

President's Corner
**Second Annual
 YMOS Birdathon**

by Wayne Bell



The Maryland
Yellowthroat
 Newsletter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

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Five young birders shed their cabin fever to raise funds for MOS youth activities by participating in the second annual YMOS Birdathon. This event, celebrating the arrival of spring, took place on March 20 and 21. Advanced birders were **Amanda Spears** and **Christina Brinster** (coached by *Wayne Bell*); intermediate birders were **Gabby Caligiuri**, **Elizabeth Jones**, and **Emmett Mayberry** (coached by *George Radcliffe*). Birding was confined to Maryland's Eastern Shore—Day 1 from Truitt's Landing to the Spocott estate south of Cambridge; Day 2 from Blackwater NWR to Kent Island. No tapes were allowed; the coaches could only confirm species identifications—and drive.

Spring did indeed arrive. Morning temperatures in the low 50's climbed to near 70 by afternoon, with clear skies and light winds. Even so, birding was difficult. The heavy snows of winter had flattened most fields and marshes and put a damper on habitat-restricted sparrows. The harsh winter also delayed arrival of early migrants. Wintering waterfowl found the disappearance of ice and snow

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**CONFERENCE 2010:
 WASHINGTON COLLEGE REDUX**

We did it before and we liked it so much we're doing it again! The location (**Chestertown**), the guest speaker (**Doug Gill**), even the exact dates (**June 11-13**) are identical to those of 2004.

But fast-forwarding to 2010, this year's workshop will focus on a phenomenon that barely existed way back in 2004: **eBird**. Maryland's own Marshall Iliff, now with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, will give us the inside story, starting with a field trip for 20 lucky people on Saturday morning and following up with a workshop that afternoon. The workshop—not limited to the 20 field trip participants—will demonstrate how eBird works. Dozens of other field trips are in the works, too, sampling everything from

National Wildlife Refuges to private estates on the Eastern Shore; listers' trips will scour Cecil, Kent, and Queen Anne's Counties. Specialty trips will take in history, geology and butterflies.

All the other traditional favorites are on the agenda, too: Silent Auction (bring your donations!), Research Posters, Wine and Cheese Social, Birding Store, conference T-shirts and pins. And then there are the birds. In 2004, the group identified 158 species, including Dickcissel, Swallow-tailed Kite, and Hudsonian Godwit. Can we do better in 2010? Come see.

—*Janet Shields*
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Election of Officers will take place at the annual business meeting Saturday, June 12. The slate of candidates, as presented by Nominations Committee Chair Helen Patton:

President: Mark Johnson, Harford
Vice President: Maureen Harvey, Howard
Secretary: Janet Shields, Frederick
Treasurer: *Emmalyn Holdridge, Howard

**After six years of excellent service, Emmy intends to resign, but she has agreed to stay while we search for a replacement.*

CALL FOR POSTERS

Research Posters will again be featured during Saturday's Wine and Cheese Social, with the authors standing by to field questions about their work.

If your research involves the natural history of Maryland bird life (including banding activities and hawk watches), take advantage of this great opportunity to share your findings with the MOS membership. Contact Dave Ziolkowski, Chair of the Research Committee, at 443-299-8453.

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an invitation to move north. In addition, the youngsters had constructed a challenging "Must-See" list of 100 species. Any species missed on this list had to be replaced by two additional off-list species.

These young birders really rose to the challenge. Things looked grim at the end of Day 1, with fewer than 90 species seen and many Must-Sees missed. But by the end of Day 2 they had logged a total of 119 species. After applying the penalty for the 11 remaining Must-See misses, the net total was 108 species. Based on pledges and donations received in advance, this total raised nearly \$900 for YMOS programs. Well done!

While junior birders missed only six Must-See species in 2009, the group found three of them this year: Bonaparte's Gull, Pileated Woodpecker, and Cedar Waxwing. Three others were missed both years (Northern Bobwhite, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet) and will join the other 8 misses for the 2010 Birdathon Must-See

list (among them: Lesser Black-backed Gull, Gray Catbird, Saltmarsh Sparrow, and Swamp Sparrow). Although they missed 22 species seen in 2009, the youngsters still managed to add nine new species for a combined list of 142 for the two Birdathon years.

Numbers and funds aside, in the end the YMOS Birdathon is just plain fun. It's an opportunity to be outside, enjoy one another's company doing something we all enjoy, and share in discoveries and many surprises. Here are some examples:

5:00 AM in the salt marsh at Truitt's Landing across the bay from Assateague Island. As the sky lightens and stars fade, the squeaks from hundreds of Green-winged Teal steadily increase. As if on cue, a King Rail begins "bumping," setting off an explosive chorus of other Kings and at least two Virginia Rails. The Birdathon is under way!

The water tower at Ocean City Inlet is being sandblasted, so things do not look good for the usually reliable Peregrine Falcon. But unexpectedly there it is, perched atop the south jetty. A couple of brain-challenged trespassers try to get close for a cell phone picture and spook the bird. It flies across the Inlet directly toward us. As it passes overhead a Herring Gull comes out of nowhere and attacks it with mouth agape. Our mouths are agape, too!

"Ohmygosh, a quok!" Christie shouts as we're driving at 30 mph past a narrow shrub-bordered ditch in West Ocean City. We have just cased the willows at Elliott's (West OC) Pond for Black-crowned Night-Heron and

come up empty for this Must-See species. Christie had maybe half a second to see anything in that ditch but is certain the "quok" was standing on a log. Driving the lead car, I go back through a parking lot for a view of the ditch. And there it is—an immature BCNH, posed for all to scope and positively identify! While we are high-fiving, six first-of-year American Egrets fly over as if to share in the celebration.

Many others help the youngsters along the way. George Radcliffe starts off Day 2 with visits to haunts around his historic Spocott home. Hermit Thrush and Winter Wren are singing and the youngsters see Savannah Sparrow there. Joyce Bell fills the feeders at our Easton home to entice a winter resident Vesper Sparrow to wait until the group arrives for lunch. It does. Feeders at Karen and Bill Harris's home produce White-breasted Nuthatch and Purple Finch, both uncommon this winter. Thanks to the MDOsprey birding network, the group sees the rare Tufted Duck at Kent Narrows. Just before 5:00 PM they finally locate a Must-See American Wigeon at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center, the Birdathon's last species.

The YMOS Birdathon would not be possible without the assistance of people who opened their homes, provided overnight accommodations, or helped drive the youngsters to and from rendezvous locations. Special thanks to **Jackie Radcliffe, Joyce Bell, Tony and Lynn Caligiuri, Susan Mayberry, Sharon Brinster, Lisa Spears, and Karen and Bill Harris.**

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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 July 20, 2010 for the September/October 2010 issue.

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Photograph page 3 ©Bill Hubick.
Photograph page 3 ©Michael Bowen.*

TREASURER HUNT

More than perhaps any other position in the Society, the job of Treasurer requires specialized skills and training. The Treasurer handles all of the organization's financial information and transactions, prepares financial reports, and works with the outside auditors.

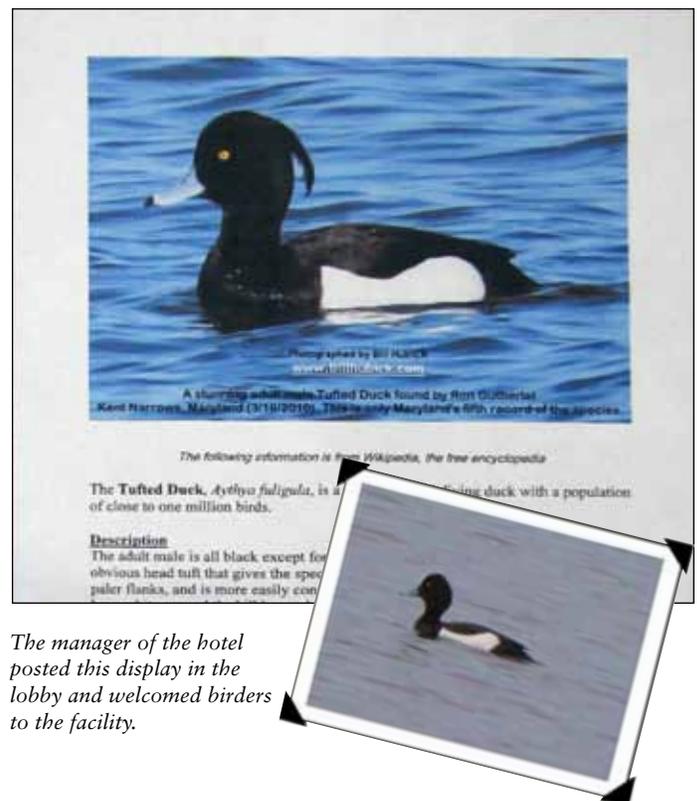
Do you perhaps know some MOS member who has this kind of special financial/accounting background? Please forward his or her name to either Helen Patton (Helen@dataprompt.com, 301-588-5418) or Janet Shields (janetbill@prodigy.net, 301-733-7877).

Birds of Note—by Les Roslund

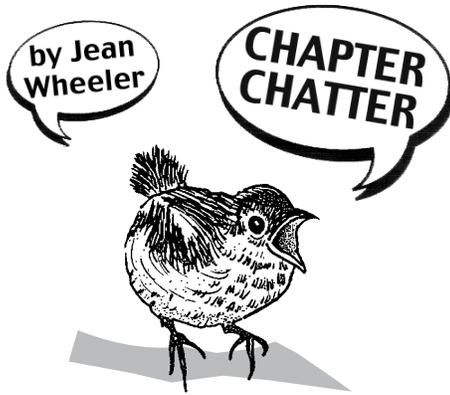
- As heavy snow and bitter cold descended upon Maryland in early February, always-optimistic birders looked forward to finding species that normally winter farther north. For the most part, such hopes went unfulfilled, and only the very lucky managed to see the very few unusual visitors to come around. One was a SNOWY OWL in DC, and it was seen only by Ron Lippock of DC. Ron's friend Gary Allport forwarded the report to the birding community; though Ron is not a birder, Gary made a convincing case for it being a SNOWY OWL, based on Ron's excellent description. This bird was flying low in the Cleveland Park area of northwest DC on the morning of Feb 3. Efforts to relocate it were not successful, in part because searching was hampered by the snow storms that persisted for the next few days.
- All of February brought only two PINE SISKIN reports. The first came from Kathy Isaacs of Pasadena, Anne Arundel County. A single bird briefly visited her feeder on Feb 3; in 2009 her feeders had hosted swarms of PINE SISKINS. The second sighting was similarly brief. Kevin Graff saw one PINE SISKIN in his yard in Jarrettsville, Harford County, for a few minutes on Feb 6. Things improved a little in early March, with regular sightings of good numbers of PINE SISKINS in Baltimore County, Carroll County, and elsewhere as spring migration got under way.
- One quite exciting winter sighting was a white-phase GYRFALCON. On Feb 7 this bird passed over Woodbine, Howard County, providing a thrilling work break for Rob Abbott and his wife (who were diligently shoveling their driveway). The bird was only about 100 feet high, and lighting conditions were good enough to reveal clear field marks. Fortunately the Abbotts were familiar with the species, thanks to previous sightings in other states. This report came courtesy of Rob Hilton of Silver Spring, who is a friend of the Abbotts.
- With piles of snow everywhere, birders throughout the region were reporting large numbers of feeder birds, but not until Feb 10 did the true star of the season arrive. A beautiful male PAINTED BUNTING showed up all decked out in breeding plumage on a feeder at the home of Dorothy and Allen Paugh of Bowie, Prince George's County. The Paughs promptly spread the word, cleared away snow for parking spaces, and then began to host a parade of birders. Most visitors attained great views and some excellent photographs were taken. The bird cooperated by coming to the feeder almost daily, and by mid-March the visitor list had reached 90. The bird continued until April 12.
- The abundant snow did not bring lots of SNOW BUNTINGS. Roadside birding, when conditions allowed, did turn up great numbers of woodland birds and plenty of LAPLAND LONGSPURS and AMERICAN PIPITS, but SNOW BUNTINGS remained hard to

find. Eventually a few reports trickled in, and at two locations the birds stayed around, much to the delight of the birders who chose to chase them. Patty Craig of St. Mary's County found a group of three SNOW BUNTINGS at Point Lookout SP on Feb 18; at least one stayed through Feb 22. On Feb 22 Mike Walsh of Salisbury found a handsome male SNOW BUNTING along Colbourn Creek Road, Somerset County; this bird was still present until early March and was enjoyed by many birders. Les Coble of Talbot County spotted a single SNOW BUNTING on Feb 21 as it flew over the heads of a dozen members of the Talbot County Bird Club at Blackwater NWR; everyone else was busy watching the antics of the dozen Bald Eagles that were in the air at the time. Finally, on March 8 Jan Reese scored a total of 30 SNOW BUNTINGS during one of his periodic visits to Poplar Island, Talbot County.

- March 3 brought another unusual sighting. A CALIFORNIA GULL dropped down on the Potomac River near Violette's Lock, Montgomery County, and floated downstream for about five minutes before taking flight towards DC. It was Dave Czaplak whose watchful eye caught this bird, close enough to provide excellent field marks. Attempts to relocate the bird over the next few days amongst the huge flocks of gulls in the region were not successful.
- Another exciting species was found on March 16, when Ron Gutberlet of Salisbury picked out a TUFTED DUCK amongst the LESSER SCAUP in a cove adjacent to a Holiday Inn Express near Kent Narrows, Queen Anne's County. This bird, a handsome male, delighted many viewers by staying through March 31.



The manager of the hotel posted this display in the lobby and welcomed birders to the facility.



ALLEGANY & GARRETT COUNTIES

The Allegany & Garrett Counties' Bird Club is alive and well. We have our own Facebook Page now. Recent talks from *David Yeany* (Audubon IBA Program Coordinator) and *Marie Brady* (Frostburg State University Graduate Student) on results of last year's Bird Blitz and Grassland Songbird research (respectively) were very interesting. We are all looking forward to spring and our upcoming field trip to Garrett County ponds (assuming they thaw by April 3). Our web site URL is now <http://www.westernmdbirding.com/>.

—*J. B. Churchill*

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

Four days in The Soo (Saulte Ste. Marie, MI): Some folks thought we were crazy—did we know what the weather can be like up there? (In hindsight, did they know what the weather was going to be like here less than a week later? I think not.) Four of us, *Larry Woo Hoo Zoller*, the leader, *Dick Adams*, navigator, *Jean Wheeler* of Harford Co and *Bobbi Reichwein*, set out on January 29. Arrived to 12 degrees F and clear skies. Increasing clouds portended the skies and lake-effect snows that accompanied us all weekend. Red-tails decreased and Ravens increased, the farther north we went. Saturday morning we set out in light snowfall. Target birds: Snowy Owl, Northern

Hawk Owl, Northern Shrike, and Snow Bunting. We spotted all of them, with especially great looks at the Snowy and the Hawk Owl. On Sunday, another day of lake-effect snow, we spotted Ruffed Grouse feeding in a tree top, but some of our target birds would elude us—Boreal Chickadee, Great Gray Owl, Spruce Grouse, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Bohemian Waxwing, Evening Grosbeak. We did get great looks at some of the northern species not seen in MD, and we saw a lot of the UP, including Whitefish Point Lighthouse and Lake Superior. We had a total of 24 species, Dick got some life birds, and most importantly, unbeknownst to us, we had acclimated ourselves somewhat to the Soo-like weather that was to come to MD.

—*Bobbi Reichwein*

Juanita and Pat Tate were off to southwestern AZ to visit family and bird (“the family thinks we’re primarily there to bird”) for a week starting mid-March. Pat finally got his life Burrowing Owl and Juanita and Pat both got the White-tailed Kite. Saw lots of ducks and shorebirds at Sweetwater (Tucson) and at Gilbert Water Ranch near Phoenix, including three teal (Blue, Green, and Cinnamon). Black-necked Stilts and American Avocets were plentiful in Gilbert. The White-tailed Kite was in the San Rafael Grasslands, along with Mountain Bluebirds and a Greater Roadrunner, and a couple of Grasshopper Sparrows put on a display for us. The Burrowing Owl was in Palominas, along with Eurasian Collared-Dove and several Vermillion Flycatchers. Painted Redstarts and White-throated Swifts were highlights in Ramsey and Garden Canyons. Hummers were at several places: Broad-billed, Magnificent, Black-chinned, and Anna’s. Other birds of note were Phainopepla, Pyrrhuloxia, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Bewick’s

and Cactus Wrens, Say’s and Black Phoebes, Abert’s and Canyon Towhees, and many Ruby-crowned Kinglets. All together we had 109 species, many at multiple locations. Oh yes, visiting with family was very enjoyable. We even took the grandchildren birding in Ramsey and Garden Canyons.

—*Pat Tate*

CAROLINE COUNTY

We are continuing to work on our bird census at Camp Todd Girl Scout Camp (25012 Beauchamp Branch Road in Denton) in order to create a comprehensive bird list for the camp. We weren’t able to do much in January and February due to the snow. We’ve given Ranger Bob Foote a brief list of birds likely to be seen by habitat and by season for him to add a bird portion to his trail guides. Ranger Foote invites MOS members to visit the camp to hike and bird and send him a list of your sightings. He asks you to contact him ahead of time at 281-844-6854 or e-mail BobFoote1@aol.com.

—*Debby Bennett*

HOWARD COUNTY

On April 17 the Howard County Bird Club participated in the county’s third annual Greenfest. Volunteers manned the Club’s display table and had an opportunity to promote birding in the County. Typically, about 3,000 people attend Greenfest.

Chuck Stirrat and *Dave Harvey* continued a tradition, begun when Dave retired, of a mid-winter birding week, leaving *Maureen* behind to work. They spent the last week of February along the Texas Coast and the Lower Rio Grande Valley. They started with close-up views of Whooping Cranes from the “Skimmer” with Captain Tommy. They then traveled to the Valley where they pursued “south Texas specialties” for Chuck’s first visit to this portion

of Texas and “rarities” that might add to Dave’s ABA list. On the first day in the Valley they had a serendipitous meeting with Howard County birder *Bill Hill* at Laguna Atascosa NWR, searching unsuccessfully for the Blue Bunting. After spending the day with Bill at Estero Llana Grande SP, they birded Santa Ana NWR, Quinta Mazatlan, Bentsen-Rio Grande SP, Anzalduas County Park, Salineno, Falcon SP, and Zapata. They then turned north for a tour of the King Ranch, then chased rarities north of Corpus Christi, and closed with two hours of productive birding along the bay at Corpus Christi. Chuck spent some time watching a feeder for a Buff-bellied Hummingbird with no success; could it have anything to do with the bobcat that was hanging out under the feeder? Total species for the trip were 172 and 25 ABA life birds for Chuck (~3 for Dave). Despite several missed rarities, highlights were many, including the regular Valley specialties plus Tropical Parula, Roadside Hawk, Northern Wheatear, and Northern Jacana.

Gayle and Bill Hill were lucky to be visiting southern Texas this February when the two big snowstorms paralyzed Maryland. The weather in the Lower Rio Grande Valley was also unusually cool and wet, but it apparently contributed to one of the better winters for seeing vagrants. The trip started on a high note when Bill, who drove to Texas for an extended stay, saw a Northern Wheatear that wintered on a very small property near Beeville, TX. With thousands of acres of farmland to choose from, the wheatear remained exclusively on this property. Perhaps it liked the organic farming practices of its Amish host. Gayle arrived a few days later for a 10-day visit, and together they were able to see Rose-throated Becard and Clay-colored Thrush at Bentsen SP, Crimson-collared Grosbeak and

Tropical Parula at Quinta Mazatlan, an immature Roadside Hawk at Falcon SP, Zone-tailed Hawk and Sprague’s Pipit at Anzalduas County Park, and a White-collared Seedeater in Laredo. Bill also saw Blue Bunting at Laguna Atascosa NWR, an adult Roadside Hawk at Frontera Audubon, Red-billed Pigeon and Muscovy Duck at Salineno, and a Brown Jay at San Ygnacio (1-2 birds just returned to the U.S. after a 2-year hiatus).

Howard County Bird Club made good use of the backpack donated by MOS. The Club sponsored an essay contest targeting birders between the ages of 9 and 13. The winner was nine-year old *Ethan Herder*, a home-schooled third grader from Glenwood. Ethan was presented with his backpack at the Club’s March meeting.

—*Kate Tufts*

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Gail Mackiernan and *Barry Cooper*, along with other MBC birders, enjoyed a male Varied Thrush in Herndon VA on the morning of Feb 14, and then later that day, the male Painted Bunting in Bowie MD. “A great way to recover from Snowmageddon!” Gail wrote that comment having just returned from a snow-delayed holiday in warm, sunny Oaxaca City, Mexico, where she and Barry managed to see a number of specialty birds, including Dwarf Jay, Ocellated Thrasher, Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo, and Oaxaca and Bridled Sparrows, as well as the impressive Mayan ruins at Monte Alban.

MBC’s perennial voyagers, *Joy and Mike Bowen* and *Helen Patton*, spent a well-timed two weeks birding in Florida in early February, “neatly missing the two big local snowstorms and enjoying the drenching rains and the blistering sunshine of the Sunshine State.” They tallied more than 160 species, with just a few of them, like

Egyptian Goose and Purple Swamphen, being non-ABA-countable. Top highlights were a perched La Sagra’s Flycatcher on Key Biscayne, a young Red-footed Booby relaxing on top of a flight cage of a rehab center in Miami, from which it had been released six weeks earlier, and a free-flying Brown Booby at Hobe Sound. The trio hit many excellent birding spots, including Merritt Island NWR, Wakodahatchee Wetlands, Tigertail Beach on Marco Island, Babcock-Webb WMA near Fort Myers, and Fort deSoto Park in Pinellas County. At Ding Darling NWR they ran into fellow MBC members *David and Helen Gray*, two of hundreds of birders and photographers on Sanibel Island that day.

David Moulton writes, “At 595, I’m very near the 600 life list milestone. Varied Thrush in Herndon was the most recent tick, and I am working hard on Lapland Longspur before the big thaw. So 2010 should be a big year for me, if I can use that term. Having just read *Kingbird Highway* for the first time, I am humbled when I compare my life list to the single-year ‘birding’s Mt. Everest’ that Kenn Kaufman climbed using his hitchhiking thumb.”

In the first week of December *Suzanne Dater* went to Bosque del Apache with a group of photographers, arriving when it was 14 degrees at night—but it warmed to 40 degrees during the day, “so the wetland ponds did finally unfreeze. We had good weather, except for one day when the winds reached over 40 miles per hour.” Among the birds the group photographed were: Sandhill Cranes and Snow Geese by the thousands, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Ring-necked Duck, Common Merganser, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Peregrine Falcon, American Coot, Greater Roadrunner, Western Scrub-Jay, White-crowned Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird,

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Chapter Chatter *continued from page 5*

Gambel's Quail, Pyrrhuloxia, and Bushtit.

—Chris Wright

SOUTHERN MARYLAND**Returning Rarity Roundup!**

Baltimore Oriole—at the home of *Hal and Nancy Delaplaine* of La Plata. This is his fifth winter, according to Hal. The bird arrived on November 10, 2009. Last year it departed on April 22; how long will he stay this year?

Yellow-throated Warbler—at the home of *Carol Ghebelian*. Another bird returning for its fifth winter! It arrived on December 15 and survived the snows with an abundance of mealworms put out on the window ledge when feeders were snowed in. It also ate other fat-filled foods: black oil sunflowers, peanuts, and suet, as well as the worms—even the freeze dried

ones. He began singing song fragments March 12 and then full songs on the morning of March 17, St. Patrick's Day; that was the last day he was last seen.

Greater White-fronted Goose—seen first in Solomons, by *Tyler Bell*, just south of the bridge, then relocated in Lusby on Turner Road by *John Hubbell*. This is possibly a returning bird which was seen last year in the same field near the bridge.

—Tyler Bell

TRI-COUNTY

Guided bird tours have expanded in recent years to combine birding with other interests such as music and history. This Spring *Betty Pitney* attended a tour with a Civil War theme. The week-long trip was divided between Savannah, GA, and Charleston, SC. Mornings were spent

birding the surrounding areas for migrant songbirds and shorebirds, while afternoons were devoted to touring the historic areas in these cities rich in Civil War historic sites. Staying in the historic districts of the cities added to the atmosphere. Betty says the trip leader, Jon Dunn, is not only one of the top birders in the country but also a history buff par excellence.

March 19 saw the opening of an exhibit of artwork by *Dr. Ellen Lawler*, who teaches in the Biology Department at Salisbury University, at the Art Institute and Gallery in Salisbury. Ellen's work, primarily watercolors of birds and nature, is based on sketches and photos taken in the field. Her work may be seen at several locations on the Eastern Shore and also at East Coast Artists On Line, at www.eastcoastartistsonline.com/

—Carol Broderick

MAY COUNT 2010

SATURDAY, MAY 8

This year's May Count—Maryland's 48th—will take place on May 8. By that time, the second week of May, many of the species that nest in Maryland have returned to their breeding grounds. Plus, they are joined by an array of warblers, vireos, and other migrating species whose numbers peak in the state around this time. With species diversity high, plumages bright, and bird song in the air, there is no better time to bird in Maryland.

Each County has an assigned compiler; their names and numbers are listed in the Calendar. If you haven't participated before, coordinators can provide maps of territories that need coverage and pair you up with experienced birders who can show you the ropes. A field checklist of May Count species can be downloaded from the MOS web site at www.mdbirds.org/counts/namc.

More volunteers mean better coverage, so slap on some sunscreen and insect repellent and enjoy a great day of birding. You'll discover new spots to bird that you didn't know existed.

For something a little different, consider volunteering in one of the less populous counties on the Eastern Shore or in Western Maryland, which need some extra hands. You'll be able to explore new territories and likely see species that you don't find at home.

Please join us in the field on May 8 for a great day of birding.

—Mike Welch, Statewide Coordinator
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LISTING MILESTONES, 2009

Once again, 2009 was an amazing year for great birds in Maryland: Lark Bunting, Tufted Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Yellow Rail, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Yellow-nosed Albatross, Roseate Tern, Swallow-tailed Kite, White-faced Ibis, Hudsonian Godwit, Painted Bunting, and on and on.

Additionally, some awesome records were set or equaled in 2009. First, the Maryland 400 Club welcomed a new member! Congratulations to Mark Hoffman for finally finding his nemesis Yellow-headed Blackbird to reach 400 species in Maryland. Paul O'Brien and Jim Stasz are now tied for the top spot at 402 species each.

I bet you didn't know there was a hard-fought MD Big Year going on last year, all in an attempt to beat the prior Big Year tally of 330 species set by Jim Stasz in 2000 and again in 2008. In 2009, both Jim and Stan Arnold smashed the old record by finding 338 species, while Jim Brighton ended with 337 species and Kevin Graff with 331.



In the **MD State Life List Category**, we now have 138 people who have ever reported a tally of 300 or better, the so-called 300 Club. This is 12 more than last year.

Top birder in the **District of Columbia** is still Rob Hilton, with 271 species, while Paul Pisano closed to within two species of Rob.

The **Total Tick Category** (a count of all species seen, totaled up across all 23 Maryland counties) continues to

gain more folks reporting—up to 39 this year. Jim Stasz still sits atop this heap, with his count of 6,248 species, an average of just under 272 species in each county. Bob Ringler and long unheard from Marshall Iliff are in 2nd and 3rd places, both now in the 5,000+ species category, along with Matt Hafner, Hans Holbrook, and John Hubbel. Bill Hubick once again had the highest **Total Tick 2009**, with 3,193, followed closely by Ron Gutberlet with 3,147. If there were a category called Certifiably Crazy, the folks here all belong to it!

Jim Stasz remains the owner of the **County Close-Out Category**, with 183 species seen in each of Maryland's 23 counties. Following him are John Hubbell (148 close-outs) and Bob Ringler (133). For just 2009, Ron Gutberlet led the pack with 34 closeouts.

The **Birds Photographed in Maryland Category** continues of interest.

George Jett is at the pinnacle, with 378 species, with Jim Stasz (374) and Mark Hoffman (366) in hot pursuit. High counts for 2009 include Joe Turner's 201 species and Jeff Culler's 142.

In the **Maryland Yard List Category**, Harry Armistead, Jeff Shenot, and Jim Stasz continue to hold down the top three spots, with 267, 224, and 222 species, respectively.

The **District of Columbia Home/Work/Other Category** is led by Gary Allport, who has 94 species on his NW DC yard list, followed by Norm Saunders with 89 species from 15 or so years of rambling around the parks of Capitol Hill, and by Michael Jennison with 76 species on his DC yard list.

I'll let you explore the 23 Maryland County lists of listers on your own. Watch especially for the eight or so names that keep repeating from one county to the next; some might say they are the oil companies' best friends! Finally I pass along some of the remarks I received this year.



Stan Arnold: 2009 was a year of phenomenal good birding fortune and great experiences. My top ten: (10) A Goshawk flying over the yard; (9) Finding Common Raven in 11 different counties; (8) Getting 22 new birds in my home county of Anne Arundel; (7) Finishing the year with our second-best yard year (118 species) and adding 9 new species, including White-winged Crossbill, Lincoln's Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, and Cerulean Warbler; (6) Finally getting to see Roseate Tern in Maryland; (5) Our yard's first Mississippi Kite; (4) Successfully finishing a Big Year, despite swearing I'd never do it again after my 2001 attempt; (3) Getting one of the best yard birds ever when 3 Sandhill Cranes flew over; (2) Enjoying the best find of the year, Jim Green's Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Kent Co; (1) The most unexpected birding experience of my life: Finding an albatross off the beach of Assateague near the Virginia state line in early June.

Harry Armistead: I am somewhat at a disadvantage in not actually living at any of these places. In addition, every year I spend 3+ weeks on the Eastern Shore of Virginia during the best part of the passerine fall migration season. Some of my totals would

Listing Milestones *continued from page 7*

be considerably improved if I could catch a few days, especially in the fall, when the warblers, vireos, thrushes, flycatchers, et al. are at their best. My absence for 3 weeks each when I was in the Arabian Peninsula (Jan. 2009) and Antarctica and environs (Nov. 2009) probably had little effect on my totals. I've never been much of a chaser but the Cambridge ducks and the Oxford Snowy Owl provided exceptions one could not resist. And Poplar Island is almost within sight of our yard.

Tyler Bell: My favorite experience of 2009 was finding a drake Barrow's Goldeneye at Jefferson Patterson Park while conducting the Jug Bay-sponsored Patuxent River Waterfowl Survey. This constitutes the first record for Calvert County and was in the same location where I found the drake Tufted Duck back in 1997. Talk about a sweet spot!

Joy and Mike Bowen: We had some wonderful new Maryland birds this year, but we also missed a number of others—including the female Barrow's Goldeneye in Cambridge because we were birding at the time in (shame! hiss! boo!) Delaware. Probably the most fully satisfying experience of the year was spending a wonderful day birding Carroll County with Bob Ringler during the MOS Conference.

Jim Brighton: When I think of 2009 what comes to mind is BIG. A JANUARY BIG DAY turned into a BIG JANUARY which then turned into a BIG YEAR. 337 birds later, all I can hope for is that 2010 is just as fun.

Keith Eric Costley: In 2009 I added 20 species to my Baltimore County list and 14 to my Baltimore City list. My best Baltimore County sightings included: 2 Vesper Sparrows at Southwest Area Park; 3 Saltmarsh Sparrows at Fort Howard Park VA

Hospital; 3 Bank Swallows flying over Soldiers Delight; and 12 Red Crossbills at Soldiers Delight NEA and 8 White-winged Crossbills at Druid Ridge Cemetery. In Baltimore City the highlights included the Sedge Wren at Patterson Park, and, at Fort McHenry, Brant, Red-necked Phalarope, Bank Swallow, and Saltmarsh Sparrow.

Jeff Culler: My special thanks to Jo Solem, Bonnie Ott, Joe Byrnes, and Joe Hanfman for their kind assistance and sharing over the years. Most exciting bird of 2009 was a Warbling Vireo, observed in Howard County, on December 15!



Kathy Fleming: The great thing about this year was that 7 of my 13 state birds were also life birds. Also, I was able to photograph almost all of the state birds I added.

Diane Ford: Although I couldn't wander as far as I would've liked, I still picked up some long awaited species: Loggerhead Shrike, Eared Grebe, Red-throated Loon, Hudsonian Godwit, Cackling Goose, and Grasshopper Sparrow.

Ross Geredien: I'm looking forward to hitting 300 in 2010!

Kevin Graff: It has been a great year for rarities; I ended up breaking my MD record for the year.

Jim Green: Back in January I was birding on the eastern shore with several others; someone received a phone call from Matt Hafner (back from FL for the weekend), who had just discovered a Glaucous Gull at the Salisbury County landfill. We all hightailed it to that spot and shortly we were able to see it—for me both

a State bird and as my 4000th total tick for MD. My favorite memory has to be when Kyle Carstensen (visiting from CO) and I found the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Kent County at Eastern Neck NWR. Up until then it had been a very long, dreary, non-productive day. Kyle was very impressed at the marvels of the MDOsprey and use of cell phones, which enabled more than 25 MD birders to arrive and see the STFL within a 3-hour period.

Ron Gutberlet: What a year! It was great to be along for the ride. I hear they like birding in other states, too, but I can't imagine anyone is having as much fun as we are.

Matt Hafner: This was the first year that I lived solely outside of Maryland, but I still managed to spend about 21 days in the state, hence a 2009 Year List of 260. There were many birding highlights, including joining up with Hans's Yellow Rail/Bachelor Party at Irish Grove after my brother's wedding in April, making a run at a May Big Day with six people in a minivan, and surprising a bunch of friends by showing up unannounced at the Big Sit on Assateague.

Joe Hanfman: 2009 was truly a phenomenal birding year. As a group, we saw 242 species in Howard County, breaking the old record of 236 set in 1994; I personally saw 225. It is a tribute to the many birders who shared information in a timely manner via MDOsprey, e-mails, text messages, phone calls, Howard County Rare Bird Alerts, and eBird.

Elaine Hendricks: In my third year as a certified (crazy) county lister, I added 19 species to my Maryland life list to reach 311, passed 3400 total ticks, notched 46 county closeouts, and recorded species #132 (a Surf Scoter!) for my Greenbelt Lake list.

My most memorable birds of the year would certainly include the Tufted Duck in Cambridge, the Harris's Sparrow in Columbia, and the Red-necked Phalaropes in Queen Anne's County (all were great life birds for me). My top birding experience of the year has to be the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (the one with both of its tail streamers) at Eastern Neck. The subsequent rapid response of hardcore listers was also great fun; I never thought I would be present when Jim Stasz got a state bird!

John Hubbell: Aside from meeting several personal listing goals—5000 total ticks and 200 birds in every county—the greatest experience of the year had to be Yellow Rail weekend in Somerset County. And staying ahead of Ron Gutberlet in Wicomico County.

Bill Hubick: 2009 had so many rarities that my year list (321) looks like a Big Year attempt just from hanging out with the Big Year guys. Without a doubt the coolest moment was everything coming together perfectly to find Yellow Rails during Hans Holbrook's birding/bachelor party. Another incredible moment was finally seeing my state Roseate Tern, after missing one during a 10-hour sea watch while I was getting everyone pizza! Other highlights? White-winged Crossbills in 13 counties, an excellent attempt at the MD Big Day record, hitting 350 species photographed in MD, getting all Eastern Shore counties over 200, fantastic camaraderie, and staying ahead of Ron Gutberlet in Wicomico Co.

George Jett: I've been on sabbatical trying to get my retirement in order. Check my web site to see what has happened during 2009 except a few new species photo chases: www.georgejett.net. Trinidad was a very successful trip.

Glen Lovelace: Adding a beautiful adult male Golden-winged Warbler to my home/Caroline lists was definitely a highlight.

Nancy Magnusson: I had set a few modest MD birding goals going in to 2009. With the help of a gang of Howard year listers (Joe Hanfman in particular went into maniac mode) and the folks who report to MDOsprey, I was easily able to reach those goals. Some of the highlights were going to Elliott Island for the first time, seeing a Painted Bunting in Howard County, hitting 216 for the year in Howard County (a personal best), and adding two species (White-winged Crossbill and Yellow-bellied Flycatcher) to the Schooley Mill Park list. Congrats to all those who went after one record or another—it was a lot of fun reading about and watching your exploits. The camaraderie of all the folks I bird with and run into during the course of the year is, of course, always special.

Andy Martin: I tried a Montgomery Co Big Year and was medium happy with 219. I think that Paul O'Brien's record of 229 from early 1990s is reachable by someone with right amount of skill, lots and lots of time, and a little bit of luck. The Swallow-tailed Kite at Hughes Hollow with Lydia Schindler was the best bird I ever found on my own. I'm glad Dave Czaplak birds in Montgomery and that Paul O'Brien and his Upper Watts Branch hotspot is only 10 minutes from my house!

Joel Martin: It would be hard to top January 2009, with Lark Bunting, Tufted Duck, and Barrow's Goldeneye appearing within days of each other. But one of the highlights of my year was a single county tick—Red-headed Woodpecker in Baltimore County, my home base, thanks to Keith Costley. My county listing efforts are still modest but are taking me to new and interesting parts of the state.

Carol McCollough: Although work interfered severely with birding, I still managed to add 11 species to my Maryland list in 2009. My best bird of the year had to be the Snowy Owl at Cooperative Oxford Lab (and meeting the birders who came to see it), followed by the Cambridge trifacta. The Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was also a great life bird. Banding pelicans with Dave Brinker and Harry Armistead, watching plunge-diving gannets in the mid-Bay from the deck of the Miss Kay, watching the Screech Owls' nest. . . . the list just goes on. Not all birding leads to lifers or State birds, but it all produces happy memories. Roll on 2010!



Peter Osenton: In 2009 I added 6 state birds, including Tufted Duck, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, and the White-faced Ibis Hans Holbrook found during the Assateague Big Sit. My yard list acquired one new bird with a Worm-eating Warbler. I was able to add five new birds in Howard County, three in PG County, and nine in Anne Arundel.

Michael Ostrowski: I saw a lot of cool birds in Maryland in 2009, including Neotropic Cormorant, Swallow-tailed Kite, and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, but I think the highlight was watching 75+ Black Terns feeding at Violettes Lock on 8/21.

Robert Ostrowski: My favorite year of Maryland birding yet. I met a bunch of new friends, became obsessed with county listing, and saw some amazing birds. Some of my favorites were: the Swallow-tailed Kite at Hughes Hollow, Chuck-will's-widow in PG County, self-found Orange-crowned

Listing Milestones *continued from page 9*

Warbler on Assateague, finding two Long-billed Dowitchers at Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary, and seeing two Gull-billed Terns fly by while I was sitting on the roof of my car at Vaughn North.

Tom Ostrowski: What tops my list of great experiences of 2009 is when I stumbled upon three Black-necked Stilts at Chesapeake Environmental Center. A cool bird to see anytime, but what pushes it to top of my list is that, unbeknown to me at the time, it was to be a county record for Queen



Anne's County.

Joy Peters: After two and half years of working on my county lists, it was a thrill to have my first SEVEN closeout birds in 2009—no record, but exciting nonetheless, with plenty of good birding and interesting new places discovered along the way!

Paul Pisano: My two new DC birds were not expected at all: White-winged Crossbill and Red-necked Phalarope. I'm glad I finally caught up with two MD nemeses—Lark Bunting and Tufted Duck.

Danny Poet: Year Highlights:

1) Finding the Whimbrels at Central Sod Farm in Queen Anne's County in Aug-Sept. 2) The Short-eared Owl show at Starr in Queen Anne's; 3) The Red-necked Phalarope at Central Sod farm in August; 4) Seeing a Chuck-will's-widow in early June after all these years of just hearing them; 5) The Snowy Owl in Oxford.

Derek Richardson: We added five birds to our yard list in 2009: Hermit Thrush, Mallard, Yellow-throated Vireo, Chestnut-sided Warbler, and Common Raven.

Les Roslund: A Ross's Goose dropped down onto Leeds Creek in front of our house on Christmas Eve to provide a new yard bird. It was very easy to see amongst the gaggle of 2,000 Canada Geese that were also on the creek, and it stayed through Christmas Day.

Nico Sarbanes: I set three goals at the start of 2009: 1) to get my MD life list over 300 species, 2) to get my MD year list over 250 species, and 3) to get my Photographed in MD list over 250 species. With a lot of birding (and occasional disregard for schoolwork), I succeeded in achieving all three! Many thanks to the Maryland birding community, whose kindness and generosity can be no more evident than in the dozens of individuals who drove me around in search of birds this year. Highlights included finding a flock of over 60 White-winged Crossbills up the street from my house, seeing the rare waterfowl trio at Cambridge, getting photos of my first MD Woodcock at point-blank range, sea-watching on Assateague over the summer, and, of course, getting my 300th species in Maryland, a Mourning Warbler originally found by Frode Jacobsen at Cromwell Valley Park. Getting the MOWA on the day before my 16th birthday, I joined Marshall Iliff and the O'Brien brothers in being the only MD birders to see 300 species in the state before reaching age 16 (according to Matt Hafner), fantastic birders whose company I am honored to be in.

Kurt Schwarz: While my year totals have been less than stellar, it's been a great year, with nine additions to my state list, four to the Howard County list, and one to the yard list.

Fred Shaffer: Highlights from 2009 included seeing the Tufted Duck and Barrow's Goldeneye in Cambridge, the Scissor-Tailed Flycatcher at Eastern Neck NWR, the Swallow-tailed Kite at Hughes Hollow, and

a Little Gull at Ocean City inlet, and finding the Franklin's Gull at Schoolhouse Pond.

Jeff Shenot: Highlights from 2009 included greatly expanding my appreciation and love for our home state of MD. I birded many of MD's best birding places for my first time ever and got to meet many great folks while doing so. Even though I spent less time around home, this year held fabulous surprises for my yard list, including Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Golden Eagle, Black-billed Cuckoo, Cliff Swallow, and Red Crossbill. My 2009 highlights included 40 species of waterfowl and many great lifers. Perhaps my favorite outing was a late-night effort in hopes of a Yellow Rail at Irish Grove Sanctuary; although I missed finding one, the sheer excitement and beauty of the expansive salt marsh there left an indelible impression (and a hunger to try again in 2010!).

Dan Small: Highlights include meeting many great MD birders this year and birding some great new locations around the Eastern Shore. Having only gotten into the listing thing half way through 2009, I'm looking forward to a full year in 2010.

Jo Solem: 2009 was an exceptional birding year in this small Piedmont county. Headline species included an invasion of White-winged Crossbills in winter; spring brought a cooperative Harris's Sparrow and Painted Bunting, plus a Henslow's Sparrow; Virginia Rails nested in summer. Although autumn shorebird habitat was limited, a Stilt Sandpiper created a stir as did a Clay-colored Sparrow—and a Lark Sparrow made a cameo appearance. These and other gems added up to a record-breaking year for half a dozen Howard County birders.

Jim Stasz: Oh, this is out-of-date already. I have added 5 County birds so far this year.

Warren Strobel: The year started off with a bang, with the Barrow's Goldeneye in Calvert County and the Tufted Duck at Cambridge waterfront, and kept on from there. Will never forget the Memorial Day trip to western Maryland with Dan Haas and Chris Murray; we left pre-dawn, hooked up with David Yeany at Finzel Swamp, and birded like demons. Picked up an amazing seven state birds in a single day, including several lifers such as Henslow's Sparrow and Golden-winged Warbler. And made it home in time for a holiday BBQ. Then there was the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in QA County.

Dave Webb: After a lengthy drought of new additions to either my Harford or APG lists, I finally added a new bird to each of these, Snowy Owl and Lapland Longspur, respectively. I hope I don't have to wait as long for the next additions.

Leo Weigant: Great experiences? Well, there was that Lark Bunting and Tufted Duck within days of each other. And a fine pelagic with Paul and Anita Guris last February. But probably the "most memorable" experience was following Paul's medical crisis, surgery, and not-always-smooth recovery afterward. Best "Happy Ending" of the year.



Well, that wraps it up for another year! Thanks all of you for your submissions and I wish Good Birding to each and every one of you in 2010!

—Norm Saunders
List Report Compiler

Mallards Go (for) Nuts

On Sep 26, 2009, I observed a loose flock of 22 Mallards gathered on the ground within the canopy drip-line of a Pin Oak on the grounds of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, Talbot County. Locally, Pin Oak appeared to have a bumper crop of acorns in 2009. I could see at least three Gray Squirrels harvesting oak acorns from the outer tree branches above the Mallards. Movements of the squirrels occasionally dislodged acorns other than those being directly pursued.

My attention was attracted to the unusual behavior of the Mallards (20 males, 2 females). They were standing as if at attention in an alert state with each individual well separated from any nearby individual. Suddenly one individual lunged in a dive to catch something in the grass while nearby individuals contested the sudden move and the prey. Then each duck quickly returned to its previous posture and respective position in the flock. This behavior happened several times before I realized the Mallards were vying for falling acorns.

During this observation, squirrels repeatedly came down the tree to bury acorns in the grass amongst the ducks. The ducks infrequently pecked at the squirrels in defense of their flock position, but at no time did they make the association that the squirrels were depositing at their feet the very morsel they so desired. Similarly, it appeared that the ducks made no association with the signaling-sound that a falling acorn made while glancing off leaves as it fell through the tree foliage to the ground. The duck's detection appeared to rely entirely on visual perception of an acorn ricocheting off the plumage of a nearby individual and/or as it bounced on the lawn grass within their immediate reach.

I found this activity to be unlike any previously observed Mallard behavior and it added to my knowledge of that species.

—Jan Reese
St. Michaels

MD/DC RECORDS COMMITTEE

Following its annual meeting in March, the MD/DCRC announced the following new members to a three-year term:

Walter Ellison (Kent)
Ron Gutberlet (Wicomico)
Joe Hanfman (Howard)

The committee expressed thanks to the three members who are rotating off the committee:

Stan Arnold (Anne Arundel)
Paul DeAnna (DC)
Leo Weigant (Anne Arundel)

Continuing on the committee:

Mike Bowen (Montgomery)
Gwen Brewer (Charles)
Bill Hubick (Anne Arundel)
Mikey Lutmerding (Prince George's)
Fred Shaffer (Anne Arundel)
Dave Ziolkowski (Harford)

Paul O'Brien (Montgomery) was re-elected as Chair and **Phil Davis** (Anne Arundel) was re-elected as Secretary.

BIRD BLITZ 2010

With an eye to expanding its successes of the past two summers, the Important Bird Areas program will offer two Bird Blitz training sessions this spring—one in western Maryland and one on Maryland's eastern shore. The Western training session will be held on May 11 at 7:00 PM at Frostburg State University (Compton Hall, Room 224), and the Eastern Shore training session will be held on May 28 at 7:00 PM at the Pickering Creek Audubon Center in Talbot County.

These training sessions will include instructions on all Bird Blitz survey methods and hands-on GPS training, as well as an opportunity to sign up for survey routes at Bird Blitz target sites across Maryland. Everyone interested in participating in Bird Blitz this year is urged to attend one of these sessions. Even persons who have "blitzed" in the past will find the training an excellent refresher.

In 2010, we plan to focus on 11 candidate sites in western, southern, central, and eastern Maryland. In addition, three eastern shore IBAs will be targeted in an effort to assess their global status for the globally vulnerable Saltmarsh Sparrow. Survey routes are being developed for these sites, and all necessary mapping materials will be provided to volunteers. All methods will be the same as in 2009, including the use of GPS to map primary target at-risk bird species. At-risk-species data collected by GPS during last year's surveys has already been seen as highly valuable to the Maryland DNR Natural Heritage Program.

In 2009, 42 Bird Blitz participants conducted 108 surveys at 13 sites across Maryland, leading to the identification of four new IBAs: Mattawoman Creek, Nanjemoy, Zekiah Swamp, and St. Mary's River. This was in addition to two more IBAs using 2008 Bird Blitz data: Monocacy Grasslands and Indian Springs WMA. And more IBAs based on 2009 data are in the pipeline.

Please consider signing up for Bird Blitz 2010 and making the decision to count birds for conservation this summer. Your citizen-science efforts will be a significant contribution to the conservation of Maryland birds and their habitats. To learn more about Bird Blitz 2010 or to find out how to participate in this year's efforts, visit the Bird Blitz web site at: <http://mddc.audubon.org/birds-science-education/important-bird-areas/bird-blitz-2010>.

As always, please contact me via phone or e-mail if you have any questions about the IBA Program or Bird Blitz 2010. Thank you and I hope you decide to be a part of Bird Blitz 2010!

—David Yeany II
 IBA Program Coordinator
 Audubon MD-DC
 814-221-4361
dyeany@audubon.org

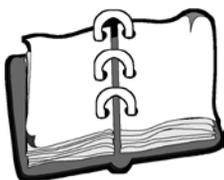
BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR BANDED PIPING PLOVERS

In an effort to determine where Piping Plovers wintering in The Bahamas are staging during migration, and breeding, 57 birds were uniquely color-marked this winter in The Bahamas for Environment Canada, with help from The Bahamas National Trust. At least four of the birds have already been resighted in the US (in FL, SC, MA and CT), and the researchers ask that all observers look for bands on any plover they come across this season.

Each bird has a black flag (band with a tab sticking out slightly) on the upper left leg, nothing on the upper right, a single color band on one lower leg, and two color bands (which can be the same color on top of each other) on the other lower leg. Colors used included: red, orange, yellow, white, light green, dark green, dark blue, and black. To see

pictures of marked Bahamas plovers, visit: <http://cvwofirstlandingspk.blogspot.com/2010/02/piping-plovers-of-bahamas.html>.

Please report all sightings to **Cheri Gratto-Trevor**, Prairie and Northern Wildlife Research Centre, Environment Canada, 115 Perimeter Road, Saskatoon, SK S7N 0X4 Canada (cheri.gratto-trevor@ec.gc.ca), noting the color and location of each band on the bird, and location and behavior of the bird (on nest or brood, foraging at migratory stop-over, etc.), as well as presumed sex of the bird, if possible.



MOS Calendar

May-June 2010

Saturday, May 1

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.

Cecil. Elk Neck SF. Traverse the quiet wooded lanes of one of Cecil's birding gems with our own Parke John. Meet 7 AM at the State Forest office parking lot off Irishtown Rd. Leader: Parke John, parke@del.net.

Frederick. Little Bennett RP. We will look for migrating warblers and other returning species in this lovely area in Montgomery Co. Call Gemma Radko, 301-514-2894, for further info.

Harford. Second Annual Epic Birding Contest. Join a team to compete for bragging rights on finding the most species at Susquehanna SP. Meet at the Rock Run Mill at 6:30 AM for team selections and rules review. Counting will begin at 6:45 AM and end at 11:30 AM. Rally celebration will occur at approximately 12 noon at the Laurapin Grill in Havre de Grace. Family members and others are welcome to join the contestants for the celebration. Coordinators are Tom Gibson (410-734-4135 or gibsonlld@aol.com) and Sue Procell (410-676-6602 or suzanne.procell@us.army.mil).

Howard/Montgomery. Pigtail and Triadelphia Reservoir. Also in conjunction with WSSC. Meet 8 AM at the Green Bridge Rd parking lot off Triadelphia Mill Rd in Howard Co. The cove is bordered on three sides by deciduous and coniferous woods. Extensive mudflats may exist,

with the possibility of shorebirds. Facilities available (rustic). Leader: Joe Hanfman, auk1844@comcast.net or 410-772-8424.

Kent. Beginner's Bird Walk at Heron Point. 2 hrs. Meet 9 AM in the main parking lot for a leisurely walk along the river looking for early spring migrants: swallows, warblers, vireos, and sparrows. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net.

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. If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com.

Sunday, May 2

Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. 2 hrs. A series of casual spring walks in Apr and May. 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.

Frederick. FRED ARCHIBALD MAY COUNT. Meet at the Sanctuary at 6 AM. Contact Bob Schaefer at 301-831-5660 or robert.schaefer@gmail.com for further info.

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.

H Indicates Field Trip

Talbot. Pocomoke Swamp. Full day. We will bird the edge of Nassawango Creek Preserve in search of migrant and resident songbirds with a focus on warblers. Help us find a new bird or two. Leader: Terry Allen, 410-822-8132. Bring lunch, drinks, and insecticide. Depart Easton Acme parking lot 6:30 AM.

Tuesday, May 4

Baltimore. Cromwell Valley Park. A series of weekly walks to follow the progress of Spring migration. Meet 8:30 AM. [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. Immediately after crossing the bridge, turn left into parking lot where we will meet at 8:30 AM. Leader: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or whitemarlin2001@yahoo.com.

MEETING. **Baltimore.** Tuesday Evening Lecture at Cylburn Mansion, 4915 Greenspring Ave. Speaker and topic TBA. Doors open at 7 PM for socializing and snacks, show starts about 7:15 PM. For more info, contact Pete Webb at 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

Montgomery. Rock Creek Park, DC. Early migrant warblers, vireos, etc. Meet 7 AM at Picnic Area #18, one-half mile below the Nature Center on Ridge Rd. Call the leader for more info and for specific directions. Limit: 8. Reservations required. Leader: Wallace Kornack, 202-338-7859.

Wednesday, May 5

Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. Scopes useful. Automatically cancelled in bad weather (rain, fog, etc.). [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

Calendar *continued from page 13*

Hwy. Take first left onto Lawrence St and turn left onto Fort Ave, continue through gateway into the park.] Meet outside the Visitor Center at 8 AM. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

MEETING. **Carroll.** Program TBA. 7:30 PM at South Carroll Senior Center, 5928 Mineral Hill Rd, Eldersburg, MD. Contact Dave Harvey at 410-795-3117 for more info.

MEETING. **Cecil.** Program TBA. 7 PM at the Elkton HS. For more info, contact President Pat Valdata, pvaldata@zoominternet.net.

M **Montgomery.** Exploring Calvert County. Sue Hamilton will guide us as we cover some of the birding hotspots of Calvert Co. Participants will meet 7 AM at the road leading to Flag Ponds. Limit: 10. Call the coordinators for detailed directions and more info. Leader: Sue Hamilton. Coordinators: Lydia Schindler, 301-977-5252, and Linda Friedland, 301-983-2136.

Thursday, May 6

MEETING. **Frederick.** *John Bjerke and Cyndie Loeper* will present a streamlined version of their well-received workshop on "Shorebird Identification," to help prepare us for the tricky ID process during shorebird migration in July and Aug. 7 PM at the C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick.

M **Patuxent.** Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail). The Prince George's Audubon Society (PGAS), along with members of the Patuxent Bird Club, will host mid-week bird walks every 1st and 3rd Thur at the newly-dedicated Luther Goldman Birding Trail. Meet 6 PM at the parking lot at Berwyn Rd and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Call 301-459-3375 for more info.

Friday, May 7

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** "All You Need to Know about Reptiles and Amphibians but Were Afraid to Ask." *Scott Smith*, MD DNR, State Herpetologist. 8 PM at Arlington

Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville.

DINNER MEETING. **Harford.** "Bald Eagle Tagging and Monitoring at Aberdeen Proving Ground" by OFC *Bart Roberts*. 6:15 PM dinner; 7 PM program at Harford Glen, 502 W Wheel Rd, Bel Air. Contact Dave Webb at 410-939-3537 or porzana@comcast.net for add'l info.

M **Montgomery.** Birding by Ear along the C&O. The emphasis is on listening so tune up your ears for this half-day canal walk. Migrant and nesting landbirds. 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 8

* MAY COUNT. **Allegany/Garrett.** To participate in Allegany Co, contact J.B. Churchill, jchurchi@atlanticbb.net, 301-689-8344 or 301-697-1223 (cell) to be assigned an area to count. To participate in Garrett Co, contact Fran Pope, fpope@gcnetmail.net or 301-334-4908.

* MAY COUNT. **Anne Arundel.** Contact (by May 5) compiler, Dotty Mumford, at 410-849-8336 for more details.

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

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

* MAY COUNT. **Carroll.** All day. Individual parties of counters will set their own schedules in their pre-arranged areas. The Tally Rally will be hosted by Jerry and Laura Tarbell at their home. Contact Bill Ellis to coordinate count locations at 443-520-8809. RSVP to Jerry and Laura Tarbell at 410-857-1109 if you will be attending the Tally. Please bring a cash 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. Must contact compiler (to be named) ahead of time for assignment to an area and for reporting forms and instructions. Note: If you are interested in volunteering to be compiler of the May Count, please contact Pat Valdata, pvaldata@zoominternet.net.

* MAY COUNT. **Frederick.** Join the crowd for our local countywide count. Contact Mike Welch at 301-685-3561 to assist.

* MAY COUNT. **Harford.** Contact Compiler, Mark Johnson, at 410-692-5978 or mark.s.johnson@us.army.mil.

* MAY COUNT. **Howard.** Call Bonnie Ott to sign up at 410-461-3361.

* MAY COUNT. **Kent.** An all-day effort to census all birds in Kent County. Join a field party or count in your neighborhood. Contact one of the leaders for details. Info: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net.

* MAY COUNT. **Montgomery.** Compiler: Andy Martin, apmartin2@comcast.net.

* MAY COUNT. **Patuxent.** Contact Fred Fallon, 410-286-8152, for info.

* MAY COUNT. **Talbot.** Please contact compiler to coordinate count areas. Compiler: Les Coble, 410-820-6165 or lescoble@hughes.net.

* MAY COUNT. **Tri-County.** Everyone can participate. Contact Ellen Lawler for details and checklists at 410-546-9056.

* MAY COUNT. **Washington.** Contact Dave Weesner, 301-302-6376, to help with the local effort.

M **Baltimore.** Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. A continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort. See

May 5 listing for directions. Meet 8 AM in Visitor Center parking lot. Cancelled in bad weather (high winds, fog, rain, etc). Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

Sunday, May 9

Baltimore. Anne Arundel. Reptiles and Amphibians at Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary and Birds, Too. Follow-up to May 7 club meeting. DNR's Scott Smith will lead with help from Chris Swarth. Meet 8 AM at the Jug Bay Visitor Center. Contact: Gerald Winegrad, 410-280-8956.

Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. 2 hrs. See May 2 listing.

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

Talbot. Nomini Farm, Trappe. Depart Easton Acme parking lot 7 AM. Co-leaders: Wayne Bell, 410-820-6002, and Paul Spitzer.

Harford. Girls-Gone-Wildflower. Enjoy Mother's Day with a walk through flower-rich areas of Susquehanna SP. Birds will also be abundant. Meet at the confluence of Deer Crk and the river on Stafford Rd at 7:30 AM. Leaders are Colleen Webster (410-459-4577 or cwebster@harford.edu), Jean Wheeler (410-638-6774 or jsweeler44@msn.com), and Lynn Feryus (1fery@verizon.net).

Monday, May 10

Baltimore. Poplar Island. Poplar I. is an environmental restoration project similar to Hart-Miller. It is reached by a 20-30 minute boat ride from Tilghman I. 2-hour bus ride around Poplar Island, stopping wherever birding looks good. Meet 6:30 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 Armetta. Coordinator: Kevin Graff, whitemarlin2001@yahoo.com.

B Indicates Field Trip

Tuesday, May 11

Baltimore. Cromwell Valley Park. See May 4 listing. Leader: Paul Noell, 410-243-2652 or myconut@verizon.net.

MEETING. **Kent.** "Bats (and Birds) of the Amazon" by *Gwen Brewer*. 7:30 PM at Wesley Hall, Heron Point, E Campus Ave, Chestertown. For info, contact Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568.

MEETING. **Patuxent.** *Keith Underwood* will present "Environmentally Sound Storm Water Management." The formal program begins at 7:30 PM, but doors open at 7 PM for informal conversation, refreshments, and exchange of birding news. Location: College Park Airport Annex. For more info, contact Fred Shaffer at glaucousgull@verizon.net.

Thursday, May 13

MEETING. **Howard.** "Temperate Zone Biases in Studies of Plumage and Song Evolution; Why Baltimore Orioles Led Us Astray," by Dr. Kevin Omland, University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Understanding the causes of bright bird coloration has been a focus of ornithology since Darwin. Using DNA sequence data to produce a family tree for the whole oriole group, the UMBC researchers challenged some long-held assumptions about bright male coloration. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at Howard Co Rec and Parks, 7210 Oakland Mills Rd, Columbia. Info: Ward Ebert, 301-490-5807.

Saturday, May 15

Anne Arundel. Southern Maryland. North Beach, Cypress Swamp, Flag Ponds, and Calvert Cliffs SP. Meet 7:30 AM at Parole P&R. Leader: Nick Nicholson, 410-353-3329.

Baltimore. Milford Mill Park, for migrant warblers, thrushes, and other song birds. Meet 7:30 AM at park. [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 into small

parking lot. Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

Cecil. Woodlawn Wildlife Area. Woodlawn, located in western Cecil Co, is a restored landfill. The Cecil Bird Club is partnering with Woodlawn to promote use of the area for birding and nature observation. Join us for a leisurely stroll around the fields and woods of this reawakening natural area. Meet 7 AM at the Woodlawn parking area for a half-day walk. Leader: Richard Donham, donhamr@zoominternet.net.

Harford. Swan Harbor Farm. Explore the wetlands and forests of this beautiful county park. Shorebirds, eagles, grebes, ducks, and rails are expected. Meet at the park at 8 AM. Leaders: Randy Robertson, 410-273-9029 or r.c.robertson@comcast.net and John Gallo.

BIG DAY. **Howard.** All-day listing extravaganza! Limit: 12. Plan to spend the day hiking around the county in search of as many species as possible. All types of footwear needed. Bring food and drinks. Brief lunch stop planned. Facilities in some spots. Call Bonnie Ott to sign up at 410-461-3361.

LITTLE BIG DAY. **Howard.** Half day. This trip is designed for beginner and intermediate birders and will not be as intense as the Big Day outing. Some of the same locations as the Big Day trip may be visited. E-mail or call the leader for reservations and details. Facilities in some spots. Leaders: Karen Darcy and Kevin Heffernan, 410-418-8731 or KJHeff@aol.com.

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. If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com.

Calendar *continued from page 15*

H Tri-County. Migrating Shorebirds. Locations TBD. Contact leader Sam Dyke at 410-742-5497 for meet time and other info. Trip leaves from Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art parking lot on S Schumaker Dr on Beaglin Park Dr in Salisbury.

Sunday, May 16

H Baltimore. Owings Mills Mall Wetland. Willow Flycatcher, Green Heron, Blue Grosbeak, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Orchard Oriole are just a few of the birds that breed in and around this mall's wetland area. Meet 7:30 AM. [From Beltway I-695 exit 19 take NW Expressway I-795 to exit 4, Owings Mills Boulevard. Stay in left lanes onto Owings Mills Blvd for Owings Mills Town Center. At first traffic light turn left onto Red Run Blvd. Pass an isolated gas station on your right, then turn left onto Mill Run Circle (an entrance into the shopping mall). Turn right to stay on Mill Run Circle, then next right, and immediate left into corner of movie theater parking lot (there's a pond downhill on the right).] Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6489 or oriolekec1@comcast.net.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. 2 hrs. See May 2 listing. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H Harford. Eden Mill Park Bird-banding Demonstration. Come see expert bird banders in action. You will see birds up close, in the hand, and perhaps have the opportunity to actually release a bird. You will also learn about the data collection process, how the birds are captured and released from the nets, and much more. This is a great experience for beginners and children. There are also nearby nature trails through woods, meadows, and along streams and a boardwalk through a marsh. Meet at the banding station on Eden Mill Road at 7:30 AM.

H Montgomery. Rock Creek Park, DC. 1/3 day. See May 4 listing. Limit: 6. LEADER: Wallace Kornack, 202-338-7859.

H Talbot. Bombay Hook, DE Shore. Leader: Charles Hopkins, 410-763-8742. Bring lunch and drink for picnic. Bring insecticide and scope if available. Depart Easton Acme parking lot 6:30 AM.

Tuesday, May 18

H Baltimore. Cromwell Valley Park. See May 4 listing. Leader: Peter Lev, 410-823-2962 or plev@comcast.net.

Wednesday, May 19

H Howard. Henryton Road. Easy walk along the river. This area of Patapsco Valley SP is nesting location for Yellow-throated, Worm-eating, and Cerulean Warblers. Meet 8:30 AM at end of Henryton Rd. Leader Joe Byrnes, 410-730-5329 or LBRoller@verizon.net, and Jeff Culler, 410-465-9006.

MEETING. **Montgomery.** "East Pacific Odyssey or . . . If It's Tuesday It Must Be Ecuador" by *Gail Mackiernan*. 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac. For more info, contact Steve Pretl at stevept@takomavillage.org.

Thursday, May 20

MEETING. **Caroline.** *Dana Limpert*: "What's Happening to our Bats?" 7:30 PM at Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton.

H Patuxent. Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail). See May 6 listing.

Saturday, May 22

H Anne Arundel. Adkins Arboretum. Native plants for birds. Meet 7 AM at Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot. Leader: Britt Slattery, co-leader: David Gillum, 410-266-8775.

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! Meet 8 AM at the White House (27 S Patterson Park Ave). Leader: Dave Curson, 410-675-4963.

H Baltimore. DE Bay. Full-day trip for a wide variety of migrating shorebirds. Possible spectacular assemblage of breeding-plumage turnstones, Sanderlings, and Red Knots. Curlew Sandpiper possible. Be prepared for possible heat and biting insects. Minimal walking involved. Scopes very useful. Bring a lunch. Meet 7 AM at Nursery Rd P&R, I-695, Exit 8. Alternatively, meet 9:15 AM at the Bombay Hook Visitor Center lot. Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

H Cecil. DE Bay Shorebird Migration. Join Trip Leader Sean "Bird Dog" McCandless for a full day tour of the best shorebird spots on the DE Bayshore. The trip is timed to coincide with the peak of shorebird migration, and the various refuges along the DE River and Bay present a spectacle of thousands of shorebirds—a sight (and sound) not to be missed. Meet near Dunkin' Donuts in Big Elk Mall, intersection of Rtes 40 and 213 in Elkton, at 8 AM. Be prepared to carpool. Bring lunch, snacks, and drink and a scope if you have one. Wear sturdy shoes, for possible muddy conditions. Leader: Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

H Frederick. Soldiers Delight. We're planning a new field trip to this serpentine barren in western Baltimore Co where we will seek out warblers, flycatchers, and tanagers as spring migration slows down and breeding season gets under way. Our leader will be Keith Costley from the Baltimore Bird Club. Contact Kathy Calvert to find out where and when we will meet at 301-698-1298.

H Kent. DE Bay Shorebirds and Horseshoe Crabs. The annual May gathering of northbound shorebirds feeding on Horseshoe Crab eggs on the shores of Delaware Bay is a migration spectacle. Full day, bring lunch. Meet 8 AM at Dollar General parking lot, Chestertown. Contact leaders for meeting time. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@crosslink.net.

Montgomery/Howard. Hot Spots for Red Knots. Full day. Joint trip with Howard Co. We will start at 8:30 AM at the Visitor Center for Prime Hook NWR and work our way north along the DE Bay. Also on the itinerary will be the DuPont Nature Center at Mispillion Lighthouse, a wonderful facility that offers great views of Red Knots and other shorebirds. We will go until dark or exhaustion, whichever comes first. Bring binoculars, lunch and snacks, water, sunscreen, and plenty of insect repellent. Bring scopes if you got 'em. Trip is limited to 12 persons/3 vehicles per chapter. Reservations required. For reservations and info, contact leaders, Cyndie Loeper, cyndieloeper@comcast.net or 301-535-8584, Kurt Schwarz, krschwa1@comcast.net or 410-461-1643 before 8 PM, and Peter Osenton, 410-799-8584, roadwarrior71@verizon.net.

Patuxent. Bombay Hook NWR, DE. Meet at Bowie P&R at 7 AM. Witness the dramatic concentration of shorebirds feeding on horseshoe crab eggs at a time when egg-laying is maximized. Contact Fred Fallon for reservations at 410-286-8152.

Sunday, May 23

Baltimore. Cylburn Self-guided Walk. 2 hrs. See May 2 listing. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

Harford. Harford Glen. Always a spring favorite, the woods and wetlands of Plumtree Run and Winters Run are full of great birdlife, from eagles and hawks to shorebirds, waterfowl, and warblers. Meet at the upper parking lot of Harford Glen at 7 AM. Leaders: Lynn Davis, 410-569-0504 or lynnd@iximd.com, and Ruth Bergstrom.

Howard. Patapsco Shrubland. We'll look for warblers, vireos, thrushes, and other edge species. Meet 7:30 AM at 735 River Rd (up long drive, take right-hand split, and park by house). Leader: Felicia Lovelett, 410-489-7169 or c5nest@gmail.com.

Talbot. Adkins Arboretum.

Leader: Dave Palmer, 410-829-3376. Depart Easton Acme parking lot 7 AM OR meet at Tuckahoe Lake parking lot at 8 AM.

Monday, May 24

MEETING. **Tri-County.** "Birding in Papua, New Guinea" by *Bill Fintel*. 7 PM at Asbury Methodist Church, Fox Rm, south entrance, Camden Ave, Salisbury.

Tuesday, May 25

Baltimore. Cromwell Valley Park. See May 4 listing. Leader: Patsy Perlman, 410-466-3998 or pattony2@gmail.com.

Friday, May 28

Baltimore. Whip-poor-wills at Soldiers Delight. Come and assist with our annual count of calling "whips" at the best site for this species in Baltimore Co. We will stay until after dark and finish by 10:15 PM. Meet 8 PM at Soldiers Delight. [From I-695 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: David Curson, 410-675-4963.

Saturday, May 29

Harford. Bombay Hook NWR, DE. The premier location on the East Coast for shorebird migration. Join leaders Randy Robertson (410-273-9029 or r.c.robertson@comcast.net) and Russ Kovach (410-457-4274 or Russell.kovach@gmail.com) to search for the rare and the familiar. Meet at 7 AM at the 155/95 P&R.

Sunday, May 30

Anne Arundel. DE Bay. Horseshoe crabs, shorebirds, gulls, etc. Meet 7:45 AM at Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot. Bring lunch. Leader: Gerald Winegrad, 410-280-8956. We will stop for dinner on the way home.

Talbot. Ferry Neck for late migrants and nesting landbirds. Leader: Les Coble, 410-820-6165. Breakfast: Priscilla and Paul Thut. Depart Easton Acme parking lot 7 AM.

Monday, May 31

Harford. Upper Deer Creek Valley. Explore the streams and ponds of NW Harford Co and visit the World Famous Bradenbaugh Flats. Expect to see warblers, Horned Lark, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Willow Flycatcher. Meet at the northern end of Madonna Rd where it crosses Deer Creek at Hidden Valley at 7 AM. Leader: Dennis Kirkwood, 410-692-5905 or dkirkw@verizon.net.

Thursday, June 3

ANNUAL PICNIC. **Frederick.** We are trying a new location this year—Utica Park, north of Frederick. Bring binoculars, a dish to share, plate, drink, and utensils. We'll meet at 6 PM for birding and eats.

Saturday, June 5

Howard. Dragonfly Count. To sign up and get more information, contact June Tveekrem, 410-715-3979, June@SouthernSpreadwing.com.

MOS BOARD MEETING. 10 AM at Swan Harbor, Havre de Grace. Contact Janet Shields, MOS Secretary at janetbill@prodigy.net for add'l info.

Sunday, June 6

Frederick. Western Maryland. Mike Welch will lead us to some hot spots in western MD to look for some of the local breeders, including Least and Alder Flycatchers, Golden-winged and lots of other warblers, and Henslow's Sparrow. Call Mike at 301-874-5828 for info.

Harford. Conowingo Dam. A great place in Harford to see eagles and orioles as well as Prothonotary Warblers. Meet at the new observation platform close to the dam at 7 AM. Leader: Les Eastman, 410-734-6969 or les@birdtreks.com.

ANNUAL CLUB PICNIC. **Kent.** 5 PM. Join us for a potluck picnic at the Lodge at Eastern Neck NWR. Includes a short meeting to elect officers for next year and gather speaker and trip suggestions from members. Contact Nancy Martin/Walter Ellison at 410-778-9568 or rossgull@crosslink.net for more details.

Tuesday, June 8

PLANNING MEETING. **Allegany/Garrett.** 7 PM at the Carey Run Sanctuary.

MEETING. **Patuxent.** Members' Night. The formal program begins at 7:30 PM, but doors open at 7 PM for informal conversation, refreshments, and exchange of birding news. Location: College Park Airport Annex. For more info, contact Fred Shaffer at glaucousgull@verizon.net.

Thursday, June 10

PLANNING MEETING. **Frederick.** Everyone please come to our 2009-2010 planning meeting and volunteer to give a program or lead a field trip. We need new ideas and suggestions. Meet at 7 PM at Kathy Calvert's house. Call Kathy at 301-698-1298 for info and directions.

Friday-Sunday, June 11-13

MOS 2010 ANNUAL CONFERENCE. Washington College, Chestertown, MD. Join your fellow birders from across the state for the MOS Annual Conference, featuring field trips, workshops, social events, business meeting, and special guest speaker for the gala banquet. See page 1.

Saturday, June 12

Cecil. Birding by Kayak. Explore the waters of the Elkton marshes with Sean McCandless. This is a good way to search for rails and shorebirds as well as terns during the high point of the migration season. Meet 7 AM at Brownie's Shore (Elk River Park Boat Ramp), off Old Field Point Rd. Bring your own kayak and paddle. Also, of course, bring and wear a life preserver. Leader: Sean "Bird Dog" McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

Monday, June 14

Allegany/Garrett. Green Ridge SF. Nightbird Trip (rain date June 15). Explore the night life of this beautiful state forest. This is one of the state's hotspots for Whip-poor-wills and they should be singing non-stop on this moonlit evening. Barred Owls are likely and we will look for other

H Indicates Field Trip

nightbirds as well. Meet 8 PM at the SF's HQ (exit 64 off of I-68). Reservations required. Please call leader, Gwen Brewer, at 301-752-9239 by June 10 if you plan to attend.

Saturday, June 19

H Anne Arundel. Chino Farms. Grasshopper Sparrows and Dickcissels. Meet 7 AM at Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot. Leader: Doug Gill; co-leader: David Gillum, 410-266-8775.

H Harford. Railing at Swan Harbor. Join this search for three rail species that are always special sightings due to their reclusive nature. Owls will also be on the agenda. Meet at the park at 7:30 PM. Leader is Dave Ziolkowski, 443-299-8453 or dzjolkowski@yahoo.com.

Saturday, June 26

H Anne Arundel. Patuxent River Park Boat Trip for Osprey Banding. Meet 7:45 AM at Parole P&R. Leader: David Gillum, 410-266-8775. \$6 per person fee.

H Harford. Churchville Farm Tour. Visit two farms that support great bird habitat. Expect meadowlarks, woodpeckers, Field Sparrow, and Yellow-breasted Chat. Meet at the Churchville Rec Center off Glenville Rd at 7 AM. Leader: Dave Webb, 410-939-3537 or porzana@comcast.net.

Friday, July 9

SUMMER SOCIAL AND MEETING. **Harford.** "Rise and Conquer: The Ravens of Baltimore" by *Amy Eveleth*, The MD Zoo in Baltimore. 6:15 PM at Anita Leight Estuary Center. Contact Dave Webb at 410-939-3537 or porzana@comcast.net for additional info.

Saturday, July 17

H Cecil. Summer at Fair Hill. Part of our "Seasons at Fair Hill" series. Summer at Fair Hill means specialty breeding birds: Scarlet Tanager, Veery, Wood Thrush, Ovenbird, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-winged Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Bobolinks,

and more! Of course, the scenery at Fair Hill can't be beat--lush woods, rolling hills, extensive hayfields, and crystal-clear streams. Be prepared for a longish hike over trails that are narrow and may be steep and muddy in places. Meet 7 AM at the Covered Bridge parking lot at Fair Hill. Parking fee; honor system in use. Bring small bills to pay fee (\$3 MD residents; \$4 out-of-state visitors). Wear shoes or boots good for walking. Leader: Richard Donham, donhamr@zoominternet.net.

Sunday, July 18

H Harford. Bombay Hook NWR, DE. Fall migration for shorebirds is in full swing and something rare always shows up. Meet at 7 AM at the 155/95 P&R. Leaders are Dave Larkin, 410-569-8319 or larkin3001@comcast.net, and Tom Gibson.

Saturday, July 24

PICNIC. **Carroll.** Summer Picnic at Amy Hoffman's. Another chance to talk birds, eat, drink, and have fun with fellow birders. RSVP to Amy Hoffman, 410-549-3598, if you plan to attend.

H Harford. Hummingbird Banding. See our smallest birds up close as host Les Eastman and bander Bruce Peterjohn trap and band Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. Meet 8:30 AM at the Eastman residence. Contact Les for directions at 410-734-6969 or les@birdtreks.com.

H Montgomery. DE Coastal Areas: Bombay Hook, Little Creek, Logan Tract. Join us for a full day joint trip with ANS. Shorebirds, marsh birds, and some songbirds. Bring packed lunch and drinks. Meet 8 AM at Bombay Hook Visitor Center parking lot. For reservations and more info, contact Leader: John Bjerke, 240-401-1643. Cyndie Loeper will co-lead.

Tuesday, July 27

H Howard. Poplar Island. Poplar Island is an environmental restoration project similar to Hart-Miller. When completed, it will provide

Calendar *continued from page 17*

approximately 570 acres of wetland and 570 acres of upland habitat. It is reached by a 20-30 minute boat ride from Tilghman I. Scopes helpful. Facilities available. Reservations required. Contact the coordinator. Limit: 24. Leader: Robin Armetta. Coordinator: Joe Hanfman, auk1844@comcast.net, 410-772-8424.

Saturday, July 31

H Harford. Conowingo Dam. Search for terns, gulls, warblers, and shorebirds along the Susquehanna. Meet at the new observation deck near the dam at 7:30 AM. Leader: Russ Kovach, 410-457-4274 or Russell.kovach@gmail.com.

Wednesday, August 4

H Talbot. Poplar Island. Meet at Tilghman Boat Dock 8:45 AM. Leader: Charles Hopkins, 410-763-8742. Registration required. Boat leaves PROMPTLY at 9 AM. Returns at approx. 1 PM.

Saturday, August 21

H Baltimore. DE Bay. Full-day trip for herons and a wide variety

of migrating shorebirds, including avocets. See May 22 listing. Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

H Cecil. Turkey Point Migrants. Get ready for fall migration with a trip to Elk Neck for early migrant songbirds. Be prepared for a round-trip hike to the Point, a distance of about two miles. The pace will be leisurely. Most of the walking is on a gravel road with good footing, but there are hilly sections. Wear comfortable shoes/boots for walking. Bring drinks and/or snacks. Meet 7 AM at Turkey Point parking lot. [From North East, take Rte 272 south about 11 miles.] Trip leader: Parke John, parke@del.net.

Sunday, August 22

H Harford. Dragonflies, Butterflies, and Birds. Join leaders Terry Haley (terry.haley@charming.com) and Jean Wheeler (jswheeler44@msn.com; 410-838-6774) at 9 AM as they search for some of nature's most beautiful flying critters at the habitat-diverse HCPS environmental education center, Harford Glen.

Harford Glen is located at the west end of Wheel Rd off of Rte 24. Meet in the upper parking lot.

Saturday, August 28

H Harford. Kayak Trip at the Bosley Conservancy. Meet at the Bosley parking lot at the north end of Perry Ave in Edgewood. Join staff from the Anita Leight Center and HBC and enjoy the final four hours of daylight paddling the calm waters of the Conservancy and Otter Point Crk. Expect a wide variety of species, including herons, shorebirds, migrant songbirds, and much more. One and two person kayaks and gear will be provided by the Anita C. Leight Estuary Center for \$8 per person. No BYO kayaks. If you have never kayaked before, do not worry. There will be people there to help you. It is easy and the course we will be following will be well suited to beginners and experts alike. Bring a picnic meal and drinks. Contact the leader, Dave Webb at 410-939-3537 or porzana@comcast.net, for details and reservations. Lynn Feryus will assist with bird identification.

STEVE SIMON

It is with sadness I report the passing of Steve Simon on April 11 at Broadmead in Baltimore County. Steve was the last surviving charter member of MOS. I believe he joined at the age of 15 when the organization was created in 1945. Steve was a mentor for some of us in Baltimore County decades ago. He had a keen ear for bird sounds and a subtle wit that made birding with him a delight. He continued active birding into his sixties, including some of the long hikes at Hart-Miller, before health issues forced him to move to Broadmead. Last year he donated the last of his nature books to MOS and some of you may have purchased one at the silent auction at the MOS conference.

—Bob Ringler

NOT TOO LATE FOR WORKSHOPS

The deadline to sign up for the **MOS-sponsored Student and Educator Birding Workshops** has been extended to May 7, and scholarship information is available. The two programs, which will run in parallel from June 20 to 25, will take place at Washington College in Chestertown. The two groups will share field experiences but each will have its own classroom sessions.

Information and application materials can be found at Maryland Birds and Bird Habitats; for the student program, go to www.mdbirds.org/activities/youth.html, for the educator program, www.mdbirds.org/education/birdstudy/careers.html.

—George Radcliffe
radclifg@gmail.com

LAST CALL

...for **Chapter and Committee Annual Reports**. Submit them to President Wayne Bell (wbell2@washcoll.edu) by May 15.

...for **Research Proposals**. Grants (generally no more than \$2,000) are available for ornithological research in the state of Maryland. Applications are due by June 1. Notification of awards will be made in about 8 weeks. For info, contact David Ziolkowski, 443-299-8453.

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

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BOOK REVIEW

A Guide to the Birds of East Africa. A Novel, by **Nicolas Drayson** • *Mariner Books, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 2009.* Paperback \$13.95.



It's not often that birders get to star in a novel, but birders are front and center in this "Guide." Opening with the Tuesday morning birdwalk of the East African Ornithological Society in Nairobi, this charming little romance is built around a zany week-long competition to find the most bird species. To the winner belongs the privilege of asking the lovely Rose (she leads those birdwalks) to the annual Hunt Club ball.

Nicholas Drayson, a naturalist and author, was raised in England and resides in Australia, but he also lived for two years in Nairobi and observed it well. He anchors his novel, not among the British expats who people East African tales of the days of Lord Delamere and "Happy Valley," but in the highly structured society of Nairobi's well-to-do East Indians. These gentlemen hang out at the Asadi Club, where they play billiards, drink Tusker beer, and make book on the slightest of disagreements.

Our hero, Mr. Malik, is a sweet, self-effacing widower who has, for the past three years, "been passionately [but secretly] in love" with Rose. He's been gathering his courage to invite Rose to the ball, when his schooldays nemesis, Harry Kahn—a flashy, four-time divorced, good-time Charlie—returns to town. Harry also plans to ask Rose to the ball.

With the enthusiastic concurrence of the Asadi Club, a wager is arranged, rules are set, and Mr. Malik and Harry Kahn face off. Each night they must return to the club to present their day's tally of new species. But while Harry Kahn has buckets of money to throw at quick flights to the coast or to the mountains, and a

couple of Aussie birders to back him up, the conscientious Mr. Malik not only must leave time for his regular "commitments" but also has to contend with a few extraordinary setbacks, including car theft and even Somali raiders.

The supporting cast is engaging: "Tiger" Singh, lawyer and Asadi Club leader, with a fondness for the Latin phrase; Benjamin, Mr. Malik's young gardener, with a fondness for words and for birds; and the lovely Rose, with an unlikely fondness for the Twist and a devotion to Kenya.

The book is not all fluff; any number of serious issues—AIDS, homophobia, corruption—flow beneath the surface. In fact, in the author's opinion, this book is really about "the goodness of people and the triumph of that goodness." And the book is funny; the author wittily skewers corrupt officials, do-gooder first world nations, even ecotourists. He also works in some delightful set pieces on birds: hoopoe, ostrich, Great Blue Turaco.

Not all the birding details ring true. For readers attuned to the intensity of a Maryland Big Year or Big Day, the contestants seem fairly clueless, their approaches to birdfinding haphazard and even somewhat lackadaisical. The contest rules ban not only tapes but also cameras. And some reviewers have faulted the ornithology (a species or two in the wrong habitat).

Such discrepancies don't much matter, though. The sprightly story draws you in and moves you quickly along. This "Guide" is a fun read—even more so for anyone lucky enough to have birded in East Africa.

—*Lydia Schindler*
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