

President's Corner

Things I Learned From Birding with Dave

by Marcia Balestri

If you're an expert birder, you don't need to read this column. You already know these things and hopefully have passed them on to your less experienced birding pals. The "Dave" of the title is a real person, but I could have just as easily said Mike, Wilbur, Helen, Kathy, Bob, Jim, or a dozen other names. Dave represents all the expert birders that I have had the pleasure of birding with, and who have generously passed on, either explicitly or by example, some of their wisdom and techniques. On behalf of all of the bewildered novices out there frantically paging through their Peterson's guide, I thank you.

Of course, whole books have been written on how to be a better birder. These are just a few suggestions that I think improved my skills a quantum step (no leaps for me). Some take a bit of practice, so when you are sitting on your porch, try them on birds at your feeder. You already know what the common visitors are, and you can concentrate on your technique rather than worrying about missing a new bird. I haven't included any of the "how to tell a Double-crested from a Great Cormorant

(President's Corner continues on page 2)

Inside This Issue:

President's Corner	1
Bigby, Anyone?	1
Rainforest Reigns	2
DNR Report: Invasives	3
Bird Blitz	4
World Series of Birding	5
Chapter Chatter	6
Caroline's Wiki and Blog	8
Calendar	9
Birds of Note	19
Book Review: <i>Of a Feather</i>	20
Last Call	20



The Maryland Yellowthroat

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BIGBY. ANYONE?

If you subscribe to *Birdchat*, you've heard of the Big Green Birding Year (BGBY), pronounced Bigby. A Bigby is simply a Big Year in which you count only those species seen within walking or cycling distance of your home or principal place of work. As simple as that, no dashing off to the far corners of the planet, burning fossil fuels as you go. This low-key, friendly bit of birding rivalry seems appropriate in these days of lowering carbon emissions. If you have ever felt even a tiny bit guilty about driving or flying to see a good bird (or several), you might consider this alternative.

There are no prizes other than the glory, but one can have fun, keep fit, and maybe make a small statement about what we value. There are three categories:

- The Walking Bigby: You list all species that you see in 2008 while traveling on foot from home or from your regular place of work. If you access the area by any other means, the bird won't count

for your Bigby. Walking, of course, includes snowshoeing in the winter.

- The Self-propelled Bigby: This allows you to extend your range a bit and includes birds reached by walking, bicycling, canoeing, or skiing. Walking Bigby birds can be included.
- The Public Transport Bigby: This category was added by public request. As long as you travel to your walking/cycling/canoeing site by bus or by rail (but absolutely not by taxi, friend's car, or plane) and return in a similar fashion, then you are doing a Public Transport Bigby. Walking Bigby and Self-propelled Bigby birds can be included.

So start with your backyard list and work outwards. Just make sure that you are always traveling under your own steam. For more information or to sign up, go to <http://www.sparroworks.ca/bigby.html>.

—Marcia Balestri

CONFERENCE 2008

Wall calendar, Blackberry, widget—mark the dates: May 30, May 31, and June 1 will see the 2008 state conference in Harford Co. You can look forward to lots of field trips, lots of conviviality, plus Michael O'Brien leading a Birding by Ear workshop, Bill Thompson delivering the keynote speech, the ever-popular silent auction and raffle, and shops for birding paraphernalia and birding optics.

Rainforest Reigns

With MOS having successfully met the 2007 Rainforest Challenge, George DuBois of the Frederick Bird Club has thrown down the gauntlet for the third year in a row: Come up with \$1,500 by year's end, and George will donate a matching \$1,500 to the Cloud Forest Conservation Project in the Cosanga Valley, Ecuador. To help preserve this area of immense biodiversity and great conservation importance, send your 2008 contribution to MOS treasurer Emmalyn Holdridge, 5812 Harness Ct, Columbia, MD 21044. (And you don't have to wait for December to do it.)



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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 March 20, 2008 for the May/June 2008 issue.

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Photographs pages 7 and 19 © George Jett.*

President's Corner (continued from page 1)

flying two miles away" tips that I picked up along the way. If you want a comprehensive treatment of those ideas, get Pete Dunne's *Essential Field Guide Companion*, the ultimate guide to "jizz" birding and highly recommended for insomniacs. I've had it for a year and am only halfway through it!

Eyes on the prize. Look at the bird (or motion) first with your eyes. While staying focused on the bird, raise your binoculars to your eyes. Don't look down to find your bins—they're right where you left them.

Pre-focus your binoculars. If you saw motion and are waiting for the bird to pop up, quickly focus your binoculars on that spot and bring your binoculars back down. Then when he pops up again, you won't have to fiddle too much with your focus.

You, too, can track a bird with your binoculars long after you think it's gone. When I first started birding, the minute the bird flew, I dropped my binoculars. After watching Dave track little guys until they were out of sight, I realized many times he was able to identify the bird based on flight pattern or some other field mark that became apparent in flight. Or better yet, you see where it lands and can try again. This one takes lots of practice. I'm still working on it.

Scan, and scan again, and then again. This is especially good for those mudflats with lots of shorebirds or bodies of water with big flocks of waterfowl. It also works watching feeding flocks. Take your time—it's what you are there for. I can almost guarantee you will see another species every time you scan. I can't count the number of times I was ready to go, but Dave took a little more time and we saw a trip bird because of it.

Listen! Some folks can't or don't want to invest the time involved in learning calls and songs. At the very least, familiarize yourself with the common ones in your area. You'll know when you hear something new.

I have actually discovered a couple of things on my own that work well for me.

Stop looking at your book and look at the bird. The time to look at your field guide is before you go out in the field. This

one is hard for me, especially in a new country, because I am so afraid of missing that lifer, but I think I have probably missed more by flipping pages.

Say it out loud. When I see a bird I don't know or am not sure of, I describe it out loud. This helps me to remember the field marks when I do finally look at the book and also makes me look at the whole bird from beak to tail. Of course, if you are standing at an overlook in the Grand Canyon, you may get some very strange looks from the folks nearby!

Go birding with people better than you are. I hesitated to do this for a long time—lack of knowledge, fear of embarrassment. But trust me on this one; there are a lot of nice folks out there who would love to pass their wisdom and techniques on to you.

Workshops help a lot, if you have the resources. I have attended several workshops, a couple with a famous birder who lives in Cape May. Every time I go out with the guy (who will remain unnamed but who has written a book on shorebirds, whose parents live in MD, and whose initials are Michael O'Brien), I learn a new trick or three on how to identify specific birds. Not just the ones I am there to study, but anything else that happens by. My only regret is that I didn't write down all his pearls of wisdom (how DO you separate that Double-crested from a Great Cormorant when they are flying two miles away?), and my memory isn't what it used to be.

Enjoy what's in front of you. You don't have to be in the jungles of Ecuador or the savannas of Africa to enjoy watching birds. In *A Guide to Bird Watching*, Joseph Hickey writes, "However surprising it may seem, the richest opportunities to explore the mysteries of bird life exist among common species of birds and not among migration rarities."

So you expert birders who DID read this column are now saying, "Nothing new here!" And you are right. But maybe there are a few beginners out there who haven't had the opportunity to bird with Dave and who can put some of these tips to good use.



DNR Reports
by Glenn Therres:
Invasive Species

Since the early colonization of North America, new species of plants and animals have been introduced at an ever-increasing rate. These species have arrived through a variety of pathways, including the ballast of ships and the packing material of imported goods, in addition to deliberate import. While most introduced species are beneficial or benign, about 15 percent become invasive.

Unfettered by the diseases and predators that they contend with in their native lands, invasive species show a tremendous capacity for reproducing and spreading throughout their new homes, where they typically cause problems for native wildlife, plants, and natural communities. Some notable examples are European Starling, House Sparrow, Mute Swan, nutria, phragmites, and kudzu.

Introduced invasive species can include creatures such as viruses as well as large mammals and everything in between, including amphibians, reptiles, birds, insects, plants, fish, shellfish, and even jellyfish. Invasive species are often exotic, but even some native species can become invasive in altered natural habitats. Moreover, some introduced species don't tend to become invasive for several generations; species such as grass carp, European Starlings, Mute Swans, and nutria have turned invasive long after their original introduction.

Invasive species are proving difficult and extremely costly to control. The zebra mussel, for example, has virtually eliminated native mussels from the Great Lakes and altered the basic food chain, threatening the availability of microscopic food for native fish. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates the economic impact of the zebra mussel in the Great Lakes to reach \$5 billion.

With their highly efficient reproduction and exploitation of new habitats, introduced invasive species

can and have quickly eliminated native species from the landscape. In fact, over 45 percent of species federally listed as endangered or threatened in the United States are being impacted by introduced species. On Pacific Rim islands, Madagascar off the coast of Africa, Australia, and Puerto Rico, introduced species are wreaking havoc on native species and severely altering their habitats. The introduced mongoose has caused the decline or extinction of many endemic island bird species. In Maryland, one of our primary concerns is the impact of invasive plants on habitats that support rare native plants and plant communities; these communities include shale barrens, vernal pools, and peat bogs.

Unfortunately, **a new invasive species was recently discovered in Maryland.** Two small populations of **wavyleaf basketgrass**, a Eurasian grass never previously found in the US, were discovered in Patapsco State Park by sharp-eyed botanists in 1996. Smithsonian Institution and international experts confirmed its identity as an exotic subspecies of a grass that is native to subtropical and tropical regions, including the southeastern coast of the US. In 2000, a private consulting ecologist found this grass by a wooded stream on the property of the Hernwood Landfill in Baltimore County. Last year this shade-tolerant moist forest grass turned up more than 20 miles away in Little Paint Branch Park in Prince George's County, where it is being actively removed by groups of volunteers. During the dry summer, this fast-moving grass was one of the few plants obvious on the forest floor.

It is unclear how wavyleaf basketgrass first came to the US and to Maryland, although it is possible that the Baltimore County landfill was the unwitting source of the infestation, which may have spread from hanging basket plantings that someone threw away. Unfortunately, it does appear to spread rapidly through wooded natural areas: the Little Paint Branch pockets of infestation add up to about 3 acres, and in sections of

Patapsco Valley State Park, the grass covers more than 150 acres. DNR has begun to map the extent of the infestation and is taking steps to limit the spread of this invasive grass.

Controlling invasive species once they become established is extremely difficult and expensive. Prevention is the best way to ensure that an invasive species does not become established. People who spend time in the field can help prevent the spread of invasive species by doing the following: (1) be sure to clean anything that came into contact with water in streams, lakes, ponds or beaches before using those things in another body of water; (2) remove all mud, sand, plants, or small water creatures before leaving the field; (3) do not bring samples of living aquatic animals or plant parts home; and (4) clean all clothing that has been in contact with seeds or other plant parts and avoid bringing home samples of plants from your vacation site.

Borrowing a phrase from Smokey Bear (sort of), "You, too, can help prevent invasive species."

Tracking the Maryland Birding Trail

Marcia Watson's committee has drafted a goals statement and developed a sense of the overall scope of the birding trail project. The committee is also looking into the feasibility and advisability of working with a professional consultant. And it is drawing on the experience of Delaware birders, who opened a birding trail for the First State in December 2007.

IBAs AHoy! BIRD BLITZ 2007

BY DAVID CURSON

The first statewide season of IBA Bird Blitz was a great success. No less than 50 volunteers completed 46 bird counts at 11 sites across Maryland in order to determine which of these sites deserve to be an Important Bird Area (IBA). Bird Blitz helps this determination by producing a breeding-season count of certain at-risk bird species that can then be compared with the threshold population sizes required for a site to qualify as an IBA (see the *Yellowthroat*, Jan-Feb 2007).

Below is a summary of the results from each site, with count totals for some of the at-risk species that were the primary targets of the survey. Many participants also counted secondary target species, which assist the review of IBA nominations by providing data on bird species assemblages representative of different habitat types.

Catoctin Mountain, Frederick County

Volunteers: 5

Bird counts: 2

IBA Technical Review committee member David Smith led a crew in searching the Manahan Rd area of Catoctin Mountain National Park. Their count of 6 Cerulean Warblers in one small area suggests a larger population in the Catoctin range overall, since 7 Breeding Bird Atlas blocks there held ceruleans during 2002-06. Further counts will be conducted in 2008. Participants: David Smith, Mike Welch, Lois Kauffman, Barbara Gearhart, David Curson.

C&O Canal, Frederick County

Volunteers: 1

Bird counts: 3

David Smith hiked the C&O Canal from the Monocacy River to Harper's Ferry and counted 32 Prothonotary Warblers and 27 Louisiana Waterthrushes along this 30-km stretch. An IBA nomination for this portion of the National Historic Park is in progress.

Sugarloaf Mountain, Frederick County

Volunteers: 1

Bird counts: 3

Jerry Tarbell answered the call with a series of solo hikes that covered nearly all the trails on Sugarloaf. His efforts yielded an impressive 23 Worm-eating Warblers in 8.5 survey hours, plus a couple of surprises—a Cerulean Warbler and 3 singing Black-throated Green Warblers, two species not normally found here. An IBA nomination for this site is in progress, and would benefit from additional information on numbers of Whip-poor-will. Please forward any data on whips at this site to David Curson at the address below.

C&O Canal, Montgomery County

Volunteers: 6

Bird counts: 8

Mike Bowen organized a team of Montgomery Bird Club members to blitz the C&O Canal between the Beltway and Sycamore Landing and also adjacent public lands, including McKee-Beshers Wildlife Management Area and Seneca Creek State Park. Count totals included 24 Prothonotary Warblers and 26 Louisiana Waterthrushes. Sadly, no Cerulean Warblers were noted, a reflection of this species' rapid decline in Maryland and elsewhere. An IBA nomination for this site is in progress. Participants: Mike Bowen, Joy Bowen, Linda Friedland, Helen Patton, Lydia Schindler, David Curson.

Patapsco Valley State Park, Howard County

Volunteers: 4

Bird counts: 1

This site was recently identified as an IBA based on the 2006 Bird Blitz results, but a survey was done in 2007 to search the Henryton Road (Howard County side) section of the state park for Cerulean Warblers. None were found, but participants were able to listen to Blue-winged Warblers at one of their regular

nesting sites. Participants: Felicia Lovelett, Kevin Graff, Tom Miller, David Curson.

Gunpowder Falls and Prettyboy Reservoir, Baltimore County

Volunteers: 16

Bird counts: 14

Baltimore Bird Club members, organized by Paul Kreiss, achieved an impressive level of coverage of this extensive forested area. Count totals included 51 Worm-eating Warblers, 29 Louisiana Waterthrushes, 11 Prairie Warblers, and a diverse assemblage of forest-interior species. An IBA nomination for this site is in progress. Participants: Paul Kreiss, Georgia McDonald, Dan McDonald, Wendy Olsson, Rob Olsson, Kevin Graff, Carol Schreter, Peter Webb, Keith Costley, Nancy Grace, Bryce Butler, Tekla Ayers, Steve Ayers, Andrew Ayers, David Curson.

Zekiah Swamp, Charles County

Volunteers: 2

Bird counts: 1

A single visit to this 20-km-long forested wetland, which is poorly known by birders, yielded 6 Prothonotary Warblers and 2 Red-headed Woodpeckers. Further Bird Blitz surveys are needed in 2008. Participants: David Curson, Wendel Landes.

Calvert Cliffs State Park, Calvert County

Volunteers: 2

Bird counts: 3

Surveys at Calvert Cliffs yielded a small number of Worm-eating Warblers, Kentucky Warblers, and Red-headed Woodpecker and a range of forest-interior species. Participants: Leslie Starr, Sue Hamilton.

South River Greenway, Anne Arundel County

Volunteers: 3

Bird counts: 6

Rich Mason led a series of surveys that revealed an unexpected gem of a site between I-97 and Route 50 that

includes part of the old Crownsville Hospital site. Totals included 16 Worm-eating Warblers, 14 Louisiana Waterthrushes, 10 Prairie Warblers, and 14 Kentucky Warblers, the latter species reflecting a well-structured forest understory all too rare in Maryland's forests at the moment. Also, a count of 4 Prothonotary Warblers was surprising, since this species was not recorded here during the 2002-06 Breeding Bird Atlas. South River Greenway was identified as an IBA in December 2007 and Audubon Maryland-DC is working with Anne Arundel Bird Club and the Scenic Rivers Land Trust to protect land here. Participants: Rich Mason, Drew Koslow, David Curson.

Tuckahoe State Park and Adkins

Arboretum, Queen Anne's County, Caroline County

Volunteers: 10

Bird counts: 5

IBA Technical Review committee member Wayne Bell organized a crew that surveyed by canoe the 10 km of Tuckahoe Creek within the state park and also covered many of the area trails. Totals included 45 Prothonotary Warblers, 11 Kentucky Warblers, and 19 Louisiana Waterthrushes; in addition, this was the only site to report Northern Bobwhite. An IBA nomination for this site is in progress. Participants: Wayne Bell, Danny Poet, Karen Harris, Bill Harris, Amanda Spears, Margie Steffens, Forrest Bogan, Martha Bogan, A. Clark, J. Furlong.

Idylwild Wildlife Management Area, Caroline County

Volunteers: 9

Bird counts: 2

Members of Talbot and Caroline County Bird Clubs joined forces to blitz this interesting site, which contains forested wetlands and sandy pine woods. Count totals from just the northern end of the site include 11 Prothonotary Warblers, 4 Louisiana Waterthrushes, and 6 Worm-eating Warblers. A nightjar survey under a nearly full moon on May 26 identified 7 Whip-poor-wills.

An IBA nomination for this site is in progress. Participants: Wayne Bell, Danny Poet, Debby Bennett, Mark Schilling, Terry Allen, Les Roslund, Dave Palmer, Chuck Mock, David Curson.

These results have led to a number of IBA nominations at sites where the required data were not previously available. Many thanks to all birders who participated and made last year's Bird Blitz such a success.

Take Part in Bird Blitz 2008!

There are still a number of potential Important Bird Areas for which we do not have the necessary data to determine their status. Please consider organizing a Bird Blitz in 2008 at one of the sites below.

Garrett State Forest, Garrett County.

Potomac State Forest, Garrett County.

Mount Nebo Wildlife Management Area, Garrett County.

Dan's Mountain Wildlife Management Area, Allegany County.

Warrior Mountain Wildlife Management Area, Allegany County.

Sideling Hill Wildlife Management Area, Washington County.

Indian Springs Wildlife Management Area, Washington County.

South Mountain, Washington/Frederick Counties.

Mattawoman Natural Environment Area/Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area, Charles County.

St. Mary's River State Park, St. Mary's County.

Elk Neck State Park, Cecil County.

Millington Wildlife Management Area, Kent County.

Bird Blitz instructions and survey forms are available by contacting Audubon MD-DC's Director of Bird Conservation, David Curson, at Audubon MD-DC, 2437 Eastern Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21224, or 410-558 2473. IBA criteria and nomination forms are available at Audubon's website at <http://mddc.audubon.org>

Yellowthroats Try for Trifecta

With Spring right around the corner, the MOS-sponsored Maryland Yellowthroats are once again planning their strategies for the 2008 World Series of Birding, to be held May 10 in Cape May, New Jersey. With expectations high following the successes of the past two years,* we will once again be competing in the Cape May County class. Last year's team of Zach Baer, Jim Brighton, and Bill Hubick will be joined by new member Mikey Lutmerding. Unfortunately, our fearless leader, "Captain" Matt Hafner, will be absent, as the WSB conflicts with his wife Kim's graduation from veterinary school. Matt will be missed, but we are very excited to have Mikey joining the team.

Please consider making a pledge to the Yellowthroats, either a per-species donation or a flat amount. All profits will go to support the Atlas. So keep your fingers crossed and hope the birds come our way in 2008, so we can keep the Cape May County trophy in Maryland!
—Jim Brighton

*Ed. note: The Maryland Yellowthroats took first place in the Cape May County division in both 2006, with 179 species, and 2007, with 184.



CAROLINE COUNTY

Danny Poet reports that the Caroline County Bird Club is ecstatic. For the first time in its history, the Denton Christmas Bird Count—which goes back to the 1950s—tallied over 100 species—101, to be precise. Though everyone knew that it was possible someday to reach that goal, everything had to fall into place. The circle has very little water, just farm ponds, two sewage treatment plants, the lake at Tuckahoe State Park, and the upper reaches of the Choptank River. There's no Bay front, and duck species can be hard to come by. This year, however, winter finches and a variety of ducks pushed them over the century mark. They also had the count's first-ever Golden Eagle. Thanks to everyone who helped out. (It's been reported that the count compiler, Steve Westre, was still dancing atop his dining room table.)

Update on the nature trail that the Denton Development Corporation asked the Caroline Bird Club to assist them with developing, the Crouse Park-Wharves at Choptank Crossing project: <http://dentondevelopmentcorp.com/CrouseParkRedevelopment.html>. *Steve Westre*, the club's liaison for the project, writes:

When you say nature trail, certain images pop into your mind. Forget that picture. This trail will run right in front of a restaurant to be built next to the Choptank River in Denton. The idea of a trail was, I believe, something that made the Wharves grant look better. It might be advertised as The World's Shortest Nature Trail.

But that doesn't mean that we won't be able to make good use of

what we will have. There will be signs pointing out plant life, we plan to post a list of birds that have been seen on the trail, and we will have a place where visitors can list the birds they see or any other notes on bird activity. Even though this trail is short, it could introduce lots of people to the natural world when they go to the restaurant and the nearby visitor center. I like the idea of keeping a running total of the number of birds seen there. We could post the top lists of the birds individual birders have seen on the trail, and birders certainly love keeping lists. It could be a lot of fun; you can take something small like this and make it into something a lot bigger.

CECIL COUNTY

The Elkton Christmas Bird Count was held on a very rainy December 16, 2007. Preliminary species count is 95; not all area reports have been received. Count highlights include Merlin, Common Redpoll, Pine Siskin, American Woodcock, Wild Turkey, numerous American Tree Sparrows, and Northern Harrier. The weather impacted waterfowl and gull counts; both were noticeably low. A final count report will be published in the next *Cecil Bird Life* newsletter.

HARFORD COUNTY

Our family headed north this year in search of a snowy, white Christmas. What we found was a "Winter Wonderland" warmed with friendly hospitality, great eats, holiday cheer...and a few boreal birds! Our destination was the North Pole, via the Polar Express, of course. Well, sort of; we actually went to Lake Placid, NY in the upper Adirondacks via the NJ Turnpike. But don't laugh; as I learned, North Pole, NY is just up the road a few miles from the home of the 1932 and 1980 "Do you believe in miracles?" Winter Olympics.

With an area-wide snow base of 8" plus, cross-country skiing was how we birded and enjoyed this boreal region. But it's the local feeders that concentrate the bird activity. Our first stop was the Adirondack Park Visitor

Interpretive Center (VIC)/Paul Smiths. The birds as they arrived: Black-capped Chickadee, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and White-breasted Nuthatch. The next three arrivals made it nearly impossible to leave. First, ten Common Redpolls, followed by a Pine Grosbeak, and then a flock of about 12 Evening Grosbeaks. What's really nice about this feeder setup is that it's micro-phonated, so you're listening to all the action while sitting about 2 feet away from the feeders—in a toasty lodge. On the trails we flushed a probable Spruce Grouse.

The next day we came upon another mixed flock of birds near Bloomingdale. This flock included 16 Common Redpolls, 26 Pine Grosbeaks, and 22 Evening Grosbeaks. A cross-country ski of the Bloomingdale bog found us in a beautiful, wintry silence. But tracks showed more grouse presence, and a light tapping in the forest brought hope of a sought-after Black-backed Woodpecker. My pursuit through the knee-high snow sans skis did provide an exhilarating workout. The bird, however, turned out to be a Pileated Woodpecker. Did I mention "light" tapping? Oh, well! I'm ready to go back.

—Rick Cheicante

HOWARD COUNTY

Bill Hill has done it again—spotted another rarity in Howard County. This time it was a Ross's Goose, the first record in Howard County. Bill found the bird on December 17 at Larriland Farm in the western end of the county. It was keeping company with three Snow Geese and several hundred Canada Geese. While Bill got the alert out quickly, the bird did not hang around long; it flew toward evening. It was spotted again two days later by Nancy Magnusson in another location, where it stayed for only one hour and then was not seen again.

While Bill Hill helped us to end 2007 on a high note, three more Howard County birders started 2008

off in a similar fashion. Emy Holdridge, Nancy Magnusson, and Jo Solem found a well-camouflaged Sandhill Crane at Triadelphia Reservoir on January 6, just after noon. They saw the bird from Brighton Dam, and it was indeed a terrific spot as the bird was standing against a line of trees and blended in so well.

—Kate Tufts

KENT COUNTY

After two Kent County CBCs featuring rain and mild temperatures and a plethora of geese and White-throated Sparrows, Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin traveled north to Vermont, where they participated in Nancy's hometown count in Rutland and Walter's traditional count that straddles the Connecticut River in Hanover, NH and Norwich, VT. Walter has been compiling this count for about 40 years. Temperatures were in the teens and 20s for both counts, and New Year's Day in Hanover featured snowfall beginning by 10:30 AM. Appropriately for the conditions, northern species were well represented: Bohemian Waxwing, Pine Grosbeak, Common Redpoll, a Northern Shrike, and Black-capped Chickadees. White-throated Sparrows and geese, while present, were scarce.

—Nancy Martin

SOUTHERN MARYLAND

Two more rare species have been photographed since the last Chapter Chatter. *George Jett* writes:

On December 28 I got a call from a friend, Millie Kriemelmeyer, that Lee Duer, the manager of the Waldorf Wild Bird Center, just photographed a Rufous Hummingbird in Mechanicsville. Later in the day I stopped by the store and asked Lee how he knew it was a Rufous; he was not aware that winter *Selasphorus* hummingbirds are very hard to identify. Lee showed me his images, and we discussed the options. With Lee's cooperation, I made arrangements with the property owners to visit the hummingbird the next day,

and I got some good pictures. I returned on January 1 with Bruce Peterjohn and David Holmes, the two local hummingbird banders, and we successfully captured the bird. All the measurements pointed toward a young Rufous female. However, several observers who had seen this bird in the field, along with Bruce, were not totally convinced of the species. The dreaded "H" word surfaced. As of this writing, it is still being called a Rufous, but discussion is continuing on whether this bird is a hybrid.

(The leading discussion is Rufous/Broad-tail. If it can be determined to be a hybrid Rufous/Broad-tail, how should I list this bird? I am considering adding both species to my St. Mary's list. I could at least add a half species, and if we get another Rufous/Broad-tail hybrid I would have a whole Broad-tail for the state.)

The other recent rare bird in our region was less problematic. On December 29 I learned that a Painted Bunting was coming to a feeder in Annapolis, but the information was to be kept under wraps, since the bird was on private property—and the bird was reported to have gone by the time Gwen and I returned from our holiday trip to Michigan. However, on January 2, I learned the bird had

returned, and on January 3 I sat in the Annapolis backyard for three and one-half hours in 20-degree weather to get the image of a beautiful male. This is one of the prettiest birds that I have ever seen, and worth any hardship I endured.

I'm waiting for that next rare bird to chase.

—George Jett

TALBOT COUNTY

George Armistead has a contract with Princeton University Press to co-author a book with Brian Sullivan on North American bird identification. During the winter of 2007, Harry Armistead and three of his friends took part in an Ivory-billed Woodpecker search throughout the Choctawhatchee River basin of Florida. These four also were part of a Cornell University search team in Arkansas the previous winter. It is quite fashionable not to believe there are any ivory-bills now. George is fashionable, Harry isn't, yet they still speak (!). One of Harry's close friends, Bob Anderson, saw single ivory-bills on the Choctawhatchee, December 25, 2006 as well as January 3, 2007. Harry is scheduled to be profiled in the March 2008 *Chesapeake Bay Magazine*.



Painted Bunting photographed by George Jett on January 3, 2008. To see this beautiful bird in "living color," check out the Yellowthroat on the MOS web site, www.mdbirds.org.

WHAT THE HECK DO BLOGS AND WIKIS HAVE TO DO WITH BIRDING?

I was introduced to blogs and wikis through some very cool online training I received at work, at the Caroline County Public Library. If this readership is like my club, at this point some of you are saying, “What is a Blog?” I like Wikipedia’s definition best: *A blog is a website where entries are commonly displayed in reverse chronological order. “Blog” can also be used as a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog. Many blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject; others function as more personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs* (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog>).

Then what is a wiki? Wikipedia’s definition: *A wiki is software that allows users to create, edit, and link web pages easily. Wikis are often used to create collaborative websites and to power community websites* (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiki>). Wikipedia itself is a great example

At work, we currently use blogs to communicate and discuss issues internally. I find them easier than e-mail in many cases. We have found wikis to be helpful for shared projects and documents, such as strategic planning.

So, I decided to see what I could create for my local bird club. The Caroline County Bird Club is a small group and we don’t have a web site. I used the same blog software and wiki software that I was introduced to at work. It is also FREE!

You have to remember that I had the advantage of playing with these technologies at work. We all had to create a blog for ourselves and to learn how to add photos, links to other urls, etc. I even figured out how to load a YouTube video. But honestly, it does take time. You have to plan on the learning curve and set-up time, then ongoing posting and monitoring. And some of the time the more technical things are a challenge, especially if I actually have to read the instructions.

First the blog. I used Google’s Blogger software. You just need to create a Google account. So, yes, I have yet another e-mail address, but that’s ok; it comes in handy sometimes. At <https://www.blogger.com/start>, they walk you through the process to create your account, then create a blog.

Creating a blog using **Blogger** takes just three steps:

1. Create an account.
2. Name your blog.
3. Select your template (pick from selections on background and format).

Once you’ve created your blog, here are two important things to know:

- To add posts and edit: You can add posts, edit, or change the stepup (including template) of your blog by going to <http://www.blogger.com> and logging in. **Be sure to write down your login and password so you’ll remember.**
- To view your blog: Your blog address is [http://\(xxxx\).blogspot.com](http://(xxxx).blogspot.com) (xxxx) = the unique identifier you entered in Step 2. Be sure to also write down your blog address.

A little more help is available at http://www.blogger.com/tour_start.g.

For the wiki, I used pbwiki software:

<http://pbwiki.com/wiki.php>. A YouTube explanation is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmByB0siPog>. (YouTube is an excellent place to look for a how-to video on just about anything. Disclaimer: your search results might include just about anything.)

The biggest challenge for me was learning how to create the pages, then use the Sidebar as my table of contents with links to either the pages I created or other urls, like the MOS web site. Once I had figured out how to add a link to something in the blog, it wasn’t too hard in the wiki. I still need to improve my skills at scanning old photos and formatting for wikis and the like (look at the old MOS photo I have posted on our wiki). The wiki is password-protected, so I have to give the password to those who want to post.

Why use one over the other? Because I wasn’t sure which would be the best to use—blog or wiki. So, I made the blog our “web site” and linked the wiki to it, to post schedules and other documents. Our link is on the MOS web site under *Chapters*. And here is what I really like—if you go to www.google.com and type in *Caroline County Bird Club Maryland*, or *birding Caroline County Maryland*, you will find our blog. To me, that is so great! My hope is to provide an easy means to find information about our club and birding opportunities and issues in our area. People can read it for free and can join for free to post comments. I can invite people to post articles, photos, etc., so it doesn’t have to be just me maintaining it. And you don’t have to know HTML or any specific web design software.

A few Caroline members, including our current president, Danny Poet, have been posting to the blog. In fact, Danny created his own blog, where he has posted some of his recent bird photos. You can Google him and easily find his blog, as well.

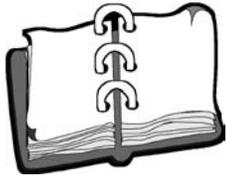
So far, I’m leaning towards the blog being the more useful to our club. It’s easier for me to invite people to post on the blog and oversee their posts. And it’s easy to find with a simple search on the Internet.

Try Googling *birding blogs*: I was amazed to find some really good blog sites, including *A DC Birding Blog*—<http://dendroica.blogspot.com/>; *Stokes Birding Blog* at <http://www.stokesbirdingblog.blogspot.com/>; and many more personal birding blogs.

What I need now is an intermediate workshop on how to make our blog more user-friendly and readable. Maybe some of the smaller MOS Chapters could consider creating a blog instead of a formal web site: no cost, low maintenance, more outreach to our members and to other people interested in birding in our parts of Maryland. It just takes time.

I hope you found this article useful. I would love to get some feedback—your own experiences and suggestions. Maybe someone will step forward and offer to do a blog workshop. I would be happy to host it in Denton.

Oh, one more thing—please visit our blog and wiki: <http://carolinebirdclubmos.blogspot.com/> and <http://carolinebirdclubmos.pbwiki.com/>.



MOS Calendar

March-April 2008

Saturday, March 1

MOS BOARD MEETING. Hosted by the Harford Bird Club. 10 AM at the Anita C. Leight Estuarine Center, Abingdon. Contact Janet Shields, MOS Secretary at janetbill@prodigy.net, for add'l info.

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. 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. 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 Prince George's Audubon Society web site (www.pgaudubon.org/index.html) 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 Reservoir. 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: Debbie Terry, 410-252-8771 or gt5s@bcpl.net.

H Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hours. Meet at west end lot at 8 AM. Easy walking around the lake on paved path. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Leader: Kurt Schwarz, 410-461-1643. Facilities available.

H Kent. Blackwater NWR. 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.

H Talbot. Ocean City and Environs. Seeking Harlequin Duck, eiders, gannet, Purple Sandpiper, Razorbill, (Western) Willet, and possibly Peregrine Falcon. Depart Easton Acme parking lot 6:30 AM or meet leader at Ocean City Inlet, south jetty parking lot 8 AM. Bring lunch. Soup, drinks, and warmth provided at trip leader's condo at noon. Leader: Wayne Bell, 410-820-6002.

Tuesday, March 4

MEETING. Baltimore. Tuesday Evenings at Cromwell Valley. "Enhancing Your Yard for Wildlife." *Britt Slattery*, Senior Conservation Biologist with Audubon MD/DC, will give a slide presentation on how to design your yard with native plants and other features to attract and benefit birds and other wildlife. Doors open at the Sherwood House 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

H Indicates Field Trip

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 southwest of the city, take I-95 north (Exit 11), 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.

MEETING. Carroll. *Frøde Jacobsen* will present "Genetic Makeup of Peregrine Falcons in Scandinavia before and after Reintroduction." 7:30 PM at Senior Center, 125 Stoner Ave, Westminster. Contact Bill Ellis at 443-520-8809 for more info.

Thursday, March 6

MEETING. Anne Arundel. Richard E. Heise, Jr. Annual Wildlife Lecture. Speaker TBA. 8 PM in the Blue Heron Rm at Quiet Waters Park, Hillsmere, Annapolis.

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

Friday, March 7

MEETING. Harford. *Jean and Larry Fry* present "Birding Down Under." Reservations required for dinner only; all are welcome for the general meeting. Dinner 6:15 PM, meeting 7 PM at the Presbyterian Church in Churchville. For add'l info or dinner reservations contact Russ Kovach at 410-457-4274.

Saturday, March 8

H Anne Arundel. Pickering Creek Audubon Center, Talbot Co. Waterfowl and late winter migrants. Meet 7 AM at Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot for this all-day trip. Bring lunch. 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. Blackwater NWR and Beyond. A trip designed to see large numbers of waterfowl during the height of spring staging season. Meet 9 AM at the refuge's VC. Bring breakfast, lunch, and snacks. Bring scope if you have one. Some easy walking on level ground. Leader: Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

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

H Montgomery. Jug Bay, PG Co. 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. Reservations required. Leader: John Bjerke, 240-401-1643.

Sunday, March 9

H Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hours. Meet at west end lot at 8 AM. Easy walking around the lake on paved path. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Leader: Bonnie Ott, 410-461-3361. Facilities available.

H Talbot. Talbot Co WWTP. Migrant waterfowl, gulls, Osprey, Wilson's Snipe, Rusty Blackbirds, pipits, and maybe an oddity or two. Leader: Terry Allen, 410-822-8132. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM. Breakfast host: Patty Allen.

Monday, March 10

H Baltimore. Poplar Island. When this environmental restoration project similar to Hart-Miller is completed, it will provide approximately 570 acres of wetland and 570 acres of upland habitat. Poplar I. is reached by a 20-30 minute boat ride from Tilghman I. Meet 7 AM at Nursery Rd P&R or meet 9 AM at Tilghman I. Scopes helpful. Facilities available. Bring snacks if desired. Lunch will be at a local restaurant. Reservations required. Limit 24. Leader: Robin Batcheller. Coordinator: Kevin Graff, whitemarlin2001@Yahoo.com.

Tuesday, March 11

MEETING. **Allegany/Garrett.** *David Yeany II* will describe his research at The Nature Conservancy's Finzel Swamp Preserve in Garrett Co: "Community Analysis and Habitat Associations of Bird Assemblages Breeding at Finzel Swamp, MD." 7 PM at the Allegany Co Main Library, 31 Washington St, Cumberland. Info: 301-777-1200.

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

MEETING. **Patuxent.** "The Horseshoe Crab and Shorebird Connection" by *David Smith*, Aquatic Ecology Lab, USGS. Call Fred Shaffer at 410-721-1744 for add'l info. Meet 7:30 PM at the College Park Airport Annex.

Wednesday, March 12

MEETING. **Cecil.** *Middleton Evans* is known as Maryland's most devoted photographer. For 20 years, the Baltimore native has photographed the many faces of MD while capturing the essence of its colorful traditions, people, and places. Middleton will share a stunning collection of photos from his recently published book, *Rhapsody in Blue—A Celebration of North American Waterbirds*. 7 PM on the lower level of Wesley United Methodist Church, Old Chestnut Rd and Justice Way. For info, contact Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

H Harford. Woodcock Trip. When these odd birds fly, we want to be there to see the bizarre spectacle. Meet at the Aberdeen Wal-Mart at 6:30 PM. Leader Colleen Webster will take you to the site. Call her at 410-942-0867 for more info.

H Montgomery. Informal Late Afternoon Walks Until Dusk. Meet at the end of Seneca Rd at Riley's Lock on the bridge at 5 PM. After checking out the river, we will proceed to Hughes Hollow to observe waterfowl flying in to roost. We will try for displaying woodcock if they are in the vicinity. Bring scope, flashlight, and wear "muddy conditions" footwear. Reservations not required. Leader: Jim Green, 301-208-2393.

Thursday, March 13

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

MEETING. **Talbot.** *Don Messersmith* will show slides and describe the birds encountered on his trip to Western Australia. 7 PM at William Hill Manor Auditorium, 501 Dutchmans Ln, Easton. Info: Cathy Cooper, 410-822-3451 or coopercw@goeaston.net.

Friday, March 14

H Howard. Woodcock Walk. 1-2 hours. Meet at horse trailer parking lot on Annapolis Rock (halfway between Hipsley Mill and MD 94) at 6:45 PM. Short walks/standing along possibly muddy mowed paths. Portable chair useful. As darkness descends, we will watch and listen for displaying woodcock. Owls also possible. Leader: Jay Sheppard, JMSheppar@aol.com. No facilities.

ANNUAL SOCIAL. **Montgomery.** Woodend, Chevy Chase, 6:30 PM. Guest of Honor: *Mike Bowen*. The dinner is being catered by Smokey Glen Farm of Gaithersburg. Limit: 90. Acceptances and checks (\$20 per

person) to Jim Nelson, 8510 Bradmoor Dr, Bethesda, MD 20817. For info, contact Jim at kingfishers2@verizon.net or 301-530-6574.

Saturday, March 15

H Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. See Mar 5 listing for details. Meet outside the Visitor Center at 8 AM. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

H Carroll. Woodcocks at Morgan Run. We will try to hear the calls and wing twitter of, and possibly see, American Woodcocks performing their courtship displays. We will bird dusk until after dark (sunset 7:14 PM, twilight ends 7:41 PM). Meet 6:30 PM at the parking lot for the south area of Morgan Run NEA at the end of Ben Rose Ln (near intersection of Bartholow Rd with MD 97). Leader: Bob Ringler, 410-549-6031.

H Frederick. Black Hill RP. Mike Welch will lead us on a trip to the lake at Black Hill RP in Montgomery Co, one of the best places in the area for wintering waterfowl. Red-necked Grebes, Canvasbacks, and Redheads will be among the species we will be seeking. Meet at the Urbana P&R (south side) at 7:30 AM. For info, contact Mike at 301-874-5828.

H Harford. Harford Waterfowl Tour. Randy Robertson and Jean Wheeler lead the search for our spring visitors, those web-footed, heavy-bodied birds. The Susquehanna Flats offer good looks at many migrating ducks and their near cousins. Meet at Tydings Marina at 8 AM. Contact Jean at 410-879-7424 for more info.

H Howard. Howard Waterfowl Search. Half day. Meet at Broken Land Parkway lot at Lake Elkhorn at 8 AM. Plan to visit the Columbia lakes, possible western ponds, and Triadelphia Reservoir to search for gulls, ducks, grebes, loons, and other waterfowl. Easy walking involved.

H Indicates Field Trip

Plan to carpool. Bring lunch and drinks. Scopes helpful. Facilities available at certain locations. Leader: Stan Arnold, 410-768-0155.

H Kent. Prime Hook NWR, DE. Early spring birding for waterfowl, raptors, sparrows, and the occasional surprise. 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.

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.

Sunday, March 16

H Cecil. Bombay Hook NWR and Delaware Bayshore. Meet 8 AM near Dunkin' Donuts in Big Elk Mall, intersection of Rtes 40 and 213 in Elkton. Bring scope. Dress for possible extreme cold and possibly windy conditions. Wear sturdy footwear for walking trails that may be muddy. Generally easy walking. Bring breakfast, lunch, and snacks. Entrance fee or federal user pass or Duck Stamp required at Bombay Hook. Trip leader: Marcia Watson, mww@udel.edu.

H Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hours. Meet at west end lot at 8 AM. Easy walking around the lake on paved path. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Leader: Joe Byrnes, 410-730-5329. Facilities available.

H Montgomery. Lingering Waterfowl and Sparrows. Half day. Meet at Riley's Lock at 7 AM. Then follow the leader to a sequence of interesting places. Reservations not required. Leader: Dave Powell, 301-540-8776.

H Talbot. Wades Point. Early migrants and late spring waterfowl. Depart St. Michaels Village Shopping

Center parking lot at 7 AM. Leader: Les Roslund, 410-763-8169. Breakfast host: Jean Crump.

H Tri-County. Prime Hook NWR and DE Bay. Waterfowl, raptors, and early migrants. Bring lunch and drinks. Meet 7:30 AM in Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art parking lot on S Schumaker Dr on Beaglin Park Dr in Salisbury. Info: Betty Pitney, 410-543-1853.

Tuesday, March 18

H Montgomery. Informal Late Afternoon Walks until Dusk. See Mar 12 listing.

Wednesday, March 19

H Harford. Woodcock Trip. When these odd birds fly, we want to be there to see this bizarre spectacle. Meet at the Aberdeen Wal-Mart at 6:30 PM. Leader Colleen Webster will take you to the site. Call her at 410-942-0867 for more info.

H Montgomery. Informal Late Afternoon Walks Until Dusk. See Mar 12 listing.

Thursday, March 20

MEETING. **Caroline.** Jared Parks of the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy will present "Land Preservation on the Eastern Shore." 7:30 PM at the Caroline Co Public Library, Denton. Info: Debby Bennett, firefly5845@hotmail.com.

H Howard. Centennial Park/First Day of Spring. 2-3 hours. Meet at boat ramp parking lot at 8 AM. Easy walking around the lake on paved path. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Leader: Bonnie Ott, 410-461-3361. Facilities available.

Saturday, March 22

H Frederick. Liberty Reservoir and Environs. Bob Ringler will lead us around some of his favorite spots around the reservoir. Meet at the Rte 75 P&R just south of I-70 at

7:30 AM. For info, call Bob at 410-303-2792.

Sunday, March 23

H Talbot. Wet Bottomlands East of Rte 50. Waterthrush, snipe, and others. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM. Leader: Jan Reese, 410-745-2875.

Wednesday, March 26

H Baltimore. Loudon Park Cemetery. Meet 9:30 AM at cemetery (3801 Frederick Ave). Directions: From I-695, take Exit 13, Rte 144/Frederick Rd east, towards the city (away from Catonsville). Go about 2.5 miles. Just past Mount St. Joseph HS, turn right into the cemetery's main entrance. Leader: Joy Wheeler, 410-825-1204.

Saturday, March 29

H Baltimore. SeaWatch at Ocean City Inlet. Join us in the Inlet parking lot for full-day watch for gannets galore and other seabirds headed north. Expect to see Brant, scoters, a variety of gulls, and (with a little luck) pelagic birds close to shore. A Red Phalarope was seen at SeaWatch in Mar 2004. Stay over Fri night for early start on Sat. Dress warmly; cold wind can be brutal. Bring lawn chair, scope, and warm drinks. Leader will provide snacks. Bring lunch or buy it at nearby shops. Dinner/Tally Sat evening at local restaurant. Optional stayover Sat night for birding the Inlet Sun AM, then birding stops on way home. Contact leader for motel reservations, meeting place, and add'l info. Leader: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456, whitemarlin2001@yahoo.com.

H Harford. Swan Harbor. This small but significant park on the Oakington Peninsula offers 469 acres of bayside, rolling farmland, undeveloped woodland, and brushy meadows. Possibility for Bald Eagle, Wilson's Snipe, a good mix of ducks, and wintering sparrows. Join caretakers John Gallo and Tom Gibson at the park HQ at the end of the entrance road at 8 AM. Call John at 410-459-0548 for more info.

H Kent. Owl Prowl. Meet 7 PM at the Eastern Neck NWR lodge. This field trip will hopefully bring us face to face with an owl or two, after an introduction to local species and their calls. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net.

Sunday, March 30

H Anne Arundel. Wooten's Landing for American Woodcock. Breakfast location TBA. Meet 5:30 AM at Parole P&R for this half-day trip. Leader: Katherine Lambert, 410-867-4056.

H Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hours. Meet at west end lot at 8 AM. Easy walking around the lake on paved path. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Leader: Ralph Cullison, 410-442-2181. Facilities available.

H Talbot. Leader's Choice. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM. Leader: Danny Poet, 410-827-8651.

Tuesday, April 1

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. First in a series of weekly walks to follow the progress of spring migration. Habitats include woods, lake, streams, and marsh. Meet 8:30 AM at footbridge. Directions: From I-695, take Jones Falls Expy (I-83 south) to Northern Pkwy exit, and go left (east) to next light, Falls Rd. Go left (north) and stay in right lane, go past second light (Lake Ave), turn right (east) before south end of Falls Rd bridge (just north of Lake Ave). Follow right-left-right turns to avoid Light Rail entrance and go 0.5 mile to intersection. Park and walk to footbridge. Leader: Joan Cwi, 410-467-5352 or jafjsc@verizon.net.

MEETING. **Baltimore.** Tuesday Evenings at Cromwell Valley. "Birding in Colombia: As Easy As ABC" by *George Jett* and *Gwen Brewer*. This program will feature the natural history encountered on a

H Indicates Field Trip

three-week trip during Feb 2007 to a number of natural preserves being protected and managed by ProAves, the Colombia partner of the American Bird Conservancy. Doors open at the Sherwood House at 7:30 PM for socializing and snacks; show starts about 7:45 or 8 PM.

Wednesday, April 2

H Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. See Mar 5 listing for details. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

MEETING. **Carroll.** *Bob Ringler* will present "Cranes." 7:30 PM at Senior Center, 125 Stoner Ave, Westminster. Contact Bill Ellis at 443-520-8809 for more info.

Thursday, April 3

MEETING. **Frederick.** Members' Night. In honor of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Frederick Bird Club, we will reprise an activity from the past. This is a chance for members to bring in a few slides of a favorite birding activity to share with the group. 7 PM in the Community Rm, C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick. Call Mike Welch at 301-874-5828 if you would like to participate.

Friday, April 4

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** *Janet Millenson*, Past President of MOS, will present "The Bird World Three Centuries before Audubon." 8 PM at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville.

Saturday, April 5

H Allegany/Garrett. Garrett Co Ponds. Call the leader, Roy Brown, at 301-724-7769 for more info. Meet at Parkside School in LaVale at 9 AM and pack a lunch for a picnic at New Germany SP (if we don't freeze first!).

H Baltimore. Cromwell Valley Park. Diverse habitat includes stream, woods, and fields. Expect to see a variety of resident and migrant birds. Meet 8 AM. Directions: From the Baltimore Beltway (I-695) take Exit 29A/Cromwell Bridge Rd. Turn north

(away from the city) onto Cromwell Bridge Rd. At 1.4 miles, turn left at the "Willow Grove Farm Entrance." Follow entrance road, then turn left after bridge and park in lot on left. Leader: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or whitemarlin2001@Yahoo.com.

H Cecil. Conowingo Wildflowers and Birds. Meet 7 AM at Fisherman's Park at Conowingo Dam. Bring scope if you have one. Wear sturdy footwear for walking trails that may be muddy. Easy walking on a level, well-graded trail. Leader: Ken Drier, kdrier@zoominternet.net.

H Harford. Harford Glen. Always a productive location, with an impressive species list of shorebirds, warblers, and other songbirds. Meet at the parking lot just north of the dormitories at 7:30 AM. Call Carol at 410-638-8220 for more info.

H Howard. Alpha Ridge Landfill. Half day. Meet at Alpha Ridge Park at 8 AM. Moderate to difficult walking over hills and fields of the landfill. Vesper sparrow, meadowlarks, kestrels, and other open-country birds expected. Rarities possible. Boots recommended. Leader: Ralph Cullison, 410-442-2181. Facilities available.

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.

H Patuxent. Displaying Woodcock. Location and departure time contingent on current conditions. Call Dave Mozurkewich for add'l info and reservations at 301-459-3375.

Sunday, April 6

H Baltimore. Cylburn Nature Walk. 2 hrs. First in a series of 4 Thursday walks in April. Watch spring progress with a delightful variety of flowers, trees, and bushes along Cylburn's nature trails. Expect to find a variety of migrant and resident birds. No designated leader. Meet 8:30 AM at mansion's front porch, 4915

Greenspring Ave. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H Talbot. Wetland Restoration Projects along Oxford Road. Depart Easton Acme parking lot 7 AM. Breakfast hosts: Sally and Chip Akridge. Leader: Wayne Bell, 410-820-6002.

Tuesday, April 8

MEETING. **Allegany/Garrett.** Amateur Night. We will look at members' bird (and other natural history) photos (no pictures of your kids or pets, please!). We are setting a tentative limit of 20 photos per member, so weed through those photos and pick your best ones. J.B. Churchill will prepare a PowerPoint presentation with digital photo submissions, so send your (jpeg format) photos to him at jchurchi@atlanticbb.net (preferably zipped). If you have slides, let J.B. know, and we will bring a slide projector as well. You don't have to be present to have your slides shown, but we can't be held responsible for comments made behind your back. 7 PM at the Allegany Co Main Library, 31 Washington St, Cumberland. Info: 301-777-1200.

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. See Apr 1 listing for details and directions. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

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

MEETING. **Patuxent.** "Tracking Nocturnal Migrants in the Appalachians by Sound Recording" by *Deanna Dawson*, Patuxent Wildlife Research Refuge. Call Fred Shaffer at 410-721-1744 for add'l info. Meet 7:30 PM at the College Park Airport Annex.

Wednesday, April 9

MEETING. **Cecil.** *David Curson*, Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon MD/DC, will discuss current efforts related to the Important Bird Areas Program and its impacts

on land-use planning. 7 PM on the lower level of Wesley United Methodist Church, Old Chestnut Rd and Justice Way. For info, contact Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

Thursday, April 10

MEETING. **Howard.** "Capturing Cost Rican Birds with a Video Camera," by *Marty Brazeau*. Marty's work led to a promotional video for the birding lodge, Rancho Naturalista. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at Howard Co Rec and Parks, 7210 Oakland Mills Rd, Columbia. Info: Kevin Heffernan, 410-418-8731.

MEETING. **Talbot.** *Greg Kearns* will describe the Sora Rail program at Jug Bay and the importance of wild rice. 7 PM at William Hill Manor Auditorium, 501 Dutchmans Ln, Easton. Info: Cathy Cooper, 410-822-3451 or coopercw@goeaston.net.

Saturday, April 12

H Anne Arundel. Little Patuxent Oxbow Lake Preserve. Depart 7:30 AM from Parole P&R. Leader: Tom Bradford, 410-987-0674.

H Baltimore. Smith Island. All-day trip to see the herons, egrets, and other birds on the island, plus gannets, sea ducks, and possible pelagic species up close during the boat rides to and from the island. Bring lunch, snacks, beverages, and cash; the General Store on the island will be open (cash only). Rental bicycles and golfcarts are available on the island. Car pool from Nursery Rd P&R at 7 AM or meet at the Point Lookout boat dock at 9 AM. The boat leaves at 9:30 AM, arrives at the island about 11 AM, and can pick up about 2:30 PM (negotiable) for the 1.5 hour ride back to Point Lookout. This trip requires reservations by Apr 9 and \$35 cash per person. No credit cards or checks. Limit 30 (waiting list of 5). Contact Pete Webb at pete_webb@juno.com or 410-486-1217, for reservations. The \$35 fee will be collected at the boat dock.

MOS Calendar (continued from page 13)

H Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. See Mar 5 listing for details. Meet outside the Visitor Center at 8 AM. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

H Baltimore. Hampton National Historic Site. Meadow and woodland birds. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM at farmhouse parking lot. Directions: From Beltway I-695, take Exit 27 (Dulaney Valley Rd) north. Turn right at very first road, Hampton Ln (traffic light). Drive approximately one mile (past park sign) and make a left turn onto farm lane and proceed to the farmhouse parking lot (you will see the farmhouse at the end of the lane). Leader: Gail Frantz, 410-833-7135 or guineabird@aol.com.

H Cecil. Mt. Harmon Plantation and Grove Neck Sanctuary. Both Mt. Harmon and Grove Neck are located in the southernmost part of Cecil Co, on the banks of the Sassafras River. Mt. Harmon is a privately-owned historical site—a former tobacco plantation that dates back to colonial times. Meet 7 AM at Mt. Harmon Plantation. Wear good shoes or boots for walking. Bring scope if you have one. Leader: Parke John, parke@del.net.

H Frederick. Eastern Shore. Marcia Balestri will lead us around some Eastern Shore hotspots to look for early arriving warblers and lingering winter birds. Meet at the Rte 75 P&R just south of I-70 at 5:30 AM. For info, call Marcia at 301-473-5098.

Sunday, April 13

H Baltimore. Cylburn Nature Walk. See Apr 6 listing. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H Harford. Perryman. Explore this locally popular birding destination known for its large fields and bayside access. The timing of this trip presents a great opportunity to find Wilson's Snipe, Horned Lark,

American Pipit, Savannah Sparrow, and a good mix of puddle ducks. Meet leader Dave Ziolkowski at the Aberdeen Wal-Mart parking lot, southeast corner, at 7 AM. Call him at 443-299-8453 for more info.

H Howard. University of Maryland Farm. Half day. 7 AM. Search the wetland and dry fields for migrants. Expect difficult walking. Knee boots a must. Limit: 12 people. Call Bonnie, 410-461-3361, to reserve a spot.

H Talbot. Jean Ellen duPont Shehan Audubon Sanctuary, Bozman, for loiterers and vagrants. Depart St. Michaels Village Shopping Center parking lot at 7 AM. Leader: Vince DeSanctis, 410-886-2009.

Tuesday, April 15

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. See Apr 1 listing for details. Leader: Joan Cwi, 467-5352 or jafjsc@verizon.net.

Wednesday, April 16

H Baltimore. Evening Walks at Fort McHenry. Cancelled in rain, snow, sleet, fog, etc. Park on Wallace St (left just before the gate). Directions: From I-95, take Hanover Street Exit 55, McComas St (last exit before tunnel eastbound, first after tunnel westbound), north on Key Hwy, which turns west, first left Lawrence St, left onto Fort Ave; continue east to gate into Fort McHenry. From the JFX, I-83, south to St Paul St exit. St Paul becomes Light St, then left (east) onto Fort Ave; continue to end as above. Park on Wallace St (left just before the gate). Meet 6 PM at the main gate. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

MEETING. **Montgomery.** "Warblers of Maryland." *Linda Friedland* and *Mike Bowen* will present a streamlined version of the popular workshop they debuted at the 2006 MOS conference. 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac.

H Indicates Field Trip

Thursday, April 17

MEETING. **Caroline.** Program and speaker TBA. 7:30 PM at the Caroline Co Public Library, Denton. Info: Debby Bennett, firefly5845@hotmail.com.

H Howard. Weekday Walk at Lake Elkhorn. 2-3 hours. Meet at Broken Land Parking lot at 8 AM. Easy walking along the lake and to Forbay Pond. Migrants will be moving through. Warblers will generally be in abundance. The lake can turn up interesting surprises. Hawks flying over also possible. Great trip for beginning birders. Leader: Joe Byrnes, 410-730-5329. No facilities.

Friday, April 18

H Harford. Owl Prowl. Debbie Bowers knows where the owls are! Join her this night just before the full moon to call in a few of the silent hunters, from the small Screech to the large Great Horned. Meet at 7:45 PM in the Rocks SP office parking lot. Trip limited to the first 8 to request a spot. To make your reservation, call Debbie at 410-692-9741.

Saturday, April 19

H Anne Arundel. Pocomoke River Canoe Trip. Early spring migrants. Meet 7 AM at Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot for this all-day trip. Bring lunch. Leader: Larry Zoller, 410-987-9354. Contact Larry for more details.

H Baltimore. Huntley Meadows, VA. Bring picnic lunch for 3/4-day trip to northern VA woods and freshwater marsh with boardwalk trail for resident wildlife and early spring migrants. American Bittern and Sora both possible. Three-hour level walk on paved paths and boardwalks. Meet 7:30 AM at Nursery Rd P&R. Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

H Baltimore. Hampton National Historic Site. Meadow and woodland birds. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM at farmhouse parking lot. See Apr 12 listing for directions. Leader: Joy Wheeler, 410-825-1204.

H Cecil. North East and Elkton Town Parks. North East Town Park features lots of water. Meadow Park in Elkton also features water, in several forms: the Big Elk Creek flows through the park, there is a system of manmade ponds (originally built as fish hatcheries), and to top it off, there is a freshwater marsh. Meet 7 AM at North East Town Park, at the end of Walnut St in North East. Bring scope if you have one. Trip leader: Richard Donham, donhamr@zoominternet.net.

H Howard. Earth Day at Mt. Pleasant/Beginners Walk: Birding by Ear. 1-2 hours. Meet at shed at 8 AM. Easy walking through the fields of Mt. Pleasant farm. Tree lines, hedgerows, and streams provide opportunity for non-meadow species. Great opportunity for flyovers. Learn the basics of binocular and field guide use. Leader: Kurt Schwarz, 410-461-1643. Facilities available.

H Kent. Eastern Neck NWR. Beginners Bird Walk. An Earth Day walk geared toward beginning birders, but all are welcome. Meet 9 AM at Eastern Neck NWR HQ. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net.

H Montgomery. Blue Mash. Half day. Interesting walk at this relatively new and surprisingly birdy site. Waterproof boots helpful. Meet 7:30 AM at Zion Rd parking lot. Call leader for reservations and directions. Trip is limited to 8-10 participants. Leader: Mark England, 240-252-4218 (h) or 240-375-4500 (cell).

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.

H Tri-County. Nassawango Preserve. Migrating and resident vireos and warblers and other special birds of the swamp forest. Bring

snacks and drink. Meet 7 AM in Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art parking lot on S Schumaker Dr on Beaglin Park Dr in Salisbury. Leader: Betty Pitney, 410-543-1853.

Sunday, April 20

H Baltimore. Patapsco Valley SP/Granite Area. Join the search for early migrants along the Patapsco River and neighboring forest. Several species of warblers and both orioles possible. Boots recommended. Meet 7:30 AM. Directions: From I-695 take Liberty Rd (Exit 18/Rte 26) west for 2 miles to Old Court Rd (Rte 125). Turn left on Old Court Rd and drive 5.5 miles through Granite to the Patapsco River. Park on the lane in the cemetery just after the Job Corps signs. Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6489 or oriolekec1@comcast.net.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Nature Walk. See Apr 6 listing. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H Montgomery. Hughes Hollow and Vicinity. Half day. With a variety of habitats, Hughes Hollow is always productive in spring. Meet 7 AM at the Hughes Hollow parking lot in McKee-Beshers WMA. Reservations required. For more info, directions, and reservations contact Leader: Jim Nelson, 301-530-6574 or kingfishers2@verizon.net.

H Talbot. Pickering Creek Audubon Center. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7AM. Leader: Les Roslund, 410-763-8169. Breakfast host: Carolyn Roslund.

Tuesday, April 22

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. See Apr 8 listing for details. Leader: Debbie Terry, 410-252-8771 or gt5s@bcpl.net.

Wednesday, April 23

H Baltimore. Evening Walks at Fort McHenry. Cancelled in rain, snow, sleet, fog, etc. See Apr 16 listing for details. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

Saturday, April 26

H Allegany/Garrett. CAREY RUN WORK DAY. 8 AM 'til you drop. Hard workers needed to help us out at the MOS Carey Run Sanctuary in Finzel. Be sure to bring your picks and shovels; yard tools such as rakes, shovels, and chainsaws will be useful. Bring a place setting and a covered dish to share for lunch. Beverages will be supplied. Contact Barbara Gaffney at 301-895-4646 for more info.

H Baltimore. Marriottsville Warblers. Resident warblers include Prothonotary and Worm-eating. Yellow-throated Warbler and Barred Owl also possible. Meet 8 AM. Directions: From I-695 Exit 18 (Liberty Rd), go west 4.9 miles to Marriottsville Rd. Turn left 4 miles past quarry and rifle range to unmarked, narrow road with mailboxes. Just before bridge, turn right, continue to small unpaved parking lot on left. Leader: Paul Noell, 410-243-2652 or myconut@verizon.net.

H Baltimore. Patterson Park. Migrants found in this urban park have included Blue-headed, Red-eyed, White-eyed, and Warbling Vireos; Wood, Swainson's, and Gray-cheeked Thrushes; Veery, Summer Tanager, Merlin, and Woodcock! Directions: From downtown Balt, drive east up Pratt St, go left onto S Patterson Park Ave, and park on this street in the first or second block. Meet 8 AM at the White House just inside the west edge of the park at intersection of S Patterson Park Ave and Lombard St. Leader: Dave Curson, 675-4963 or dcurson@audubon.org.

H Baltimore. Hampton National Historic Site. Meadow and woodland birds. Cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM at farmhouse parking lot. See Apr 12 listing for directions. Leader: Debbie Terry, 410-252-8771.

H Cecil. Seasons at Fair Hill: Spring. Spring at Fair Hill means migrants: we'll be looking for early warblers, vireos, flycatchers, and

MOS Calendar (continued from page 15)

sparrows. Meet 8 AM at the Covered Bridge parking lot at Fair Hill. Parking fee required. Honor system in use; bring small bills to pay fee (\$3 MD residents; \$4 out-of-state visitors). Wear good shoes or boots for walking. Leader: Meta Little, meta368@Juno.com.

H Frederick. Lilypons Big Day. Help us find as many species as possible at Frederick Co's premier birding site. You can start at any time and finish at any time. Call Mike Welch at 301-874-5828 if you would like to participate.

H Harford. Susquehanna SP. Enjoy the early spring wildflowers and migrant songbirds that have made this park so popular with local naturalists. The birdlist will likely include Blue-headed Vireo, Yellow-throated Warbler, and Louisiana Waterthrush. Les Eastman will keep you looking up to find those migrants while Colleen Webster will be battling to keep your vision down on those flowers. Meet up with them at 7 AM at the mouth of Deer Creek. Call Les at 410-734-6969 for more info.

H Howard. Patapsco Daniels Area. 2-3 hours. Meet at the Camel's Den lot on Daniels Rd at 8 AM. Easy walking along the river. Path may be muddy. Wonderful spot for migrant and resident warblers (Worm-eating, Northern Parula, Louisiana Waterthrush). Tanagers, thrushes, and most woodland species may be found here. Leader: Joe Byrnes, 410-730-5329. No facilities.

Sunday, April 27

H Anne Arundel and Baltimore. Cherry Hill Portion of Middle Branch Park, Baltimore. Joint chapter trip. Pheasant, meadowlark, terns, and swallows. Depart 8:30 AM from Parole P&R. Leader: Dave Walbeck, 410-757-0112.

H Baltimore. Druid Hill Park. Just about anything could show up in this large, urban park with varied habitats. Meet 8 AM. Directions: Take the Druid Hill Park exit from I-83, which

puts you onto Druid Park Lake Dr. Turn right into the main park entrance on Swan Dr and park on road margins at the northwest corner of the lake. Leader: Bryce Butler, 410-728-0646 or capitano.bryce@verizon.net.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Nature Walk. See Apr 6 listing. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H Baltimore. Chimney Swifts at Dusk, Druid Hill Park Conservatory (Greenhouse). Watch migrating Chimney Swifts pour into the Conservatory chimney. Meet 7:45 PM (come at 7:30 if the weather is cloudy or gray). Rain date April 29. Directions: The Conservatory is located at Auchentoroly Terr and Gwynns Falls Pkwy. From I-83, exit at 28th St, follow signs to "Druid Park Lake Dr" (go along edge of the park). Turn right at 5th traffic light, Gwynns Falls Pkwy. See the Conservatory on your right (an historic Victorian glass greenhouse). Co-leaders: Carol Schreter, 410-664-5151, and Joan Cwi, 410-467-5352 or jafjsc@verizon.net.

H Carroll. Spring Migrants at McKeldin, Patapsco Valley SP. Look and listen for spring migrants in transit and newly arrived breeding birds, including flycatchers, warblers, and finches. Meet 7:30 AM at the parking lot on the west side of Marriottsville Rd, on the north side of the railroad tracks, just south of the South Branch of the Patapsco River (at the Howard/Carroll Co line). Leader: Bob Ringler, 410-549-6031.

H Harford. Winters Run Road. A quiet 3-mile stroll along this primary Harford Co waterway, following a low-traffic, tree-lined pathway with some farmland and meadow habitat attracting a variety of birds. Join leaders Dave Larkin and Lynn Davis at 7 AM at the Rte 24/I-95 P&R. Call Lynn at 410-569-0504 for more info.

H Indicates Field Trip

H Howard. Middle Patuxent Environmental Area. Half day. Meet at Trotter Rd. lot at 8 AM. Moderate walking through the wooded paths and along the river. This is a fabulous area for many species of passerines. A warm-season grass field may host sparrows. Warblers and vireos expected. Boots recommended; grass can be tall and paths may be muddy. Leader: Stan Arnold, 410-768-0155. No facilities.

H Kent. Bombay Hook NWR, DE. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General parking lot, Chestertown. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net.

H Talbot. Cottingham Farm Wetland and Grassland Restoration Projects. Sparrows, raptors, and early spring migrants. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7AM. Leader: Wayne Bell, 410-820-6002. Breakfast hosts: Nancy and Bernie Burns.

Monday, April 28

H Montgomery. Woodstock Park/Dickerson Conservation Area. Half day. Come out for a morning and search for migrants around the parking area at Woodstock Equestrian Park (Dr. William Rickman side). Afterwards, a quick car ride will take us to Dickerson Conservation Area to search for birds along its wooded trails and the nearby C&O Canal. Meet 7 AM at Woodstock Equestrian Park. Limit: 10. Reservations required. Leader: Andy Martin, 301-294-4805 (h), 301-529-2066 (cell) or apmartin2@comcast.net.

Tuesday, April 29

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. See Apr 1 listing for details. Leader: Ruth Culbertson, 410-825-1379.

H Baltimore. Rain Date: Chimney Swifts at Dusk in Hampden. See Apr 27 listing.

Wednesday, April 30

H Baltimore. Evening Walks at Fort McHenry. Cancelled in rain, snow, sleet, fog, etc. See Apr 16 listing for

details and directions. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

H Montgomery. Rock Creek Park, DC. One-third day. Early migrant warblers, vireos, etc. Meet at 7 AM at Picnic Area #18, 1/2 mile below the Nature Center on Ridge Rd. Call the leader for more info or specific directions. Reservations required. Leader: Wallace Kornack, 202-338-7859.

Thursday, May 1

MEETING. **Frederick.** Our own *Bob Balestri* has become an accomplished nature photographer. Bob will share with us some of his best work and will give us tips on how to take better pictures. 7 PM in the Community Rm, C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick.

Friday, May 2

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** *Glen Therres*, MD DNR, will present "Maryland's Action Plan for Conserving Our Wildlife Diversity, from Barn Owls to King Rails." 8 PM at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville.

MEETING. **Harford.** *David Brinker* presents "Maryland's Biodiversity: The Wonders of the Free State and How We Go About Biodiversity Conservation." No reservations necessary. 7 PM at the Harford Glen Outdoor Education Center near Abingdon. For add'l info, contact Russ Kovach at 410-457-4274.

Saturday, May 3

H Baltimore. Halethorpe Ponds. Diverse habitat of this little-birded area includes the river, two freshwater ponds, floodplain woods, and a powerline cut. We'll look for Warbling Vireo, both orioles, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Osprey, Bald Eagle, pheasant, and an assortment of warblers. Meet 7:30 AM at Nursery Rd P&R. Leader: Joel Martin, 410-744-9211 or jcdlmartin@aol.com.

H Baltimore. Soldiers Delight. Warblers, flycatchers, and tanagers are featured as spring migration heats up in this globally rare ecosystem.

Meet 7:30 AM. From I-695 Beltway Exit 18/Liberty Rd, go west 4 miles, bear right onto Deer Park Rd just before traffic light and water tower, go 2 miles to historical marker, overlook, and gravel lot on left. Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6849 or oriolekec1@comcast.net.

H Baltimore. Hampton National Historic Site. Meadow and woodland birds. Automatically cancelled in inclement weather. Meet 8 AM at farmhouse parking lot. See Apr 12 listing for directions. Leader: Ben Poscover, 410-823-2548.

H Cecil. Elk Neck SF. Traverse the quiet wooded lanes of one of Cecil's prime birding gems with our own Parke John. At this time of year, the forest is starting to ring with the songs of newly arrived summer residents: Veery, Wood Thrush, Hooded Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Great Crested Flycatcher, and other goodies. Meet 7 AM at the SF parking lot off Irishtown Rd. Wear good shoes or boots for walking. Leader: Parke John, parke@del.net.

H Frederick. C&O Canal Walk. We will go from Point of Rocks to Lander, looking for migrating warblers. Be sure to do your neck exercises beforehand. Meet at Baker Park at 6:30 AM. Call Kathy Calvert at 301-698-1298 for further info.

☼ **Frederick.** Fred Archibald May Count. Meet at the Sanctuary at 6 AM. Contact Bob Schaefer at 301-831-5660 or rjs30@erols.com for further info.

H Howard. Western Regional Park. Half day. Meet at lot near pond off Carr's Mill Rd. at 8 AM. Explore this newly developed county park with a variety of habitats. Some paved roads will provide moderate walking but be prepared to head on to grassy paths or trail blaze into field edge areas. Leader: Ralph Cullison, 410-442-2181. Facilities available.

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.

H Patuxent. Southern Prince George's County. This trip will cover a variety of habitats in search of migrants along the Patuxent River. Contact Fred Shaffer for add'l details and meeting location at 410-721-1744.

Sunday, May 4

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

H Baltimore. Cylburn Nature Walk. See Apr 6 listing. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H Baltimore. Spring Butterflies at Soldiers Delight. Join butterfly expert Dick Smith for a field trip at this globally rare ecosystem. (The park charges a \$2 per person fee for this event.) Meet at 1 PM at Visitor/Nature Center. Cancelled if raining. From I-695 Exit 18/Liberty Rd, go west 4 miles, bear right onto Deer Park Rd just before traffic light and water tower, and go approximately 1.5 miles to the Visitor/Nature Center. To verify the trip is on and for more info, call the park at 410-461-5005.

☼ **Frederick.** Audrey Carroll May Count. Meet at the Sanctuary at 6 AM. Call Dave Smith at 410-549-7082 for further info.

H Montgomery. Little Bennett RP. Half day. Near peak migration for warblers and vireos, including those breeding in this varied habitat. Contact the leader for time and directions. Reservations required. Leader: Gemma Radko, 301-514-2894.

MOS Calendar (continued from page 17)

H Talbot. Ferry Neck. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM. Leader: Les Coble, 410-820-6165.

Tuesday, May 6

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. See Apr 1 listing for details. Leader: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or whitemarlin2001@Yahoo.com.

MEETING. Baltimore. Tuesday Evenings at Cromwell Valley. "Pale Male." Join us for a viewing of the fascinating documentary about the famous Red-tailed Hawk and his mate who set up housekeeping on a building ledge next to New York City's Central Park. Doors at the Sherwood House open at 7:30 PM for socializing and snacks; show starts about 7:45 or 8 PM.

Wednesday, May 7

H Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. See Mar 5 listing for details. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

H Baltimore. Evening Walks at Fort McHenry. Cancelled in rain, snow, sleet, fog, etc. See Apr 16 listing for details. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

MEETING. Carroll. *Mark Hoffman* will present "The Final Exam." 7:30 PM at Senior Center, 125 Stoner Ave, Westminster. Contact Bill Ellis at 443-520-8809 for more info.

H Montgomery. Exploring Calvert County. Three-quarters day. Local expert Sue Hamilton will guide us as we cover some of the birding hotspots of Calvert Co. Meet at 7 AM at the road leading to Flag Ponds. We'll then move to Battle Creek Cypress Swamp and other local spots before we stop for lunch. Limit: 10. To reserve a spot, and for detailed directions, call Coordinators: Lydia Schindler, 301-977-5252, and Linda Friedland, 301-983-2136.

Thursday, May 8

H Montgomery. Patuxent Drift Boat Trip, PG County (tentative).

Half day. Joint trip with ANS. Peak migration time for songbirds; also marsh and waterbirds. Waterproof footwear and insect repellent advisable. For update, check MBC web site: www.mdkinc.com/mccbld.

Friday, May 9

H Montgomery. Pennyfield Lock: Birding by Ear. The emphasis is on listening, so tune up your ears for this half-day canal walk. Migrant and nesting landbirds. One way walk to Violette's Lock with car pooling return a possibility. Meet 7 AM at the end of Pennyfield Lock Rd. Reservations required. For more info and reservations call the Leaders: Cyndie Loeper, 301-530-8226, and Ann Lucy, 301-229-8810.

Saturday, May 10

MAY COUNT. Allegany/Garrett. To participate in Allegany Co, contact J.B. Churchill (compiler) at jchurchi@atlanticbb.net or 301-689-8344 (h) or 301-697-1223 (cell) to be assigned an area to count. There will be no tally. Send your results to J.B. To participate in Garrett Co, contact Fran Pope (compiler) at fpope@gcnetmail.net or 301-334-4908.

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

H Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. See Mar 5 listing for details. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

MAY COUNT. Caroline. Compiler: Debby Bennett. Contact her at firefly5845@hotmail.com for more info.

MAY COUNT. Carroll. Parties will count resident and spring migrant bird species all times of the day throughout the county. Individual parties of counters will set their own times in their pre-arranged areas. The Tally Rally will be hosted by Jerry and Laura Tarbell at their home. To coordinate count locations, contact

Bill Ellis at 443-520-8809. RSVP to Jerry and Laura Tarbell, at 410-857-1109, if you will be attending the Tally. Please bring a \$ donation or a food item.

MAY COUNT. Cecil. Assist the Cecil Bird Club as we participate in the annual, continent-wide International Migratory Bird Day. Contact compiler Parke John, parke@del.net, ahead of time for assignment to an area and for reporting forms and instructions.

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

MAY COUNT. Kent. An all-day effort to census all birds in Kent Co. Join a field party or count in your neighborhood. For details, contact Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net.

MAY COUNT. Montgomery. For info, contact Compiler, Andy Martin, 301-294-4805 (h), 301-529-2066 (m), or apmartin2@comcast.net.

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

MAY COUNT. Patuxent. Contact Coordinator, Fred Fallon, at 301-249-1518 for more info.

MAY COUNT. Tri-County. Everyone can participate. For details and checklists, contact Ellen Lawler at 410-546-9056.

Saturday-Sunday, May 10-11

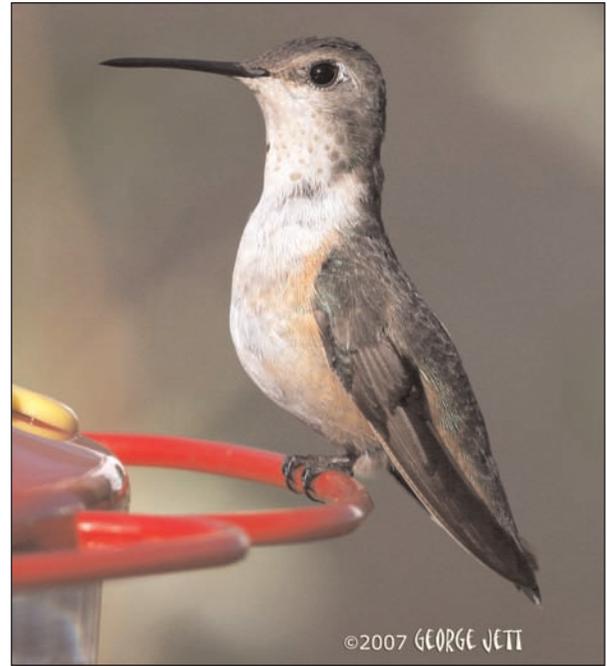
H Talbot. Cape May for "Everything." Peak spring migration for warblers, passerines, shorebirds, and waders. Leader: Charles Hopkins,

H Indicates Field Trip



Birds of Note—by Les Roslund

- Summer reports of a poor mast crop to our north had local birders anxiously watching for nice numbers of irruptive species this season. The birds did not disappoint. Starting with RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES back in July, there has been a continuous parade of siskins, finches, crossbills, and redpolls. Particularly notable was an adult male WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL that came to the watering pan of a Silver Spring resident. The home owner, Noah Kahn, noticed the bird on Dec 2 and promised to pass the word if the visit pattern became reliable. That did not happen until Dec 15, but from then until Dec 24 the bird was regularly seen, much to the joy of numerous lucky birders.
- COMMON REDPOLLs started showing up on Dec 2, with a fly-over sighting at Fletcher's Boathouse in DC that was reported by Frank Hawkins. Though most of the subsequent sightings have been of single birds, their reported flocking behavior was demonstrated on Jan 12 in Cecil County, where Chris Starling was treated to views of a flock of 30-40 birds; these were seen at Hance's Point beside the lower North East River. Other happy viewers of a COMMON REDPOLL included members of the Kennard Elementary School After-School Birding Club in Queen Anne's County; on Jan 9 their bird showed up for easy viewing at a feeder and stayed a good five minutes as it stuffed itself with black oil sunflower seeds, much to the delight of the young birders.
- On Nov 20 John Taylor noticed a rather pale *Myiarchus* flycatcher at Pig Point just north of Jug Bay in Anne Arundel County. He managed to study the bird at close range for about 10 minutes and reached the conclusion that it was an ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER. John enlisted Karyn Molines to share the observation, and they were treated to excellent views of the feeding behavior of this young bird. Later attempts to find the bird were not successful.



Rufus Hummingbird photographed by George Jett in Mechanicsville on December 31, 2007.

- SWAINSON'S HAWKS are readily found in western states but are known as only a rare migrant in our region. Luckily, local birders Dave Brenneman, Winger West, and Marcy Stutzman took good photographs and got long looks Dec 18 when they found a hawk feeding on the ground in Dorchester County near the Hurlock Wastewater Treatment Plant. After thorough consideration they identified the bird as a juvenile SWAINSON'S HAWK. On Jan 6 a sighting of a possible SWAINSON'S HAWK east of Hurlock was reported by Jim Stasz, so this bird may have decided to loiter in our region for a while.
- A LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE was found Dec 21 near Antietam, Washington County, by Hans Holbrook. The bird was very cooperative, so thorough field mark observations were obtained. John Hubbell was able to relocate this bird on Dec 24 but no additional sightings have been reported. Habitat changes in Maryland in recent years have led to a switch in rarity status between LOGGERHEAD and NORTHERN SHRIKES, with Loggerhead now being the rarer of the two (and the one that is reportable to the records committee).
- RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRDS occasionally treat patient birders to their presence somewhere in our area each year. This year Laurie and Pete Mora of northern St. Mary's County were the lucky winners. The bird was discovered on Dec 28 and it was captured, measured, and banded on Jan 1. After that, the real fun began, for some of the feather measurements of this rather dull-colored immature female did not match the accepted values for RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD. The jury is still out, but some experts suggest the bird could be a cross between RUFOUS and CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD. Meanwhile, the Moras graciously continued to host interested birders until Jan 6, at which time the bird decided to depart.

410-763-8742. Some people will travel Fri to allow for full day of birding on Sat.

Sunday, May 11

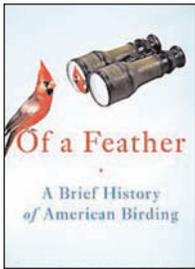
H Baltimore. Milford Mill Park. For migrant warblers, thrushes, and other songbirds. Wilson's Warbler possible. Meet 7:30 AM on Milford Mill Rd. Directions: From I-695 exit 18/Liberty Rd, proceed west to first light at Washington Ave. Turn right, proceed to light on Milford Mill Rd just after the overhead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

H Baltimore. Cylburn Nature Walk. See Apr 6 listing. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

BOOK REVIEW

***Of a Feather: A Brief History of American Birding* By Scott Weidensaul • Published 2007 by Harcourt.**

(Hardcover \$35 and paperback \$18.)



Scott Weidensaul, although young (born 1959), has been called one of the finest writer-naturalists of our time, someone who “elevates ecology to the level of philosophy,” to quote a review published in the *Los Angeles Times*. Anyone who has read his superb *Living on the Wind* or *The Ghost with Trembling Wings* can certainly agree that the *Times* reviewer was not exaggerating. Weidensaul is a major

intellectual and moral force for conservation. He is also an excellent and much in demand speaker who gave the keynote address at the 2007 MOS Annual Conference in Salisbury.

This new book is not quite in the lofty realms of much of his prior work, but it is a worthwhile read nonetheless. It tracks the lives and writings of earlier American naturalists like Mark Catesby and Philadelphian William Bartram, and it chronicles the tenuous relationship between Alexander Wilson (“the father of American ornithology”) and the irrepressible John James Audubon. It also offers absorbing details about Spencer Fullerton Baird, who from his position at the Smithsonian’s Natural History Museum directed a network of amateur naturalists—many of them military officers serving in the American West, who sent specimens and reported observations back to Baird in Washington. Many Western birds came to bear the officers’ names—Bendire’s Thrasher, Heermann’s Gull, Xantus’s Murrelet, Coues’s Flycatcher (now Greater Pewee).

Naturally, Weidensaul covers the familiar saga of Roger Tory Peterson and his development of the first really popular field guide to the birds. That tale is perhaps better known than the earlier history of birding but still remarkable. Peterson’s legacy of ever-better and more detailed field guides written by others made possible the current proliferation of specialty guides—to shorebirds, to gulls, to sparrows—that are showing up just about every month, promising to make every birder a more knowledgeable and competent field observer.

To this reviewer, the most interesting and challenging part of the book comes in its last chapter, in which Weidensaul expresses his fear that more and more birders prefer chasing rarities to supporting conservation efforts. “For too many birders, (the) spirit of listing and competition has overshadowed the more elemental aspects of bird study and diluted what should be a strong and universal voice demanding better care of birds and the natural world on which they depend.” Weidensaul told me recently that he had gotten “a lot of flak” from some active birders, including an upcoming negative review in *Birding* magazine, the flagship publication of the American Birding Association, as a result of this assertion. But he sticks with his views and is hopeful that the rise of “Citizen Science,” with its emphasis on personal participation in Christmas Bird Counts, feeder watch programs, and the like, will develop a new breed of birder for whom listing is merely an enjoyable accompaniment to conservation commitment rather than an end in itself.

—Michael Bowen
Montgomery Bird Club

POSTMASTER: TIME-DATED MATERIAL—PLEASE EXPEDITE!

LAST CALL

...for Posters for the May conference in Harford County. If you would like to share the results of research on the natural history of Maryland bird life—banding activities, hawk watches, even small research projects—present it in poster format during the Wine and Cheese Social on Saturday, May 31. For more information, contact Dave Ziolkowski at 301-497-5753 or dziolkowski@usgs.gov.

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