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The Maryland Yellowthroat

May 2021



Photo by Carol Swan

Gerald Winegrad and Carol Swan encountered this melee of tundra swans and assorted other waterfowl during a winter foray. Read their informative account in the Anne Arundel County summary in Chapter Chatter

In this Issue

President's Corner	Page 3	MBCP Partnership Update	Page 4
MOS Hog Island Scholarship Update	Page 4	Maryland Birds Through Time Introducing a New Series	Page 5
What One Window Can Do	Page 6	"The Falconer" Film Profile	Page 7
MOS Sanctuaries Update	Page 8	My Tribute to Dr. Don Messersmith	Page 12
Lyme Disease Awareness and Prevention	Page 15	Birding In Baker Park	Page 16
What Happened to the Quail?	Page 18	Chapter Chatter	Page 20
Our Gem of a Refuge	Page 26	Hogchokers, Popes and Pigwitches	Page 26

The Maryland Yellowthroat
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Editor's Note

As you read these words, a number of scientists and natural resource managers are out there studying the ecology, behavior, distribution, and current population status of our state birds. What projects do they have underway, and what are they discovering? What is the latest news? To help in finding the individuals who can tell us, Marcia Watson, Gabriel Foley, and Sam Droege (who else?) forwarded names of some knowledgeable experts whom we would want to hear from. Now, three of the individuals they recommended have graciously contributed articles to this issue. Bob Long, an upland game manager for the Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources gives us an update on the status of the bobwhite and what is being done to address its recent population decline. And we are very excited to be inaugurating a series on the population trends of selected Maryland birds, as revealed by recent data from the Breeding Bird Survey. The authors taking this on are Dave Ziolkowski and John Sauer, scientists at the U.S. Geological Survey. Hopefully, other experts will also want to share their insights with those, namely the MOS members, who can truly appreciate their efforts, enjoy learning their discoveries, and support and advocate for their work.

Meanwhile, the core articles are, as always, updates from some of the stalwarts who are keeping MOS going. Jean Wheeler, once again in the "Chapter Chatter," fills us in on what our members have been up to as of late. Marcia Watson provides several items of news from her Sanctuary Committee, including updates on the members donating their time and efforts into protecting and maintaining the MOS sanctuaries for the enjoyment of us all. Anna Urciolo informs us who the latest recipients of the MOS Hog Island Scholarships are (congratulations!). And Chris Eberly tells us the latest from the Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership (MBCP).

Other members are contributing to this issue, as well. Past MOS president Barbara Johnson gives us a stirring tribute to another long-time, not to say legendary, member, Don Messersmith. What a fascinating career and what a unique repository of MOS history. Katherine Pauer provides an account of her recent visit to the Patuxent Research Refuge North Tract, which is now under threat from a scheme to route a MAGLEV high-speed track through the grounds. (See Marcia Watson's article describing this menace in the February, 2021 Yellowthroat.) Bob Lauer, in turn, describes a comparatively little-known birding site, Baker Park in downtown Frederick, readily accessible from I 270, that harbors a surprising variety of birds. (If you're going to follow in their footsteps, read Brian Prendergast's article on Lyme Disease first). Isabelle Pardew tells us about the dramatic rescue and rehabilitation of a Red-tailed Hawk that had collided with a window on the Towson University campus. And, on the last pages, you will find Harry Armistead's rumination on the quirky local names of some of our state birds. Most have been left in the dust by our modern field guides, but Harry has been able to resurrect them.

Finally, deepest thanks to Susan Pardew for taking on the thankless job of Yellowthroat copy editor. I wish you all could see how incredibly careful, eagle-eyed, and patient she is.

Errata

In the print edition of the February 2021 Yellowthroat, the photo of a Whooper Swan on page 11 was misattributed. The photographer was David Fleischmann

Also in the print edition, the MOS member honored in the obituary on page 16, Linda Kay Griggs Baker, was misidentified on the title page

President's Corner

Spring has sprung, and the ongoing vaccination of the American public offers new hope that we will soon be able to gather comfortably in chapter meetings and to walk together on field trips. It has been a long year without being with our fellow birders except through Zoom meetings. Looking ahead to the fall, MOS is anticipating having an in-person board meeting in September, our first since March of 2020, and I expect that local chapters will also start holding their meetings in person next fall. At the same time, we will be putting our experience with virtual meetings to good use; the MOS board meetings in the future will be both in-person and virtual, allowing board members from any corner of the state to attend. These hybrid meetings will help keep the MOS community together without spending time and fuel driving across the state. I'd also like to see the local chapters work towards putting their in-person chapter meetings on-line. It would be an opportunity to make our presentations available to a wider audience, not only to those local chapter members who are unable to attend the meetings in person but also to members of other chapters and to people outside of MOS.

Yet at the same time as I write this, the number of COVID cases here in Maryland and elsewhere in the country has started once again to rise, no doubt due to the increased prevalence of more contagious variants. While I am optimistic over the longer term, we need to continue to be careful over the short term. This means virtual meetings for the rest of the spring, and limitations on the number of people on a field trip. Our convention, originally planned for May in Cumberland, has been replaced by a virtual convention in June; May, and even June, would have been too soon for an in-person event. The uncertainties of the course of the pandemic make it very difficult to plan ahead.

One of the main attractions to our conventions is the field trip schedule, which gives us a chance to go birding in a different part of the state in the company of our birding friends. How does one replicate that in a virtual convention? Not only do we have to worry about COVID, but those attending the virtual convention will be scattered across the state rather than in a single location. What the convention committee has decided to do is to replace the guided field trips with "Do It Yourself" birding trips, in conjunction with the main theme of the convention, the Breeding Birds of Maryland. Instead of field trips planned by the committee, the attendees can go birding in places of their choice. To help spice things up, there will be prizes awarded in several categories related to the theme of the Breeding Birds of Maryland. Suggestions for where to go can be found on the convention website (www.mosconvention.org), but because of the pandemic, you should plan your trips with COVID safety foremost in mind. If you are uncomfortable with traveling, then bird solo or safely distanced in your neighborhood. If you are two weeks past your vaccination, then perhaps you might feel comfortably safe with a weekend in far Western Maryland, or a day on the Eastern Shore, maybe even in the company with other vaccinated birders. Because of the

uncertainties surrounding the state of the pandemic, we will all need to be flexible and maintain a certain spontaneity. But spontaneity requires preparation, so you should be making plans now!

In addition to helping plan the virtual convention, I have been looking at the process by which MOS budget is set. In the last issue of the Yellowthroat, I mentioned that one of the things that I wanted to do as president is to take an in-depth look at our activities to make sure that we aren't just doing things in a certain way because we've always done them that way. The way in which MOS allocates money is a perfect example of a process that has worked well in the past but no longer really suits the needs of the organization. Parts of the budgeting process work well. In particular, the normal operating expenses - the cost of the Yellowthroat, MD Birdlife, the website, insurance, audit, etc. - are well understood, and the budgeting process for the operating expenses works well. Other parts, not so much. The normal sanctuary expenses are pretty consistent, but there are large, expensive repairs that crop up every few years, such as the new roof on Carey Run, which don't fit neatly into the current budget process. The Research and Scholarship committees have the problem that forecasting the number of research grants and scholarships is hard to do, since they depend on how many applications there are. Some years there are no applications for research grants, yet in other years, we have to turn away good proposals because the budget has been allocated already. Worst of all, there is money that is set aside for statewide education of our members (e.g., programs on bird identification), yet there is no activity in this area (we have no volunteers to lead the programs), and so the money goes unused. The good news is that MOS is well-positioned financially, in part because the current budgeting process is so conservative. But it is also very inflexible, and there is no easy way to allocate money to new endeavors.

One new area where we may want to allocate money to is in outreach to birders from underserved populations in Maryland. At the March Board meeting, a statement on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) was adopted. This statement can be seen on our website at

<https://mdbirds.org/wp-content/uploads/>

[MOS-Declaration-on-EDI.pdf](#). Additionally, a Committee on EDI was formed, chaired by Ross Geredien, with the intention of developing approaches for MOS to reach out to birders who aren't currently part of the MOS community and don't feel welcome within MOS. Outreach to the underserved populations and others is important to the future of MOS. Our membership has remained static, even as the popularity of birding in Maryland has increased tremendously. If you would like to be part of the Committee on EDI, please let me know.

John McKitterick

john.mckitterick@mdbirds.org

President, MOS

Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership leaps into Spring

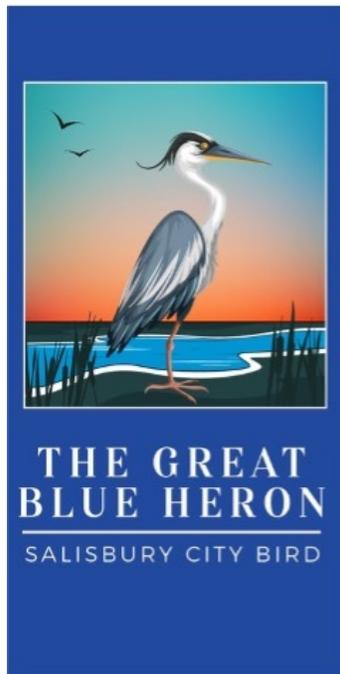
The 2020 field season for bird monitoring fell victim to COVID restrictions. We are optimistic that 2021 will bring better news. While our plans to expand the scope of IBA monitoring will have to wait until at least next year, we are hoping to resume our existing monitoring this May. Bald Eagle nest monitoring has picked up this year, albeit not yet at full strength. If you are looking a good birding opportunity, the Cecil County Green Infrastructure Plan monitoring

(<https://marylandbirds.org/cecil-county-ebird-project>) is looking for you! There are no protocols to follow or time of day restrictions. The only requirement is to use eBird and record everything you encounter. Since your eBird checklist is the official data sheet there is also no need to check in with MBCP. Nighttime visits are encouraged to help document owls and nightjars.

Salisbury became the most recent Bird City Maryland community (<https://marylandbirds.org/bird-city-maryland>), and the first on the Eastern Shore. The community voted on their City Bird. The Great Blue Heron topped the list of five candidate species. The application process is underway for a few additional cities and towns. If your community is interested in becoming a Bird City, visit our website or contact birdcity@marylandbirds.org.

The Board of the nonprofit Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership now has a year of meetings under its belt. The process of getting all the necessary documents, procedures, and processes in place is nearly complete. The Advisory Council, which replaces the previous Steering Committee, will have its first meeting in the next month or so. The role of the Advisory Council is to guide MBCP in its prioritization of research, conservation, and implementation goals, with an emphasis on filling niches in Maryland bird conservation that remain vacant. Forest

conservation is an important area where MBCP can be a value-added partner. Discussions with The Nature Conservancy are in progress regarding forest conservation priorities, and we are working with the Audubon Naturalist Society on a meadow and grassland focus.



The Farmland Raptor Program (<https://marylandbirds.org/farmland-raptors>) is underway for nesting Barn Owls and is ready for the American Kestrel nesting season. We are getting submissions for chimneys and towers of nesting and roosting Chimney Swifts. A brand-new swift tower will be dedicated at Kinder Farm Park this spring. Construction and installation were completed by Friends of Kinder Farm Park and Park personnel with funding and assistance from the Anne Arundel Bird Club. Our map of swift chimneys and towers is taking form (<https://marylandbirds.org/chimney-swifts>). Please contribute information on known nesting chimneys and towers!

Chris Eberly director@marylandbirds.org

Hog Island MOS Scholarship Update

The Hog Island Audubon Camp is celebrating its 80th year of education, with MOS having supported scholarships to this camp for many years. Essentially, the recipients work with students in schools or nature centers across Maryland.

Unfortunately, the 2020 camp was canceled due to the 'pandemic', yet all of the seven scholarships awarded have been transferred to this year's camp, which will be held, albeit with several changes. The number of people attending the workshops has been reduced by 40%, and an accounting of last year's campers needed to be compiled before new acceptances were offered for 2021.

Six of our 2020 MOS scholarship recipients will be able to participate in several workshops: Erin Eve (Howard County Park Ranger); Stacey Flynn (Media Specialist at Great Seneca Creek Elementary School); Kathryn Fuller (William S. Schmidt Outdoor Education Center—outdoor educator/environmental resource teacher); April Eve Hill (Elementary teacher and co-director Cylburn Arboretum Summer Nature Camp); Jessica Jeannetta (Naturalist at Oregon Ridge Nature Center); and Alison Moore (Educator/administrator elementary school). Additionally, one workshop has been rescheduled to another date, and one of our recipients, Richard Perry, is unable to attend.

We then awarded scholarships to six recipients for 2021, with one withdrawal due to concerns about the 'pandemic.' The five who will be attending are: Sarah Kempfer (Education Coordinator at Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary); Matthew Love (High School Environmental Science teacher); Scott McDaniel (Executive Director of the Susquehanna Wildlife Society); Renate Owen (Volunteer at Bear Branch Nature Center and Hashawha Environmental Center); and Adam Zurgable (Volunteer at Oregon Ridge Nature Center).

Congratulations to all of the Hog Island campers and also to the MOS chapters and colleagues for their sincere recommendations.

Anna Urciolo

Chair, MOS Scholarship Committee

Maryland Birds Through Time Series—NEW!

Dave Ziolkowski and John Sauer



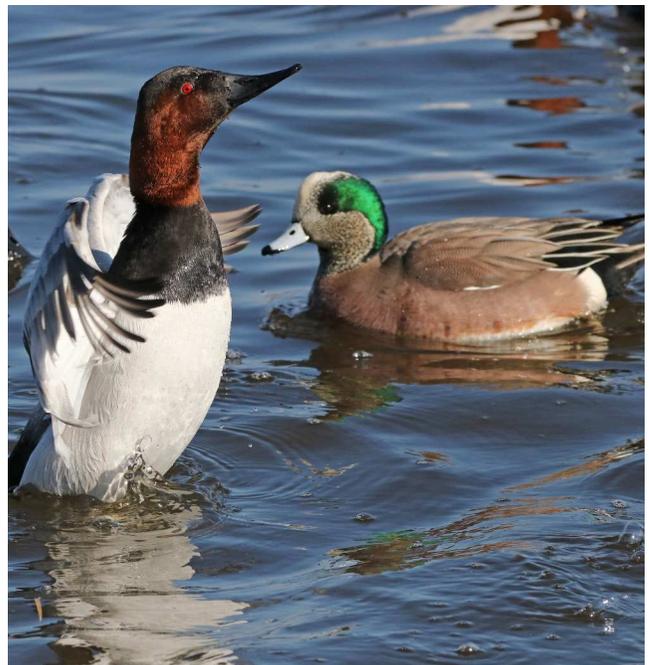
We welcome Yellowthroat readers to a brand, new open-ended series featuring species spotlights that tell a tale—that of how the birds of Maryland have fared throughout time.

These essays will be relatable within a common context of the half-century long record of North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) results. The BBS was hatched right here in Maryland in the early 1960's and quickly developed wings, ranging from coast to coast within just three years, thus occupying a lofty perch as the cornerstone of continental bird conservation and management for hundreds of bird species in the U.S. and Canada. The brainchild of one of MOS's most celebrated members, the indomitable, indefatigable, and greatly missed Chandler Robbins, who had an idea back in the '60's, of a volunteer-based, roadside point-count program. How novel was that? Well, if it's any litmus, the first question Chan received upon introducing his idea at a 1964 Patuxent Bird Club meeting was, "Can a car really start and stop 50 times like that?" Indeed they can, and a flock of Maryland birders proved it a year later logging countless hours in testing Chan's plan to make sure it met success—many people who now occupy the hallowed halls of Maryland birding lore, and on whose shoulders the MOS organization stands, were in that very flock!

Today, the BBS may be most recognizable for its contributions at the continental scale, fueling findings like the recent '3 Billion Birds' report, but the survey addresses changes at the state level as well. Many have seen BBS results in the Maryland Breeding Bird Atlases, and it is worth highlighting the numerous ways that the BBS contributes to our understanding of local and regional bird populations. My colleague and co-author, John Sauer, and I have the great pleasure of addressing that very issue in this series. Much has been written about the BBS already, so in anticipation, we kindly direct readers to a straightforward, illustrated overview of the history of the BBS, how it works, and the products it produces: (www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/bbsnews/Pubs/Birding-Article.pdf). And, for those curious about where the BBS is heading in the future, check out the "*Strategic Plan for the North American Breeding Bird Survey, 2020–30*" (<https://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/1466/cir1466.pdf>). Stay tuned for our first installment in the next Yellowthroat! Cheers!

Illustration by Isabelle Pardew

Photo of Canvasback and
American Wigeon by Carol Swan



What One Window Can Do

Isabelle Pardew

Photos by Kathy Woods

It was a beautiful November evening of last year—the sun beginning to cast its shadow earlier than past days, a chill permeating the air just a bit more—a perfect night for cruising the skies, or relaxing on a branch, or just hanging out—perfect conditions. Yet, when you think about it, perfect conditions for what, exactly? Yes, a bird strike. Again. On the Towson University campus. Near the West Village Commons. Again. Windows and birds. A disaster waiting to happen, and it did in a big way on this night under a beautiful sky.



As the founder and president of Lights Out TU, a Towson University Club that monitors campus for bird strikes (with the guidance and aid of Lights Out Baltimore, as well), I received a message from Kathy Woods of Phoenix Wildlife Center who had been contacted by one of the security officers in reference to a Red-tailed Hawk and a window strike on campus—a bird strike against the large east-facing West Village Commons window, where our club has found many a downed migratory bird over the years.

Kathy relayed the pertinent information to me, knowing that I would quickly locate someone on our transport team to deliver the bird to her as soon as possible—our wonderful security team at TU had just placed the hawk in a large cardboard box, covered him with a blanket, and placed him in one of the work trucks near the TU Security headquarters, per Kathy's instructions—hoping that the raptor would recover and fly off. I asked one of our transport volunteers who lives on a farm near the Phoenix Wildlife Center's new home to help with the rescue.

The hawk was promptly picked up from TU security by our transport volunteer Codie, and dropped off to Phoenix on November 3rd, with serious head trauma and a possible spinal injury. He was scheduled for x-rays on November 11th, but was still unable to stand or fully eat on his own. Although the team at Phoenix was worried, they continued to hold out hope, as Kathy Woods is forever optimistic. If, in fact, the hawk was merely 'stunned', he would recover in time from the trauma. Anxiously anticipating the result of his imaging, Phoenix relayed the extent of the injury—head bruising—still severe, but much better than other options. Knowing this, Kathy estimated this little fellow's recovery time to last several months.

Sixteen days after the initial strike, on November 19th, the hawk was able to stand and eat—super great progress. His next notable progress was a celebratory one—as he rang in the New Year on his 'perch' with Kathy and Hugh—indicating better alertness and functioning ability. After much progress and time—the old adage, 'things take time' really rang true here—he was released in to the wild by Hugh from the Phoenix grounds on April 1, 2021, after nearly five months of constant care and monitoring from the amazing crew at Phoenix.

Although I was thrilled to learn that our little 'Commons' hawk had made it, I also knew how much work Lights Out TU has still to do. This incident led me to go through the involved process of increasing Lights Out TU's Club package status last fall, in order to receive extra funding to retrofit the most dangerous windows—for birds—on campus. Lights Out TU is also currently working with facilities management to obtain window decals and monitoring cameras within our budget.

We are always happy when a Lights Out TU rescue works out, but wouldn't it be a beautiful world for all windows to be properly fitted with window film or fritted glass so that our flying friends would not have to go through the agony of a strike? A heartfelt thank you to Kathy, Hugh, and their team at Phoenix Wildlife Center, as well as all of my fellow club members at Lights Out TU. Thank you, and good flying little 'Commons' hawk!

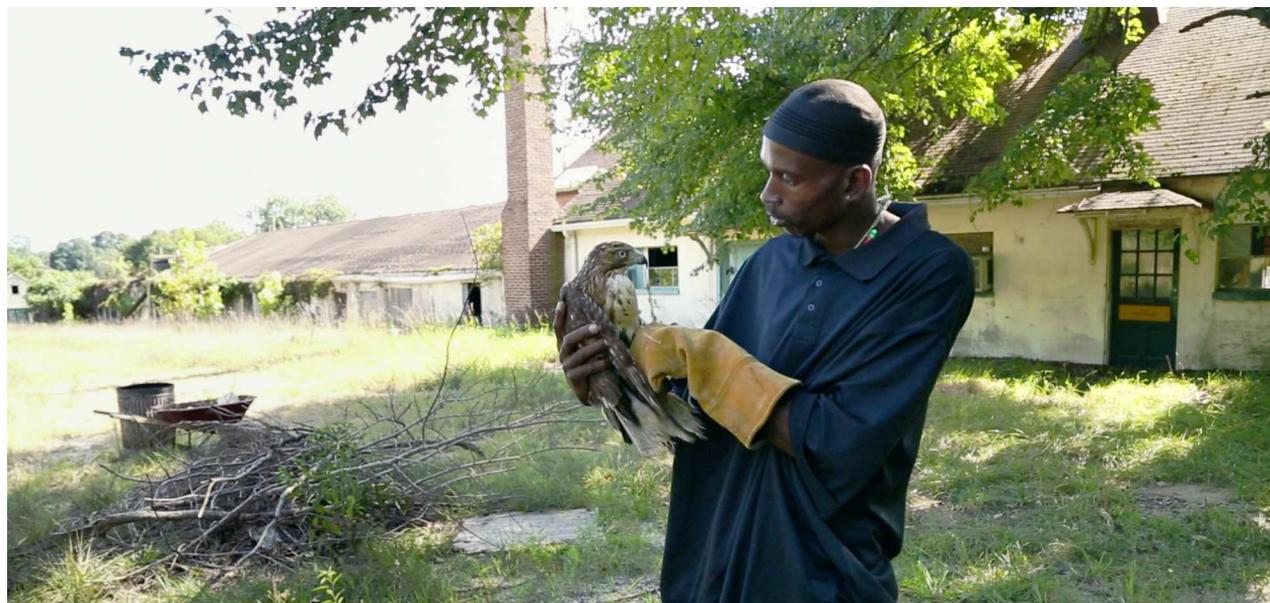
You can find Lights Out Towson University on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#), and Phoenix Wildlife Center's website [here](#).



"The Falconer"

Documentary Film Profile of Black Master Falconer Rodney Stotts

By Annie Kaempfer



Rodney releases a Red-tailed Hawk Photo by Annie Kaempfer

As the light bent through my lens, Rodney Stotts, the protagonist of my first feature film, stepped into the frame and spoke softly, "Enjoy life, buddy..," as he simultaneously withdrew his hands to allow 'Stuff', a Red-tailed Hawk to taste freedom for the first time in eight months. As the raptor took flight, I struggled to capture his gently disappearing form—rich brown shoulder feathers, wings out-stretched, his belly pale and speckled, and of course his tail, a deep red.

'Stuff's' release opens my documentary film "The Falconer". Of Rodney's many birds of prey—'James' the Lanner Falcon, 'Mr. Hoots' the Eurasian Eagle Owl, 'Agnes' and 'Harriet' the Harris Hawks, to name just a few—'Stuff' holds a special place in my heart, being the first bird I ever held, with a heavy glove protecting not only my hand, but the slight tremble in my arm as well. The impact that I felt when looking into 'Stuff's' pale eyes is unforgettable, and I was so sad to see him go. Did Rodney feel the same way? "Oh no, no, no...", he said in a recent interview with *The Washington Post's* John Kelly, "When you let it go, that's a beautiful thing." Clearly that helps explain why I ended up a filmmaker, and Rodney a master falconer.

A story of second chances—for injured birds of prey, for an abandoned plot of land, for young people in our nation's capital who bear the burden of social and environmental injustice, and for Rodney himself—"The Falconer" follows Rodney over many years. It is my wish that this film captures the beauty and hope of Rodney's mission to build a bird sanctuary and provide access to nature for his stressed community—a safe haven for people and birds, a place of mutual healing and growth, if you will.

One of very few Black master falconers in the U.S., Rodney never planned on being an environmentalist. Growing up in marginalized S.E. Washington, D.C., he seemed destined for a life on the streets, but soon left that world behind while developing a passion for the art and sport of falconry. "All this is healing. All this is medicine. All this changes who you are," says Rodney. And, I know he's right. I have seen it for myself, and I've filmed it. It is magical when people meet Rodney and his birds for the first time—the light glowing in their eyes, just as Rodney glowed before my lens. It is my sincere hope that you watch "The Falconer", and join Rodney on his journey—feeling the magic as well.

Visit www.thefalconerfilm.com for more information, but also know that "The Falconer" will have its national broadcast premiere at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, June 1 as part of the documentary series *America ReFramed* on public television's WORLD Channel. Find your local channel by visiting worldchannel.org/schedule/. The film will also be found on Link TV (Direct TV channel 375 & Dish Network channel 9410), and will be available to stream at worldchannel.org/amdoc.org and on the PBS app.

MOS Sanctuaries Update

By Marcia Watson

Atlasers: Don't Forget the MOS Sanctuaries!

When planning your atlasing trips this year and beyond, please include regular visits to the ten MOS Sanctuaries. All of the sanctuaries now have public eBird hotspots for use in submitting your atlas checklists.

The first and second Breeding Bird Atlases gave us lists of birds breeding *within atlas blocks* where the sanctuaries are located, but because of the methodology for the previous atlases, we do *not* have lists of breeding birds that are specific to the MOS Sanctuaries themselves.

Using eBird for the Third Breeding Bird Atlas gives us a huge advantage in that it allows us to pinpoint the birds breeding within the boundaries of the sanctuaries. Every checklist submitted at an MOS Sanctuary helps us to gain a fuller understanding of birds using the sanctuaries to breed and raise their young, and that knowledge, in turn, allows us to develop appropriate habitat management plans.

The relevant atlas blocks and eBird hotspots for the sanctuaries are:

Garrett County:

- Carey Run Sanctuary: Frostburg CW; <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L473407>
- Caroline W. Wilson Sanctuary: Deer Park CE; <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L5853813>
- Robbins Sanctuary at Red Run: Avilton CW; <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L6283516>

Frederick County:

- Seymour B. Cooper Sanctuary: Blue Ridge Summit CE; <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L5926718>

Prince George's County:

- Piscataway: Piscataway CW; <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L5941724>

Anne Arundel County:

- Mandares Creek: Round Bay SW; <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L5664738>

Talbot County:

- Mill Creek Sanctuary: Wye Mills SW; <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L468268>
- Marengo Woods Sanctuary: Saint Michaels CE; <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L6076244>

Caroline County:

- Myrtle Simons Pelot Sanctuary: Denton NE; <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1111044>

Somerset County

Irish Grove Sanctuary is the only exception to the general rule of using the public eBird hotspots for atlas submissions from the sanctuaries. Irish Grove is so large that it lies in four atlas blocks: Marion SE, Kingston SW, Crisfield NE, Saxis NW, and submitting an eBird checklist with the appropriate location takes some care and attention. Remember that when atlasing, each eBird checklist should always lie within only ONE atlas block, and that you should start a new checklist when you cross a block border.

- o The public eBird hotspot for the main part of Irish Grove sanctuary near the house (<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L4502310>) is in the Saxis NW atlas block.

- o The public eBird hotspot for Rumbly Point (<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L467271>) is also in Saxis NW.

- o There are no public eBird hotspots for outlying portions of Irish Grove that are in the Marion SE, Kingston SW, or Crisfield NE atlas blocks, so when atlasing in parts of the sanctuary away from the core near the house, you will have to create a personal location in eBird that corresponds to exactly where you are.

The MOS sanctuaries are described in detail, complete with maps and directions, on the *Birder's Guide to Maryland & DC* website. For easy access to the sanctuary descriptions, go to <https://birdersguidemddc.org/region/mos-sanctuaries/>

MOS Sanctuary Committee: New Chair, New Volunteers

The MOS Sanctuary Committee is pleased to announce that **Wayne Gordon** has been named as the new chair of the committee. Wayne is a member of the Howard Bird Club. A native Texan, Wayne relocated to the Baltimore area in the 1970s, joining MOS in 1978. He is a biology educator by profession, now retired from a teaching position at the Glenelg Country School. Wayne says that early on, he did a lot of birding in Maryland, with memorable trips to see the Back River Ross's Gull and the Papermill Flats Ruff, but birding eventually took a backseat to raising kids and focusing on his career. Ironically, in recent times he has spent more time in the fields of Texas and Arizona than Maryland. Wayne's birding trips have taken him "from Barrow to Brownsville and Bangor to Bakersfield" with some international stops thrown in for good measure. With his recent retirement, Wayne was looking for a way to reconnect to Maryland birding and sees the Sanctuary Committee as providing a good incentive to travel around the state. He is looking forward to getting his hands dirty and his boots muddy at the sanctuaries. Wayne and wife, Sheila, live in Howard County with their blue heeler puppy, Maisie, while making frequent trips to Virginia to see son Matt, his wife Emily, and new grandson Fitz, as well to see daughter Molly in South Carolina.



Wayne on the Eastern Shore during a YMOS trip



Mike with a Little Free Nature Library that he built at the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship in Hillsboro, Virginia

Mike Spurrier of the Frederick Bird Club is another new member of the Sanctuary Committee. Mike will serve as the Sanctuary Manager for the Seymour B. Cooper MOS Sanctuary, which is north of Thurmont in the Catoctin Mountains. Mike also will be helping with the Sanctuary Committee budget and with hands-on projects (building, property, and trail maintenance) at various MOS Sanctuaries throughout the state. Mike is a recent retiree, stepping down after 34 years of work at Community Action Agencies (federally-designated organizations that provide human, health, and homeless services). Mike has been birding for over 30 years. In addition to birding in the U.S. and Canada, he has been fortunate to have had opportunities to bird in India, Peru, Belize, France, Ireland, England, Wales, Dominica, Guadalupe, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. Mike lives in Frederick with his spouse Susie Chaitovitz, their son Ian Spurrier, and terriers, Buddy and Boswell.

Lucie Lehmann and **Linda Vitchock** are two members of the Anne Arundel Bird Club who have recently stepped forward to conduct bird monitoring at the Mandares Creek MOS Sanctuary in Anne Arundel County. The Mandares Creek Sanctuary is MOS's smallest property, containing just 8 acres. The sanctuary is located off a cove of Little Round Bay on the Severn River and consists of a small strip of woodland and a freshwater marsh.

At Irish Grove, **Shirley Taylor** has for over 30 years been the reservations coordinator, and has welcomed hundreds of visitors to Irish Grove. Shirley is now retiring from that position. Many thanks to Shirley for her hard work and diligence over the years.

Pat Valdata will be stepping in as the reservations coordinator for booking overnight visits at the Irish Grove house. Pat is a member of the Tri-County Bird Club and lives outside Crisfield, just ten miles from Irish Grove. Pat has been a volunteer at Irish Grove for the past several years, keeping an eye on the sanctuary with regular visits and participating in semi-annual workdays. To make reservations to stay at Irish Grove, contact Pat at pvaldata1@gmail.com.

The Sanctuary Committee also includes:

- Brent Byers (former chair)*
- Paul Bystrak, Sanctuary Manager for Irish Grove MOS Sanctuary (Somerset County)*
- Jeff Effinger, Sanctuary Manager for Mill Creek and Myrtle Simons Pelot MOS Sanctuaries (Talbot and Caroline Counties, respectively)*
- Kevin Graff*
- Fred Fallon*
- Chuck Hager, Sanctuary Manager for Carey Run MOS Sanctuary (Garrett County)*
- Melissa Hensel, Sanctuary Manager for Caroline W. Wilson MOS Sanctuary and the Chandler & Eleanor Robbins Sanctuary at Red Run (both Garrett County); Melissa (mjhensel@yahoo.com) also handles the reservations for overnight stays at Carey Run.
- John McKitterick (ex-officio as MOS President)
- Dotty Mumford, organizer for Irish Grove workdays and former chair*
- Dominic Nucifora (immediate past chair)
- Sue Ricciardi*
- Rob Rineer*
- Robin Todd (ex-officio as Past President and coordinator for the Birds and Habitat Group of MOS Committees).
- Marcia Watson, committee secretary

*The individuals marked with asterisks are long-term volunteers for the sanctuaries. Their knowledge of sanctuary history, their experience and their ongoing participation at sanctuary workdays ensures that the sanctuaries remain in good shape for all of us. Collectively, they have given over **260 years of service** to the MOS sanctuaries!

The committee **is looking for additional volunteers** to serve as **Sanctuary Stewards** for Piscataway Sanctuary (Prince George's County), Marengo Woods Sanctuary (Talbot County), and Mandares Creek Sanctuary (Anne Arundel County). Sanctuary Stewards serve as the main point of contact for the sanctuary and lead projects such as trail building or cleanup.

Bird monitors are also needed at all the Sanctuaries. Bird monitors simply visit their assigned sanctuary on a regular basis throughout the year and submit an eBird checklist for each visit. The submission of eBird checklists ensures that we have an understanding of the birds that use each sanctuary throughout the year, so that habitats can be managed appropriately. Submission of eBird checklists **with breeding codes** is even more important during the Third Breeding Bird Atlas, to give us up-to-date records of breeding bird populations at the sanctuaries. See the companion article in this issue "Atlasers: Don't Forget the MOS Sanctuaries!"

To volunteer as a Sanctuary Steward, Bird Monitor, or in any other capacity (fund-raising? grant writing?), please send an email to Wayne Gordon at sanctuary@mdbirds.org.

The MOS Sanctuaries protect almost 3,000 acres across the state. The ten MOS Sanctuaries are

- Carey Run – 162 acres in Garrett County
- Caroline W. Wilson – 86 acres in Garrett County
- Chandler & Eleanor Robbins Sanctuary at Red Run – 45 acres in Garrett County

- Irish Grove – 2,326 acres in Somerset County
- Mandares Creek – 8 acres in Anne Arundel County
- Marengo Woods – 49 acres in Talbot County
- Mill Creek – 157 acres in Talbot County
- Myrtle Simons Pelot – 61 acres in Caroline County
- Piscataway – 82 acres in Prince George's County
- Seymour B. Cooper – 14 acres in Frederick County

For brief overviews of the sanctuaries and sanctuary regulations, see the MOS website at <https://mdbirds.org/conservation/refuges-sanctuaries/>.

For detailed visitor's guides, including trail maps and driving directions, see the *MOS Birder's Guide to Maryland & DC* at <https://birdersguidemddc.org/region/mos-sanctuaries/>.

Sanctuary Houses Remain Closed Due to COVID; New Procedure for Combination Locks

The houses at Carey Run and Irish Grove MOS Sanctuaries remain closed until further notice because of the coronavirus pandemic. In addition, no tent camping is allowed at Carey Run or Irish Grove while the houses are closed. The closure of the houses will be reconsidered from time to time as new information about the pandemic becomes available. For updates on the status of the houses, check the MOS website (<https://mdbirds.org/conservation/refuges-sanctuaries/>) or the *Birder's Guide to Maryland & DC* website:

(<https://birdersguidemddc.org/site/carey-run-mos-sanctuary/> or <https://birdersguidemddc.org/site/irish-grove-mos-sanctuary/>)

The grounds at all MOS Sanctuaries are open for day visits, and we ask visitors in groups to observe social distancing and mask-wearing.

The Sanctuary Committee has become aware that people have been staying in the houses without registering or paying the overnight fee. It is always necessary to register in advance to stay at the houses and to pay the appropriate fee, which, though nominal, helps to defray the cost of maintenance, utilities, and supplies. When the houses re-open, the Sanctuary Committee will be enforcing the advance registration policy by changing the combination locks after each stay. Overnight visitors will be given a new combination when they pre-register and pay the fee.

The Sanctuary Committee is developing an online form for advance registration and payment of fees. The form will be available through the MOS website at the time that the houses re-open. In the future, check the websites below for the form.

<https://mdbirds.org/conservation/refuges-sanctuaries/carey-run/> and <https://mdbirds.org/conservation/refuges-sanctuaries/irish-grove/>

2021 MOS Convention Update

MOS is pleased to announce that the annual MOS convention *will* be held from June 11 –13, 2021, but in a *virtual* format—unlike any previous conventions. We hope you will participate! This year's theme is the *Breeding Birds of Maryland*, as this is the second year of the third Breeding Bird Atlas of Maryland and D.C.

Due to COVID-19, the format will differ, as there will be no formal field trips with leaders. Rather, we will be encouraging you to go out, *safely*, on self-guided field trips of your choice within the state of Maryland, with prizes awarded. There will be follow-up chat rooms for friendly, group discussions, seminars (both live and recorded), as well as two keynote addresses! Additionally, the pin contest is in full swing, with entries already closed and the judging started. And, we will have a poster session, a chat room social, and a photo contest, although the rules and formats will be different. Registration has already opened, and due to the virtual format, there will be no cost to attend for active MOS members—though donations will be gratefully accepted!

We are continually updating the convention website, <http://www.mosconvention.org/>, so check it out over the next few weeks for more information. We still need volunteers to handle the Tally Rally and for IT assistance, so if you are willing to help out, please email conference@mdbirds.org with your preferred interest.

My Tribute to Dr. Don Messersmith

by

Barbara Johnson

Don Messersmith has had such a huge influence on so many people because, in addition to being extremely knowledgeable and inquisitive about birds, insects, plants, and all other aspects of natural history, he is an incredibly nice man. His kindness, combined with his desire to share what he knows, has inspired a generation of naturalists from Maryland. Don leads by example, and students of all ages are drawn to him in the hope that someday they can learn to understand nature as well as he does. He is a born teacher, and his work has influenced people both in America and in other parts of the world.

William Young

Author of [The Fascination of Birds: From the Albatross to the Yellowthroat](#)

"I knew other birds, but you know the difference between looking and really seeing? I consider the cardinal my first life bird." And so one Northern Cardinal, spotted on a Boy Scout bird hike in Toledo, Ohio, led to over 4,050 bird species spotted in over 118 countries in every continent for Dr. Don Messersmith, whose legendary service to MOS has contributed to the knowledge and enjoyment of birds, insects, and natural science for legions of birders.

An avid book collector as well as a cycling buff, Don bought his very first foreign field guide in 1950 while biking through the Netherlands as a college student at the University of Toledo. He added scores of bird species to his life list on subsequent extended cycling tours through Europe and Africa. Engaged by his friend Orville W. Crowder to assist in developing Crowder Nature Tours—an original overseas nature tour company—Don guided trips to dozens of countries. After Orville's death, Don and his wife Sherry founded World Nature Tours, sending birders around the globe for over 20 years. He then joined a British group in China for the first birding tours there since the early '30's, following that up with numerous tours throughout not only China, but Australia as well.

Don has always paired his love of cycling and birding, even leading a biking trip to Scandinavia in 1953, just before being drafted. Subsequently, he cycled and birded with an Army buddy for over 1,500 miles during a five month trek encompassing Yugoslavia, Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, and Israel—all just after his discharge from the military.

Additionally, in 1972 while on sabbatical from his post as professor of Entomology and Ornithology at the University of Maryland, Don led a group of birders on a six month island-hopping tour throughout the South Pacific—Tahiti, American Samoa, Western Samoa, Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands (Guadalcanal), Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Australia, and New Zealand—adding another 1,500 bird species to his repertoire.

At age 91, Don has taught without interruption for over six decades—teaching courses and leading trips for the Audubon Naturalist Society (ANS) for over 50 years. He also offered a variety of courses on birds and insects, and on culture influenced by wildlife at the JHU Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, only the 'pandemic' keeping him from his teaching after to these many years.

Don's many academic and conservation awards and national honors include the following notable examples: the "Exceptional Teaching of Entomology Award" (Entomological Society of America, 1976), the "Paul Bartsch Award" (ANS, 2002), and the "Chandler Robbins Education and Conservation Award", presented by the American Birding Association at the 2011 MOS Conference.

MOS member Daphne Gemmill recalled, "Don's love of teaching transfers to a love of the subject matter by his students. In 1978 I took his Smithsonian introductory birding class. That class set me on a 42 year pursuit of birds and brought me many new friends and happy experiences. I am forever grateful, as I know many of his other students are."

An important and integral member of MOS since 1964, as one of the first members of the newly formed Montgomery County Chapter, Don has regaled MOS chapter members and conference attendees with his presentations and field trips. Recently, Don was bestowed a title created on his behalf—"Maryland Ornithological Society Historian Emeritus."

After raising four daughters with his late wife Sherry, Don now enjoys relaxing with his seven grandchildren. Up until the 'pandemic', Don could still be found leading bird walks for his fellow residents at the Riderwood Retirement Village in Montgomery County. He recently completed a history of his church and a video presentation of his wife Sherry's early life as a child of missionaries in China, all while organizing countless photographic slides from his travels, hoping to illustrate his life story for his children and grandchildren. Finally, he is writing a book account of his over five month cross-country birding road trip he took in 2013 at age 84.

"Birding has opened the world to me," Don said. "I made contacts all over the world— many that I still write to."

I thus honor you with this tribute, Don, as does all of MOS, and we sincerely hope that you are back to teaching soon!

Don's account concerning his work with The American Youth Hostel Association, World Nature Tours, and the Crowder-Messersmith Conservation Fund:

"In 1950 I joined the American Youth Hostel Association (AYH) in order to take their bicycling trip to Europe for ten weeks. At the end of that trip I was selected to be a leader of future trips. Subsequently, I led five more European trips for AYH. I was so interested in their concepts and programs that I organized a chapter in Toledo. With this group I led a trip to Scandinavia and upon my return I was drafted into the Army. After I was transferred to Washington by the Army, I joined the Potomac Area Council (PAC) chapter of AYH, and was soon appointed the Council's Executive Director while still in the Army. Upon my discharge I immediately (literally the same day) left for Europe to lead an AYH bicycling group in Western Europe followed by the long pioneering trip mentioned above. I taught a year in Washington and resumed my work with the PAC, AYH. After that year I went to V. P. I. to work toward my Ph.D. in Entomology.

While working on my Ph.D. I attended a lecture in Washington by Orville Crowder, who had helped found and expand The Maryland Ornithological Society. Orville and I were both active in the PAC and had heard of each other, but it was the first time we had met. On the spot he offered me a chance to lead one of his trips. I was still working on my Ph.D, but as soon as I finished, I led a trip to Iceland for him in 1964. After that I led other trips for Crowder Nature Tours and as a result of experiences meeting conservationists in other countries, we formed the World Nature Association in 1969. We then organized and led nature trips (meaning we looked at all aspects of nature and the people, but the emphasis was always on birds). I was leading a trip to the Indian Ocean island countries in 1974, when I received word that Orville had died of a stroke. So, I turned around and came home. In 1975, Sherry and I started World Nature Tours to continue Orville's work.

During the same time, the World Nature Association Board of Directors established the Crowder Memorial Fund to give small conservation and education grants using Orville's inheritance, all of which he had left to me, to use by the World Nature Association. I invested the money and from the earnings we awarded \$2,000 grants, with the Board selecting the recipients. Sherry and I administered the Fund for 20 years, and also ran World Nature Tours from our home while I taught at the University of Maryland and for The Audubon Naturalist Society. Eventually it became too much for us and, after much research, we gave the remaining money to ANS to continue giving grants. That's when it became the Crowder-Messersmith Conservation Fund. Daphne Gemmill was our Chairperson in WNA and has continued in that role for ANS to the present time."

("The Fund honors Orville Crowder and Don and Sherry Messersmith, leaders in nature tourism, as a means to further global nature conservation. The Crowder-Messersmith Conservation Fund, together with the Audubon Naturalist Society, helps fund small, local conservation and education projects in developing countries by providing seed money to communities and individuals whose projects have not attracted major support from other sources. Grants have provided more than 160 projects in over 55 countries with start-up costs since 1974.", ANS website).

Don's recollection of becoming the Maryland Ornithological Society's Historian:

"I volunteered to become MOS Historian when Bob Ringler gave me a set of slides from the early days of MOS. I knew that in a few years MOS would be 50 years old, so I went to Cylburn to look at what was stored there. Then I began doing further research at the Headquarters of the Maryland Natural History Society and learned they started MOS from one of their study branches. The rest is history."

*Below are Don's contributions to **Maryland Birdlife**, which can be accessed at www.mdbirds.org, under Publications:*

Messersmith, D.H. 2015. Chandler S. Robbins: Maryland's Birding Treasure. Maryland Birdlife 64(1):2-22.

Messersmith, D.H. 1995. A Tribute To Orville Wright Crowder, 1904-1974. Maryland Birdlife 51(2):51-54.

Messersmith, D.H. 1995. Origin And Early History Of MOS. (From A Talk Given At The 50th Anniversary Meeting, June 24, 1995). Maryland Birdlife 51(3):103-108.

Messersmith, D.H. 1986. Swallow-Tailed Kite In Worcester County, Maryland. Maryland Birdlife 42(2):55-56.

Messersmith, D. 1974. In Memoriam - Orville W. Crowder. Maryland Birdlife 30(2):77.

**“The Chandler Robbins
Education and
Conservation Award.”**

Presented by the American Birding
Association to Donald Messersmith
(with the Award's namesake at his
side) at the MOS Annual Conference
, Wisp Mountain Resort Hotel and
Conference Center, McHenry,
Maryland. 21 May 2011
(Photographed by Bill Murphy).



**"The Birdman of
Riderwood"**



Lyme Disease Awareness and Prevention

by Brian F. Prendergast

Prevention of Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases is *easy*, but it is often done *wrong*. As a MOS member, a former medical entomologist in the Navy for 20 years, and the Mosquito Control Program Manager for the Maryland Department of Agriculture, I felt the need to write an article about Lyme disease, as moving towards prevention is key.

In 2019, there were over 1400 diagnosed cases of Lyme disease in Maryland—tracked by the Maryland Department of Health and broken down by county on their website:

<https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/OIDEOR/CZVBD/Shared%20Documents/>

[Lyme%20Disease%20Data%202008%20-%202019.pdf](https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/OIDEOR/CZVBD/Shared%20Documents/Lyme%20Disease%20Data%202008%20-%202019.pdf). By perusing the table of Maryland Lyme disease cases accessed by opening this link, you can find out the number of cases in your county and how it has changed since 2008. There, you will discover that Carroll County recorded the most cases in 2019 with 169, followed by Harford County with 140, Baltimore County with 138, and Montgomery with 135. The fewest cases appeared in Dorchester with only four (0 in 2018), followed by Somerset with eight and Caroline and Charles counties, both with 12. Illustrating that Lyme disease occurs in urban and suburban settings is Baltimore City with 41 recorded cases in 2019.

Lyme disease prevention is based on knowledge and awareness. Essentially, all ticks are a problem—just about every species of ticks is capable of carrying something, including other human pathogens. Yet, the threat of Lyme disease is perhaps the greatest, with under-diagnosis being an issue as well, since Lyme disease pathogens can cause symptoms well after the initial infection.

In addition to other tick-borne pathogens, it takes the Lyme disease pathogen a considerable amount of time to pass from the tick to a host, which could be a human or a dog—with 24 hours being a good rule of thumb. That being said, I have seen estimates that are much longer—the point being that it is *never* too late to check yourself for ticks. In effect, you should check yourself *whenever* you are in tick habitat. Tick habitat is generally thought of as wooded or scrubby areas, but they can also be found on lawns—even living on the edge of a wooded area is a risk factor. Tick checks do not take long, and could become part of a regular routine of showering after you go birding or even mowing the lawn. In any case, make it a priority to find a shower within *24 hours* of activity.

Ticks have four life stages—egg, larva, nymph, and adult. Both nymphs and adults can spread disease—with nymphs being very small and easy to miss, so look closely. If your freckles are moving around, that's a problem—by visiting the CDC website: (<https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/tickbornediseases/tickID.html>), you can get an idea of the size. It is improbable that you would find a tick in your hair, mainly because it is difficult to look there. Yet, the good news is that some ticks can be removed with thorough scrubbing with soap and water—soap clogs the tick's breathing apparatus, but if rinsed off quickly, it won't hurt the tick. Thus, extra effort needs to be applied to remove hidden denizens from your hair by scrubbing hard and rinsing thoroughly.

Repellents are also an issue, with the mantra being that whether or not you apply a repellent, you should still check yourself for ticks. The repellents may have been applied incorrectly or not thoroughly enough. Likewise, even if your pants are tucked in your socks, you should still check for ticks. *Do not* assume that you would feel anything that is crawling on, or biting you—the people that got Lyme disease thought the same thing. *It does not take long for a little piece of mind.*

Repellents are key—again, check yourself for ticks even if you are using repellents. Repellents are quite simple but applying them incorrectly is common. Essentially, *put permethrin on clothing, and a repellent on exposed skin*. Putting permethrin on exposed skin is not a good idea, as it is an insecticide. Further, it will not 'stick' to skin, and you will not be protected when you think you are—but it just so happens that the permethrin molecule sticks to clothing fibers, with some formulations approved by the EPA for clothing application. Always read the label before using an insecticide, e.g., permethrin, to ensure proper use. It is possible to buy garments that are pre-treated, as well as to purchase permethrin in an aerosol or pump bottle. Properly applied on clothing, the permethrin releases slowly, thereby acting as a repellent in sub-lethal amounts as it is very irritating to ticks and mosquitoes.

The CDC now endorses six repellents (use EPA registered products containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, PMD, or 2-undecanone). Years ago, DEET was the only repellent available, with many people hesitant to apply. There are also repellents on the market that are not endorsed by the CDC—check the CDC web site to ensure that you purchase a recommended brand.

Most people have heard of the '*bullseye*' rash, yet a '*bullseye*' rash is only seen on 70% of Lyme disease patients, meaning that there is not a rash in 30% of patients—I have seen estimates that are higher. This is per the Maryland Department of Health website (<https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/OIDEOR/CZVBD/Pages/lyme-disease.aspx>). Unfortunately, you cannot use the absence of a rash as a way of self-diagnosing. Thus, please check the Department of Health web site for a complete list of symptoms—there are early stage symptoms and late-stage symptoms, and there are other tick-borne

diseases. When in doubt, check with your doctor as well.

Finally, habitat modification is recommended in many circumstances, with properties bordering a wooded lot or a well-traveled trail coming to mind. Since most of us do not want to be wearing repellents every time that we step out in to our yards, there is evidence that putting a wide strip of mulch between a lawn and a wooded lot will reduce the number of ticks on the lawn. There are other recommendations as well at: https://www.cdc.gov/lyme/prev/in_the_yard.html.

In effect, the old adage should be considered—*an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure*. Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses are obviously not fun—they are even worse if they are not diagnosed. In any case, *if you keep them off of you, you will remove doubt*.

Birding in Baker Park

by Bob Lauer

Photography by Tom Dorsz

Looking for another option for urban birding? Need to stop off for a breather as you roll down I 270? Look no further than Baker Park—one of the crown jewels of the city of Frederick, Maryland. Paralleling Carroll Creek and stretching from its western end at US route 15 to downtown Frederick, this typical yet underrated city park is easily accessible from US highway 15 and encompasses miles of paved trails. Free to all comers, there is also ample free parking available along the perimeter of the park.

As Carroll Creek flows through the park, its sloping banks provide a variety of habitats for birds. At the far western end of the park, the creek is flanked by modest wooded expanses—it is here where an unpaved path runs directly along the creek. For the next mile or so, between Fairview and College Avenues, a variety of principally hardwood trees and bushes parallel the creek. Groomed, large open grass areas are also found here, as well as grassy areas with mature trees and a small, yet productive lake—all cross cut with paved paths. It is these varied habitats that appear to have contributed to Baker Park being ranked by eBird as one of the top four locations for birders in Frederick County. As far back as 2007, and using data from eBird, Cornell University's Ornithology Lab has recorded 180 different species in this city park. Species ranging from the truly exotic Swallow-tailed Kite and Long-tailed Duck to more common birds like American Robins, Mourning Doves, and Northern Cardinals have been recorded.

The year 2020 was an unusually fruitful year for birders in Baker Park, with both migration seasons being extraordinary in their own ways and producing an abundance of species. During spring 2020 migration, at least 26 different species of warblers were identified, as well as all five of the locally occurring species of vireo. The warblers and the majority of the vireos were predominately found in the bushes and trees along the creek. Additionally, a small duck—a Bufflehead—joined the resident flock of Mallards for a week or so on Culler Lake. But perhaps the star of the spring migration was a Black-billed Cuckoo that was spotted at the far western end of the park, midway up a small sycamore tree.

Meanwhile, the fall 2020 migration beginning in late August did not produce nearly as many species of warblers, but several other interesting and relatively unusual birds for the park were in fact observed—a number of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, at least three Blue Grosbeaks, and a fairly rare Olive-sided Flycatcher. Nearing the end of November, and capping the fall migration, a large flock of approximately 45 Tundra Swans were seen flying south at a very high altitude above the park. Closing out the year, a male Merlin was observed perched atop a large sycamore tree at the western end of the park—stunning!

During the summer months, the sky over Baker Park fills with swallows, swifts, and flycatchers. Barn Swallows, Tree Swallows, and Northern Rough-winged Swallows are common, with occasional Bank Swallows and Purple Martins seen. Large flocks of Chimney Swifts can also be fairly common. Flycatchers in the park include Eastern Phoebes and Eastern Kingbirds, as well as sporadic *Empidonax* flycatchers, such as Acadian and Least Flycatchers. This past summer, a pair of Great-crested Flycatchers was observed during courtship, building their nest high in the cavity of an old sycamore tree—eventually feeding their young and ultimately coaxing five fledglings out of the nest to take solo flights, a process from courtship to fledging taking a total of about six weeks. Orioles—both Baltimore Orioles and Orchard Orioles—are also present in summer months, in addition to Scarlet Tanagers and Indigo Buntings.

Known to birders throughout the Maryland and D.C. region as a home to a large Black-crowned Night Heron rookery, the 'Baker Park' rookery is located in a line of white pine trees at the west end of Culler Lake. The Black-crowned Night-Herons arrive in early April and generally depart by late August. Nesting adjacent to the park, Yellow-crowned Night-Herons have also been spotted in recent years. Along with these fair-weather herons, Great Blue Herons forage in the park year-round,

with Green Herons and Great Egrets being seen.

Also making their homes in Baker Park are a number of raptors—Cooper's Hawks, Red-shouldered Hawks, and most likely Red-tailed Hawks. It is not unusual to spot any, or all three, of these raptors perching or soaring over the park, with Broad-winged Hawks and Ospreys making an appearance as summer visitors. Sharp-shinned Hawks will visit occasionally during the winter months, with Bald Eagles, Northern Harriers, and Peregrine Falcons also making their presence known.

Finally, woodpeckers (at least five species), wrens (three species), thrushes (five species), sparrows—including the Eastern Towhee—and three finch species also share the park with everyone else. Blue Jays and crows are common, with the Common Raven popping in from time to time.

An active birder could record 70 to 90 species in a year, a feat not that unusual—in a very good year, like 2020, as many as 120 different species could be observed. So, next time you're looking for an off-the-grid city park, head over to Frederick's renowned Baker Park.

Some birds photographed at Baker Park



Yellow-crowned Night-Heron



Black-crowned Night-Heron



Osprey along Culler Lake

“What happened to the quail?”

By Bob Long, Upland Game Bird Project Manager, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Heritage Service

It's a question I hear frequently from concerned landowners, birders, hunters, and citizens of Maryland. Their anecdotal observations of the beloved gamebird's decline are justified and supported by data. The USGS Breeding Bird Survey shows that Maryland's Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*) population has declined by more than 95% since the 1960's – the largest decline of any bird species in Maryland during that time frame. Their range, which once spanned the entire state, is now confined to smaller areas and mainly concentrated on the Eastern Shore. And with the decline, the distinctive namesake “bob-WHITE” call is noticeably absent from many rural landscapes.



Habitat loss is the primary culprit. The bobwhite's survival depends on an abundance of brushy, weedy habitat, termed “early-successional,” that provides cover from predators and food resources such as seeds and insects. This critical habitat has been lost over time across the landscape. Some of the habitat changes are noticeable – a shopping center replacing a farm, or a hedgerow being removed to make room for center-pivot irrigation equipment. But other changes are more subtle. More efficient farming methods have gradually reduced the amount of cover and waste grain left after harvest and limits weeds and other important plants in and around crop fields. In many forested areas, the lack of management has resulted in a habitat that is no more useful than a parking lot for bobwhites. Periodic disturbance, such as correctly planned timber harvests, allows sunlight to reach the ground, triggering the germination of a diverse plant community needed by quail. Without management, brushy woodlots and young pine forests slowly transition to closed-canopy systems where large and densely-spaced trees shade out quail-friendly plants. Park-like forest floor conditions are attractive to humans but can be a death trap for a bird whose survival depends on staying hidden from the keen eyes of predators, and the predators that prey on quail and their nests are numerous – hawks, owls, foxes, raccoons, skunks,

snakes, feral cats, and others can combine to take a large toll on dwindling bobwhite populations that have been relegated to smaller and more isolated patches of protective habitat.

The landscape challenges that bobwhites face impact many other species as well. An entire suite of birds that depend on grassland and shrubland habitats are disappearing at alarming rates. A recent examination of the USGS Breeding Bird Survey data in Maryland reveals that 9 of the 12 bird species with the greatest rates of decline share similar habitat requirements with quail. Grasshopper Sparrows, Prairie Warblers, Field Sparrows, Yellow-breasted Chats, and American Woodcock are all much less common than in the past, largely due to the same landscape changes. Pollinators depend on this habitat too, and with fewer native plants to fulfill their life needs, many bee, butterfly, and moth species have declined. Even more adaptable critters, such as Wild Turkeys, tend to be more abundant where quail habitat exists. Young turkeys, called poults, use the same cover and food resources for their survival until they outgrow the mouths of their main predators.

Despite the bad news and current trajectory of bobwhite populations, there is cause for optimism. Quail are the most studied bird in North America and the research is clear – habitat is all that is needed to reverse the declines and give the species a fighting chance. Scattered pockets of bobwhite, although mostly at low levels, are still hanging on in many areas. This seed stock can multiply and thrive with suitable habitat. And habitat restoration on both public and private lands has been proven to increase populations.

The Department of Natural Resources has ramped up habitat management efforts to boost or sustain populations on suitable public properties. Native grass and shrub plantings, forest management, and increased use of prescribed fire have set the stage for bobwhites to make a comeback. On Nanticoke River Wildlife Management Area in Wicomico County, quail have returned in good numbers in response to the improvements. In other areas, populations have held steady, which can be considered a success given the overall population trend. More work is planned in the coming years, which should help bobwhites as well as the many other species that use similar habitat.

But public lands conducive to habitat management are limited, and ultimately the fate of the species likely rests in the hands of private landowners. Fortunately, a suite of cost-share and incentive programs are available to help install and maintain appropriate habitat. Grass buffers, native shrub plantings, pollinator meadows, and other beneficial habitats can be created with little to no cost to the landowner using USDA Farm Bill Programs. Per-acre rental and bonus payments make some practices even more attractive. In certain situations, groups like Washington College's Natural Lands Project can provide additional assistance and incentives. Many of these practices provide dual benefits of wildlife habitat and water quality improvements – it's truly a win-win-win situation for wildlife, the Chesapeake Bay, and the landowner receiving payments! But landowners do not need to enroll in a program to help – consider leaving a corner of your field fallow for a couple years to provide habitat, or simply don't mow good cover during summer or fall when birds need it the most. Private landowners can really make a difference. Several of the properties with the highest density of bobwhites in Maryland are in private hands.

Although property owners have the ability to directly help bobwhites and other wildlife via habitat restoration, anyone can make a difference. You can spread the word about quail and other declining species that need brushy, weedy habitats. Understand that species that depend on early-successional habitats will not recover with a passive preservation-type approach. They will only increase if critical habitat is established, then managed with prescribed fire, mowing, or other methods to keep them in a productive state for years to come. With increased public awareness and support for these types of projects, land management efforts can become more focused on creating diverse habitat types that benefit a range of species. And with proper habitat, the iconic whistle of the bobwhite will hopefully become a common sound once again in Maryland.

Contact Bob Long, MD DNR Wildlife and Heritage Service, at bob.long@maryland.gov, 443-521-6247) for more information about bobwhite or habitat programs. Landowners on the Eastern Shore are encouraged to contact Daniel Lawson, Natural Resources Conservation Service Bobwhite Specialist, at Daniel.lawson@usda.gov or 443-448-3011.



A prescribed burn to improve habitat for bobwhite and other wildlife species at the Nanticoke River Wildlife Management Area in Wicomico County

A lush meadow on private land, excellent bobwhite habitat



by Jean Wheeler

CHAPTER CHATTER

ANNE ARUNDEL

IT IS GOOD TO BE OUT!

I went to Patuxent River Park in Bowie last weekend, taking along a backpack with two cameras, a monocular (if someone wants a really good one, check in with me), a tackle box and two fishing poles. I go to fish, bird, and photograph, but not necessarily in that order—it just depends. I followed a few paths, fishing in some small ponds there and did catch a very small bass. Not much birding activity—heard the usual Barred Owl, had one

couple tell me they saw a Belted Kingfisher and a grebe. Once at the main pond, I was greeted on Saturday to a group of Ring-necked Ducks and took a lot of pictures. I went back Sunday and was surprised to see Northern Shovelers, so again I spent most of my time photographing—here are a few, and a few more on Facebook—as there were over 200 pics, I did leave most of them out.

Ronald Nicholson



WONDERFUL WINTER WATERFOWL

All Maryland birders are aware of the thousands of migratory ducks, geese, and swans that join resident waterfowl in this region in winter. Chesapeake Bay is still the winter epicenter for migratory waterfowl in the Atlantic Flyway. Last January (2020), the DNR winter waterfowl aerial survey for the Maryland Chesapeake Bay, Potomac River, and Atlantic coast shorelines counted about 627,000 waterfowl, which was higher than the 566,300 birds observed during 2019, but lower than the five-year average of 738,440 birds.

To view the actual count by species, go to: <https://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2020/02/06/>

[midwinter-waterfowl-survey-shows-rise-in-bird-count/](https://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2020/02/06/midwinter-waterfowl-survey-shows-rise-in-bird-count/). You will be fascinated by what this reveals. For example, there were only 300 Common Goldeneye spotted. Including Virginia's portion of the Bay, almost one million waterfowl were counted. Of course, this is only a remnant of the five million found in Bay country 100 years ago.

Maryland DNR lists more than 40 species of waterfowl that have been seen in Maryland, but 24 species is considered the "normal" on bird lists. Some on the 40 plus DNR lists are exotics or rarely seen natives, like King Eiders—my wife Carol Swan and I saw 17 species this winter.

The Anne Arundel Bird Club's 67th Christmas Bird Count occurred on January 3, 2021, with volunteers spotting 106 species numbering 55,000 birds with Canada Geese the most numerous (7,793), including many resident geese, and 6,888 migratory Ruddy Ducks coming in second.

Finding the huge rafts in Anne Arundel County without a boat can be challenging unless you have access to private properties. This is especially true where folks with piers attract large rafts with corn.

Carol and I are fortunate to live on the Annapolis Neck Peninsula on Oyster Creek with great views of the creek and bay from our home where I can scope as far as the Bay Bridge. I can look for the rafts that used to congregate at Tolley Point off of Bay Ridge.

For 17 years, I led Super Waterfowl Sunday trips on the Annapolis Neck Peninsula for the Anne Arundel Bird Club followed by a soup and chili supper at our home that Carol prepared. With the permission of willing property owners, I found the best spots around this area by scouting for this event, with access as well.

Tolley Point used to be an excellent site with huge rafts of as many as nine species of waterfowl. This winter, the raft of several thousand waterfowl had a majority of Canvasbacks with scaups of both species, Mallards, Buffleheads, Ruddy Ducks, Canada Geese (resident), a few Redheads, and more than 100 Tundra Swans.

From there, one can proceed to Thomas Point Park where in a little calm cove you can find resting Black Ducks, Tundra Swans, Mallards, Buffleheads, and other species.

Driving from Thomas Point Park, take the first road to the right and look on Fishing Creek from the community parking lot or from the other side in Oyster Harbor—I saw 13 Hooded Mergansers in February.

This winter season, as usual, the first migratory waterfowl we see on our creek are Ruddy Ducks followed closely by Buffleheads. Buffleheads were very common this winter all over the peninsula including out in the open waters of the Bay. They were here on our creek every day and were joined later by 40 Ruddy Ducks. For only the second time in 23 years I saw a lone female Common Goldeneye feeding around our pier—you never know as the *'more you look, the more you see.'*

A trip to Blackwater NWR always promises birding eye candy on a winter day. In January, Carol and I found more than 200 Tundra Swans, which have learned to feed in fields with the paucity of Bay grasses. There were some great views of Northern Pintails with many dabble-feeding in the shallow ponds behind the Visitor's Center, now closed. The numbers were meager compared to two years ago when the sides and back of the Visitor's Center were filled with pintails, perhaps 1,500 of them.

The biggest disappointment was that during our visit, which included the Little Choptank River, we did not see *one* Snow Goose, not even in the many farm fields in the area.

Besides migratory waterfowl, Maryland has naturally breeding populations of Hooded and Common Mergansers, Wood Ducks, and Black Ducks. But descendants of human bred-for-hunting Mallards and Canada Geese breed here and in all 48 lower states as they have lost their migratory instinct and cause both public health and ecological problems. Our Oyster Harbor beach on the Bay has had the county's highest summer beach levels of dangerous bacteria caused by resident goose poop that could lead to serious human illness. The resident geese regularly foul my yard and pier.

Efforts to have hunters take more geese with greater bag limits—eight a day in the early hunt before migratory birds arrive—have not succeeded in bringing numbers down as resident geese have increased in the Atlantic Flyway to more than one million. Migratory geese have declined by 5% a year in the last decade to only 173,000. Although the waterfowl hunting season ended on January 30, hunters are needed to cull the resident geese even more.

In the 2019 waterfowl hunting season, nearly one million U.S. hunters harvested 12.4 million ducks and geese. Maryland's nearly 30,000 duck and goose hunters harvested 166,700. Mallards and Canada Geese made up 40% and 47% of these respective harvests. For species by species, state-by-state details on hunting harvests, see:

<https://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/surveys-and-data/HarvestSurveys/MBHActivityHarvest2018-19and2019-20.pdf>

Finally, for those of you interested in the remarkable details on each of North America's 46 species of ducks, geese, and swans, you will be blown away by the 2014 two-volume set of the definitive Waterfowl Bible—*Ducks, Geese, and Swans of North America* by Guy Baldassarre. It updates the famous Bellrose treatise with much more up-to-date information on population status, conservation threats, breeding and wintering grounds, migration patterns, food preferences, mating details, and much more.

For example, one female Lesser Scaup on Devils Lake in North Dakota with a satellite transmitter on her was located 3 days later in Cuba! You also can find out what Buffleheads are diving for around us, and how they nest in Canadian tree hollows, including those created by woodpeckers.

Carol and I love our waterfowl searches, and we go searching often on the Annapolis Neck—she photographs the waterfowl with great close-up shots.

Gerald Winegrad

BELT WOODS STATE PARK

My wife Joy and I bought a used RV, hoping to get on the road and travel again. Recently we took it out to Belt Woods, an area in Prince George's County, which we had never visited before.

Belt Woods, according to the 1989 breeding bird survey, is an important forest interior bird nesting habitat with neo-tropical songbirds, such as Wood Thrush, Red-eyed Vireo and Kentucky Warbler. This is a 625-acre forest in Prince George's County, owned and protected by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Confusingly, various labels are applied to different portions of this property. A 43-acre area called the "South Woods" contains one of the last stands on the Atlantic Coastal plain of old growth hardwoods, such as white oaks and poplars. The total acreage includes a Natural Environmental Area (NEA) of 110 acres and a Heritage Conservation Fund (HCF) site of 515 acres. In a further subdivision, the Maryland General Assembly has designated 610 acres as a Maryland State Wildland, and the National Park Service reserved 56.3 acres as a National Natural Landmark (NNL). The total property is managed by the Maryland Park Service—currently, the property is transected by gravel and dirt farm roads and a network of old unimproved trails totaling about ten miles. Within the wildlands, mechanized vehicles, including bicycles, are prohibited, and access is blocked by a locked gate. There are no amenities and only a very limited parking area outside the gate. Additionally, deer hunting is allowed in season by permit. A planning document for the Park, including maps, can be found by searching for Belt Woods at <https://dnr.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx>, and a history of the property is provided at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belt_Woods.

Peter Bungay

ERECTING NESTING TOWERS FOR CHIMNEY SWIFTS

The Anne Arundel Bird Club decided over a year ago to raise funds for a major conservation effort to build nesting towers for Chimney Swifts. *Bill Offutt*, Chief of Park Operations for Anne Arundel County and an honorary AABC member, encouraged the Club to erect them in the county parks. The first one, shown in the accompanying photo, was completed in Kinder Farm Park on March 17th, 2021.

As the name implies, the swifts use chimneys to construct nests in which to brood their young. However, many homeowners nowadays leave caps in place on top of their chimneys, which blocks the access that these birds need in order to reproduce. This assault on the bird's continued existence, along with other problems, such as the loss of insect prey from pesticide use, has resulted in a marked decline in numbers of swifts. For the past three decades, Paul and Georgina Lyle of Austin Texas, have been publicizing this threatening trend and crusading to reverse it by recommending the erection of dedicated structures as alternatives to residential and industrial chimneys.

AABC is grateful to the Friends of Kinder Farm Park and four of its volunteers who man the wood shop. The scale of the tower



can be judged from the photo of two of them *Photo by Peter Bungay. Pictured are Dave Barry (left) and John Trageser* standing next to the tower: mask-less Dave Barry, head of the Wood Shop, and John Trageser. Pat Branch and Kirk Platt added the final touches. Together with the staff of the park maintenance department, they took up the challenge to create a potential home in which swifts can breed in a structure that improves upon the design in the Lyles' publications. The tower itself is 14" square inside and the smaller opening for the swifts at the top is about 15 feet above the ground,

surrounded by a kiosk that supports the tower. The four sides of the kiosk display didactic signs obtained from various Audubon Societies to explain the reason why it was considered important to construct the tower and to provide background information about swifts and their peculiar natural history. For example, they are called swifts because they appear to be the animal with the fastest flying speed—they spend most of their life on the wing when they are not nesting. They evolved to rest solely on vertical surfaces—not perching on limbs and being helpless on the ground. They will allow only one nest at a time no matter how large the chimney, yet they migrate to wintering homes in South America in flocks that can number in the thousands. Birders know what a spectacle it is to see such a swarm entering a large chimney in the evening to communally roost for the night during their migrations.

At present, this tower appears to be the only one in the Anne Arundel area created specifically for swifts. However, AABC hopes to have the support to build additional towers in other parks in the county—we are actively looking for suggestions for appropriate sites for placement of additional towers. The Lyles recommend they be close enough and north of trees to minimize heating in summer months when the swifts are brooding, but far enough that predators cannot gain access to the opening atop the tower.

The purchase of construction materials and signs has relied on donations through the website (www.aabirdclub.org) or by check, which can be made out to

Anne Arundel Bird Club and mailed to Peter Bungay, Treasurer, 1750 Birdbrook Trail, Annapolis, MD 21401.

Peter Bungay

CECIL COUNTY

The Cecil Bird Club has been at a standstill since last March when the 'pandemic' truly broke onto the scene. As of this writing, all officers in the club have now been fully vaccinated as of the first week in March—with that taken care of, the club hopes to be able to again start offering field trips. Atlasing continues, and County Coordinator *Sean McCandless* has already contacted those who were involved last year to prime them for the coming season. Club President *Maryanne Dolan* will be taking the first steps out and about as she ventures to Panama come April. This will be a preview of the MOS trip there rescheduled for next year. If you haven't experienced one of her MOS trips, you owe it to yourself to give them a serious look.

Ken Drier

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

A BIRDING SOJOURN IN CONNECTICUT ACCOMPANIED BY SOME EXCELLENT DINING!

Francesca Grifo wrote of a birding sojourn in Connecticut accompanied by some great (socially distanced) meals. "Last October I took the perfect trip—five days in Connecticut. I know—it doesn't sound glamorous but it was some of the best eating and birding I have done on the east coast. We had the advantage of a terrific book, *Birding in Connecticut* by Frank Gallo (Wesleyan University Press), the pleasure of birding with Frank, and the good fortune of hitting a peak migration day to exceed my target of 100 species. The book contains detailed descriptions of nearly 150 places to see birds in Connecticut as well as how and when to bird them, information on weather, migration, QR codes that link to eBird species checklists and bar charts, and several useful appendices.

"On a Thursday morning in mid-October, my semi-birder husband and I drove to Connecticut which is not as far as you might think, arriving in a little over four hours leaving time for a late afternoon visit to Sherwood Island State Park where we picked up 33 species in about three hours, including a large flock of American Pipits, Killdeer, and Field, White-throated, Savannah, and Song Sparrows. We then began our culinary adventures at Sally's Apizza in New Haven, where we dined outdoors and socially distanced over a white pizza.

"Friday morning we met Frank at Lighthouse Point where we lucked into a wave migration morning with raptors overhead and warblers literally falling at our feet! We saw 53 species in four hours including ten species of warblers, abundant Blue-headed Vireos, Cooper's and Sharp-shinned hawks, Purple Finches, Swainson's Thrush, 500 Blue Jays and so much more. It was quite amazing to watch flocks of birds approach the inlet created by the Quinnipiac River and then circle back around sometimes several times before crossing to Sandy Point on the other side. Some flocks did this repeatedly. After a huge lunch at Delmonaco's Market in the outskirts of New Haven, we ventured to Shell Beach in Guilford picking up 16 species and adding Great and Snowy Egret to our list. We moved on up the coast to Jared Elliot Preserve adding Nelson's Sparrow and 17 other species. We ended our day near the Rhode Island border arriving at Hammonasset Beach State Park around 3:30 p.m., with a little over two hours of light left—although we easily could have spent the entire day there.

We saw 43 species, including Pine Siskins, Bobolinks, more warblers and a Common Loon. We ended our day at Ford's Lobster in Noank, eating outdoors overlooking the water.

"Saturday morning we explored Sandy Point in West Haven and were rewarded with a beautiful walk along the beach and 15 species including Lapland Longspurs, Brant and our 3rd Merlin of the trip. We continued to Mondo Ponds where we found classic New England Fall Foliage and 13 species of birds, including 60 Grackles. We made our way to Long Wharf where we feasted on Tacos de Birria from the Los Michoacanos food truck—and looked up to see Fish Crows bringing my Connecticut total to 94 species!

"Sunday found us at the Stewart McKinney National Wildlife Refuge where the warehouse pond was filled with 96 Green-winged Teal! And yes—the pond is 300 yards from an Amazon warehouse facility! We hiked out the Railroad Trail passing about 80 sparrows (mostly song) to see a Spotted Sandpiper—species number 96! From there, we headed to Milford Point to visit Frank at "The Big Sit," a fund raiser for the New Haven Bird Club that consists of five birders who arrive at 4 a.m. and count all the birds they can see and hear from a 17 foot circle! They had 108 by 7 p.m. when they stopped! We left them before that after seeing Peregrine Falcons, both Night Herons, Horned Larks, an American Oystercatcher, and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet that was about four feet away. We made a quick stop in fading light for a Wood Duck at Konald's Pond, an interesting wetland that was hard to see through the trees and shrubs that surround it. We ended the day with roasted clams, corn, and lobsters at The Place in Guilford!

"On our last day we awoke to a cold rain so we headed to a pond behind Jonathan Law High School where we found both Eurasian Wigeon and American Wigeon, and Gadwalls! Then we made an expensive stop at Liuzzi Market in New Haven where I went a little crazy—the muffuletta, pancetta, porcini, caciocotta, capicola, provoletti, guanciale... Got a sausage and broccoli rabe sandwich, and Bill got the Italian combo and cannoli for the road. Wow! We made one last rainy stop at Seaside Park for Monk Parakeets! What a trip filled with new friends, old friends, family, great food, and 110 species of birds! Go to Connecticut and buy Frank's book! We are so definitely returning soon!"

Cheryl Hogue writes that when COVID trends were down last August, she slipped off to Cape May, NJ, to take a shorebird identification workshop. Former Marylander Michael O'Brien taught the outdoor-only class sponsored by the Cape May Bird Observatory. The ten students, wearing masks at all times and staying six feet apart, learned some finer points of shorebird ID, including how to differentiate between "Western" and "Eastern" Willets. Four Willets—two each of these subspecies—wading in the Atlantic surf conveniently provided excellent comparisons.

In October, Cheryl was interviewed on the Women Birders (Happy Hour) podcast hosted by Hannah Buschert. The two met at the 2020 San Diego Bird Festival. In the podcast, they discuss boosting diversity, inclusion and respect in the birding community, a goal Cheryl passionately supports. Cheryl also describes how she got into birding. As part of the podcast, Hannah invented a cocktail based on Cheryl's favorite bird: the Superb Fairy-wren of Australia. Catch the podcast and the drink recipe via <https://www.gobirdingpodcast.com/women-birders-happy-hour>.

Chris Wright

PATUXENT

Like other MOS chapters, Patuxent Bird Club had to figure out how we were going to cope with the COVID crisis. Our last in-person chapter meeting, on March 10, 2020, featured Gabriel Foley giving a kick-off to the 3rd Breeding Bird Atlas, and squeaked in *the day before* the Governor's mandatory shut-down order on March 12th. The board of the Patuxent Chapter, in consultation with our partners at Prince George's Audubon Society, immediately decided to cancel all field trips and in-person meetings until further notice. Here we are more than a year later, and that decision is still in place.

Prince George's County has been hard hit by the COVID pandemic, with the highest reported number of COVID cases in the state, and the second-highest number of deaths. The roll-out of vaccinations in Prince George's County has lagged behind other jurisdictions in Maryland: by March 16th, 2021, only 13% of county-residents had received the first dose of the vaccine, compared to 22% statewide. And as of March 16, 2021, the COVID infection rate (cases per 100,000 population) in Prince George's remains high, at 15.95% compared to 14.34% statewide. Our neighbors here in the county have faced disease that has decimated their families, as well as economic hardship from so many jobs lost. Our local-elected leaders have taken on tasks they never expected, becoming organizers of food drives and vaccination sign-ups at local churches and community centers.

Faced with this situation, the Patuxent Bird Club board is *not* moving quickly toward resuming in-person group activities. Our only field activities over the past year have been bird counts conducted under the COVID-safe guidelines issued by MOS. Our members participated in the 2020 spring and fall counts, with results compiled by *Fred Fallon*, and we're preparing for the spring 2021 count. We also hosted two very successful Christmas Bird Counts—the Jug Bay Count on

December 20th (*Marcia Watson*, compiler) and the Bowie Count on January 1st (*Dave Mozurkewich*, compiler).

Many of our members were thrilled to witness a new species for Prince George's County when a Sabine's Gull appeared on the Potomac River off Piscataway Park on September 13. The juvenile bird was found by Patuxent Bird Club member *Kevin Bennett*, whose quick eye immediately noticed the distinctive markings on the distant bird. Word quickly spread among local birders, and the bird remained in the area and was seen and enjoyed by many until Tuesday the 15th. It is thought that this was probably the same Sabine's that had been observed from September 9 – 11 in Virginia and DC waters a short distance upriver. With the addition of the Sabine's Gull, the official checklist for Prince George's County now stands at 337 species, tied with Montgomery County in fifth place among Maryland counties for number of species observed, according to eBird.

Like other chapters, the Patuxent Bird Club has pivoted toward online meetings, starting last September. Our first two online meetings were just informal get-togethers—no presentations—so that our members could talk about birds and whatever else was on their minds and so that we could all become familiar with the online meeting software. We've been happy to welcome members of other MOS chapters from throughout the state to our online meetings.

We began hosting speaker presentations last November, when our member *Sam Droege* spoke about the environmental impacts of the MAGLEV high-speed train project on lands at Patuxent Research Refuge and Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. This was a call to action for our members to join the opposition to the MAGLEV project. Then in December, we held our annual holiday film night with a virtual trip to the Eastern Shore, with the screening of a film series, "View from the Edge," developed by photographer David Harp and writer Tom Horton for the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art in Salisbury.

January brought us a presentation by Chris Eberly on the Farmland Raptors and Chimney Swift Programs sponsored by the Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership. In February, Steve Dryden talked with us about a habitat improvement project in Rock Creek Park in DC.

In March, Gabriel Foley rejoined us—online this time—for the one-year anniversary of the COVID shutdown and to provide an update on the Atlas. He was joined by our county Atlas co-coordinators *Ross Geredien* and *Dave Mozurkewich*, who showed us where we need to apply some additional effort for the Atlas. The follow-up discussion resulted in some good brainstorming to increase Atlas participation in our county.

Our April meeting focused on a new Audubon program to promote backyard gardens that are bird- and wildlife-friendly. Kathy Shollenberger and her husband Barry Stahl, both Master Gardeners, are leading this program for Prince George's Audubon. The program provides on-site garden consultation visits.

We're excited about our May online meetings, when we're offering a one-two punch on the mysteries of shorebird identification. First, *Gene Scarpulla* will provide an introduction to shorebird identification, and then a week later we will have a surprise mystery guest to cover more advanced aspects of shorebird ID. The identity of the mystery guest—a nationally known shorebird expert—will be revealed closer to the date. For the shorebird series, we'll be giving our local members first chance at signing up for our limited online seats. We'll finish out the year in June with our traditional members' night, when members share their best photos of birds and birding spots.

And with fingers crossed, we're hoping to resume in-person meetings and field trips this fall. Only time will tell.

Marcia Watson

TRI-COUNTY

Salisbury is the first Bird City on the Eastern Shore of Maryland! The official designation took place at the Salisbury City Council meeting on Monday, April 12th at 6pm. Chris Eberly, the Director of the Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership will present the designation. The Tri-County Bird Club helped determine the five finalists for the honor of being the "Salisbury City Bird". An online election declared the Great Blue Heron as the winner! To learn more about Salisbury's Bird City initiative go to <https://salisbury.md/departments/infrastructure-development/bird-city>

Ellen Lawler

Our Gem of a Refuge

by Katherine Pauer

In lieu of recent developments concerning the MAGLEV train project, I took the opportunity to go birding at the Patuxent Research Refuge, established in 1936 as the only national wildlife research refuge, by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Originally 2,670 acres, the refuge has since grown to today's size of over 12,000 acres. This 12,000-acre refuge contains stream habitats, oak-pine savannah barrens, and forests—home to a diverse group of wildlife such as the Scarlet Tanager, the American shad, and over 155 species of native bees. Also active in the world of conservation, the refuge monitors amphibians, bands birds, and conducts research in ecotoxicology.

On a clear, cool Monday morning in early March of this year, I drove out to the Patuxent Wildlife Refuge. Upon opening my car door, I heard the calls of Red-winged Blackbirds filling the sky. I first walked over to the bird feeders near the main visitor's center to check out the local feeder birds, and saw a couple of Mourning Doves hanging out in the branches, all puffed up trying to keep warm, and two male Cardinals chasing each other among the trees. With an abundance of trails to choose from, such as Goose Pond Trail among others, I checked out the trail map and decided to walk the Cash Lake Trail, feeling I would have a good chance to see birds along the water.

After approaching the first boardwalk over the water and hearing nothing but frog calls, mainly Spring peepers and others I couldn't identify, I looked across the lake and saw movement—a Killdeer—not one but two, foraging in the mudflats, darting very quickly, but most delicately, from one mudflat to another. Another Killdeer flew in from above and began calling out, perhaps for its mate. I resumed my hike as two Bluebirds kindly escorted me across the rest of the boardwalk.

I checked out a viewing area located off the trail and saw a few crows chasing a dark shape above the lake. Pulling out my binoculars for a closer look, I spotted an Osprey—hovering above the water and then taking a dive...*SPLASH*, the Osprey dove in and came back out with a large fish whose belly glittered gold in the sunlight. The crows began their pursuit of the Osprey across the water, and I was silently cheering the large raptor along in his attempt to escape the impish crows. My cheering apparently worked, as the Osprey then took to the woods to devour its tasty treat.

On a little open stretch of land near the lake, I viewed numerous sparrows and juncos flitting about the underbrush. Just then, a bare tree caught my eye, illuminating 15 Tree Swallows perched in the branches, their stunning iridescent green feathers shining in the sunlight. As the wind shifted, the swallows flew off over the water and began to dive and swoop, gracefully dancing above the stillness of the lake—a classical ballet playing out before my eyes. After being entranced by this performance, the rest of my hike continued through the woods under the clear *peter-peter* songs and echoes of Tufted Titmice, and the drumming of a Red-bellied Woodpecker.

Upon returning to my car and driving off, I was quite saddened that not only had my bird walk come to an end, but that the end could be near for a substantial portion of Patuxent's wildlife habitat, upland wetlands, and streams—all in the name of progress. This particular wildlife refuge is such a unique home to such a diverse array of birds and other wildlife, which is why it is so important that it remains untouched, especially from the MAGLEV train plans. I encourage you all to go birding here, and to make the refuge a priority during this spring migration season—hopefully all the birds and other wildlife will have a chance to continue thriving, and hopefully we can continue seeing these species in our state. Patuxent wildlife refuge is truly a gem—our gem.

Sources: <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Patuxent/about.html>

Hogchokers, Popes, And Pigwitches—Revised And Abridged

by

Harry Armistead

Been well nigh on these 20 some years now, this was well received in some quarters, at that time. So, here 'tis again for y'all with some changes and add-ons. Thanks to Phil Davis, Jared Fisher, Larry Riddle, and David Fleischmann for unearthing this document, otherwise lost from my files. Seen any Labrador Twisters lately? Pigwitches? Then why the hell not?

Here is a fanciful enumeration of other species, as it might sound coming from an Eastern Shore of Virginia waterman—not for *one moment* should it be supposed that this is in jest—I personally love to hear a good Eastern Shore accent!

Yes, we got Hogchokers and other fishes, your Spot, Hardheads, Croakers, Trout, and Rock. Puppy Drum, Alewives,

Bunkers, and others. Then there's Blowtoads, Oystercrackers, and Dowdies, too. And Doubleheads, but you can't eat them, though some do—they're good for bait.

Down here we got names for all the crab sorts—there's busters, popes, shedders, soft-crabs, she-bitties, paper-shells, and doublers (the one underneath's always a softie), your ordinary hard crab, and, of course, there's jimmies (male) and sooks (female) crabs.

Now birds, that's somethin' else. Lot of them little sandpipers. The big ones, the Straight-billed Curlew, they used to shoot and eat them. Sea Crows, too, and Curlew, as well. In the old days, they'd also shoot Calicobacks, Robin Snipe, and Sewin' Machines as well as Black-breasted Beetlers. Ducks was commoner then, but there's still lots of Little Dippers, Clubheads and Southerlies. Out on the ocean Skunkheads are real common and other types of sea coots—you go real far out to sea, you get tuna birds in summer. Never see them from land.

Other places got more ponds and freshwater than we do hereabouts, they got more ducks like Sprigs, Spoonbills, and Teal. In the old days, there was but one gull in summer and that was the Cacklin' Gull—called Soft Crab Gull. Now, the Winter Gulls is nestin' on the islands as well. Time was, you'd never see a Winter Gull here but in winter. All the old names, like Egg Harbor, Gull Marsh, Great Egging Beach, and the like, that was 'cause they'd go out there and gather gull eggs to make a good omelet or two. Then let 'em alone to do their business and nest again.

Big groups of gulls and strikers, Little Strikers, and Big Strikers, still nest on the islands as well as Flood Gulls—the littlest striker we call the Minnie Hawk. What you call the cormorant, well, you know what sort of names they have, and Shag is one of the more polite ones—although you might say Shitpoke, but not t'other, unless you were to say Pocomoke Goose or Baltimore Goose. In early April or late March there's lots of little divers, we call 'em Pigwitches. And in the summer there's the little heron, called Scowp 'cause of the way they call when you jump 'im. Of course you know the White Crane and the Blue Crane, the blue one sometimes called Forty Quarts of Soup or Old Cranky.

Every so often, when there's a big freeze-up or blizzard in Jersey, or Canada, then the woodcocks pile in here like crazy. Take Hans' spaniel out and you'd flush one every twenty feet. Up north they call them Labrador Twisters or Bogsuckers, Timberdoodles even. In '93, we got a real cold rain, coated all the rushes, sedges, and trees with ice—everything. The woodcocks like to froze—chicken Hawks was hitting them right off the grass. Goin' down 600 woodcocks, blackbirds, Killdees, Field Larks, and Canaries was all along the roadside shoulders—had to be careful. Big old Sicklebill—never used to see him at all until the '60's. Now there's white ones too, in with the herons and cranes.

In September, when there's doves before the Partridge season, you can also find the Sage Hens or Marsh Guineas when the tide's good and flooded. Time was, the tradition for that was a big deal—big shots would come from D.C. to do it! Also in September, and sometimes in August, you have Reedbirds, or Rice-birds as they're also known, pilin' into the reed beds at Oyster late in the day. In the evening, what we call whip-poor-wills—also called Hollerin' Boys—will start to call after sundown, 'specially in June.

That's about the smart of it—and when the tide starts to slack, when she begins to let out, that's when your Sage Hen will start to hollerin'. There's other smaller mudhens, too, and such, about the size of a Field Lark, but you don't see them as much as you see the Sage Hen, Railbirds, Marsh Guineas, and Mudhens. You know what I mean? At low tide the Sage Hen will go after Fiddle Crabs, and other creepy crawlies.

A good source of colloquial names is Edward Howe Forbush's [Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States](#) (Massachusetts Dept. of Agriculture, 1925-1929, 3 volumes). For instance, this source lists ten names for Hooded Merganser. However, [Bird is the Word: An Historical Perspective on the Names of North American birds](#) by Gary H. Meiter (McDonald & Woodward Publ. Co., 2020, 437p.) is perhaps the last word in this area, with, for example, 70 colloquial names for Hooded Merganser and 150 for Northern Flicker. Another excellent book, [Chesapeake Requiem: A Year with the Watermen of Vanishing Tangier Island](#) by Earl Swift (Dey Street, 2018, 435p.), has many more terms for the Blue Crab than appear in "Hogchokers".

In memory of Lynwood Horner, and in tribute to Steve Parker. Best to all!

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MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



CBTRUST
Chesapeake Bay Trust

Results from the 2021 MD Legislative Session

The 2021 Maryland General Assembly Session ended at midnight on April 12. Several environmental bills passed, but others did not. MOS had some role in helping pass these bills. Among the victories was HB0208/SB0375 on Neonicotinoid Sale and Storage. The Pollinator Protection Act of 2015 had left a loophole that permitted some retailers to continue to display neonicotinoid pesticides. This bill ends forever the retail sale of neonics. MOS sent out several action alerts. We did not get an opportunity to testify. This was the only bill we advocated to pass this session.

Other environmental bills that passed that we would be supportive of, but did not act on were:

- HB0391/Sb0716 banning intentional release of balloons. Safe Skies Maryland did promote this bill
- H03222 Low Impact Landscaping, prohibiting Home Owners Associations from restricting bird-friendly gardens and habitats. Safe Skies helped draft this bill and actively promoted it.

There were many disappointments in the 2021 Session. Most notable was the failure to override the Governor's veto of the Chlorpyrifos Ban. The Senate President, however, has informed the Maryland Department of Agriculture that if they try to roll back MDA regulations banning Chlorpyrifos, legislation will be reintroduced for a permanent ban.

- Our signature bill, the Maryland Sustainable Buildings Act of 2021 (HB0236) passed the House, but died in committee in the Senate. MOS submitted written testimony and put out several action alerts.
- HB0314, the Plastic Bag Reduction Act, also failed. MOS submitted written testimony.
- HB1025, a bill to prohibit possession or storage of the pesticide Carbofuran also did not advance. This is the poison killing Bald Eagles on the Eastern Shore and in Delaware. MOS submitted written testimony.

One bill, HB0991, Forest Mitigation Banks, was confusing. According to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and other organizations, this bill would actually exacerbate forest loss. Hence, we submitted written testimony in opposition. The bill passed, but we are told that there were amendments that improved the bill, primarily by adding a 3-year sunset clause to it. We clearly could have used more information on this bill.

We took no action on the Climate Solutions Now! Act, which would establish more stringent greenhouse gas targets. Of course, climate change is an existential threat to bird life, but we lacked the resources to get into this issue. The bill failed. That said, another bill passed that would plant a lot of trees.

According to Audubon Mid-Atlantic, 54 pro-environmental bills passed in the 2021 Session.

I thank all who responded to the action alerts and wrote or called their legislators. These contacts do make a difference.

Kurt Schwarz
Conservation Chair, MOS

MOS Calendar

Through 8/31/2021

Field Trips

Please wear masks, practice social distancing, and adhere to all restrictions requested by the host organization. Additional details are posted on MOS and chapter web sites.

5/1	7:30 AM – 12 PM	Susquehanna State Park, Rock Run Gristmill	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leader: Brent and Mary Byers, 410-686-7294 or baypuffin@hotmail.com. Description: Trip to the river for resident Cerulean and Prothonotary Warblers and a collection of spring migrants. Paths are uneven, unpaved and some are hilly. Meet at the lot at the end of Rock Run Rd., next to the old mill building. RSVP required. Limit: 10.
5/1	7:30 AM – 12 PM	Warbler Walk at Susquehanna State Park	Host: Harford Bird Club. Leader Tim Houghton (timhoughton@comcast.net or 410-510-7504). Description: Take a stroll through the park in search of spring migrants. While warblers will be the focus of the trip, there should be plenty of other songbirds as well as waterfowl and waders out on the river. Meet at the parking area at Rock Run Mill at 7:30 AM.
5/1	8 AM - 12 PM	Basic Bird Walk at Martinak State Park	Host: Caroline Bird Club. Leaders Wayne Bell and Debbie Bennett. Description: Good for beginners learning to identify birds and breeding bird behavior. Dress appropriately and bring binoculars if you have them. Meet in the parking lot by the log cabin.
5/2	7 AM - 12 PM	Izaak Walton League Conservation Farm	Host: Montgomery Bird Club. Leader Jim Nelson, kingfishers2@verizon.net or 240-515-4517. Description: wide range of bird habitats, and migration should be well underway. Reservations required. Limit 6.
5/2	8 AM – 12 PM	Oregon Ridge and Agricultural Center	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leader: Simon Best, simonrabest@gmail.com. Description: Oregon Ridge is a good spot for warblers, thrushes, and other passerines. The Center for Maryland Agriculture has a variety of open habitats and fields; we'll look here for Eastern Meadowlark, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Bobolink. Meet at the Oregon Ridge Nature Center. RSVP required. Limit: 10.
5/2	8 AM – 12 PM	Field Trip: Millington NRMA	Host: Kent County Bird Club. Leaders Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568, birdclub.kentcountymd@gmail.com or borealdee@gmail.com. Description: Migrating warblers should still be on the move while many breeding specialties are establishing territories in Kent County's most extensive forest. Half day. Meet at the "Dollar General" parking lot (off Philosopher's Terrace) in Chestertown.
5/2	8:15 AM – 12 PM	Cylburn Walk	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leader: Mark Linardi, 443-834-8413 or mlinardi@outlook.com. Description: Easy birding in Cylburn's gardens and urban forest. Expect to find a variety of migrant and resident birds. Some paths are not paved and can be hilly. Beginning birders welcome. Pre-registration required - RSVP to leader. Limit: 10.
5/2	7:45 – 8:30 PM	Chimney Swifts at Dusk	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leaders: Joan Cwi, 410- 467-5352or jafjsc@verizon.net and Alice Nelson, 410- 499-0546 or alice.display@verizon.net. Description: The swifts have returned again to the Bookbindery Chimney in Hampden, so that is where we will hold the watch! Check the BBC website for last minute location changes. If cloudy or a drizzle, come a half hour early. Canceled if raining. Binoculars useful but not necessary.
5/4	8 – 10 AM	Lake Roland	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leaders: Debbie & Lou Taylor, 410-852-9807, debrataylor11@gmail.com. Description: Continuing series of weekly walks following the progress of spring migration in Lake Roland's varied habitats. Meet at the Light Rail Parking Lot (Boardwalk entrance to the park). Check with leader if weather is extreme (rain, wind). Participants must sign a Covid-19 waiver. Pre-registration required - RSVP to leader. Limit: 10.
5/5	8 AM – 12 PM	First Wednesday Walks at Fort McHenry	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769 (alternate contact Wendy Alexander, 443- 204-3754). Description: Continuing a series of surveys at the fort and wetland. Binoculars required. Telescope can be useful for distance viewing. Canceled in bad weather. Please park outside the main entrance gate in lot on left, and meet at the gate. RSVP required. Limit: 10.
5/7	7 AM - 12 PM	Birding by Ear at Hughes Hollow	Host: Montgomery Bird Club. Leader Paul Woodward at grackling@ATT.NET. Description: Tune up your ears as we listen for and learn to identify the songs and calls of migrant and local breeding birds. Geared to beginners. Reservations required. Limit 6.
5/8	TBA	Little Bennett RP	Host: Montgomery Bird Club. Leaders Woody and Rae Dubois dengue1@verizon.net. Looking for warblers and other migrants. Reservations required. Limit 6.

5/8	8 AM – 12 PM	**Youth Birding**	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leader: Daisy Sudano, dsudanotraining@yahoo.com, 410-426-7627. Description: These walks are designed to encourage the appreciation of birds and bird habitat conservation to minors through mentorship and education. They will change monthly and may include youth-oriented education programs, youth birding trips, and competitions. Limit: 10.
5/8	8 AM – 12 PM	Herring Run Park - Birding by Ear	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leaders: Kim Tomko, Lynne Parks v.lynneparks@gmail.com or 443-416-6180. Description: Learn to identify birds by songs and calls. Expect warblers, orioles, vireos, and more. We'll walk along a 2-mile flat paved path. Park and meet along the south lanes of Belair Rd. where it crosses Herring Run below Parkside Dr. Birders with disabilities will be registered first. RSVP required. Limit: 10.
5/8	8 AM – 12 PM	Patuxent Research Refuge-South Tract	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leaders: Debbie & Lou Taylor, 410-852-9807, debrataylor11@gmail.com. Description: Early May at Patuxent South brings Warblers, Orioles and Flycatchers. May find Scarlet Tanager, Indigo Bunting and Grosbeak in a habitat mix including lakes, meadows, and forest wetlands. Walking 2-3 miles of boardwalks, floating walkways, forest floor and paved trails around lakes. Bring sunscreen, bug spray and water. Port-a-pot in parking lot. Meet in far-left hand corner of parking lot. RSVP required. Limit: 8.
5/8	All Day	YMOS Big Day	Host: YMOS Contact: George Radcliffe, radclifg@gmail.com, 410-463-1669 Description: Student Competition with details to be determined at a later date.
5/8	All Day	May Count	See separate May Count chart.
5/9	7 AM – 12 PM	Birding at Sweet Air	Host: Harford Bird Club. Leader Dr. Mark Johnson (marksjohnson2@gmail.com; 410-692-5978). Description: Stroll through the Sweet Air area of Gunpowder SP in a search for migrants and breeding birds. Baltimore Orioles, Indigo Buntings, Scarlet Tanagers and various Warbler species are the targets. Meet at the parking lot at the end of Dalton-Bevard Road at 7 AM.
5/9	7 AM - 12 PM	Rock Creek Park	Host: Montgomery Bird Club. Leader Gerry Hawkins, maineusa@comcast.net or 571 277-8406. Description: Near peak time for migrant warblers, vireos, etc. Meet at the Nature Center. Reservations required. Limit 6.
5/9	7 AM - 12 PM	Rickman/Woodman Equestrian Park	Host: Montgomery Bird Club. For reservations (required) and more information, contact leader Scott Young at wsyacy@verizon.net. Co-leader: Dave Roberts. Description: Join us as we explore this location for some spring early morning birding on the west side of Route 28 (https://rb.gy/qpdqda). We'll bird the broad fields and separating woods, beginning at 7 AM, hoping for warblers and sparrows, vireos, woodpeckers, and raptors. Limit: 10.
5/9	8 – 10 AM	Marshy Point Nature Center	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leaders: Brent and Mary Byers, baypuffin@hotmail.com or 410-686-7294. Description: Easy half-day walk through varied habitats for feeder birds and other songbirds, raptors, and waterfowl. Half-mile trail leads to point overlooking Dundee Creek. All are welcome, including families. Telescopes useful. RSVP required. Limit: 10.
5/9	8 – 11 AM	Soldiers Delight	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leader: Mark Linardi, 443-834-8413 or mlinardi@outlook.com. Description: Expect to see a wide variety of migrating songbirds. Meet at the Overlook on Deer Park Rd. We will cover 1.5-2 miles of level but sometimes rocky terrain. Trails can be muddy if the weather has been wet. RSVP required. Limit: 10.
5/11	8 – 10 AM	Lake Roland	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leader: Mark Linardi, 443-834-8413 or mlinardi@outlook.com. Description: Continuing series of weekly walks following the progress of spring migration in Lake Roland's varied habitats. Meet at the Light Rail Parking Lot (Boardwalk entrance to the park). Check with leader if weather is extreme (rain, wind). Participants must sign a Covid-19 waiver. Pre-registration required - RSVP to leader. Limit: 10.
5/13	7 AM - 12 PM	Blue Mash and Oaks Landfill	Host: Montgomery Bird Club. For reservations contact leader Mark England at englandmark@comcast.net, or 240-308-4114. Description: Half-day trip starting at the Blue Mash Nature Trail, where we will look for a variety of songbirds and other species. Then we will drive over to the adjacent Oaks Landfill to look for raptors, Blue Grosbeaks, possible Dickcissels and Grasshopper Sparrows.
5/15	8 AM – 12 PM	Saturday Morning Walk at Fort McHenry	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leader: Wendy Alexander, 443-204-3754. Description: Continuing a series of surveys of bird activity at the Fort and wetland. Binoculars required. Telescope can be useful for distance viewing. Canceled in bad weather. Park outside the main entrance gate in lot on left, and meet at the gate. RSVP required. Limit: 10.

5/15	8 AM – 12 PM	Birding at Emory Knoll Farm	Host: Harford Bird Club. Contact Carey Rowsom (carey@greenroofplants.com or 410-452-5880). Description: The open fields and woods of this lovely property are excellent habitat for songbirds, woodpeckers, and both resident and migratory warblers. Meet at the farm at 8 AM. Parking is limited.
5/15	8 AM – 12 PM	Birding at Hashawa Environmental Center	Host: Carroll County Bird Club. RSVP to Scott Hodgdon at 443-280-2480 or scotthodgdon@msn.com. Description: Come and enjoy a pleasant walk in the woods and along the stream. We will be looking for vireos, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and flycatchers. Meet at the parking lot at the Bear Branch Nature Center.
5/15	8 AM – 5 PM	Slaughter Beach	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leader: Daisy Sudano, dsudanotraining@yahoo.com, 443-416-9867. Description: We will make some stops along the shoreline on our drive along Bay Avenue and Slaughter Beach. More than 130 species of birds, fish, shellfish, and other animals can be found in the surrounding estuary habitat. Meet at Coppermine Fieldhouse parking lot. Minimal walking. Please bring a bag lunch. Limit: 10.
5/16	7 – 11 AM	Herring Run Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leaders: Kim Tomko and Matt Lince, 443-324-0907 or mdlince@comcast.net. Description: This urban park in NE Baltimore is an oasis for many species of migrating and resident birds. Easy walking, on mostly flat, paved paths. Habitats include open fields, edge habitat, wooded areas, and Herring Run itself. RSVP required. Limit: 10.
5/16	8 AM – 5 PM	Field Trip: Delaware Bay Shorebirds and Horseshoe Crabs	Host: Kent County Bird Club. Leaders Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568, birdclub.kentcountymd@gmail.com or borealdee@gmail.com. Description: The annual gathering of shorebirds including Red Knots and Ruddy Turnstones, feeding on horseshoe crab eggs, is a migration spectacle. The area is also good for coastal marsh birds, gulls and terns. Full day, bring lunch. Meet at the “Dollar General” parking lot (off Philosopher’s Terrace) in Chestertown.
5/18	8 – 10 AM	Lake Roland	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leader: Ron Davis, ronldavis1963@gmail.com, 410-821-1297. Description: Continuing series of weekly walks following the progress of spring migration in Lake Roland’s varied habitats. Meet at the Light Rail Parking Lot (Boardwalk entrance to the park). Check with leader if weather is extreme (rain, wind). Participants must sign a Covid-19 waiver. Pre-registration required - RSVP to leader. Limit: 10.
5/22	6:45 AM – 5 PM	Bombay Hook & Dupont Nature Center	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leader: Joe Corcoran, corcoran2921@gmail.com, 667-231-6453. Description: Expect a wide variety of migrating shorebirds. Possible Turnstones, Sanderlings, breeding plumage Red Knots. Marsh Wrens, Seaside Sparrows, Blue Grosbeaks. Purple Martins and Tree Swallows at their colonies, and Night-herons likely. Be prepared for heat and biting insects. Minimal walking. Bring lunch. Telescopes very useful. Meet at Nursery Road P&R at 6:45 am. RSVP required. Limit: 10.
5/22	7:30 AM – 12 PM	Warbler Walk at Susquehanna SP	Host: Harford Bird Club. Leader is Gabby Ross (gabbycammarata@gmail.com; 410-688-1578). Description: Between the presence of numerous migrant visitors as well as resident species, birding is always good at Susquehanna SP. The focus of this trip will be on late migrant arrivals. Meet at the Mill parking lot at 7:30 AM.
5/22	8 – 9:30 AM	Druid Hill Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Patterson Park Audubon Center-patterson.audubon.org. Description: Join Audubon and the Maryland Zoo to explore this leafy city park. From forest to lake, a variety of bird species await. For information, contact Patterson Park Audubon Center. Participants must adhere to our COVID code of conduct and register in advance at our website.
5/22	8 AM – 12 PM	Beginners’ Bird Walk, Eastern Neck NWR	Host: Kent County Bird Club. Leaders Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568, birdclub.kentcountymd@gmail.com or borealdee@gmail.com. Description: Meet at the Tundra Swan Boardwalk, Eastern Neck NWR. Spend the morning exploring several of the Refuge’s trails and overlooks, looking for a variety of breeding species and late migrants, from raptors to warblers. Half day, bring snacks.
5/23	7:30 – 11 AM	Cromwell Valley Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leader: Sam Tillman, sam.tillman@gmail.com, 443-844-5917. Description: We’ll walk a portion of the Minebank Trail looking for warblers and other migrants, and continue to the open meadows for swallows, flycatchers, raptors, and more. All trails we’ll walk are mowed grass, packed gravel, or paved, and generally flat so this walk is accessible to most participants. Beginners birders welcome!
5/25	8 – 10 AM	Lake Roland	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leader: Peter Lev, plev@comcast.net or 410-952-9426. Description: Continuing series of weekly walks following the progress of spring migration in Lake Roland’s varied habitats. Meet at the Light Rail Parking Lot (Boardwalk entrance to the park). Check with leader if weather is extreme (rain, wind). Participants must sign a Covid-19 waiver. Pre-registration required - RSVP to leader. Limit: 10.

5/27	7:30 – 11:30 AM	Gunpowder Falls SP- Masemore Water Trail	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leader: Joe Corcoran, corcoran2921@gmail.com, 667-231-6453. Description: We'll look for breeding warblers, vireos and flycatchers on territory. We will be walking the portion that runs adjacent to the river, about 1 mile each way. Trail is unpaved, and can be narrow and uneven in places. Canceled if raining. RSVP required. Limit: 10.
5/29	8 – 9:30 AM	Patterson Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Patterson Park Audubon Center-patterson.audubon.org. Description: Join Audubon to explore this urban oasis in southeast Baltimore. With more than 200 species on record, the park is full of surprises. For directions, contact Patterson Park Audubon Center. Participants must adhere to our COVID code of conduct and register in advance at our website.
5/29	8 AM - 12 PM	Basic Bird Walk at Adkins Arboretum	Host: Caroline Bird Club. Leader Debby Bennett. Good for beginners learning to identify birds and breeding bird behavior. Dress appropriately and bring binoculars if you have them.
5/29	8 AM – 12 PM	Birding at Krimgold Park	Host: Carroll County Bird Club. RSVP to Matthew Hodgdon, 301-703-0657 or mhodgdon@msn.com. Description: Come and enjoy a pleasant walk while bird watching in the park. The park has a lot of open fields, four ponds and tree lines. We hope to see sparrows, swallows and Horned Larks. Please meet at the last parking lot by the pavilion.
5/29	8:30 AM – 12 PM	Paddle at Perryville Community Park	Host: Harford Bird Club. Leaders Colleen Webster (cwebster@harford.edu; 410-459-4577) and Sue Procell (procellmd@gmail.com; 443-417-4919). Description: Eagles and Osprey are almost always seen; passerines are common in the surrounding trees; waders and waterfowl are common throughout. Meet at Stump's Point at the far end of Perryville Community Park.
5/31	7 AM – 12 PM	Birding Hidden Valley and Bradenbaugh Flats	Host: Harford Bird Club. Leader Dennis Kirkwood (newarkfarms@gmail.com or 410-692-5905). Description: The trip will include the Hidden Valley area, with its stream which runs through a stand of mature hemlocks, and Bradenbaugh Flats, with stops along the way at any other sites with potential. Meet in the parking lot at the N end of Madonna Rd. where it crosses Deer Creek. Parking space is limited.
6/2	8 AM – 12 PM	First Wednesday Walks at Fort McHenry	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769 (alternate contact Wendy Alexander, 443-204-3754). Description: Continuing a series of surveys at the fort and wetland. Binoculars required. Telescope can be useful for distance viewing. Canceled in bad weather. Please park outside the main entrance gate in lot on left, and meet at the gate. RSVP required. Limit: 10.
6/3	7:30 – 11:30 AM	Prettyboy Reservoir- CCC Trail	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leader: Kojo Baidoo, baidookojo6@gmail.com. Description: We'll look for breeding warblers, vireos and flycatchers. Trail is unpaved and relatively level. We will walk about 2-2.5 miles. Canceled if raining. RSVP required. Limit: 10.
6/5	7:30 AM – 5 PM	Atlas Blockbuster	Host: Harford Bird Club. Check with Dennis Kirkwood (newarkfarms@gmail.com or 410-692-5905) and Matt Hafner (hafner.Matt@gmail.com or 410-971-3203). Description: Help determine breeding bird populations in Harford County for the MD Breeding Bird Atlas project. Details to be announced later.
6/5	8 AM - 12 PM	Maryland-DC Breeding Bird Atlas project	Host: Carroll County Bird Club. Contact David Smith, lacsmith12@comcast.net or 443-995-4108. Description: The focus will be to gain insights about how to identify evidence of breeding birds; and to document breeding birds from the Atlas block we are visiting. Meeting place TBA.
6/5-6	All Day	Western Maryland breeding bird specialties weekend.	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leader: John Dennehy at 410-653-5214 or jdennehy@verizon.net. Description: Overnight at Carey Run Sanctuary or hotel. Visit sites in Garrett and Allegany Counties for breeding Henslow's Sparrow, bobolink, rose-breasted grosbeak, and a variety of warblers. Ruffed Grouse also possible. Some short hikes (mostly level, but may be hilly), as well as roadside birding. RSVP required. Limit: 10.
6/6	8 AM – 12 PM	Breeding Bird Atlasing	Host: Kent County Bird Club. Leaders Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568, birdclub.kentcountymd@gmail.com or borealdee@gmail.com. Description: Join us as we explore a Kent County atlas block – learn to observe breeding behavior and how to contribute sightings to the Breeding Bird Atlas Project. Half day, bring snacks. Meet at the "Dollar General" parking lot (off Philosopher's Terrace) in Chestertown.
6/11 - 13	All Day	Virtual MOS Convention	See www.mosconvention.org for details.

6/12	10 AM – 12 PM	Habitat Walk: Prettyboy Reservoir, Shambergers Peninsula Trail	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leaders: Ted Martello, Baltimore City Forestry Board, and Carol Schreter C.Schreter@comcast.net or 410-664-5151. Description: Because the City reservoir pine forests planted in the 1930s are aging, an 11-acre patch was thinned or cleared in 2010. Walk a Forest Management Study site to examine trees planted there in 2012. Easy 1 mile walk along the Beckleysville Rd. fire trail.
6/12		Patuxent River at Brown's Bridge	Host: Montgomery Bird Club. For reservations, time and directions, contact leader Cheryl Hogue at cheryl.hogue@gmail.com. Description: We'll look for Cliff Swallows building mud nests. We will also explore wooded trails on WSSC property to observe other possible breeding birds including Scarlet Tanager, flycatchers, and thrushes. Be prepared for bright sunlight and possible biting insects. Trip will be cancelled in case of heavy rain or thunderstorms. Reservations required and the limit is 10.
6/12	8 AM – 12 PM	**Youth Birding**	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leader: Daisy Sudano, dsudanotraining@yahoo.com, 410-426-7627. Description: These walks are designed to encourage the appreciation of birds and bird habitat conservation to minors through mentorship and education. They will change monthly and may include youth-oriented education programs, youth birding trips, and competitions. Limit: 10.
6/12	8 AM – 12 PM	Breeding Bird Atlas Outing	Host: Carroll County Bird Club. Please contact David Smith at lacssmith12@comcast.net or 443-995-4108. Description: The focus of the outing will be to learn more about the Maryland-DC Breeding Bird Atlas project, to gain insights about how to identify evidence of breeding birds; and to document breeding birds from the block we are visiting. Meeting place to be announced.
6/13	9 – 11 AM	Marshy Point Nature Center	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leaders: Brent and Mary Byers, baypuffin@hotmail.com or 410-686-7294. Description: Easy half-day walk through varied habitats for feeder birds and other songbirds, raptors, and waterfowl. Half-mile trail leads to point overlooking Dundee Creek. All are welcome, including families. Telescopes useful. RSVP required. Limit: 10.
6/19	8 – 9:30 AM	Druid Hill Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Patterson Park Audubon Center-patterson.audubon.org. Description: Join Audubon and the Maryland Zoo to explore this leafy city park. From forest to lake, a variety of bird species await. For information, contact Patterson Park Audubon Center. Participants must adhere to our COVID code of conduct and register in advance at our website.
6/19	8:30 AM – 12 PM	Paddle at Tydings Park	Host: Harford Bird Club. Leaders Colleen Webster (cwebster@harford.edu or 410-459-4577) and Sue Procell (procellmd@gmail.com or 443-417-4919). Description: Join us at 8:30 AM at the boat launch ramp with your kayak, stand-up or canoe as we search for waterfowl, waders, peeps and songbirds. Osprey and Bald Eagle are also almost guaranteed.
6/26	8 – 9:30 AM	Patterson Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Patterson Park Audubon Center-patterson.audubon.org. Description: Join Audubon to explore this urban oasis in southeast Baltimore. With more than 200 species on record, the park is full of surprises. For directions, contact Patterson Park Audubon Center. Participants must adhere to our COVID code of conduct and register in advance at our website.
7/10	8 AM – 12 PM	**Youth Birding**	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leader: Daisy Sudano, dsudanotraining@yahoo.com, 410-426-7627. Description: These walks are designed to encourage the appreciation of birds and bird habitat conservation to minors through mentorship and education. They will change monthly and may include youth-oriented education programs, youth birding trips, and competitions. Limit: 10.
7/11	9 – 11 AM	Marshy Point Nature Center	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leaders: Brent and Mary Byers, baypuffin@hotmail.com or 410-686-7294. Description: Easy half-day walk through varied habitats for feeder birds and other songbirds, raptors, and waterfowl. Half-mile trail leads to point overlooking Dundee Creek. All are welcome, including families. Telescopes useful. RSVP required. Limit: 10.
7/17	6:30 AM – 12 PM	Birding the Walls-Cook Trail	Host: Harford Bird Club. Leaders Dave Webb (410-939-3537) and Jean Wheeler. Description: Meet at the Harford Community College Observatory at 6:30 AM. This trail connects HCC to Prospect Mill Park. Dozens of forest-interior dwelling species abound in the woods surrounding the trail. In the event of recent rains, wear appropriate footwear.
7/24	8 – 9:30 AM	Druid Hill Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Patterson Park Audubon Center-patterson.audubon.org. Description: Join Audubon and the Maryland Zoo to explore this leafy city park. From forest to lake, a variety of bird species await. For information, contact Patterson Park Audubon Center. Participants must adhere to our COVID code of conduct and register in advance at our website.
7/31	8 – 9:30 AM	Patterson Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Patterson Park Audubon Center-patterson.audubon.org. Description: Join Audubon to explore this urban oasis in southeast Baltimore. With more than 200 species on record, the park is full of surprises. For directions, contact Patterson Park Audubon Center. Participants must adhere to our COVID code of conduct and register in advance at our website.

8/8	9 – 11 AM	Marshy Point Nature Center	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leaders: Brent and Mary Byers, baypuffin@hotmail.com or 410-686-7294. Description: Easy half-day walk through varied habitats for feeder birds and other songbirds, raptors, and waterfowl. Half-mile trail leads to point overlooking Dundee Creek. All are welcome, including families. Telescopes useful. RSVP required. Limit: 10.
8/14	8 AM – 12 PM	**Youth Birding**	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leader: Daisy Sudano, dsudanotraining@yahoo.com, 410-426-7627. Description: These walks are designed to encourage the appreciation of birds and bird habitat conservation to minors through mentorship and education. They will change monthly and may include youth-oriented education programs, youth birding trips, and competitions. Limit: 10.
8/21	8 – 9:30 AM	Druid Hill Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Patterson Park Audubon Center-patterson.audubon.org. Description: Join Audubon and the Maryland Zoo to explore this leafy city park. From forest to lake, a variety of bird species await. For information, contact Patterson Park Audubon Center. Participants must adhere to our COVID code of conduct and register in advance at our website.
8/28	8 – 9:30 AM	Patterson Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Patterson Park Audubon Center-patterson.audubon.org. Description: Join Audubon to explore this urban oasis in southeast Baltimore. With more than 200 species on record, the park is full of surprises. For directions, contact Patterson Park Audubon Center. Participants must adhere to our COVID code of conduct and register in advance at our website.
8/31	8 - 11 AM	Cromwell Valley Park	Host: Baltimore Bird Club. Leader: TBA-check website for updates, https://baltimorebirdclub.org/ . Description: First in a series of weekly Tuesday morning walks to follow the progress of fall migration. This park has variety of habitats including fields, stream-side woods and hillside forest. Expect a variety of migrant and resident birds. Beginning birders welcome. RSVP to leader required. Limit: 10.

Meetings

All meetings are virtual, but not the picnics! Additional details, including links, will be posted on chapter web sites and the MOS calendar, as available.

5/4	7 – 9 PM	Baltimore Bird Club	"The Cohabitation of Shorebirds and Horseshoe Crabs" by Daisy Sudano.
5/4	7 - 9 PM	Patuxent Bird Club/PGAS	"Shorebird Identification Part I" by Gene Scarpulla
5/5	7 – 9 PM	Carroll County Bird Club	Topic TBA
5/6	7 – 9 PM	Frederick Bird Club	Andy Wilson will speak on How Drones Provide a New Way to Monitor Bird Populations
5/7	7 - 9 PM	Harford Bird Club	"Birding & Beyond in Cuba" by Paul J. Baicich & Soledad Pagliuca.
5/11	7 – 9 PM	Baltimore Bird Club	BBC Board Meeting
5/11	7 - 9 PM	Patuxent Bird Club/PGAS	"Shorebird Identification Part II" by Michael O'Brien
5/13	7:30 – 9 PM	Howard County Bird Club	"Birding and Beyond in Cuba" by Paul Baicich
5/19	7:30 – 9 PM	Montgomery Bird Club	South African Birds by Josh Engel
5/20	6:30 – 8:30 PM	Anne Arundel Bird Club	"Tiny Travelers: Saw-whet Owls of Maryland" by Melissa Boyle Acuti
5/25	7 – 8:30 PM	Washington Cty Bird Club	Speaker TBA
6/5	10 - 12 noon	MOS (virtual)	Board Meeting
6/8	7 – 9 PM	Baltimore Bird Club	BBC Board Meeting
6/8	7 – 9 PM	Patuxent Bird Club/PGAS	Members Night: Bird and birding photos by bird club members
6/11-13	All day	MOS	MOS Virtual Convention. For details see www.mosconvention.org
6/13	12:30 – 3:30 PM	Baltimore Bird Club	BBC Annual Picnic. Location TBD.

6/27	4 - 6:30 PM	Washington County Bird Club	Picnic at Fort Frederick SP. Call Anna Hutzell at 301-797-8454 if you have any questions.
7/16	6 - 9 PM	Harford Bird Club	Picnic/Social Gathering at Susquehannock Wildlife Society
May Count			
Information is current as of publication date, but subject to change if state pandemic guidance/restrictions change.			
5/1	Dorchester 107th May Count	Compiler Harry Armistead, harryarmistead@hotmail.com or 215-248-4120	
5/1	Fred Archibald May Count	Meet at Sanctuary at 6 AM. Contact David Smith, 410-549-7082	
5/8	Allegany May Count	Compiler is Mark Eanes, mdeanes@atlanticbb.net	
5/8	Anne Arundel May Count	Compiler Steve Sheffield, srsheffield@comcast.net	
5/8	Baltimore May Count	Coordinator: Libby Errickson, elizabeth.errickson@gmail.com	
5/8	Calvert May Count	Compiler is Sherman Suter, sjsuter29@verizon.net , 410-586-1073 or 703-768-5922	
5/8	Caroline May Count	Compiler is Debby Bennett, dabennett1996@gmail.com	
5/8	Carroll May Count	Contact Scott Hodgdon, scotthodgohn@msn.com	
5/8	Charles May Count	Compiler is Lynne Wheeler, somdaudubon@yahoo.com or 301-751-8097	
5/8	Dorchester 108th May Count	Compiler Harry Armistead, harryarmistead@hotmail.com or 215-248-4120	
5/8	Frederick May Count	Compiler David Smith, 410-549-7082	
5/8	Garrett May Count	Compiler Karl Schwalm, Karlandsharon@hotmail.com	
5/8	Harford May Count	Compiler TBD	
5/8	Howard May Count	Compilers are Amy Anderson, amyanderson72@gmail.com and Gregg Petersen, sig29@aol.com	
5/8	Kent May Count	Contact Walter Ellison, 410-778-9568 or rossgull61@gmail.com	
5/8	Montgomery May Count	Compiler Diane Ford, dmford455@yahoo.com .	
5/8	Prince George's May Count	Compiler Matt Felperin, mfelperin@nvrpa.org	
5/8	Somerset May Count	Compiler Pat Valdata, 302-563-7180 or pvaldata@charter.net	
5/8	St. Mary's May Count	Compiler J. Tyler Bell, jtylberbell@yahoo.com	
5/8	Talbot May Count	Contact Ron Ketter, 410-820-6165 or rgketter@gmail.com	
5/8	Washington May Count	Contact Mark Abdy, mjabdy@yahoo.com or 301-432-7696	
5/8	Wicomico May Count	Compiler Ellen Lawler, 410-546-9056 or emlawler534@comcast.net	
5/8	Worcester May Count	Compiler Marcia Balestri, mebalestri@gmail.com	
5/9	Audrey Carroll May Count	Meet at Sanctuary at 6 AM. Coordinator David Smith, 410-549-7082	