

The Osprey

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN MARYLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY



Morelet's Seedeater
Photo by Jim Boxwell

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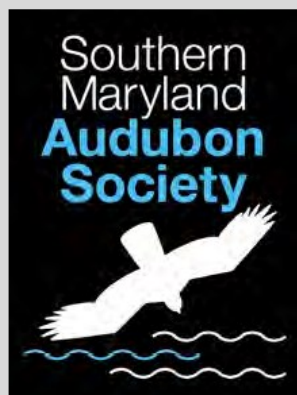
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<http://somdaudubon.org/>

President's Perch

The star of our Bald Eagle cam, Hope, is ready for her closeup: She has laid eggs in her massive nest at Port Tobacco River Park in Charles County, a sign that spring is in our sights.

This spring is especially eagerly anticipated. For the first time since the pandemic began, there's a cautious sense of returning to normalcy, a feeling of coming out of hibernation and re-engaging safely with our communities.

During the pandemic, tens of thousands of people took up birding for the first time. Just seeing birds out our windows or on our walks around the neighborhood brought us solace and joy and made us feel less trapped.

We at Southern Maryland Audubon found different ways to stay in touch with you. Zoom meetings expanded our efforts to spread the news on birds, wildlife and native plants to a much larger audience. Meeting attendance quadrupled from pre-COVID in-person meetings.

We've kept the Zoom meetings so you can continue to see and hear our great speakers from the comfort of your couch, but now we are ready for more.

And we need YOU!

This is *your* chapter and we welcome you as volunteers, no matter your birding skills—or lack thereof. If you care about the natural world around you, we need you.

We welcome new faces and creative minds for our chapter leadership and board of directors. We are an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff. That means we do our work and follow our passions with a minimum of bureaucracy. You can bring your skills and interests to our chapter and make a big impact in your community and in your own lives.

Do you like meeting new people and participating in local festivals? We have exhibits at all the fun events—Osprey festivals, insect festivals, nature fests, local community events. You don't have to be a bird expert, we'll team you up with one. And if you are new to Southern Maryland, or just coming out of COVID hibernation, it's a great way to meet neighbors and become a part of your community.

Want to help with our workshops and classes on birds and birding, native plants for birds, community science and other wildlife topics? We welcome you.

We of course have great bird walks at scenic regional parks, sanctuaries and historic properties. This year we're starting "Birds in Your Neighborhood" walks so more people—especially novice birders—can learn more about the birds they see every day. If you'd like to help us organize a bird walk in your neighborhood, just ask!

Continued on page 2, see **Perch**

Perch continued

Want to help choose our scholarship winners to Audubon's summer bird and nature camp on an island off the Maine coast? Or know great speakers for our lecture series? Are you good at fund raising? Please reach out to us!

We welcome writers, photographers and artists to contribute to our *Osprey* newsletter and social media. It's a great way to share your observations and creative work with a community that will appreciate your talents.

Interested in staying on top of what our local and state political and government leaders are doing to protect—or not protect—the environment where we live? Our conservation leaders welcome eyes, ears and advocates.

If you would like to get more involved with Southern Maryland Audubon in any way, please email me at president.somdaudubon@gmail.com There's a spot waiting for you in our flock!

Happy birding!
Molly

Port Tobacco CBC

by Gwen Brewer, Compiler

On December 18, 2022, 19 observers in 9 parties set out for the Port Tobacco Christmas Bird Count. The weather was pretty pleasant, with temperatures in the mid-30's to mid-40's, although the wind kicked up some in the afternoon. In all, 82 species were seen on the count and almost 7,000 individual birds were tallied. In general, bird numbers and activity were on the low side. Highlights were a reported 4 Common Ravens (2 at Pope's Creek by Dave Henderson and 2 near Blossom Point) and a Blue-headed Vireo see along Blossom Point Road by Gwen Brewer, and Tom and Farren Dell. Despite the vireo's almost constant movement, Farren got an excellent photo!



Blue-headed Vireo
Photo by Farren Dell

Waterfowl were a bit scarce again this year, although Mike Callahan, Toni Kruszka, and Keith Linville had about 350 Ruddy Ducks and 50 Buffleheads in the Potomac, and Lynne Wheeler and Tiffany Farrell added 3 Common Mergansers from the Nanjemoy area. Thanks to Dave Henderson and his 4:30 am start, we added 7 Great-horned and 12 Eastern Screech-Owls to the two Barred Owls heard elsewhere in the circle by Tom Seaton and Lynne and Tiffany.

Raptors were present in small numbers in most sectors, including 5 Northern Harriers, 2 Sharp-shinned Hawks, and 3 American Kestrels in total, with good showings for Cooper's, Red-shouldered, and Red-tailed Hawks. Bald Eagles continue to be numerous, with 40 adults and 15 immatures counted.

Nanjemoy counters (Gabi Zabel, Julie Daniel, Susan and Kenny Burch, as well as Lynn and Tiffany) found all seven expected woodpecker species and the only Killdeer on the count, and the first group mentioned added the only Chipping Sparrows and Brown-headed Cowbirds. Several winter specialties were seen by multiple observers, including 4 Red-breasted Nuthatches, 8 Hermit Thrushes, 2 Winter Wrens, 20 Golden-crowned Kinglets, 3 Brown Creepers, and 55 Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Bob Lukin found 8 Pine Siskins. Mike Callahan and crew found the only Fox Sparrow on the count, and also added a welcome 12 Rusty Blackbirds, 5 Gadwall, and 14 Cedar Waxwings.

The Allens Fresh area yielded 9 Eastern Meadowlarks (Bob Lukin) and the only White-crowned Sparrows were seen at Cedar Point Wildlife Management Area (Gwen, Tom, and Tiffany). Other sparrows included Swamp and Field at a few locations. Molly Moore and John Anderson found the only Gray Catbird on the count, and others found a few Brown Thrashers (3), 5 Eastern Phoebe, and 12 Ruby-crowned Kinglets. Blue Jays and Northern Flickers were noted to be present in larger numbers than usual. And thank goodness Jean Artes and Lee Vines came through with the Rock Pigeons in La Plata! Thanks to all for your efforts, and to Mike Callahan for coordinating the sector assignments and for organizing the tally rally at Bollywood Masala in La Plata.



Scholarships to Audubon Hog Island

Southern Maryland Audubon Society is now accepting applications for scholarships to Audubon Camp in Hog Island, Maine. For 2023, SMAS will offer three types of camp scholarships for teens, educators, or others with a serious interest in ornithology, bird watching, or environmental and nature studies. Applications must be received by **March 1**. The scholarships cover tuition, room, and board. The recipient is responsible for all travel expenses. For details about each camp scholarship and Covid-19 vaccination requirements go to the Audubon Hog Island website at <https://hogisland.audubon.org/programs>

CAMP PROGRAMS OFFERED

Birders	Field Ornithology	June 18 – June 23
Teens	Mountains to Sea Birding for Teens (ages 14 -17)	June 25 – June 30
Teachers	Sharing Nature: An Educators Week	July 16 – July 21

Applicants must be residents of 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 experience and knowledge to benefit others in Southern Maryland and support the SMAS mission?

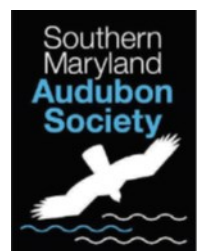
Your signed letter must include:

1. Mailing Address
2. Email Address
3. Phone Number
4. One or more signed letters of recommendation describing your interests, abilities, and how the experience will benefit either your organization or the SMAS mission.

Scholarship recipients must submit a written article for our *Osprey* newsletter about their experience by August 7, and possibly a brief presentation at one of the future Monthly Meeting Programs for 2023 – 2024.



Please send applications to:
Southern Maryland Audubon Society
Molly Moore
president.somdaudubon@gmail.com



Costa Rica, December 2022

Story and photos by Jim Boxwell

My wife and I had the opportunity to travel to Costa Rica in December for 10 days, traveling from the Caribbean to the Pacific coast. Costa Rica is about the size of West Virginia and has over 900 species of birds, 230 species of mammals, 360 species of reptiles and amphibians, and over 10,000 species of plants. With 28 national parks, it's no wonder that this country's tourist industry focuses on nature. Although this wasn't a birding trip, there was ample opportunity to look for wildlife.

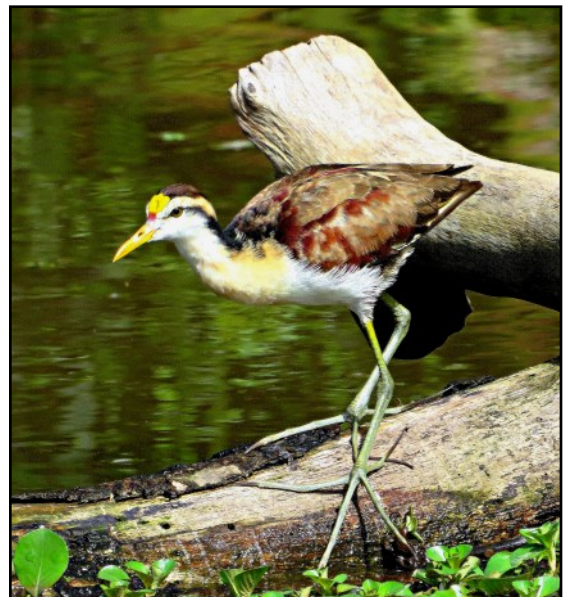
The tour started with a bus trip from the capital, San Jose, towards the Caribbean coast. Tortuguero National Park, our destination, is not accessible by road so we finished the trip with an hour boat ride through the coastal rain forest. Before boarding the boat, we spotted a Nicaraguan Seed-finch and Montezuma Oropendola, a type of blackbird that sounds like a branch rubbing again a tree trunk in the wind. The boat ride allowed up close views of the herons and egrets that you expect to see in the southern US plus Neotropic Cormorants and Mangrove Swallows.

During our two day stay, we were able to observe Three-toed Sloths, an armadillo, Long-nosed Bats, caimans, crocodiles, as well as Spider, and Mantled Howler Monkeys. We did not wake with a chorus of tropical birds singing as you might expect, but with the very loud guttural growling of our local howler monkey troop. The bird highlights included Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, Boat-billed Herons, Northern Jacana, Grooved-billed Ani, Great Green Macaw, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Linneated Woodpecker, White-collard Manakin, Masked Tityra, Collared Aracari, and Keel-billed Toucan.

Our next stop was La Fortuna in the central highlands of the country. We were told it got the name La Fortuna because it was spared from the eruption of the Arenal Volcano in 1968. This isn't true but it makes a good story. We stayed at a resort that overlooked the volcano, which was shrouded in clouds most of the time. The habitat was more open than on the coast and afforded great views of many birds. The birding here was exceptional and some of the bird songs sounded familiar, including Scarlet Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, House Wren, American Redstart, Chestnut-sided, and Yellow Warblers.

At home if you see a bird you have at least an idea of what type it is, if not the actual species. Not so with one the first birds saw there. It's big --is it a type of turkey or maybe a chicken? What in the world was I looking at? Fortunately, the Great Curassow was the first plate in my Costa Rica bird book. Mystery solved. By the time I spotted its relative, the Crested Guan, I at least knew what page to look at. A few of the other species we saw included Scarlet-rumped, Palm, and Blue-gray Tanagers, a Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture (looks like a turkey vulture), Red-lored Parrot, Melodious Blackbird, Morelet's Seedeater, Rufous-naped Sparrow, Blue-and-white Swallows, Buff-throated, and Cinnamon Saltators (which is in the tanager family).

Continued on page 4, see **Costa Rica**



Top: Three-toed Sloth and baby
Middle: Northern Jacana
Bottom: Masked Tityra

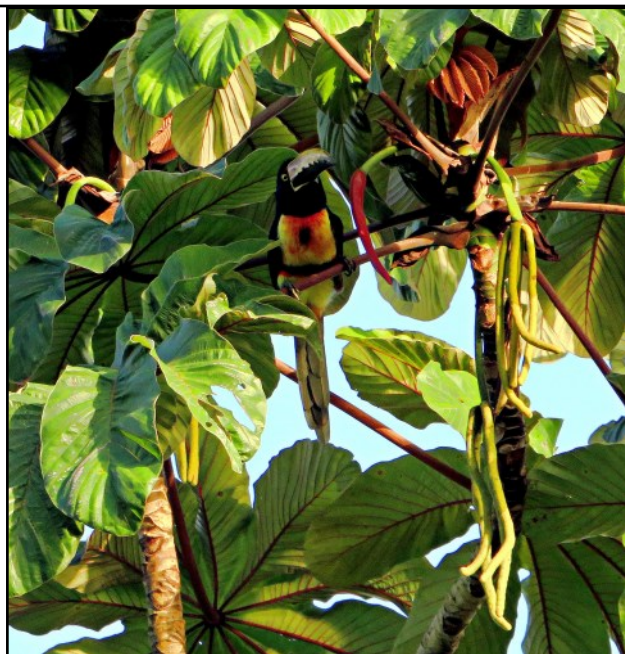
Costa Rica continued

Our next stop was the Arenal Volcano National Park, which sits next to Lake Arenal. The lake has the largest hydroelectric plant in Costa Rica. We continued to see great birds including White-throated Crake (rail), Dusky Anteater, Buff-rumped Warbler, Red-throated Ant-Tanager, and Black-headed Saltator. But what really got my attention was the venomous juvenile Eyelash Pit Viper, which was about 5 inches long and hiding six inches off the path. I stopped stepping off the pavement to let people pass after that.

On our drive around the north shore of Lake Arenal to the Pacific coast, we were able to observe a band of 25 White-nosed Coati (raccoon relative) swarming the highway. A car in front of us had stopped to feed them bananas.

The last stop before returning to San Jose, and home, was to the beach resort Tamarindo, which did not have spectacular wildlife, but the beach and sunsets were gorgeous! Of the 94 species of birds I observed, 66 of them were new to me. I would recommend a stop at a coffee plantation, hot springs near Arenal, the Monteverde Brewery and a visit to hanging bridges in the cloud forest.

Costa Rica is truly a tropical paradise with its great scenery, wonderful food, friendly people and fantastic wildlife. Please feel free to email at jimboxwell@yahoo.com if you would like more information about our trip.



Top: Collared Aracari
Middle: Female Great Curassow
Bottom left: White-throated Capuchin Monkeys
Bottom right: Arenal Volcano



The Ft. Belvoir 123rd Christmas Bird Count MD Shoreline Report - By the Numbers

by Lynne Wheeler

The Audubon Christmas Bird Count has generated over 120 years' worth of data showing how bird populations change over time. This annual tradition is recognized by many of us in southern Maryland. While the first count started in 1900, our current day efforts are critical as we determine the impact climate change is having on our bird populations.

Elizabeth Gray, National Audubon Society's Chief Executive Officer, wrote an insightful article recently titled "*How a Century-Old Winter Tradition Could Help Protect People and Birds for Another Hundred Years*". I recommend you read her article on the website at www.audubon.org. I'd like to share an excerpt:

"In a [new climate study published this year](#), Audubon researchers looked at 90 years of CBC data. They found that winter ranges for many birds of the eastern United States have changed in response to climate-related changes in temperature and precipitation. This is consistent with our [2021 climate study](#) that used CBC data to determine that many duck species that winter in the Southeastern U.S. have shifted northward due to temperature changes. Birds with specific habitat needs will be even more restricted by habitat availability and land-use change in a climate-disrupted future."

I have participated in two local CBCs over the years, the Port Tobacco CBC and the Ft. Belvoir, Virginia CBC, and have enjoyed them immensely. I volunteer for the Port Tobacco count covering an area within the circle, and as a co-coordinator with our Southern Maryland Audubon Society Conservation Chair Bob Lukinic, for the Ft. Belvoir CBC, where we help to find volunteers to count birds along the Maryland shoreline of the Potomac River, and Bob and his spouse Dottie, hold the tally rally party afterwards, which is too much fun! The center for the Ft. Belvoir circle is in Virginia, but extends across the river to our Maryland shoreline. The National Audubon article I mention above is of particular interest to me because for the last two years I have concentrated on identifying and counting waterfowl for this count – so the duck species reference catches my eye!

On Saturday, December 31, we had 18 volunteers hunt for birds from the southern tip of Indian Head, north to Accokeek, Maryland. My husband John and I spent four hours "duck hunting" by boat, which is by far the best vehicle to gather this data, and while this was my second year counting by boat, I sure wish I had done it this way years before!

Count day started off with a challenge for all of us – fog!! All up and down the river shoreline and creeks we had to wait for the fog to lift, spending our first few hours at parks and towns. Our boat launch was delayed till 9:45 am – and the first 30 minutes were spooky – still thick fog, but not long afterward the fun began. We soon witnessed Tundra Swans, numerous Mallards and Buffleheads, and it was amusing to get a phone call from two other volunteers (Jean and Jan) calling us from their phone from a cliff above – they see us! The camaraderie of count day is so special!

How did we do? Our day of effort achieved 88 species and 8692 total individuals. Considering this is just a sliver of the whole circle, and we are a small percentage of the overall participants in this CBC circle, we were pleased! Our bird highlights were a Black-throated Gray Warbler spotted by Marisa Rositol at National Colonial Farm (the only rare bird for the whole CBC circle and only the ninth state record), and a Virginia Rail by Cavan Allen at Piscataway Park (a first for our MD shoreline). Notable species are always a delight to document! Marisa also found our only Common Yellowthroat, and the only one for the last seven years, the Virginia Rail by Cavan falls in the same category! Our MD shoreline territory is one out of eleven, and looking at the overall numbers we are a big contribution to the count. This year we had the highest number reported for Canada Goose, Mallard, Bufflehead, Common Merganser, Mourning Dove, Black Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, European Starling, Northern Mockingbird, American Robin, and Common Grackle. The total birds reported for the circle was 51039, and as stated earlier, our MD shoreline contributed 8686 to this count. Total species reported was 112, MD shoreline was 88.

Continued on page 7, see **Ft. Belvoir CBC**

Ft. Belvoir CBC continued

In review of the last seven years for our shoreline, we show an increase in population for Canvasback, Bufflehead, Mourning Dove, Winter Wren, Northern Mockingbird, and Belted Kingfisher, and a decrease for Song Sparrow and Swamp Sparrow. A species of note is the Common Raven, now **not** considered a rare bird sighting, every count for the last six years we have reported 1-3, and last year we documented for the MD-DC Breeding Bird Atlas for the first time they are breeding in the Indian Head area!

The overall number of documented bird species for the MD shoreline, current year to 2017, was: 88, 82, 77, 74, 80, 89, and 84. The overall total number of birds surveyed, current year to 2017, was: 8692, 8600, 9657, 5900, 13341, 17706, and 11657. The last two years, 2017 and 2018, showed large rafts of waterfowl and contributed to the high numbers. Weather is a large contributing factor to CBC results, and we include this information in our data submission, as well as number of participants and the number of effort hours involved. I am intrigued by Elizabeth Gray's article I referenced earlier, and I will continue to track our waterfowl data over the years. Are we on the receiving end of the shift, or are they going north of us? Time will tell.

To cap off this wonderful day of counting we end up with scrumptious food and drinks at Bob and Dottie Lukinic's house for what we call the tally rally. And in true bird nerd fashion we end this gathering attempting to call in an Eastern Screech-Owl which nests at Bob's property, called in by the very talented owl whisperer, Mike Callahan. While we did not get the owl flying over our head this year, outside in the dark, with a full stomach and slightly woozy head from drinking, trying to see the Screech-Owl appear, well....it simply is fabulous! But maybe I really am a bird nerd!

Hermit Thrush – Unusual Visits to a Feeder in Port Tobacco, MD

Article and Photos submitted by Barbara Hill

I am relatively new to birding, only a couple of years, but I knew I saw something special when I saw a Hermit Thrush at my feeder. I was elated to find it coming back each day for the past week! Since I am new, I researched the Hermit Thrush and the Cornell University [All About Birds](#) site states "*Hermit Thrushes rarely visits backyards and generally do not visit feeders. However, during migration, they often forage on the ground or eat berries in yards with trees or shrubs.*" Birds are wonderful to watch and if you are interested, Southern Maryland Audubon Society has lots of activities and walks for folks of all ages. Watch their social media and websites for information. I am sharing a couple of photos of the hermit thrush, one on the first day I started seeing it (January 26) and one from yesterday (January 31).



Elevating Birds With Art and Music

by Molly Moore

Eaton Ekarintaragun is a birder, artist, violinist, photographer and muralist. All by age 16.

The Huntingtown High School junior was last year's recipient of Southern Maryland Audubon's youth scholarship to Audubon's bird and nature camp on Hog Island, Maine.

Eaton combines his passion for birds, art and music to elevate all three. He uses his close observations of birds to create what he describes as "crazy little details" in the feathers and faces of birds in acrylic, pastel pencil and oils of waterfowl, hummingbirds and other birds.

He has entered the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Junior Duck Stamp competition for the last three years. Eaton's painting of a Hooded Merganser—which took a month to complete—won first place in his age category at the state level two years ago. His Canvasback placed third in the state last year and he's entering a magnificently detailed oil painting of a Northern Shoveler in this year's contest.

Eaton integrates birds into his Calvert County school projects. This year he's working with other students on a large bird mural on campus. He also designed the program for his school orchestra's concert which featured music with bird themes. Eaton plays the violin in the orchestra.

A member of the Southern Maryland Youth Birders sponsored by Southern Maryland Audubon, Eaton urges anyone interested in birding and nature to start nature journaling.

"It doesn't have to be pretty," he says of journaling. "It's a way to slow down and start noticing bird and animal behaviors."

It also helps you take note of all those "crazy little details."

(All art by Eaton Ekarintaragun)



Clockwise from above: American Wigeon,
Canvasback, Hooded Merganser



Welcome, New Members!

Christine Alarcon, Fort Washington
Karen Anderson, Huntingtown
Sherri Bowser, La Plata
Cheryl Deatley, Waldorf
David Donahue, Huntingtown
Michael Dyson, Saint Inigoes
Zoe Grabenstetter, St. Mary's City
Jeannie Hucko, Hollywood
Chris Jantsch, Mechanicsville
Brian Jones, Fort Washington
Brian Keefe, Chesapeake Beach
Rosalie Parker, Lusby

Michelle Pritchett, Waldorf
Carole Ranta, Fort Washington
Laura Ross, Lexington Park
Kristi Rudolph, Leonardtown
Chyau N Shen, Drayden
Rick Smith, Lusby
Julie Swierczek, Saint Leonard
Lloyd Timberlake, Ridge
Christopher Wagon, La Plata
Eva Whittle, Hollywood
Maureen Wolfe, California

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Southern Maryland Audubon Society (SMAS)

@somdaudubon · ★ 5 4 reviews · Nonprofit organization

Please follow us on Instagram @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!

Visit us at www.somdaudubon.org

Dear Readers:

If you have any observations, announcements, articles, etc. that you'd like to see in the newsletter, send them in! The deadline for submissions for The Osprey is the 5th of each month. Since this winter is shaping up to be a winter finch irruption, perhaps you have some photos that you'd like to share? Did you travel over the holiday break? Go on a birding/nature outing that you recently enjoyed? We're always looking for member contributed content!

Great Backyard Bird Count coming February 17 — 20

How to Participate

COVID Statement: *Watching birds is a safe and enjoyable activity we can do during the Covid global pandemic. For the 2023 Great Backyard Bird Count, we strongly urge participants to comply with all current country, province, state, First People's lands, or municipal Covid-19 regulations and guidelines. This includes, but is not limited to, social distancing while bird watching and wearing a mask when birding with others.*

<https://www.birdcount.org/participate/>

Participating is easy, fun to do alone, or with others, and can be done anywhere you find birds.

Step 1 – Decide where you will watch birds.

Step 2 – Watch birds for **15 minutes or more, at least once over the four days**, February 17-20, 2023.

Step 3 – Count all the birds you **see or hear** within your planned time/location and use the best tool for sharing your bird sightings:

If you are a **beginning bird admirer and new to the count**, try using the [Merlin Bird ID app](#).

If you have **participated** in the count **before**, try [eBird Mobile app](#) or enter your bird list on the [eBird website](#) (desktop/laptop).

If you are **participating as a group**, see instructions for Group Counting.

Below, explore step-by-step instructions for entering data using each available tool.

Merlin Bird ID

If you are **NEW to the Great Backyard Bird Count** and have a smartphone, we recommend you using the Merlin Bird ID app to enter your first bird. It is **FREE** and easy to use.

[Using Merlin Bird ID](#)

Merlin covers bird species from **7 continents** and is available in **12 languages**.

eBird Mobile

If you are already using eBird to track your birding activity, the **FREE** eBird Mobile app is a fast way to enter your bird lists right from the palm of your hand.

[Using eBird Mobile](#)

Desktop or Laptop

If you prefer to enter your sightings on a computer, perhaps after making a list while on a hike or watching your feeders, we'll walk you through how.

[Using eBird on a Computer](#)

Note: *You can start entering bird lists at **midnight local time on the first day of the count**, anywhere in the world. Data entry remains open until **March 1**, but the information you enter should only be from the four days of the Great Backyard Bird Count.*

February — April 2023 Events

February 17 – 20 is the GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT!



Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the Great Backyard Bird Count was the first online citizen-science project to collect data on wild birds and to display results in near real-time. For information about the GBBC see their website at birdcount.org. You can help out by counting birds for as little as 15 minutes! Local GBBC get togethers throughout southern Maryland will be advertised on our Facebook page.

February 18 – SATURDAY - 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

FIELD TRIP – A Great Family Outing!

Indian Head Riverwalk, Charles County

165 Riverwatch Drive, Indian Head, MD 20640

“GBBC ON THE RIVER”

Leader: Lynne Wheeler

Come and enjoy a winter walk through the woods to a 1,200 feet long boardwalk along the Potomac River. A great bird walk for families! We will also participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count - a global project where the world comes together for the love of birds. We will report our observations to help scientists better understand bird populations before one of their annual migrations. Expect to see many Bald Eagles and rafts of waterfowl, as well as winter birds in the wooded section. Due to limited parking, we will meet at the Indian Head pavilion parking lot at 100 Walter Thomas Road, Indian Head, MD 20640. We will carpool and/or do drop offs to the boardwalk. RSVP to Lynne Wheeler at 301-751-8097 (text only) or somdaudubon@yahoo.com

February 24 – FRIDAY – 7 p.m.

FIELD TRIP – A GREAT FAMILY OWTING!

Leader(s): Bob Boxwell and Margarita Rochow

Elms Environmental Center, St. Mary’s County

49300 St. James Church Road, Lexington Park, MD 20653

“OWL PROWL AT THE ELMS”

Come “call out” the owls!! Owls are nocturnal, and therefore not easy to spot. A great Friday night family outing at The Elms. Dress appropriately for the weather, and avoid noisy clothing. This event is weather dependent. Rain or high winds will result in cancellation. Directions: Take Rt 235 south, left onto St. James Church Road (opposite Mattapany Rd). You will see the sign for The Elms Environmental Education Center. We will meet in the hunter’s dirt parking lot on the right 100 yards before the gate (Do not drive past the gate!) RSVP to Bob Boxwell at 410-231-1251 or

robertboxwell1@outlook.com

February — April 2023 Events continued

February 27 – MONDAY - 6:00 p.m.- 8:00 p.m.

SPECIAL WORKSHOP

Spring Dell Center Building, Charles County

6040 Radio Station Rd., La Plata, MD. 20646

“WINTER SOWING VEGGIES, HERBS & NATIVE PLANTS”

Presenters: Molly Moore and Marlene Smith, Southern Maryland Audubon and Charles County Master Gardeners
Learn how to grow your own native plants, herbs and vegetables from seeds, in milk jugs in the dead of winter! We'll show you the science behind the method and you'll plant jugs to take home. Please bring one or more clean recycled milk jugs if you can. We'll have extras and all other supplies, including seeds available. Spaces limited to 24 people. Family friendly for children ages 10 and up. This program is sponsored by Southern Maryland Audubon, University of Maryland Extension Charles County Master Gardeners and the Neighborhood Creative Arts Center. \$5 donation requested. Register here: <https://www.neighborhoodcreativeartscenter.org/product-page/winter-sowing-workshop>

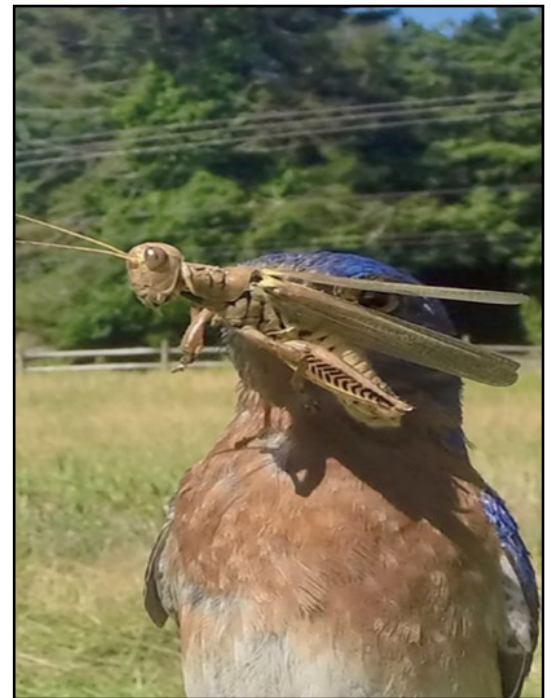
March 1 – WEDNESDAY – 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Monthly Meeting Program – Virtual Zoom Meeting

The Bird Insect Food Web, Dr. Ashley Kennedy

Numerous studies from around the world suggest that insect populations are currently in decline, which in turn affects birds who rely on insects for food. To determine which insects are most important in bird diets, trail cameras and crowd-sourced pictures of birds gained insight about the food webs that connect plants, insects, and birds and what we can do in our own yards to make a difference.

Ashley Kennedy received her PhD in the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware in 2019. Her dissertation research in Dr. Doug Tallamy's lab focused on bird-insect food webs, investigating which insect groups are most important to breeding birds. She is currently an environmental scientist for the state of Delaware in 2020. She is a past board member of Delaware Audubon, a Science Policy Fellow of the Entomological Society of America, a 2018 recipient of the John Henry Comstock Graduate Student Award, current president of the Entomological Society of America (Eastern Branch), and a Board Certified Entomologist with a specialty in Medical and Veterinary Entomology.



Eastern Bluebird with
Differential Grasshopper prey

March 4 – SATURDAY – 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

FIELD TRIP – One of our Best! Don't miss out, this trip fills up quickly!

Patuxent River Naval Air Station, St. Mary's County

21866 Cedar Point, Bldg. 2189, NAS Patuxent River, MD 20670. Gate #2, pass office parking lot.

“WINTER BIRDS AND TUNDRA SPECIALISTS AT PAX RIVER AIRFIELD”

Leader: Dean Newman We are fortunate to have access to sections of the navy base fronting on the confluence of the Patuxent River and the Chesapeake Bay, which hosts airfields that provide tundra-like habitat. Previous trips have turned up winter birds such as Snow Bunting, Lapland Longspurs, Short-eared Owls, Horned Larks, Savannah Sparrows, Wilson's Snipe and Peregrine Falcon. Pre-registration is required and open to U.S. citizens only. Must bring photo I.D. We will be escorted and traveling together in a van, so participant size is limited to 10. RSVP to Dean Newman at deannewman03@gmail.com

February — April 2023 Events continued

March 25 – SATURDAY – 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

FIELD TRIP – S MD Audubon Youth Birders – Youth Welcome to Join!

Newtowne Neck State Park, St. Mary's County

21110 Newtowne Neck Road, Leonardtown, MD 20650

“EARLY SPRING BIRDS AT THE NECK”

Leader: Ben Springer

Do you want to learn about birds? Or want to meet other kids that love birds? If so, this is your trip! Join Southern Maryland Youth Birders at a great location. Newtowne Neck is a 776-acre park of shoreline, woodlands, wetlands, and agricultural fields—a wide variety of birding habitats. On this trip last year, young birders found 52 species, including Yellow-throated Warblers! DIRECTIONS: From Rte. 5 north of Leonardtown, turn on Rte. 243 (Newtowne Neck Road), continue for 4.5 miles to parking lot on left just beyond the graveyard and before St. Francis Xavier's Church. RSVP required to Ben at 443-771-6636 (text preferred) or ben.springer@comcast.net.

April 1 – SATURDAY - 8:00 a.m. - 12 noon

FIELD TRIP

Point Lookout State Park, St. Mary's County

11175 Point Lookout Road, Scotland, MD 20687

“MIGRATION ON THE POINT”

Leader: Ben Springer

Join us at Southern Maryland's premier birding hotspot as early migrants funnel north across 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. **(Do not proceed directly to the park entrance.)** Fee area. RSVP required to Ben at 443-771-6636 (text preferred) or ben.springer@comcast.net

April 5 – WEDNESDAY – 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Monthly Meeting Program – Virtual Zoom Meeting

“The Mysteries and Marvels of Bird Migration”

Chris Eberly, Executive Director, Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership

Chris Eberly has been Executive Director of the Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership since 2017. He attended graduate school at the University of Georgia where he earned an M.S. in natural resources and ornithology. Following graduate school, he became the first coordinator of the Department of Defense's bird conservation program (DOD Partners in Flight Program), a position he held for 17 years. After serving as Executive Director of the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory in Texas, he was excited to return to Maryland to head up the Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership. Chris strives to connect people to birds through Bird City Maryland, the Maryland Bald Eagle Nest Monitoring Program and the Farmland Raptor Program. No one is more qualified to share with us examples of amazing bird migrations from raptors to shorebirds to songbirds.

April 22- SATURDAY - 9 a.m.-10:30 a.m.

FIELD TRIP - EARTH DAY BIRDS IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD WALK

Cobb Island, Charles County

13201 Main Avenue, Cobb Island, MD 20625

“BIRDS OF COBB ISLAND”

Leader: Molly Moore

What better way to celebrate Earth Day than learning the birds that frequent one of the most unique communities in Southern Maryland. This walk is family friendly and open to first time birders and experienced birders of all ages from Cobb Island and beyond. We will walk through the wooded neighborhoods of the island, spotting songbirds migrating through the area as well as those settling in for nest-building. We'll explore the waterfront and wetlands edges for shore birds, Osprey, and Bald Eagles. This will be an easy walk along quiet paved streets and paths. DIRECTIONS: Meet in the parking lot of the Cobb Island Civic Association, white building at Main Ave and Rte. 254, one block from the bridge, across the street from the Cobb Island Volunteer Fire EMS Services. RSVP to Molly Moore at president.somdaudubon@gmail.com

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

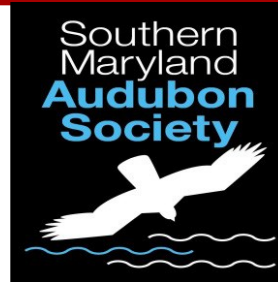
Photo by Bill Hubick

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.

2022—2023 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