

# The Osprey

Newsletter of the Southern Maryland Audubon Society



Cerulean Warbler  
Photo by: Dean Newman

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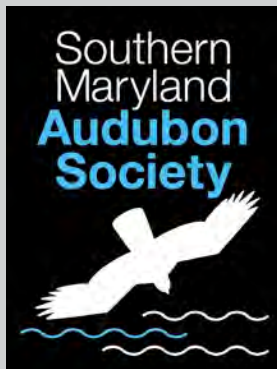
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<http://somdaudubon.org/>

## President's Perch

Greetings, friends, and welcome to what promises to be an unusual program season at the Southern Maryland Audubon Society. Sadly, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, our trip leaders have made the hard decision to cancel our field outings this fall. We are disappointed, but please know that the health and safety of our members come first. Thankfully, our monthly meetings, with guest speakers, can continue in the virtual realm. We plan to use the popular webinar and meeting platform, Zoom. Please see our program listing for more details. Over the next few months, how else can we serve you? Some have mentioned organizing a "big sit" or perhaps "pop-up" bird outings of just a few people. Trying situations like these demand new thinking and flexibility. Please email me at the address below and share your wish list and creative ideas!

Although summer is traditionally quiet for the SMAS board, we used this time to make an important upgrade. Have you seen our redesigned website? Our goals were to make it mobile friendly and more informative. With the launch in June, we included new descriptions of our work as well as information about native plants, bird feeding and nest boxes, window strikes, bird rescue, and the problems with outdoor cats. We also provide links to webcams and more resources for beginning birders and youths learning at home. Check it out at [SoMdAudubon.org](http://SoMdAudubon.org). We are most grateful for your constructive feedback!

If your summer travel plans were quashed, then you'll sympathize with our 2020 scholarship winners who were notified that the National Audubon Society cancelled this summer's programs at Hog Island, Maine. But all is well; those same recipients have a raincheck for next year's camp instead. In lieu of travel, I spent my early summer working on the Maryland/DC Breeding Bird Atlas. With each outing, I learned something new and improved my observation skills. Amid the isolation of working at home, watching birds mate, build nests, and feed young became a peaceful, reassuring antidote.

In these unprecedented times, many people are finding solace and contentment in nature. Perhaps more conservationists will be minted through this trial. At least one of our goals must be to reach out to others and make them feel safe and welcome---in other words, take them under our wing!

Please check our website and Facebook pages in the coming weeks; we will respond to changing circumstances and add new kinds of events, if at all possible. Meanwhile, stay safe and well, everyone.

Tiffany Farrell  
[somdaudubon.president@gmail.com](mailto:somdaudubon.president@gmail.com)

## Block Party

Widewater NE, CE, SE, Nanjemoy SW - Charles County

Anyone who has visited the Nanjemoy area in SW Charles County is aware that we have big parties down here, so forgive us for having to write about four blocks, hence – this is a BIG block party! Join us for a trip down Rt. 224, Riverside Road, as we explore a beautiful road along the Potomac River. Your outing will reveal an impressive riparian forested landscape with peeks to the river. Charles County has the third highest percentage of forest land in Maryland that offers us a plethora of nesting birds. Tulip Poplar, Swamp Chestnut, Pin and White Oaks, Beech, Sassafras, Sycamore, and Loblolly Pine are some of the dominant tree species in this area.

Much of this forested area is defined as the Nanjemoy Important Bird Area and extends approximately 9 miles north to south and seven miles east to west. As you travel, while public access in some areas can be limited, it is possible to pull off onto the soft shoulders of the road. There are also multiple Maryland Department of Natural Resources or Bureau of Land Management areas to look and listen for birds, or the open areas at the numerous bridge crossings - which we highly recommend. Riverside Road itself has very light traffic, especially early in the morning. Walking/birding along it is quite safe and peaceful. As you stop in the road and bird, very friendly locals will likely stop and say hello.

The east entrance of Riverside Road is approximately 29 miles south of the Washington, DC Beltway exit for MD Route 210, where it intersects with Chicamuxen Road. At Riverside Road mile 1.5, you reach the tip of the **Widewater NE** block. At mile 2.6 there is a place to pull over on the right near Sandy Point Road to check out the woods along the road. At mile 4.1 is a right hand entrance into Mallow Bay Park – a Charles County



Hot Spot with a current species list of 127. There are several miles of trails and magnificent views of the Potomac River. Here you can see the infamous WW I ship “graveyard” – the Ghosts of Mallow Bay. Mallow Bay Park is a must see on your trip and has been recently designated

a National Marine Sanctuary. Many view the sunken ships by kayak, and, most importantly, this location has well maintained facilities, the only ones on this journey. Scan from the overlook area for multiple Osprey nests on the *Accomac* shipwreck. This location also offered up breeding Great Blue Herons, and you will enjoy the numerous Bald Eagles flying in the area. The land trail to the left of the overlook is known for Louisiana Waterthrush and numerous Forest Interior Dwelling Species. This year the Yellow-throated Warblers were very vociferous!

At mile 4.7 Riverside Road intersects with Liverpool Point Road at the southern end of the Widewater NE block. Turning right on to Liverpool Road there is a parking area at 0.1 miles on the right for an access point into Nanjemoy NRMA and the NE Block. At mile 4.8 you have crossed into the **Widewater CE** block, where there is a parking area for Douglas Point Recreation Area



North trail head. One mile further south at mile 5.8, is the parking area for Douglas Point South trail head. At mile 5.9 is a left hand parking lot for more access to the Nanjemoy NRMA. From the parking lot, there is an easy walk south along Riverside

Road to one of 224’s wetlands “dips”. These areas have over 120 documented species according to eBird, and opportunities to hike trails into the

forest, or do some bushwhacking in the NRMA if you are up for it. At 9240-9266 Riverside Road, coordinates 38.4216, -77.2540, stop at the first bridge of note. This area offers great marsh habitat on both sides of the



bridge and gave us the first breeding Northern Rough-winged Swallows for the county on June 13, as well as breeding Tree Swallow, Common Grackle, Summer Tanager, and a myriad of other species coded Possible and Probable. We will have fun Confirming them as we continue with the atlas project. As you proceed a short distance to 12333 Riverside Road, coordinates 38.38804, -77.23192, you again can stop in the road where wetland areas are visible. This location offered many good breeding birds. We Confirmed Prothonotary Warbler delivering food to a tree cavity here as well as Red-headed Woodpecker, all while listening to a pair of Barred Owls.

Three more miles south and you cross into **Widewater SE**. This comprises approximately one mile of Riverside Road, and a half-mile of Smith Point Road. A good parking spot is the corner of Smith Point Road and Riverside Road. Traffic at this location is extremely light – perhaps one car or less per half-hour in the morning – so walking along the road is very pleasant. Visitors will enjoy a quiet environment, only hearing the insects and birds. Smith Point Road is known for its Chuck-Will’s-Widows and Whip-poor-wills. As of 2019-20, from June thru July, they can reliably be heard calling from the woods after sunset or before sunrise if there is a half to full moon. Use of recordings should not be necessary.

You can finalize your journey at our favorite bridge at Thorne Gut, just into the **Nanjemoy SW** block at 12335-12337 Riverside Road, coordinates 38.3859, -77.2294. Stop on the bridge as long as you like, it is wide and safe, and will offer up surprises by the minute. This location gave us breeding Louisiana Waterthrush, Orchard Oriole, Tufted Titmouse, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-headed Woodpecker, Eastern



Phoebe and many, many Possibles and Probables. Immediately south of the bridge we were fortunate to have an intimate view of a Prothonotary Warbler feeding young in the cavity of a Tulip Polar. I will not forget that moment of my life.

In sum, this part of southern Maryland may be a day long adventure for many, but well worth a visit for the abundant wildlife, if not the scenery. Come on down and enjoy our habitat! It is one big party!

*Authors: County Coordinators Lynne Wheeler and Tom Seaton*

## Great American Outdoors Act Passes Senate

If our most recent indoor-and-distancing considerations have taught Americans anything, it is how much we love - and need - to connect with the outdoors and nature. When we've gotten outside, it's often been to local parks and open spaces - so much so that many of these sites had to be closed because social distancing could not be maintained. Safe and easy access to the outdoors is a right we can no longer take for granted.

That's why the Senate passage of the Great American Outdoors Act in mid-June was so significant. By a 73-25 vote on 17 June, the Senate decided to spend \$900 million a year on the vital Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and another \$1.9 billion per year (for each the next five years) on improvements on federal lands - National Wildlife Refuges, National Parks, Nation Forests, Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of Indian Education.

The bipartisan vote was interesting: Twenty-eight Republicans supported it, 25 opposed. Forty-three Democrats and two independents backed the bill. (Two Democrats missed the vote.)

The Act would fully and permanently fund the LWCF, set up by Congress in the 1960s, paid for by revenue from offshore drilling for oil and gas, and chronically underfunded. Congress has hardly spent LWCF funds in most years, so it has become an undependable source for conservation funding. This bill will now require mandatory and permanent funding of the program at a level of \$900 million annually, meaning that Congress will not vote on this every year. (Alas, the original budget cap of \$900 million annually in authorization in the mid-1960s is "worth" a lot less in the second decade of the 21st century.)

In a joint bipartisan statement by Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM) and Mike Simpson (R-ID) they added, "Investing in conservation and access is not only the right thing to do; it's also popular regardless of political affiliation."

In recent years - at least before the pandemic - the outdoor recreation industry had been booming. It generated \$887 billion in annual consumer spending, sustaining 7.6 million jobs, and providing cities and states with nearly \$60 billion in tax revenue annually. But in a time when lawmakers are studying alternate and large "stimulus packages," it's good to remember that the Great American Outdoors Act constitutes a stimulus package of its own, producing jobs from the backlog of outdoor federal maintenance, creating and expanding parks and refuges

with hiking trails for our health and well-being, and otherwise contributing to local economies with recreation opportunities for individuals and families to enjoy.

Before you jump up and down cheering, however, realize that the U.S. House of Representatives has to vote on the Great American Outdoors Act. However, fairly rapid House passage is suspected.

If you want more, watch this summary from the PBS Newshour: <https://www.pbsocial.org/programs/pbs-newshour/great-outdoors-1592427721/>



You can access all the past E-bulletins on the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) website: <http://refugeassociation.org/news/birding-bulletin/>

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## WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Asha Andreas, Lusby  
Gwendolyn Bagley, White Plains  
Kevin Bongiovanni, Lexington Park  
Jordan Burick, La Plata  
Jacqueline Burson, Mechanicsville  
Joshua Butson, Brandywine  
Mary Ellen Carsley, Port Republic  
Holly Carr, Fort Washington  
Gloria Constant, Accokeek  
Jessica Denny, Saint Leonard  
Helen Didion, Port Republic  
Michelle Gibbs, Waldorf  
Joshua Grossman, Leonardtown  
Gerald Hancock, La Plata  
Mauline Jordan, Piney Point  
Susan Kreckman, Leonardtown  
LaVerne Madison, Brandywine  
Helena Melnitchenko, Owings  
Shannon Miles, Indian Head  
Robert and Elizabeth Miller, Huntington  
Janet Mindel, La Plata  
Jerre Musser, Solomons  
Janice Nisbet, Huntingtown  
Richard Peel, Alexandria  
Jennifer Poinsett, Lexington Park  
Chris Schumacher, Leonardtown  
Laurence Stoll, Mechanicsville  
Margaret Williams, Lusby

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## Recording Bird Songs and Calls

Wednesday, July 29, 2020

From “The Birding Wire” by Swarovski Optik

Recording bird vocalizations is a wonderful experience as many birders can attest. During the past few months the number of bird song audio recordings submitted with eBird checklists surged in the archives of the Macaulay Library! It appears many birders took advantage of the new levels of quiet during the “shelter at home spring” to record bird songs and calls. Between March 1 and May 31 eBirders contributed more than 100,000 audio recordings.

By comparison, it took more than 70 years for contributors to the Macaulay Library to archive its first 100,000 recordings. In fact, during the month of May alone, contributors added nearly 50,000 new recordings, suggesting the numbers of monthly recordings probably continue to increase.

Recording bird vocalizations is catching on among many birders, across the Americas and around the world. If you are interested in getting started – or if you have a level of interest in the process of bird song recording – we’d like to share some introductory information provided by the Macaulay Library, a department of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, for you to get an appreciation of this exciting aspect of birding, and maybe open a new expansion of your birding activities.

**Gear** – Basic gear for recording bird vocalizations, like most equipment, has a range of options. Generally, you need two pieces of gear that work together: A digital recorder that uses uncompressed .WAV files, and a separate microphone. A number of recorders and shotgun microphone models are reviewed and compared in a Macaulay Library link provided at the end of this article.

In a pinch, you can use a combination recorder with a mic – a self-contained system – like those found in smartphones and voice recorders. These are lightweight and convenient to carry, but these units have a hard time isolating a sound and producing high-quality recordings. For better quality recordings, separate microphones and digital recorders are recommended.

**Know Your Gear** – When you have selected your equipment, familiarize yourself with the recorder and mic before you take them into the field. Check that your gear is functioning properly, and be sure you know how it works and that you are comfortable using it while birding. Practice helps you can take advantage of great recording opportunities in the field. The more comfortable you are with your equipment, the better your recordings will turn out, and the more you will enjoy your recording experiences.

**Uncompressed .WAV Files** – WAV is the standard audio format used at the Macaulay Library, the Library of Congress, and other sound archives dedicated to the long-term preservation of audio. WAV is an uncompressed audio format that provides an accurate copy of bird sounds, maximizing the usefulness of your recordings for research and conservation today and in the future. By contrast, compressed file types like MP3 and M4A are often

the default on smartphones and other recorders, but these files don’t pick up audio information that can be important. If your recorder supports it, a sample rate of at least 48 kHz and a bit depth of 24 bits is recommended for bird song recordings.

**Get Close** – Getting closer to the bird you wish to record dramatically increases the volume of its sounds compared to any background sound, resulting in a cleaner more audible recording. Reducing the distance between you and your subject by half effectively doubles the perceived loudness of the signal. Try to move slowly and quietly, being careful not to disturb the birds you wish to record or others in the area.

**Aim Your Microphone** – Position the microphone to minimize obstructions between it and the vocalizing bird. When using a directional mic, aim it directly at the singing bird. This is especially important when using a parabolic microphone system, given its extreme directionality. Keep your eye on your subject (if you can see it) so you can follow its movements and keep it “in focus.” Consider repositioning to reduce any interfering noise; turn your back to unwanted noise if you are using a parabola, or position so any noise is to one side if you are using a shotgun microphone. When you aim your mic properly, it will increase the quality of the recording while reducing the interference of background noise.

**Make Longer Recordings** – The most valuable recordings include many songs or calls from the bird, or show some of the variation or diversity of bird vocalizations of that species. When you are in a good location with an actively singing bird, it’s often worth recording for several minutes. Then consider whether you can get closer or otherwise take action to obtain a better recording without displacing the bird. The better the quality of the recording, the more worthwhile it is to extend your recording time. And the longer you record, the more likely your subject will provide something especially interesting as you record.

**Review, Organize, Edit, and Upload** – You will put in a lot of effort to get your recordings, so don’t just file your efforts, share them with the world. Once you establish a filing system and get your recordings archived, it’s less likely you will lose any data. Try keeping recordings organized in folders identified by the day they were recorded, then follow the archival editing suggestions provided by the Macaulay Library at <https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions/articles/48001064341> and upload your recordings and other media to your eBird checklist at <https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions/articles/48000825713-add-photos-and-sounds>

The above information from the Macaulay Library offers introductory information, but for the entire instruction and other helpful links, be sure to refer to <https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions/articles/48001064298-sound-recording-tips>

For more info about recording equipment options, see <https://www.macaulaylibrary.org/resources/audio-recording-gear/> and also refer to a helpful review of popular recording products at <https://www.macaulaylibrary.org/resources/audio-recording-gear/gear-review-2019/>

Share your birding experiences and photos at [editorstbw2@gmail.com](mailto:editorstbw2@gmail.com)

To subscribe, click on this link: <https://subscription.theoutdoorwire.com/subscribe?brand=birding>



**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**  
Photo by Dean Newman

## The 2020 Audubon Photography Awards: Top 100

Take a scroll through this year's spectacular, artistic, and playful avian images, while reading the story behind each.

By The Editors  
Summer 2020

This year nearly 1,800 photographers from across the United States and Canada submitted more than 6,000 images to the 11th annual [Audubon Photography Awards](#). Our expert judging panel had the difficult task of choosing just six winners and four honorable mentions from the pool, but with so many awe-inspiring submissions, we always enjoy picking some favorites that didn't make the final cut.

As usual, we've selected 100 additional photographs, shown here in no particular order. During this year of collective tragedy and canceled plans, we are especially grateful to share a gallery that displays even a small slice of global birdlife in all of its stunning and joyous variety, from acrobatic Ospreys to hungry hummingbirds to busy woodpeckers.

We hope these shots inspire you to appreciate and perhaps try to capture the beauty of birds yourself. Our photography section has everything you need to get started, including [tips and how-to's](#), [gear recommendations](#), and Audubon's [ethical guidelines](#) for wildlife photography. With skill, patience, and maybe a little luck, you could find your shot at taking top honors in our 2021 awards.

[To read the rest of the article and to see the award winning photos, click here: <https://tinyurl.com/y2sygqje> ]

National Audubon Society  
225 Varick St  
New York, NY 10014  
212-979-3196

## Legislation to Reduce Bird Collisions Passes U.S. House Of Representatives!

On July 1, 2020, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 2, which includes H.R. 919 – Bird-Safe Buildings Act, in a monumental victory for bird conservation. This bipartisan bill is designed to reduce bird mortality by calling for federal buildings to incorporate bird-safe building materials and design features. As many as 1 billion birds a year die in collisions with buildings in the United States alone. Congressman Mike Quigley has been the driving force behind this bipartisan legislation for more than a decade, and American Bird Conservancy has been steadfast in our efforts to pass this bill. We are seeing great progress on this issue, as more than 20 states, counties, and municipalities have passed bird-friendly legislation. Enacting H.R. 919 into law will be a game-changer. Recognition of this issue at the federal level will be a momentous achievement because if passed by the Senate and put into law, it will set an example for the entire U.S. The Bird-Safe Buildings Act will soon be introduced in the Senate, and we need your help to ensure its passage with bipartisan support. Please [contact your Senators today in support of this bill!](#) You can [read the press release here.](#)

### Take Action!

Media Contact: Jordan Rutter, Director of Public Relations,  
202-888-7472 | [jerutter@abcbirds.org](mailto:jerutter@abcbirds.org) | @JERutter  
Expert Contact: Dr. Christine Sheppard, Director, Glass  
Collisions Program, 914-261-8277 | [csheppard@abcbirds.org](mailto:csheppard@abcbirds.org)  
American Bird Conservancy  
P.O. Box 249 | The Plains, Virginia 20198  
(540) 253-5780 | [info@abcbirds.org](mailto:info@abcbirds.org)



**American Goldfinch**  
Photo by Anne Bielamowicz



## Monthly Meeting Program Upcoming Zoom Lectures

### **Covid-19 Friendly!**

**Instead of in-person meetings this fall, SMAS is launching virtual lectures using Zoom. We will send invitations via email which will have information and a link for joining the meetings. If you do not get our Osprey newsletter via email you need to sign up. Please go to our website [SoMdAudubon.org](http://SoMdAudubon.org) and sign up at the bottom of the homepage.**



### **AWESOME POSSUMZ**

**September 2 @ 7:30 p.m.**

Learn about the natural history of the Virginia Opossum, North America's only marsupial. Karen Brace will introduce you to "Stuart" and address the misconceptions and misinformation that surround opossums, their "super powers", where they live, what they eat, and how they help the environment.



### **FARMLAND RAPTOR PROGRAM**

**October 7 @ 7:30 p.m.**

Chris Eberly, Executive Director of the Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership (MBCP) will discuss this exciting new program which focuses on stabilizing and increasing the population of the American Kestrel, Barn Owl, and Chimney Swift, three of the 143 species of Greatest Conservation Need in Maryland's State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP)

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please enroll me as a member of the **Southern Maryland Audubon Society**. All of my membership dollars will help support local conservation initiatives and enable us to provide southern Maryland teacher education scholarships to attend Hog Island, Audubon Camp in Maine.

- Individual/Family: \_\_\_1year \$20 \_\_\_2year \$35 \_\_\_3year \$45  
 Lifetime Membership: \_\_\_ \$500  
 Donation: \_\_\_\_\_

Please enroll me as a first time member of the **National Audubon Society**. You will automatically become a member of the Southern Maryland Audubon Society. You will receive six issues of National's award winning *Audubon Magazine*. A fraction of my dues will be received to our chapter. Your renewal information will come directly from the National Audubon Society.

Introductory Offer: \_\_\_1 year \$20

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Please enroll me for electronic delivery of our monthly newsletter *The Osprey*.

\_\_\_ Email me a link to download the pdf,  
 \_\_\_ Email me a notice it is available on the website. My email address is:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ No thank you, please mail me a paper copy.

Please make your check payable to Southern Maryland Audubon Society or National Audubon Society.

Mail to: *Southern Maryland Audubon Society, P.O. Box 181, Bryans Road, MD 20616.*

**GREAT NEWS!!** You can now go online and join SMAS via **PayPal**. Go to our website at [somdaudubon.org](http://somdaudubon.org) for this new option.



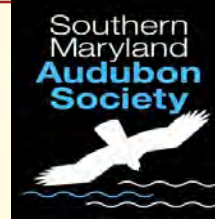
**Osprey**  
 Photo by Bill Hubick

**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.

### 2019-2020 Officers

President, Tiffany Farrell - [somdaudubon.president@gmail.com](mailto:somdaudubon.president@gmail.com)  
 Vice-President, Margarita Rochow - [margarita@usa.net](mailto:margarita@usa.net)  
 Treasurer, Julie Daniel - [juliemdaniel@hotmail.com](mailto:juliemdaniel@hotmail.com)  
 Secretary, Julie Simpson - [jsimps@runbox.com](mailto:jsimps@runbox.com)



## Southern Maryland Audubon Society Adopt-a-Raptor

Foster Parents Needed!

Southern Maryland Audubon Society sponsors the banding of nesting birds of prey, or raptors, with serially numbered aluminum bands in cooperation with the Bird Banding Laboratory of the U.S. Department of the Interior. Limited numbers of Osprey, Barn Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl and American Kestrels become available each year for adoption. Your donation will be specifically utilized for raptor research and raptor conservation projects such as:

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

Please indicate which raptor you wish to adopt. You may adopt more than one:

- Osprey, \$10 each      Total Amount: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Barn Owl, \$25 each      Total Amount: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Northern Saw-whet Owl, \$30 each      Total Amount: \_\_\_\_\_  
 American Kestrel, \$35 each      Total Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

General Donation to Raptor Fund      Donation Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

The foster parent receives:

- A certificate of adoption with the number of the U.S. Department of the Interior band and the location and date of the banding.
- Information on the ecology and migration patterns of the species.
- A photo of a fledgling and any other available information on the whereabouts or fate of the bird.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

If this is a gift, please include the recipient's name for the certificate: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail To: *Southern Maryland Audubon Society*  
*Carole Schnitzler*  
 3595 Silk Tree Court, Waldorf, MD 20602