

The Osprey

Newsletter of the Southern Maryland Audubon Society

Southern Maryland Audubon Participates in the Charles County Fair by Lynne Wheeler



Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Photo by: Bill Hubick

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in the Chesapeake Bay

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<http://somdaudubon.org/>

September 12 – 15th was the 90th anniversary of the Charles County Fair. This year, the Charles County Garden Club asked our society to participate as an exhibitor in the Flowers category an educational exhibit. The board gladly accepted this honor and challenge.

Members may have noticed that in the last year we have been concentrating our efforts on educating southern Maryland gardeners on the benefits of using native plants. Last May we had a very successful native plant sale, and now we had an opportunity to educate many Charles County fair attendees.

We formed a committee, consisting of Lynne Wheeler, Mary Ann Scott, and Nancy Megas, to plan and execute. Many emails confirmed our need for an educational poster. We decided to highlight four native plants under the four plant types Trees, Shrubs, Flowers and Vines. We had fun with our descriptions and pictures, and Mary Ann's expertise with graphic design and printing contacts was of great assistance. We also created a new informational pamphlet titled "Supporting Birds and Butterflies Using Native Plants." Visitors were provided copies of our new pamphlet and our SMAS Fall Program.

Lynne had fun compiling a dozen representative live native plants to display, many from her garden. It was a challenge in late September to find plants still in bloom, but she succeeded in a display of bloomers and plants that had already gone to seed. We included six additional informational native plant placards flanking our new Birdscaping poster. The final whimsical touch of birds scattered around the backboard of the display made a visual tie-in to our theme; native plants are important providers for birds. Nancy's keen eye in setting up the display was very beneficial, and we had a great surprise in finding our Audubon member Julie Daniel at the fair that day. We dragged her over and benefited from her judicial eyes, let alone her added height (the rest of us were vertically challenged!). Thanks Julie!

It seems our hard work and efforts were appreciated by the Charles County Garden Club, members of the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland, as they awarded us their Educational Top Exhibitor Award, and we won a Blue Ribbon too! Hopefully we educated some gardeners on how to provide more food and nectar to our favorite garden visitors. Get educated yourself and visit the SMAS website at www.somdaudubon.org and download a copy of our new native plant pamphlet. It's always a good time to plan your garden into a more diverse and healthier place for our smaller friends.



Hog Island Scholarship

The Southern Maryland Audubon Society is now accepting applications from Southern Maryland teachers, naturalists, and environmental educators for a scholarship to attend a summer educational program on Hog Island in Maine. This scholarship, which is valued at nearly \$1,000, will cover tuition, room, and board. The recipient is responsible for travel expenses. One scholarship will be awarded for either the "Field Ornithology" workshop to be held June 15-20, 2014 or the "Sharing Nature: An Educator's Week" workshop to be held July 20-25, 2014.

SMAS has a long history of raising funds in order to award these types of scholarships to local educators. Past winners have returned from their experience truly appreciative of the chance to learn from knowledgeable staff in a unique environment. For more information about these experiences, visit <http://projectpuffin.org/OrnithCamps.html>

Applicants must be educators currently teaching in Southern Maryland. To apply, please send a one page letter explaining:

- 1) How you will benefit from the Hog Island opportunity
- 2) How you will use the workshop experience in your teaching to support the SMAS mission.

Your signed letter must contain your mailing address, email address, and phone number. Along with this letter, please include a signed letter of recommendation from your immediate supervisor describing your interests, abilities, and how the experience will benefit your organization and audience. Scholarship recipients will be required to submit a written report of their experiences within a month of their return. The deadline for applications is February 14, 2014. Please send application documents as attachments to:

Michael Patterson, Education Committee Chair, SMAS
michael.patterson@pgparks.com

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Jean Burns, Lusby
Nikki L. Burch, Clinton
James Davis, Temple Hills
Katherine Davis, Waldorf
Millicent Dew, La Plata
Kristen Kennedy, Great Mills
Al Kuhn, Huntingtown
Dianne Lyon, Swan Point
Kelly Mahoney, Mechanicsville
Dale Raney, Lexington Park
Morgan Zimmerman, Mechanicsville
Lillian Conner-Kelow, Temple Hills

Winter Finch Forecast 2013-2014

As days shorten and cooler temperatures descend into North America, it's time for one of our favorite features of the Autumn — Ron Pittaway's Winter Finch Forecast. Here it is: This is not an irruption (flight) year for winter finches, but there will be some southward movement of most species into their normal winter ranges. Ontario's cone crops (except white pine) and deciduous seed/berry crops are generally above average to excellent. Very good to bumper spruce cone crops extend across Canada's boreal forest from Yukon (bumper) east to Atlantic Canada, with rare exceptions. Cone crops are good to excellent (poor on white pine) in central Ontario and Laurentian Mountains in southern Quebec with heavy crops extending east through the Adirondack Mountains of New York and northern New England States.

For the full report, click on this link:
<http://ebird.org/content/ebird/news/wf1314/>

Ron Pittaway, Ontario Field Ornithologists
Toronto, Ontario

Bird Conservation Updates from American Bird Conservancy - October 2, 2013

Brochures to Prevent Bird Collisions Available for Distribution

Collisions with glass constitute a huge source of bird mortality, as many as one billion each year. To help homeowners prevent birds hitting their windows by using a variety of treatments to the glass ABC has produced a flyer that can be downloaded at:

www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/collisions/pdf/collisions_flyer.pdf

We have printed flyers available for distribution in boxes of 3,600 or lots of 1,000. If your organization is interested, please contact Christine Sheppard, csheppard@abcbirds.org with the amount you wish to distribute and a mailing address. The only cost to your organization is shipping \$10 for 1,000 or \$30 for a box of 3,600. Thanks for helping to spread the word!

For more information about ABC's collisions program see:

<http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/releases/130912.html>

Steve Holmer
Senior Policy Advisor
American Bird Conservancy &
Director, Bird Conservation Alliance
202-234-7181 ext. 216
sholmer@abcbirds.org

Imperiled Red Knot Proposed for Listing as Threatened by Wildlife Agency

MEDIA RELEASE

Contact: Robert Johns, 202-234-7181 ext.210
bjohns@abcbirds.org



Red Knots and Dunlin
Photo by: Mike Parr

(Washington, DC, September 27, 2013) American Bird Conservancy (ABC), one of the nation's leading bird conservation groups, today welcomed the decision by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to formally propose an Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing of "threatened" for the highly imperiled *rufa* Red Knot, a shorebird which flies more than 9,300 miles from south to north every spring and repeats the trip in reverse every autumn, making this bird one of the longest-distance migrants in the animal kingdom.

Surveys of wintering knots along the coasts of southern Chile and Argentina and during spring migration in Delaware Bay on the U.S. coast indicated that a serious population decline occurred in the 2000s. Specifically, the 2011 count of the main wintering population of the bird in South America, found a decline from the previous winter of at least 5,000 birds—approximately one third of the population.

"There is a compelling scientific case for ESA listing. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decision to list the *rufa* Red Knot, though long overdue, offers hope that future generations of Americans will be able to witness this migratory marvel," said Darin Schroeder, Vice President of Conservation Advocacy for American Bird Conservancy.

Red Knot survival has been tied to battles over state and federal management practices associated with a key food source for the bird, horseshoe crab populations along the shores of New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland. An abundant horseshoe crab population provides critical fuel for the bird's migrations as they put on weight by stopping at Delaware Bay to feed on horseshoe crab eggs. Birds with higher weights have a better chance of reaching the Arctic to breed and survive into the next year. In 2011, ABC organized a group meeting with FWS ESA

Program staff, regarding ABC's longstanding request to list the *rufa* Red Knot. Because of new information presented (including the 2011 count), FWS agreed to issue a proposed listing of the *rufa* Red Knot.

Despite this growing evidence of over exploitation of the horseshoe crab population, Atlantic States Marine Fish Commission has not the reduced harvest significantly in the last six years. Unfortunately, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, which regulates the horseshoe crab harvest, dismantled its own shorebird technical committee after it recommended a moratorium on harvests.

Background:

- Since 2005, four formal requests to list the Red Knot under the Endangered Species Act have been submitted to the FWS. Citing a lack of resources and other priorities, the Service chose not to list the bird but placed it on the candidate list in 2006. Since then, Red Knot numbers have continued to fall.

- The decline of Red Knots and other shorebird species has been caused by a dramatically diminished supply of horseshoe crab eggs after millions of crabs were removed from the Bay beginning in the 1990s.

- When Red Knots leave Delaware Bay in poor condition due to the lack of horseshoe crab eggs, they either die before ever arriving in the Arctic or arrive in too poor a condition to successfully reproduce. As a result, adult birds are dying off without being replaced by juveniles, leading to a decline in population.

- Attempts to rebuild the Delaware Bay horseshoe crab population through minimal reductions in harvest quotas have to date been unsuccessful. The State of New Jersey implemented a moratorium on horseshoe crab harvesting in 2008.

- Governments and scientists from five other countries where Red Knots breed, stopover, or winter are studying and working to address the other threats the species faces. At a meeting attended by many of the knot experts, they agreed that rebuilding the horseshoe crab population at Delaware Bay by implementing a moratorium until recovery occurs is the top management priority.

Red Knots are not the only species affected by the horseshoe crab fishery. Other species including Sanderlings, Ruddy Turnstones, and Semipalmated Sandpipers also depend on an abundant supply of horseshoe crab eggs at the Delaware Bay stopover. Each of these species has experienced significant declines, as well.

OUT-OF-SEASON; OUT-OF-RANGE HUMMINGBIRDS

Hummingbirds are fascinating animals. This was a good year for our nesting Ruby-throats, but they are leaving. Most of our nesting birds leave the region by mid October, but I recommend leaving your hummingbird feeders out from now until January 1 for two reasons. Migrant Ruby-throated that might stop by need additional energy for the dangerous trip south, and this is the time period when non-breeding hummingbirds start showing up in Maryland

I call non-breeding species in our region "out-of-season, out-of-range birds". Maryland now has four documented non-breeding hummingbird species on the state list: Rufous, Calliope, Anna's and Allen's Hummingbirds. The District of Columbia has a documented Black-chinned. All are rare visitors. They show up in the east during October through January. For example, in 2008 within about a 20-mile stretch in Calvert County along the western side of the Chesapeake Bay, we had the fourth Maryland state record of a Calliope Hummingbird (North Beach), a hatch-year female Rufous (Port Republic), and a first Maryland state record hatch-year female Allen's (Prince Frederick). The Allen's was discovered on December 23. To see images of a number of these rare hummingbird visit www.georgejett.net.

All these records resulted from hummingbird feeders being left out to attract birds during the October to January period. There is absolutely no truth to the old wives' tale that if you leave out your feeder the birds won't leave, and will freeze in the winter. Hummingbirds migrate based on the available light and suitable weather conditions. Suitable weather is a big high pressure with a good tail wind. Hummingbirds leave when the available daylight triggers chemicals in the brain to tell them it is time to move along, and this occurs around the fall equinox – late September.

These rare visitors are normally hatch year birds that have yet to learn which way to migrate. Hatch-year birds are those born this spring or summer. We have two Rufous Hummingbird records for Charles, and many others across the state. So many that the Maryland rare birds records committee no longer reviews this species, but the other species are reviewable. If you get a hummingbird after November 1 please report it to me. I can be reached at gmjett@comcast.net.

Rufous and Allen's are very hard to separate in the field. They are in the genus *Selasphorus*, and non-adult males look very similar. Proper identification is important. This is done by certified hummingbird banders. Fortunately I know two in the area. You need detailed measurements of the bird in hand, especially when you are determining the first state or county records. Documenting these birds to species help provide useful scientific data on the migration of these birds, and you could be a part of learning more about these amazing animals. Additionally, the Allen's stayed until December 29, and as many as 50 avid birders got to see this new state bird due to the generosity of the property owner. The Allen's probably migrated from

northern California, and went east instead of south to Mexico where the species normally overwinters. Because the bird got extra feed during her stay in Maryland, she likely had a more successful trip south once she decided to continue migration.

Non-breeding hummingbirds will be hungry when they arrive from the long flight from as far away as Alaska. When leaving out your feeders please make sure your feeder is clean, the food is fresh, the feeder is located where you can see it easily, and check it on a daily basis. This way you will know when you have a potential non-Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and the bird will be provided a healthy meal. If it gets below 20 degrees at night, bring in the feeder so the liquid feed won't freeze. Nothing worse than to arrive and find a frozen dinner! I use one part sugar and three parts water for non-breeding hummingbird bait. It is a higher energy source than I feed during the normal breeding season of April to September. Sugar and water will freeze around 20 degrees, so to prevent damage to your feeder when ice expands inside it, fill it just two-thirds full. If a hard freeze is expected, it is best to bring the feeder in at night. Put the feeder out about one-half hour before sunrise as these birds tend to feed early. When you put out the feeder in the morning it will be liquid and ready to help the bird survive.

I have over the years received several communications asking if hummingbirds are supposed to be here on Thanksgiving. At that point I ask the informant where do you live. Will you be the next person to help out these fascinating animals?

Good bird watching, and if anyone asks you why they are called hummingbirds, tell them they don't know the words.

George Jett Waldorf, MD. gmjett@comcast.net
www.georgejett.net

CHAPTER-ONLY DUES DUE

Chapter-only dues run from fiscal year July - June. If you have not renewed, please use attached form and send in NOW to avoid a postage stamped snail mail reminder. If you are unsure of your renewal status contact Lynne Wheeler (301-743-3236, comstockel@aol.com) or Carol Gheblian (301-753-6754, gheblian@comcast.net). Thanks for your continued support of SMAS.

Rarity Focus

Andy Brown reported a Dark-eyed Junco at Battle Creek Cypress Swamp on September 25. This is the first report, along with another from Cromwell Valley Park in Baltimore County on the same date, for Maryland this fall/winter. To see a graph showing the abundance of juncos in Maryland, go to this link: <http://tinyurl.com/junco-arrival-in-MD>

Tyler Bell found a Western Kingbird along the powerline cut on the road into Flag Ponds Park on September 11. The bird was photographed but was not relocated, unfortunately. This is likely the fourth record for the county.



Western Kingbird
Photo by: Tyler Bell

Logging Industry Loses Another Attack on Marbled Murrelets

Noah Greenwald, Center for Biological Diversity
(503) 484-7495

Shy seabirds that feed at sea and lay their single egg on the branches of old trees along the Pacific Coast, Marbled Murrelets kept some much-needed Endangered Species Act protections last week when a court rejected still more claims from the timber industry aimed at opening up logging in the birds' habitat.

In 1992 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service protected Marbled Murrelets in Washington, Oregon and California because of old-growth logging. But the timber industry put up a years-long fight, repeatedly trying to strip protections from the bird to get access to coastal forests. The Center and its allies defended the species.

In its ruling the district court rejected logging industry claims that murrelets in central California could not be considered part of the protected population; it also refused to eliminate critical habitat protections during the three-year period when the Fish and Wildlife Service will re-examine its 1996 critical habitat designation for the species.

"This decision ends a dark chapter in the effort to ensure the survival of the highly endangered Marbled Murrelet," said Noah Greenwald, the Center's endangered species director.

Read more:

http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/news/press_releases/2013/marbled-murrelet-09-05-2013.html

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

November 6 – WEDNESDAY – 7:30 p.m.

Monthly Meeting Program

La Plata Volunteer Fire Department, Charles County
911 Washington Avenue, La Plata, MD 20646
“The Maryland Biodiversity Project”
Jim Brighton, Naturalist and Photographer

The Maryland Biodiversity Project was started in June, 2012 by Bill Hubick and Jim Brighton to thoroughly catalog the living things of Maryland. We have already cataloged over 10,000 species, including over 3,200 species with photographs contributed by more than 130 photographers. We are excited to collaborate with the many exceptional naturalists in and around Maryland in making this an indispensable resource for conservation and education. Do not miss this very interesting program!!

November 23 - SATURDAY – 8:00 a.m. – Noon

Field Trip

Mattawoman Natural Environment Area, Charles County
“EARLY WATERFOWL FROM THE GEORGE WILMOT TRAIL”
Leader: Gwen Brewer (301-843-3524, glbrewer@comcast.net)

Come search for migrating waterfowl and songbirds in this prime habitat! Up to 5,000 individuals and 13 different species of waterfowl have been present, including Eurasian Wigeon. From Rt. 225 (Hawthorne Road)/Rt. 224 (Chicamuxen Road) intersections take Rt. 224, go approximately ½ mile and take a left into Lackey High School. Meet in the Lower (2nd) parking lot. Bring a spotting scope if you have one, and be prepared for a moderate walk. No facilities and no fee. This is joint trip with the Audubon Naturalist Society. RSVP required.

December 4 – WEDNESDAY – 7:30 p.m.

Monthly Meeting Program

Leonardtwn Library, St. Mary's County
23250 Hollywood Road (Rt. 245), Leonardtown, MD 20650
“Local Photographers Night and Holiday Cheer”

Come show what you have photographed on trips, backyards, and local birding hot spots. Feel free to bring your own photos, hard copy or disc; a laptop will be available for use. Enjoy an evening of sharing and viewing while sampling cakes and cookies. A great start for the holiday season!

December 6 AND December 13

FRIDAY – 8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Field Trip

Myrtle Point Park, St. Mary's County
“WINTER OWL PROWL”

Leader: Bob Boxwell (410-610-5124, bobboxwell@hotmail.com)

Youths especially welcome!

This trip is co-sponsored with the Friends of Myrtle Point Park and is an annual event which attempts to “call out” the resident owls of the park. Owls are nocturnal, and therefore, not easy to spot. We will meet in front of the park gates and attempt to attract owls by having them respond to recorded calls. Please dress for the weather, but avoid “noisy” clothing (please no snowsuits!). This event is weather dependent. Rain or high winds will result in cancellation. To find Myrtle Point Park, take Rt. 4 in St. Mary's County to Patuxent Boulevard, and follow to the end.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS 2013/2014

Dec. 15 Port Tobacco Count

Gwen Brewer

glbrewer@comcast.net

Dec. 22 Point Lookout Count

Bob Boxwell

bobboxwell@hotmail.com

Dec. 29 Patuxent River

Andy Brown

brownaj@co.cal.md.us

Jan. 5 Ft. Belvoir

Carol Gheblian

gheblian@comcast.net

Interesting Internet Links

Youth Division of the Maryland Ornithological Society

- Did you know this excellent site exists? It features helpful tips for getting started, a bird quiz, and programs and field trips for young birders. It's an important URL to have handy for anyone who asks how they can get their kid(s) involved in birding.
- <http://www.ymos.org/>

Hitler Gets to 700

- Some inappropriate language, in text form, appears in this otherwise very humorous jab at Hitler as portrayed as a rabid ABA lister!
- <http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=jbohMUh1QnQ>

Eagle Versus Deer

- <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/09/130923114120.htm>

Parahawking: Taking Flight With Raptors

- <http://www.audubonmagazine.org/articles/birds/taking-flight-raptors>

EDITOR: Tyler Bell E-mail: 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.