

The Osprey

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN MARYLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY



American Goldfinches
Photo by Bill Hubick

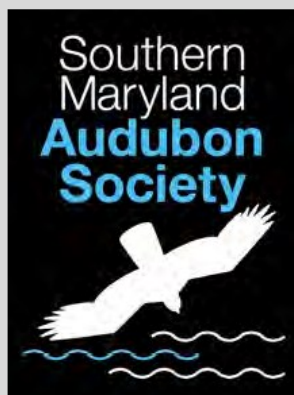
IN THIS ISSUE

Forget Netflix! We've Got Great SMAS Webinars on Demand.

Help Shape The Future of the Patuxent Watershed.

Hiking for a "Hulking Grouse".

Audubon Educators Hog Island Camp 2022



<http://somdaudubon.org/>

President's Perch

Have you noticed how quiet your birds have become? There's a hush in our backyards and parks as the temperatures cool and many species are bulking up in preparation for fall migration.

You also might be gearing up for fall chores: raking leaves, cutting back your floppy flower stalks and cleaning up brush in your yard. This year, why not skip the chores!

Turn your yard into a bird-friendly fall stopover and winter habitat with almost no work.

Leave the leaves and the seed heads. Neatly pile any branches or brush in the corner of the yard or patio to give birds a safe winter shelter. Enjoy the fall. Go birding. Go for a hike. Go read a good book. Check out our upcoming fall field trips to some of the best birding spots in southern Maryland.

Leaves are a critical winter blanket for the native insects birds will depend on to survive the winter and feed their young next spring. Want more fireflies in your yard? They can only reproduce and survive under a healthy layer of leaf litter. Bagging leaves or putting them on the curb for pickup is like throwing out good food.

Those native flowers you've been cultivating aren't just great for the summer garden. They provide a buffet of seeds and shelter from winter storms for birds. And they offer housing for many native bees and other pollinators who lay their eggs in hollow systems or spin cocoons on their branches.

Yes, but what will the neighbors or the Home Owners' Association say?

Be sure to tidy your yard enough that it won't annoy neighbors. Cut back stems and branches hanging over sidewalks or streets. Just as important, take the time to explain kindly—try avoiding lectures—to neighbors that you are gardening for birds and wildlife. Offer them seeds from your native plants or a small bouquet of your fall blooms.

Also know that Maryland is one of a growing number of states that requires Home Owners Associations to allow residents to plant native plants and reduce their lawns.

The Chesapeake Bay watershed has lost an average of 100 acres of forest every single day since 1985. In fact, your yard may have originally been part of one of those forests.

It's up to all of us to create bird-friendly corridors to help birds survive and thrive in the face of shrinking habitat.

So this fall help the birds. Skip the chores!

Happy birding,
Molly

Welcome, New Members!

Judith Beckrich, Owings

Barbara Biesecker, Bryantown

Steven Bond, La Plata

Lucinda Jolly, Brandywine

Cindy E Kobrine, Lusby

Raymond LaBella, Mechanicsville

Margaret MacDonald, La Plata

Tracy Mattingly, Welcome

Serita McFarling, California

Michele Quesenberry, Owings

Norman Rhodes, Solomons

Sydney Sowell, Dunkirk

Paul Wachsmuth, Waldorf

Paulette Ward, Fort Washington

Travis Wray, Pomfret



Forget Netflix. We've got great SMAS webinars on demand!

by Molly Moore

Did you know Southern Maryland Audubon records all our great presentations and lectures?

If you missed our September presentation on **Winter Sowing: Growing Natives for Birds & Beauty**, you can find it on our website.

If your student has a project on **River Otters** or **Wild Turkeys (The Private Life of an Unloved Bird)**, we've got them covered.

If you are a Master Gardener or Master Naturalist looking for fun and informative advanced education webinars on anything from **The Secret Lives of Northern Cardinals** to **Mystical Monarchs** to **Native Plants for Butterflies and Birds**, we've got a big selection.

Or if you're just curious about nature and sick of trolling Amazon Prime and Hulu, check out our videos at www.somdaudubon.org/our-work/program-archive/



Help Shape the Future of the Patuxent Watershed!

**What do you love about the Patuxent River?
What do you want it to look like in the future?**

If you live, work, or play near the Patuxent River or one of its many tributaries, drop in to our open house and tell us what matters to you! Help us make a social, economic, and environmental assessment that takes your needs, lives, and values into account.

**Register or find out more at
<https://linktr.ee/Patuxent>**

**Open House 1: Oct. 1, 10AM - 3PM
Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary
1361 Wrighton Rd., Lothian, MD**

**Open House 2: Oct. 5, 10AM - 3PM
Chesapeake Biological Laboratory
146 Williams St., Solomons, MD**



Hiking High For A “Hulking Grouse”

by David Moulton

Of the many joys of birding, I find that having a good excuse to get out of the house and into new or unusual natural places is a large part of pursuing this passion. Usually, this involves chasing some uncommon bird that has wandered into the neighborhood temporarily, such as a Wood Stork on Camp Brown Road or a Barrow’s Goldeneye at The Elms. But sometimes it is the birder, not the bird, who is doing the wandering, on the trail of a species that does not migrate.

So it was this August, when I found myself hiking at 4 am in moonless darkness, following the dim light of a headlamp up a rocky trail in the Ruby Mountains of Nevada. Overhead, the sky was dotted with a million stars. Jupiter, Mars and the Pleiades shone down brightly on our small group, trudging forward in awe of the infinite firmament above and in eager anticipation of dawn, when we would have our best chance of seeing our objective – the Himalayan Snowcock.



Himalayan Snowcock photo by Jesse Anderson
eBird [S44127263](#) Macaulay Library [ML92863121](#)

The Himalayan Snowcock is a large member of the pheasant family. It is gray overall, with a white head and two chestnut lines running down its short neck, sometimes described as a “hulking grouse.” Its North American home in the mountains of Nevada is not natural. In the 1960s, this species was introduced into this country from Pakistan in an experiment to establish a new gamebird for hunters. The Nevada flock soon flourished and established a sustainable population, although it was never introduced elsewhere. This was the last such experiment of officially introducing an exotic gamebird in the US, but its survival has meant that the Himalayan Snowcock is now a full-fledged member of the checklist of North American birds and, as such, a suitable target for birder quests.

By 5 am, we had climbed to 10,000 feet and set up our telescopes next to a glacial lake, waiting for the first rays of the sun to touch the ridgeline of the enormous red-rock caldera encircling us. The birds can often be seen at dawn in silhouette against the skyline as they leave the highest rock ridges and descend into the meadows below the rockfalls to forage. Soon thereafter, a Snowcock was flushed by a soaring Golden Eagle, and it descended to the lower slopes. By training our scopes in the general area of that first bird, and waiting for the sun to provide better lighting, we were able to detect movement on the slopes and eventually found as many as 10 Snowcocks grazing slowly on grasses and berries.

High-fives all around! As the morning warmed up, Mountain Bluebirds, Pine Siskins and Cassin’s Finches all contributed to our happy celebration of yet another moment of immersion in the beauty and wonder of wild places.



Himalayan Snowcocks photo by David Moulton
eBird [S117777242](#) Macaulay Library [ML479572661](#)

Audubon Educators Hog Island Camp 2022

by John Sullens

Bird watching is so much more than simply looking at birds. A focused walk in the woods or a peaceful backyard study while birding has the potential to be a “one of a kind” experience or even a “once in a lifetime” moment! I had that birding “once in a lifetime” moment while attending the Audubon Educators Camp. I was the 2020 recipient of a scholarship sponsored by the Southern Maryland Audubon Society. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I attended the 2022 Educators Camp.

The Island

The camp is in Bremen, Maine on Hog Island, a stone's throw from the mainland set in the Muscongus Bay. In total, the island is 330 acres. The woodland is primarily spruce and fir with some oak mixed in. There is plenty of accessible coast and it is dotted with meadows of wild flowers and ferns. Miles of walking trails cut through the woodland and follow the perimeter. The island provides natural beauty with clear sunrises and sunset views.

Once I stepped foot on Hog Island, I breathed in the fresh salt air and was transported back in time; a time and place without strip malls, light pollution or automobiles. Not much has changed on the island since the National Audubon Society held its first camp there in 1936. Several distinct habitats including North Atlantic tidal pools, which was a first for me to explore. Tidal pools are home to many species of algae, European Green Crab, and the native Jonah Crab; tunicates, which I learned are vertebrates, native and exotic Periwinkle, Dog Whelk, Rock Gunnel Eel and so much more life.

The Campsite

The Audubon Camp resides on the north 30 acres of the island, but it feels smaller and more cozy. I arrived early and it gave me time to explore. I befriended two educators and using a map of the island included in my camp packet, we hiked a few miles through the woods to a cove and back. We marveled at the bearded moss hanging from the trees, and the beautiful views of the Bay, and seals swimming among the endless rows of lobster trap floats. We birded using the [Merlin app](#) as our guide. The few camp buildings on the island were erected in the 1930s and 1940s and they stand today without too many improvements. They are of wood construction with cedar shake siding and large screened windows to allow the cool air in for great sleeping. A large outdoor bell gongs when swung on its hanger to summon campers to the next activity. Each camper had a turn at ringing the bell.



[Hog Island Audubon Camp](#)

Activities

The first night program was an introduction to the history of the island, the Audubon Camp; in addition, we met the educators assigned to our week. It was at this time, I realized I was in a special place; hallowed ground. The mission of the camp, from its conception, is to bring educators from all parts of the country to Hog Island, immerse them in nature emphasizing how everything and we are connected and interdependent. Then encourage those teachers to share what they learned with their communities creating a multiplying effect of knowledge. Being a part of the educator's camp is an honor and I will take what I learned back to my community. Each day began with an optional 5:45 am bird watching and coffee time. I did not miss one and every day I added a new bird to my list. Just seeing the seals swim about was entertaining enough.

[Sharing Nature: An Educator's Week | Hog Island Audubon Camp](#)

Continued on page 6: see **Hog Island**

Hog Island continued

Once In a Lifetime Moment

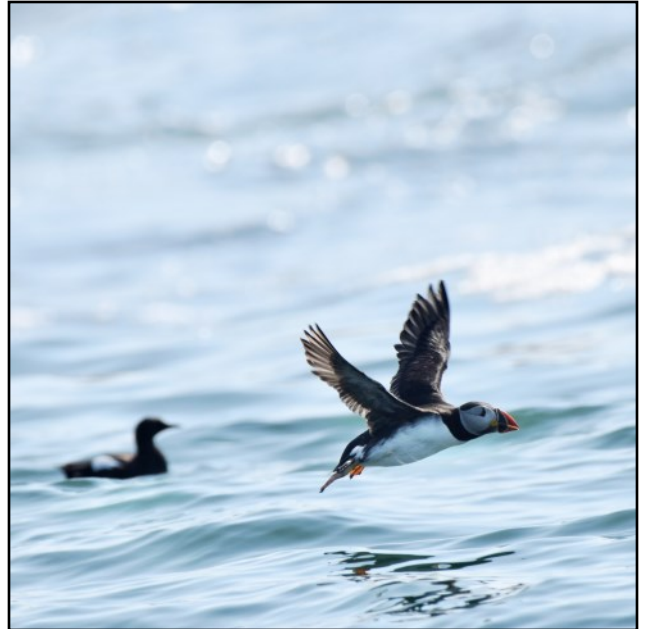
On a foggy, choppy seas morning we set out on a lobster boat to reach Egg Island. Focusing on the horizon and swallowing candied ginger to prevent seasickness, we finally made it to Egg Rock Island, one of Audubon's research sites near the Maine Coast. As we neared the island, the captain idled the engine to give us the best view of the nesting birds. I found it difficult at first to identify the Atlantic Puffin among all the other sea birds. It was a flash of orange from the bill that caught my attention first. Then I focused on the short black wings and bright white underbelly. There were a thousand birds on the rocks and hundreds of Atlantic Puffins. In time, puffins were flying over our boat. The bird's flight does not look efficient as if it is struggling to gain flight. It has an odd shaped bill and short wings better suited for underwater flippers than for flying. [All About Birds](#) website calls the Atlantic Puffin, "The clown of the sea." To see Atlantic Puffins is awesome but to see this many in one place was a once in a lifetime experience for me.

Over a century ago, hunters nearly extirpated the puffin colonies from the Maine coast for food and feathers. The National Audubon Society started Project Puffin in 1973 to learn how to restore puffins to historic nesting islands in the Gulf of Maine. 8 years later, on Egg Island, seven pairs of puffins returned to nest. Today, over 1000 Puffin pairs return to three main islands off Maine.

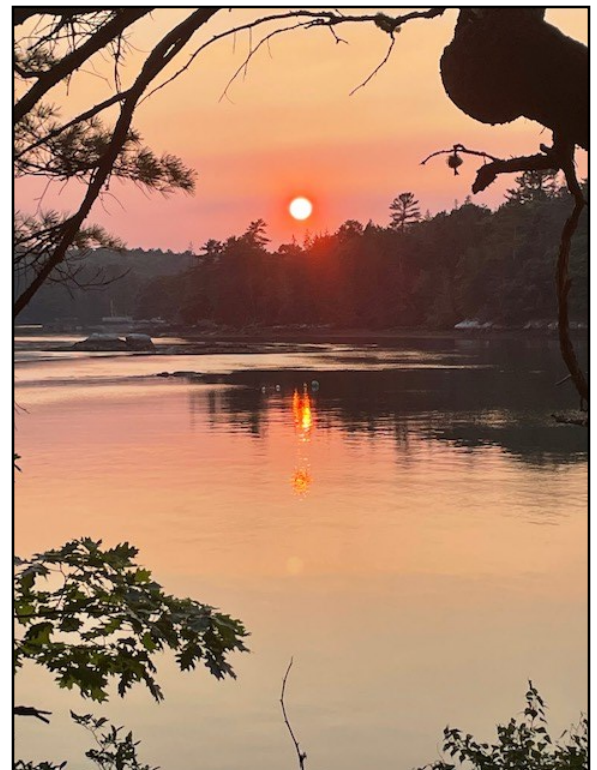
[Eastern Egg Rock](#) | [Audubon Project Puffin](#)

Conclusion

Audubon Educators Camp was amazing from start to finish and I highly recommend it to everyone. The food was amazing too. The staff was professional and accommodating. The teachers were patient, knowledgeable and willing to change course to do what was best for us. I made new friends. I recorded several new birds for me including Roseate Tern, Atlantic Puffin, Common Eider, Black Guillemot, and Ruddy Turnstone. I continue to research more about Hog Island and plan to return to that special place soon.



Black Guillemot (left) and Atlantic Puffin (right)
Photo by John Sullens



September 2022— November 2022 Events

September 24 – SATURDAY - 9:00 a.m. - 12 noon

FIELD TRIP – Southern Maryland Youth Birders Event

Tilghman Lake Park, Charles County

10598 Box Elder Rd, La Plata, MD 20646

“YOUTH BIRDING AT TILGHMAN LAKE: A BIRD CITY EVENT”

Leader: Phin Rouland

Calling on all kids!! This birding field trip is targeting all youth interested in joining our Southern Maryland Youth Birders Club, or simply want to learn more about birds and get together with other kids that are also interested in birds. We will start off with a one-hour discussion: Birding 101- The Basics of Birding, bird migration, and Town of La Plata becoming the first Bird City MD, and what that means to us! Meet at the pavilion, the discussion will be followed with a two-hour bird walk around the lake. Loaner binoculars provided, but please bring your own if you have them! NOTE: This event will include two adults for supervision of youth. [Geared for ages 7 – 18](#). **All youth under the age of 12 must include an adult.** Maximum of 12 youth participants. RSVP required to Lynne Wheeler at 301-751-8097 (text preferred) or somdaudubon@yahoo.com

September 25 – SUNDAY - 8 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

FIELD TRIP

Historic Sotterley, St. Mary's County

44300 Sotterley Lane, Hollywood, MD 20636

“BIRDING THE FIELDS AND TRAILS OF SOTTERLEY”

Leader: David Moulton

Join us for a fall excursion to this scenic and historic Patuxent River property, sponsored jointly by SMAS and Historic Sotterley. Bald Eagles, migrant songbirds and lingering meadowlarks and sparrows can be found via Sotterley's trails and river views. Directions: From Rt. 235, go north on Sotterley Road; turn right through gates to the visitors' center parking lot. Maximum of 10 participants. RSVP required to David at 240-278-4473 or moulton.davidh@gmail.com

October 1 – SATURDAY - 8:00 a.m. - 12 noon * New Date. Changed from September 17.

FIELD TRIP

Point Lookout State Park, St. Mary's County

11175 Point Lookout Road, Scotland, MD 20687

“MIGRATION ON THE POINT”

Leader: Tyler Bell

Join us at Southern Maryland's premier birding hotspot as fall migrants funnel south to cross the Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac River. Loblolly pines, mixed hardwoods, beaches, marshes and broad water views regularly deliver a wide variety of species and occasional rarities. Contact leader for meeting location. (Please Note: Do not proceed directly to the park entrance.) Fee area. Maximum of 10 participants. RSVP required to Tyler at 301-862-4623 or jtylerbell@yahoo.com

October 2 – SUNDAY – 8:00 a.m. - 12 noon

FIELD TRIP

Cove Point Beach and Marsh, Calvert County

Exact location and directions given upon reservation

“SHARP-TAILED SPARROWS AND MIGRANTS”

Leader: Bob Boxwell

Cove Point beach and marsh is a unique habitat on the Western shore of the Chesapeake Bay. A living shoreline project is helping to restore the fresh water marsh from salt water incursion. We will target sparrows, marsh inhabitants and migrants. This is a restricted area, and we are limited to ten guests. RSVP required by September 28th to Bob at 410-231-125 or robertboxwell1@outlook.com

September 2022— November 2022 Events continued

October 5 – WEDNESDAY – 7:00 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Monthly Meeting Program - Virtual Zoom Meeting

"Getting Ahead of the Spotted Lantern Fly Invasion in Maryland"

KENTON SUMPTER, Entomologist, Maryland Department of Agriculture

Kenton Sumpter will discuss how Maryland's Department of Agriculture (MDA) has been active since 2018 in combating the spread of this non-native invasive species which is strongly attracted to and attacks tree-of-heaven, grape, black walnut, maple, willow, and white pine. If all goes well, DNR hopes to have a substantial impact on limiting the spread of SLF going into 2023, and to effectively educate the citizens of Maryland on how to help eradicate this invasive species, where they find them, and report their sightings to MDA. Zoom in and join us online. The presentation is free and open to all. In order to receive the link to join this lecture you need to sign up for our Osprey newsletter; please go to smdaudubon.org. See the sign-up area at the bottom of the page. We will email you the link to join the lecture several days prior, as well as the same day of the lecture.

October 29 – SATURDAY – 9:00 a.m. – 12 noon

FIELD TRIP – Southern Maryland Youth Birders Event

Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum, Calvert County

10515 Mackall Rd, St Leonard, MD 20685

"BIRDING THE FIELDS AND WOODS OF JPPM"

Leader: Phin Rouland, Audubon Southern Maryland Youth Birders Club

Another field trip for youth to get into birding!! This is a wonderful location offering open fields and wooded areas, which provides for good land birding. When done birding we recommend you checkout this large reserve with archaeological sites & historical exhibits, plus trails and an Indian village. Meet at the visitor center/museum parking lot. Loaner binoculars provided, but please bring your own if you have them! This event will include two adults for supervision of youth. Geared for ages 7 – 18. **All youth under the age of 12 must include an adult.** Maximum of 12 youth participants. RSVP to Lynne Wheeler at 301-751-8097 (text preferred) or smdaudubon@yahoo.com

November 2 – WEDNESDAY – 7:00 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Monthly Meeting Program - Virtual Zoom Meeting

"Birds and Beyond in Cuba"

PAUL BAICICH, Bird Conservationist, and co-author of numerous books, including the popular monthly Birding Community E-Bulletin.

Paul will introduce us to a number of key natural and bird-filled locations in Cuba - Viñales, Zapata, Guanahacabibes, Cayo Coco, Baracoa, Topes de Collantes, and Havana. But just as importantly, we will examine opportunities for "connecting" with our counterparts in Cuba. This is particularly important since Cuba contains 28 Important Bird Areas (IBAs), with over 370 bird species recorded on the island. Of these 370 species, 27 are endemic to the island, and 29 are considered globally threatened. We will look at these fascinating birds, places, and people in terms of advancing bird-education, conservation, and responsible eco-tourism. Zoom in and join us online. The presentation is free and open to all. In order to receive the link to join this lecture you need to sign up for our Osprey newsletter; please go to smdaudubon.org. See the sign-up area at the bottom of the page. We will email you the link to join the lecture several days prior, as well as the same day of the lecture.

Join SMAS on Facebook and Instagram!



We are now officially on Instagram!

Please follow us **@southernmarylandaudubon**

You might see other similar account names, but our official Instagram account is **@southernmarylandaudubon**.

You'll find our latest event updates, tantalizing tidbits of bird lore, how-tos on attracting more birds to your yard, and updates on how you can pitch in to help protect birds and their habitat in Southern Maryland and elsewhere. And of course, there will always be awesome bird photos!

Follow **@southernmarylandaudubon** and please invite all your friends to join our flock!

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: __1 year \$20 __2 year \$35 __3 year \$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 your dues will be received by 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

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 join SMAS via **PayPal**.
Go to our website at somdaudubon.org for this new option.



Osprey

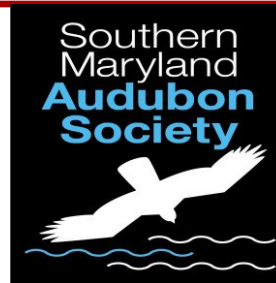
Photo by Bill Hubick

Editor: Tyler Bell Email: 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.

2021–2022 Officers

President, Molly Moore - president.somdaudubon@gmail.com
Vice President, Elena Gilroy—elenabode@yahoo.com
Treasurer, Julie Daniel—juliemdaniel@hotmail.com
Secretary, Barbara Hill —tytito@verizon.net



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: _____

City: _____

State, Zip Code: _____

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