

The Osprey

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN MARYLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

President's Perch



American Tree Sparrow
Photo by Steve Arthur

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<http://somdaudubon.org/>

Early in my previous life as a newspaper reporter, I covered state legislatures. I quickly came to appreciate the immediacy of the work lawmakers do at the state level and the huge influence residents have on whether or not bills get passed.

The Maryland General Assembly is in full swing right now and each one of us can make a real difference in determining how Maryland protects birds and our natural habitat for wildlife and people. All it takes is a phone call, email or letter to make your voice heard.

Audubon Mid-Atlantic's recent I Bird I Vote Conservation Summit in Annapolis brought together state and federal leaders and grassroots conservation advocates from across the state to examine this year's legislative opportunities. Education and scholarship chair Annette Cook and I represented Southern Maryland Audubon.

We all could relate to U.S. Senator Ben Cardin who told us he uses his morning walks with his wife, and the birdsong they hear, to bring down his blood pressure from his intense day job.

Here are some of the key proposed laws we believe will keep our birds singing, support their habitat and just possibly, reduce our blood pressure:

The 2024 Biodiversity and Agriculture Protection Act limits the sale of invasive plants, including aquatic species, which are a major threat to the native plants and ecosystems that birds and other wildlife depend on for survival.

House Bill 22 and Senate Bill 178 require the State Highway Administration to consider using pollinator habitat along state highways. Its own studies show native flowers and grasses require less mowing and support more bee abundance and other pollinators.

The "Brighter Tomorrow Act" supports more incentives for using solar power.

Senate Bill 306 gives the Critical Area Commission, which sets regulations for coastal areas, authority to incorporate climate and equity considerations in its planning.

We will keep you updated on the status of these and other bills in the coming weeks. I urge you to look up your state representative or senator at MDElect.net. Ask them to support the bills you most care about.

It only takes a few minutes to make a call or write an email and your voice **can** make a real difference.

Happy birding!
Molly Moore

The Great Backyard Bird Count



Art by Charley Harper

2024 Great Backyard Bird Count

The 2024 GBBC will take place Friday, February 16, through Monday, February 19. Please join us for the 27th annual count!

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

Spend time in your favorite places watching birds—then tell us about them! In as little as 15 minutes notice the birds around you. Identify them, count them, and submit them to help scientists better understand and protect birds around the world. If you already use eBird or Merlin, your submissions over the 4-days count towards GBBC.

Connect to Birds, to Nature, and with Each Other

Birds are everywhere, all the time, doing fascinating things. Join us, February 16–19, 2024, when the world comes together for the love of birds.

[How to Participate](#)

Be Part of a Global Event

Watch observations roll in from around the world. Each submitted checklist becomes a glowing light on our bird sightings map. Results from 2023 are inspiring.

[Watch the World Map Light-Up](#)

[Explore 2023 Data](#)

Showcase Your Photos from the Count

We enjoy seeing your pictures from the count. Share pictures of birds, yourself, and others birdwatching in your yards or at your favorite birding spots.

[Learn How to Share Photos](#)



Map Your Community Birding Event

Are you birding for GBBC as a part of a community event? Add it to the map so others can join you and so we have a better sense of how the world comes together to celebrate birds.

[Add to the Map](#)



Point Lookout Christmas Bird Count, December 16, 2023

by Tyler Bell

Thanks to everyone for helping make the 2023 Pt. Lookout CBC a success! The weather was quite cooperative with little wind and lots of sun. Conditions for counting waterfowl on the Bay were ideal. eBird Central still hasn't added a data export function on their trip reports but it is still a convenient way to compile the data through shared checklists. If only I was more motivated to compile it quicker! Here's a link to the report if you're interested:

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/182404>

Thanks to Scott Clark's folks, the count has a new species: Ross's Goose. Initially reported as a Snow Goose, Jim Stasz relocated the bird on the first day of Count Week and IDed it as a Ross's. Scott's folks noted the bird on Count Day!

Jim Boxwell and Patty Craig had the only Cackling Goose for the count. They also had the only Lesser Scaup, Rock Pigeons, Lesser Black-backed Gull, American Pipits, White-crowned Sparrows and Eastern Towhee.

Ben Springer, and Matt and Claire Ichniowski had the only Greater Scaup. Remember when we used to have large flocks of mixed scaup? They also had the only Clapper Rail, American Woodcock, Sedge Wren and Marsh Wren (both with photos!), Red-throated Loon, Great Cormorants and Northern Harrier.

If you look at the report, it will note another "lifer": Northern Pintail. It's new to the eBird report but not new to the circle. But, they aren't that common. That was in the Elms sector with David Moulton, Margarita Rochow, Robert Hurry, Becky Hunter, Geoff Wysham, Tina Riley, Rich Delwiche, and me. We also had the only Brown Creepers.

Jordan Price, and Kevin and Finley Emerson had the only Pied-billed Grebes and Chipping Sparrows despite car issues causing a late start for them.

Bob Boxwell had the only Horned Larks while counting in the St. George's sector.

Ben Springer, birding solo, photographed a nice flock of Brown-headed Cowbirds and a Palm Warbler at Cornfield Harbor.

We ended up with 94 species.

Big Misses, IMO, include:

Wild Turkey
Forster's Tern
Northern Gannet
Brown Pelican
White-breasted Nuthatch
Savannah Sparrow
Pine Warbler



Bonaparte's Gull at Point Lookout State Park, photo by Steve Arthur

Patuxent Christmas Bird Count, December 23, 2024

by Ben Springer

This year's count was a big success with 94 checklists and an impressive total of 100 species! Some of the highlights include:

First recorded Blue-headed Vireo for the Pax circle by Scott Clark

First recorded King Rail for the Pax circle by Gene Groshon and Bob Boxwell

Highest year counts for Red-breasted Merganser (157), Merlin (4), Winter Wren (19), Hermit Thrush (69), Chipping Sparrow (57), Swamp Sparrow (57), and Pine Siskin (18)

Most numerous species: Canada Goose (3593)

Bird on the most checklists: Northern Cardinal (59 checklists)

Birds found on only 1 checklist:

Snow Goose (Scott Clark)

Cackling Goose (Scott Clark)

Gadwall (Ben Springer)

Green-winged Teal (Jen Cookus & Sheri McConville)

Ring-necked Duck (Ben Springer)

Pied-billed Grebe (Scott Clark)

King Rail (Gene Groshon & Bob Boxwell)

Clapper Rail (Scott Clark)

Killdeer (Gene Groshon)

Wilson's Snipe (Jim Swift)

Sanderling (Scott Clark)

Laughing Gull (Kyle Rambo)

Cooper's Hawk (Kevin Allor)

Blue-headed Vireo (Scott Clark)

Fish Crow (Scott Clark)

American Pipit (Kyle Rambo)

Brown-headed Cowbird (Ernest Willoughby,
Paula Willoughby, Peg Corl,
Suzanne Harden, Pamala Hawkins, and
Anne Tyler)

Palm Warbler (Scott Clark)

Pine Warbler (Scott Clark)

Here is the eBird trip report for the totals

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/185313>

Thanks everyone and Happy 2024!

Ben Springer

Patuxent CBC Compiler



Top: Merlin, photo by Steve Arthur

Below: Northern Cardinal, photo by Randy Streufert



Fort Belvoir 124th CBC Maryland Shoreline Report, December 30, 2023

by Lynne Wheeler

The Fort Belvoir, Virginia CBC circle extends across the Potomac River from Virginia to the Maryland shoreline, the northern end at Piscataway Creek/Accoakeek area, the southern end to Indian Head. Kurt Gaskill is the circle compiler, Bob Lukinik and I coordinate volunteers for the Maryland shoreline. Bob and his spouse Dottie host our fabulous tally rally dinner after the count. A real treat!

From Kurt Gaskill's report: A whopping 158 participants volunteered for the circle, 15 of us on the Maryland shoreline. The CBC found 110 species, below the 20-year average of 113. Highlights were the return of the Black-throated Gray Warbler to National Colonial Farm in Maryland; this species was reported for the first time in the last CBC at the same location (and trees). Another highlight was Vesper Sparrow, found at the Lorton Landfill; a mostly short grassy area of about 320 acres. VESP was last reported for the CBC on January 3, 1999 and there are infrequent reports of 1-3 birds in the 70's and 80's. Lastly, an American Bittern at Huntley Meadows; this is the third occurrence in 20 years with a record from last year's CBC and the next on January 2, 2005.

Some obvious trends over 25+ years are found, such as: Canada Goose, American Black Duck and Mallard numbers are trending downward. Gadwall and Killdeer seem to be trending downward since 2017. Overall gull numbers are down since 2018. Double-crested Cormorant is trending upward since 2012. Great Blue Heron numbers have dropped by a third since 2017. Black Vulture appeared in 1993 and is huge now. Eastern Phoebe is more abundant since 2018. Normalized Carolina Chickadee and Tufted Titmouse counts continue a long-term downward trend (nearly a third in 35 years) whereas White-breasted Nuthatch shows an upward trend for the same period.

Maryland shoreline report from Lynne: This year we found 78 species, below our 7-year average of 84. The seven-year historical review of our participation in this circle concurs with the downward trend of Canada Goose (7-year average 1487, 2023 found 698) and American Black Duck (7-year average 112, 2023 found 70), whereas our Mallard numbers show a slight increase, the 7-year average is 755, 2023 found 791. Note: birding the Mattawoman Creek by boat has helped increase the findings of Mallards. All waterfowl numbers may be skewed by very high waterfowl counts in 2017.

Gadwall and Killdeer also show a downward trend on the Maryland side, as well as gull species. Double-crested Cormorant showed a slight decrease for Maryland vs Virginia, and Great Blue Heron was steady with a count of 25, we have a 7-year average of 24. Bufflehead sightings were low, 7-year average is 221, but this year resulted in only 45, but last year gave us an outlier high number of 403. Decreased numbers were also noted for Mourning Dove, Blue Jay, American Robin, and American Crow. Increased numbers for Savannah Sparrow, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

Thanks to all of the volunteers for helping out. Our contribution to the overall results for this circle is impressive. We provide the second highest count for Bald Eagle (38) and total birds seen, and continue to be lucky to have Marisa Rositol give us a unique species – the Black-throated Gray Warbler for a second year in a row!



Black-throated Gray Warbler at National Colonial Farm
Photo by Marisa Rositol

Scholarships to Audubon Hog Island Camp

Southern Maryland Audubon Society is now accepting applications for scholarships to Audubon Camp in Hog Island, Maine. For 2024, 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 **February 29, 2024**. The scholarships cover tuition, room, and board. The recipient is responsible for all travel expenses. For details about each camp scholarship and Covid-19 guidelines, go to the Audubon Hog Island website at <https://hogisland.audubon.org/programs>

CAMP PROGRAMS OFFERED

Birders	Field Ornithology	June 16 – June 21
Teens	Mountains to Sea Birding for Teens (ages 14 -17)	June 23 – June 28
Teachers	Sharing Nature: An Educators Week	July 14 – July 19

Applicants must be residents of Southern Maryland. To apply please send a one page letter explaining:

How will you benefit from the Hog Island opportunity?

How will you use the experience and knowledge to benefit others in Southern Maryland and support the SMAS mission?

Your signed letter must include:

Mailing Address

Email Address

Phone Number

One or more signed letters of recommendation describing your interests, abilities, and how the experience will benefit either your organization or the SMAS mission.

Please also submit a recent photograph of applicant .

Scholarship recipients must submit a written article for our Osprey newsletter about their experience by August 5, 2024, and possibly a brief presentation at one of the Monthly Meeting Programs for 2024 – 2025.



Please send applications to:

Annette Cook

Scholarship & Education Committee Chair
Southern Maryland Audubon Society
acook.somdaudubon@gmail.com



How Birds Survive Winter & How You Help

The weather has been frightful during the past week in most areas of the United States and Canada, and for birds searching for food in sub-freezing temperatures, plus colder wind chills, it makes you wonder how birds adapt to winter weather, which has become a serious matter of survival during the current mid-January cold snap. Over millennia, and year to year, birds have adapted to be able to survive, and they are assisted by birders like you who provide access to quality foods, and landscaping that serves as shelter.

How do birds survive inclement winter weather? Sometimes birds simply evacuate. Flying to a warmer area or an area with no snow cover and more abundant foods can be one response. This may be a short term, relatively short flight for some species; but it may be a continuation of migration for species that linger north of their usual winter range. For birds that remain, there are a number of ways birds adapt to the changing conditions of winter.

Birds have a natural way to insulate themselves from cold weather – they use their feathers. Most important, during cold weather, a bird will fluff their feathers away from their body to create a layer of air that is warmed by their high body heat. This provides a warm air layer between a birds' body and the air outside their plumage. Birds have a body temperature of about 104 degrees, which varies a little from bird species to species, but overall it is obviously much warmer than humans (if our temperature was 104, we'd be sick with a high fever).

Birds' down feathers also provide extra insulation to retain the warmth of their body when the temperature drops. Some birds even grow extra down feathers in the months leading up to winter so they are better prepared for cold snaps or continuous winter cold. Another way birds stay warmer is to stay out of the wind – avoid wind chill – and we often see a bird clinging to a tree on the opposite side from the wind, or even perching on the lee side of a feeder, or any other windbreak.

If they have enough quality food to eat, birds can break from their usual search for food, thereby reducing their activities during cold weather. At night, some birds roost in shelters like tree cavities, crevices in buildings, or in nest boxes. Some species of chickadees, kinglets, and bluebirds may roost in groups to conserve and share body heat, and woodpeckers regularly construct their own roosting cavity that they use for short-term or longer term periods.

While preening feathers is a regular maintenance behavior, wet feathers can prove disastrous in cold weather. By preening with natural oil produced in a gland near the top base of their tail, birds preen a lite film of oil onto their feathers to make them virtually waterproof. During wet weather, birds also tend to seek shelter in thick vegetation or a cavity or nest box.

Finding Winter Foods

With much less food available during winter months in cold weather regions, especially with the lack of insects during freezing temperatures, many birds adapt by changing their diet. Most birds search out higher energy foods such as suet and black oil sunflower seeds, where available. The additional energy boost from these quality foods allows birds to generate more body heat to keep warm. Some familiar backyard birds even store food – including nuthatches, chickadees, and jays – especially caching seeds for later use. But to be successful, these birds must rely on their memory to reclaim the seeds during a time of need. As an example, it has been documented that a Black-capped Chickadee can remember hundreds of locations where it stored seeds.

Some birds also search for food in flocks, sometimes in mixed-species flocks. This technique provides more eyes to search of food sources, and birds can learn from one another how to search for different foods. More birds looking for food also equates to more birds watching for danger, especially predators.

Continued on page 7, see **Survive**



A Hairy Woodpecker feeds on high-energy suet while fluffing its plumage out to keep a warm layer of air between its feathers and body.

Photo by Paul Konrad.

Survive, continued

Helping Birds During Winter

Most birders are dedicated to providing a dependable feeding station stocked with a variety of quality foods, and fresh water. A feeding station can be as elaborate, or as decorative, or as simple as you wish, but it's important to provide good quality foods that are eaten by the birds you see wintering in your area.

To start with, suet is a staple bird food due to its high fat content that provides much needed energy. Black oil sunflower seeds are the best high-calorie seeds to offer, shelled or unshelled (we prefer to provide unshelled seeds to avoid the mess of shells), and for smaller finches that will eat shelled sunflower seeds and sunflower chips, we also provide nyjer thistle seeds. By all means, avoid buying packages of mixed seeds that are typically sold at grocery stores; they tend to provide seeds with little food value mixed with cracked corn and other filler seed types to reduce the cost of the bag of "bird seeds."



Eastern Bluebirds

Photo by Herbert Fechter

It's important to keep your feeders stocked daily, just as you feed any pets on a daily basis. Birds need water too, so if you can provide a heated bird bath, you will be a center of attention for birds that need to drink and bathe regularly.

Of course, the landscaping in your yard can provide food and shelter for birds too. The most obvious foods are provided by fruiting trees, including crab apples, service berry, winter berry holly, bayberry, and others that yield fruit or berries. Evergreen trees also provide seeds in their seasonally produced cones that many birds utilize, and they may provide the best natural shelter for a variety of wintering birds. Bushes, hedges, and tangles of deciduous trees provide shelter and foraging habitat too.

Providing shelter can also be a matter of adding a birdhouse for cavity-nesting birds or a specialized roosting box. Some wintering birds will use a vacant birdhouse to get out of the wind, but roost boxes are a relatively new product that provide an added level of winter shelter by retaining valuable warmth created by the birds. Better yet, there are now some convertible nest/roost boxes that seem like game changers for small cavity nesting birds like bluebirds, titmice, and chickadees.

Birds are amazing and resilient creatures that give us an exciting dose of nature on a daily basis. Enjoy the birds that winter in your neighborhood, and do what you can to benefit them during trying winter weather periods like we've experienced lately across expansive regions of the country. The above information was developed using an article provided by Perky-Pet and other articles as a basis to share more about how birds survive cold weather and how we help them survive Arctic weather fronts. To refer to the Perky-Pet article, see How Birds Survive in Winter Weather (perkypet.com)

Share your backyard birding experiences and photographs 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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Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum Field Trip, January 20, 2024

by Tyler Bell

If you want to experience the worst weather on a winter field trip, be sure to come on one of mine! This trip is cursed. Bitter cold, nor'easter, heavy snow, I've had them all. Despite temps in the low 20s and wind chills in the teens, there were five brave souls in attendance. Long distance award goes to Tess Wilson, Audubon Mid-Atlantic network engagement manager from Pittsburgh! Geoff Wysham, and Bernie and Chris Grossman, all from St. Mary's County, rounded out the list. Special thanks to Nora Windsor, JPPM liaison, for letting us into the museum before normal hours to warm up and use the facilities.

Our first stop was at the museum. There was a large flock of Cedar Waxwings in the trees outside the entrance. A Red-bellied Woodpecker had found an odd knothole in a tree that was apparently filled with water. Because it faced the sun, it must have been liquid despite the actual temperature. Water is hard to find during a cold snap like we were experiencing.

Next, we walked to the end of the gravel road across from

the MAC Lab. We took advantage of sheltered areas and tried to scan the water. The northwest winds had whipped the Patuxent into a frenzy but we found a small mixed flock of Lesser and Greater Scaup, two Horned Grebes, and some Ruddy Ducks. Normally, this area is fairly productive for waterfowl but with waves around one foot, it was almost impossible to see anything further out from shore than a hundred yards or so. When we returned to the cars, there was a nice mixed flock of Chipping Sparrows and Yellow-rumped Warblers in the leeward side of the MAC Lab.

We attempted to walk down to the Woodland Trail but it was icy. At this point, the group disbanded. Geoff and I headed down to the end of Lloyd Bowen Road to see if any of the specialties were around. We couldn't find any Great Horned Owls, which nest there, but we did manage to hear several Brown-headed Nuthatches.

Knowing that it was bitterly cold and windy, I'm surprised that we were able to tally 43 species! Click on this link to see the species list:

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/196432>

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!

Frederick A Webb, Dunkirk

Paul Ragard, California

Gloria Geary, Leonardtown

Cheryl Luke, Chesapeake Beach

Paula L Tolson, Fort Washington

MeeMee Shaw, Bushwood

Martha Pride, Cobb Island

Andrew Tebbano, Hollywood

Bill Wilson, La Plata

Barb Mack, Lusby

Pamela Serafino, Chesapeake Beach

Diane Tyrrell, Owings

Joseph Czarniecki, Fort Washington

Upcoming Events

February 17 – Saturday – 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Field Trip – Great Backyard Bird Count

Tilghman Lake, Charles County

10598 Box Elder Rd, La Plata, MD 20646

“GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT AT TILGHMAN LAKE”

Leader: Lynne Wheeler

Learn how you can participate in one of the year’s largest citizen science projects. Meeting at the Tilghman Lake pavilion, you will be instructed on how to compile checklists for the Great Backyard Bird Count, and afterward as a group try your hand at it. This event will include a mile-long hike around the lake which encompasses pine and mixed woods, as well as brushy thicket and open lawn. After the walk we will hang out at the pavilion continuing to add to our count. Easy unpaved terrain. No fee. Restrooms available. Limit of 15 participants.

RSVP at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0844A8A923ABFFC70-47052053-great>

or to Lynne Wheeler at somdaudubon@yahoo.com

or text 301-751- 8097.

March 6 – WEDNESDAY - 7 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Monthly Meeting Program – Zoom Meeting

“SAFE SKIES — HOW WE CAN DO MORE TO PROTECT BIRDS AS THEY MIGRATE”

Dr. Mark Southerland, Director of Safe Skies Maryland, Maryland Ornithological Society

1 billion birds die every year in window collisions. Migratory species are often lost prior to reproduction during spring migration, while fledglings may be lost in while attempting their first migration in the fall. Populations of neotropical migrants cannot sustain these losses indefinitely. Safe Skies Maryland was created to empower citizens to know what to do about this significant threat, to have direct access to the most scientific and technological information, and more specifically to know how to prevent it, and protect birds for future generations. Dr. Southerland received his PhD in Ecology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He continues to work as an environmental consultant, including supporting Maryland, DNR since 1993. He leads the legislative program of the Safe Skies Maryland, including the state legislation, under consideration and the bird safe buildings law that passed Howard County in July 2020.

March 9 – SATURDAY – 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Field Trip

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

21866 Cedar Point, Bldg. 2189, NAS Patuxent River, MD 20670. Gate #2

“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. Preregistration is required and open to U.S. citizens only. Must bring photo ID. Meet at pass office parking lot, Gate #2. We will be escorted and traveling together in a van; participant size is limited to 13. No restrooms. Given the uncertainty of NAS Pax’s Trusted Traveler program, **preregistration is required by February 14** to the addresses below and open to US citizens only. After that, registration for the trip will be closed.

RSVP at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0844A8A923ABFFC70-47052075-winter>

or to Dean Newman at deannewman03@gmail.com

Upcoming Events continued

March 23 – SATURDAY – 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

In Person Lecture

Lexington Park Library, St. Mary's County

21677 FDR Blvd., Lexington Park, MD

“HOW TO CREATE YOUR OWN BIRD B&B”

Molly Moore, President, Southern Maryland Audubon Society

Learn how to attract more birds and pollinators to your yard, patio or deck without spending a fortune. Southern Maryland Audubon in partnership with the Lexington Park Library will give you tips for providing the native plants, water sources and shelter birds need to thrive—whether you have a big garden or an apartment window box. And we'll show you how to make your windows and surroundings safer for the birds you attract. Weather permitting, we will move outside to identify birds visiting the library grounds. Bring binoculars if you have them, but we will also have loaners.

Registration here: <https://stmalib.libnet.info/event/9929489>

March 30 – SATURDAY – 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Field Trip

Point Lookout State Park, St Mary's County

10444 Point Lookout Rd, Scotland, MD 20687

“EARLY MIGRATION AT THE POINT”

Leader: Phin Rouland

Catch some of the earliest signs of migration at one of Maryland's peak hotspots. Attendees will meet at the picnic area parking and together we'll walk down to the Point. We'll scan both the Chesapeake and Potomac waters for any remaining winter waterfowl as well as for spring arrivals including Osprey, Brown Pelican, and tern species. At the point we'll target Northern Gannet which are in peak numbers passing by on migration. We'll spend what time is left around the picnic area and on trails around Fort Lincoln. Highlights could include arriving swallow species, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Yellow-throated Warbler. Flat but unpaved, around a 2 mile walk. Gate fee \$3 per car. Restrooms available. Limit 12.

RSVP at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0844A8A923ABFFC70-47681455-early> or to phin.rouland@gmail.com.

April 6 – SATURDAY – 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Maryland Osprey Nature Festival

Drum Point Club, Lusby, Calvert County

See the upcoming April issue of *The Osprey* for more information or click on this link:

<https://marylandospreyfestival.org/>



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

Upcoming Volunteer Activities

4/6/24 Maryland Osprey Festival at Drum Point Club, Lusby, MD

4/13/24 Virginia Osprey Festival at Colonial Beach, VA

4/20/24 we've been invited to participate in the St. Mary's County Earth Day at Summerseat Farm

4/27/24 we've been invited to participate in the Lexington Park Library's Sustainability Fair

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!

Ross's and Snow Geese

Photo by Mick Thompson

Southern Maryland Audubon Society in Action

The Southern Maryland Audubon Society took our “All the Dirt on Winter Sowing” workshop to the Lexington Park Library on January 27 with a big shout out to our partners in promoting the importance of growing native plants: St. Mary’s County Lexington Park Library, St. Mary’s Community Development Corporation, Wild Ones Chesapeake Bay, St. Mary’s County Garden Club and Charles County Master Gardeners.

We showed our 25 participants how native plants not only support birds and other wildlife in your yard but can attract more pollinators and beneficial insects to your vegetable garden. Ten volunteers representing our partners helped participants select native seeds and plant



them in milk jugs where they will germinate later this spring.

This was one of a series of five workshops on collecting native seeds and growing native plants that we co-hosted this fall and winter as part of our Native Plants for Birds program. If you missed our workshops, you can learn how to winter sow by watching our video here:

<https://bit.ly/3HV1szj>

(Photo, left, by Molly Moore)

Southern Maryland Audubon President Molly Moore and Education Outreach and Scholarship Chair Annette Cook represented our chapter at the annual Audubon “I Bird I Vote” Conservation Summit in Annapolis February 3. The session drew conservation and political leaders from throughout the state for briefings on critical conservation bills under consideration in the Maryland General Assembly and in Congress. (Photo, right, by Jim Brown)



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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