

The Osprey

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN MARYLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

President's Perch

Greetings, Flock!

It's the start of a new program year for the Southern Maryland Audubon Society (SMAS) and our calendar is jam-packed with great new programs and activities for all ages— from bird walks to nature journaling to growing native plants for birds and pollinators.

We have an extraordinary line-up of monthly talks by top bird and wildlife experts, both online and in-person. Erin Reed, one of the state's leading experts on native plants for birds, will kick off our presentations on September 6 with tips for turning your yard or patio into a bird destination.

Check out our event listings in this newsletter and on our website www.somdaudubon.org to find an activity sure to catch your interest.

Of course, the core of our mission is protecting birds and the places they need to thrive. We've launched a new Grassland Ambassadors program to help farmers and other landowners better protect vulnerable birds such as Eastern Meadowlarks, Grasshopper Sparrows, Barn Owls, and American Kestrels that depend on open fields and meadows to survive. Our website has all the details.

We're partnering with Safe Skies Maryland to work with local, state and federal government leaders and agencies to expand the use of bird-friendly glass in buildings to reduce the bird strikes that kill an estimated one billion birds every year.

We are rehabbing and monitoring bluebird trails across Southern Maryland and happily recorded a bumper crop of fledglings this summer.

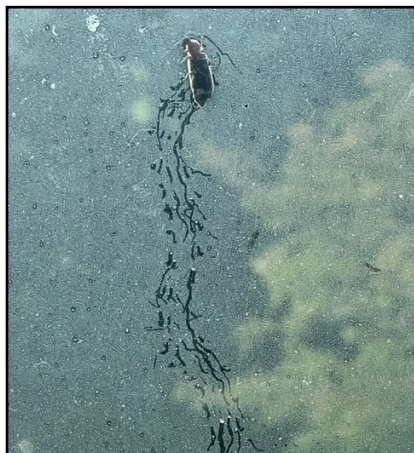
The photo on the right is my favorite summer image! The infectious smile on Kaelyn Stewart's face as a tiny salamander tickles her palm epitomizes the joy of exploring nature. Kaelyn, a rising senior at North Point High School for Science, Technology, and Industry in Waldorf, was the winner of our teen scholarship to the amazing Hog Island Audubon Camp in Maine. We are thrilled that Kaelyn will be leading our first nature journaling workshops this fall. (Not to worry, you don't need to be an artist or a writer to join in.)



We hope you've noticed we have a bold new logo featuring our iconic Southern Maryland bird, the Osprey, and reflecting the colors of our state flag. It was created by a brilliant young artist, Olivia Lunger, and voted in by our membership at our annual June picnic and meeting.

If you're not a member of SMAS, please consider joining our flock and supporting our bird conservation efforts. Better yet, become a volunteer! Write me at president.somdaudubon@gmail.com for more details.

Happy birding,
Molly Moore



Firefly Tracks
Photo by Carrie Staples

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<http://somdaudubon.org/>

Heaven on Earth

by Molly Moore

Listen to Kaelyn Stewart, winner of Southern Maryland Audubon's teen scholarship to the Hog Island Audubon Camp in Maine, describe "heaven on Earth."

"My favorite activity at the Hog Island Mountains to Sea Birding for Teens Camp was hiking up Borestone Mountain. Borestone is the most beautiful place I have ever laid my eyes upon and the hike was so rewarding.

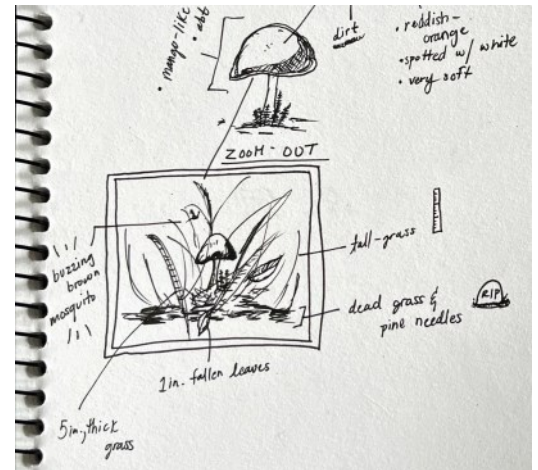
"It was a tough hike with rock climbing and strong fog and mist but making it to the summit felt like heaven on earth. At the top, we had snacks, learned about the geology of the mountain, did some birding, practiced mindfulness, and wrote a poem about something we saw on the mountain.

"Words cannot describe the joy Borestone Mountain made me feel. I would 100% do it again!"

Kaelyn is also eager to share the nature journaling experience she learned at camp and will be leading Southern Maryland Audubon's inaugural "Learning Nature Journaling" workshop September 17 at Gilbert Run Park in Charles County.

A volunteer at the Humane Society of Charles County. Kaelyn said she hopes to become a herpetology veterinarian or a veterinarian for exotic and avian species traveling around the world.

(Photos courtesy of Kaelyn Stewart)



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. We're going out of our summer break so maybe you travelled? Perhaps you have some photos that you'd like to share? Go on a

Welcome, New Members!

Dorothy Birch, Solomons
Diana Brown, Oxon Hill
David Boylen, Hughesville
Joan Byrd, Temple Hills
Ruth Carmona-Murray, Port Tobacco
Greta Davis, Temple Hills
Agnes L Giannini, La Plata
Francesca Grifo, Bethesda
Matthew Hill, Brandywine
John K Hulmston, Brandywine
Sandy Konerth, Huntingtown
Erika Kjersgard, Lexington Park
Craig R Martin, Great Mills

Michael Martin, Lexington Park
Pamela-Jeanne Moran, Port Republic
Joseph McKenna, North Beach
Dianne Pilkerton, Mechanicsville
David Pokora, La Plata
Carmen Portela, Port Republic
Deborah Shefka, Owings
Catherine Riley, Waldorf
Charlie Rogers, Oxon Hill
Marjorie Sullivan, Suitland
Beth Versak, Owings
Glenna Wood, Mechanicsville

Summer Is For The Birds

For the Southern Maryland Audubon Society, summer vacation meant more chances to share the joy of birds. From local festivals to birding workshops, from native plant clinics to recognizing our Conservationist of the Year, it was a very busy season.

The “Insectival” at the Annmarie Sculpture Garden and Arts Center in Solomons offered a great opportunity to teach children and their families the importance of insects to birds. And the insect costumes were amazing—check out the four lady bugs! (Photo by Annette Cook)



We honored St. Mary’s County Public School teacher Dorothy Birch as our “Conservationist of the Year” for her outstanding work training the future generation of conservationists. Dorothy teaches and directs the Natural Resources Management program at Dr. James A. Forrest Career and Technology Center in Leonardtown. *Southern Maryland News* featured Dorothy and our award in a front page story. (Photo by Barbara Hill)

SMAS instructors Dean Newman and Molly Moore led a workshop at the Loffler Senior Activity Center in Lexington Park that began with a lesson on adjusting binoculars properly and ended with using the Merlin app on smartphones to identify birds by their calls. (Photo by Molly Moore)



New Chapter Leaders Elected

Two new board members and a new vice president are joining the SMAS leadership team, including two students at St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM).

Ben Springer (top right photo), a senior at SMCM, was elected our new vice president by the membership at our annual June meeting, and Phin Rouland (bottom right photo), a rising freshman at SMCM, was elected to the Board of Directors, along with Annette Cook (bottom left photo).

Ben works at Patuxent River Naval Air Station as a bird survey intern and is majoring in environmental studies. He has been a member of the board and active field trip leader for the past several years.

Phin, along with some of his friends, started the Southern Maryland Youth Birders in association with Southern Maryland Audubon Society. Phin is an avid bird photographer and will be serving as our field trip chair, organizing the chapter bird walks and other events.

Annette Cook became an avid birder during the Covid lockdown and is one of our most active volunteers. She will be our scholarship



and education chair, heading our scholarship program to Hog Island Audubon Camp in Maine as well as organizing our education outreach at community events and with partner groups across Southern Maryland. Annette works as a defense contractor supporting a NAVAIR program office.

Officers re-elected to their positions are Molly Moore, president; Barbara Hill, secretary; and Julie Daniel, treasurer. Other members of the Board of Directors are Dean Newman and Karolina Krzywda.

Owl Moon Raptor Center

By Dean Newman

On Friday, Aug 3, I was stuck in I-495 traffic on the south side of the Woodrow Wilson Bridge at the intersection with US 1. It was about 3:30 p.m. and, as you can guess, I had discovered several hundred of my “best friends” as we inched, bumper to bumper, toward the bridge. Luckily, I was in the left lane (please don’t judge me) when I spotted a juvenile, freshly-fledged Osprey in the middle of traffic obviously exhausted and confused. I’m not sure how the bird had avoided being run over.

Without thinking it through, I pulled my truck to the left shoulder and desperately attempted eye contact with an oncoming VW Passat. Thankfully that driver stopped and allowed my “pedestrian-ship” to block that lane. The traffic in the right lane paused as well. Luckily, the bird was so exhausted it didn’t attempt to escape and I was able to capture it within seconds.

Incidentally, if you ever have to capture an Osprey, don’t worry about the beak. Secure those talons. Grab the bird by both legs, again ignoring the beak. I learned that from a fellow SMASer, Kyle Rambo. Works with Red-shouldered Hawks as well. You’ll come out unscathed.

Once I had the bird safely back on the interstate shoulder and in the floorboard of my truck, what next? The bird was too exhausted to release and I wasn’t sure there wasn’t an injury. As far as I know, and PLEASE correct me, we have no wildlife rehab persons in our Tri-County area. My wife suggested I call Molly Moore for advice.

Molly suggested I contact Owl Moon Raptor Rehab and Suzanne Shoemaker answered the phone. To say she was most attentive is an understatement. Owl Moon is in Boyds, Maryland; way up in Montgomery County; over an hour’s drive from my current location. That’s in non-traffic conditions and it was Friday afternoon rush hour in DC. I would have made the drive but, did I mention Suzanne was most attentive? After explaining where I was at, she volunteered to send a runner to meet me half way; the IKEA parking lot in College Park. I gratefully accepted.

Suzanne provided the name and phone number of the runner whom I immediately called. Bill Lamoureux answered as he enthusiastically suggested a meeting place. I want to emphasize the positive attitude of everyone I spoke to from Owl Moon regarding helping this bird. I sincerely believe Bill would have driven to Southern Maryland if I’d told him I was going home and that’s where he could get the bird.

Thirty minutes later I pulled into the IKEA lot and Bill was there waiting for me. He was a bit taken aback when I pulled the Osprey from my back seat with no box or containment. Nonetheless, he opened the back of his hatchback vehicle and I placed the bird on his floorboard and we parted company.

I thought that would be the last I heard of the incident but an hour or so later, Suzanne texted to inform me that Bill and the Osprey had arrived and, upon initial exam, the bird looked in great shape. She said they would do a more thorough exam once it had settled down. Moreover, the next day, Suzanne sent me another text saying they were testing the bird’s flight capability and were contemplating releasing it close (not on the highway) to where I found it.

The real hero in this story is the Owl Moon Raptor Center. Yes, my bird wasn’t a challenging or critical case but many other raptor stories are. I come from an area of the country where hawks are considered vermin and are shot on sight. That’s tragic but, closer to home, our bird feeders are raptor magnets and collisions with windows, power lines, screen porches, etc. are common. It seems almost inevitable that, at some time, any of us are going to find or be contacted about an injured raptor. Non-birders think, just because we belong to a bird club, we should have the answer. We do. I strongly urge you to bookmark [Owl Moon Raptor Center](https://owlmoon.org/), 20201 Bucklodge Road, Boyds, Maryland, (301) 353-8947 on your phone or computer: <https://owlmoon.org/> I can tell you from personal experience they consider every raptor important and will move mountains to save one.

Dean Newman is a member of Southern Maryland Audubon Board of Directors and co-chair of the Raptors and Grasslands Birds Conservation Committee.

See the article in the Washington Post! <https://tinyurl.com/DeanNewman>

North Dakota in late May

By Tyler Bell

Jane Kostenko and I had planned on doing a driving trip out to visit her family in North Dakota in late spring 2020. The pandemic shut that down but with things looking better this year, we decided to do it. There was also a volunteer opportunity in Medora, just outside the gates to Theodore Roosevelt National Park, that we had wanted to do so it all came together nicely.

Driving from Maryland to North Dakota means interstate driving at speed for three solid days. We stayed with family in Minneapolis then once we got into North Dakota did a little birding while still trying to arrive before sundown. The Red River divides North Dakota and Minnesota and is the line in the sand for many eastern species. Sure, you might find them here and there around the state but some are almost a lock along the river. So, with that in mind, we stopped at Trefoil Park in Fargo to look for Red-bellied Woodpeckers. There had been flooding along the river so our route to the park was met with detours. Then, at the park, it was raining, windy and cold. Northern Cardinals are in the same range as red-bellies so we were happy to hear one near the park entrance. Still, after about 15 minutes of walking trails, we finally heard one. Ultimately saw it then jumped back in the car, racing the sun.



Northern Cardinal
Photo by Joanne Wuori

At Medora, the avifauna has a much more western flavor. Western Wood-Pewee, Bullock's Oriole, Lark Sparrow, Violet-green Swallow can be found in the right places. But, after climbing a cable ladder up the side of a butte, as we were trying to catch our breath, we heard "picky tuck tuck". It didn't register for a few seconds then I whipped out my phone and got a recording. Summer Tanagers are not common anywhere in North Dakota and particularly in the southwest part of the state. Another state bird.

Elsewhere, we tried to find birds missing from our eBird state needs list. One was Short-billed Dowitcher. I know we had seen them before but just hadn't submitted any to eBird. So, whenever we found shorebirds, we were super careful to try and pull out SBDOs. We found them in several places though Long-billed Dowitchers are the default in the upper plains.



Summer Tanager
Photo by Peter Hogan

Sadly, we missed a mega state rarity, Lewis's Woodpecker, in Medora no less, a couple of days after we left. On a gravel road where we had even birded!

The funniest part of searching for Red-bellied Woodpecker and then chancing on a Summer Tanager is that they have both nested in our yard at one point or another over the years. Same with Northern Cardinal which often nests in a bush outside our kitchen window. One person's rarity is another person's yard bird.

Supreme Court Decision on Clean Water Act Is a Major Loss for Birds and People

The decision puts protections for as many as 90 million acres of wetlands in question.

May 26, 2023 · American Bird Conservancy

The May 25 Supreme Court decision in *Sackett vs EPA* represents a major loss for both birds and humans. For 50 years, through Republican and Democratic administrations alike, the Clean Water Act has protected hundreds of millions of acres of wetlands throughout the United States. The court's decision yesterday narrowed the definition of "waters of the United States" such that protections for as many as 90 million acres of wetlands are now in question, which could lead to massive losses due to filling, draining, or dredging. The decision jeopardizes important habitats for birds and the health of many of our nation's streams, lakes, and other waterways.



The Whooping Crane is one of hundreds of bird species that rely on clean water. Photo by Dennis W. Donohue, Shutterstock

"The Clean Water Act is a bedrock, bipartisan law that ensures that vital habitats like wetlands continue to provide their immense benefits to birds, ecosystems, and humans alike," said Michael J. Parr, President of American Bird Conservancy (ABC). "This decision puts tens of millions of acres of wetlands at risk with the stroke of a pen. And, given that the United States and Canada have lost 3 billion birds since 1970 — more than a quarter of the birdlife in these countries — we simply cannot afford to introduce major new pressures on these already-declining populations.

"Americans have demonstrated for decades that they care about our water and wetlands and have engaged with countless conservation actions," continued Parr. "We hope that this Supreme Court decision will be met with a renewed commitment to wetland conservation by the people."

Wetlands serve an irreplaceable role for hundreds of species of birds in the United States. Birds use these incredibly productive habitats as breeding sites, stopovers during migration, and wintering sites. Wetland birds also represent one of our few major conservation success stories; the 2022 State of the Birds Report identified wetland birds as the only group of birds with increasing populations. The Court's decision represents a major threat to tragically reverse that hard-fought victory.

Beyond birds, wetlands represent a vital natural resource for human communities as well. They filter and clean our water, and they provide storm and flood protection in the face of increasing climate volatility. Local communities often lack the power to fight back against regionally powerful polluters or developers and rely upon strong federal protections to ensure access to clean water. The narrowing of the Clean Water Act represents a major threat to communities throughout the country.

"ABC calls upon Congress to clarify the definition of wetlands under the Clean Water Act to re-instate these fundamental safeguards," said Parr. "And we will continue to push for robust wetland protections at both the federal and state levels."

American Bird Conservancy is a nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving wild birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. With an emphasis on achieving results and working in partnership, we take on the greatest problems facing birds today, innovating and building on rapid advancements in science to halt extinctions, protect habitats, eliminate threats, and build capacity for bird conservation. Find us on abcbirds.org, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (@ABCbirds).

Media Contact: Jordan Rutter, Director of Communications, media@abcbirds.org

September — October 2023 Events

September 6 - WEDNESDAY – 7 p.m. – 8 p.m.

MONTHLY MEETING PROGRAM - Zoom Meeting

“GARDENING FOR BIRDS: HOW WE CAN ALL BE HABITAT AMBASSADORS”

ERIN REED MILLER, Bird-Friendly Communities Coordinator, Patterson Park Audubon Center

Whether you have a community park, backyard or simply a window box, you can plan your own wildlife sanctuary. Erin explains how every patch of habitat, however small or paved, adds up, making a big difference for birds. Erin Reed Miller earned degrees in Wildlife Conservation and Wildlife Ecology from the University of Delaware. There she researched native plant and insect connections with Dr. Doug Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home*, *The Living Landscape*, and *Nature's Best Hope*. She is currently Bird-Friendly Communities Coordinator at Baltimore's Patterson Park Audubon Center where she works with communities to increase bird-friendly habitats.

September 9 – SATURDAY - 8 a.m. – 11 a.m.

FIELD TRIP

Chancellors Point Park, St. Mary's County

18171 Rosecroft Road, St. Mary's City, MD 20686

“MIGRATION ALONG THE ST. MARY'S RIVER”

Leader: BEN SPRINGER

Join us for a fall meander to key bird migration hotspots in and around Historic St. Mary's City, which can be easily combined with a visit to the site of Maryland's first capital. The combination of riverfront, open fields, forest and marshland provide us with a chance to look for migrating warblers as well as lingering breeding birds. Easy walk with minor elevation changes. Meet leader at 8 a.m. at the Chancellors Point Park parking lot. Directions: Driving south on Rte. 5 from St. Mary's City, turn right on Rosecroft Road. In one mile, watch for signs for Chancellors Point Park. Turn right onto access road and follow signs to the end. (GPS coordinates: 38.1694115, -76.4407542.) Maximum of 10 participants. RSVP to Ben at ben.springer@comcast.net or 443-771-6636 (text preferred).

September 9 – SATURDAY – Bird Walk 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. BioBlitz 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

FIELD TRIP – Bird Walk and BioBlitz

Mallows Bay Park: Malloys Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary

1440 Wilson Landing Rd, Nanjemoy, MD 20662

“BIRD WALK AND BIOBLITZ AT MALLOWS BAY”

Leader: LYNNE WHEELER

Come join us at Malloys Bay either for a one-hour bird walk hosted by the Southern Maryland Audubon Society, or you can also officially register to participate in NOAA's BioBlitz. Whatever floats your boat! Come learn about the biodiversity in the sanctuary and species that this unique habitat supports. **BioBlitz** is a free event where participants collect as many species observations as possible. By participating, you'll help scientists collect valuable biodiversity information and learn more about Malloys Bay! Joining the BioBlitz is easy! Anyone with a cellphone camera and access to the free [iNaturalist](https://www.inaturalist.org) app can participate. Here's how:

- 1) Download the iNaturalist App. Create a user account at [iNaturalist.org](https://www.inaturalist.org).
- 2) Join the project on iNaturalist.
- 3) You must pre-register for the BioBlitz (10 a.m. – 1 p.m.) You will receive a free t-shirt at check-in! Look for the blue NOAA tent.

Special activities:

10:00am - Guided bird-watching hike led by the Southern Maryland Audubon Society

All day - Seining for aquatic organisms with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources

RSVP to Lynne at somdaudubon@yahoo.com or 301-751-8097 (text only) by September 2. Include your full name, what county you reside in, how many are attending, and specify bird walk only or both events. Note: One section of the trail has a steep incline, moderate difficulty.

September — October 2023 Events continued

September 13 - WEDNESDAY – 7 p.m.

PRESENTATION—IN PERSON

Historic Sotterley, St. Mary's County

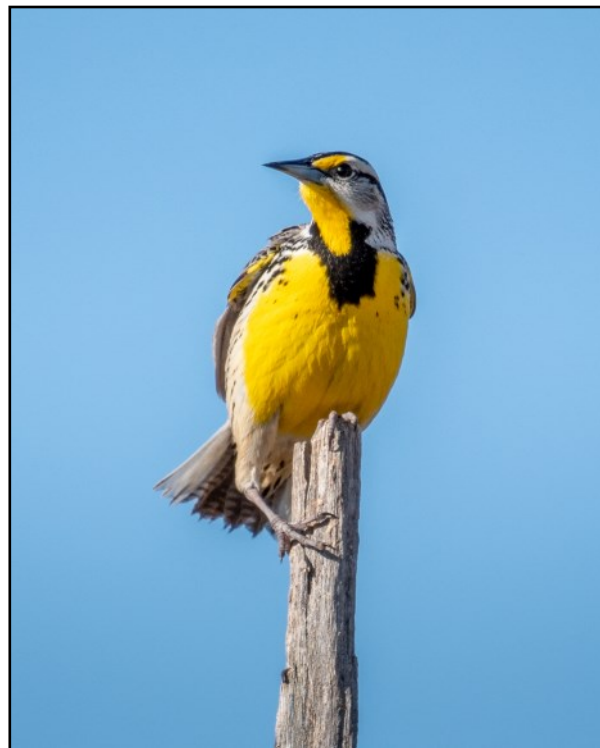
44300 Sotterley Lane, Hollywood, MD 20636

“SOTTERLEY PRESENTS: SAVING GRASSLAND BIRDS IN SOTTERLEY'S HAYFIELDS “

DAVID MOULTON, founder of Saving Southern Maryland's Grassland Birds, will discuss the role Sotterley has played in finding ways to bale hay while trying not to harm baby birds at the same time. Some of our most beloved species of grassland birds, such as the Eastern Meadowlark, nest only in large hay fields during May and June – often conflicting directly with the spring hay harvest. What can be done? With Sotterley's property manager, Joe Goldsmith, David has undertaken a series of experiments to demonstrate that by altering harvest techniques, timing and patterns, Southern Maryland hay farmers can often maintain their haying operations while significantly increasing the reproductive success of the birds. He will outline their findings and share ideas about maintaining our agricultural heritage and conserving our threatened wildlife.

This event will be in-person only. We request that you register in advance here:

[Register for FREE Here!](#)



Eastern Meadowlark
Photo by Kshanti Greene

September 16 - SATURDAY – 8 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: 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. From Lexington Park drive south on Rte. 235 for 13 miles. Go left on Rte. 5 for 0.7 miles then left into the Ridge Post Office parking lot. We will arrange carpooling from there. Point Lookout SP is a fee area. Bathroom facilities available. Flat, easy terrain. Mosquitos can be problematic so bring bug spray. Sunscreen recommended. Maximum of 15 participants. RSVP to Tyler at 301-862-4623 or jtylerbell@yahoo.com.

September 17 - SUNDAY - 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

NATURE WORKSHOP

Gilbert Run Park, Charles County

13140 Charles St., Charlotte Hall, MD. 20622.

“LEARNING NATURE JOURNALING”

Leader: KAELYN STEWART

Nature journaling is easier than you think! You don't have to be an artist or a writer to get closer to birds and nature with a notebook and pen. Kaelyn will guide you through exercises that will sharpen your observational skills and expand your personal experience with nature in the tranquil setting of Gilbert Run Park. Sketchbook and pen will be provided. Open to all ages 10 and above. DIRECTIONS: Eight miles east of LaPlata on Route 6. Enter parking lot and look for us beneath a hand-held Southern Maryland Audubon logo sign. On our fairly easy walk to a peaceful spot to journal, we could traverse some slightly hilly areas with exposed tree roots. Comfortable walking shoes recommended. RSVP required to president.somdaudubon@gmail.com. Workshop is free.

September — October 2023 Events continued

September 23 – SATURDAY – 9 a.m. – 12 noon

FIELD TRIP – Southern MD 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, Southern Maryland Audubon Youth Birders Club

Catch the tail end of migration on another field trip for youth to get into birding!! This wonderful location offers easy walks with little elevation change through open fields, wooded areas, and river view which provides for good bird diversity. 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 somdaudubon@yahoo.com

September 30 – Saturday - 8 a.m. – 11 a.m.

FIELD TRIP

Historic Sotterley, St. Mary's County

44300 Sotterley Lane, Hollywood, MD 20636

"BIRDING THE FIELDS AND TRAILS OF SOTTERLEY"

Leader: DEAN NEWMAN

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. Easy walking and very gentle slopes. Contact Dean Newman at deannewman03@gmail.com

October 7 - SATURDAY - 10:30 a.m.-12:00 noon

MONTHLY MEETING PROGRAM (NOTE DIFFERENT DATE AND TIME**)**

Port Tobacco Recreation Center

8190 Port Tobacco Road, Port Tobacco MD 20677

"SOUTHERN MARYLAND BIRDS OF PREY"

Speaker: MIKE CALLAHAN — SMAS Raptor Conservation Chairman, Environmental Educator

Come join us **in-person** and meet some of our Southern Maryland raptors face-to-face as raptor expert Mike Callahan discusses the behavior and habits of the hawks, eagles and owls indigenous to our region. Mike will be accompanied by several live raptors from the Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Education Center, providing a closer look at these magnificent and remarkable birds. Mike will discuss the effort to re-establish a sustainable breeding program for Barn Owls which MD DNR lists on its Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species lists as rare, and in need of conservation. RSVP not required.

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

FIELD TRIP

Cove Point Beach and Marsh, Calvert County

"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. Flat sandy walk. May be wet (wind and tide dependent). This is a restricted area and we are limited to ten guests. Exact location and directions given upon reservation. RSVP by September 29 to Bob at 410-231-1251 or robertboxwell1@outlook.com.

See related article on Page 11.

Cove Point Marsh

by Tyler Bell

On July 27, Bob Boxwell, Sherman Suter and I did a breeding bird atlas survey at the Cove Point Marsh. Since this area is restricted, due to the location of the liquid natural gas (LNG) terminal and security concerns, it's always a neat experience to bird there. We didn't see any other people the two and a half hours that we were there. Unfortunately, due to calendar conflicts, we had little choice in the date and it was a hot one.

The walk from the small parking area is along a hard, sandy path that ends at the water's edge on the Chesapeake. The LNG platform is literally a mile offshore. Sherman scoped the platform which was loaded with gulls and Double-crested Cormorants. Always hoping for something unusual like a Brown Booby or the more likely Brown Pelican but neither were present this day. We did find a lingering female Black Scoter and a flyby Willet which were nice surprises. But, our main goal was Marsh Wren. Sadly, we didn't find any of them, either. They have declined considerably since the previous breeding bird atlas.

But, every time that we go there, and we've done this walk once a year since the atlas started in 2020, the planted beach grasses continue to flourish. There are short marsh grasses (*Spartina patens*) in the lower tidal zone which is where the sharp-tailed sparrows (Nelson's and Saltmarsh) can be found on Bob's field trip scheduled for Sunday, October 8. The success rate for Nelson's on his trips is high.

After bushwhacking through tall *Spartina alterniflora* grasses in the higher tidal zone in temps in the 90s, we were whipped and turned around. Thankfully, there was a nice breeze and eventually air conditioning in the car.

If you plan on attending Bob's field trip, be aware that you will be walking through soft or hard packed sand, possibly some water, then some uneven terrain in the *Spartina*. But, birding in this special place makes the walk worth it!

Follow us on Facebook @somdaudubon



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

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.

2023—2024 Officers

President, Molly Moore - president.somdaudubon@gmail.com
Vice President, Ben Springer—ben.springer@comcast.net
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