

President's Corner

Futurama

by Marcia Balestri

DATELINE: June 4, 2027 10:55:20

SCENE: MOS Meeting, Vidcon
originating from Maggie's
house, Garrett County

"Thanks, Jim, for your Scholarship report. Ah, a couple more folks have joined us. Margo: Conservation?"

"Yes. As you know, Montgomery County sold off the last of the public land, except Black Hill, to accommodate the influx of people from the move of the capitol from Annapolis to Germantown. The new owners of Seneca Lake are getting testy about granting access to non-residents and may cut off our field trips there. They have also requested that we take it off the Birding Trail map. We are still in negotiations with them. Black Hill is still open for trips, but you have to get permission and have an escort meet you at the gate. We have refocused our letter campaigns further north to try to save areas in Frederick, Washington, Allegany, and Garrett Counties, although the development is rampant. We are

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The Maryland Yellowthroat

Newsletter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2008

VOL. 28, NO. 1

HARFORD BECKONS: CONFERENCE 2008 EDGEWOOD, MAY 30-JUNE 1

Birders across the state are familiar with Conowingo Dam, famous for its Bald Eagles and wintering gulls, and Susquehanna State Park, home to breeding passerines such as Yellowthroated, Kentucky, and Cerulean Warblers. The 2008 annual conference, our first ever in Harford County, will provide MOS members an unprecedented opportunity to sample some of the county's lesser-known but equally productive hotspots, including Swan Harbor Farm, the Perryman peninsula, Harford Glen, Rocks and Palmer State Parks, Broad Creek Memorial Scout Reservation, and the Bradenbaugh Flats. Specialty outings on the field trip docket will include a listers' trip as well as a visit to Baltimore County's Hart-Miller Island, a kayak excursion in the tidal marshes of Otter Point Creek, and a canoe trip along a gentle, bucolic stretch of Deer Creek. (These two paddling excursions will be made available at a very modest cost, courtesy of the Anita C. Leight Estuary Center and the Eden Mill Nature Center.) Dave Webb has arranged for all of these trips and more. Contact Dave (porzanna@comcast.net) if you wish to help out with the field trips.

Maryanne Dolan (Maryanne.dolan@gmail.com) is again handling the Silent Auction and Raffle. Raffle profits (usually \$2,000-\$3,000) are traditionally donated to a local group, and the 2008 funds will go to the Harford Land Trust. Organized in 1991 by local residents, this is Harford County's first and only county-wide land trust, and it joins

more than 40 other land trusts protecting land throughout Maryland. Quite a few of our Harford MOS members are actively involved in this very worthy organization. (Find out more at its website, www.harfordlandtrust.org).

We are indeed lucky to have both a Wild Bird Center and Chesapeake Optics coming to the conference. John Sala, Baltimore MOS member, owns Wild Bird Center stores in Timonium and Gaithersburg. Gary Lang's Chesapeake Optics is located in Havre de Grace. Gary, a Harford MOS member, will bring an interesting selection of optics for your perusal. John will have lots of Wild Bird Center merchandise plus information on a Baltimore conservation project. Lots of great items to investigate in your "free" time.

Don't forget that we have **Bill Thompson**, editor of *Bird Watcher's Digest*, coming as keynote speaker. Also, Mike Bowen has arranged for **Michael O'Brien** to give a Birding by Ear workshop and lead a field trip.

Headquarters for our meetings, meals, and lodging will be the Ramada Conference Center in Edgewood. This is a suburban setting located in the southwestern part of the county, just a short distance off I-95.

Be on the lookout for registration brochures sometime in February. I'm looking forward to seeing many of you at the Harford Conference in May.

—Janet Shields,
Conference Committee
301-733-7877
janetbill@prodigy.net

In Living Color

Check out the *Yellowthroat* on the web site to enjoy all the great bird photos in their original full-color state.

Teacher's Aid

Did you know that the Youth Birding Web pages, accessible through the MOS web site, carries lesson plans on bird-related topics?

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

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Anyone is welcome to contribute articles or ideas that would be of interest to other birders. Copy may be mailed or e-mailed to Lydia Schindler by January 12, 2008 for the March/April 2008 issue.

Illustrations pages 1, 5 and 8 © M. Suzanne Probst. Photographs pages 9 and 10 © George Jett. Photograph (top) page 12 © Skip Pettit. Photograph (bottom) page 12 © Mary Konchar.

President's Corner (continued from page 1)

lucky that Frederick doesn't yet have a reservoir, and, with the continued water problems, there is a hold on development in the Catoctins, but if they pass the Schaefer Reservoir Bill, we will have to retrench to save the area."

"Thanks, Margo. And Sara: Membership?"

"Well, it's somewhat stabilized. We are down to 10 Chapters and P.G. Island combined with Charles Island. The average membership for each chapter is about 60. Any drop is still due to people leaving Maryland to move to inland states. Not much we can do about it."

"OK. Thanks, Sara. That's all the Committee reports. Any Old Business? New Business? OK, that's it, thanks for tuning in. Warren will get the action items out tomorrow, and the next meeting will be August 6, coming to you from Loch Raven Wetlands. You can live-vidcam the pre-meeting field trip led by George starting at 7:00AM, or you can save it until later. The meeting will start promptly at 10:00AM. Good seeing all you this month. Don't forget the three letter campaigns to the representatives in Germantown and the Dubois Legacy Contributions. Bye."

DATELINE: June 4, 2027 11:00:32

SCENE: Mike's Living Room,
Frederick County

"Wow, Maggie sure gets through these meetings in record time—under an hour today!"

"Not a lot of news to report lately, not good news, anyway."

"So, Mike, thanks for letting me come to your house to watch the vidcon. My husband is using ours for work today."

"On a Saturday?"

"Yeah, you know how these solar guys are—24/7."

"You goin' on that pelagic this weekend?"

"Nah, not a good return on investment anymore. Peter's new solar hovercraft gets you out there pretty fast, if you leave from

Laurel docks, but it still takes 3 hours. Pretty expensive, and since there're no fish, there're no birds.

"Besides, I'm supposed to meet Sally at her house to atlas this weekend. She has Liganore and wants help with her last miniroute. She has one of those new vidcams that pans fast, can zoom in on a dime, and has great sound. Shouldn't take us too long—5 minutes a site and 15 sites, a couple of minutes in between to reposition—we'll be done in an hour and a half. Come join us if you want; she won't mind. Afterwards you can help us count the White Ibis colony on the north side of the lake for the Department of Ecology. It's growing like gangbusters and there is a significant population of Anhinga, too."

"Sounds like fun. I haven't dialed in on that area in a while, but I have my own atlas to do this weekend. I need more work on my blocks in the Catoctins. I'm having a hard time finding some of the species folks saw in the last atlas, but there are so many new species from the south, I've already hit 95 in some of my blocks."

"Did you look at the new atlas entry site on FaceTube? It's amazing. I went back and looked at the data from the last atlas. They had so much territory to cover with 23 counties. And they didn't have our technology either. Had to do it all on foot and by car. 'Course they did have a lot more people."

"Yeah, over 500, I hear. Can you imagine all the gas they burned collecting all that data? They'd be arrested now. I did hear that we were going to have to atlas all the blocks that are under water now, just for comparison's sake. After a few scans, they found out what we could have told them—no fish, no birds. Just a few gulls. What a contrast to the 150+ species there 20 years ago. Anyway, they decided not to bother."

"Good thing. How boring that would be scanning over all those miles of ocean. Oh, well, gotta go. Let me know if you see anything good up at Catocin. I still need Ruddy Quail-Dove for the year. See ya, Mike."

MINUTES OF THE MOS BOARD MEETING SEPTEMBER 29, 2007

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

Atlas: Jane Coskren
Awards: John Malcolm
Birding Trail: Marcia Balestri
Conference: Janet Shields
Conservation: Maureen Harvey
Development/Publicity: Russ Kovach
Investments: Martha Waugh
MD/DC Records: Phil Davis
Sanctuary: Brent Byers
Scholarship: Tom Strikwerda
Yellowthroat: Lydia Schindler

Allegheny: *not represented*

Anne Arundel: Linda Baker,
Dale Johnson, Phil Davis

Baltimore: Brent Byers,
Roberta Ross

Caroline: *not represented*

Carroll: Maureen Harvey

Cecil: *not represented*

Frederick: Kathy Calvert,
Chuck Finley, Helen Horrocks,
Nancy Parker, David Smith,
Michael Welch

Harford: Thomas Congersky,
Russ Kovach

Howard: Mary-Jo Betts, Jane Coskren,
Karen Darcy, Shiras Guion, Kevin
Heffernan, Tom Strikwerda, Martha
Waugh, Paul Zucker

Kent: Walter Ellison, Nancy Martin

Montgomery: John Malcolm,
Jim Nelson

Patuxent: Fred Fallon

Talbot: Wayne Bell

Tri-County: *not represented*

Washington: Anna Hutzell,
Ann Mitchell

President Marcia Balestri called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m. She thanked the Frederick Bird Club for hosting the meeting at the Urbana Regional Library and thanked Barbara Gearhart and others for leading the field trip held before the meeting.

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved with a correction of the

Sanctuary Committee report to show that the Carey Run house was opened for the summer rather than closed for the winter.

Treasurer's Report: Emmalyn Holdridge's quarterly Treasurer's Report was submitted. She will be mailing copies of the new Sales Tax Exemption Form to committee chairs and chapter treasurers. Marcia Balestri will have the form available as a PDF file.

CHAPTER REPORTS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Sanctuary: Brent Byers reported on work being done at Irish Grove. The tide gate should now be finished. Dotty Mumford will be at the sanctuary the weekend of October 26 for a work session concentrating on trail work and house cleaning. At Carey Run, MOS has applied to the Landowners Incentive Program for financial assistance for the removal of Autumn Olive. The cost is estimated to be \$11,000, with the state paying 75% and the cost to MOS \$3,900 for the first year. The Board agreed that MOS should get before-and-after photographs of the eradication program. Regarding the possible new Piscataway Sanctuary in Prince George's County, the builder is still working on legal aspects that will enable the company to donate the land to MOS.

Atlas: Jane Coskren asked each chapter to look at their budget and review their Atlas contributions; some chapters have been very generous while others have contributed nothing. She requests that chapters consider making a donation this year. The state is no longer able to give us grants because we are no longer collecting data, but there are still Atlas expenses and Walter's salary to be met.

Walter Ellison reported that most of the committee's activities involve processes that have already been initiated. The book deal with Johns

Hopkins Press is signed and sealed, and the book should be delivered by November 1 of next year. Anyone who knows of unpublished information on breeding birds should contact Walter, rossgull@baybroadband.net or 410-778-9568. One last field project this year was miniroutes. So far, data from 142 routes have been received and 13 are yet to be submitted; the total to date is 634 miniroutes, with final total of 650-660 expected. The photo competition, announced in the last *Yellowthroat*, is ongoing.

Awards: John Malcolm reminded the Board that awards are important to a volunteer organization, and it behooves chapter presidents, state officers, and committee chairs to recognize the volunteers' contributions. John showed samples of awards he can produce or procure, and encouraged chapters to contact him to see what they can work out to recognize the people valuable to their organization.

MD Birding Trail: Marcia Balestri presented Marcia Watson's report. The MD Birding Trail task force has accumulated literature on birding trails from many other states, and it met last week to start the real work on the project. The task force discussed its charge, goals, and audience and reviewed the scope of the entire project. They worked from a lengthy document, which will be refined over time to become the specifications for the trail itself. The task force affirmed the trail will cover the entire state, ideally including every county as well as the District of Columbia. A first draft of a goal statement will be finalized in the coming weeks. The next steps are to draft criteria for site selection and to identify a process that will ensure input from and participation of MOS chapters in choosing sites. The task force will also be investigating the feasibility of working with a consultant.

Conference: Janet Shields reported that 193 people attended the 2007 Salisbury Conference. It was a very enjoyable conference but we did lose

BOARD MINUTES (continued from page 3)

money—a little over \$2,000. This was covered by money made in previous years, but this is an on-going problem as the costs of food and facilities increase. We are considering what adjustments might need to be made in the future.

The 2008 conference will be May 30-June 1 in Harford County, a new, exciting location for us. Dave Webb and the Harford members are already working on field trips. Ross Kovach has arranged for Bill Thompson, editor of *Birdwatcher's Digest*, to be the keynote speaker. Mike Bowen has arranged for Michael O'Brien to give a Birding by Ear workshop on Friday and a field trip on Saturday.

Conservation: Maureen Harvey reported on conservation concerns. The National Wildlife Refuge Association has sent many reports on issues at National Wildlife Refuges. Of particular note is a developer seeking approval for a marina and large housing development adjacent to Aransas NWR near Rockport, TX, where Whooping Cranes spend the winter. The marina has the potential of disturbing these sensitive birds both during development, which would involve dredging two channels, and afterwards by increased boat traffic in the area. In Maryland, Cecil County birders are concerned about a proposed development at Chesapeake Cove, where a Bald Eagle has been nesting. Unfortunately, landowners can remove the eagle's nest tree as soon as the young have fledged and stopped using the nest.

Delaware's DNR had imposed a moratorium on all taking of horseshoe crabs in their state last year. However, a waterman took them to court, and a sympathetic judge found the DNR restriction unconstitutional based on depriving the man of his livelihood, in view of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Horseshoe Crab Management Board decision that allowed taking 100,000 males this year and next in Delaware. This fall, Delaware DNR is working on new legislation that they expect will stand up in the courts.

Development/Publicity: Russ Kovach, NikonF5user@aol.com or 433-386-4787, as new chair, would like to have a representative from each chapter on his committee, and he asks that each chapter president designate someone and send their name and contact information to him. He plans to meet with these people in the new year to discuss what each chapter is doing and proceed from there. Russ feels that one thing MOS doesn't do well is cross-communicate, and that there are a lot of chapter activities that are not identified as MOS activities and vice versa. He would like to see credit given both to chapters and to MOS statewide for individual chapter and state events in order to give the public a clearer impression of who we are and what we do.

Janet Millenson reported on a seminar on attracting major gift donors, which relates to what Russ intends to do. She has a list of recommendations from the workshop, which she will send to chapter presidents. They include identifying specific uses of donations as well as identifying donors, cultivating relationships, and soliciting gifts. For Russ's purposes, it is essential that he and the chapter representatives are informed of each chapter's activities. We need to know such things as number of field trips, talks to outside groups, help with community projects, etc, to enable the committee to promote MOS and show potential donors where our money is going.

Investments: Martha Waugh handed out her Investment Committee Report and noted that we did have more income than we have had in the past. At this point our market value is lower than at the same time last year.

Scholarships: Tom Strikwerda reported that the 2007 scholarship year was successful, and he has received reports from most of the recipients. He has been sending out requests for applicants for 2008. He doesn't expect any major changes in the program this year, and it will probably be able to fund 14-16 scholarships. The program will try to target more schools in the DC area.

MD/DC Records: Phil Davis presented an update on the birds of Maryland and DC. Two species, Cackling Goose and Bullock's Oriole, were added to the DC list to bring the total up to 326. Maryland saw three additions to the state list, Inca Dove, Tropical Kingbird, and Anna's Hummingbird, bringing the list up to 432.

OLD BUSINESS

Manual of Operations: Paul Zucker noted that there was a discussion regarding MOS policy of not reimbursing members for gas, etc. in the manual. He proposes the following be accepted and placed right before the individual committee descriptions in the manual: *It is MOS policy not to reimburse any members for mileage and parking costs or for tolls. Any exception needs to be approved by the Board of Directors.* This was approved by the Board and will be added to the manual. Paul has received input from the Membership Chair and the Office Administrator. The wording needs to be resolved in describing Office Administrator and Executive Secretary. He is leaning towards a statement saying because of changing needs, the Executive Secretary position has not been filled, and then give the duties of the Office Administrator. Paul will draft new wording to present to the Board. Paul still needs descriptions for the Development/Publicity Committee and for Youth Programs.

Insurance Waiver: Marcia Balestri stated that the insurance waiver is on the MOS website.

George DuBois's New Challenge: George DuBois issued a challenge again this year. MOS needs to raise \$1,500 by December 31 and George will match it and the money used for a rain forest project.

NEW BUSINESS

Four Acres in Kent County: Nancy Martin reported that the Kent County chapter researched the offer of four acres. The property appears to be totally surrounded by other lots. It is located in the middle of a very nice patch of woods but it has no road

frontage or obvious access. It is something that Nature Conservancy could possibly handle, but not MOS.

Membership Counting: Helen Horrocks explained that we've traditionally counted memberships but now would like to count individual members. (Many household memberships have more than two people.) Helen has asked chapter treasurers to try to provide this information. Currently, counting individual members and household memberships as two people, MOS has 1,760 MOS members. It would be a good statistic to have for Maureen Harvey's Conservation Committee letters and Russ Kovach's Development/Publicity Committee.

Attendance Decline on Field Trips: Marcia Balestri has had members talk to her about a decline in field trip participation. Marcia noted that had been the case in Frederick until they cut down the number of trips. She doesn't know if that is a statewide phenomenon and is curious as to why it is happening and what can be done about it. In some chapters, it might be related to members aging. On the Eastern Shore, where older people are relocating, field trips are thriving. Having trips mentioned in chapter newsletters and websites seems to help other chapters.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MOS received a letter from Maryland Department of Natural Resources thanking us for providing their biologists with accommodations at Irish Grove during the 2007 eelgrass collection efforts in Tangier Sound. They gave MOS a generous \$1,000 donation in appreciation.

President Marcia Balestri adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
—Janet Shields, Secretary

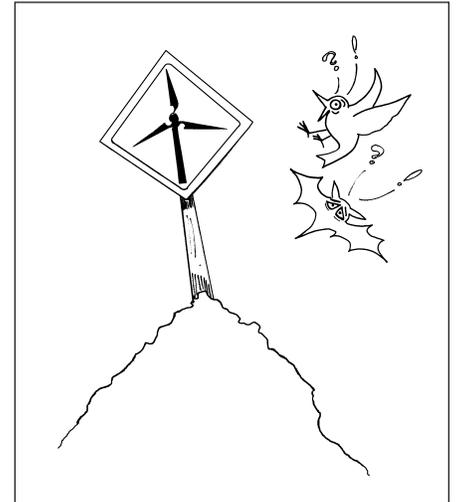
AN ILL WIND FOR OUR PUBLIC LANDS: ACT NOW

State forests in Western Maryland preserve some of our most pristine land. According to a (Baltimore) *Sun* article by Tom Pelton ("State Forests Sought for Wind Farms," 12/8/07), MD Governor Martin O'Malley is being wooed by developers from Pennsylvania who want to build wind farms on our state lands. They are asking to lease 400 acres of state forests to install 100 2-Megavolt wind turbines, with a promise to produce electricity for 55,000 homes.

While the State's energy needs continue to grow and we need cleaner energy sources, the minimal energy gain from these wind farms would not outweigh the tragic destruction of some of the most impressive land and wildlife habitat in MD—and this, for the benefit of private, for-profit companies. While he was a gubernatorial candidate, Martin O'Malley blasted then-Governor Robert Ehrlich for trying to sell off state forests to politically connected developers. State forests, parks, and wildlife sanctuaries are for the public, not for private companies to reap windfall profits.

Wind turbines are an intermittent energy source, because they supply power only when the wind is blowing and lack the capacity to store electricity. Thus, they are incapable of producing much electricity during the summer months, when wind blows the least and demand for electricity is the highest. Wind charts indicate these Western Maryland wind turbines would generate only enough electricity to power 17,000 average residential customers (not 55,000) during the summer months, and then only when the wind is actually blowing.

Activist Ajax Eastman wrote to the *Sun* editor, "If the Governor allows a private developer to build 100 huge wind turbines on our public



lands, his action will destroy hundreds of acres of the ecologically richest unfragmented forests [and] impact endangered species and migrating birds and bats, but would only intermittently provide a relatively small amount of electricity to the grid. They would provide few long-term jobs, and the company's \$400 million investment could be recovered completely in several years, due to lucrative tax shelters and credits."

Please write, phone, or e-mail one or more of the following members of the Board of Public Works to ensure they won't lease our public lands for industrial development: Gov. Martin O'Malley, 100 State Circle, Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1925, 410-974-3901, 1-800-811-8336; Treasurer Nancy Kopp, Goldstein Treasury Building, 80 Calvert Street, Annapolis, Maryland 21401, 410-260-7533, 1-800-974-0468; Comptroller Peter Franchot, Goldstein Treasury Building, 80 Calvert Street, Annapolis, MD 21401, 410-260-7801, pfranchot@comp.state.md.us.

—Maureen Harvey, Chair
MOS Conservation Committee

The Conservation Connection

by Maureen F. Harvey



Regional, national, and international threats to birdlife persist. Bird conservationists must stay alert and speak out as issues emerge. The following summaries touch on a hodge-podge of crucial issues.

Forest Planning Rules—A Logger's Dream

In October 2007, Howard County's George Alderson drafted an eloquent letter to the U.S. Forest Service, for MOS to sign, commenting on new Forest Planning Rules. Forest planning, George explains, is where the Forest Service cuts up the pie. The timber industry used to get the biggest piece, but over the past 25 years wildlife has been getting a bigger share. The timber industry would like to roll back this progress. Although a U.S. District Court reversed a previous Forest Service plan, the Forest Service tweaked a few items and brought back the same proposal. It's a logger's dream, cutting down public participation, eliminating National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis, and dropping the consideration of alternatives. It also deletes an important provision that requires each plan to provide for viable populations of native species. MOS's letter stated our position on conservation of habitat and the need for public input on disposition of Federal lands.

Alternative Energy and the Outer Continental Shelf

The Secretary of the Interior has announced an interim policy authorizing the Minerals Management Service (MMS) to issue limited-term leases allowing research on alternative energy uses on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). MMS will regulate alternative energy projects, including wind, wave, solar, underwater current, and generation of hydrogen, as well as projects that involve alternate uses for existing oil and gas platforms on the OCS, such as aquaculture, research, education, recreation, or support for offshore operations and facilities. MMS plans to publish a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for the program in Spring 2008. A separate NEPA analysis will evaluate the environmental impacts of the proposed regulatory framework. The curious may visit the MMS website, <http://www.mms.gov>, and OCS Information Center, <http://www.ocsenergy.anl.gov>.

Texas Birds Face Multiple Threats: Coastal Developments, Border Wall

The MOS Conservation Committee submitted comments to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding two separate permit applications for developments along the Texas coast adjacent to bird sanctuaries, expressing concerns about the impacts of the development on the sanctuaries' denizens. Bolivar Holdings, LLC, proposes building a 38-acre, 150-unit development on land surrounded by the Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary near Galveston. Seadrift Ranch Partners, Ltd, wants to create two marinas in association

with a big luxury housing development adjacent to Aransas National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) near Rockport. Aransas is the wintering home of the endangered Whooping Cranes, and part of the proposed development would be in habitat critical for the cranes. The dredging and construction activity would itself be disruptive, but remember that additional long-term disturbance from boat traffic would follow!

Carol Schreter and Wendy Olsson report that the Baltimore Bird Club Board wrote to members of the U.S. Congress and the USFWS opposing the construction of a wall along the Mexico-U.S. border in the lower Rio Grande Valley. Such a wall could involve clearing brush in a swath up to 150 feet wide along the river and building a road suitable for driving at 50 MPH. Of the 153 miles of wall authorized in Texas, 86 miles may cross habitat critical for birds and birdwatchers, including 14 separate protected areas. (According to a report commissioned by Congress, the CA and AZ border walls have had no impact on the number of immigrants who are in the U.S. illegally.) The Secure Fence Act of 2006 and the Real ID Act of 2005 have given the Secretary of Homeland Security the power to waive any and all federal laws. Homeland Security does not even have to consult with state and local officials. Well-known wildlife refuges and parks that lie in the path of this wall include Santa Ana NWR, Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR, Sabal Palms Audubon Sanctuary, Bentsen State Park, and The Nature Conservancy properties called Chihuahuan Woods and Southmost Preserve. If you would like to follow this issue or sign a petition, go to www.NoTexasBorderWall.com.

Resort Plans Threaten Grenada Dove

Despite local and international outcry in 2006, a major resort development on the island of Grenada threatens the largest and most important population of the Critically Endangered Grenada Dove, the island nation's national bird. In January 2007, photos became available showing that about half of Hog Island had been cleared by bulldozer in the same configuration as the maps presented in development plan, even though the developers and the government of Grenada claim that no final decision on the development has been reached. The dove is protected officially only in the 155-acre Mt. Hartman National Park. Most of the doves are concentrated in the national park and unprotected portions of the 450-acre Mt. Hartman estate. The extensive development plan—an 18-hole golf course, central hotel, 107 individual hotel units, and 255 private residential villas on the mainland and on Hog Island just offshore—will certainly require the redrawing of the protected area's boundaries and may require that parts of the national park be sold to the developers. In April 2007, the government of Grenada amended the National Parks and Protected Areas Act to allow the Governor General to sell any national park to

developers or other private interests. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) released in June 2007 understates the importance of Mt. Hartman to the dove's survival and fails to address the severe impacts on dove habitat and prospects for the species' survival. In September 2007, ABC submitted a detailed critique of the EIA to the Government of Grenada and the developers, with suggestions on how to protect the dove. Surveys of the Grenada Dove are under way, but it is unclear the degree to which the developers are using this information to guide the design of the resort. The developers' response to ABC did not address the critique but stated that stakeholders would soon learn more of the developers' plans through a press announcement. They are clearly resistant to any public review process that could hamper their plans.

Red Knots and Delaware Horseshoe Crabs

In June 2007, a Delaware Superior Court repealed a 2-year moratorium on the take of horseshoe crabs in the Delaware Bay, a key stopover site for the migrating Red Knot. Meanwhile, FWS released their 2007 Red Knot assessment, which concludes the species' dramatic population decline is mainly due to the low availability of horseshoe crab eggs in Delaware Bay, a key stopover site for the birds during their migration. Studies have shown that Red Knot individuals with lower body weight at departure from Delaware Bay have lower survival rates than heavier birds. The FWS report confirms that Red Knots could easily become extinct within 10 years. In response to the Superior Court ruling, Delaware's Dept of Natural Resources adopted emergency regulations that reduce Delaware's regular annual harvest quota from 150,000 horseshoe crabs of either sex to 100,000 male-only horseshoe crabs.

Nova Scotia Names Three New Bird Species at Risk

In October 2007, the Nova Scotia government added Red Knot, Chimney Swift, and Common Nighthawk to its list of species at risk, bringing the total of species listed under the province's Endangered Species Act to 41. The Red Knot population in Canada has declined by 70% in the past 15 years, with a similar decline recorded in Nova Scotia. The Chimney Swift was added to the endangered list, while the Common Nighthawk is classified as threatened. Meanwhile, the government announced that the province's Peregrine Falcon population has successfully recovered, although it remains on the vulnerable list; the falcons are now nesting on cliffs along the Bay of Fundy. Federal and provincial laws in Canada prohibit activities that could disturb or destroy species or their habitat and impose fines for violations.

Tower Safeguards for Gulf Coast

On September 11, 2007, ABC and a coalition of other conservation groups, represented by Earthjustice, argued before a federal appeals court that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) should implement regulations aimed at reducing the number of birds killed in collisions with cellular and television towers in the Gulf Coast region. According to USFWS estimates, lights from communication

towers, by disorienting birds during nighttime migration, kill 5 to 50 million birds each year. Despite these figures as well as USFWS recommendations for simple modifications that could save birds, the FCC has failed to act. Migratory bird populations that transit the Gulf Coast region, where more than 5,000 towers dot the 1,000-mile stretch from Port Isabel, TX to Tampa Bay, FL, are especially at risk. The September hearing was the final opportunity for both sides to argue the case before the matter is decided by a panel of judges. "American Bird Conservancy strongly believes the court should hold the FCC accountable for their persistent disregard of our nation's well-established wildlife protection laws," said Darin Schroeder, ABC's Executive Director of Conservation Advocacy. "It's time the FCC understands they should be concerned about protecting our nation's ecological heritage and wildlife resources." There is no set date for a decision on the case. Point of contact: dschroeder@abcbirds.org.

San Francisco Bay + Black Sea Oil Spills = Huge Bird Losses

On November 7, 2007, the *Cosco Busan* struck the Bay Bridge, spilling 58,000 gallons of bunker oil in San Francisco Bay. The Point Reyes Bird Observatory's Executive Director of Conservation Science, Ellie M. Cohen, reported that their team of 20 scientists, working to process oiled birds under the CA State Oiled Wildlife Care Network, processed a total of 1,409 birds (715 live, 183 washed of oil, 511 dead) within two days of the spill. Then on November 10, a heavy storm brought severe damage to vessels stuck in the Kerch Strait between the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. One vessel broke in two, leaking at least 2,000 tons of oil, and three more vessels that sank carried potentially hazardous sulphur. At least 30,000 birds died immediately, and thousands more were covered in oil and faced death in the following days. Fifty km of Russian coastline was affected by the oil spills, including two Important Bird Areas (IBAs) designated primarily for migrating and wintering birds. Up to 50,000 migratory waterfowl and other birds are known to use the sites during migration.

The PRBO points out that the number of oiled birds collected during a spill markedly underestimates the true numbers impacted. In many spills, the observed mortality is actually only 5-10% of true mortality, as many carcasses are never recovered (they may sink, wash out to sea or to inaccessible beaches, or be eaten by scavengers). Direct mortality from oiling is often due to one of three things: hypothermia (the oil interferes with the waterproofing of feathers), starvation (birds beach themselves to avoid the hypothermia and therefore can't forage, or they preen so obsessively to try to remove the oil that they do not spend any time doing anything else), and toxicity of oil ingested during preening. Oil can persist in the environment long-term and continue to impact the birds and kill or contaminate food sources.



CAROLINE COUNTY

Last issue, Caroline announced their blog. Now they also have a wiki—a web site that, like Wikipedia, allows users to add and edit content collectively—though in this case, contributors must be pre-approved. The blog allows members to share sightings and other info; the wiki serves up items of longer duration, including event listings, as well as items of a historical nature, such as old club photos. Caroline invites you to visit them at <http://carolinebirdclubmos.blogspot.com> and <http://carolinebirdclubmos.pbwiki.com>. (While you're there, see if you can help us ID the folks in a photo from an MOS Convention held during the 1950s or 1960s near Thurmont, MD.) If you have any comments or suggestions, post them there, or contact me at firefly5845@hotmail.com. Caroline's President **Danny Poet** also has a blog—check it out to see some excellent photos: <http://birderforever.blogspot.com>.

—*Debby Bennett*

HARFORD COUNTY

Lynn Feryus traveled to Colorado in July on her 16th trip with Naturalist Journeys (www.naturalistjourneys.com). She saw 157 species on the 11-day trip, starting at Denver and going east to Pawnee Grasslands, across the Continental Divide to the west side of Rocky Mountain NP, and then to Black Canyon and Gunnison NP. Lark Bunting, Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspurs, and Gunnison Sage Grouse were among her life birds.

Deb Bowers also traveled west this summer, to northern Arizona. In addition to Grand Canyon and Little

Colorado Gorge, she and her husband climbed the state's highest peak, Humphries Mountain. Among the many interesting birds she saw were Pinyon, Steller's, and Scrub Jays, Mountain Chickadee, and Clark's Nutcracker. She also spotted California Condor #23, a 12-year-old male.

—*Jean Wheeler*

HOWARD COUNTY

Hawk enthusiasts **Jane and Ralph Geuder** made a late-October visit to the Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve in Duluth, MN. Though the site is known for its huge flights of Bald Eagles, folks from the eastern U.S. are more impressed with the Northern Goshawks and Rough-legged Hawks that come through. The reserve has a wonderful volunteer program, with presentations to over 2,000 school children each year. The Geuders got close-up looks at Northern Goshawk, various phases of Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Black-backed Woodpecker, and Northern Shrike.

Erratum: A correction to the November/December Chapter Chatter: The first person to spot the Cattle Egret at Lake Elkhorn on August 28 was **Sue Neri**, not **Barry Miller and Michelle Stewart** as reported.

—*Kate Tufts*

FREDERICK COUNTY

Don Briddell reports that he had an “apartment-house-building” pair of American Robins in his yard. They spied the ladder hanging on the side of the garage and proceeded to build 11, yes 11, nests along the ladder. They settled on the middle one to raise the family. He supposes they didn't want neighbors!

—*Helen Horrocks*

SOUTHERN MARYLAND

On October 16, **Ann Wearmouth** had a brief encounter with a Fork-tailed Flycatcher. While out running through her neighborhood, Ann noticed a gray, black, and white bird with long tail feathers perched in a tree. She stopped running to get a better look. Ann, who had done

Peace Corps work in Paraguay, where Fork-tailed Flycatcher is a common species, knew immediately what the bird was

Ann ran to get a neighbor, **Chris Guy**, who works at the Fish and Wildlife Service. He brought his son, and all three watched the bird for about five minutes before the bird decided to move on. This would be the third state record for this long-distance migrant. Five days later a Fork-tailed Flycatcher was reported and photographed in Kent County. One can speculate that this was the same bird, since it is highly unlikely there were two of these extremely rare birds in Maryland within one week.

On Sunday evening, October 21, **Jim Stasz** phoned to tell me he had a Calliope Hummingbird at his feeder in North Beach. He wanted to know if I would come over and get some still photographs; he had taken some video. This was the third record of Calliope Hummingbird for Maryland. The next morning, after I confirmed that the bird had spent the night in North Beach, I headed up the road. When I arrived around 9 AM, the feeder was still in the shadow of Jim's house. After an anxious 15-minute wait, the Calliope Hummingbird arrived to feed. I took a few images, but they were less than satisfactory because morning light was not yet available.

After feeding the bird would fly up toward a tree north of Jim's yard, and perch somewhere. This tree was in the morning light. Around 11 AM, after several unsuccessful attempts to locate the bird in the tree, my luck changed, and I was able to get better and more natural images.

Ms. Nancy Newfield, a hummingbird expert in Louisiana who has handled and banded 102 Calliopes, analyzed the images I sent and concluded the bird in North Beach was an immature male Calliope. It was last seen on Tuesday, October 23 at 8 AM. Good luck to him, wherever he may have gone.

—*George Jett*



Calliope Hummingbird photographed by George Jett on October 21, 2007.

TALBOT COUNTY

Les and Carolyn Roslund visited Peru for two weeks in November. The main focus of the trip was exploration of Machu Picchu and other Inca villages high in the Andes Mountains. However, there was also time to enjoy a sample of Peru's spectacular bird life. They spent the last few days of the trip on the waters of the Amazon River, accompanied by local guides who identified the birds and interpreted many features of the rainforest habitat.

Bill and Karen Harris went birding in Idaho and Oregon last spring. One of the places they visited was the East Cascades Bird Conservancy's Lewis's Woodpecker project, where researchers are studying the nesting rate of the woodpecker in bird boxes; the nesting rate this year was about 50 percent. They also took a photo of a Black-throated Sparrow, a dry climate bird, at Bonner's Ferry in northern Idaho, which they sent to

Terry Gray of the Palouza Audubon Society in Lewiston, Idaho; he accepted the sighting as a rarity for northern Idaho. The trip total was 195 species.

—Karen Harris

TRI-COUNTY

Tri-County members have been busy on the local speaking circuit. **Dave Ganoë** spoke at Salisbury University last fall on nature photography and displayed many of his photographic works of art. **Jean and Larry Fry** were guest speakers at the Christmas luncheon of the Institute of Retired Persons, where they presented a talk and slide show on birds of the Eastern Shore. And finally, **John Groutt**, representing the Wicomico Environmental Trust, spoke to two local groups on the impact of unchecked growth on the Eastern Shore. For a small club, we have an amazing resource of talented members.

—Carol Broderick

Not-So-Lonesome Dove

We've all heard of a "lucky duck," but have you heard of a "lucky dove?" This story begins in July 2006, when my brother called to tell me about a tame white dove in the yard of his Rockville apartment. It had been there for two days, seemingly with nothing to eat. Apparently, another resident had owned the dove, grown tired of it, and thrown it out the window. But the bird would not leave.

My brother, not knowing much about birds, asked if it ate bananas. I told him doves and pigeons prefer seeds and grains, but he had no birdseed. He asked if he could bring it to me, because his two tabby cats were getting ready to pounce! Having raised everything from zebra finches to chickens, I thought a dove would be interesting.

When the dove arrived at my house—via a cat carrier—I found it to be a young bird with dusky feathers and an appetite. It begged for food from the hand, leading me to believe it had been hand-raised. It was fully feathered, but it was so weak and emaciated that I didn't think it would live. We immediately went to the pet store for a proper cage and food. I filled up the bowl with seed and some grit, and a few minutes later it was empty. After three bowls of food, the bird took a long drink of water (head down, as we know doves and pigeons do). It was wait and watch.

The next morning the bird was still alive, and eating like there was no tomorrow. We decided to call it "Dovie." Since "Dovie" was so acclimated to people, he'd just have to be an indoor bird. In August, he molted into pure white feathers, quite pretty. You may wonder why I call it a "he." Let's just say that a couple of mounts on the sofa cushions and the tail-drag behavior described in the Stokes Bird Behavior guide gave it all away.

Several years ago I had an Indian Hill Mynah bird, and I can tell you, doves are much quieter and better behaved (and a lot cleaner, too). We let Dovie out several times a day to exercise, stretch, and strut across the top of his cage. He vocalizes, too. He has a deep "hoot" that would put an owl to shame. He also purrs and "woofs" like a dog.

No doubt about it, Dovie has edged his way into our hearts. Our 12-year-old son particularly adores him and loves watching him. He is always asking questions about birds, why they do this or that; I think that by watching and raising a bird, he has gained a better appreciation of them. Even our pet dog has tolerated Dovie—well, pretty well (except for the pecking part).

I've read doves can live up to 20 years. We wonder what that works out to in birdseed. Dovie's got a good thing here.

—Diane Ford
Montgomery Bird Club

Diane was prompted by Colleen Webster's tale of the injured Great Blue Heron in the May-June Yellowthroat to relate a story with a happier ending.

THEY'RE HEEEEERE!

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE: INVASION AND RANGE EXPANSION

BY PAUL J. O'BRIEN, CHAIR, MARYLAND/DC RECORDS COMMITTEE

Once upon a Dry Tortugas trip in May of 1986, I came upon a dove that, at first, I thought was a Ringed Turtle-Dove, *Streptopelia risoria*. But on closer examination it seemed too large, the primaries too dark, and the belly too gray. I had no clue, nor did available field guides offer any, so I had to let it go as a “mystery bird”. But shortly after I got back home from Florida, the June issue of *Birding* arrived and there was Tony White’s article: “Collared Dove: The Next New North American Species?” (*Birding*, Vol. 23, pages 150-152, 1986). Finally I had my clue. Within the next few years I began seeing these doves in numbers around Sarasota, where I traveled each spring for a vision research meeting. (I know, a dirty job, but somebody. . .)

In 1987 P. William Smith published documentation for a growing population of *Streptopelia decaocto* in southeastern Florida (“The Eurasian Collared-Dove Arrives in the Americas,” *American Birds*, Vol. 41, pages 1370-1379, 1987). Smith recounted the story of the pet shop owner in Nassau, Bahamas, who obtained several pairs of the doves to establish a breeding stock. The aviary was burglarized in 1974 by kids looking for parakeets. Some of the doves escaped, and the owner gave up and released the rest. The population grew and the doves spread to other islands in the Bahamas, or they were deliberately released there for hunting purposes. By the early 1980s, populations showed up in various Florida locales, including Tampa Bay, Homestead, and Delray Beach.

Christina M. Romagosa undertook a graduate thesis study of the continent-wide spread of Eurasian Collared-Dove (see C.M. Romagosa and T. McEaney, “Eurasian Collared-Dove in North America and the Caribbean,” *North American Birds*, Vol. 53, pages 348-353, 1999). Initially the doves spread primarily westward along the Gulf Coast to Texas, then moved northward from there. In recent years there have been records from nearly every state in the lower 48, and in 2007, the bird reached Alaska.

Spread up the east coast has lagged behind that in the middle of the country, but the birds are now being seen with more frequency in the mid-Atlantic states. The birds were first seen in North and South Carolina in 1994; Pennsylvania, 1996; New Jersey and New York, 1997; Connecticut, 1998; Massachusetts, 1999; and Virginia, 2000. Maryland’s first record dates to 2002 in Cecil County; this was followed by reports from Worcester County in 2003 and Frederick County in 2005. The breakout year was 2006, with reports from Frederick (3), Dorchester, and Worcester.



Eurasian Collared-Dove photographed by George Jett on November 21, 2007.

In 2007, two birds were found along Hooper’s Island Rd in Dorchester Co in January; singles were noted in Harford County in April, Washington County in May, and at Blackwater NWR, Dorchester Co, in August. In October, one was spotted on Assateague Island, and during the “Worcester County Rarities Roundup” November 10-11, first one dove and then four were found at South Point. By mid-November, the species had made it to a suburban backyard in Rockville, Montgomery County.

Eurasian Collared-Doves are aggressive seed eaters, and they tend to congregate around human communities. Competition with Mourning Doves could ultimately become a problem. It remains to be seen if this dove can sustain populations in northern climates, but they are here and should be looked for around your feeders and on telephone lines. They are incessant singers in the spring, so listen for a different dove call. You may hear them before you see them.

Felicitous Phrase Dept:

Clive Harris returned home Dec 9 “to find an adult Cooper’s Hawk standing outside our front door, right on the doormat—almost like it had been left there by FedEx.”

NEW NAMES IN THE WINGS? POTENTIAL COMMON NAME CHANGES OF MARYLAND AND DC SPECIES

BY PHIL DAVIS, SECRETARY, MARYLAND/DC RECORDS COMMITTEE

In 2006 the International Ornithological Congress (IOC) sponsored the publication of a new and significant work, *Birds of the World: Recommended English Names*, by Frank Gill and Minturn Wright (Princeton University Press). This work presents the results of a 15-year task to “compile a set of unique English language names for the extant species of the birds of the world.”

The introduction opens with an Old Chinese Proverb: “Wisdom begins with putting the right name to a thing.” Those who have birded internationally can especially appreciate this statement. This work represents a major step toward achieving that challenge. The authors posit that standardized names increase clear, crisp, and global communications among various stakeholders, and they observe that global birders need English names that are more standardized and simpler—as do government officials, biologists, publishers, etc.

The names that they recommend are:

- Based on rules that simplify and standardize name construction.
- Selected to involve minimal use of hyphens for group names.
- Anglicized with glottal stops, accents, and the like.
- Based on interregional agreement and global consensus, with compromises.
- Selected with deference to long-established names.
- Aligned with current, though ever-changing, species taxonomy.
- Recommended but not mandatory; local adoptions are wholly voluntary.
- Sponsored and endorsed by the IOC and by the English Names committee members.

As my title implies, this list provides only potential future names for Maryland and DC species; no changes would take place unless and until the American Ornithologists’ Union (AOU) adopts them onto the AOU Check-List, the taxonomy standard for the Maryland Ornithological Society.

I analyzed the list of over 10,000 world-wide species name recommendations (a data CD is included with the book!), and below I show the major 26 proposed changes to the common names of accepted Maryland and District of Columbia species. I did not include 13 changes that deal only with eliminating hyphens (eg, Eastern Screech-Owl becomes Eastern Screech Owl). I also ignored five changes that replace the American “gray” with the English “grey” (eg, Grey Catbird). I have highlighted the more “drastic” name changes with asterisks:

- ***Brant** becomes Brant Goose.
- ***Ring-necked Pheasant** becomes Common Pheasant.
- ***White-winged Scoter** becomes Velvet Scoter (unless the AOU also accepts the already-implemented British split, which retains our American “White-winged Scoter” as a separate species).
- ***Black Scoter** becomes American Scoter (unless the AOU does not accept the already-implemented British split, which keeps our current “Black Scoter” lumped with the former European “Common Scoter”). (Very confusing, eh?)
- ***Common Loon** becomes Great Northern Loon. (Note that the Brits lose all of their “divers.”)
- ***Eared Grebe** becomes Black-necked Grebe.
- **Greater Shearwater** becomes Great Shearwater.
- **White Ibis** becomes American White Ibis.
- **Greater Flamingo** becomes American Flamingo. (Yes, this is an accepted species on the Maryland list!)
- ***Rough-legged Hawk** becomes (just) Roughleg. (No, there is no “hawk” as a part of this name; this is not a typo!)
- ***Black-bellied Plover** becomes Grey (Gray?) Plover.
- **Black-headed Gull** again reverts to Common Black-headed Gull.
- ***Pomarine Jaeger** becomes Pomarine Skua (yet our other two *Stercorarius* species remain as Jaegers!?!?).
- ***Dovekie** becomes Little Auk.
- ***Rock Pigeon** changes again, this time to Common Pigeon. (Can you say “CO-PI”?)
- ***Northern Shrike** becomes Great Gray Shrike.
- ***Common Raven** again becomes Northern Raven.
- ***Bank Swallow** becomes Sand Martin.
- **Cliff Swallow** becomes American Cliff Swallow.
- **European Starling** becomes Common Starling.
- ***American Pipit** becomes Buff-bellied Pipit. (The *japonicus* subspecies of our current North America American Pipit, found in western Alaska, could be further split into a separate species, which may be called the Siberian Pipit.)
- **Yellow Warbler** becomes American Yellow Warbler.
- **Nelson’s Sharp-tailed Sparrow** becomes the much shorter and more manageable Nelson’s Sparrow.
- **Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow** likewise becomes Saltmarsh Sparrow.
- ***White-winged Crossbill** becomes Two-barred Crossbill.
- ***Hoary Redpoll** becomes Arctic Redpoll.

A final insolent editorial note: If any of these changes are implemented, please no whining or pining for the “good old days.” Such changes would represent a significant step forward in achieving the worthwhile goals and objectives discussed at the top of the article. It’s not the Oldsquaw anymore, it’s the Long-tailed Duck. Get used to it!



Birds of Note—by Les Roslund



Fork-tailed Flycatcher photographed by Skip Pettit on October 21, 2007.

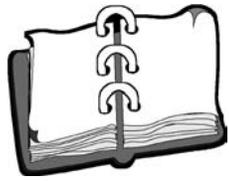
- One had to be fast or lucky or a little of both to have seen the FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER that very briefly stopped in at Eastern Neck NWR in Kent Co. Fortunately, Skip Pettit of Bluemont, VA, met the qualifications and also demonstrated fine skills as a bird photographer. On Oct 21, Skip took very convincing photographs of the bird as it perched on a power line beside the road near the north end of the refuge. USFWS staff at Eastern Neck were told about the bird by several visitors on Oct 21, but the identity of the first person to notice the bird remains a mystery. The sightings all occurred between 10:30 AM and 1:30 PM. Phil Davis of the MD/DC Records Committee notes that there were only two previous Maryland records, Anne Arundel Co in 1983 and St. Mary's Co in 1997.
- Also on Oct 21, a CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD showed up in the yard of Jim Stasz in North Beach, Calvert Co. Jim has a great array of late-blooming flowers in his yard, and he keeps his hummingbird feeder filled and ready for action at this time of year. The bird stayed around for two more days, much to the delight of birders and photographers. Phil Davis also found two previous records of CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD in Maryland, in Prince George's Co in 2004 and in Queen Anne's Co in 2006.
- On October 30, John Bjerke of Montgomery Co discovered a RED PHALAROPE during a visit to Blackwater NWR, Dorchester Co. The bird was using one of the canals along the wildlife drive as a feeding site and resting place. From the date of discovery until November 3 this bird served as a magnet for many birders and provided delightful observations along with numerous splendid photographic opportunities. A RED PHALAROPE on the ground this far inland is considered to be quite unusual. However, when the bird came ashore it was seen to have an injured leg. The injury may have forced it down, thereby treating birders of the area to some great views.

- In late fall, NORTHERN GOSHAWKS can be found in small numbers as they pass the various hawk-watching sites of our region. However, an early October sighting of a NORTHERN GOSHAWK near the parking lot of the National Wildlife Visitor Center in Prince George's County deserves special mention. Elaine Hendricks of Greenbelt saw this bird on October 9 while walking along the entrance road to the VC. She was startled by the very large, very pale, long-tailed accipiter that flew out of the woods and passed within 30 feet of her head. The bird lit a short distance from her so she was able to study it carefully for definitive field marks. Another NORTHERN GOSHAWK was reported on October 29 by Harry Armistead. This one was an immature bird that showed up along Swan Harbor Road near Hooper's Island in Dorchester County.
- Three years ago CAVE SWALLOWS made their debut in Maryland, treating birders to thrilling views in several counties. A major storm system was credited for bringing them to our region from the southwest. For the next two years, there were only isolated views of a few individuals, but this year the CAVE SWALLOWS were back. The first reports came from the Rarity Roundup weekend in Worcester County. On November 11, Matt Hafner and Bill Hubick found and photographed a single bird at Rum Point Golf Course. Before the day was out, 3 to 5 CAVE SWALLOWS had showed up near the bridge to Assateague Island. Then, on November 15, Sean McCandless had his lunch in Harve de Grace interrupted by a CAVE SWALLOW gliding around a cove of the Susquehanna River. Hank Kaestner provided the most recent report, of a CAVE SWALLOW at North Point State Park in Baltimore County November 24. Perhaps there will be more.

Tyler Bell points out that the credit for finding a WHIMBREL at Point Lookout SP, St. Mary's Co, on September 20, and reported in the last issue of the *Yellowthroat*, belongs to Marty Cribb and Patty Craig.



Red Phalarope photographed by Mary Konchar on November 2, 2007.



MOS Calendar

January-February 2008

Tuesday, January 1

H Baltimore. Loch Raven. Start the New Year birding. Varied habitats including woods, fields, and reservoir. Likely birds are Red-breasted Nuthatch, Bald Eagle, sparrows, thrushes, and waterfowl. Meet 8:30 AM. Directions: from I-695, take Exit 27 Dulaney Valley Rd north, go 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 then park on your right. All cars need to park on the same side of the road. Leader: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or WhiteMarlin2001@yahoo.com.

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

Wednesday, January 2

H Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. Scope can be useful. Automatically cancelled in bad weather (rain, sleet, snow, fog, etc). Meet 8 AM outside the Visitor Center. Directions: from I-695 south-west of the city, take Exit 11/I-95 north towards the city. Get off at Exit 55/Hanover St. Turn right (east) on McComas St, left (north) on Key Hwy. Take first left onto Lawrence St and turn left onto Fort Ave, continue through gateway into the park. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

Thursday, January 3

MEETING. **Frederick.** World traveler and lister extraordinaire *Hank Kaestner* will again entertain us, with a new chapter on "Birding Adventures in Kazakhstan." 7 PM at the C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick.

Thursday & Saturday, Jan. 3 & 5

H Montgomery. Gull Workshop. Meet 7:30 PM at Cyndie Loeper's house for light fare and a gull slide presentation by *Clive Harris*. Then join Clive for the associated local area field trip on Sat. All are welcome for either or both sessions. For directions, field trip details, and required reservations, call Coordinator: Cyndie Loeper, 301-530-8226.

Friday, January 4

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** *Doug Forsell* will present "Winter Waterbirds in the Chesapeake." 8 PM at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville. Hosts: Juanita Tate and Bobbi Reichwein.

Saturday, January 5

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

H Cecil. Eastern Neck NWR. Full day. Start the 2008 birding year with a trip to this National Wildlife Refuge located in Kent Co, our immediate neighbor to the south. This location offers a mix of open fields, woodlands, and access to the headwaters of the Chesapeake Bay. Meet 8 AM at the Tundra Swan Boardwalk at Eastern Neck, first stop after the bridge at the refuge entrance. Bring lunch and snacks. Dress for extreme cold and possible wind. Bring scope if you have one. Easy walking on level ground. Leader: Parke John, parke@del.net.

H Kent. Eastern Neck NWR. Kick off your birding year with a half-day

trip for waterfowl and winter land-birds. Meet 8 AM at the Dollar General parking lot (the old A&P, off Philosopher's Terr) in Chestertown. For info, contact Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net.

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. Call Fred Shaffer, 410-721-1744, for add'l info.

Sunday, January 6

COVERED DISH DINNER AND LECTURE. **Baltimore.** 7:30 PM at BYKOTA Center in Towson (formerly Towson ES). Annual potluck dinner. Guest speaker *Hank Kaestner*, birder and world traveler extraordinaire, will share his latest foreign adventures in a slide presentation entitled "Exotic Birding Locales in Asia: Yemen and Kazakhstan." High adventure and unusual birds! For reservations and food coordination, contact Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or WhiteMarlin2001@yahoo.com.

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

Tuesday, January 8

MEETING. **Allegany/Garrett.** *Hank Kaestner* will present "Recent Birding Adventures 2006-2007: Specialty Birding in Western and Central Asia." Hank will talk about recent trips to Yemen and Kazakstan, including info about culture, geography, and the spice trade, in addition to the birds of this area. 7 PM at the Allegany Co Main Library, 31 Washington St, Cumberland. Info: 301-777-1200.

MEETING. **Patuxent.** "Health of the Bay" by *Mary Kilbourne*, Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Call Fred Fallon, 301-249-1518, for add'l info. 7:30 PM at the College Park Airport Annex.

MOS Calendar (continued from page 13)

Wednesday, January 9

MEETING. **Cecil.** *David Brinker*, MD DNR, will discuss "Maryland's Colonial Waterbirds." 7 PM on the lower level of Wesley United Methodist Church at Old Chestnut Rd and Justice Way, near Elkton. For info, contact Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

H **Montgomery.** Sparrows 102 at Woodstock Equestrian Park, 8 AM. A continuation of Sparrows 101 (from Blue Mash last Oct). Fox, White-crowned, and American Tree Sparrows are possible. Half day. For info and reservations (required), call Leader: Lydia Schindler, 301-977-5252.

Thursday, January 10

MEETING. **Howard.** "Exotic Asian Birding," by *Hank Kaestner*. Brothers Peter and Hank search for lifers in Yemen and Kazakhstan. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM. Howard Co Rec and Parks, 7210 Oakland Mills Rd, Columbia. Info: Kevin Heffernan, 410-418-8731.

Friday, January 11

MEETING. **Harford.** *David Ziolkowski* will present "Panama: Pulling the Tails of Natural History in a Land of Winged Jewels and Poo-Slinging Monkeys." 7 PM at the Churchville Presbyterian Church, Churchville. Contact Russ Kovach at 410-457-4274 for add'l info.

Saturday, January 12

H **Anne Arundel.** Kent Narrows/Horsehead, Queen Anne's County. Danny Poet will lead this trip for wintering waterfowl. Depart 8 AM from Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot. Info: Tom Bradford, 410-987-0674.

H **Harford and Cecil.** Harford County/Cecil County Feeder Tour. What a better way to start your year off and get into birding? Join club president Russ Kovach and Cecil birder Marcia Watson as they point out all that beginner birders need to know when looking out their home windows onto feeder areas. Reservations required. Beginning

birders are particularly welcome. Please contact Russ at 410-457-4274 to reserve your spot and receive further info.

Sunday, January 13

***** **FRED ARCHIBALD MID-WINTER COUNT.** **Frederick.** Meet at the sanctuary at 6:30 AM. Dress warmly and wear waterproof boots. Contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660 or rjs30@erols.com, for more info.

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

Wednesday, January 16

MEETING. **Montgomery.** "Birding on the Florida Gulf Coast" by *Jim Green*. Jim, a frequent field trip leader and key organizer for the Breeding Bird Atlas, will share another of his interests, bird photography, as he shows us the wonderful variety of birds and birding locations at this dream birding destination. 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac.

Thursday, January 17

MEETING. **Caroline.** *Don Meritt* will present "Wildlife of the Mountains of Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming: From Craters of the Moon to the Beartooth Range, with the Grand Tetons and Yellowstone Thrown In." 7:30 PM, Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton.

Saturday, January 19

***** **C&O CANAL COUNT.** **Allegany/Garrett.** Again this year, the C&O Canal Count will replace the Allegany Mid-Winter Bird Count. Contact Peter Vankevich, petevankevich@gmail.com, for a stretch of the canal to cover. Each mile of the canal is counted separately.

***** **C&O CANAL COUNT.** **Frederick.** Make-up date will be Jan 20 if the weather is bad. Contact Peter Vankevich, petevankevich@gmail.com, to participate.

***** **C&O CANAL COUNT.** **Washington.** Contact Shirley Ford, 301-241-3020, to participate in this annual Audubon count.

H **Baltimore.** Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. Scope can be useful. Automatically cancelled in bad weather (rain, sleet, snow, fog, etc). See Jan 2 listing for directions. Meet outside the Visitor Center at 8 AM. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

***** **MID-WINTER COUNT.** **Baltimore.** To participate in this post-migration bird count in your choice of location in Balt City or Co, contact Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

***** **MID-WINTER COUNT.** **Carroll.** Individual parties of counters will set their own times in their pre-arranged areas of Carroll Co. Parties will count resident and late migrant bird species throughout the county. Tally Rally will be hosted by Pat and Bill Ellis at their home. Contact Bill Ellis at 443-520-8809 to verify your bird counting area and if you will be attending the Tally. If attending Tally, please bring a \$ donation or a food item.

H **Cecil.** Ocean City Area and Assateague. A classic trip to the prime MD winter birding hotspot. Meet 6 AM at Big Elk Mall, Elkton, at Dunkin' Donuts parking lot area. Bring breakfast, lunch, and snack, or money to buy take-out food on the way. Dress for extreme cold and wind. Bring scope if you have one. Easy walking on level ground. Leader: Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

H **Montgomery.** Introduction to the Winter Shore: Ocean City, MD, to Broadkill Marsh, DE. Full day. We'll

brave winter's icy blasts for the chance to see some seasonal specialties: scoters, eiders, Harlequin Duck, loons, Bonaparte's Gull, Purple Sandpiper. New members and new birders are encouraged but all are welcome. Dress (very) warmly. Scope useful. Fast food for lunch and thaw. Meet 8:30 AM at the Ocean City Inlet parking lot. For reservations (required), call leaders: Lydia Schindler, 301-977-5252, or Linda Friedland, 301-983-2136 (before 9 PM).

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

Saturday-Monday, January 19-21

H Anne Arundel. Eastern Shore Weekend to include Chincoteague, Ocean City, and Blackwater NWR. Reservations required. Contact leader, Susan Zevin, at 410-573-9424, no later than Jan 6.

Sunday, January 20

H Harford. Conowingo Gull Watch. Just when the post-holiday season blues have got you in their sights, you can count on Dave Webb to get you some gulls up at the dam. The hydro-electric fish Cuisinart rarely disappoints, pulling in good numbers of waterfowl and Bald Eagles as well as such rarities as Black-legged Kittiwake, Glaucous, Iceland, Thayer's, and Black-headed Gulls. Bundle up and meet Dave at the parking lot closest to the dam at 8 AM. Call Dave at 410-939-3537 for more info.

Tuesday, January 22

POT LUCK DINNER AND MOVIE.

Washington. Pot luck starts at 6:15 PM at the Mt. Aetna Nature Center, Hagerstown. Brings your own plate, utensils, and drink, plus a dish to share. After dinner, watch the film "Flying Casanovas" and be led into the little-known world of avian architecture. Call 301-797-8454 for add'l info.

Saturday, January 26

H Cecil. Cecil Gulls. Learn to identify the different age classes of gulls with Gene Scarpulla and Sean McCandless. By special permission, we will visit the Cecil landfill near the town of North East. Meet at North East Town Park, located at the end of Walnut St. Bring scope if you have one. Dress for extreme cold and/or wind, and be prepared for walking and then standing still while we scan the flocks. Bring money for an optional "thaw-out" lunch at one of the local seafood restaurants. Contact Leaders: Gene Scarpulla, ejscarp@comcast.net or Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net, for meeting time.

* MID-WINTER COUNT. Harford.

Choose your location. Feeders are OK. Contact Mark Johnson, 410-692-5978, for more info.

H Kent. Ocean City, Worcester Co. Winter specialties include gannet, sea ducks, alcids, gulls, Purple Sandpipers, and wintering passerines. Full day. Dress warmly, bring lunch and warm beverages. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General parking lot, Chestertown. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net.

H Montgomery. Ducks at a Distance. Black Hill RP. Learn and review the basics of duck ID at this premiere county spot for winter waterfowl. The trip will be geared to new birders but all are welcome. Bring a scope if you have one. Meet 7:30 AM at the pull-off next to the Rte 121 bridge. Half day. No reservations needed. For more info or directions, call the leader, Dave Powell, at 301-540-8776.

Sunday, January 27

H Anne Arundel. Annapolis Neck and Thomas Point. Waterfowl and Soup Social. Meet Noon at Bay Ridge Shopping Center. Reservations required by Jan 24. Contact Leader/Host, Gerald Weingrad, 410-280-8956, for meeting location and details.

* MID-WINTER COUNT. Frederick. Contact David Smith, 410-549-7082, to sign up. Tally Rally at Smith's.

Monday, January 28

MEETING. Tri-County. *Dave Wilson* will present info about the the Delmarva Coastal Bays Program. 7 PM at Asbury Methodist Church, Fox Rm, south entrance, Camden Ave, Salisbury.

Friday, February 1

MEETING. Anne Arundel. *John Sauer* will present "Are Bird Populations Declining?" 8 PM at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville. Hosts: Sue Ricciardi, Lynn Davidson, and Hal Wierenga.

Saturday, February 2

H Cecil. Winter at Fair Hill. Half day. Meet 8 AM at Fair Hill Nature Center, near covered bridge parking lot (fee required, \$3 MD residents; \$4 out-of-state visitors—bring small bills for honor box). Enter Fair Hill off Rte 273 and follow signs to the Nature Center. Leader: Richard Donham, donhamr@zoominternet.net.

H Harford. Bradenbaugh Flats. Another good morning for regulars and beginning birders alike. Bradenbaugh-born and raised, Dennis Kirkwood is the premiere guide to escort you through the bustling hedgerows and large open fields of this winter birding wonderland. The trip consists mostly of drive-and-stop birding, followed by a wrap-up at the Kirkwood's house featuring delicious homemade soup and breads. Meet 8 AM at Jarrettsville ES. Contact Dennis, 410-692-5905, for more info.

* MID-WINTER COUNT. Howard.

Contact Joe Byrnes, 410-730-5329, or LBRoller@verizon.net, for more info.

H Montgomery. Blackwater NWR/Elliott Island. Full day (to dusk). Bring food and warm drinks. Hoped-for species include Cackling Goose,

MOS Calendar (continued from page 15)

Ross's Goose, ducks, Rough-legged Hawk, Short-eared Owl, and Brown-headed Nuthatch. Will American White Pelicans winter again this year? Meet 8 AM at the new Visitor Center. Reservations required. Limit: 12. For reservations and directions, contact leader, Bill Hubick, at 443-854-9753 or bill hubick@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. Call Fred Shaffer, 410-721-1744, for add'l info.

Sunday, February 3

✿ **MID-WINTER COUNT. Anne Arundel.** Take time off from your usual chores and spend the day at your favorite birding spot hunting down and counting all the birds you can find. Coordinator/Compiler: Tom Bradford, 410-987-0674.

Tuesday, February 5

H Anne Arundel. Dotty's Choice. Half day. Meet 8 AM. For meeting location and trip details, contact the leader, Dotty Mumford, 410-849-8336.

MEETING. **Baltimore.** Tuesday Evenings at Cromwell Valley. *Bruce Beebler*, VP of Conservation International's Melanesia Center for Biodiversity Conservation, will present "Exploring for Bowerbirds and Birds of Paradise in Western Papua." Doors open at the Sherwood House at 7:30 PM for socializing and snacks, show starts about 7:45 or 8.

Wednesday, February 6

H Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. Scope can be useful. Automatically cancelled in bad weather (rain, sleet, snow, fog, etc). See Jan 2 listing for directions. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

MEETING. **Carroll.** *Dr. Michael Braun* will present "The Avian Tree of Life: Part 2." 7:30 PM at Senior Center, 125 Stoner Ave, Westminster. For info, contact Bill Ellis at 443-520-8809.

Thursday, February 7

MEETING. **Frederick.** *Phil Davis*, well-known MD birder and secretary of the Records Committee, will consider "Maryland's Next Species" and let us know which new species we should be on the lookout for. 7 PM in the Community Rm, C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick.

Saturday, February 9

✿ **MID-WINTER COUNT. Cecil.** Full-day census of all birds in Cecil Co. Must contact compiler, Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net, ahead of time for assignment to an area and for reporting forms and instructions. To count in your choice of locations, contact him early. Feeder watchers or single locations also welcome.

Saturday or Sunday, Feb. 9 or 10

H Harford. Winter Invasives. Let Russ Kovach lead you through his neck of the woods searching for what promises to be a good show of mixed finches, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and possibly even crossbills. Meet at Dublin ES at 7:30 AM and keep your fingers crossed for those crossbills. Call Russ for more info at 443-386-4787.

Sunday, February 10

H Baltimore. Marshy Point Nature Center. Half day. Waterfowl, raptors, and passerines. Half-mile trail leads to point overlooking Dundee Creek. Boots advisable and scopes useful. Meet 9 AM at Nature Center parking lot. Directions: Exit Balt Beltway (I-695) at Rte 702 south. Take 2nd exit, Chase/Eastern Blvd. Go 6 miles. Turn right at Marshy Pt. sign. Go 0.25 mile and turn left into parking lot. Leaders: Debbie Terry, 410-252-8771 or gt5s@bcpl.net, and Mary Byers, 410-686-7294 or baypuffin@hotmail.com.

✿ **MID-WINTER COUNT. Kent.** Full day. Join the field crew or count in your neighborhood, anywhere in Kent Co. Contact one of the leaders, Nancy Martin or Walter Ellison, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net for more info.

H Indicates Field Trip

H Montgomery. Black Hill RP. Half day. We'll concentrate on identifying winter waterfowl on the lake while looking for landbirds, too. Short easy walks with car jaunts in-between. Area can be windy, so dress appropriately. Scopes are helpful. Limit: 10. Meet at the deck behind the Visitor Center at Black Hill at 8 AM. For reservations (required), contact leader: Andy Martin, 301-294-4805 (h), 301-529-2066 (m), or apmartin2@comcast.net.

Tuesday, February 12

MEETING. **Allegany/Garrett.** *Dan Feller* will present "The Allegheny Woodrat in Maryland: Cumberland Bone Cave Fossils to Endangered Species Status." Known from Pleistocene age fossil deposits excavated near Cumberland, the Allegheny Woodrat persists today, though it is now on the brink of extirpation in MD. Woodrat life history, distribution, and population trends as derived from 17 years of monitoring will be embellished with stories describing the antics of an animal appropriately named the "packrat." 7 PM. Allegany Co Main Library, 31 Washington St, Cumberland. Info: 301-777-1200.

MEETING. **Patuxent.** "Results of the Maryland Breeding Bird Atlas—20 Years of Change" by *Fred Fallon*, PG Co Coordinator, MD/DC Breeding Bird Atlas Project. Call Fred Fallon, 301-249-1518, for add'l info. 7:30 PM at the College Park Airport Annex.

Wednesday, February 13

MEETING. **Cecil.** Business meeting and general social. 7 PM on the lower level of Wesley United Methodist Church at Old Chestnut Rd and Justice Way. For info contact Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

Thursday, February 14

MEETING. **Howard.** "Goshawk: Driven by Its Prey," by *David Brinker*, MD DNR. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM. Howard Co

Rec and Parks, 7210 Oakland Mills Rd, Columbia. Info: Kevin Heffernan, 410-418-8731.

Friday-Monday, February 15-18

H Montgomery. Presidents' Day Weekend on the Eastern Shore. 4 days. Joint trip with ANS. Bombay Hook, DE, through Ocean City, MD, then Elliot Island, Choptank River, and Blackwater NWR. Winter songbirds, waterfowl, waterbirds, shorebirds, gulls, and raptors. Meet 7:30 AM at Bombay Hook NWR Visitor Center parking lot. Dress for cold, wind, and rain. Bring lunch and snacks. 6-car limit. Make reservations with leader, Paul Du Mont, 703-931-8994; leave message after 7 rings, and indicate if you can drive others. Helen Patton, 301-588-5418, will assist and co-lead. Accommodations: Fri in Rehoboth, DE, Econolodge, 302-227-0500; Sat in OC, MD, Comfort Suites, 410-213-7171; Sun in Cambridge, Best Value Inn, 410-221-0800. Optional Thurs stay-over in Dover, DE, at Dover Inn, 302-674-4011.

Saturday, February 16

*** MID-WINTER COUNT. Garrett.** Contact compiler Mikey Lutmerding at mikeycerw@yahoo.com or 301-707-7764 for more info and to get a territory.

H Baltimore. Cape Henlopen, DE, to Ocean City, MD. Full day. Targeting loons, gannets, sea ducks, Great Cormorant, and Purple Sandpiper. Razorbill possible. Bundle up: this trip is usually brutally cold and windy. Meet 7:30 AM at Nursery Rd P&R, off Balt Beltway (I-695) exit 8 (not 8A). Alternate meeting place, about 9 or 9:30 AM at the Lewes-Cape May Ferry passenger lot. Bring lunch. Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

H Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. Scope useful. Automatically cancelled in bad weather (rain, sleet, snow, fog, etc). See Jan 2 listing for directions. Meet outside the Visitor Center

at 8 AM. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

H Cecil. Hard-Core Owling. Meet 4 AM at Big Elk Mall parking lot (corner of Rtes 40 and 213) Elkton, near the Dunkin' Donuts. Leader: Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

H Frederick. Eastern Neck NWR and Kent County. Marcia Balestri will lead us around Kent Co hot spots including Eastern Neck NWR in search of Ross's Goose and other wintering birds. Meet at the Rte 75 P&R just south of I-70 at 6:30 AM. Call Marcia at 301-473-5098 for info.

H Patuxent. Conowingo Dam and Port Deposit. This mid-winter trip will have an emphasis on gulls, waterfowl, and eagles. Call Fred Shaffer for reservations at 410-721-1744. Meet 7:30 PM at the Bowie P&R to carpool.

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

Saturday-Sunday, February 16-17

H Harford. Central NJ shore. Barnegat Inlet and Brigantine NWR for Harlequin Duck, "Ipswich" form of Savannah Sparrow, Northern Gannet, Snow Bunting, eiders, Great Cormorant, and a plethora of other northern winter birds. Trip departs at 7 AM Sat with expected return by 5 PM Sun. Co-leaders: Dave Ziolkowski, 443-299-8453, and Les Eastman. Contact Dave for meeting location and to make reservations.

Saturday-Monday, February 16-18

H Anne Arundel. Annual Winter Birding Weekend. Destinations to be determined, depending on birds. Contact leader Peter Hanan at 410-672-5672 by Feb 10 for details and reservations.

H Carroll. Presidents' Day Weekend on the Eastern Shore. Bird great spots such as Bombay Hook, Indian River Inlet, Ocean City Inlet, and West Ocean City Pond for winter waterfowl and other winter residents. Meet 10 AM at Bombay Hook NWR Visitor Center. Leader: Bob Ringler, 410-549-6031. Contact Bill Ellis at 443-520-8809 to inquire about sleeping space at his house in Ocean City on Sat and Sun nights.

Monday, February 18

H Washington. Travel to woods, fields, and river with Judy Lilga, 301-432-2276, in search of winter birds. Meet 8 AM at the Rte 66 P&R.

Wednesday, February 20

MEETING. Montgomery. "Birding Uganda: The Pearl of Africa" by *Gail Mackiernan*. The small country of Uganda, an increasingly popular birding destination, bridges the faunal zones of East and Central Africa and has one of the continent's largest bird lists. Gail and Barry Cooper recently spent 25 days visiting most of the country's major game and national parks, recording almost 550 species of birds. Gail's talk will combine slides and video of their trip. 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac.

Thursday, February 21

MEETING. Caroline. "Hawk Watch: A Video Guide to Eastern Raptors." 7:30 PM, Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton.

Saturday, February 23

H Anne Arundel. Edgewater Area. Waterfowl and other beach birds. This half-day trip starts at 7 AM from the Parole P&R. Leader: Fred Fallon, 301-249-1518.

H Frederick. Conowingo Dam. Sarel Cousins will lead us on a trip to Conowingo Dam on the Susquehanna River where thousands of gulls hang out. When gull numbers are high, chances are good for a rarity among them. This is also a great place to see

MOS Calendar (continued from page 17)

lots of Bald Eagles. Meet at the Rte 75 P&R just south of I-70 at 6:30 AM. Call Sarel at 703-727-2830 for info.

Sunday, February 24

H Harford. Loch Raven. Join veteran leaders Dave Larkin and Lynn Davis to explore one of Baltimore's most scenic waterscapes. Just 6 miles north of downtown Towson, this reservoir and its surrounding forest is a magnet for pine-loving songbirds and waterfowl. Ring-necked Duck, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Fox Sparrow are likely. Meet 8 AM at the MD 152/147 P&R. Contact Dave at 410-569-8319 for more details.

Monday, February 25

MEETING. **Tri-County.** Program TBA. 7 PM at Asbury Methodist Church, Fox Rm, south entrance, Camden Ave, Salisbury.

Tuesday, February 26

MEETING. **Washington.** Program TBA. 7:30 PM at the Mt. Aetna Nature Center.

Saturday, March 1

H Baltimore. Horsehead Wetlands. Winter waterfowl and passerines. Meet 7:30 AM at Nursery Rd P&R off Balt Beltway (I-695) exit 8 (not 8a), or 8:30 AM at the Horsehead Visitor Center lot. Leader: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or WhiteMarlin2001@yahoo.com.

H Cecil. Winter Birds of Earleville WMA. Earleville WMA, in the southern portion of Cecil Co, is a great place to look for wintering birds. Sparrows bounce along the hedgerows and quail scurry ahead. Overhead, we may be lucky enough to see Brant. We might even find a Ross's Goose or a Cackling Goose. Meet 7 AM at Big Elk Mall parking lot (corner of Rtes 40 and 213), Elkton, near the Dunkin' Donuts. Bring scope if you have one. Dress for possible extreme cold and possibly windy conditions. Wear sturdy footwear for walking trails that may be muddy. Leaders: Parke John, parke@del.net, and Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

H Patuxent. Fran Uhler NA. Tentatively scheduled annual cleanup date. Check the PG Co Audubon Society web site (www.pgaudubon.org) for the latest info. Meet at the end of Lemon Bridge Rd off MD 197, just north of Bowie State U and the MARC line. No reservations required.

Sunday, March 2

H Baltimore. Loch Raven. Winter waterfowl and landbirds. See Jan 1 listing for directions. Meet 8:30 AM. Beginning birders welcome. Leader: Debbie Terry, 410-252-8771 or gt5s2bcpl.net.

H Kent. Blackwater NWR, Dorchester Co. Prime wintering waterfowl and eagle country. Full day. Bring lunch. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General parking lot, Chestertown. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net.

Tuesday, March 4

MEETING. **Baltimore.** Tuesday Evenings at Cromwell Valley. "Enhancing Your Yard for Wildlife." *Britt Slattery*, Senior Conservation Biologist with Audubon Maryland-DC, will give a slide presentation showing how to design your yard with native plants and other features to attract and benefit birds and other wildlife. Doors at the Sherwood House open at 7:30 PM for socializing and snacks, show starts about 7:45 or 8 PM.

Wednesday, March 5

H Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. Scope can be useful. Automatically cancelled in bad weather (rain, sleet, snow, fog, etc). See Jan 2 listing for directions. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

MEETING. **Carroll.** *Frode Jacobsen* will present "Genetic Makeup of Peregrine Falcons in Scandinavia Before and After Reintroduction." 7:30 PM at Senior Center, 125 Stoner Ave, Westminster. For info, contact Bill Ellis at 443-520-8809.

Thursday, March 6

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** Richard E. Heise, Jr. Annual Wildlife Lecture. 8 PM at Quiet Waters Park. Speaker TBA. Hosts: Bill Ryone and others.

MEETING. **Frederick.** *Stauffer Miller* will fill us in on his latest birding adventures, which may include visits to Mexico, West Virginia, and Turkey. He definitely gets around! 7 PM in the Community Rm, C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick.

Saturday, March 8

H Anne Arundel. Pickering Creek Audubon Center, Talbot County. Waterfowl and late winter migrants. Meet 7AM at Bay 50 Shopping Center. Leader: Tom Bradford, 410-987-0674.

H Baltimore. Middle Creek WMA. All-day trip (bring lunch) to visit this major gathering place north of Lancaster, PA for Snow Geese and other waterfowl. There is also an excellent display of mounted birds at the Visitor Center. Note: Trip may go elsewhere if Middle Creek is frozen over. Meet 8 AM at Timonium P&R on Greenspring Dr/Deereco Rd off Timonium Rd just east of I-83. Leader: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or WhiteMarlin2001@yahoo.com.

H Cecil. Full day. Blackwater NWR and Beyond. A trip designed to see large numbers of waterfowl during the height of spring staging season. Bald Eagles are a bonus feature. Ospreys may be newly arrived and setting up territories. Early shorebirds might be on the move. Come take advantage of the peaceful Eastern Shore ambiance before the tourist season sets in. Meet 9 AM at the refuge HQ. Bring breakfast, lunch, and snacks. Dress for possible extreme cold and wind. Bring scope if you have one. Some easy walking on level ground. Leader: Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

H Indicates Field Trip

Ten New Year's Resolutions for the Field Birder

Few people really make New Year's resolutions any more. Well, I can help you fill that huge void in your life! Here is a list of resolutions that you may freely adopt.

Resolved:

- 1** To carry a copy of the latest MD/DC Records Committee (MD/DCRC) Maryland and/or DC Review Lists inside my field guide or in my car so that I can check on the review status of any rare or unusual birds that I run across to determine if they are "reviewable" sightings. The MD Review List is only two pages (one if you print on both sides), and the DC Review List is only one page. These lists can be found on the MD/DCRC web pages at:

MD <http://www.mdbirds.org/mddcrc/pdf/mdreview.pdf>

DC <http://www.mdbirds.org/mddcrc/pdf/dcreview.pdf>.

- 2** To carry a list of phone numbers of other local birders into the field, so that if I do find a potentially reviewable bird, I can call either someone to come check it out, or someone who might be near a computer so that they can post a message to *MDOsprey*, with directions. Even if you are not sure about an ID, it's best to get the word out as a "possible." We have probably missed a number of rare and unusual records because of not judiciously "spreading the word."

- 3** To carry either note paper (with a pen) or a voice dictation recorder (with batteries) into the field to record notes for any reviewable birds on the spot.

- 4** To describe the entire bird, from tip to tail, not just key field marks, starting with which family the bird belongs to. The MD/DCRC web page carries documentation guidelines that provide memory joggers. (This two-page checklist is another good reference to throw into your car.) You can find these guidelines here:

<http://www.mdbirds.org/mddcrc/pdf/rcform.pdf>.

Or check out other related links in the "Reporting Sightings" section:

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

- 5** To include in my report how I have eliminated other similar species (for example, Spotted Towhees from Eastern Towhees, Cave Swallows from Cliff Swallows, etc).



- 6** To write out or dictate my notes before consulting a field guide, unless I'm still in the field and am on the bird. In that case, I can consult a field guide for key field marks and immediately check for the presence or absence of those field marks. It's okay to consult a field guide later, to analyze age, sex, plumage, or elimination of other similar species AFTER the basic sighting has been documented; however, in your report draw a line between the observation field notes and any post-sighting analysis, and tell the committee when and where field guide(s) were consulted, including which references were used.

- 7** To prepare a formal report to the MD/DCRC either the evening of the sighting or within a very few days. (Otherwise, the memory fades or terminal procrastination may set in.)

- 8** To submit written documentation in electronic format to the MD/DCRC Secretary (either via e-mail or via the MD/DCRC web form), and send images as e-mail attachments.

- 9** To provide some basic level of written documentation even if just submitting digital images. At a minimum, provide the date and location. (Even though the committee does accept "photo only" documentation, the voting members still grouse if they don't get some kind of accompanying statement.)

- 10** In electronic documentation and attachments, to use file names that convey information, including observer name, observation date, and species name (or four-letter abbreviation), plus a sequence number for multiple images. Feel free to contact the MD/DCRC Secretary before you submit electronic documentation for the assigned MD/DCRC data-accession number, and you can include that, too.

Oh, what a wonderful life it would be . . .

Happy New Year to All!

—Phil Davis

Secretary, MD/DC Records Committee

H Frederick. Timberdoodles at Audrey Carroll. David Smith will lead us on a search for American Woodcocks. Meet at the Rte 75 P&R just south of I-70 at 5:30 PM. Bring a flashlight. For info, contact David at 410-549-7082.

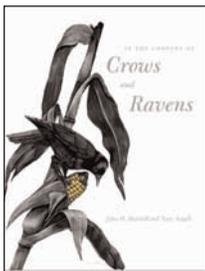
H Montgomery. Jug Bay, PG County. Half day. Joint trip with ANS. Possible Rusty Blackbirds, migrating Wilson's Snipe, and courtship display of Osprey. Meet 8 AM. Call leader for details and driving instructions. Check ANS *News* for more info. Reservations required. Leader: John Bjerke, 240-401-1643.

Saturday, March 15
MOS BOARD MEETING. MOS. Hosted by Hartford County Bird Club.

BOOK REVIEW

In the Company of Crows and Ravens by John M. Marzluff and Tony Angell • Yale University Press, 2005. 384 pages.

(Hardcover \$35 and paperback \$18)



“Few people hold no opinion about crows,” observe the authors of this thought-provoking look at the intertwined histories of humans and corvids. Like us, these striking birds are intelligent, gregarious, omnivorous, long-lived, and capable of complex verbal expression. Crows and ravens have been significant figures, both worshipped and dreaded, in the myth and folklore of many cultures.

Hundreds of places, commercial products, and even musical groups are named for them.

Our relationship with corvids may have begun when ravens, accustomed to scavenging from wolf kills, learned to follow groups of human hunters. Battlefields also provided good feeding opportunities, contributing to the birds’ reputation as harbingers of death (see: Edgar Allen Poe). However, as agriculture became more important and forests were cleared, ravens withdrew and crows expanded their range. Their special fondness for corn earned them the hatred of farmers, who responded with varying degrees of lethality.

Crows also adapted easily to urban life, where they have access to the cornucopia of civilization’s garbage and generally are less persecuted than in rural areas. In fact, young crows not yet ready to establish a breeding territory—like young people in similar circumstances—often move from the suburbs to the city and adjust their diets accordingly. John Marzluff tells how his daughter offered local Seattle crows fried potatoes in either a plain brown bag or one with the McDonald’s logo. Yes, you guessed it: the crows consistently went to the McDonald’s bag first! This social learning (that a McDonald’s logo probably

means tasty food inside) was quickly picked up by less experienced birds in the group.

Despite their adaptability, corvids are not thriving everywhere. Island crows are particularly endangered, with several Hawaiian species already extinct, yet few government resources are allocated to address the problem. Global climate change and introduced predators threaten corvids in many places, and of course West Nile Virus has taken a terrible toll. The book also warns of more subtle evolutionary threats. When human settlements and roads cause the ranges of previously isolated species to overlap, the smaller population may end up genetically pruned from the corvid family tree.

Marzluff and Angell make an interesting case for human and corvid “cultural coevolution.” Crows and ravens have associated themselves with humans more closely than any other non-domesticated species, taking advantage of our crops and our refuse as easy sources of food. We have affected the birds’ behaviors, and as we respond to them (e.g., with superstitions and scarecrows), they affect ours. Overall this is a fascinating examination of an under-appreciated group of birds, although at times the authors try too hard to make everything fit into a grand unifying theory of corvid uniqueness.

The book’s illustrations deserve special mention. Tony Angell’s black-and-white drawings of alert and mischievous crows and ravens vocalizing, flying, eating, sunning, and playing are outstanding. He also captures the cold confidence of predators in his images of a Red-tailed Hawk about to eat a crow nestling, and a Great Horned Owl staring down a mob of American Crows.

—Janet Millenson
Montgomery Bird Club

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LAST CALL

...for the **Pin Contest**, deadline Jan 15. Info on the web site or from John Malcolm, smudgie@comcast.net.

...for 2007 **Locality Lists**, deadline Jan 21. Details on the web site or from Norm Saunders, marshhawk@verizon.net.

...for **scholarships**, deadline Jan 31. Info on the web site or from Tom Strikwerda, tom.strikwerda@verizon.net.

...for the **Atlas Photo Contest**, deadline Jan 31. Details on the web site.

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