

The Osprey

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN MARYLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

President's Perch



Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Photo by Marcia Hagwood

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<http://somdaudubon.org/>

Greetings Flock!

My son looked out the kitchen window recently and declared, "Mom! Your hummingbirds are so FAT!"

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are now bulking up for their long fall migration to Mexico and Central America. They are sipping the last nectar from cardinal flowers and other native plants in your yard and you may see them fighting at your hummingbird feeders. Be sure to keep your feeders cleaned and replenished every few days to help these little gems prep for migration and to support hummers traveling through Southern Maryland from further north.

Nature journaling! Field trips across the region! Live raptor lecture! Southern Maryland Audubon has never offered more chances for you to get out and explore nature while the summer heat is breaking and the weather is at its most glorious. Our calendar is packed with events for all ages.

Don't miss our free, in-person nature journaling workshop at beautiful Gilbert Run Park near Charlotte Hall on Sunday, September 17. You don't have to be an artist and we'll provide the sketchbooks and pens. It's a great way to get closer to nature and learn to create a record of your nature observations. Check out our events calendar in this newsletter for the details on all our free events and how you can sign up.

You'll be able to meet live raptors up close and personal at our in-person 10:30 a.m. Saturday morning October 7 meeting at Port Tobacco Recreation Center. Our Raptor and Grassland Birds Conservation Chair Mike Callahan will bring raptors from the Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Education Center in Charles County and will regale the audience with lively raptor lore and info.

We welcome all of you to volunteer at any of our events. We need folks to help at our festival tables, lead and coordinate bird walks and support our many conservation efforts for birds.

Bird migration season is now underway. In addition to our beloved hummingbirds, millions of other birds will be on the move over Southern Maryland. You can make their journey less stressful by turning off outside lights that can disorient the travelers and urging your office building to turn off unnecessary interior lights that can cause birds to crash into windows. Keep your cats indoors for both bird and cat safety. And create a safe resting stop in your yard by leaving dying native plants standing for food and shelter and providing fresh water in a bird bath or dish or plate.

Enjoy the season, come out and join our events and happy birding!
Molly Moore

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. JOIN OUR FLOCK OF VOLUNTEERS!

Southern Maryland Audubon Society's primary missions are education, public outreach, and environmental advocacy to support birds and the habitat they need to thrive in Southern Maryland and beyond.

SMAS's robust activity calendar includes:

- Bird Walks
- Workshops
- Presentations
- Youth & Public Outreach
- Festival Exhibits
- Community Science

Volunteers of all ages, levels of birding expertise, and availability are needed to help support our programs and activities. Even small actions make a difference!

Act Now! Contact acook.somdaudubon@gmail.com for more information about volunteering with SMAS.



JOIN THE FLOCK!

2023 Hog Island Field Ornithology

Spoiler alert: I want to go back!

On Sunday afternoon, all of the weeks' campers, teens and adults, reported to the designated parking lot on the mainland and waited to be ferried to the Island. After we found our rooms (and met our roommates) we were free to roam around the island until dinner at 5:00. The food at Hog Island is all locally sourced and lovingly prepared and is widely reported to be excellent – a report that I can validate! That evening after dinner we met all the other campers and our lead instructors for Field Ornithology: Scott Wiedensaul, Sara Morris, and Angelika Nelson. Assisting them were Catherine Hamilton, Anthony Hill and our junior instructor, Teodelina Martelli.

From that first afternoon it became apparent that the people in the Field Ornithology camp were a fascinating group. Each of them had a love of birds, a body of experience with them, and a desire to learn more about them. I cannot remember ever meeting a group of people for the first time and finding every one so entirely companionable. Over the week we realized that quite a few of us were from the Mid-Atlantic region, and so of course we've made plans to stay in touch and do some birding, and some bird photography, together.

The first days were chilly, overcast and damp and I wore every layer I'd brought. The buildings are not heated, and the first and last weeks of camp at Hog Island can be a little nippy. Lesson learned: always pack one more layer! However, after the first full day we were all tired enough to sleep well regardless of the cool temperatures. Each day we had bird walks around the island and at various locations on the mainland. After dinner each evening, we had excellent lectures. Sara discussed ornithology, Scott talked about migration, and Angelika explained some of her research on vocal communication. Sara described the rich collection of bird specimens at Hog Island, which includes some that were preserved at the end of the 19th century and are still in use. We had full access to this collection during our stay on the island, and it was tremendously informative to hold an actual specimen and examine the details up close.



Roseate Tern Photo by Jan de Regt



Atlantic Puffins Photo by Jan de Regt

Tuesday was the most exciting day for me. We cruised to Eastern Egg Rock in the rain to see the Atlantic Puffin colony that had been re-established by Project Puffin beginning in the 1970's. There were puffins everywhere, along with Black Guillemots, Common Eiders, a Roseate Tern, Common Terns, a lone American Oystercatcher, together with lots of gulls, Common Loons, and Double-crested Cormorants. After circling the rock several times, we continued on to Allen Island where we erected several mist nets, called in some warblers and banded them. That was quite an amazing process to see up close!

See Hog Island, page 4

Hog Island, continued

The last night we had a celebratory dinner, including lobster for those who chose it, and I have to say that it's a different experience to eat a whole lobster with a bunch of wildlife biologists. In place of a lecture that night we all participated in an early observation of International Guillemot Appreciation Day, complete with a sing along led by Sara and her accomplices. A slide show followed, featuring everyone's favorite few photos from the week. Carter McDermott-Hinman, our very talented and enthusiastic sous chef, provided a delightful musical accompaniment on her viola, creating a truly magical evening.

Everything I experienced was so remarkable that it's difficult to choose just a few highlights, but I'd have to say that seeing the puffins, hearing a Veery sing, seeing warblers being banded and released, and hearing the heartbeat of an American Redstart are all top contenders. Photographing the Milky Way in the wee hours with my roommate and another camper who joined in the fun ranks right up there too.

I am already trying to decide which program I'll attend next year. Registration for the 2024 programs opens in November – mark your calendars!

Jan de Regt



Magnolia Warbler Photo by Jan de Regt

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. Perhaps you have some photos that you'd like to share? Go on a birding/nature outing that you recently enjoyed? We're always looking for member contributed content!

Welcome, New Members!

Malani Baker, California

Jacqueline P Couvillon, Port Tobacco

Gail Dobson, Valley Lee

Phyllis Frere, Bel Alton

E Haack, Owings

Elisabeth Hunsaker, Port Tobacco

Margaret G Hildebrandt, Sunderland

Barbara Van Maastricht, Solomons

Wayne Moodie, Waldorf

L J Pinto, Mechanicsville

Leona Queen, Fort Washington

Terence Schlegel, Waldorf

Charlotte Yeatman, Dameron

Donald Zust, Huntingtown

Rare Duck Visits Southern Maryland

photos and story by Molly Moore

You won't find her in any field guides, but we can't resist noting the sighting of the 61-foot-tall "Mama Duck" at the Leonardtown Wharf in August.

Leonardtown went totally quackers over the Maryland debut of the World's Largest Rubber Duck at the 15th anniversary celebration of its waterfront park. Cheerful yellow ducks were popping up all over town—on storefronts, in front yards and in planter boxes. And of course on Duck Donuts.

The super-sized rubber duck is the creation of Dutch conceptual artist Florentijn Hofman who has been creating big yellow versions of "Mama Duck" across the globe for the past 15 years.



"Mama Duck" migrated across the Chesapeake Bay to Crisfield on Maryland's Eastern Shore August 11-13.



The Whooping Crane Aerial Survey

Marking the 6th year the Aransas-Wood Buffalo Whooping Crane population has topped the 500 mark, a preliminary analysis of aerial surveys conducted in January 2023 indicate there were 536 Whooping Cranes wintering in southeast Texas, in the primary survey area (approximately 160,125 acres) centered on Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, including 88 first-year juveniles and 203 adult pairs. The last survey from winter 2021-22 estimated 543 Whooping Cranes, indicating the population has remained stable over the last two years.



Aerial surveys conducted in January indicate there were 536 Whooping Cranes wintering in southeast Texas, centered on Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. Photo by Paul Konrad

An additional 14 Whoopers were recorded outside the primary survey area, based on information from Texas Whooper Watch, eBird reports, iNaturalist reports, a Whooping Crane GPS tracking study, and aerial surveys conducted in the secondary survey areas.

Whooping Cranes are one of the rarest birds in North America and are highly endangered. They are long-lived birds, documented to live more than 30 years in the wild, with a very low reproductive rate. Adults generally don't pair and nest until four or five years old; usually laying two eggs, but rearing only one young, if successful; which has made their recovery extremely slow.

In 1967, when the species was listed under the Endangered Species Act, only 43 Whooping Cranes still existed in the wild, all wintering at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge and nesting in Wood Buffalo National Park in northwest Canada. Over the decades Whooping Crane numbers have increased significantly since extensive conservation efforts were initiated by federal and state agencies, wildlife organizations, and private landowners, with the long-term annual population growth rate averaging 4.34 percent. Biologists plan to conduct the next whooping Crane census during January 2024.

Today, a second Eastern Migratory Population of Whooping Cranes has been reintroduced that nests primarily in Wisconsin and winters from Indiana to Alabama, numbering about 71 Whooping Cranes. There is also a non-migratory population that has been reintroduced into Louisiana wetlands that numbers about 76. These two reintroduced populations show excellent promise of increasing in numbers and expanding into adjacent states where Whooping Cranes were found historically.

This Whooping Crane update comes as the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is celebrated during its 50 year anniversary. Throughout the year, the Department of the Interior is celebrating the ESA's importance in preventing imperiled species' extinction, promoting the recovery of endangered wildlife, and conserving the habitats upon which they depend. To refer to the original US Fish & Wildlife Service press release, see [2023 Wintering Whooping Crane Count | U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service \(fws.gov\)](#)

You can also see an impressive animated map that shows the migration route and stopover locations of 19 Whooping Cranes at [Visualizing Whooping Crane Migrations Between Texas and Canada \(savingcranes.org\)](#)

Share your backyard birding experiences and photos with The Birding Wire at editorstbw2@gmail.com
To subscribe, click on this link: <https://subscription.theoutdoorwire.com/subscribe?brand=birding>

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September — November 2023 Events

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. Pt. 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 itylerbell@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. We will walk a short distance to a beautiful spot. RSVP required to president.somdaudubon@gmail.com. Workshop is free.

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 with gentle very slopes. RSVP to Dean Newman at deannewman03@gmail.com

September — November 2023 Events continued

October 7 - SATURDAY - 10:30 a.m. – 12 noon (NOTE DIFFERENT DATE AND TIME**)**

MONTHLY MEETING PROGRAM

Port Tobacco Recreation Center

8190 Port Tobacco Road, Port Tobacco MD 20677

“SOUTHERN MARYLAND BIRDS OF PREY”

Speaker: MIKE CALLAHAN — Southern Maryland Audubon Society 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.

October 14 – SATURDAY – 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

FIELD TRIP

Port Tobacco River Park, Charles County

7740 Chapel Point Road, Port Tobacco, MD 20677

“COUNT ME IN FOR BIRDS”

Leader: LYNNE WHEELER

Join Lynne at the Port Tobacco River Park pavilion and learn how to identify birds, and count them! This trip will prepare you to participate in upcoming Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) in December. We need your help! Multiple Christmas Bird Counts are held December 16 – December 31 throughout southern Maryland in Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's County. This is an opportunity to learn how it is done, as well as how to use the MERLIN bird I.D. smart phone app. We will have a 30-minute discussion at the pavilion, followed by a bird walk in the park. Binoculars and the MERLIN bird app is recommended. RSVP to Lynne at somdaudubon@yahoo.com or 301-751-8097 (text only).

October 15 – SUNDAY – 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

NATURE WORKSHOP

White Plains Regional Park, Charles County

1015 St. Charles Parkway, White Plains, MD 20695

“JOY OF NATURE JOURNALING”

Leader: KAELYN STEWART

Always wanted to learn nature journaling? Or want to take your journaling up a notch? A great way to spend a fall morning getting closer to birds and nature. Kaelyn will guide us in learning to observe nature on a more intimate level at White Plains Regional Park. An easy walk to a pleasant setting. Workshop is free. Open to all ages 10 and above. Sketchbook and pen will be provided. Meet in the park parking lot, look for us beneath a hand-held Southern Maryland Audubon logo sign. RSVP required to president.somdaudubon@gmail.com

September — November 2023 Events continued

October 28 – Saturday - 8 a.m. – 12 noon

FIELD TRIP

American Chestnut Land Trust, Calvert County

North Side Trails: 676 Double Oak Road, Prince Frederick 20678

“OCTOBER BIRDING AT THE CHESTNUT LAND TRUST”

Leader: DEAN NEWMAN

Enjoy the possibility of both late summer migrants heading south and arriving winter songbirds. Moderate terrain through field, wood, and wetland. Directions: From Solomons Island Road, in Prince Frederick, turn onto Dares Beach Rd. Continue for 2.5 miles before taking a right onto Double Oak Rd. From here attendees will drive another mile before turning left into the Land Trust parking lot where the walk will begin. No park fee. Contact Dean Newman at deannewman03@gmail.com

November 1 – WEDNESDAY - 7 p.m. – 8 p.m.

MONTHLY MEETING PROGRAM – Zoom Meeting

“WINTER WARBLERS”

DR. CODY KENT, Assistant Professor of Quantitative Vertebrate Biology, Frostburg State University
New World warbler beauty and diversity has long fascinated birders and scientists. Their spring arrival begins the height of bird activity across most of North America. But much of their time is spent wintering in southern latitudes, particularly in the Caribbean where concentrated warbler diversity reaches its zenith. Research over the last two decades has shed more light on the importance of wintering conditions for their survival and nesting success. Dr. Kent will discuss our current understanding of warbler population biology in the Caribbean including foraging behavior, distribution and interactions with other species. Dr. Kent completed a Ph.D. at Tulane University where he began research on wintering Caribbean warblers. His current research includes examining how small-scale land management actions impact bird diversity within Washington DC and large-scale studies of how human activities impact niche diversity in warblers across the United States.

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(SMAS)**

1.8K likes • 2K followers



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