Tuesday, September 20

H **Baltimore.** Lake Roland. Meet 8:30 AM. See Sept 6. Leader: Debbie Terry, 410-252-8771 or gt5s@bcpl.net.

Wednesday, September 21

MEETING. **Montgomery.** "What Have I Learned from 100,000 Hours of Backyard Banding?" by *Chan Robbins*. During the past 30 years, Chan has observed 200 species of birds in his yard in Laurel and has banded about 100 of them. 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac.

H **Baltimore.** Hampton Historic Site. See Sept 7.

Saturday, September 24

H **Anne Arundel.** Tuckahoe SP. Half day. Late migrants, shore, and waterbirds. Meet at Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot at 7:30 AM. Leader, Sue Ricciardi, 410-647-9513.

H **Cecil.** Fair Hill Nature and Environmental Center. Fall installment of the Seasons at Fair Hill. Meet 7 AM at the Covered Bridge parking lot near the Center. Leader: Ken Drier, kdrier@zoom-internet.net.

H **Frederick.** Blue Mash Nature Trail, Montgomery Co. Fall migrants and resident species. Meet 7:30 AM at the Rte 75 P&R, just south of I-70. Leader: Helen Horrocks, 301-831-6315.

H Howard. Patapsco Valley SP. Half day. Prime migration time; many species of forest birds expected. Moderate walking and possible muddy trails. Meet 8 AM at bottom of Henryton Rd at the dead end. Leader: Ralph Cullison, 410-442-2181.

H Patuxent. Bombay Hook NWR. Meet 7:30 AM at the Bowie P&R. This field trip will allow birders the chance to sort through the thousands of migrant shorebirds in the pools and mudflats of Bombay Hook. See why Bombay Hook is the "Avocet capital of the East." Call Fred Shaffer for reservations, 410-721-1744.

H Harford. Red Bridge and Falling Branch Rds (NW Harford Co). Leisurely stroll along quiet and scenic county roads. Meet leader Dennis Kirkwood at 7 AM at the lower lot of the Eden Mill Nature Center. Call 410-692-5905 for details.

Sunday, September 25

H Caroline. Bird-banding observation in Chestertown with Jim Gruber, Bander. Meet at Rose's parking lot in Denton to car pool 7:45 AM. Great for kids. Adults welcome too. For directions contact Debby Bennett, 410-479-1343.

H Carroll & Howard. Dickey Farm. Joint county club trip for warblers, sparrows, vireos, and waterbirds. Meet at the MD 32/I-70 P&R, 7:30 AM. Leaders: Dave and Maureen Harvey, 410-795-3117.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. See Sept 4.

H Talbot. Pickering Creek Audubon Center. Wading birds, sparrows, and early waterfowl. Breakfast Host: Carolyn and Les Roslund. Meet 7 AM Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot in front of Acme, Easton, or 7:20 AM at Pickering Creek Welcome Center. Leader: Mark Scallion, 410-770-4585 or mscallion@audubon.org.

Monday, September 26

MEETING. **Tri-County.** "Identifying Fall Warblers and Sparrows," by *Walter Ellison*. 7 PM at Asbury United Methodist Church, Fox Room, south entrance, Camden Ave, Salisbury.

Tuesday, September 27

MEETING. **Washington.** *David Curson* will discuss the Important Bird Areas program. 7:30 PM at Mt. Aetna Nature Center. Call 301-797-8454 for details.

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. Meet 8:30 AM. See Sept 6. Leader: Shirley Geddes, 410-377-6583.

Wednesday, September 28

H Baltimore. Hampton Historic Site. See Sept 7.

Saturday, October 1

H Montgomery. Upper Watts Branch, Rockville. Half day. Migrant warblers, vireos, and thrushes and assorted woodland residents. Meet at 8 AM at corner of Princeton Pl and Fordham St (for more detailed directions, check MBC site guide or call leader.) Limit: 12. Reservations required. Leader: Paul O'Brien, 301-424-6491.

H Frederick. Hart-Miller Island. Gene Scarpula will lead a 7-8 mile trek around the island to look for migrating shorebirds. Be sure to bring lunch, plenty of water, hat, sunscreen, and bug spray. Space is limited. Coordinator: Gary Smyle, 301-663-0055.

H Howard. Woodland Walk at the Middle Patuxent EA. Half day. Moderate walking through wooded trails. Great area for migrants of all species. Field edges and thickets provide sparrow habitat. Prepare for wet grass on the trails. Meet 7:30 AM at the Trotter Rd lot. Leader: Stan Arnold, 410-768-0155 or 410-428-7567.

H Tri-County. Assawoman WA and Delaware Seashore SP. Fall migrants. Meet 7:30 AM at Asbury United Methodist Church, east parking lot (Wesley Dr side), Camden Ave, Salisbury. Leader: Allen Deward, 410-352-1853.

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

H Harford. Gunpowder SP via Bottom and Friendship Rds. Leisurely stroll along quiet and scenic county roads. Meet 7 AM at the Fallston Public Library. Contact leader Russ Kovach at 443-386-4787 for details.

H Kent. Elk Neck and Turkey Point Hawk Watch. Join us for fall migrants from warblers to raptors. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General parking lot, Chestertown, or 9:15 AM at Turkey Point parking lot, Elk Neck. Leader: Walter Ellison, 410-778-9568.

Sunday, October 2

H Montgomery. Blue Mash Nature Trail. Half day. Migrant sparrows, warblers, and other woodland edge birds. Waterproof boots essential. Meet at 7:30 AM at Zion Rd parking lot. Call leader for reservations and directions. Limit 8. Leader: Rick Sussman, 301-774-1185.

H Anne Arundel. Black Marsh. Half day. Shorebirds, marsh birds, and migrants in a location we don't visit very often. Meet at the Jones Station P&R at 8 AM. Leader: Larry Zoller, 410-987-9354.

H Baltimore. Cromwell Valley Park. Meet 8 AM. See Sept 3.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. See Sept 4.

H Talbot. Tilghman Island. Hawk-watching. No Breakfast. Bring lunch and a lawn chair. Meet 9 AM at St. Michaels Village Shopping Center parking lot adjacent to Talbot Bank, St. Michaels. Leader: Andrew Bullen.

H Harford. Susquehanna SP. This trip sends off the last of the fall migrants and welcomes the arrival of some "cold weather" residents. See thousands of Tree Swallows amassed over the river on their southbound journey and search the forest for Gray-cheeked and Swainson's Thrushes, Blue-headed Vireo, Cape May Warbler. Meet leader Les Eastman at 8 AM at the Rock Run Mill. Call 410-734-6969 for more info.

Tuesday, October 4

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. Meet 8:30 AM. See Sept 6. Leader: Dot Gustafson, 410-584-9509 or dotsg@bcpl.net.

MEETING. **Baltimore.** "Important Bird Areas Program" with *David Curson*, Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon MD-DC. 7:30 PM at Cylburn Arboretum, 4915 Greenspring Ave.

MOS Calendar (continued from page 19)**Tuesday-Wednesday, October 4-5**

H **Montgomery.** Chincoteague NWR, VA. Two days. Meet at "NEW" Visitor Center on refuge at 7 AM Bring snacks, beverages, sunscreen, bug spray and lunch for the first day (we will eat on the refuge). Moderate walking on trails and beach. Looking for late migrants, raptors, terns, gulls, shorebirds, etc. Call leader for reservations. Limit: 12. Leader: Jim Green, 301-208-2393 or jgreen@smokeyglennfarm.com.

Wednesday, October 5

MEETING. **Carroll.** *Carla Dove* will present a program on feather identification. 7:30 PM at the Senior Center, 125 Stoner Ave, Westminster. Info: Tammy Schwaab, 410-857-4913.

Thursday, October 6

MEETING. **Frederick.** *Linda Keller* will describe "Wade into Ecology in Wisconsin." Linda, an MOS scholarship winner, will discuss the exploration of the plants, dragonflies, and birds of the Hunt Hill Audubon Camp. 7 PM at the C. Burr Artz Library in downtown Frederick. Info: Linda Keller, 301-834-6977.

Friday, October 7

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** "Rising and Falling Fortunes: The Story of Brown Pelicans and Black Skimmers in MD" by *David Brinker*. 8 PM at the Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville.

Saturday-Monday, October 8-10

H **Carroll.** Assateague Island, Worcester Co. Participate for all or part of the holiday weekend. Prime time for western vagrants. Reservations/trip details: Mark Hoffman, 410-549-3598.

Saturday, October 8

H **Montgomery.** Little Bennett RP. Half day. Everyone welcome, especially new birders, to enjoy this area of varied habitats and bird life. Late warblers and vireos, early sparrows, and some raptors possible. Contact leader for reservations, time, and place to meet. Leader: Gemma Radko, 301-607-4374.

H **Cecil.** Turkey Point for migrants and hawks. Meet at the Turkey Point parking lot at 8 AM. Leader: Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

H **Howard.** Mount Pleasant Farm. 1-2 hrs. Easy walking through the fields of the farm. Tree lines, hedgerows, and

streams provide opportunity for non-meadow species. Prime time for sparrows. Great opportunity for flyovers. Meet 8 AM at shed. Leader: Kurt Schwarz, 410-461-1643.

H **Baltimore.** Lake Roland. Half day. Warblers, thrushes, possibly shorebirds and other delights. We will also be noting the invasive plants that threaten this and other "natural" parks. Habitats include woods, lake, streams, and marsh. Meet 8 AM. See Sept 6 trip listing for directions. Leaders: Peter Lev, 410-823-2962 or plev@comcast.net, and Wendy Olsson, rwolsson@verizon.net.

Sunday, October 9

H **BIG SITE.** **Montgomery.** Join the Sitting Ducks at Black Hill RP starting at sun-up and continuing until ? Come for the day or just a few hours. Call Rick Sussman for directions and more information. 301-774-1185.

H **BIG SITE.** **Anne Arundel.** Kinder Park. Participate in this nationwide event by joining others from dawn to dusk. Coordinators: Tom and Sharon Bradford, 410-987-0674.

H **BIG SITE.** **Kent.** Come for all or part of the day to help tally every species seen from an 18-foot diameter circle at the observation platform at Tubby Cove, Eastern Neck NWR. Leader: Walter Ellison, 410-778-9568.

H **Baltimore.** Cylburn Self-guided Walk. See Sept 4.

H **Talbot.** Tuckahoe SP. Edge and woodland migrants. No Breakfast. Meet 7 AM Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot in front of Acme, Easton, or 7:30 AM Prime Outlets, Queenstown, in front of LL Bean. Leader: Bill and Karen Harris, 410-770-8303.

H **Harford.** Bombay Hook NWR, DE. Day-long adventure to the Hook and adjacent birding hotspots. The muddy impoundments, fresh and saltwater marshes, and wave-washed beaches afford great numbers and good views of shore and waterbirds. American Bittern, American Golden-Plover, and White-rumped Sandpipers are local specialties but that's not all, as European waifs, western strays, and windblown pelagics commonly occur. Bring lunch and meet 7:30 AM at the MD 155/I-95 P&R. Contact leader Dave Larkin at 410-569-8319 for details.

Monday, October 10

H **Baltimore.** Hart-Miller Island. Join us for a half-day bus trip around Hart-Miller. Possible rare gulls, Merlin, and Peregrine Falcon. Scope is helpful. Bring sunscreen, insect repellent, drinks, and snacks. Meet 8 AM at Nursery Rd P&R. Car pooling will be necessary. Reservations are required. Reservation, directions, and info: Gail Frantz, 410-833-7135 or guineabird@aol.com.

Tuesday, October 11

H **Baltimore.** Lake Roland. Meet 8:30 AM. See Sept 6. Leader: Matilda Weiss, 410-337-2732.

MEETING. **Kent.** 7:30 PM at Wesley Hall, Heron Point, E. Campus Ave, Chestertown. Speaker TBA. For info contact Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568; or Peter Mann, 410-648-5205.

Thursday, October 13

MEETING. **Howard.** "Birding in Patterson Park, Baltimore," by *Middleton Evans*, author and photographer of MD natural areas. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM, meeting/program 8 PM at Howard Co Rec & Parks, 7210 Oakland Mills Rd, Columbia. Info: Jeff Friedhoffer, 410-997-5336.

MEETING. **Talbot.** *Ross Hawkins* of the Hummingbird Society will present "Hummingbirds of the Americas." Your last chance to catch this wonderful slide presentation before Ross moves to the Southwest. Meet 7:30 PM upstairs at the Easton Welcome Center, S. Harrison St, Easton.

Friday, October 14

H **Washington.** Lilypons Water Gardens, Frederick Co. Meet 8 AM at the Rte 66 P&R. Contact Linda Field, 301-797-6189.

Saturday, October 15

H **Baltimore.** Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. See Sept 17.

H **Patuxent.** Governor Bridge Park. The park is located on Governor Bridge Rd, about 1 mile east of MD 301. Meet 7:30 AM at the parking lot. No reservations are required.

H **Harford.** Waggoner's Gap Hawk Watch. Full day. Fantastic locale near Carlisle, PA, for close views of migrating raptors and beautiful overlooks of fall

foliage. All eastern raptors (including Merlin and Northern Goshawk) are possible, and the site has a reputation for being the leading eastern watch for Golden Eagles. Bring lunch. Meet leaders Randy Robertson and Tom Congersky at 7:30 AM at the MD 152/MD 147 P&R. Call 410-273-9029 for more info.

Sunday, October 16

H **Montgomery.** Seneca Creek SP. Half day. Meet 7 AM at Darnestown Food Lion, Rte 28 at Seneca Rd (Rte 112). Easy walking on trails or gravel roadbeds. No reservations needed. Call for further information. Leader: Dave Powell, 301-540-8776.

H **Howard.** Sparrow Big Day. Full day. Search wetlands and dry fields for sparrows. Going for 12 species. Expect difficult walking. Knee boots a must. Limit: 12. Info and reservations: Bonnie Ott, 410-461-3361.

H **Baltimore.** Cylburn Self-guided Walk. See Sept 4.

H **Talbot.** Barnstable Hill Farm. Our first visit to Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage farm on Kent Island. Lots of wetlands and warm-season grasses. Breakfast on your own at a local restaurant. Meet 7 AM Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot in front of Acme, Easton, or 7:30 AM Prime Outlets, Queenstown, in front of LL Bean. Leader: TBA.

Tuesday, October 18

H **Howard.** David Force Park. 2-3 hrs. Meet 8 AM at the sign on Pebble Beach Dr. Easy walking through the wooded trails and fields. Streams and pond provide habitat for numerous bird species. Leader: Jo Solem, 301-725-5037.

H **Baltimore.** Lake Roland. Meet 8:30 AM. See Sept 6. Leader: Ruth Culbertson, 410-825-1379.

Wednesday, October 19

MEETING. **Montgomery.** "Defining Species in the Age of Genomes: Phylogeny, Speciation, and Hybridization in the Baltimore Oriole Group" by *Kevin Omland*. The Baltimore Oriole and its relatives provide a dramatic demonstration of the challenges and questions that face evolutionary biologists. 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac.

Thursday, October 20

MEETING. **Caroline.** *Jonathan McKnight* will present "Dangerous Beauty: The Mute Swan in the Chesapeake Bay." Bring your questions and concerns. 7:30 PM at Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton.

Friday-Sunday, October 21-23

H **Anne Arundel.** Kiptopeke SP and Fisherman's Island NWR, VA. Migrant land birds, raptors, shorebirds, and waterfowl. Bird and raptor banding will be taking place at Kiptopeke. Contact the coordinator by October 7 if you want to make this popular trip. Meet at the Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot at 8 AM. There will be a small fee if we bird the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Coordinator: Stephen Hult, 410-956-3392.

Saturday, October 22

PELOT SANCTUARY CLEAN-UP. **Caroline.** Meet 9:30 AM at sanctuary. Dress appropriately. Bring gloves and garbage bags. Pickup trucks would be most welcome to help haul garbage and items to be recycled. Directions: <http://www.mdbirds.org/sanctuary/sanctsites.html#pelot> Coordinator: Kurt Plinke, 410-482-2446 or krplink@comcast.net.

H **Frederick.** Lilypons Water Gardens. Possible American Bittern, Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, and other fall migrants. Meet at Lilypons bridge 7:30 AM. Leader: Mike Welch, 301-874-5828.

H **Patuxent.** Southern Prince George's County. This joint field trip with the Southern MD Audubon Society will visit several of the best birding hotspots along the Patuxent River in search of migrant shorebirds, sparrows, and waterfowl. Meet 7:30 AM at the Mattawoman-Beantown P&R on MD 205, or meet the group at the first stop in PG Co. Call Fred Shaffer for reservations, 410-721-1744.

H **Harford.** Owl Prowl. Tame nightlife got you down? Get with the pros as dynamic duo Debby Bowers and Dave Ziolkowski lead you through the Harford countryside to make "rarely heard-seldom seen" a thing of your owling past. Great Horned, Barred, and Screech Owls expected with Saw-whet and Long-eared long shots. Dress warmly and meet at Eden Mill's lower lot at 6:30 PM. Call 443-299-8453 for more details.

H **Baltimore.** Northampton Furnace Trail. Easy walk through mixed woods and brushy habitats to edge of Loch Raven Reservoir. Good chance for Winter Wrens, lingering robins, and waterfowl. Meet 8 AM at Dulaney Valley Rd and Chapelwood Ln, 2 miles north of Beltway exit 27. Leader: Joy Wheeler, 410-825-1204.

Sunday, October 23

H **Howard.** West Friendship Park. Half day. Meet 7:45 AM at strip mall lot at the intersection of Rtes 32 & 144. Explore 200+ acres of Howard Co parkland. Easy to moderate walking. Extensive fields should host a wealth of sparrows. Woodland and ponds may hold some surprises. Leaders: Bonnie Ott, 410-461-3361, and Lisa Colangelo.

H **Baltimore.** Cylburn Self-guided Walk. See Sept 4.

H **Talbot.** Ferry Neck and environs. Resident and migrant land birds and waterfowl. Breakfast Hosts: Myra and Bill Novak. Meet 7 AM Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot in front of Acme, Easton. Leader: Harry Armistead.

H **Harford.** Swan Harbor Farms. This county-owned park on the Oakington Peninsula contains a mix of flooded and dry agricultural fields, deciduous woodlands, and brushy meadows. Reliable for Bald Eagle, waterfowl, and Savannah Sparrow. Highlights might include Merlin, Black-bellied Plover, American Golden-Plover, Wilson's Snipe or other shorebirds. Meet leaders Lynn Davis and Colleen Webster at the park headquarters at the end of the entrance road at 8 AM. Call 410-569-0504 for more details.

Monday, October 24

MEETING. **Tri-County.** "Birding Great Britain, Shetland Islands, and Wales," by *Jean and Larry Fry*. 7 PM at Asbury United Methodist Church, Fox Room, south entrance, Camden Ave, Salisbury.

Tuesday, October 25

MEETING. **Washington.** Pot Luck dinner starts at 6 PM; bring your own place setting and a dish to share. Meeting starts at 7:30. *John Clatterbaugh* will present "Gardening for Birds." Mt. Aetna Nature Center, Mt. Aetna Rd east of Rte 66, north of I-70. Call 301-797-8454 for information.

MOS Calendar (continued from page 21)

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. Meet 8:30 AM. See Sept 6. Leader: Josie Gray, 410-922-1837.

Friday, October 28

H Cecil. Turkey Point. Evening trip to search for owls. Meet at Turkey Point parking lot 7 PM. Leader: Scott Powers. If you need assistance, contact Richard Donham at donhamr@zoominternet.net.

Saturday, October 29

H Frederick. Fall at Audrey Carroll Audubon Sanctuary. Pesky little brown jobs (sparrows) and other migrants. Meet at 7:30 AM at the Rte 75 P&R, just south of I-70. Leader: Dave Smith, 410-549-7082.

H Howard. Hawk Watch at Mount Pleasant Farm. Full day. Join raptor aficionado Ralph Geuder to sit and watch hawks. Bring a chair and food for however long you plan to stay. Ralph will provide tips on separating species in flight. The farm provides trails for walking and a nature center. Meet 9:30 AM at shed. For info, call Ralph: 410-788-3764.

H Patuxent. Waggoner's Gap Hawk Watch, Carlisle, PA. This is one of the area's best locations for observing the fall hawk migration. Meet 7:30 AM at the Bowie P&R. Call Fred Fallon for reservations, 301-249-1518.

Sunday, October 30

H Anne Arundel. Dyke Marsh and Huntley Meadows Park, Fairfax Co, VA. Half day. Early wintering land birds and possibly waterfowl. Meet the leader 7:30 AM at the Parole P&R. Leader: Juanita Tate, 410-266-6043.

H Howard. Rockburn Branch Park. Half day. Meet 8 AM in parking lot on the left just past restored schoolhouse. Moderate but lengthy walking through the woods and fields looking for migrants. Hawk migration will be in full swing. Possible owls and bats. Paths may be muddy. Leaders: Karen Darcy, 410-552-9342, and Kevin Heffernan, 410-418-8731.

H Talbot. DNR Park at the east side, north end of the Rte 50 Choptank River Bridge. Sparrows, waterfowl, wading birds, and gulls. No Breakfast. Meet 7 AM Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot in front of Acme, Easton. Leader: Gordon Jennings, 410-476-3328.

Tuesday, November 1

H Baltimore. Loch Raven. Self-guided walk through woods and fields with the opportunity to see many migrants, including Red-breasted Nuthatches, Rusty Blackbirds, Fox Sparrows, Swainson's and Hermit Thrushes. Scope the lake for Bald Eagles, swans, and a variety of waterfowl. No designated leader. Meet 8:30 AM. From I-695 north of the city, take exit 27, Dulaney Valley Rd, north several miles; cross large bridge over reservoir and immediately bear right. Continue to first left, Stone Hill Rd. Go about 100 yards, turn around, and park on the right. All cars need to park on the same side of the road. Coordinator: Paul Noell, 410-243-2652 or myconut@msn.com.

MEETING. Baltimore. "Seasons at the Fort" with *Jim Peters*. Jim single-handedly took on the project of turning the urban wetlands of Fort McHenry into a micro-habitat for resident and migrating birds. Jim will share his six years' experience of monitoring birds at the Fort. 7:30 PM at Cylburn Arboretum, 4915 Greenspring Ave.

Wednesday, November 2

MEETING. Carroll. Program TBA. 7:30 PM at the Senior Center, 125 Stoner Ave, Westminster. Info: Tammy Schwaab, 410-857-4913.

Thursday, November 3

MEETING. Frederick. *Art Kennell* will give a photographic presentation on "Backyard Birding." 7 PM at the C. Burr Artz Library in downtown Frederick.

Friday, November 4

MEETING. Harford. Speaker TBA. Dinner at 6:15 PM followed by meeting and presentation at 7 PM. Churchville Presbyterian Church, MD 22 & MD 136. Info and dinner reservations: Rick Cheicante, 410-803-2712.

MEETING. Anne Arundel. "Extinct and Endangered Species in the Bahamas" by *Tony White*. 8 PM at the Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville.

Saturday, November 5

H Montgomery. Blue Mash Nature Trail. Half day. Looking for hawks, sparrows, and other woodland edge species. Trip may cover area around Rte 108 and Riggs Rd, so carpooling may be necessary. Waterproof boots essential. Meet at 7:30 AM at Zion Rd parking lot. Call

leader for reservations and directions. Limit 8. Leader: Rick Sussman, 301-774-1185.

H Anne Arundel. Flag Ponds Nature Park, Calvert Co. Full day. Look for wintering birds in this 545-acre park. Departing from the Parole P&R lot at 7:30 AM. Bring a lunch. Leader: Nick Nicholson, 410-721-4814.

H Carroll. Waggoner's Gap Hawk Watch, Carlisle, PA. Come for all or part of the day. Meet 8 AM at Westminster Town Mall (formerly Cranberry Mall) by the big mall sign near Rte 140. Info: Bill Ellis, 410-781-7113.

H Howard. Alpha Ridge Park and Landfill. Meet 8 AM at parking lot on the right, just inside the gate to the park. Moderate to difficult walking through the fields looking for sparrows and early winter arrivals. Landfill may host rarities. Boots recommended. Leader: Ralph Cullison, 410-442-2181.

H Baltimore. Loch Raven. See Nov 1. Leader: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or ocean_city2001@yahoo.com.

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

H Harford. Mariner Point Park. Nestled between the Gunpowder marsh and the slow waters of Foster Branch, the varied habitats and paved trails of this park make for good birding and a comfortable walk. Meet leaders Tom Congersky and Randy Robertson near the pavilion at the back parking lot at 7:30 AM. Call 410-658-4137 for details.

Saturday-Sunday, November 5-6

H Frederick. Town Hill Overnight. Stay at a local B&B on Saturday and visit the famous (in MD, anyway) hawk watch. Possible Northern Goshawks and Golden Eagles. Meet 10 AM at Baker Park November 5. Info and reservations: Dave Smith, 410-549-7082.

H indicates Field Trips

Sunday, November 6

H Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hrs. Meet 8 AM at west end parking lot. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Early waterfowl, lingering migrants likely. Leader: Joe Byrnes, 410-730-5329.

H Talbot. Wye Island. Land and waterbirds. Breakfast Host: Carol Yates. Meet 7 AM Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot in front of Acme, Easton. Leader: Danny Poet, 410-827-8651 or dannypoet@hotmail.com.

H Kent. Blackwater NWR and Elliott Island. A day-long trip in search of waterfowl and other south-Dorchester specialties. Meet 7 AM at Dollar General parking lot, Chestertown. Leaders: Walter Ellison, 410-778-9568, and Peter Mann, 410-648-5205.

Tuesday, November 8

MEETING. Kent. 7:30 PM at Wesley Hall, Heron Point, E. Campus Ave, Chestertown. Speaker TBA. For info contact Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568, or Peter Mann, 410-648-5205.



**Heard some good
bird talks lately?**

Janet Shields is updating the
MOS Speaker's List.
Pass your recommendations
along to her at
janetbill@prodigy.net.

2006 MOS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

BY TOM STRIKWERDA

MOS is now accepting applications from Maryland teachers, park rangers, and youth leaders for scholarships to attend summer ecology and ornithology workshops conducted by the Audubon Society in Maine, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Those accepted into the program receive tuition, room, and board for an intensive six-day course of field study and instruction in ecology, ornithology, conservation, and natural history. The value of each scholarship is from \$800 to \$1,000. Travel expenses are the responsibility of the recipient. Each year MOS awards approximately ten scholarships.

Please note: Brochures from the camps are not available until January, so specific dates for camps are not known at this time. The scholarship chairperson, MOS chapter presidents, or MOS chapter representatives can provide general descriptions of the content of workshops. Websites of the respective Audubon organizations provide additional information; however, not all workshops listed are approved for the MOS Scholarship program. Winners are notified by early March.

To be eligible for a scholarship, applicants must work with young people. Typical applicants are teachers, camp counselors, park rangers, students, and others who intend to make nature education a part of their careers. Applicants need not be members of MOS, but they must be endorsed by a chapter or a member of MOS. Applicants must be 18 years of age or older. Each candidate must submit the following:

- 1) A written statement in the form of a letter showing how the Audubon experience will be used to develop in young people an appreciation of our natural heritage and a sense of responsibility for the care and quality of our natural resources and environment.
- 2) Two letters of recommendation from individuals who know of the candidate's interests, activities, abilities, and potential. One of these letters should be from either a member of MOS or a chapter of MOS. It is extremely helpful if the letters of recommendation cite specific activities, accomplishments, or projects in which the applicant was involved, in addition to personal qualities.
- 3) A current resume.

Each MOS chapter has appointed a scholarship representative to assist potential applicants. Please consult with your chapter president for contact information or contact the Scholarship Committee Chairperson (see below).

Applications for the 2006 workshops are due by January 31, 2006. Please direct questions and submit applications to Tom Strikwerda, Chair, MOS Scholarship Committee, 9806 Culver Ct, Kensington, MD 20895; telephone: 301-942-2841; e-mail: tom.strikwerda@verizon.net.

All chapter presidents and representatives are urged to disseminate this information as widely as possible to all educators and youth leaders in the state. A broad base of applicants is needed to ensure wide participation in the selection process.

BOOK REVIEW**The Grail Bird, by Tim Gallagher • Houghton Mifflin, 2005**

In April 2005, the Cornell University Lab of Ornithology made the stunning announcement that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, widely believed to be extinct, had been rediscovered in a bayou in eastern Arkansas. Tim Gallagher's new book, *The Grail Bird: Hot on the Trail of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker*, documents the search and rediscovery efforts—reinvigorated by the report of a pair of Ivory-bills in the Pearl River region of Louisiana in 1999.

The book begins with a bit of background of Ivory-bill searchers stretching all the way back to Mark Catesby, Alexander Wilson, and John James Audubon. And Gallagher, a renowned wildlife photographer and editor of Cornell's *Living Bird* journal, describes what got him so passionate about this bird. As a true Ivory-bill fanatic, Gallagher comes into contact with others like himself. Some are part-time chasers with full-time jobs, some give up their jobs to become full-time chasers. One of the main characters in this tale is Gallagher's longtime friend Bobby Ray Harrison, a true son-of-the-South wildlife photographer and art history and photography teacher at Oakwood College in Alabama.

Much of the book revolves around their antics as they follow up on leads on reported woodpecker sightings, and it begins to take on a detective-novel-like feel as more clues are gathered, more suspects are investigated, all towards revealing the final mystery. Mixed in with the story of their eventual sighting of an Ivory-billed

Woodpecker is a good dose of bird legend and lore, both past and present.

Gallagher is a gifted storyteller and the book builds to a great climax, so that by chapter 16 you simply cannot put it down. The last three chapters bring the story to a close in November 2004, but the epilogue and postscript bring us right up to March 2005.

The Grail Bird has a Maryland connection, too. John Dennis was a Somerset County resident and a long time Ivory-bill chaser. Dennis claimed to have seen an Ivory-bill in the Big Thicket of east Texas in late 1966, and he recorded its calls there in May 1968. The ornithological world, however, did not accept his sighting. Harrison and Gallagher search out and find Dennis's missing tapes, and with help from Cornell's bioacoustics lab, they prove Dennis was right—he had indeed recorded the “kent” calls of an Ivory-bill years before.

This book relates more than just the rediscovery of an “extinct” bird. It documents the years of bad land use, unwise conservation practices, and questionable ornithology that pushed the Ivory-bill to the brink. And in the end it offers up hope. In the words of Tim Gallagher, “I believe the attention that this bird's rediscovery will bring to the southern swamp forest habitat will ultimately be a good thing, as more and more of it is preserved. And that can only be good for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, provided that the species can hang on just a little while longer. Considering how much the bird has already gone through, I have faith that it will.”

—Rick Sussman, *Montgomery Bird Club*

LAST CALL

... for **Fall Count Data**,
deadline October 10.
Contact Chuck Stirrat,
410-531-2417.

NEXT-TO-LAST CALL

... for **Research Proposals**,
deadline December 1.
Grants are available for
ornithological research
conducted in Maryland.
For info, contact Gwen Brewer,
gibrewer@comcast.net.

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