

# The Osprey

Newsletter of the Southern Maryland Audubon Society



*Rufous Hummingbird*  
Photo by: Bill Hubick

## In This Issue

**Hummingbirds at Home**

**GBBG eNewsletter**

**Reasons to Keep Counting  
with eBird**

**Tanagers - Coffee Birds**

**Audubon Day at Blackwater**

**Upcoming Events**

**SMAS MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

**May 7, 2014**

See page 2 for details



<http://somdaudubon.org/>

## Hummingbirds At Home

Watching hummingbirds is a favorite pastime for many birders and gardeners alike. These aerial wonders are fascinating and endearing as they flit about and feed on flowers and at feeders, visiting our yards and parks on their migration journeys during the spring.

Their small size belies their toughness – many hummingbirds migrate long distances and must eat several times their weight in nectar daily to stay alive. Their accelerated metabolism may keep hummingbirds moving at impressive speeds, but also means they live on the edge, consistently within hours of starving to death if they don't find food.

To live such high energy lifestyles hummingbirds must sync their migration and nesting times with the flowering of nectar-bearing plants. Climate change threatens to throw off this delicate balance, with unknown repercussions for hummingbirds. We know that scientific research will be essential for helping us understand how climate change is affecting hummingbirds and for learning what we can do about it. But it's not that simple. Collecting the necessary scientific data across large areas is difficult and costly.

Since the spring of 2013, over 9200 volunteers have shared over 26,000 observations of feeding hummingbirds with Audubon through our newest citizen science program, Hummingbirds at Home. The purpose of this innovative program is to gather data that will help us better understand how changing flowering patterns and supplemental feeding by people relate to the timing of hummingbird migration and breeding success, and how hummingbirds are impacted by feeders, non-native nectar sources in gardens, shifting flowering times, and climate change.

Since nectar is a critical resource for hummingbirds, fueling their ability to breed after migration, Audubon's Hummingbirds at Home program asks people to document what flowering plants the hummingbirds are feeding on in their backyards as well as whether hummingbird feeders are supplied and used. The ultimate goal of Hummingbirds at Home will be to develop a series of region-specific recommendations to help hummingbird lovers make their gardens and "patches" better stocked with nutrient-rich nectar sources, especially during the critical post-migration and breeding seasons.

In this family-friendly program, participants log hummingbird sightings and the flowering plants or feeders they visit online and with free mobile technology or via desktop computers. Participants can record surveys of their yards, as well as logging how often hummingbirds visit their nectar foods. As sightings are reported, participants can also view hummingbird sightings on the website in near real time!

To learn more about this exciting citizen science project, go to [www.hummingbirdsathome.org](http://www.hummingbirdsathome.org)

## Don't Miss Our SMAS Monthly Membership Meetings!

Thanks to Jean Artes, first time Program Chair, our monthly meetings continue to draw a fine attendance. The April meeting on Butterfly Biology and Gardening drew nearly 40 people, including 16 Southern Maryland Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists. And who would have predicted that the Gull Identification program the month before would have drawn 35 members, including closet gull enthusiasts not normally seen at our meetings. Don't miss our last meeting of the season on May 7, at the Leonardtown Library on the state's Salt Marsh Project. Our Audubon Maryland-DC leaders, David Curson and Krysta Hougen, will speak of their work in helping prepare these vital habitats for impacts of climate change. Enjoy fellowship and refreshments beginning at 7 p.m.

Be sure to thank our leaders in bringing us these meetings and also our interesting field trips led by long-term dedicated SMAS volunteers.

Carol Ghebelian, co-membership chair

[Editor's Note: Don't forget to thank Carol for all that she's done in many years of tireless service to SMAS!]



## GBBC eNewsletter March 2014 The next GBBC is February 13-16, 2015

## WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Karen Anderson, Valley Lee  
Lisa Banks, Fort Washington  
John Conlon, La Plata  
David Cooksey, La Plata  
Evelyn Dashiell, Pomfret  
Roger Haskett, Lusby  
Kurt & Gwyn Hein, Lexington Park  
John Hoger, Mechanicsville  
Eugene O. Jones, Huntingtown  
Clifford Ransome, White Plains  
Rick Sass, Lusby  
Charles & Gloria Sauter, California  
Melinda J Scott, Accokeek  
Cynthia Shoemaker, Marbury  
Paul Silbermann, Indian Head  
Janice Stottlemeyer, Mechanicsville  
Joan Thompson, Huntingtown  
Albert Zahniser, Solomons

## Fast Facts & Stats

It's time to put the exclamation point at the end of another exciting, record-breaking Great Backyard Bird Count with a look at how the February 14-17 GBBC stacked up by the numbers:

Number of checklists: **144,109**

Species observed: **4,296**

Countries participating: **135**

Estimated number of participants: **142,051**

## Top 10 countries by number of checklists

Rank	Country	# Checklists
1	United States	124,310
2	Canada	13,458
3	India	3,358
4	Australia	908
5	Mexico	546
6	Chile	356
7	Costa Rica	256
8	Puerto Rico	196
9	United Kingdom	162
10	Portugal	149

Head over to the GBBC website to [explore more results, including other Top 10 Lists.](#)

## Top Reasons to Keep Counting with eBird

Now that you've contributed to the Great Backyard Bird Count, we hope you will keep sharing your observations year-round with eBird. Why? Here are three of the top reasons:

**1. Birding with a Purpose.** If you already love to watch birds, sharing your observations is a small step that can make a big difference. Recently, eBird was featured in the journal *Biological Conservation*, highlighting how your checklists are used to advance science and conservation.

**2. Keeping Track of Your Sightings.** Recording your observations in eBird allows you to keep your personal checklists in one, permanently archived place so you can enjoy memories from the past and see how your sightings fit in to the big picture across continents and through time.

**3. It's Easy to Get Started.** You can use your same user name and password from the GBBC to enter bird checklists with eBird. We invite you to get started today at [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org).

**Thrasher**, sing own song -  
so content to twice honor  
others, lesson learned

**Fawn Birth**, trembling stilts,  
hikers hushed, just about connect -  
voice guilts, shouldn't stay

**Brown Creeper** always  
inching never satisfied  
next tree seduces

Al Schirmacher  
Muscotah, KS



**Brown Thrasher**  
Photo by: Bill Hubick

## Access Matters: Derailing?

If you have ever birded along a hiking/biking trail (i.e., "rail-trail") that is built on a former rail-bed, you know how important and useful such access sites can be.

But you might also be interested in knowing that in early March, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down a decision that is a blow to such rail-trails. The Supreme Court ruled (8-1) against the U.S. Government's interest in a former rail corridor that runs through land it used to own. The ruling stated that the U.S. did not retain a "reversionary interest" in the railroad corridor after conveying the adjacent lands to private owners.

This case focused on a former rail line in Wyoming, most of which was converted to the Medicine Bow Rail Trail.

This decision should not impact rail-trails that are on "railbanked" corridors (i.e., rail corridors that are preserved under the federal "railbanking law" for future rail use by being converted to a trail in the interim). But this decision could open up certain non-railbanked corridors to further litigation.

Trail advocates anticipate more cases in the future in which the federal government will be forced to compensate adjoining landowners in order to maintain public access to some popular trails. This could add up to be a significant challenge for the trail-building and trail-use communities.

The case is described in some detail here by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy:

<http://community.railstotrails.org/blogs/trailblog/archive/2014/03/17/what-the-marvin-m-brandt-case-means-for-america-s-rail-trails.aspx>

It's all about access for recreational activity, and for many readers of the E-bulletin this also means birding sites and birding activity.

Birding Community E-bulletin  
Paul J. Baicich  
410-992-9736  
[paul.baicich@verizon.net](mailto:paul.baicich@verizon.net)

You can access past E-bulletins on the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) website:  
[www.refugenet.org/birding/birding5.html](http://www.refugenet.org/birding/birding5.html)

# Audubon Day at Blackwater



Join fellow Audubon Chapter members from across the region at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge

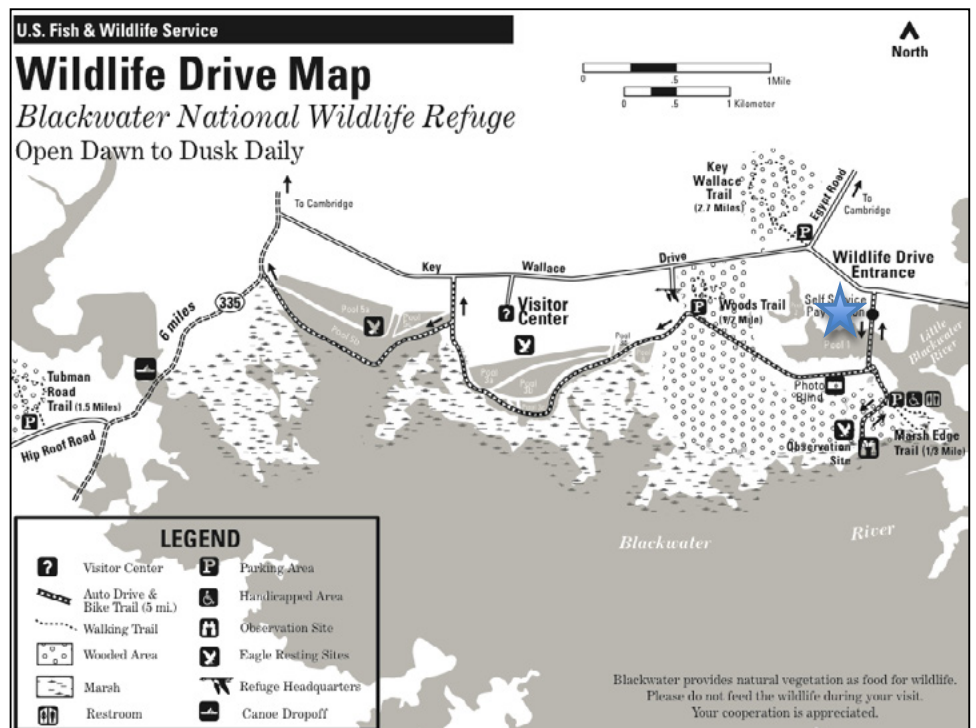
Pickering Creek Audubon Center is hosting a full day at Blackwater for Audubon Chapters. We'll get our hands dirty in the morning by helping to restore the salt marsh with a grass planting. In the afternoon, we'll tell the story of this threatened habitat by visiting locations normally closed to visitors. Lunch will be provided.

Call Pickering Creek's office, 410-822-4903, or email Krysta Hougen at [khougen@audubon.org](mailto:khougen@audubon.org) to reserve your spot!

Date: Saturday, May 31<sup>st</sup>  
Meet at the Education Building (★)  
Time: 10 am to 3 pm



Like us on Facebook to keep up-to-date on events and programs:  
[facebook.com/pickeringcreek](https://www.facebook.com/pickeringcreek)



## Tanagers - Coffee Birds

Are you enjoying a nice cup of morning coffee? These songbirds, the Western Tanager and the Scarlet Tanager, and your latte have a connection you may not have realized.

Each spring, these tanagers arrive after a long journey from Mexico and Central America. To us, spending the winter in Mexico may seem a glorious vacation, but the tanagers must labor continually to find suitable habitat with plenty of fruits, berries, and insects. Much of their prime wintering habitat has been turned into coffee plantations.

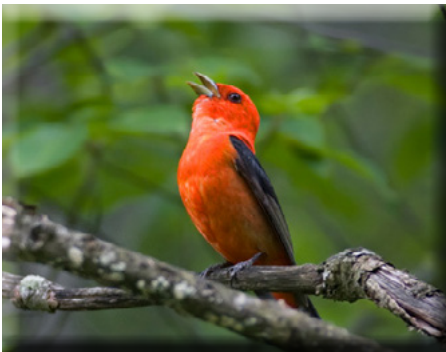
When coffee plantations employ traditional methods of growing coffee bushes under a tall canopy of trees, tanagers can enjoy a food-filled winter home. And you can rest easy with a delicious cup of shade-grown brew. But where the tall, shade-giving trees have been cut down to grow coffee in the direct sunlight, what is also removed is the habitat tanagers require to rest and feed.

To be sure the tanagers continue to return for the summer, consider reaching for shade-grown coffee.

It's satisfying to know that even a simple change in habits can have a positive impact on birds. To find where you can purchase shade-grown coffee near you, come to our website, BirdNote.org.

Written by Frances Wood © 2014 Tune In to Nature.org  
April 2014

Scarlet Tanager  
Photo by: Bill Hubrick



## Free Bird Checklists for Major World Areas

We have comprehensive checklists, with endemics labeled, for every nation in the world, almost all of the world's major islands or island groups, and each U.S. state or Canadian province. We will send you one as a text file attached to an e-mail in reply to an e-mail from you telling us which one you want. There is no charge.

Robert Eisberg  
SANTA BARBARA SOFTWARE PRODUCTS  
Our world birding software is demonstrated  
[www.birdbase.com](http://www.birdbase.com)  
E-mail: [sbsp@aol.com](mailto:sbsp@aol.com)

Southern Maryland Audubon Society

## ADOPT-A-RAPTOR

Foster Parents Needed!!



The Southern Maryland Audubon Society supports raptor conservation and research projects in the Southern Maryland area through the "Adopt-A-Raptor" Program. The program currently includes four species: **Osprey, Barn Owl, American Kestrel and Northern Saw-whet Owl.** Each bird is banded by a licensed bird bander with a serially numbered metal band, in cooperation with the U.S. Bird Banding Laboratory. A limited number of birds are available for adoption each year!

**NEW FOR 2013!! "Adopt-A-Nest" now available for Osprey, Barn Owl & Kestrels!**

### **Adoptive "parents" will receive:**

A certificate of adoption with the bird's band number, and location and date of banding.

Information on the ecology and migration patterns of the species

Any other pertinent information that may become available

### **Your support helps provide:**

- Barn Owl Nest Boxes
- Osprey Nesting Platforms
- Kestrel Nest Boxes
- Mist Nets or Banding Supplies

Complete the form below to "Adopt-A-Raptor" with the Southern Maryland Audubon Society

Mail completed form to: *Melissa Boyle, Adopt-a-Raptor,  
10455 Point Lookout Rd. Scotland, MD 20687*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
as it should appear on Adoption Certificate

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I wish to adopt:

\_\_\_\_\_ (# of) Osprey, \$10 each / \$25 per nest

\_\_\_\_\_ (# of) Barn Owl, \$25 each / \$50 per nest

\_\_\_\_\_ (# of) Northern Saw-whet Owl, \$30 each

\_\_\_\_\_ (# of) American Kestrel, \$35 each / \$75 per nest

Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

*Make checks payable to: Southern Maryland Audubon Society*



## UPCOMING EVENTS cont.

### May 10 – SATURDAY – All Day COUNTY MAY COUNTS

Calvert, Charles, Prince George's, St. Mary's Counties

Help is always appreciated from all: backyard birders, beginners, new members. This is a great way to learn! Data and information help save our birds! The county coordinators for you to contact are as follows:

Calvert: Sue Hamilton  
(410-586-1494, [seal10n2002@yahoo.com](mailto:seal10n2002@yahoo.com))  
Charles: George Jett  
(301-843-3524, [gjett@comcast.net](mailto:gjett@comcast.net))  
Prince George's: Fred Fallon  
(301-249-1518, [fwfallon@earthlink.net](mailto:fwfallon@earthlink.net))  
St. Mary's: Patty Craig  
(301-872-5670, [walelu67@yahoo.com](mailto:walelu67@yahoo.com))

### Barn Owls & Breakfast, Charles County, Youth especially welcome!

Mid-May to early June, Exact date to be determined, it all depends on the owls!! Watch our Osprey newsletter or website for date and details.

Leader: Mike Callahan  
(240-765-5192, [raptorsrulemc@gmail.com](mailto:raptorsrulemc@gmail.com))

A new version of B&B! Come and enjoy breakfast before helping our Raptor Conservation Committee Chairman Mike check a Barn Owl nest box, and hopefully banding the nestling owls. This trip takes place on private property in Charles County and the location will not be advertised. The date is dependent on the age of the nestling owls. RSVP required. Directions will be given upon reservation. There is a small fee involved to cover the cost of food. Please bring your own reusable plate, mug and utensils to help make this a "greener" trip. Limited space available.

### June 1 – SUNDAY – 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

#### Annual Meeting

Clearwater Nature Center, Prince George's County  
11000 Thrift Road, Clinton, MD 20735

Potluck Lunch	1:00 – 2:15
Host's Welcome	2:15 – 2:30
Meeting	2:30 – 3:00
Bird Walk	3:00 – 4:00

Come join SMAS for our Annual Picnic Meeting at this wonderful nature center located within Cosca Regional Park, a part of Prince George's County Parks and Recreation. Clearwater Nature Center features a small indoor pond, live animal exhibits, a lapidary workshop, and seasonal gardens. Directions from Waldorf, take 301 north, at the Rt. 301/Rt. 5 split, bear left onto Rt. 5 (Branch Ave.). At second light, turn left onto Brandywine Rd. At next light,

turn left onto Thrift Rd. Remain on Thrift Rd. 1.5 miles until you see the sign on your right for Clearwater Nature Center.

### June 7 – SATURDAY – 11:00 p.m. (yes!!)

#### Field Trip

#### Flag Ponds, Calvert County

"FULL MOON HORSESHOE CRAB ADVENTURE AT FLAG PONDS"

Leaders: Andy Brown and Melissa Boyle  
([melissaboyle3@gmail.com](mailto:melissaboyle3@gmail.com), or 443-340-3035)

The horseshoe crab is one of nature's miracles, and their eggs fuel the amazing migration of shorebirds! Want to see horseshoe crabs spawning on the beach by moonlight? Join us for this unique chance at water's edge. Bring flashlights, wear comfortable walking shoes that can get wet. Meet at the gate to Flag Ponds. RSVP to Melissa (see above) by June 4.

### June 22 – SUNDAY – 2:00 p.m. **PLAY BALL!!!!**

#### "FUN"-Raiser

Regency Furniture Stadium, Waldorf, MD  
11765 St. Linus Drive, Waldorf, MD 20602

Southern Maryland Blue Crabs Baseball "FUN" - Raising for SMAS

Please help us raise funds to send a southern Maryland teacher to Audubon Camp at Hog Island, Maine. Audubon helps to provide environmental and avian education to our teachers so they can educate our children. Your \$13.00 ticket will provide \$6.50 to SMAS, and you can have a fun afternoon! Tickets MUST be ordered online!

- Go to [www.somdbluecrabs.com](http://www.somdbluecrabs.com)
- Click on the SMAS Fundraising icon
- Enter our fundraising code: SMAS
- Click "Buy"
- Select your seats and complete your order

### June 27 – FRIDAY – 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

#### Field Trip

#### Patuxent River Park – Jug Bay, Prince George's County

"OSPREY BANDING TRIP"

Leaders: Melissa Boyle ([melissaboyle3@gmail.com](mailto:melissaboyle3@gmail.com), or 443-340-3035) and Greg Kearns

Join us for our annual Southern Maryland Audubon Society Osprey Banding Trip at Jug Bay. Do not hesitate to sign up for this event if you have never been lucky to experience this truly beautiful park and see Osprey chicks up close and personal. The parks naturalist, Greg Kearns is one of the best in his field and provides a very entertaining, fact-filled and fun outing. **This opportunity is limited to 15 participants!** Youths Welcome (younger than 12 with adult). Cost is \$12/person, payable the day of the trip. RSVP to Melissa (see above) by June 23.

**EDITOR:** Tyler Bell E-mail: [jtylerbell@yahoo.com](mailto:jtylerbell@yahoo.com)

The deadline for the Osprey is the fifth of each month. Please send all short articles, reports, unique sightings, conservation updates, calendar items, etc. to the above address.

#### 2013-2014 Officers

President, Mike Callahan (240-765-5192)  
Vice-President, Michael Patterson (301-752-5763)  
Secretary, Lynne Wheeler (301-743-3236)  
Treasurer, Will Daniel (240-518-8006)