

The Osprey

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN MARYLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

President's Perch



Cape May Warbler
Photo by Steve Arthur

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<http://somdaudubon.org/>

It is hard to believe we are already into the fall season! Trees are turning and our beloved migratory birds are heading out, but SMAS has programs and quite a few birding trips coming up to take us through November. We have a birding by kayak on October 24 at Mattingly Park in Indian Head and a special ghost walk at Mallows Bay on Halloween. If you are free, I encourage you to attend. And just a reminder we are hosting a Craft Fair at Thomas Stone High School in Waldorf on December 6 from 10 am to 3 pm. There are many vendors signing up to participate and we expect it to be a major event as well as a wonderful opportunity for community outreach and education while folks shop for the holidays. We will also be debuting our Osprey mascot (costume) at the fair and that alone would be worth a visit.

SMAS (along with other organizations) was invited to sponsor a program with the Maryland Osprey & Nature Festival Organization on September 24 screening a documentary *"The Last Osprey"* at the Drum Point Club in Lusby. Though the weather was a bit on the poor side the event ended up standing room only. An encouraging sign so many people came out to learn of the plight of the Osprey in Chesapeake Bay.

Frankly, *"The Last Osprey"* was disturbing. Osprey nests I have seen active for 20+ years stood vacant this year and other attendees noted the same with nests on the waters outside their homes. The documentary lays out how industrial scale commercial harvesting of Menhaden in Chesapeake Bay is adversely impacting the ecosystem. These filter feeders play an unlikely key role in the entire ecosystem of the Chesapeake. These fish are rich in omega-3 fatty acids and a key dietary staple of Osprey chicks. And there in lies the problem – omega-3 fatty acids are a valuable commodity and harvested with little or no regulation.

We can see the results of the harvesting of a key part of the ecology of the Bay in the rapid decline of an apex predator -- the Osprey. Greg Kerns, senior naturalist for the Maryland National Park and Planning Commission, anchored the presentation of the documentary and reinforced, through his 43-years of firsthand experience, the devastation we are seeing in the Osprey population. Ospreys serve as a biomarker, or simpler a barometer, of the health of the overall Chesapeake Bay ecosystem.

The presentation and discussion were impactful. It drives home the importance of people being informed and educated on activities and industries that can devastate a delicate ecosystem such as the Chesapeake Bay. I would encourage you to read further about this on the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's website.

Will Daniel
SMAS President

Late Season Vagrant Hummingbirds

by Tyler Bell

People are still reporting hummingbirds across Maryland as of the third week of October. Wish we still had any in Wildewood but our last Ruby-throat was on October 2. Please keep your feeders up at least through Thanksgiving for two reasons. First, some Ruby-throated Hummers are late migrants through the end of October. A few actual spend the winter in the Chesapeake/mid-Atlantic, particularly near water where overnight temperatures tend to be more moderate.

Second, and more important, IMO, is that starting next week, it's just about as likely that any hummingbird will not be a Ruby-throat but more likely a Rufous Hummingbird. Rufous are annual in the mid-Atlantic in the dozens. There are currently two being seen in Maryland (Garrett and Wicomico Counties).



Mexican Violetear photo by Hugh David Fleischmann.

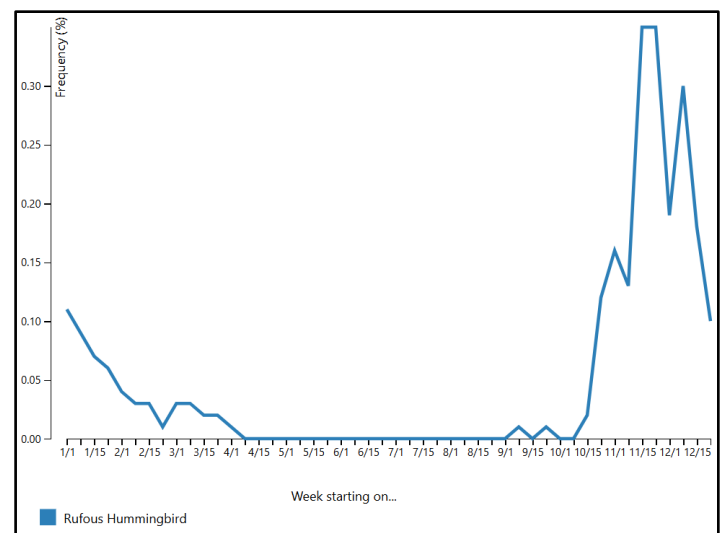
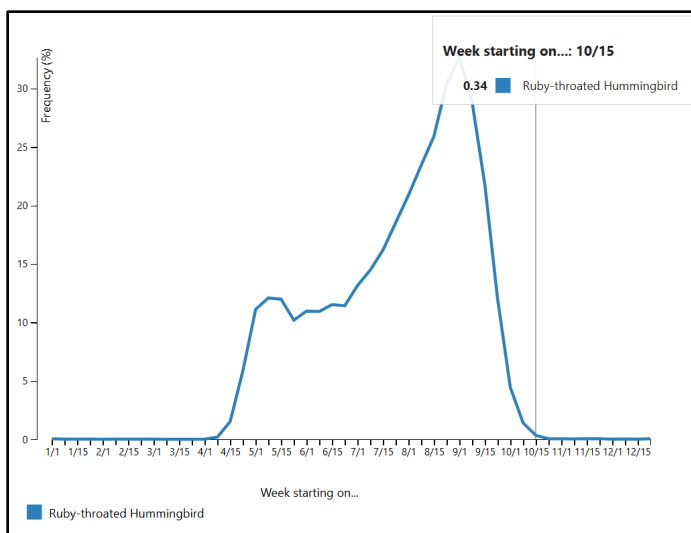
Other western vagrants have been found in Maryland in small numbers. Allen's, Anna's, Black-chinned, and Calliope are rare but there are at least two records of each. Mexican Violetear has been seen at least twice (one grainy image from Anne Arundel is inconclusive but I'm convinced they were correct).

Aside from typical nectar feeders, late season hummers are attracted to late blooming plants like penstemons, and Mexican or pineapple sage.

If you see a hummer at your feeder, please try and get photos. Perched birds showing the primary wing feathers or hovering birds showing the tail, particularly if it's flared, can help narrow down the choices.

Between Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties, the cumulative species list is Allen's, Anna's, Black-chinned, Calliope, Ruby-throated and Rufous. Let's find a Calliope for Charles and St. Mary's or another Anna's!

Below are occurrence graphics from eBird for Ruby-throats and Rufous.



Winter Finch Forecast 2026-2027

By Tyler Hoar

FINCH RESEARCH NETWORK



GENERAL FORECAST

Last year was a bit of a mixed bag for boreal irruptions, but it was a solid flight year here in the East for Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Grosbeaks and Purple Finches with a small flight of Pine Siskins too. The picture looks mixed again this year, as crops are good in the east and the far western parts of the boreal, but are largely poor in the central areas of the boreal. The overall poor seed crops in a vast area of the central boreal will likely cause finches to move into Eastern Canada, the Great Lakes region and northeastern United States, but birds will likely be in the woods more than at feeders due to plentiful seed resources in the northeastern conifer forests. We do not expect any big irruptions of any of the finches in the southeastern states this year.

There are two areas of good food crops, 1) in the east from central Ontario eastward into the Maritimes and the northeastern United States, and 2) from British Columbia to Alaska. From western Manitoba to Alberta crops are mostly poor though!

Crops are very good on eastern white pine and northern white cedar, and variable with areas of fair to good crops for eastern hemlock and the three spruces (black, red and white), with red spruce showing the best crop of the three. Many areas of red spruce are good, especially in interior areas away from the Maine and Maritime provincial coasts. Northern white cedar is also good this year. Most other species are quite variable too, but maples are more at the good end, and pin and chokecherry more in the poor to fair end of the spectrum. Oak and beechnut crops are quite good in the east, and the birch crop is good in the eastern boreal but thins out some as you get into the central boreal. Mountain-ash appears to be quite good across much of the boreal except it is more fair in the central boreal and overall poor in areas near Tadoussac Bird Observatory in Quebec.

Spruce budworm outbreaks from Ontario eastward were widespread again this summer, providing ample food sources to Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Siskins and Purple Finches as well as the “budworm warblers” during the breeding season.

One more note about this year’s food crop information, there has been a widespread pine failure on limber, whitebark, pinyon and ponderosa pines in the interior areas of the mountain west. Type 2 Red Crossbill started moving across the country west to east in July-August giving us our first hint at what this year’s forecast could bring here in the east.

INDIVIDUAL FORECAST

The eastern region is the focus of the Finch Forecast, and Forecasts apply mainly to Ontario, Quebec, the Maritimes, the northeastern United States, and the Great Lakes region, but also touches upon points to the south across the central and eastern regions of the United States. Three irruptive non-finch passerines, whose movements are often linked to finches are also discussed. Follow finch wanderings this fall and winter on eBird, the [Finch Research Network](#) and the Finches, Irruptions and Mast Crops Facebook group for more information.

Purple Finch

Given the spruce budworm outbreaks to the north across eastern Canada, and perceived uptick in population numbers of this species since the outbreaks began 10 years ago, are we now in a period where annual flights will be more common again? Maybe! There were back-to-back flights of Purple Finches in the east the last two years; 2024-25 was a moderate flight, and last year 2025-26 was a small to moderate flight.

Many Purple Finches will move into the areas of eastern Canada, the Great Lakes, and the northeastern United States this winter to take advantage of the good spruce and great eastern white pine and mountain-ash crops. Whenever these areas have good food crops, birds stay more to the north. Will we see another flight year to the Mid-Atlantic and southern states? If one does materialize, we suspect it will be a late-developing small flight at best due to abundant resources in the northeastern forests.

Winter Finch Forecast continued on page 3

Winter Finch Forecast continued

At feeders, Purple Finches prefer black oil sunflower seeds. Away from feeders, this species is known to feed on lilac, various ashes including mountain-ash (not a true ash, but a member of the rose family Rosaceae), and other deciduous and coniferous seeds during the winter.

Redpoll

Birch seed crops on yellow, paper, gray and bog (swamp) birch all appear mixed and variable, but parts of Quebec and the Maritimes seem quite good. This will likely be a sufficient cushion to hold most Redpolls to the north in Canada. Maybe the western Great Lakes and perhaps northeastern border areas will get a small to modest irruption, but to be honest, this species has become increasingly harder to predict in the last 15-20 years. Given the August reports in the northeastern United States last year, we forecasted at least a moderate invasion year in southeastern Canada, the Great Lakes region, and northeastern United States, but it never really materialized. Sure, southeastern Canada and parts of the western Great Lakes had a small event, but larger numbers were absent and birds barely reached the United States. What likely potentially happened, is that many birds moved back across the boreal westward to areas where the crops were better, a pattern known from Pine Siskin and White-winged Crossbill. This transition seems a plausible explanation for last year's movements given the push out of the St. Lawrence in August-September and that birds vanished or numbers really never built up as expected.

One other theory we have is that with global warming and the lack of snow cover, many Redpolls just stop before moving as far south as they used to, choosing to dine on increasingly accessible weed seeds in the snowless fields of Canada.

We do not expect a big flight this year, but a small flight wouldn't surprise us either, especially in the western Great Lakes region. If any sizable flight does happen to materialize, a few "Hoaries" should be expected in larger flocks.

Watch for Redpolls on birches (including in urban areas), in weedy fields and at bird feeders offering Nyjer® and black oil sunflower seeds.

In 2024, Common Redpoll, Hoary Redpoll and the Lesser Redpoll in Europe were lumped into the same species, now called Redpoll. Genetic work found that a supergene was responsible for the Redpoll plumage differences. See the link below for photos and identification marks of the Redpoll subspecies.

Red Crossbill

As noted above, there is a good to great eastern white pine crop, and a pretty good spruce crop in interior sections of southeastern Canada, the Great Lakes, and northeastern United States. Type 12 Red Crossbills will likely dominate in their usual conifer haunts across the northeastern United States and southeastern Canada, but there has also been a significant irruption of Type 2 Red Crossbills that has moved west to east across the country –this is again due to the poor pine crops in the interior west. Hawk Ridge and Whitefish Point have both reported larger than normal numbers since August and a big thanks goes out to them for reaching out and letting us know.

Type 2 waged a huge irruption west to east in 2023-24, the last time the northeastern United States had a great eastern white pine crop. A few have lingered as usual across the northeast since that irruption. But, now here comes a new irruption of Type 2s, and with them, a few Type 4s have moved eastward as well. A few Type 1 Red Crossbills will be scattered about as well, especially in western Massachusetts, southern New York, and points southward in the mountains of West Virginia and North Carolina.

There should be more good numbers of Red Crossbills from Algonquin Provincial Park to the southern Maritimes and northeastern United States. To begin winter, expect Type 2 to dominate more in the western Great Lakes, and Type 12 will dominate in the northeastern United States. In Algonquin Provincial Park, I could see a more even mix of Types 2 and 12. As the winter progresses, expect more Type 2s to make their way into the northeastern United States. Will more Type 4 or Type 3 come as well? Time will tell!

Winter Finch Forecast continued

If numbers build, there may be a movement late winter down the coast to Long Island, Cape May, Delaware, and points south (especially Type 12), as they sometimes do, as cone crops get depleted as we progress through the winter season.

The Red Crossbill types are usually impossible to identify without recordings of their flight calls. Recordings can be made with a smartphone and identified to type. Matt Young (info@finchnetwork.org) will identify types if you email him your recordings or upload them to an eBird checklist. Matt and fellow FiRN board member Tim Spahr have now listened to upwards 30,000 recordings. Recordings uploaded to eBird checklists are deposited in the Macaulay Library. See the link at the bottom for more on the Red Crossbill call types.

White-winged Crossbill

The crossbill pendulum has swung a bit back east some this year after most White-winged Crossbills were in the western boreal for the winter of 2025-26. An excellent spruce crop seems to be in a narrower area this winter located in Alaska to parts of British Columbia, and again in the east, but there is much less going on across the middle part of the boreal.

An influx of White-wings occurred in southeastern Canada, the northeastern United States, and the Great Lakes region in July, and some stayed and appeared to nest in the areas of good spruce crops. It was reported that many in the Sax Zim Bog area moved on/through, however. So, expect White-winged Crossbills to be in the far west and the far east. Outside of these two spruce crops, expect scattered flocks and individuals randomly moving around the Great Lakes region in search of suitable food sources, including any cone-laden spruces (including ornamentals) within urban areas.

A small to moderate push of white-winged crossbills can be expected in the east as most crossbills remaining in the east should gravitate towards the interior areas of Ontario, Quebec, and the northeastern United States.

Pine Siskin

Like for Purple Finch, areas affected by spruce budworm infestations can provide bountiful food for the Pine Siskin. Pine Siskins were around in small numbers in the east this summer, but in recent weeks Tadoussac in Quebec has had numbers in the 100s several days. And at the edge western edge of this report in Hawk Ridge, Minnesota, they have had several days now over 1000 Pine Siskins.

Southeastern Canada, the Great Lakes region, and the northeastern United States have a very good northern white cedar crop (some areas have a good eastern hemlock crop as well), and siskins love cedar and hemlock seeds. The eastern white pine crop is also very good (spruce is good but more variable comparatively speaking), and the last time the eastern areas experienced a great eastern white pine crop in 2023-24 Pine Siskins were plentiful from January into spring. Again, this will be a year where several finches like Pine Siskins, the two crossbill species, and even Purple Finches will be found in the forests more than at feeders. So, to find them one will have to venture out into the forested areas where the food is to find them.

As seen by band recoveries, Pine Siskins, similar to White-winged Crossbills, will move east or west in search of cone crops. This year, birds will move towards the good crops in the northeast and in British Columbia. The good crops will hold a sizable irruption of birds in the Northeastern states, but there could be a small to moderate flight to the southeastern states as well.

This entertaining species prefers Nyjer® seeds in silo or sock feeders but also likes to dine on black oil sunflower seeds in tube feeders.

Winter Finch Forecast continued on page 5

Winter Finch Forecast continued

Evening Grosbeak

The budworm outbreak in the eastern boreal has now persisted in many areas for a decade or more, and for this budworm-loving finch, that has meant a local increase. Parents have been quite successful raising families on this abundant food source. Food sources used post-budworm, like cherry species, are not good this year, but the mountain-ash crop is, and we expect this will hold up some of the Evening Grosbeaks and Purple Finches (along with most of the Pine Grosbeaks).

We predicted a moderate irruption in 2024-25, and a small one materialized. Last year we predicted a small irruption, and a moderately-sized one occurred. Either way, the northeastern United States has experienced at least small to moderate irruptions out of the boreal into southern New York and northwestern Pennsylvania the last two winters, and we've now had irruptions out of the boreal in 2020-21, 2022-23, 2024-25 and 2025-26, and that makes for irruptions 4 of the last 6 years. The Great Lakes have experienced a similar pattern the last 6 years, with 2022 being perhaps their largest event.

During the last big budworm outbreak from ~1965-1990, Evening Grosbeaks were noted on the Ithaca Christmas bird count, an area south of the boreal, every year from 1967-1991. Will we see another small movement south off the boreal this winter?

Small to medium-sized flocks will be found in the better grosbeak haunts in southeastern Canada near Algonquin PP (and villages and towns to the south), the Great Lakes region, and the northeastern United States this winter, so they will be findable. A small movement is quite possible again south of the boreal to southern New York, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts as well. It would not surprise us.

At platform feeders, Evening Grosbeaks prefer black oil sunflower seeds. Evening Grosbeaks will look away from feeders for maple and ash trees still holding seeds. See the links section below for the Evening Grosbeak call types eBird article, and The Evening Grosbeak Road to Recovery Project.

The Finch Research Network (FiRN) is a nonprofit and was granted 501c3 status in 2020. We are a co-lead on the International Evening Grosbeak Road to Recovery Project, and have funded over \$30,000 to go towards research, conservation and education for finch projects in the last couple years. FiRN is committed to researching and protecting these birds like the Evening Grosbeak, Purple Finch, Crossbills, Rosy-finches, and Hawaii's finches the honeycreepers.

If you have been enjoying all the finch forecasts, blogs and identifying of Evening Grosbeak and Red Crossbill call types (30,000+ recordings listened to and identified), Redpoll subspecies and green morph Pine Siskins FiRN has helped with over the years, please consider supporting our efforts and making a small donation at the donate link below. The Evening Grosbeak Project is in need of continued funding to help keep it going.

Donate – FINCH RESEARCH NETWORK (finchnetwork.org)

To read the entire article, click here:

<https://finchnetwork.org/winter-finch-forecast-2026-2027>



Evening Grosbeaks photo by Shirley Donald

Spotted Lanternflies vs Native Milkweeds

We are all battling to keep Spotted Lanternflies (*Lycorma delicatula*), or SLFs, out of our gardens, yards, or personally off myself (I had three land on me in an afternoon and almost had a heart attack, I'm just a bug person from an observable distance). They are particularly attracted to Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) and use their piercing mouthparts to feed on the sap. This also enables them to puncture many other plants, which becomes quite destructive to grapevines, fruit trees, and other crops. You may be battling them now with sticky traps or pesticides which can harm other native species, but what if there was a "two birds, one stone" type of method?

Researchers at Penn State University are working on studying how SLFs interact with milkweed and have discovered high mortality of the planthopper after feeding on the plant. Milkweed is toxic, but insects like the Monarch butterfly are able to ingest these toxins and use them as a defense against predators. SLFs on the other hand, will feed on just about anything available (they've been seen attempting to feed on telephone poles), and do not have a native equivalent like milkweed. After feeding, SLF mortality was anywhere between 10 to 90%, according to the unpublished results from Sara Hermann's lab at Penn State.

Either way, planting milkweed in your yard or garden supports native pollinators, potentially with the side effect of dropping a few SLFs. Different species are more toxic. For instance, Common Milkweed had a stronger effect compared to Swamp Milkweed. Be advised that Common Milkweed spreads quickly and is harder to contain while Swamp Milkweed is more garden-friendly depending on soil conditions. It's not a guarantee they will feed on it, but it doesn't hurt to put it in your garden to benefit other species that rely on it (which isn't exclusive to Monarchs). To join in on the effort, find a native nursery near you and plant some milkweed to support biodiversity in your area!

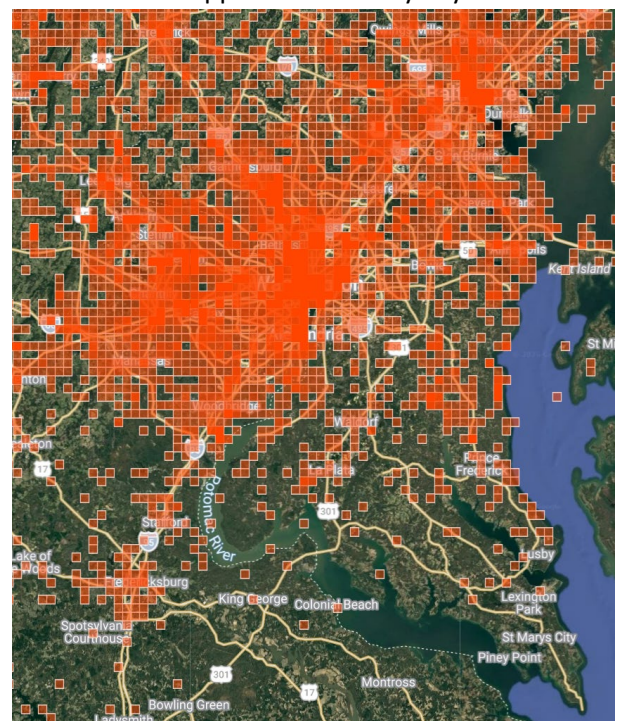
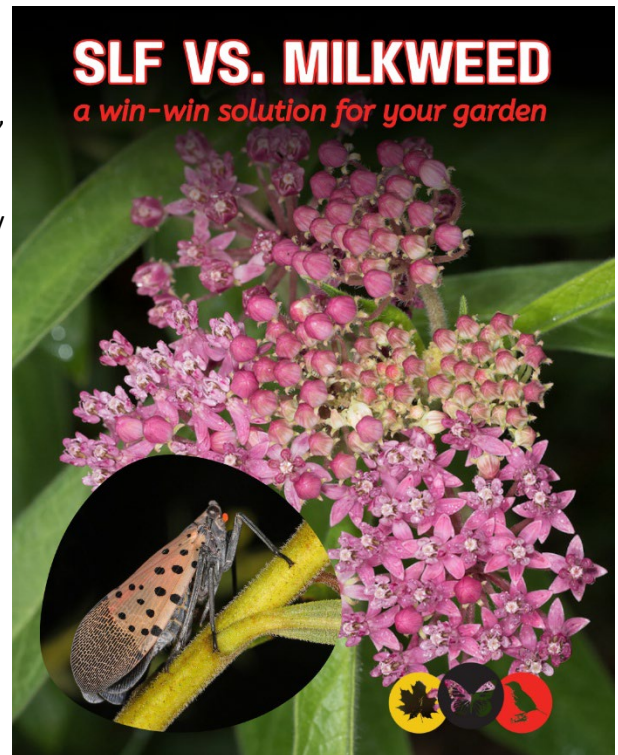
Keep those spotted guys off me,
Paleena Amy
Maryland Biodiversity Project

Read the [article about Sara Hermann's research](#).

Refer to this [great guide for planting east coast milkweed species](#).

[Swamp Milkweed](#) in Howard Co., MD (8/12/2017).
Media by Ashley Bradford.

[Spotted Lanternfly](#) in Carroll Co., MD (9/10/2023).
Judy Gallagher, some rights reserved.



Spotted Lanternfly distribution
map courtesy of iNaturalist.

Destructive Plant Pest Thwarted By Two Native Fungi

By Krishna Ramanujan, courtesy of the Cornell Chronicle.

Cornell-led research reports that two local fungal pathogens could potentially curb an invasive insect that has New York vineyard owners on edge.

The Spotted Lanternfly feeds on more than 70 plant species, including grape vines and apple trees.

Now, the paper, “A pair of native fungal pathogens drives decline of a new invasive herbivore,” led by Eric Clifton, a postdoctoral researcher in the lab of Cornell professor of entomology and co-author Ann Hajek, describes how two unrelated fungi, *Batkoa major* and *Beauveria bassiana*, have been decimating Spotted Lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*) populations near Reading, Pennsylvania.



Spotted Lanternfly adults and fourth-instar nymphs, with the bright red coloring, feed on a grapevine.

Photo by Eric H. Clifton/© Cornell University Photography

“The finding is important because these naturally occurring pathogens could be used to develop methods for more environmentally-friendly control of this damaging invader,” Hajek said.

“It’s a great example of how a major new invasive herbivore can be suppressed by native pathogens,” Clifton said. “Nobody stepped in to do this; it all happened naturally.”

Native to China, Taiwan and Vietnam, the Spotted Lanternfly was first discovered in southeastern Pennsylvania in 2014 and has spread to seven more states. Adult insects occasionally have been sighted in New York, but there are no signs yet of large populations. Entomologists and growers believe it’s just a matter of time before Spotted Lanternflies settle in New York, which boasts a nearly \$5 billion grape, grape juice and wine industry, and also stands as the country’s second-largest apple producing state. In Pennsylvania, Spotted Lanternflies have damaged at least a half-dozen vineyards from 2017 to 2018. While there are no reports of Spotted Lanternfly infecting apple orchards in the U.S., the insects have damaged apples in Korea.

In late 2017 Clifton and Hajek began responding to reports of fungi killing the insects in Berks County, Pennsylvania. In early October 2018, they investigated a site near an apple orchard. “It was clear anywhere you walked, you’d see dozens of lanternflies killed by *Beauveria* on the ground, and then you’d see cadavers all over the trees killed by *Batkoa*,” Clifton said. At the same time, they have just one ant, one stonefly, and a beetle killed by *Beauveria* and no other insects killed by *Batkoa* in the area.

Back at the lab, the researchers used genetic techniques to identify the two fungi. They found that 97% of lanternflies on tree trunks were killed by *B. major*, while on the ground 51% of cadavers were killed by *B. bassiana* and the rest by *B. major*.

Very little is known about *B. major*. “This fungus is more difficult to grow in the lab than *Beauveria bassiana*,” Clifton said. In nature, insects pick up spores of *B. major* on contact, and the fungus then enters the insect’s body through weak spots in the outer cuticle or “skin”. This fungus tends to anchor its dead insect host to a plant or tree as the spores start to develop on the outer body and the infective spores are then shot off. Spores are produced for a short period of time, and after spores have spread and infected new lanternflies, traces of them in the environment are hard to find. Hajek intends to study *B. major* further in the future.

B. bassiana, a soil fungus, has been heavily researched. It belongs to an entirely different order of fungi from *B. major*, though the two infect insects in a similar manner, through surface contact, and both kill insect hosts.

Continued on page 8. See SLFs vs Fungi

SLFs vs Fungi continued

The success of invasive species has been partly attributed to a lack of natural enemies. Conversely, Clifton suspects that one reason these two fungi infect Spotted Lanternflies but not other local insects is that the lanternflies lack the immunity that has evolved in local species, though more research is needed to verify the theory.

Clifton and Hajek plan to search the area for other insects known to be susceptible to these fungi, collect soil samples from the area, quantify the density of these fungi and test biopesticides based on *B. bassiana*. Some have already been approved by the Environmental Protection Agency.

"If you like apples, if you like grapes and wine, if you like beer (which requires hops, another plant eaten by Spotted Lanternflies), Spotted Lanternflies can attack those, and that has growers worried," Clifton said.

Louela Castrillo, an entomologist at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Research Service on Cornell's campus, and Andrii Gryganskyi, a molecular biologist at L.F. Lambert Spawn Co., are co-authors of the study. The study was funded by the USDA.

To read the article online, please click on this link:

<https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2019/04/destructive-plant-pest-thwarted-two-native-fungi>

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2026 — 10AM TO 3PM

Holiday Craft Fair



THOMAS STONE HIGH SCHOOL

Great ideas for everyone on your shopping list!

Visit <https://www.somdaudubon.org/events/>
for more information.



Audubon
SOUTHERN MARYLAND
Birds. Habitats. People. Together.

Indian Head Rail Trail, September 19

Photos and story by Pam Brumbley

We had a great morning of birding and exploring the natural habitats along the Indian Head Rail Trail and Mattawoman Creek. We met at the Livingston Road parking area, which provides access to the trail, and began by heading east on the trail for a short distance before turning west and spending most of our walk exploring in that direction. With fall migration underway, we kept our eyes and ears open for birds moving through the woodlands and marshes, while also enjoying the native plants and other natural features along the way.

Standout sightings included seven Red-headed Woodpeckers along the trail enjoying the dead and dying trees scattered throughout the marshes, which provide important habitat for these woodpeckers and many other species including Eastern Bluebirds, which we observed in the same habitat. We viewed both adult Red-Headed Woodpeckers, with their striking red heads and white bellies, and juveniles whose brownish-gray heads were just showing the first signs of red.

A small flock of Cedar Waxwings, six Northern Flickers, a Red-shouldered Hawk, two Gray Catbirds and several Great Egrets were among the birds we observed along Mattawoman Creek. We also found several familiar species, including Carolina Chickadees, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, White-breasted Nuthatches, and Carolina Wrens. A female American Redstart would be our only warbler species observed, while we anticipated seeing more.

Although fall migration brought us out to look for birds, the native plants along the trail were just as rewarding to explore. Jewelweed, goldenrod, asters, blue mistflower, and partridge pea were among the plants blooming, while patches of sensitive fern added lush green foliage to the landscape. The Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were enjoying the jewelweed flowers, providing a lovely example of the relationship between native plants and the wildlife they support.

Everyone enjoyed looking at the plants as well as the birds. Native plants provide food, habitat, and shelter for birds and other wildlife, and taking time to notice them added another dimension to our walk.

As we made our way back toward the parking area, we had one final treat. In the marsh nearest the parking lot, we spotted a Green Heron—the last bird of the walk and a memorable way to wrap up our morning.

With eight participants, 35 bird species, and plenty of native plants to admire, it was a rewarding outing along the Indian Head Rail Trail and Mattawoman Creek. Fall migration is a wonderful reminder that every walk offers something new to discover, whether it is a bird passing through, a familiar species in its seasonal habitat, or a native flower buzzing with activity.

Thanks to everyone who joined us, and we look forward to another opportunity to explore Southern Maryland's birds and natural places together.



Left, Blue Mistflower *Conoclinium coelestinum*, center, Great Egret, right, Green Heron

Upcoming Events

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 – changed to Matt Ichniowski

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 matthew.ichniowski@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 Mallows 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 reduced fee of \$30/person. Book online at www.atlantickayak.com

October 31 – SATURDAY – 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

FIELD TRIP – Family Birding and History Walk

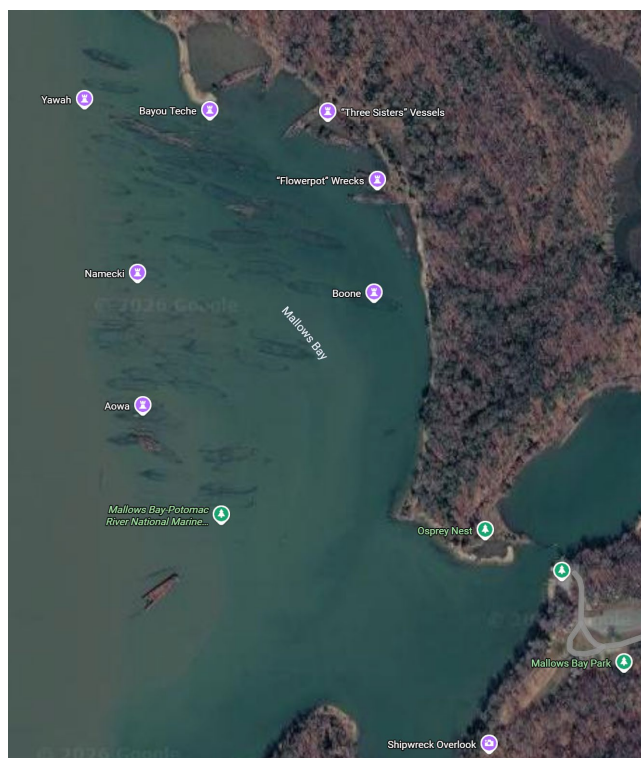
Mallows Bay Park, Mallows Bay – Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary, Charles County

1440 Wilson Landing Road, Nanjemoy, MD 20662

"BOO!! THE GHOSTS OF MALLOWS BAY"

Leader: Lynne Wheeler, Atlantic Kayak Company

What better way to enjoy Halloween than to visit the "Ghost Fleet" of Mallows Bay and scare up some birds! Walk with the Southern Maryland Audubon Society at Mallows Bay Park and learn about shipwrecks, archaeological sites, and wildlife all situated in a unique wetland, woodland and aquatic habitat which includes an evolving ecosystem. Atlantic Kayak will join us and share the history of this marine sanctuary. This is an easy bird walk along a one-mile trail where we will look for migrants, snatch final peeks at our summer friends, and welcome in our winter residents. Maximum participants 15. Loaner binoculars available. If you are also interested in renting a kayak at 3 pm for a one-hour tour it is now an option. Contact Shellie Perrie at atlantickayakco@gmail.com. To attend this event RSVP to Lynne at somdaudubon@yahoo.com or text 301-751-8097. p.s. Some of us will dress up! Boo!





Inaugural Rarity Roundup!

Saturday, November 7



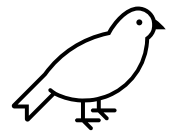
This is the 27th year that a Rarity Roundup has been held in Worcester County, Maryland. Early November is the best time to search for fall vagrants. And while Worcester County might be the indisputable champ for fall vagrants, Pt. Lookout could be a close contender. Because of the funnel-like geography, much like Cape May at the southern end of New Jersey, birds collect at the point but are reluctant to cross the large expanse of the Potomac River.

The event is organized like any formal bird count, but with one main exception: our primary goal is to detect and document rare species. If a mega-rarity is found during the count, all participants are encouraged to abandon their territories and give chase.

Depending on how many people are interested in participating, we will be dividing the southern end of the county, south of the intersection of Rts. 5 & 235, into sectors (see next page for map). Teams will beat the bushes hoping to find something uncommon. We are hoping to use the existing GroupMe to share information during the hunt.

If you'd like to participate, please email:

Tyler Bell at jtylerbell@yahoo.com



Clockwise from top left: Western Kingbird, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Lark Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow. Photos by Bill Hubick

Rarity Roundup Sectors

- 1 – The Point
- 2 – Causeway, Fishing Pier, Fort Lincoln
- 3 – Scotland Beach, PLSP Campground
- 4 – Jacobs Farm, Cornfield Harbor
- 5 – Long Neck Road
- 6 – Camp Brown Road, Harry James Road



Upcoming Events continued

November 4 – WEDNESDAY - 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

MONTHLY MEETING PROGRAM – ZOOM MEETING

“BARN OWLS, KESTRELS, SHORT-EARED OWLS, AND HARRIERS: CONSERVING MARYLAND’S FARMLAND RAPTORS”

Speaker: Alex Pellegrini

From nest boxes for American Kestrels and American Barn Owls to growing efforts focused on Short-eared Owls and Northern Harriers, this talk will introduce the Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership’s Farmland Raptor Program and the four focal species at the heart of its work. This volunteer-powered program is helping change what we know about some of Maryland’s most difficult-to-study raptors through long-term monitoring, research, landowner partnerships, and collaboration with other researchers and conservation groups. Alex Pellegrini will share what the program is learning, why these birds matter in Maryland, and how landowners, volunteers, and members of the public can get involved. Alex Pellegrini is an avian ecologist whose work focuses on raptors, migratory birds, and statewide monitoring programs. He co-leads the Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership’s Farmland Raptor Program, coordinating a multi-partner monitoring network and contributing to collaborative research on Short-eared Owls, American Barn Owls, and American Kestrels. **A zoom link to attend this meeting will be sent out prior to the meeting.**



127th Christmas Bird Count

Please Sign Up Now!! Birds Count!!

Saturday, Dec 19 – Port Tobacco, MD

Compiler: Mike Callahan, 240-765-5192 or raptorsrulemc@gmail.com

Sunday, Dec 20 – Patuxent River, MD

Compiler: Ben Springer, 443-771-6336 (text preferred) or ben.springer@comcast.net

Sunday, Dec 27 – Point Lookout, MD

Compiler: Bob Boxwell, 410-231-1251 or robertboxwell1@outlook.com

Saturday, Jan 2 – Fort Belvoir, VA and MD

MD Sector Leader: Lynne Wheeler, 301-751-8097 or somdaudubon@yahoo.com

and/or Bob Lukinic, 301-283-6317 or rdlukinic@gmail.com

Welcome, New Members!

Que Hines, Oxon Hill
Fredia Brinson, Waldorf
Susie and Michael Adams, Indian Head

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.

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



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:

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| ☐ Osprey, \$10 each | Total Amount: _____ |
| ☐ Barn Owl, \$25 each | Total Amount: _____ |
| ☐ 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

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

Vice President, Ben Springer — ben.springer@comcast.net

Treasurer, Julie Daniel — juliemdaniel@hotmail.com

Secretary, Lynne Wheeler — somdaudubon@yahoo.com