



Readers:

*The Osprey* is now being built using Microsoft PowerPoint. Previous issues used Microsoft Publisher, much more powerful software. If you notice anything amiss, please let the editor know. Sadly, Publisher is being discontinued on October 1.

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# *The Osprey*

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN MARYLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

## President's Perch



Osprey  
Photo by Anthony Goldman

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<http://somdaudubon.org/>

Greetings to all and I hope everyone has enjoyed the summer and all the opportunities to enjoy and admire the birds of summer and nature in general. The Southern Maryland Audubon Society (SMAS) kicked off the summer break with our annual meeting and picnic at Historic Maxwell Hall on June 7. It was a warm but otherwise perfect day for our meeting. Thank you, Raptor Conservation Chair Mike Callahan, for hosting us again at such a great venue, and one of the many historic sites we are fortunate enough to enjoy in the region.

We recognized two high school students as conservationists of the year...I believe a first such pairing we have honored. Alisa Grant, a St. Mary's County resident, and Jackson Crowley, a Charles County resident. Both have been active in conservation, birding, and sharing their passion for nature with others. I am encouraged by their passion for nature, education, and conservation, and no doubt they will inspire others.

We welcomed new board members as well as officers at our meeting, but before recognizing them, I must acknowledge the extraordinary contribution Lynne Wheeler made this past year as Interim President. As the new President I will rely on the sage advice and wisdom from Lynne, I just hope I do not inundate her with questions.

We welcomed two new Board Members, Susan Burch and Brandon Wilfong. Susan was awarded one of our scholarships to Hog Island this year, and Brandon is a Professor at CSM. Both are welcome additions to our board of directors, and we all are looking forward to growing our presence and engagement in our region.

Generally, we do not have many engagements over our summer break, but I do want to mention one – Insectival. This was held on July 18 at Annemarie Sculpture Gardens in Solomons, MD. Lynne Wheeler coordinated with Wild Ones <https://wildones.org>, The Xerces Society <https://www.xerces.org>, and Nature Natives

<http://nurturenatives.org>. If you have not visited Annemarie Sculpture Gardens, they are worth visiting, especially for their events. Kudos to Wild Ones, Nurture Natives, and Lynne for the setup of our combined booth. This is a great collaboration between kindred organizations. The booth started with Wild Ones and Nurture Natives, including a game to win native plants, then moved to insects and their importance (Xerces), and then the SMAS board and table on birding and conservation. We engaged many young families with children with simple bird whistles they could win by playing plant pong...basically everyone won until we ran out of the bird whistles. Giving credit to Lynne, Wild Ones, Nurture Natives, and Xerces, it was a perfect collaboration between like-minded organizations – native plant support = supporting native insects = which wild birds need to eat. It is important to highlight how these conservation efforts interconnect and explore what we can do together moving forward.

As new president, I am really looking forward to our next year! We have bird walks, bird kayaking, and our monthly meetings where we have presenters you do not want to miss!

In closing, "a view from the perch" may be viewed as looking down, but for me it means looking up! What can we do, how can we be impactful, how can we expand our outreach and education, who can we collaborate with, and as always love the beauty of nature that surrounds us.

Will Daniel  
SMAS President

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## The Fork In The Road

by Tyler Bell

Have you ever heard the phrase “If you get to the fork in the road, take it!”? Jane Kostenko and I had such an opportunity on June 8 this year. Two different White-faced Ibises were being seen on the Eastern Shore. One was at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge near Cambridge, the other at Chesapeake Farms near Chestertown.

We had a contractor coming to our house around 8 am to discuss some minor repairs to an earlier floor installation and to discuss flooring being installed in another room. The guys were on time, took a piece of quarter round to match the stain on the new material, and they were gone in 15 minutes! Before they had arrived, I had loaded optics and road trip nibblies into the car and as soon as they pulled away, we were off.

As we drove through the Annapolis area, we needed to make a choice. A post on one of the rare bird alerts noted that the Chesapeake Farms bird was being seen but there was no word on the Blackwater bird. So, when we got to the 50/301 split in Queen Anne’s County, we took the fork to the left/north.

We had been to Chesapeake Farms on December 22, 2010, to see Maryland’s first Golden-crowned Sparrow, a bird typically seen west of the Cascade Mountains on the Pacific Coast. That was a cold day and we were glad to sit in the car using it as a blind. June 8 was not cold, it was in the low 70s, so much more comfortable! But, the marshy area where the White-faced Ibis, and many Glossy Ibises, was hanging out had been drying up so it forced the birds to the far side of the pond. They were mixed in with some waist-high vegetation and there was heat shimmer. We scanned the flock until we found a loner well removed from the others. Eventually we pieced together the field marks: red eye, white outline of the face, red legs and red knees. I even managed to get a passable phone scoped image as proof.

By noon, we were on our way back home. In hindsight, we chose wisely. The Blackwater bird was last seen on June 7. The Chesapeake Farms bird was last seen on June 9! It’s always painful for someone to be the first to miss a continuing bird. Thankfully, that wasn’t us.



White-faced Ibises, Woodland, California, June 5, 2026  
Photo © Jonathan Eisen, some rights reserved (CC-BY)

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## WHOOPING CRANE NEWS: CANADA AND U.S.

Last month we touched on the wildfire situation near critical Whooping Crane nesting areas in the Northwest Territories portion of the Wood Buffalo National Park. See here:

<https://conta.cc/3PKsVv3>

This situation raised some concern, since the species is listed as Endangered in Canada as well as the United States. It may be too soon to say much concerning any long-term impacts, but initial indications are hopeful even though the cranes were incubating eggs when the wildfire started in late May and then deemed under significant control in mid-June. "It may impact individuals' nest success," said Dan Rafla, resource conservation manager for Wood Buffalo National Park late last month, "but we're fairly confident the impacts to the population are not significant with this fire."

A short CBC video from the area can be accessed here:

<https://www.bing.com/videos/riverview/relatedvideo?q=Whooping+Cranes+threatened+by+fires&mid=4ED398C7B6DE5F92C4FC4ED398C7B6DE5F92C4FC&churl=&FORM=VIRE>

and an assessment of the scene and research possibilities can be found here:

<https://www.cbc.ca/lite/story/9.7249572>

Significantly, in late June, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service released its 2025–2026 aerial survey results for the migratory Whooping Crane Population wintering on the Texas Coast. Researchers estimated that 540 Whooping Cranes wintered in the area in and adjacent to Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. The previous year's survey had estimated 557 Whooping Cranes within the primary survey area. (The minor difference between estimates is within the margin of error.) When listed as Endangered in 1967 there were only around 50 of these cranes left.

You can access the USFWS press release on the subject – with a link to the full report - here:

<https://www.fws.gov/press-release/2026-06/service-estimates-540-whooping-cranes-wintered-texas-coast-2025-2026>

In the meantime, recent concerns have arisen related to the threats to crane habitat, not simply in the nesting area in Wood Buffalo National Park or the wintering area on the Texas coast, but to wetlands used by the cranes in migration along their 2,000-mile migration route. A profusion of regulatory rollbacks is currently loosening protections from the Whooping Crane's essential habitat along its entire migration route

For starters, the Environmental Protection Agency is writing a new rule to implement the 2023 Supreme Court ruling in *Sackett v. EPA*, lifting federal jurisdiction ("waters of the United States") over many wetland and waterways under the Clean Water Act. Under new leadership at the Interior Department, we may witness the core of the Endangered Species Act - the definition of "harm" – essentially removed, potentially creating more stress.

Of course, this will not only impact the cranes, but also other birdlife, including other long-legged waders, waterfowl, shorebirds, rails, and wetland-associated songbirds. When a wetland is converted to cropland, is developed, or dries up in, say in, South Dakota, Kansas, Oklahoma, or Texas, multiple species are inevitably impacted.

For a review of what's at stake, with Whooping Cranes serving as the lens through which to view a bigger picture, check out this article from Bloomberg News by Bobby Magill:

<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/environment-and-energy/whooping-crane-migration-in-crosshairs-as-trump-policies-collide>

You can access all the past E-bulletins on the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) website:

<http://refugeassociation.org/news/birding-bulletin/>

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## Using Binoculars at Home

by The Birding Wire

Simply stated, quality birding requires one simple level of assistance – a binocular – which is just as important at home as it is in the field. When you are at home, viewing birds outside a window as they visit your feeding station or birdbath, regardless of how close and how clear a view you have, it's always worth taking occasional closer looks with binoculars. We keep a pair of binoculars positioned within reach at a favorite seat to get a closer view as warranted or anytime you wish to zero in when a favorite bird appears – or when a rarer seasonal sighting inspires a closer look. Any binoculars will be helpful in your yard, or while sitting in your living room or office, but you can improve your backyard birding experiences with the right optics.

Choosing binoculars with a "lower magnification," a wide field of view, and a short close focus distance will serve you best when birds are outside your windows or in your yard. For the most part, these features are probably included in your regular birding binoculars. By lower magnification we mean a standard 8x model (rather than a 10x are higher magnification). As for the wide field of view, you will want nothing less than the standard view provided by 42mm diameter objective lenses – so a standard 8x42 binocular is great. "Compact" binoculars are not widely used by birders because they are a very poor compromise to an 8x42 model at home or in the field.

The close focus distance of binoculars can be especially important if you view birds at a feeding station near a favorite window. The close focus distance is the closest point you can focus with a given binocular model. These days most 8x42 binoculars allow you to focus on birds as near as 5 to 8 feet away. That said, most birds you focus on will be beyond the close focus range of your binoculars, but the close focus distance is worth keeping in mind. It is always exciting to see birds in close quarters, and it may give you new insights into variations in feather structure, colors, bill shape – and if you are lucky you might be able to see a specific detail that will distinguish an individual bird from others of its kind.



Even when birds are close by at a feeder or birdbath, binocular views can provide new insights into variations in feather structure, coloration, bill shape and more (Baltimore Oriole photo by Paul Konrad).



Binoculars with a "lower magnification," a wide field of view, and a short close focus distance will serve you best when birds are outside your windows and in your yard (Eastern Bluebird photo by Paul Konrad).

**Continued on page 5, see Binoculars**

## Binoculars continued

Birding at home can also provide a helpful opportunity to practice using binoculars, such as focusing quickly and instinctively to get a bird in view. This extra effort will definitely pay off when it enhances getting a quick focus on birds during everyday birding experiences. At home, we keep our binoculars pre-focused on our feeding station so it is just a matter of fine tuning the focus when an interesting bird arrives. When observing birds from indoors, be aware that it is helpful to move slowly and carefully when reaching for binoculars or raising them to your eyes. Birds are often aware of any movements around them, and they may respond by taking flight. Another option is to wait for the bird to look away to make a slow movement to raise or lower your binoculars.

Some birders prefer to use one binocular for field birding and another binocular in the house rather than carrying one binocular back and forth. If you are interested in adding a second binocular to use at home, a model that you can keep within reach of your favorite chair, or at a desk or table where you have a clear view of your feeding station, and if you prefer not to spend too much for a second binocular, the good news is that the quality of economically priced binoculars is very impressive. Another option is to keep a second binocular in your briefcase, a backpack, or in a large purse so you have access to them at work and when you are on the go.

Every birder will have their own idea of how to organize their binoculars, however many you have on hand. But it should be clear that even when birds are close enough for enjoyable views, observing them and watching their behavior through binoculars is really the best way of watching birds anytime, anywhere. Enjoy all the birds that assemble outside your windows, near your patio, deck, or garden this summer and throughout the year.

Share your birding experiences and photos at [editorstbw2@gmail.com](mailto:editorstbw2@gmail.com)

To subscribe, click on this link: <https://subscription.theoutdoorwire.com/subscribe?brand=birding>

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## SMAS attends INSECTIVAL at the Annemarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center with Friends

by Lynne Wheeler

What a bug-tastic day! On Saturday, July 18, the Southern Maryland Audubon Society joined up with our friends Wild Ones Chesapeake Bay, Xerces Society, and Nurture Natives to educate attendees about the importance of insects for a healthy ecosystem at the annual INSECTIVAL festival at Annemarie Sculpture Gardens & Arts Center. Native plants that co-evolved with local wildlife are the host for our native insects (especially caterpillars, such as the monarch butterfly), and a vital food source for birds, providing critical protein-rich insects, nectar, berries, and seeds. Planting native species maximizes biodiversity, as they support significantly more caterpillars and insects than non-native plants.



**Continued on page 6. See INSECTIVAL**

## INSECTIVAL continued

Our booth was in a great location, nestled in the woods, and offered a ton of information about the importance of insects – The Little Things That Run The World. Partnering with other non-profits that share our passion and mission makes for a booth display that was a big hit. We had lots of information as well as youth activities that kept us all busy as a bee!

Kids flew to the booth by the sound of our free Bird Water Whistles, like a pollinator to a flower! Once we lured them in, they enjoyed playing Plant Pong - tossing a bean bag ladybug into cups that revealed a free gift – like a bird water whistle, or sticker. We also had a craft table where they could color caterpillar headbands, as well as insect or flower cutouts. The Xerces section had a great educational hands-on display about the life cycle of butterflies, and SMAS offered a free raffle to win a children's book, *A Garden to Save the Birds* and free Bug Bite Graham Cracker snack bags. And what goes good with graham crackers? – MILKweed! Wild Ones Chesapeake Bay, along with Nurture Natives (a nationally award-winning, youth-led nonprofit empowering young people through native biodiversity restoration) handed out free milkweed plants. We all had a great time immersing ourselves into the world of insects – you don't need bug spray – instead learn about how they are the little things that run the world.

If you have never attended INSECTIVAL we highly recommend you do so next year. They featured 55+ organizations/vendors/food trucks and welcomed had 1445 registrants. And we gave away over 150 milkweed plants! It is a bug-tastic family event.



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# Conserving Habitat Has Always Been Central to the Endangered Species Act

Understanding recent changes to a longstanding definition is important because of what they could mean for habitat conservation and bird recovery.

By [Erik Schneider](#)  
Policy Manager  
National Audubon Society

Every bird, and every community, depends on healthy habitat. Forests, grasslands, wetlands, and coasts sustain birds throughout their life cycles while also supporting clean water, resilient communities, and local economies. For more than 50 years, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) has helped conserve both imperiled species and the habitats they depend on, making it one of America's most successful conservation laws.

Through science-based decision-making, planning, collaboration, and sustained investment, the ESA has protected birds while providing practical tools that encourage partnership, regulatory certainty, and long-term recovery. However, recent changes to the implementation of the ESA raise important questions about how habitat protections will be interpreted moving forward.

A new rule rescinds the longstanding, bipartisan regulatory definition of "harm," which for decades recognized that significant habitat destruction resulting in the death or injury of protected wildlife could violate the ESA. The definition reflected a fundamental conservation principle: wildlife recovery depends on healthy habitat.

For that reason, Audubon, together with more than 160 affiliated chapters and thousands of members and supporters, urged the agency in 2025 to retain the longstanding definition. Audubon's comments emphasized that conserving and restoring habitat is essential to the recovery and long-term conservation of birds, including Piping Plovers, Whooping Cranes, California Condors, and nearly one hundred other U.S. bird species.

In adopting the new rule, the agency did not replace the definition with an alternative standard. As a result, important questions remain about how habitat impacts will be evaluated under the ESA. That uncertainty may make it more difficult for agencies, landowners, businesses, and conservation partners to plan with confidence and could affect collaborative conservation tools, including Habitat Conservation Plans and Candidate Conservation Agreements, that provide regulatory certainty while advancing habitat conservation. Maintaining these approaches will remain important to achieving the ESA's goals.

At a time when North America has lost 3 billion birds since 1970 and habitat loss remains one of the leading drivers of bird declines, we should be making it easier to conserve and restore the places birds and people depend on.

Moving forward, we will continue engaging decision-makers to advance the bipartisan conservation principles that have made the Endangered Species Act one of our nation's most successful conservation laws. Healthy habitat remains the foundation of successful species recovery while supporting the forests, grasslands, wetlands, rivers, and coasts that benefit communities across the country.



Piping Plover. Photo: Joseph Malott/Audubon Photography Awards

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# Where Have All the Ospreys Gone?

by Frank Izaguirre

[American Birding Association](#)

Researchers report catastrophic Osprey nesting failures along the Atlantic Coast, likely driven by declining menhaden, raising alarms about ecosystem health and broader conservation challenges today.

## Nest Failures Raise Alarm Along the Atlantic Coast

The Osprey is one of North America's greatest conservation success stories, but something has gone wrong recently along the Atlantic Seaboard. Some of the region's largest Osprey populations have experienced widespread reproductive failure, starving chicks, and abandoned nests. Researchers are working to understand why, but the crisis appears to be tied to a stark decline of Atlantic menhaden, a fish that Ospreys in the region depend on for food. It is not definitively known why menhaden have become scarcer, although overfishing is possibly a factor.

Dr. Bryan Watts of the Center for Conservation Biology at the College of William & Mary and his colleagues have been documenting Osprey populations in the Chesapeake Bay since 1970. Dr. Watts reports that, in 2026, Ospreys "have never had a year when productivity was this low." Reproductive rates in parts of Chesapeake Bay have been "underwater since the mid-2000s," but this is the worst year so far, with productivity having declined over the past five years or so.

In Dr. Watts's observation, all evidence seems to indicate that the cause of the collapse is food stress. Low egg-laying percentages, nest abandonment, brood asymmetry, brood reduction, small brood size, and nest failure all suggest food stress is the reason for poor reproductive success. According to Dr. Watts:

*"Menhaden delivery to nests has dropped 80% since the 1980s, while productivity has gone down and brood reduction has gone up. Menhaden has dropped from just below 70% of the diet to below 30%. The shift away from menhaden has caused a 50% reduction in overall diet quality. Low provisioning rates on top of poor diet quality are not sustainable."*

Dr. Watts stresses that Ospreys are an ecological indicator for the ecosystems they are part of. Ospreys are more readily observable because they occupy a higher trophic level, but there are no doubt other species struggling in less visible ways.

The crisis does not seem to be limited to the Chesapeake Bay. Reproductive success was also poor last year in New Jersey, and this year there have been reports of poor reproductive success all the way up the Atlantic Coast to Nova Scotia.

The scope of the crisis remains unknown. When the field season ends, Dr. Watts and his colleagues will be compiling data from all along the coast. Inland and other populations of Osprey do not seem to be affected, surely because they feed on other fish species.

The spectacle of starving Osprey chicks is not for the faint of heart. Ben Wurst, Senior Wildlife Biologist for the Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey, monitors nests on Barnegat Bay, in Ocean County, which has around 150 nesting pairs of Ospreys. He reports:

*"At nests that I've watched very closely this summer, signs of food stress have been evident by: the lack of males at nests, as they spend more time/energy foraging; young being left at nests unattended, while both adults attempt to forage; males returning to their nests that contain young with very small prey (menhaden) and eating the entire fish while their mates and young beg for food; adults becoming more separated from their nests with young and leaving at sunset to perch in nearby forested habitat, as they can tell their young are dying (where I have witnessed this the young all died of starvation); the silence of Ospreys in colonies where only a few Osprey nests still have young."*

**Continued on page 8. See Ospreys**

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## Ospreys continued.

The Atlantic menhaden is a small schooling fish found along the Atlantic Coast from Nova Scotia to Florida. Menhaden feed on plankton and become food for countless predators. In addition to Ospreys, Bald Eagles, other fish, whales, and dolphins feed on the species. So, when menhaden populations crash, there is a ripple effect throughout the coastal food web.

The Osprey is among the world's most widespread birds of prey, occurring on every continent except Antarctica. In most taxonomies, four subspecies are recognized globally. *Pandion haliaetus carolinensis* is the migratory subspecies that breeds across much of the U.S. and Canada, with many individuals migrating thousands of miles each fall for the nonbreeding season in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America before returning each spring.

The Osprey is one of the bird world's great ambassadors: How many people have become interested in birds and birding after watching an Osprey dramatically plunge into the water and then strain with massive wingbeats to lift itself back into the air with a fish writhing in its talons?

Birders can play an important role now by reporting Osprey nesting activity through local monitoring programs and community science projects, which helps researchers track the scope of the problem. Ben Wurst stresses that birders are an asset to monitoring ospreys worldwide, especially as we transition into late summer. The website [osprey-watch.org](http://osprey-watch.org) has a map feature and birders can check for nests near their home, and if a nest does not have next activity, then it is in need of a watcher. Unmapped nests can also easily be mapped. There are monitoring groups all along the coast who help organize volunteers to gain valuable data: Anyone can join these groups and contribute. Birders can also advocate for sustainable management of Atlantic menhaden and support habitat conservation organizations working to protect healthy coastal ecosystems.

The ABA thanks Scott Weidensaul, Dr. Bryan Watts, Ben Wurst, and David Gessner for helping with the creation of this story and for their advocacy for Ospreys. Check out [Gessner's recent article on Ospreys](#) in *Audubon* magazine.

If you enjoy bird conservation news coverage like this, support the ABA by being a member: [ABA.org/join](http://ABA.org/join)

### **Please join us for the premiere of the documentary film “The Last Osprey” followed by a presentation by Greg Kearns on the current status of Chesapeake Bay Ospreys**

**Date/Time:** Thursday, September 24, 6:30 to 8:30 PM

**Location:** Drum Point Club in Lusby, 465 Overlook Drive (take Rousby Hall Road to Barreda Boulevard to Overlook Drive)

The Drum Point Club will be open to the public for this special event.

Drinks & Snacks will be available.

#### **Schedule**

**6:30 – 6:45 PM:** Introduction of the sponsoring organizations - Maryland Osprey & Nature Festival, Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust, Calvert Nature Society, Southern Maryland Audubon Society, Drum Point Club

**6:45 – 7:15 PM:** Premiere of the documentary film "The Last Osprey" directed and produced by William McKeever. He also produced the “Biggest Little Fish That You Have Never Seen”, a film that we were fortunate to premiere three years ago at the Drum Point Club

Cautionary note – the film contains graphic images of sick and deceased Ospreys including nestlings.

**7:15 – 8:30 PM:** Greg Kearns Presentation and Discussion - “Current Status of the Chesapeake Bay Ospreys”

**Greg Kearns** is a Senior Park Naturalist for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission at the Patuxent River Park. He is an expert on the wetland ecology of the Chesapeake Bay and Patuxent River with over 40 years of experience researching Ospreys and other species. He has been instrumental in the installation of over 100 Osprey nesting platforms and has banded over 5000 Ospreys. He was named the Conservationist of the Year in 2006 by the Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources and in 2017 was awarded the National Wetlands Conservation Award.

A HAUNTING AND CRITICAL NEW DOCUMENTARY

# THE LAST OSPREY

THE SENTINELS OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY  
SOUNDING THE ALARM



DIRECTOR / PRODUCER WILLIAM MCKEEVER



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## Upcoming Events

**August 15 – SATURDAY – 7:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

**FIELD TRIP – Birding by Kayak. A SMAS and Atlantic Kayak Company Partnering Event**

Mallows Bay Park, Mallows Bay – Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary, Charles County

1440 Wilson Landing Road, Nanjemoy, MD 20662

***“BIRDING BY KAYAK WITH GABI”***

Leader: Gabi Zabel

Birders of all levels, beginner to expert, will enjoy looking for our avian friends from a different perspective: on the water. Bring your own binoculars, bird guides and a sense of adventure. Atlantic Kayak will provide the kayaks and our leader Gabi will provide the knowledge. Gabi is a Master Naturalist, SMAS board member, and employee of Atlantic Kayak Company. This birding event offers the opportunity to explore a great habitat that the sunken ships of Mallows Bay have created. Join us and immerse yourself in the sanctuary's historical and natural wonders! All reservations are for tandem kayaking provided by Atlantic Kayak Company for a fee. Book online at [www.atlantickayak.com](http://www.atlantickayak.com)

**September 2 – WEDNESDAY – 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

**MONTHLY MEETING PROGRAM – ZOOM MEETING**

***“PURPLE MARTINS”***

Speaker: Mercedes Leofsky, Research Manager, Purple Martin Conservation Association (PMCA)

Join us and learn about the life, migration and unique human-dependent nesting habits of the Purple Martin, North America's largest swallow. Did you know that the Purple Martin is the official town bird for the Town of La Plata, Maryland's FIRST Bird City? Purple Martins are special because they rely almost entirely on human-made housing to nest, catch all their food and water while flying, and migrate thousands of miles between North America and Brazil. And, they are not purple! We are excited to have Mercedes tell us all about them, and for us to learn how to ensure the future of this fabulous insectivore. **A zoom link to attend this meeting will be sent out prior to the meeting.**

**September 19 – SATURDAY – 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

**FIELD TRIP – Easy Terrain Birding**

**Indian Head Rail Trail, Mason Springs, Charles County**

Livingston Road Parking Area (38.591650, -77.112758) Near 4980 Livingston Road, Indian Head, 20640

***“MIGRATION ON THE TRAIL”***

Leader(s): Lynne Wheeler, Pam Brumbley

This is a great bird walk to look for fall warblers and migrating birds that is easy to walk because the rail trail is paved. The trail provides a unique opportunity to view undeveloped natural areas of forest, wetlands, and the Mattawoman Creek. Originally built in 1918 as a supply route for the Navy's Indian Head Powder Factory, this elevated rail bed passes through the Mattawoman Creek stream valley and is an eBird Hot Spot with 151 species year to date. It has many years since SMAS has offered a field trip here and we are excited to provide this opportunity again. Maximum participants 15. RSVP to Lynne at [somdaudubon@yahoo.com](mailto:somdaudubon@yahoo.com) or text 301-751-8097.

**September 26 – SATURDAY – 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

**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 State Park 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 [tylerbell@yahoo.com](mailto:tylerbell@yahoo.com) or 301-862-4623.

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## Upcoming Events continued

**October 3 – SATURDAY – 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.**

**FIELD TRIP**

**Newtowne Neck State Park, St Mary's County**

21308 Newtowne Neck Rd, Leonardtown, MD 20650

**"AUTUMN AT NEWTOWNE NECK"**

Leader: Alex Donley

Catch the tail end of fall migration along the Potomac at this great park. Pine, mixed forests, and fields allow for a host of possible species including late warblers along with the possibility of newly arriving winter species. Meet at the first parking lot on the right after the park entrance. No fee. Level, maintained dirt/gravel trails, may encounter mud- wear appropriate shoes. Porta-john available at the beach parking lot a brief drive further down the road.

RSVP to Alex at [ajdonley212@gmail.com](mailto:ajdonley212@gmail.com).

**October 7 – WEDNESDAY – 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

**MONTHLY MEETING PROGRAM – ZOOM MEETING**

**"HISTORY & LESSONS OF BIRD FEEDING"**

Speaker: Paul Baicich

Join us as Paul presents a story of avian culture, commerce, and conservation, emphasizing why bird feeding matters. Learn about the motives and methods from the 1890's to present day, how three common foods and methods came to be i.e. Sunflower and Nyjer seeds and tube feeders, as well as five ways to feeding success and the ten basic foods. Paul is a former employee of the American Birding Association, he edited 14 of their "ABA Birdfinding Guides," edited *Birding*, ABA's bi-monthly magazine, and served as ABA's Director of Conservation and Public Policy. In addition, Paul co-edits (with Wayne Petersen) the popular monthly *Birding Community E-bulletin*. Paul is also one of the co-authors (with Margaret Barker and Carrol Henderson) of a book on the historic development of backyard bird feeding, *Feeding Wild Birds in America: Culture, Commerce, and Conservation* (Texas A&M University Press, 2015). **A zoom link to attend this meeting will be sent out prior to the meeting.**

**October 10 – SATURDAY – 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

**FIELD TRIP**

**Calvert Cliffs State Park**

Calvert County 10540 H.G. Trueman Road, Lusby, MD 20657

**"FALL MIGRATION"**

Leader: Alex Donley

The wooded habitat and wetland at Calvert Cliffs attract a variety of songbirds. Expect to see resident birds as well as immature and adult Neotropical migrants. Great spot for warblers. Wide trail through forest adjacent to creek and wetland. Take Rt. 2/4 south of Prince Frederick for about 14 miles. Follow signs to the park. Meet leaders in parking lot. Facilities and fee, 3-mile round trip. RSVP to Alex at [ajdonley212@gmail.com](mailto:ajdonley212@gmail.com)

**October 11 – SUNDAY – 8 a.m. – 11 a.m.**

**FIELD TRIP – Easy Terrain Birding**

**Port Tobacco River Park, Charles County**

7740 Chapel Point Road, Port Tobacco, MD 20677

**"KNOCK, KNOCK, WHO'S THERE?"**

Leader(s): Lynne Wheeler, Pam Brumbley

Join Lynne and Pam as we hunt for what birds might be passing through, are still there, or have just arrived - as well as our favorite and infamous resident Bald Eagles Chandler and Hope. This park offers several trails along the Port Tobacco River, as well as meadow and hedgerow habitat. Flat, easy terrain, and overlook platforms. This is an eBird.org HotSpot that has documented 150 species. Maximum of 15 participants. RSVP to Lynne at

[somdaudubon@yahoo.com](mailto:somdaudubon@yahoo.com) or text 301-751-8097.

## Upcoming Events continued

**October 17 - SATURDAY – 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

### **FIELD TRIP**

**Point Lookout State Park, St. Mary's County**

11175 Point Lookout Road, Scotland, MD 20687

### **"AUTUMN AT PLSP"**

Leader: Alex Donley

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 State Park 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 Alex at [ajdonley212@gmail.com](mailto:ajdonley212@gmail.com)

**October 24 – SATURDAY – 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

### **FIELD TRIP – Birding by Kayak. A SMAS and Atlantic Kayak Company Partnering Event**

**Atlantic Kayak Company at Mattingly Park, Charles County**

108-A Mattingly Avenue, Indian Head, MD 20640.

### **"BIRDING BY KAYAK WITH GABI"**

Leader: Gabi Zabel

If you missed our August trip at Mallow's Bay you have another chance to do birding by kayak with Gabi – this time at Mattawoman Creek. This is a habitat you should not miss. You can get up close and personal with a myriad of bird species who flit and fly along this gorgeous meandering creek and at the edges of the riparian forest. Numerous Bald Eagles nest here, and it is a great location for waterfowl, and forest interior dwelling species. Bring your own binoculars, bird guides and a sense of adventure. Gabi is a Master Naturalist, SMAS board member, and employee of Atlantic Kayak Company. All reservations are for tandem kayaking provided by Atlantic Kayak Company for a fee. Book online at [www.atlantickayak.com](http://www.atlantickayak.com)

## Podcast Corner

From [Nature](#)—the leading international weekly journal of science first published in 1869—Nature Portfolio is here to serve the research community by publishing its most significant discoveries—findings that advance knowledge and address some of the greatest challenges that we face as a society today. Our journals publish not only primary research but also reviews, critical comment, news and analysis.

**Briefing Chat:** [The tongue trick that helps sunbirds suck](#)

**Why insects aren't huge:** [a new challenge to a decades-old idea](#)

**Botanical mystery solved:** [how plants make a crucial malaria drug](#)

# Welcome, New Members!

Cheryl Albakri, Waldorf  
Richard Austin, Waldorf  
Mary Bate, Lusby  
Ann Bignell, Lusby  
Rachel Boyd, Fort Washington  
Ariella Bode, Oxon Hill  
Alonzo Brown, Oxon Hill  
Tashea Brown, Temple Hills  
Betty Burnett, Temple Hills  
Virginia Carson, Lusby  
Helga Clayton, White Plains  
Cliff Collins, Clinton  
Chris Cummings, Solomons

Samantha Dawson-Williams,  
Clinton  
Amber Ewing, Waldorf  
Anthony Foster, Port Tobacco  
Cassandra Freeman, Oxon Hill  
Helen Hasel, Mechanicsville  
Andrew Holter, Prince Frederick  
Jennifer Huff, California  
Marc And Alice Imlay, Bryans Road  
Chris Isenberg, Mechanicsville  
Yolanda Kelly, Fort Washington  
Karen Keyser, Issue  
Amanda King, Leonardtown

Kayt Lewis, California  
Valarie Linwood, Waldorf  
Justice Marie, Waldorf  
Thomasine Mitchell, Camp Springs  
Jacqueline Peters, Suitland  
Sandgenella Ratliff, Waldorf  
Gerald Reese, Mechanicsville  
Joyce Rolczynski, Lusby  
Patrice Rohde, Indian Head  
Beth Thompson, Welcome  
Linda Ward, Clinton  
Joseph Wood, Mechanicsville

## 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 5<sup>th</sup> of each month.

Follow us on Facebook @somdaudubon



**Southern Maryland Audubon Society  
(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](http://www.somdaudubon.org)



## Southern Maryland Audubon Society

### Adopt-a-Raptor

The Southern Maryland Audubon Society sponsors the banding of nesting birds of prey with serially numbered aluminum bands in cooperation with the Bird Banding Laboratory of the U.S. Department of the Interior. Limited numbers of raptors to sponsor 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, American Kestrel Nest Boxes, Eastern Screech Owl Nest Boxes, and Mist Nets or Banding Supplies.*

Please indicate which raptor you wish to adopt. You may adopt more than one:

- |                                                          |                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Osprey, \$10 each               | Total Amount: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barn Owl, \$25 each             | Total Amount: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Donation to Raptor Fund | Amount: _____       |

When you adopt, 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, and a photo of a fledgling and any other available information on the whereabouts or fate of the bird.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_  
State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

If this is a gift, please include the recipient's name for the certificate:

\_\_\_\_\_

For online purchase go to: <https://www.somdaudubon.org/support-us/adopt-a-raptor/>

To purchase by check and mail via USPS, send this form to:

Carole Schnitzler, 3595 Silk Tree Court, Waldorf, MD 20602



Barn Owl photo by Stacy Howell



## *Southern Maryland Audubon Society*

### Membership Application to our Local Audubon Chapter

Please enroll me as a member of the Southern Maryland Audubon Society. Southern Maryland Audubon Society is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization, so 100% of your membership, renewal, or donation supports our bird conservation, education, and advocacy programs. With a chapter-only membership, ALL of your dues support Southern Maryland Audubon and our work protecting birds and the places they need to survive in Southern Maryland. To purchase online go to <https://www.somdaudubon.org/support-us/join-somd/>  
Please select the type of membership from our list below:

Individual/Family:    ☐ 1 year \$20    ☐ 2 year \$35    ☐ 3 year \$45  
Lifetime Membership: ☐ \$500  
Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

To purchase by check and mail via USPS, send this form to:  
Southern Maryland Audubon Society, P.O. Box 181, Bryans Road, MD 20616

### Membership to the National Audubon Society

Please consider supporting the [National Audubon Society](http://www.audubon.org/membership) by becoming a member. Your membership automatically enrolls you as a member of Southern Maryland Audubon Society. You will support their avian conservation efforts, and receive four issues of National's award-winning *Audubon* magazine. To join the National Audubon Society, go to:  
<http://www.audubon.org/membership>



**Osprey**  
Photo by Bill Hubick

Editor: Tyler Bell Email: [jtylerbell@yahoo.com](mailto: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.

#### 2026—2027 Officers

President, Will Daniel — [wdaniel.somdaudubon@yahoo.com](mailto:wdaniel.somdaudubon@yahoo.com)

Vice President, Ben Springer — [ben.springer@comcast.net](mailto:ben.springer@comcast.net)

Treasurer, Julie Daniel — [juliemdaniel@hotmail.com](mailto:juliemdaniel@hotmail.com)

Secretary, Barbara Hill — [tytito@verizon.net](mailto:tytito@verizon.net)