

President's Corner
Thanksgiving
 by Wayne Bell

What a winter this was for Maryland birds! Where do I start? Things sort of began, as they often do along with Atlantic coast, with the appearance of western species: Lark Sparrow (Wicomico County), Lark Bunting (Carroll County), and the state's first Allen's Hummingbird (Calvert County). Now there is a young Harris's Sparrow in Howard County. Some rare waterfowl moved in to winter along the Cambridge waterfront (Dorchester County). First there was a Eurasian Wigeon, then a Tufted Duck, and then the Eastern Shore's first Barrow's Goldeneye. Lucky birders were able to see all three in a single visit.

The winter bonanza continued with an irruption of northern species. Almost everyone with a "thistle" feeder enjoyed a plethora of Pine Siskins, maybe even too many of them. But the real highlights were perhaps a half dozen very accommodating Snowy Owls, especially one frequenting the neighborhood of the Cooperative Oxford Laboratory (Talbot County) that was such a ham that its picture made the front page of the local newspaper. Then there were the crossbills, especially White-winged, that appeared here and there across the state, with one very cooperative group in Centennial Park (Howard County) that

(President's Corner continues on page 2)

Inside This Issue:

President's Corner	1
The Big Picture	1
Conference 2009	1
Records Committee Members	2
Mid-Shore Student Research	4
Board Bulletins	4
Birds of Note	5
Chapter Chatter	6
YMOS Birdathon	8
50-Year MOS Members	9
Bird Blitz 2008: Summary	10
Bird Blitz 2009: Prospects	11
Maryland List Report, 2008	12
DC Big Year	13
Calendar	14
May Count 2009	22
Book Reviews: <i>Birdwatcher</i>	24
Last Call	24



The Maryland Yellowthroat

Newsletter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

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THE BIG PICTURE

As many of you know, I did a Maryland Big Photographic year during 2008. I wanted to see if 300 species could be photographed in the state in a single year. I was told I was crazy to try, but with improved communication tools (cell phone, list-server, etc.), I think merely identifying 300 species in a year is highly over-rated. I wanted a real challenge.

In order to justify the expense and the carbon footprint, I decided to do this as a fundraiser to help protect the Blue-billed Curassow, a critically endangered bird in Colombia. (The Blue-billed Curassow project is supported by the American Bird Conservancy. Check out ABC at <http://www.abcbirds.org/>.) So far— one year and 40,000 photos later—I have raised over \$10,000.

Would 300 be possible? I considered some facts. My Maryland Big Year list is 311 (1994)—and with new communication tools I think I could best that. Of the 379 Maryland birds I have seen, I have photographed 367, or 98.6 percent; if the same ratio held for the 311, it would come to 301. So, with lots of help and luck, 300 should be possible. Also, the Photographic List rule requires only that the bird be identifiable; it doesn't have to be a great image. My judges were Matt Hafner, Michael O'Brien, and Jim Stasz.



Connecticut Warbler photographed in Charles County by George Jett on September 18, 2008.

My strategy was to chase the birds that are rare and pick up common ones along the way. I would solicit help from friends, check the listservers, keep my cell phone on, hang out with good birders, and go out any day possible. I aimed to hit high-profile habitat during peak periods (e.g., Hart-Miller Island during shorebird migration), Assateague often, and songbird breeding grounds in western MD, and take all Paulagics trips.

Dutifully I started on January 1 at a hummingbird feeder in St. Mary's County, where David Holmes and

(The Big Picture continues on page 3)

Frederick in May

Tempted by the prospect of a fun birding weekend during peak migration? Contact Janet Shields (301-733-7877 or janetbill@prodigy.net) to sign up for the **May 15-17 conference in Frederick County.**

RECORDS COMMITTEE

New to the MD/DC Records Committee are Dave Ziolkowski, Mikey Lutmerding, and Gwen Brewer. They join Stan Arnold, Mike Bowen, Paul DeAnna, Bill Hubick, Fred Shaffer, and Leo Weigant, plus Paul O'Brien, Chair, and Phil Davis, Secretary. Members completing a two-year term are Tyler Bell, Marcia Watson, and Ellen Lawler.

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Anyone is welcome to contribute articles or ideas that would be of interest to other birders. Copy may be mailed or e-mailed to Lydia Schindler by July 20, 2009 for the September/October 2009 issue.

Illustrations pages 1 and 6 ©M. Suzanne Probst.
Photographs pages 1 and 3 ©George Jett.
Photograph page 5 ©Nico Sarbanes.
Photograph page 8 ©Bruce Field.

President's Corner (continued from page 1)

provided state birds for many who attended the MOS Board of Directors meeting hosted by the Howard Chapter in March. Short-eared Owls, usually relegated to distant Dorchester haunts like Elliott's Island Road, popped up in several easier to reach locations, including at least three individuals hawking the fields at dusk near Starr (Caroline County).

The species mentioned above were superimposed on a much larger array of birds, from uncommon to abundant, that graced our winter landscapes. Indeed, the state's species diversity makes wintertime the most exciting season to bird in Maryland. Our YMOS juniors were able to capitalize on this season's bounty by counting 132 total species in during their Birdathon on the last day of winter and the first day of spring. (See page 8.)

We should never take our good birding fortunes for granted in any season. The just released "State of the Birds" report from the U.S. Department of the Interior, using data provided by volunteers through the annual Christmas Bird Counts and North American Breeding Bird Survey, presents sobering information about the decline of many species in Maryland and nationwide (www.stateofthebirds.org).

Obviously, we need to keep up our conservation efforts even during these difficult economic times. But there is another aspect of seeing good birds that we must not accept as a given, and that is the generosity of people, from private individuals to the owners of local businesses to the personnel of our parks and refuges, all of whom contribute to our ability to see a lifer or record a rarity. As I watched the e-mail exchanges regarding one unusual species or another, talked to other birders while on my own quest for local goodies, and spent time in the field with members of the YMOS, I came to realize that our wealth of birds is itself dependent on a wealth of people who care. So I am writing this note of thanksgiving to these people. The categories are mostly generic; you can fill in the blanks according to your own experiences.

Thanks to all landowners, individuals and businesses alike, who allow birders access onto non-public lands and even into their residences and workplaces to observe and, on occasion, capture and band a rare species.

Thanks to MOS members and other birders who work with landowners to arrange access, take the time to write a

note of gratitude, and even help repair damages wrought by the occasional birder who places quest over good judgment in seeking a rare species.

Thanks to the birders who share their observations of rarities with others over various on-line forums and provide helpful directions so that others might share their good fortune; thanks, too, to those individuals and organizations that maintain these forums for the benefit of us all.

Thanks to each MOS chapter for being a local birding resource and to the editors of MOS publications who make information from these chapters available to members of the organization as a whole.

Thanks to the public servants who manage the parks, refuges, and sanctuaries that conserve a diversity of habitats including forests, wetlands, and grasslands that contribute so much to Maryland's rich bird diversity across all seasons.

Thanks to the "citizen scientists," the volunteers who participate in spring and fall bird counts, feeder watches, Christmas Bird Counts, and the North American Breeding Bird Survey, and to the people who organize these activities each year and compile the results into the richest databases on animal populations in the world.

Thanks to the junior birders and to the YMOS for helping with local banding programs, participating in field research projects (including the Atlas project), and generally helping us share the excitement and rewards of birding with youngsters who represent to us some of the best things about the next generation.

Thanks to the educators and friends who are helping our juniors learn more about birds and bird conservation and, especially, thanks to the parents who so often rise well before dawn, drive long distances, and wait patiently for hours—and do this again and again to enable their children to participate in a hobby that we all hope will last a lifetime.

Thanks to the MOS for being an organization that has brought all of the above together for the purpose of enjoying birds, conserving Maryland's natural resources, and sharing the optimism that we can create a legacy that will be enjoyed by the next generation of birders and by generations yet to come.

As your President for another term, I am deeply grateful to be a part of all of this.

The Big Picture (continued from page 1)



White-faced Storm-Petrel photographed by George Jett in Worchester waters on August 22, 2008.

Bruce Peterjohn confirmed Rufous. One rare bird down. Next I headed to Pt. Lookout with friends to look for the King Eider reported from the Point Tobacco Christmas Bird Count; thanks to Jim Brighton, it was only a matter of time before the King Eider was in front of the lens. Next, Jim Stasz called and said "George, get up to the [Point Lookout] marina." Stasz did not say what the bird was; he wanted me to find it. I eventually saw the Eared Grebe. Click! Twenty down, 280 to go.

On January 2, I did some local photography, since Carol Gheblian was hosting a Yellow-throated Warbler and Bob Lukinic had three Baltimore Orioles in his yard. I picked up another 18 species that day. January 3, the coldest day of the year, found me sitting in a back yard near Annapolis, waiting for a beautiful male Painted Bunting. Then on to the coast for Harlequin Ducks, Northern Saw-whet Owl, etc. By January's end I was at 132.

There are too many chase stories and rare birds for one page in the *Yellowthroat*. Brief highlights include the Little Gull that Kye Jenkins reported from Back Bay, the summer Black-headed Gull that Fred Shaffer reported (was it three times I chased this animal?), the Mississippi Kites at Piscataway that Chris Ordiway called about, the Snowy Owl on Assateague that Dave Brinker asked if I was interested in, and the Connecticut Warbler that Mikey Lutmerding found in Charles. (This bird must hold the record for the longest-perching Connecticut in the world.)

I got lucky on a few occasions as well. Studying gulls at the frozen

ponds in Waldorf, I found a second-cycle California Gull on January 23. That bird stayed until dark but was not relocated the next morning in spite of diligent searching by quality birders—a new county record but no one to share it with. It also was a great asset to have Kyle Rambo arrange access to the Patuxent River Naval Air Station and its approachable grassland birds. How many calls did Mark Hoffman, Bill Hubick, Ed Boyd, and others make to get me onto another bird? Thanks to all who helped.

I made a couple of mistakes during the year; otherwise I think 310 would have been possible. I missed Golden Eagle because I did not sit at Dan's Rock or Sideling Hill during migration; my plan to get this species at



Northern Bobwhite photographed by George Jett at W. A. Vaughn WMA, Worchester Co, on July 16, 2008.

Blackwater was unsuccessful. Another mistake was spending the day in Charles County during a September tropical storm, looking for new county records instead of going to the inlet and hanging out with Marshall Iliff and others. I got a Pectoral Sandpiper; they got Sooty Tern and Parasitic Jaeger. So much for being loyal to your home county.

A handful of species, despite my best efforts, would not cooperate. Wilson's Phalarope, Black-billed Cuckoo, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, and Tennessee Warbler come to mind. September and October were the low points of my year, as I wondered if I would even reach 290. Fortunately, November came through big time with Common Eider, Long-eared

Owl, Northern Shrike, Western Kingbird, Lark Sparrow (#300), and Brewer's Blackbird.

My luck continued into December with Thayer's Gull, Eurasian Wigeon, and Black-legged Kittiwake. Finally, on Dec 22, I got a call from Lee Duer of the Waldorf Wild Bird center. He reported a hummingbird coming to a feeder in Prince Frederick; the next morning I photographed it just before I was to fly to Michigan for Christmas. The network continued to produce. My jaw literally dropped when David Holmes told me the bird was the first state record of an Allen's Hummingbird. That was species #307 for 2008. What a way to end the year. I will now sit back to see if some young hotshot wants to best that number.

If you want to see some of the images I took during 2008, you can—thanks to J.B. Churchill's help—check my web site (www.georgejett.net). I have also put together a PowerPoint program on the big photo year to give to interested organizations; contact me at [gmjett@comcast.net](mailto:gjmjett@comcast.net).

If you want to join the several dozen folks who contributed (including a stupendous anonymous match of \$5,000), it's not too late. Please contact Lindsay K. Shumate, Campaign Coordinator, American Bird Conservancy, P.O. Box 249, The Plains, VA 20198, or lshumate@abcbirds.org. (ABC is a registered non-profit organization and all donations are fully tax deductible.) Write your check to the **American Bird Conservancy** and note that it is for the Blue-billed Curassow project. Please help me raise more. Thanks.

—George M. Jett



Hooded Merganser photographed by George Jett at Liberty Lake, Carroll County on January 18, 2008.

MID-SHORE LANDOWNERS SUPPORT STUDENT RESEARCH

On January 30, Dr. Wayne Bell presented a Talbot County landowner, Ms. Margaret Delamater, with tangible proof of her contribution to science. It was the copy of an academic paper based on research that she and her neighbors made possible by opening their woodlots to a long-term ecological study conducted largely by students. Starting in 2004, students have inventoried bird species and correlated the numbers of species with the size of woodlot parcels at five locations in the Mid-Shore region. The researchers interpreted their findings in light of the theory of biogeography first espoused in the 1960s by ecologists Robert MacArthur and Edward O. Wilson.

Dr. Bell directs the research, initially conducted by three students of Centerville Middle School under the guidance of their teacher, *George Radcliffe*, and two undergraduate students at Washington College who used the project as part of their senior thesis. The first research paper derived from their data was presented at the 2005 international conference on Environmental Management of Enclosed Coastal Seas (EMECS) in Caen, France. All of the students attended the conference and are identified as co-authors on the peer-reviewed paper, which is being published as part of the conference proceedings.

The students demonstrated a high level of birding skill, identifying the various species by sight and sound. They used global positioning system (GPS) and geographic information system (GIS) technology, performed the calculations, tested their hypotheses, and prepared the paper.

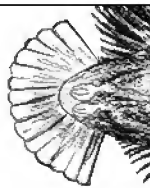
In making the presentation, Dr. Bell said, "Mrs. Delamater represents the best there is among landowners here and across Maryland. Without their consent the project would not have been possible and several promising young ecologists would not have had the chance to relate their love of birds to science. What wonderful friends they are as environmental stewards and, yes, as teachers."

—Cathy Cooper

Telling Tales

Bob Ringler, Jeff Culler, and I spent a couple of hours this afternoon [March 10] at Piney Run Park in Carroll County. After today's trip I would nominate Bob to play the Count on Sesame Street. A flock of Tundra Swans flew overhead and disappeared behind some trees. Bob said he got a count of 77 swans. Jeff had taken a picture of the flying V formation and later, when we counted the swans in the picture, there were 77.

—Joe Hanfman



BOARD BULLETINS

From the March 7, 2009 meeting of the MOS Board of Directors in Howard County.

- A new committee is developing MOS **policy on Alternative Energy**.
- Only 12 more species accounts to go for the **Atlas**.
- Many chapters have nominated sites for the **Birding Trail**; the committee is applying for grants to fund the project.
- To accommodate lean times, the FY 2010 **Budget** eliminates carry-over funds.
- The **Communications** group is working to update the MOS web site.
- **Conservation Committee** reps have asked Annapolis to repeal fast-track approval for new wind farms.
- **Investment** funds, previously handled separately for each of several MOS activities (Atlas, Education, Non-Designated, Operating, Research, Sanctuary, Scholarship), have been consolidated into a single account; the Treasurer will continue to track the details of each fund individually, and the Investment Committee will oversee performance of the consolidated account.
- The Board approved the slate presented by the **Nominating Committee**, and the current MOS officers will run for reelection in May.
- The Board approved a **Research Committee** proposal to fund a summer project to maximize data acquisition from Audubon's IBA program in Maryland. (See page 11.)
- MOS now holds title to the "Piscataway" **Sanctuary** in Prince George's County.
- With the Maine Audubon camp closed this year, the **Scholarship** program is on hiatus; the committee is working to develop alternatives for summer 2010.
- Full minutes of Board meetings will no longer appear in the **Yellowthroat**. Instead, you can find them on the MOS web page.



Birds of Note—by Les Roslund

- The winter of 2008/9 will long be remembered for the many sightings of individual SNOWY OWLS as well as for widespread reports of flocks of WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS throughout our region. Of the ten or more SNOWY OWL visits, two clearly deserve special mention. On Feb 10 Carol McCollough of Talbot County reported a SNOWY OWL at the Oxford Laboratory where she worked. Carol passed the word, and for the next nine days the village of Oxford played gracious host to many birders while the owl moved around amongst various roosting sites at the lab or on nearby houses. Village residents named this bird “Fred” and kept track of its movements so that visitors could just ask a resident and promptly learn where the bird was last seen. Fred’s reliable presence brought in writers and photographers from the local newspaper, leading to a front page story accompanied by an excellent photo. After seven days of fame, Fred decided he had been in Oxford long enough. He posed for an early evening photo on Feb 16 for Dave Palmer of Talbot County, then departed and was not seen again.
- This year even downtown DC shared in the SNOWY OWL festival. On Mar 10 Noah Kahn of Silver Spring, who works in downtown Washington, reported a SNOWY OWL on a building at the corner of L and 17th Sts, NW. For the next six days various observers succeeded in viewing this bird as it rested on buildings in that busy urban region. A nice story about the owl appeared in *The Washington Post*, along with an attractive photo. then, on Mar 16, Will McPhail of DC reported a SNOWY OWL perched on an apartment building at 20th and Kalorama Road. This owl’s markings differed from those of the bird shown in *The Washington Post* photo. So it seems there were two SNOWY OWLS in DC in early March.
- TRUMPETER SWANS marked with neck bands have been present in Maryland for the past several years. This year two groups of TRUMPETER SWANS showed up without neck bands, suggesting that they may be members of the next generation from swan restoration programs. The first reported sighting came from Dave Larkin of Harford County on Feb 8. Dave found two first-winter birds on the water at Lakeside Business Park in Edgewood, Harford County; these birds were still being seen as of Mar 21. Another group of TRUMPETER SWANS was reported by Dave Czaplak on Feb 22. Dave found four adult TRUMPETERS on the Potomac River near Violette’s Lock in Montgomery County. Regular sightings of these birds continued through Mar 17.



Harris's Sparrow first seen in by Ken Clark in Columbia, Maryland. Photograph by Nico Sarbanes.

- The spring migration of GOLDEN EAGLES at Dan’s Rock, Allegany Co, a phenomenon that was documented last year by David Brandes of Easton, PA, persisted in 2009. At midday on March 5, Mikey Lutmerding observed 19 GOLDEN EAGLES in little more than two hours. Alerted by Mikey, J. B. Churchill was able to join in for the last 9.
- There have been several very interesting “out-of-season” sightings of birds in our region. On Feb 3 Sean McCandless of Cecil County spotted a CLAY-COLORED SPARROW in a residential neighborhood close to Elkton. On Feb 9 and 10, a ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK visited a feeder at the home of Doug Bolt in Beltsville, Prince George’s County. Another ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK was heard Mar 21 at Warrior Mountain WMA in Allegany County by Joe McDaniel of Garrett County. Also on Mar 21, a quite early LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH was seen by Lin Just and her husband along Sligo Creek in Silver Spring, Montgomery County.
- Shortly before press time, a winter highlight bird species showed up in Columbia, Howard County. This was a young male HARRIS’S SPARROW; Ken Clark of Columbia discovered it amongst the group of sparrows at a feeding site that he maintains near his workplace. Ken first noticed its presence around Mar 15; it was still present as of early April.



HARFORD COUNTY Yellowstone in Winter

I traveled to Yellowstone in January with Naturalist Journeys for winter birds and mammals. The coldest was -15 degrees; although we had to scrape the inside of the car windows, this was balmy for the Lamar Valley. Hardy American Dippers dove in from the snow banks of the open streams. Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches and Pine Grosbeaks came in to a feeder. We saw a few Trumpeter Swans outside the park; resident swans are declining in the Yellowstone area). Majestic bull elk and frosty bison were common along the one plowed park road. Ravens, magpies, and eagles were a sign of wolves; one kill had 3 Golden and 2 Bald Eagles feeding together. Although we saw or heard wolves every day, they were typically distant, but the howling was magical; we had one very close encounter that was a once-in-a-lifetime moment. Pronghorn, bighorn sheep, moose, coyotes, and otters rounded out our mammal list. Scenic views of wide-open, snow-filled valleys at sunrise and sunset filled my camera chip and warmed me inside.

—Lynn Feryus

I told everyone I was “going somewhere south for the winter.” I went south all the way to Antarctica! Flying to Buenos Aires, then Ushuaia, I boarded *Minerva*. We sailed through the infamous Drake Passage, some of the roughest seas in the world, when it was a “Drake Lake.” I marveled at the deep blue color of massive

icebergs. Our landing sites on the Antarctic Peninsula were snow-covered craggy mountains with glaciers falling to the sea. At Deception Island, I joined the South Polar Hot Tub Club, dipping into the Antarctic waters and soaking close to shore in the warm waters heated from thermal springs below. Other landings included Half-Moon Island, Elephant Island, S. Georgia, and finally the Falklands. During the 17-day pelagic trip, Wandering, Southern Royal, Black-browed, Grey-headed, and Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses followed the ship. Pintada (Cape) Petrels have got to be one of the prettiest seabirds. I was able to hold and release a Common Diving Petrel which had flown onto the ship during the night. I saw 55 life birds for the trip, but the best were the penguins. Standing in the midst of tens of thousands of penguins is awesome.

—Jean Wheeler

HOWARD COUNTY Ivory Gull Road Trip

On Monday, 1/26/2009, *Joe Hanfman* and I headed for Massachusetts in search of the Ivory Gull that was being observed in Plymouth, MA. Leaving Columbia at 12:01 a.m., we drove through the night, making great time thanks to light traffic and no construction delays. We arrived in Plymouth by 7:00 a.m. and were promptly greeted with a bitter cold 5-degree temperature. After an hour search, we finally located the Ivory Gull in the Plymouth Harbor parking. We were indeed fortunate, as the bird had not been seen since mid-morning the day before and was consequently missed by many visitors. The Ivory Gull put on a wonderful display as it circled the parking lot twice, then perched on a gangplank railing alongside a mixture of Herring and Ring-billed Gulls. The parking lot was abuzz with birders, and we bumped into *Stan and Elaine Arnold* from Anne Arundel County. We reluctantly left the area at 8:45 a.m., having thoroughly enjoyed observing this wondrous visitor from the high Arctic. The drive home was only one hour longer than the drive to Plymouth; we

got around New York City with just a slight delay. We arrived back in Columbia at 4:45 p.m., having been behind the wheel 15 hours while driving a little over 900 miles. Our time in Plymouth was an hour and forty-five minutes, including a quick side trip to that famous rock. The trip cost \$100 in gas and tolls—when split two ways it was a very reasonable price to pay to see the rare and priceless Ivory Gull.

—Jeff Culler

Congratulations to two young birders for winning the Howard County Bird Club’s 2008 essay contest. Thirteen-year-old Sarah Vogel and nine-year-old Andrew Colangelo wrote about their favorite birding experiences and their favorite birds. While Sarah favors the Osprey, Andrew likes to watch Red-shouldered Hawks soar through his backyard. Both contestants received backpacks containing binoculars and field guides supplied by MOS. To read the essays, go to www.howardbirds.org and look for “Backpacks for Youth.”

—Kate Tufts

KENT COUNTY

The Kent County Bird Club lost a long-time member in January, when *Dr. Yasuo Takahashi* passed away at age 83. He and his wife, *Betty*, became members soon after retiring to Heron Point in Chestertown, and Yasuo was a regular at our monthly meetings and occasional field trips. He particularly delighted in seeing Harlequin Ducks and Harbor Porpoises at Indian River Inlet on one of our Ocean City trips. Besides birding, Dr. Takahashi kept active with tai chi, bonsai, bike-riding, poke-boating, photography, and Washington College continuing education classes.

Participants on the 14 March Pickering Creek trip were delighted to be joined by former President *Peter Mann*, taking a break from a pathologists’ convention in Baltimore, where he and Nancy Everds had traveled from their new home in Seattle. He was happy to see cardinals again and added a unique west-coast

perspective to sightings of common birds like Song Sparrow and Red-tailed Hawk and rare-to-easterners Golden Eagle.

—Nancy Martin

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Montgomery Bird Club held its Annual Social at Audubon Naturalist Society's Woodend mansion on March 13. The 64 members in attendance ate excellent Smokey Glen Farm barbecue, shared (a select few) bird photos, and honored *Howard Lefkowitz*. Best known outside Montgomery for his help with MOS automation, Howard was recognized for his service as chapter treasurer, webmaster, and managing editor of the latest edition of "A Birder's Guide to Montgomery County, Maryland."

Tom Marko moved to Okinawa, Japan, last fall, but he keeps an eye on the MDOsprey listserver. Tom recently wrote to say, "It's funny from my perspective, reading about the excitement generated by the Tufted Duck and Eurasian Wigeon, since both of these ducks are as common as Mallards here in Japan." Tom's Japan bird list already stands at 138, with 93 on Okinawa, and he is looking forward to migration to add some new ones.

One of the county's prime birding sites—which has been nominated as an Important Bird Area—is the McKee-Beshers Wildlife Management Area along the Potomac River. Use of this versatile area of wooded strips, shallow impoundments, and small fields planted with bird-food grains is shared by many outdoor organizations. In addition to birders, another regular user is the Potomac Chapter of the North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association. For the past five years, working with the Department of Natural Resources, the Association has spearheaded a clean-up of trash and unwanted dumping by those who use McKee-Beshers as their trash dump. MBC members joined in the clean-up on Saturday, March 28.

A number of Montgomery birders fled the Washington winter to see birds in exotic climes. *Joy and Mike Bowen* spent an eventful 3 weeks in Northern India, a Field Guides trip led by Terry Stevenson. Birding highlights included seeing 5 endangered Indian Skimmers, ticking all 5 Northern Indian Parakeet species, spotting 28 species of raptors—with 50+ Steppe Eagles moving away from a storm in the Himalayan foothills being especially memorable, and watching a flock of 80 Painted Sandgrouse coming in to a pond to drink at dusk. In the non-avian department, they saw 3 tigers and 2 leopards at Ranthambhore and another tiger in Corbett National Park, and they marveled at the sheer beauty of the Taj Mahal.

Helen Patton went to Antarctica (including the Falkland Islands and South Georgia), plus a pre-trip to Argentina and a post-trip to Chile. The most spectacular birds she saw were, by locale: in Argentina, a pair of Magellanic Woodpeckers at Ushuaia National Park; in the Antarctic, Cape Petrel, two Emperor Penguins seen on ice floes, and "a very odd bird called a Sheathbill;" in Chile, an Andean Condor and Fire-eyed Diucon. Even though this trip lived up to its billing as "a trip of a lifetime," in February Helen dashed off to Morocco with *Cyndie Loeper*. Their favorite birds there (talk about a change in venue!) were Bald Ibis, Cream-colored Courser, and Pharaoh Eagle-Owl. Morocco turned out to be a fascinating country, Helen reports, well worth a visit.

—Chris Wright

SOUTHERN MARYLAND

Tyler Bell and *Jane Kostenko*, from California, Maryland (in St. Mary's County), have been awarded the American Birding Association (ABA) Claudia Wilds Distinguished Service Award. The Claudia Wilds Award honors ABA members who have given long and useful service to the organization, either paid or as a volunteer. This is a way for ABA to recognize those individuals who have

devoted many hours and considerable energy to the good of the organization. The award was named for Claudia Wilds because of her many contributions to ornithology and to ABA. Tyler and Jane have assisted ABA in organizing 14 consecutive conventions, as well as six conferences. They clearly have earned this prestigious award for outstanding service to ABA. Congratulations to Jane and Tyler for a great job of supporting ABA. Tyler and Jane will be presented the award in late April at the ABA convention in Corpus Christi.

—George Jett

TRI-COUNTY

Winter Weather

As if this winter wasn't cold enough, in early February *Betty Pitney* headed to Duluth, Minnesota, where the days averaged from -6 degrees to a balmy 14. But of course birders don't go north for the weather, and the birds cooperated. Northern Hawk Owls and Black-backed Woodpeckers were checked off, and for the first time she saw a Boreal Owl on her yearly trip. The Lake Superior area also produced hundreds of Common Redpolls with a few Hoary Redpolls plus good numbers of Pine Grosbeaks.

Back on the Eastern Shore, most of our members hibernated during the unusually cold winter, with very small numbers coming out for our field trips. Then came a Saturday in early March with predictions of highs in the 60s, and 26 members and friends showed up for a trip along the Nanticoke River. One guest even brought her opera glasses. The trip was great, but the conclusion was that our members need to toughen up a bit and not be such fair-weather birders.

—Carol Broderick

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Led by *Mark Abdy*, 12 enthusiastic birders, 9 from the Washington County bird club, took a week-long birding trip to Costa Rica. The visit

Chapter Chatter *(continued from page 7)*

White-throated Mountaingem photographed by Bruce Field in Costa Rica.

centered on two areas. We spent the first 4 days in the Caribbean lowland rainforest, where we saw Crested Guan, Rufous Motmot, Montezuma Oropendola, Great Curassow, Great Green Macaw, wood-creepers, antbirds, flycatchers, toucans, parrots, hummingbirds, and tanagers (not to mention the deadly snakes, poisonous “bullet” ants, and tree frogs). Beyond birding, highlights included a visit to the Tirimbina Reserve with a lecture on bat behavior and mistnetting activity, a leisurely rafting expedition down the Puerto Viejo River, and a visit to a Dole banana plantation. (Who knew that bananas take 9 months to mature, and that each plant produces only one bunch and is then cut down?) We then traveled to the southern oak-forest mountain region (8,000 ft), where we saw (among others) the Resplendent Quetzal, Ochre-bellied Flycatcher, Collared Redstart, Silky Flycatcher, Yellowish Flycatcher, Flame-throated Warbler, Roadside Hawk, and hummingbirds almost too numerous to mention, but which included the Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer, White-throated Mountaingem, and Magnificent, Volcano, and Scintillant Hummingbirds. All told, the group saw over 246 different species of birds, most of them life birds for many of us. Some of the group are already planning a return trip.

—Bruce Field

First Annual (Hopefully) YMOS Birdathon

by Wayne Bell

The first light of dawn painted the eastern sky with gentle pastels. Frost, seemingly as thick as a light snowfall, covered the reeds. The air was just below freezing and our breath made little clouds that dissipated into the fading night. We were at Truitt’s Landing in Worcester County, a place remote by Maryland standards, with only one distant light to remind us of the proximity of a much busier world. We were members of the YMOS high school team in training, raising funds to support our participation as representatives of the MOS in the 2009 World Series of Birding: **Amanda Spears**, captain (sophomore, Queen Anne’s County HS), with teammates **Christina Brinster** (junior, Kent Island HS), and **Zach Gent** (sophomore, QAC HS), coach **Wayne Bell**, and YMOS chair **George Radcliffe**. But I’ll be first to admit that such details were lost in the moment. We were here for the birds.

As the sky grew lighter, the nearby cacophony of Snow Geese became feathers and wings that erupted into a flock that rose, wheeled, and departed, perhaps for the last time, to continue its journey north. The ensuing quiet was soon broken by a conversant King Rail, whose repeated “bumps” catalyzed responses from nearby Clapper and Virginia Rails. In the new light of daybreak, several Marsh Wrens appeared in the tussocks just a few feet away. After sunrise we had great looks at two Nelson’s Sharp-tailed Sparrows, which beckoned us deeper into the marsh. By the time we departed, we had logged 27 species. It was an auspicious beginning to two great days.

We took the back way from Truitt’s landing toward Ocean City, enabling us to stop on command to pick through every flock of sparrows and blackbirds and take a second look at

every raptor. We were rewarded by being able to tick off lots of species from our “must see” list as well as less common birds like Vesper Sparrow. Ocean City Inlet gave us an appropriately great look at a Great Cormorant in all his grizzled glory, plus more fleeting but still convincing glimpses of female Common and King Eiders. Bayside produced the cooperative Eared Grebe that had returned this winter, a Red-necked Grebe lifer for each of the kids, and the first of three Lesser Black-backed Gulls we were to see this day. Elliott’s Pond in West Ocean City helped us with all dabbling ducks except Blue-winged Teal, a species that eluded us on both days. Our last good look at shorebirds was from the reconstructed dock at Eagle’s Landing campground, where we were able to pick out Willet, Dunlin, and Black-bellied Plover.

Then we headed West, getting Wild Turkey en route and American White Pelican at Blackwater. Our attempts to see some rare ducks along the Cambridge waterfront proved fruitless, so we boogied to Pickering Creek to catch its specialties just after sundown. Alas, the woodcocks were all peented out, but we did manage to hear the three common owl species before calling it quits. We spent the night at the Bell residence in Easton, reflecting on the fact that just after noon on the first day we had recorded 101 species. The next day was to be a mop-up, a quest for specialties.

The Bell feeders responded early next morning with Pine Siskin and Purple Finch. Two hours later, the Harris’s extensive feeder operations at High Banks had given us Hermit Thrush, White-breasted Nuthatch, and Brown Creeper. I recall telling the kids in training that it was the second look at seemingly routine birds that often

produced rarities. As if on cue, we took a second look at a small kettle of gulls right overhead. One was so white as to look transparent against the clear blue sky. As it banked it revealed gray wing tips where other gulls would be black—Iceland Gull! Later, we took another second look at a presumed Bald Eagle that was soaring with a bunch of Turkey Vultures. But this one had a white tail base, white patches at the base of the primaries, and a golden sheen on the upper wing surfaces—Golden Eagle! In early afternoon, we hooked up with Danny Poet to see the Long-eared Owl that has been frequenting a site on private lands in Queen Anne's County. Bingo! A four-owl Birdathon!

We ended the day in a quest for grassland specialties at Chino Farms in northern Queen Anne's County. Alas, of the five possible species, only a flock of White-crowned Sparrows cooperated. That turned out to be species number 132. Yes, we did

miss six on our "must-see" list. Some proved elusive to other Eastern Shore birders as well, notably Blue-winged Teal, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Northern Bobwhite. In other cases like Pileated Woodpecker, we were just in the wrong place at the wrong time. But how on earth did we miss Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Cedar Waxwing? Veteran birders know that any venture results in missing some common species; they are the exception that proves the rule. On the other hand, how can one quibble with three rails, two eiders, two eagles, and four owls?

Thanks to 18 generous pledges from respondents to announcements posted in the *Yellowthroat* and on-line to MDOsprey and the Talbot Bird Club hotline, we raised more than \$550 for the YMOS. After deducting two species for each of six the must-see birds missed, our net for fund-raising was 120 species, with the per-species pledge doubled for each one over 100. Thanks to

Kevin Graff, Karen and Bill Harris, and Joyce Bell for helping identify hotspots, making us welcome at their feeders, and hosting us for dinner and a good night's sleep. Thanks, too, to Danny Poet for responding so helpfully to our spur-of-the-moment request to make it a four-owl day. And very special thanks to Sharon Brinster, who sacrificed her Saturday to drive us on Day 1 and subordinated herself to the repeated commands of "Stop! Stop! Back up!" from the youngsters, without complaint and with genuine interest in the results. All of us agreed that these were the best two days of birding we have ever had in Maryland. We feel ready for New Jersey and the World Series. But we will not soon forget the experiences we have had and the company we have kept in getting there this year.

50-Year Members To Be Honored

For the past several years, the Virginia Society of Ornithology has honored its 50-year members at its annual meetings. After Don Messersmith was thus recognized last year, with a special 50-year pin and honorary status, he proposed a similar program for MOS, and the Board unanimously approved. Beginning with this year's conference, each year MOS will recognize and honor persons who have who have been continuous members of MOS for 50 years or more.

To identify the first round of potential 50-year honorees, Don, the MOS Historian, scoured the earliest rosters and monthly listings of new members in the oldest issues of *Maryland Birdlife* and compared names with current membership lists. In doubtful cases, he wrote to individuals, "and all have responded," he reports.

The names of 18 "Honorary Members" will be announced at the conference in Frederick in May. John Malcolm has designed a special pin and certificate, which will be presented to those present and sent to those who can not attend. They will also be exempt from paying dues.

COUNTING BIRDS FOR CONSERVATION: A SUMMARY OF BIRD BLITZ 2008

BY DAVID YEANY AND DAVID CURSON

In 2008, 27 volunteers, most of them MOS members, participated in 33 Bird Blitz surveys at 10 sites across Maryland in an effort to identify areas of bird conservation importance. Bird Blitz is a breeding-season bird count targeting species at risk, and survey results are used to determine if a site supports threshold populations of these species that will qualify it as an Important Bird Area. Results from the 2007 Bird Blitz surveys, reported earlier (*Yellowthroat*, March-April 2008) led to the identification of five new IBAs: Prettyboy IBA, South River Greenway IBA, Lower C&O Canal IBA, Tuckahoe Creek IBA, and Idylwild IBA. (Details of these IBAs can be found on Audubon MD-DC's website: <http://mddc.audubon.org>.)

Below is a summary of the results from each site, with count totals for some of the at-risk species that were the primary targets. Many participants also counted secondary target species, accumulating data on bird species assemblages representative of different habitat types, information that further assists the review of IBA nominations.

Lower C&O Canal, Washington County

Volunteers: 1

Bird counts: 1

After this site was identified an IBA in February 2008, IBA Technical Review Committee member David Smith set out to determine whether the site should include the Canal from Harper's Ferry to Antietam Creek. His June survey recorded 17 Louisiana Waterthrush, 13 Prothonotary Warbler, and 11 Wood Thrush along this 14-km stretch, similar to densities in lower portions of the Canal within the IBA. Based on these results, this portion of the Canal was added to the IBA in February 2009 and the boundary of this site is currently being mapped.

Catoctin Mountain, Frederick County

Volunteers: 3

Bird counts: 2

Surveys of the Owens Creek area and Thurmont Vista documented 4 Cerulean Warbler, 7 Worm-eating Warbler, and 32 Wood Thrush. More surveys from this area are needed in 2009. Participants: David Smith, Mike Welch, John Christy.

Monocacy Grasslands, Frederick & Carroll Counties

Volunteers: 5

Bird counts: 4

Bird Blitzes in the grasslands between US Rte 15 in

Frederick County and MD Rte 97 in Carroll County led to the identification of the Monocacy Grasslands IBA. Threshold population levels were surpassed for Red-headed Woodpecker (19), Dickcissel (13), and Grasshopper Sparrow (129), with 16 Wood Thrush recorded as well. This IBA was identified not only for these three at-risk species but also for diverse assemblage of grassland birds recorded by Bird Blitz, including American Kestrel, Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Bobolink, and Eastern Meadowlark. Participants: Jim Wilkinson, Carol Wilkinson, David Smith, Mike Welch, Barbara Gearhart.

Indian Springs Wildlife Management Area,

Washington County

Volunteers: 2

Bird counts: 5

Dave Weesner led significant efforts throughout the Indian Springs WMA. The survey covered Blairs Valley Road, Bear Pond Hollow, Hickory Ridge, Catholic Church Road, Mooresville Road, Tectonville Road, and Kuhns Ridge Road. Threshold populations were found for Worm-eating Warbler (23) and Louisiana Waterthrush (20). In addition, Forest-Interior Dwelling Species (FIDS) and shrubland birds included 8 Kentucky Warbler, 59 Wood Thrush, 5 Prairie Warbler, and 3 Northern Bobwhite. An IBA nomination for this site is in progress. Participants: Dave Weesner, Pol Heiney.

Mattawoman Creek, Charles County

Volunteers: 2

Bird counts: 1

Smallwood State Park was surveyed once in late June. The count recorded 4 Kentucky Warbler, 3 Prairie Warbler, 5 Wood Thrush, and 1 Bald Eagle. More work is still needed in this area, with Bird Blitz surveys planned for 2009. Participants: Jean Artes, Dan Haas.

Nanticoke watershed, Dorchester & Wicomico Counties

Volunteers: 9

Bird counts: 9

Charles Stegman led the way for bird counts in this sizeable area of deciduous swamp and upland loblolly pine forests. Extensive coverage of the area yielded counts that exceeded IBA thresholds for Worm-eating Warbler (22), Prothonotary Warbler (83), and Chuck-will's-widow (61). Other primary target species with high counts included Prairie Warbler (25), Northern Bobwhite (12), and Whip-

poor-will (7). These counts, together with DNR records for 17 Bald Eagle nests and a nightjar survey by Mike Walsh that found 30 Chuck-will's-widows in southwestern Wicomico County, identified Nanticoke Valley as an IBA. Participants: Charles Stegman, Jean Fry, Larry Fry, David Curson, Ron Gutberlet, Pete Zerhusen, Charles Vaughn, Karen Harris, Bill Harris.

Savage River Area, Garrett County

Volunteers: 5

Bird counts: 5

Rob and Wendy Olsson led the way, covering New Germany State Park and trails throughout Savage River State Forest. Surveys yielded small numbers of Black-billed Cuckoo, Wood Thrush, Alder Flycatcher, Golden-winged Warbler, and Blackburnian Warbler. Bird Blitzes are scheduled for this area in 2009. Participants: Rob Olsson, Wendy Olsson, Laura Mitchell, Dan Ian, Travis Stotts.

South Mountain, Washington & Frederick Counties

Volunteers: 2

Bird counts: 1

A late June survey along Thurston Griggs Trail yielded 5 Worm-eating Warbler and 4 Wood Thrush. Participants: Rob Olsson, Wendy Olsson.

Youghiogheny Valley, Garrett County

Volunteers: 1

Bird counts: 4

Scott Berglund surveyed Mt. Nebo WMA, Garrett State Forest, and Herrington Manor State Park in mid-June. These counts yielded 10 Blackburnian Warbler as well as small numbers of Alder Flycatcher, Wood Thrush, Canada Warbler, and American Woodcock. Bird Blitzes are planned for this area in 2009.

Zekiah Swamp, Charles County

Volunteers: 2

Bird counts: 1

Leslie Starr and Joe Turner conducted a late June survey of Allen's Fresh via kayak. This count turned up 7 Bald Eagle, 4 Prothonotary Warbler, and small numbers of Wood Thrush and Louisiana Waterthrush. Zekiah Swamp will be targeted with Bird Blitzes in 2009.

Many thanks to the MOS members who took part in Bird Blitz 2008. Data from these surveys allowed us to identify two new IBAs: Nanticoke IBA in Dorchester and Wicomico Counties and Monocacy Grasslands IBA in Frederick and Carroll Counties. Even so, there are still many areas for which data are lacking.

BIRD WITH A PURPOSE: BIRD BLITZ 2009!

This year the Maryland-DC IBA Program is expanding the Bird Blitz effort with the hiring of an IBA Program Assistant, David Yeany, who will act as Bird Blitz Coordinator. This 6-month position has been made possible by generous funding provided by a MOS Research Grant, a State Wildlife Grant from Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and an Innovation Grant from the Toyota/Audubon Together Green partnership. David comes to the IBA Program fresh from completing his Masters in Applied Ecology and Conservation Biology at Frostburg State University, where he conducted thesis research on the bird community of Finzel Swamp in Garrett County.

Please take part in Bird Blitz this summer. In an effort to fill some conspicuous gaps in the statewide network of IBAs, Bird Blitz 2009 surveys will focus on western and southern Maryland at the sites listed below. However, there are also a number of potential IBA in other parts of Maryland that still require the attention of Bird Blitzers.

WESTERN MARYLAND

Youghiogheny Valley, Garrett County

Garrett State Forest, Garrett County

Mt. Nebo Wildlife Management Area, Garrett County

The Glades, Garrett County

Backbone Mountain, Garrett County

Savage River State Forest, Garrett County

Western Allegany Grasslands, Allegany County

Dan's Mountain, Allegany County

SOUTHERN MARYLAND

St. Mary's River, St. Mary's County

Zekiah Swamp, Charles County

Nanjemoy Area, Charles County

Mattawoman Creek Area, Charles County

Piscataway Park, Prince George's County

For more information contact:

David Yeany

IBA Program Assistant

814-221-4361 or dyeany2@gmail.com

or

David Curson

Director of Bird Conservation

410-558-2473 or dcurson@audubon.org

Bird Blitz survey instructions and other materials, including IBA criteria, are available at Audubon MD-DC's website: <http://mddc.audubon.org>.

MARYLAND LIST REPORT, 2008

Whenever anyone adds a new species to their MD Life List, that has to rank as an exciting event. But 2008 saw some really interesting species that have to be celebrated as great in their own right: Sabine's Gull, Allen's Hummingbird, Western Meadowlark, Wilson's Plover, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Lark Sparrow, Snowy Owls in abundance, both Red and White-winged Crossbills, and Common Redpoll.

Additionally, there were some awesome records set or equaled in 2008. First, there are the **FIRST** two members of the Maryland 400 Club! Congratulations to Paul O'Brien (401 species in MD) and Jim Stasz (400 species). Then, how about George Jett's Big Maryland Photo Year? He snapped 307 species last year in Maryland. . . pretty amazing, when you consider that just seeing 300 species is a remarkable challenge in our fair state! I bet you didn't know there was a hard-fought DC Big Year going on last year either, all in an attempt to beat the prior big-year tally of 202 species seen by Paul Pisano in 2003. Gary Allport and Paul Pisano went head-to-head all year long, and both of them broke the previous record, Gary with 214 species and Paul with 210. (See page opposite.) Finally, Jim Stasz managed to tie his previous MD Big Year record of 330 species, a record not approached since his previous count of 330 species in 2000. Wow, what a year!

In the **MD State Life List Category**, we now have 95 people from our active reporting list claiming tallies of 300 or better, the so-called 300 Club. Mark Hoffman lags only 1 species out of the new 400 Club, while Paul Pisano, at 387 species, lays claim to the fourth position on the state list. For 2008, we saw seven birders breaking 300 species.

Top birder in the **District of Columbia** is still Rob Hilton, with 271 species, with Paul Pisano just 4 species behind him. As mentioned earlier, Gary Allport saw 214 species in 2008, topping the annual tally and setting a Big DC Year record that is going to be very difficult to break.

The **Total Tick Category** (a count of all species seen, totaled up across all 23 counties) continues to garner more adherents—up to 34 this year. Jim Stasz still sits atop this heap, with his count of 6,192 species, an average of just over 269 species in each county. Bob Ringler and Matt Hafner are in second and third places, both now in the 5,000+ species category. Bill Hubick had the highest **Total Tick 2008** count, with 3,233, followed by Jim Green (2,964 species) and Stan Arnold (2,746 species).

Jim Stasz remains the owner of the **County Close-Out Category**, with 182 species seen in every one of Maryland's 23 counties. Following him are John Hubbell (138 close-outs) and Bob Ringler (132). Over the course of just this past year, Bill Hubick, Jim Green, and Dave Powell had the most annual close-outs.

The **Birds Photographed in Maryland Category** continues of interest. George Jett is at the pinnacle, with 374 species, but Mark Hoffman has come out of the closet for the first time to report his tally of 362 species and his vow to go after "some of the easy species I missed earlier." Is this a gauntlet being tossed down? Only time will tell. Accompanying George's amazing 2008 tally of 307 species photographed are Dave Brennenman's count of 119 and June Tveekrem's tally of 50.

In the **Maryland Yard List Category**, Harry Armistead and Jim Stasz continue to hold the top two positions, with 267 and 219 species, respectively. Jeff Shenot is coming on strong, with 215 species; Jeff also led the 2008 tally, with 173 species in his productive PG County yard. Norm and Fran Saunders are inching closer to the 200-species tally for their yard in West Ocean City. Hopefully 2009 will be the year!

The **MD Work/Other Category** is still topped by Kyle Rambo, with a remarkable 295 species on the grounds of the Patuxent River Naval Air Station. Patty Craig has 266 species at Point Lookout State Park and Dave Webb has 224 at Aberdeen Proving Grounds.

The **District of Columbia Home/Work/Other Category** is led by Gary Allport, who has 94 species in his NW DC yard. Norm Saunders tallies 89 species from 15 or so years of rambling around the parks of Capitol Hill, while Michael Jennison counts 76 species in his DC yard.

I'll let you explore the 23 Maryland County lists of listers on your own. (Go to <http://www.mdosprey.org>, then click on 2008 List Report.) Watch especially for the 8 or so names that keep repeating from one county to the next. Some might say they are the oil companies' best friends!

Well, that wraps it up for another year! Thanks all of you for your submissions and I wish Good Birding to each and every one of you in 2009!

—Norm Saunders
List Report Compiler

THE DC BIG YEAR

I have been keen to see over 200 species in DC in the time I am living here, and I was hoping to get my DC Life List to that figure by the end of 2007 but fell well short after barren birding in late Autumn and early Winter. So, with renewed gusto I flung myself into DC birding in early '08 and on into the Spring season. By the middle of May I had crossed the threshold into DC Life 200-dom and was comparing notes with Paul Pisano, in an idle moment in the Maintenance Yard, when he encouraged me to tot up my year list. I can only guess now that he rather wishes he hadn't asked!

Having caught up with some good DC-life birds, such as Cackling Goose, Rough-legged Hawk, Franklin's Gull, and Clay-colored Sparrow in the course of the first few months of the year, the DC Year List did show potential. I was a few species ahead of Paul at that time and fully expected him to reel me in, but as the year progressed it turned into quite a slugging match between us, spending a lot of enjoyable time in the field together, and me chasing, and luckily mostly seeing, the good birds he has a habit of finding. Paul is one of the most able birders I have had the honor of joining in the field, and his application and tenacity were amazing at times; especially noteworthy was his full-day vigil at the end of Hains Point in the pouring rain in TS Hanna to yield Sooty and Common Tern (both birds I still need for DC).

I spent some time travelling in October and fully expected my still extant but slender lead to be overhauled whilst away, but my luck held and as November came we were both on the threshold of the MOS-listed "previous maximum" for the DC Year—Paul's own 202 in 2003—and unlike 2007, we enjoyed a good late-Fall run of Great Cormorant, Black and then Surf Scoters on Election Day to head into the low 200s.

I was by this stage regretting having missed some relatively easy birds in the early part of the year, such as Louisiana Waterthrush, American Woodcock, Horned Lark, Pintail, Redhead, Wild Turkey, and Glossy Ibis, all birds that I had not made the effort to see when thoughts of a DC Year List were far from my mind; Paul had, of course, neatly tidied up nearly all of them. So the last six weeks of the year were quite a head-to-head between us as good birds continued to come—somehow I managed to keep a few species in hand. The Snow Bunting at Kenilworth Park in

late November which we found together (along with Rob Hilton and Greg Butcher) and the first of three Kumlien's Gulls in DC in three weekends both came at this time and were nominations for "DC Bird of the Year" for me.

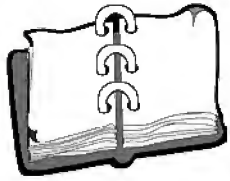
My final moments of fortune came on the DC CBC in mid-December. I bumped into a flighty White-winged Scoter (DC Year # 213) on the Anacostia first thing in the morning, then missed a much needed Great Horned Owl at Hickey Hill in the Arboretum. Finally, in a somehow typically bittersweet twist for Paul, he found a pair of Redheads whilst we were at Hains Point together late in the afternoon, taking me to 214 for the year. Had it been an equally likely pair of Canvasbacks in that scaup flock—which he needed and I didn't—then we would have ended the year nearer to a dead heat; and that would have been a just and fair outcome in my view.

As it was Paul was able to claw back the-owl-on-the-hill in the last few days of the year but by 31st December I was amazed to find that there was still the narrowest of gaps remaining.

Paul and I have not had a chance to review our lists together since the end of the year, and we plan to do so soonest, but I know that there are at least nine and possibly up to twelve species that he saw that I did not in 2008, giving a DC total of 223-226 as our collective DC Year List. In addition, there are at least four other species that were seen that we both missed, so 230 was theoretically possible.

I believe that it is Dave Czaplak's 1983 total of 240 that stands firmly as the highest ever DC Year List, an amazing achievement, and what with the loss of habitats in DC over the last 25 years, especially wetlands, I don't think that total will ever be surpassed. But, that withstanding, I think it is fair to say that we accounted ourselves well in 2008 to set what might be the "Modern Day DC Year" with two lists of 210 and over. Still, I don't think either one of us is about to do the same thing again any time soon!

—Gary Allport



MOS Calendar

May-June 2009

Friday, May 1

MEETING. Anne Arundel. *Bill Herald*, owner of the Wild Bird Center in W Annapolis, will present "Five Reasons Why Even Real Birders Can Enjoy Backyard Birds: Attracting, Feeding, and Caring for Wild Birds." 8 PM at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville.

MEETING. Harford. Program TBA. 7 PM at the Churchville Presbyterian Church, 2844 Churchville Rd, Churchville. Contact Russ Kovach at 443-386-4787 or Russell.Kovach@gmail.com for more info.

Washington. Sideling Hill and Surrounding Area. For more info and to register for this popular trip, call Dave Weesner at 717-498-0347.

Saturday, May 2

Baltimore. Halethorpe Ponds. Diverse habitat of this little-birded area includes the river, two freshwater ponds, floodplain woods, and a power line cut. We'll look for Warbling Vireo, both orioles, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Osprey, Bald Eagle, pheasant, and an assortment of warblers. Meet 7:30 AM at Nursery Rd P&R. Leader: Joel Martin, 410-744-9211 or jcdlmartin@aol.com.

Baltimore. Soldiers Delight. Warblers, flycatchers, and tanagers are featured as spring migration heats up in this globally rare ecosystem. Meet 7:30 AM. [From I-695 Beltway exit 18 Liberty Rd, go west 4 miles, bear right onto Deer Park Rd just before traffic light and water tower, go 2 miles to historical marker, overlook, and gravel lot on left.] Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6849 or oriolekec1@comcast.net.

Frederick. C&O Canal Walk. We will go from Point of Rocks to Lander for migrating warblers. Be

sure to do your neck exercises beforehand. Meet at Baker Park at 6:30 AM. Call Kathy Calvert at 301-698-1298 for further info.

Harford. First Annual Epic Birding Contest. To add a little challenge and excitement to your usual field trip experience, test your skills as a birder by entering this casual event. Sign up to be a team leader or team member at the May 1 Club meeting or arrive early to sign up at Rock Run Mill. Not a top birder? Never participated in a birding contest before? Not to worry, all skill levels welcome. Come join the fun. Teams will be balanced at a brief organizational meeting held just before the official start. Meet 6:30 AM at Susquehanna SP, Rock Run Mill. A rally/celebration will be held shortly after the event at the Laurrapin Grille in Havre de Grace. Inclement weather date, Sun, May 3. Contact Tom Gibson, 410-734-4135 or gibsonlld@aol.com, for more info.

Howard. Big Day. All-day listing extravaganza Limit:12. Plan to spend the day hiking around the county in search of as many species as possible. All types of footwear needed. Bring food and drinks. Brief lunch stop planned. Facilities in some spots. Call Bonnie Ott to sign up at 410-461-3361.

Patuxent. North Tract Night Trip for Whip-poor-will. (Tentative.) Contact Fred Fallon, 410-286-8152, for further details.

Tri-County. Pickering Creek. This 400-acre sanctuary is a working farm with meadows, mature forests, and tidal and non-tidal wetlands. Meet 7:30 AM in Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art parking lot on S Schumaker Dr on Beaglin Park Dr in

H Indicates Field Trip

Salisbury. Contact leader, Carol Broderick, 410-742-8920, for more details.

Sunday, May 3

Baltimore. Cylburn Nature Walk. 2 hrs. Continuing in a series of casual spring walks. Watch spring progress with a delightful variety of flowers, trees, and bushes along Cylburn's nature trails. Expect to find a variety of migrant and resident birds. No designated leader. Meet 8:30 AM at mansion's front porch, 4915 Greenspring Ave. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

Frederick. Fred Archibald May Count. Meet at the Sanctuary at 6 AM. Contact Bob Schaefer at 301-831-5660 or rjs30@erols.com for further info.

Howard. David Force Park. Birding for Beginners. Meet 8 AM in gravel lot off Turf Valley Rd across from the county club. Easy walking through the woodlands and along field edges. Learn basic techniques of binocular use. Learn to identify birds by sight and sound. No facilities. Leader: Michele Wright, 410-465-6057.

Montgomery. Little Bennett RP. Half day. Near peak migration for warblers and vireos, including those breeding in this varied habitat. Contact the leader for time and directions. Reservations required. Leader: Gemma Radko, 301-514-2894.

Talbot. Pocomoke Swamp. Full day. We will bird the edge of Nassawango Creek Preserve in search of migrant and resident songbirds with focus on warblers. Leader: Terry Allen, 410-822-8132. Bring lunch, drinks, and insecticide. Depart Easton Acme parking lot 6:30 AM.

Tuesday, May 5

Baltimore. Lake Roland. First in a series of weekly walks to follow the progress of Spring migration. Habitats include woods, lake, streams, and marsh. Meet 8:30 AM

at the north entrance of Robert E. Lee Park on Falls Rd (it is no longer possible to cross the footbridge below the dam at Lake Roland). Complete new directions at <http://baltimorebirdclub.org/schedule.html>. Footing can be slippery, so wear appropriate shoes. Leader: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or whitemarlin2001@yahoo.com.

MEETING. **Baltimore.** Tuesday Evenings at Cylburn Arboretum. Program TBD. 7:30 PM at the Cylburn Arboretum, 4915 Greenspring Ave. Info: Pete Webb, pete_webb@juno.com.

Wednesday, May 6

Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. Scopes useful. Automatically cancelled in bad weather (rain, fog, etc.). Directions: From I-695 southwest of the city, take exit 11/I-95 north towards the city. Get off at exit 55/Hanover St. Turn right (east) on McComas St, left (north) on Key Hwy. Take first left onto Lawrence St and turn left onto Fort Ave and continue through gateway into the park. Meet outside the Visitor Center at 8 AM. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

Baltimore. Druid Ridge Cemetery. Meet 9:30 AM at 7900 Park Heights Ave in Pikesville. Possibility of both Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, and migrant warblers. Leader: Joy Wheeler, 410-825-1204.

Baltimore. Evening Walks at Fort McHenry. Cancelled in rain, fog, etc. Park on Wallace St (left just before the gate). [From I-95, take Hanover Street exit 55, McComas St (last exit before tunnel eastbound, first after tunnel westbound), north on Key Hwy which turns west, first left Lawrence St, left onto Fort Ave, continue east to gate into Fort McHenry. From the JFX, I-83, south to St Paul St exit, south on St Paul which becomes Light St, then left (east) onto Fort Avenue; continue to end as above.] Meet 6 PM at the main gate. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

MEETING. **Carroll.** "Carroll County Bird Club Final Exam—Testing Your Auditory Birding Skills." 7:30 PM at Senior Center, 125 Stoner Ave, Westminster. Info: Bill Ellis, 443-520-8809.

Montgomery. Exploring Calvert County. Sue Hamilton will guide through some of the county's birding hotspots. Meet 7 AM at the road leading to Flag Ponds. We'll later visit Battle Creek Cypress Swamp and other spots before we stop for lunch on the beach. Reservations required. Limit: 10. Call the coordinators for detailed directions and more info. Leader: Sue Hamilton. Coordinators: Lydia Schindler, 301-977-5252 and Linda Friedland, 301-983-2136.

Thursday, May 7

MEETING. **Frederick.** "Mike Welch Bird Quiz: Can You Identify Birds from Photos and Sound Recordings?" Some easy, some not so easy. You will not be graded! 7 PM at the C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick.

Montgomery. Patuxent River Park, PG County. Half day. Peak migration time for songbirds, some marsh and waterbirds. Joint trip with ANS. Meet Greg Kearns, park naturalist, at 6:30 AM at park entrance gate. Drift-boat trip followed by hiking on trails and through marshes. Make reservations with Liz Jones at ANS, 301-652-9188, x30.

Friday, May 8

Montgomery. Pennyfield Lock. Birding by Ear. The emphasis is on listening, so tune up your ears for this half-day canal walk. Migrant and nesting landbirds. Meet 7 AM at the end of Pennyfield Lock Rd. Reservations required. For more info and reservations, call the leaders: Cyndie Loeper, 301-530-8226, and Ann Lucy, 301-229-8810.

Saturday, May 9

MAY COUNT. Allegany/Garrett. To participate in Allegany Co, contact J.B. Churchill (compiler), jchurchi@atlanticbb.net, 301-689-8344 or 301-697-1223 (cell), to be

assigned an area to count. There will be no tally. Send your results to J.B. To participate in Garrett Co, contact Fran Pope (compiler), fpope@gcnetmail.net or 301-334-4908.

MAY COUNT. Anne Arundel. Contact compiler, Dotty Mumford, at 410-849-8336 for more details.

MAY COUNT. Baltimore. All-day count of birds in Balt City and Co. For area assignments, call compiler Joel Martin, 410-744-9211 or jcdlmartin@aol.com.

MAY COUNT. Calvert. Compiler: TBD. Contact State Coordinator Mike Welch, manddwelch@comcast.net, for more info.

MAY COUNT. Caroline. Compiler: Debby Bennett. Contact her at firefly5845@hotmail.com for more info.

MAY COUNT. Carroll. All Day. Individual parties of counters will set their own schedules in their pre-arranged areas. The Tally Rally will be hosted by Jerry and Laura Tarbell at their home. Contact Bill Ellis to coordinate count locations at 443-520-8809. RSVP to Jerry and Laura Tarbell at 410-857-1109 if you will be attending the Tally. Please bring a cash donation or a food item.

MAY COUNT. Cecil. Assist the Cecil Bird Club as we participate in the annual, continent-wide International Migratory Bird Day. Must contact compiler (to be named; check Cecil Bird Club website at <http://www.udel.edu/cecilbirds> for update) ahead of time for assignment to an area and for reporting forms and instructions.

MAY COUNT. Charles. Compiler: George Jett, gmjett@comcast.net.

MAY COUNT. Dorchester. Compiler: Harry Amistead, harryarmistead@hotmail.com.

MOS Calendar (continued from page 15)

☼ **MAY COUNT. Frederick.** Join the crowd for our local countywide count. Contact Mike Welch at 301-874-5828 to assist.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Harford.** Compiler: Mark Johnson, mark.s.johnson@us.army.mil.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Howard.** Call Bonnie Ott to sign up at 410-461-3361.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Kent.** An all-day effort to census all birds in Kent County. Join a field party or count in your neighborhood. Contact one of the leaders for details. Info: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@crosslink.net.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Montgomery.** For more info contact Compiler, Andy Martin, 301-294-4805 (h), 301-529-2066 (m), or apmartin2@comcast.net.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Prince George's.** Contact Fred Fallon, 410-286-8152, for info.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Queen Anne's.** Compiler: Glen Therres, gtherres@dnr.state.md.us.

☼ **MAY COUNT. St. Mary's.** Compiler: Bob Boxwell, bobboxwell@hotmail.com.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Somerset.** Compiler: Charles Vaughn, essc@comcast.net.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Talbot.** Leader/Coordinator: Les Coble, 410-820-6165. Also, Pickering Creek Audubon Center will sponsor bird hikes, crafts, and talks celebrating birds in culture. 10 AM-2 PM. Contact 410-822-4903 x25 or go to www.pickeringcreek.org for details.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Washington.** Contact Dave Weesner, 717-498-0347, to help with the local effort.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Wicomico.** Everyone can participate. For details and checklists, contact Ellen Lawler at 410-546-9056.

☼ **MAY COUNT. Worcester.** Compiler: Mark Hoffman, wcbirding@adelphia.net.

26TH ANNUAL WORLD SERIES OF BIRDING. New Jersey Audubon will proudly host the World Series of Birding—North America's premier conservation event. This contest has changed the birding landscape and raised over \$8,000,000 for bird conservation. Every species found, every dollar raised preserves and protects critical bird habitat.

🏠 **Baltimore.** Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. Scope can be useful. Automatically cancelled in bad weather (rain, fog, etc.). Meet outside the Visitor Center at 8 AM. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

🏠 **Montgomery.** Upper Watts Branch, Rockville. Half day. Migrant warblers, vireos, thrushes, and assorted woodland residents, including possible Red-shouldered Hawks. Meet 7:30 AM at corner of Princeton Pl and Fordham St. Limit: 12. Reservations required. Leader: Paul O'Brien, 301-424-6491.

Saturday - Sunday, May 9 - 10

🏠 **Talbot.** Cape May for "Everything." Peak spring migration: warblers, passerines, shorebirds, and waders. Leader: Charles Hopkins, 410-763-8742.

Sunday, May 10

🏠 **Baltimore.** Patuxent North Tract (Research Refuge). Bring lunch for all-day trip to Anne Arundel Co site for Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, chat, and other Southern specialty birds. Prothonotary Warbler possible. Meet 8 AM at Nursery Rd P&R, I-695 Exit 8. Leader: Steve Sanford, 410-922-5103 or scartan@verizon.net.

🏠 **Baltimore.** Cylburn Nature Walk. See May 3 listing. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

☼ **Frederick.** Audrey Carroll May Count. Meet at the Sanctuary at 6 AM. Call Dave Smith at 410-549-7082 for further info.

🏠 **Harford.** Girls-Gone-Wildflower. The ladies will guide you to verdant sites in Susquehanna SP to witness its impressive assortment of wildflowers and early migrants, many in colorful spring plumage. Led by experienced birder Jean Wheeler and wildflower guru Colleen Webster, trip-goers are likely to see and hear spring migrants and see and smell the fragrance of an array of beautiful wildflowers. Meet 7:30 AM at the confluence of the Susquehanna River and Deer Crk. Contact Colleen Webster at 410-942-0867 or cwebster@harford.edu for add'l info.

🏠 **Talbot.** Leader's Choice. Depart Easton Acme parking lot 7 AM. Info: Cathy Cooper, 410-822-3451 or coopercw@goeaston.net.

Monday, May 11

🏠 **Baltimore.** Poplar Island. Poplar I., an environmental restoration project similar to Hart-Miller, is reached by a 20-30 minute boat ride from Tilghman I. Two-hour bus ride around Poplar Island, stopping wherever birding looks good. Meet 6:30 AM at Nursery Rd P&R or meet 9 AM at Tilghman I. Scopes helpful. Facilities available. Bring snacks if desired. Lunch will be at a local restaurant. Reservations required. Limit 24. Leader: Robin Armetta. Coordinator: Kevin Graff, whitemarlin2001@yahoo.com.

Tuesday, May 12

🏠 **Baltimore.** Lake Roland. Continuing in a series of weekly walks to follow the progress of Spring migration. Habitats include woods, lake, streams, and marsh. Meet 8:30 AM. See May 5 listing for directions. Leader: Paul Noell, 410-243-2652 or myconut@verizon.net.

🏠 Indicates Field Trip

MEETING. Kent. "Common Bird Songs" by *Walter Ellison*. 7:30 PM. Wesley Hall, Heron Point, E Campus Ave, Chestertown. For info, contact Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@crosslink.net.

Montgomery. Rock Creek Park, DC. 1/3 day. Active time for migrant warblers, vireos, etc. Meet 7 AM at Picnic Area #18, one-half mile below the Nature Center on Ridge Rd. Call the leader for more info or specific directions. Reservations required. Leader: Wallace Kornack, 202-338-7859.

MEETING. Patuxent. "Digiscoping for Beginners" by *Doug Bolt*. For those of you envious of the wonderful pictures captured by area birders via digiscoping, this is the meeting for you. Learn the ins and outs of this increasingly popular method of photography and how to get started. This will also be the PGAS business meeting and elections. Call Fred Shaffer at 410-721-1744 for add'l info. Meet 7:30 PM at the College Park Airport Annex.

Wednesday, May 13

Baltimore. Evening Walks at Fort McHenry. Cancelled in rain, fog, etc. Meet 6 PM at the main gate. Leader: See May 6 listing for directions. Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

MEETING. Cecil. Program TBA. 7 PM on the lower level of Wesley United Methodist Church, Old Chestnut Rd and Justice Way. For info, contact Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

Howard. Henryton Road. Easy walk along the river. This area of Patapsco Valley SP is nesting area for Yellow-throated, Worm-eating, and Cerulean Warblers. Meet 8:30 AM at end of Henryton Rd. Leaders: Joe Byrnes, 410-730-5329, and Jeff Culler, 410-465-9006.

Thursday, May 14

Baltimore. North Central Railroad Trail. We will visit a spot north of Monkton where migrants

and nesters are (usually) easy to find. Minimal walking. Meet 8 AM. Reservations required. Limit 12. Contact the leader by May 14 for reservations, directions, and info. Leader: Debbie Terry, 410-252-8771 or gt5s@bcpl.net.

MEETING. Howard. "The Falklands, South Georgia, and the Antarctic Peninsula," by *Michele Stewart* and *Barry Miller*. Photos from two trips to the bottom of the world include seven species of penguins as well as mammals and fantastic scenery. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at Howard Co Rec and Parks, 7210 Oakland Mills Rd, Columbia. Info: Tom Miller, 410-795-7005.

Friday-Sunday, May 15-17

MOS 2009 ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

Holiday Inn, Francis Scott Key Conference Center, Frederick. Info at <http://www.mdbirds.org/activities/conference/annual.html>, or contact Conference Chair Janet Shields, janetbill@prodigy.net.

Saturday, May 16

Caroline. Prime Hook NWR, DE. Coordinators: Dawn Brownlee-Tomasso and Danny Poet. Meet at Roses parking lot in Denton at 7:30 AM. Pack a lunch. Please pre-register with Dawn, so we know how many people are planning to attend and to coordinate carpooling. Contact Dawn at dbt902@verizon.net or 410-479-0882.

Cecil. Woodlawn Wildlife Area. Half day. Woodlawn is a restored landfill in western Cecil Co. The Cecil Bird Club is partnering with Woodlawn to promote use of the area for birding and nature observation. Join us for a leisurely stroll around the fields and woods of this reawakening natural area. Meet 7 AM at the Woodlawn parking area. Leader: Richard Donham, donhamr@zoominternet.net.

Kent. DE Bay Shorebirds and Horseshoe Crabs. The annual May gathering of northbound shorebirds

feeding on Horseshoe Crab eggs on the shores of Delaware Bay is a migration spectacle. Birds should be abundant a week after the full moon. Full day, bring lunch. Meet at Dollar General parking lot, Chestertown. Contact leaders for meeting time. Leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@crosslink.net.

Sunday, May 17

Baltimore. Owings Mills Mall Wetland. Willow Flycatcher, Green Heron, Blue Grosbeak, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Orchard Oriole are just a few of the birds that breed in and around this mall's wetland area. Meet 7:30 AM at lot across from the gas station on Red Run Blvd. Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6489 or oriolekec1@comcast.net.

Baltimore. Cylburn Nature Walk. See May 3 listing. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

Harford. Harford Glen. Visit this easily accessible natural gem to hike the forests and wetlands with leader Lynn Davis in search of shorebirds as well as migratory songbirds, including warblers, vireos, and orioles. Follow Wheel Rd to its western end and meet at the upper parking lot at 7 AM (when gate opens to the public). Contact Lynn at lynnd@iximd.com or 410-569-0504 for info.

Talbot. Adkins Arboretum. Leaders: Amanda Spears, 410-827-9920, and Danny Poet, 410-827-8651. Depart Easton Acme parking lot 7 AM.

Monday, May 18

MEETING. Tri-County. "Birding in Guatemala" by *Doug Ruby*. 7 PM at Asbury Methodist Church, Fox Rm, south entrance, Camden Ave, Salisbury.

MOS Calendar (continued from page 17)**Tuesday, May 19**

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. Continuing in a series of weekly walks to follow the progress of Spring migration. Habitats include woods, lake, streams, and marsh. Meet 8:30 AM. See May 5 listing for directions. Leader: Peter Lev, 410-823-2962 or plev@comcast.net.

Wednesday, May 20

H Baltimore. Evening Walks at Fort McHenry. Cancelled in rain, fog, etc. See May 6 for directions. Meet 6 PM at the main gate. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

MEETING. Montgomery. Election of officers, then “Galapagos: Marvel of Evolution.” *Richard Schubert* will treat Blue-footed Boobies, Red-footed Boobies, finches and more finches, and plenty of other remarkable birds (and a few tortoises, too) from his recent trip to this marvel of evolution. 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac. For more info, contact Steve Pretl at stevep@takomavillage.org.

Thursday, May 21

MEETING. Caroline. *George Jett* presents “The Natural History of the Maryland Coastal Plain.” 7:30 PM, Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton. Contact Deborah Bennett at firefly5845@hotmail.com for more info.

Saturday, May 23

H Baltimore. Patterson Park. Migrants found in this urban park have included Blue-headed, Red-eyed, White-eyed, and Warbling Vireos, Wood, Swainson’s, and Gray-cheeked Thrushes, Veery, Summer Tanager, Merlin, and Woodcock. Meet 8 AM at the White House (27 S Patterson Park Ave). Leader: Dave Curson, 410-675-4963.

H Baltimore. DE Bay. Full-day trip for a wide variety of migrating shorebirds. Possible spectacular assemblage of breeding-plumaged turnstones, Sanderlings, and Red Knots. Curlew Sandpiper possible. Be prepared for possible heat and biting insects.

Minimal walking involved. Scopes very useful. Bring a lunch. Meet 7 AM at Nursery Rd P&R, I-695, Exit 8. Alternatively, meet 9 AM at the Bombay Hook Visitor Center lot. Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

H Cecil. DE Bay Shorebird Migration. Join Sean “Bird Dog” McCandless for a full day tour of the best shorebird spots on the DE Bayshore. The trip is timed to coincide with the peak of shorebird migration, and the various refuges along the DE River and Bay present a spectacle of thousands of shorebirds—a sight (and sound) not to be missed. Meet near Dunkin’ Donuts in Big Elk Mall, intersection of Rtes 40 and 213 in Elkton at 8 AM. Be prepared to carpool. Bring lunch, snacks, and drink and a scope if you have one. Wear sturdy shoes for possible muddy conditions. Leader: Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

H Harford. Susquehanna SP. For a look at Yellow- and Black-billed Cuckoos, Olive-sided and Empidonax Flycatchers, Cape May and Cerulean Warblers, with zebra swallowtails a possibility, too. Meet 7 AM at Rock Run Mill. For more info, call Les Eastman at 410-734-6969 or les@birdtreks.com.

H Howard. Patapsco Shrubland. We’ll look for warblers, vireos, thrushes, and other edge species. Meet 7:30 AM at 735 River Rd (up long drive, take right-hand split and park by house). Contact Bonnie Ott at bonnieott@verizon.net for more info.

H Montgomery. Hot Spots for Red Knots. Full day. Joint trip with **Howard Co.** We will start at 8:30 AM at the Visitor Center at Prime Hook NWR and work our way north along DE Bay. Also on the itinerary will be the DuPont Nature Center at Mispillion Lighthouse, which offers great views of Red Knots and other shorebirds. We will go until dark or exhaustion, whichever comes first. Bring binoculars, lunch and snacks, water, sunscreen, and plenty of insect

repellent. Bring scopes if you’ve got ‘em. Trip is limited to 12 persons/3 vehicles per chapter. Reservations required. For reservations and info contact Co-leader, Cyndie Loeper, cyndieloeper@comcast.net or 301-535-8584. Kurt Schwarz, krschwa1@comcast.net or 410-461-1643, will co-lead for Howard Co.

H Tri-County. Truitt’s Landing. Late afternoon trip for rails, owls, Chuck-will’s-widow, and marsh sparrows. Leader and meet time TBA at May 18 club meeting. Trip leaves from Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art parking lot on S Schumaker Dr on Beaglin Park Dr in Salisbury.

H Washington. Eidolon Nature Preserve. Leave the DMV parking lot at 7 AM. Leaders Nancy and Elliot Kirschbaum. This is a joint trip with Potomac Valley Audubon. Call 301-797-8454 to register.

Sunday, May 24

H Anne Arundel. DE Bay. Horseshoe crabs, shorebirds, gulls, etc. Meet 7:45 AM at Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot. Bring Lunch. Leader: Gerald Winegrad, 410-280-8956. We will stop for dinner on the way home.

H Baltimore. Milford Mill Park. Migrant warblers, thrushes, and other songbirds. Meet 7:30 AM at park. [From I-695 exit 18/Liberty Rd, proceed west to first light at Washington Ave. Turn right, proceed to light on Milford Mill Rd just after the overhead bridge. Leader: Bryce Butler, capitano.bryce@verizon.net or 410-728-0646.

H Cecil. Elk Neck SF. Traverse the quiet wooded lanes of one of Cecil’s prime birding gems with our own Parke John. At this time of year, Elk Neck SF is starting to ring with the songs of newly arrived summer residents: Veery, Wood Thrush, Hooded Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Great Crested Flycatcher, and other goodies. Meet 7 AM at the SF parking lot off Irishtown Rd. Wear good shoes or

boots for walking. Leader: Parke John, parke@del.net.

H Patuxent. DE Beaches for shorebirds at height of Horseshoe-Crab-egg feeding frenzy. All-day trip; bring lunch and water. Meet at Bowie P&R at 7 am. Contact Fred Fallon, 410-286-8152, for add'l info.

H Talbot. Mispillion Lighthouse and DE Bay sites for Red Knots, Ruddy Turnstones, Semipalmated Sandpipers, and other shorebirds. Leader: Les Roslund, 410-763-8169. Bring lunch and drink for picnic. Bring insecticide and scope if available. Depart Easton Acme parking lot 6:30 AM.

Monday, May 25

H Harford. Hidden Valley/Upper Deer Creek. Join local resident and natural historian Dennis Kirkwood in a search for Worm-eating Warbler, Willow Flycatcher, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Scarlet Tanager. Meet at Hidden Valley (N end of Madonna Rd) at 7 AM. Contact Dennis Kirkwood at 410-692-5905 or dkirkw@verizon.net for more info.

Tuesday, May 26

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. Continuing in a series of weekly walks to follow the progress of Spring migration. Habitats include woods, lake, streams, and marsh. Meet 8:30 AM. See May 5 listing for directions. Leader: Patsy Perlman, 410-466-3998 or pattonyp@aol.com.

MEETING. **Washington.** Program TBA. 7:30 PM at the Mount Aetna Nature Center. Call 301-797-8454 for more info.

Wednesday, May 27

H Baltimore. Evening Walks at Fort McHenry. Cancelled in rain, fog, etc. See May 6 for directions. Meet 6 PM at the main gate. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

Friday, May 29

H Harford. Eden Mill Park. Join master bird bander Mark Johnson to see a variety of migrants and resident nesters up close and personal. Excellent for beginning birders and young naturalists. Meet 8 AM at the Vangrin Banding Pavilion on Eden Mill Rd just past the bridge over Big Branch. Contact Mark for further info at 410-692-5978 or mark.s.johnson@us.army.mil.

Saturday, May 30

H Anne Arundel. South River Watershed (a MD Important Bird Area). Warblers and other woodland migrants. Meet 7 AM at Parole P&R. Leaders: Dave Curson and Pierre Henkart, 410-849-5343 or henkartp@hotmail.com.

H Harford. Conowingo Dam. Always full of surprises, this locale offers everything from eagles to gulls to Prothonotary Warblers to Pileated Woodpeckers. Meet at Fisherman's Park at the end of Shures Landing Rd at 7 AM. Contact Les Eastman at 410-734-6969 or les@birdtreks.com for info.

Sunday, May 31

H Cecil. Cecil Spring Hot Spots. Join Marcia Watson on a tour through some of the best Cecil locations for late migrants and breeding birds. Specific sites will depend on scouting, but will include a variety of wetlands, forest, and fields. Target birds are shorebirds and songbirds, including warblers and vireos. (We will practice our birding-by-ear skills with the songbirds.) Meet near Dunkin' Donuts in Big Elk Mall, intersection of Rtes 40 and 213 in Elkton at 8 AM for a half-day trip. Bring snack and drink. Expect a lot of walking and wear sturdy shoes; possible muddy conditions. Info: Marcia Watson, mww@udel.edu.

H Talbot. Izaak Walton property in Trappe. Depart Easton Acme parking lot 7 AM. Leader: Shirley Bailey, 410-943-8925. Breakfast hosts: Wayne and Joyce Bell.

Wednesday, June 3

H Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. Scope can be useful. Automatically cancelled in bad weather (rain, fog, etc.). See May 6 listing for directions. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

Thursday, June 4

H Allegany/Garrett. Nightbird Trip to Green Ridge SF. (Rain date June 5). Explore the nightlife of this beautiful state forest. This is one of the state's hotspots for Whip-poor-wills, and they should be singing non-stop on this moonlit evening. Barred Owls are likely, and we will look for other nightbirds as well. Meet 8 PM at Green Ridge SF HQ (exit 64 off I-68). Reservations required. Please call leader, Gwen Brewer, at 301-752-9239, by June 1 if you plan to attend.

ANNUAL PICNIC. **Frederick.** We are trying a new location this year—Utica Park, north of Frederick. Bring binoculars, a dish to share, plate, drink, and utensils. We'll meet at 6 PM for birding and eats.

FALL PLANNING MEETING AND POTLUCK DINNER. **Talbot.** 6 PM. For more info, contact Karen and Bill Harris at 410-770-8303.

Thursday, June 4 & Sunday, June 7

H Montgomery. Bird Photography for Beginners. On Thurs we will meet in Bethesda from 7:30 to 9 PM and discuss notions of photographic technique, equipment, and philosophy pertinent to enjoying bird photography. On Sun we will meet at Hughes Hollow from 8 AM to 12 noon to photograph Red-winged Blackbirds, Tree Swallows, and any other bird that cooperates. Limit: 6-8. For more info and reservations, contact leader Evelyn Ralston at 301-493-4132 or evelynsr@verizon.net. Rain date: Sun June 14.

MOS Calendar *(continued from page 19)***Friday, June 5**

H Baltimore. Whip-poor-wills at Soldiers Delight. Come and assist with our annual count of calling “whips” at the best site for this species in Baltimore Co. We will stay until after dark and finish by 10:15 PM. Meet 8 PM at Soldiers Delight. [From I-695 exit 18/Liberty Rd, go west 4 miles, bear right onto Deer Park Rd just before traffic light and water tower, go 2 miles to historical marker, overlook, and gravel lot on left. Leader: David Curson, 410-675-4963.]

Saturday, June 6

H Frederick. Western Maryland. Mike Welch will lead us to some western MD hotspots to look for local breeders, including Least and Alder Flycatchers, Golden-winged and lots of other warblers, and Henslow’s Sparrow. Call Mike at 301-874-5828 for info.

MOS BOARD MEETING. Greenbrier SP, Washington Co. Contact Janet Shields, MOS Secretary, at janetbill@prodigy.net for add’l info.

Sunday, June 7

H Harford. Jerusalem Mill. This beautiful spot on Harford’s western border hosts a bounty of nesting songbirds. Meet 7 AM at the Mill on Jerusalem Rd along the Gunpowder Falls. Contact Phil Powers at 410-679-4116 or birdsinmd@prodigy.net.

ANNUAL CLUB PICNIC. **Kent.** 5 PM. Join us for a potluck picnic at the Lodge at Eastern Neck NWR. Includes a short meeting to elect officers for next year and gather speaker and trip suggestions from members. Contact Nancy Martin or Walter Ellison at 410-778-9568 or rossgull@crosslink.net for more details.

Tuesday, June 9

MEETING. **Allegheny/Garrett.** The meeting will take place at the Carey Run Sanctuary. We’ll be deciding on the schedule for next year, so bring your ideas for speakers, field trips,

and other projects. For best results, we need your ideas at or before the planning meeting! [Directions to Carey Run: From I-68, take the Finzel exit and turn left (south) until it ends. Then turn right and go straight at the fork in the road. Make your first right turn onto the unpaved road. Go across the bridge and then turn right (look for MOS sanctuary signs).]

MEETING. **Patuxent.** Members’ Night (digital slides, discussion on books, optics, or digital equipment). Coordinated by Fred Shaffer. Also Patuxent Bird Club business meeting and elections. Call Fred at 410-721-1744 for add’l info. Meet 7:30 PM at the College Park Airport Annex.

Wednesday, June 10

MEETING. **Cecil.** Business meeting and general social. 7 PM on the lower level of Wesley United Methodist Church, Old Chestnut Rd and Justice Way. For info, contact Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

Thursday, June 11

PLANNING MEETING. **Frederick.** Everyone please come to our 2009-2010 planning meeting and volunteer to give a program or lead a field trip. We need new ideas and suggestions. Meet at 7 PM at Kathy Calvert’s house. Call Kathy at 301-698-1298 for info and directions.

Saturday, June 13

H Baltimore. Carroll County Field Birds. Full day. Bird the fields of Carroll and/or Frederick Cos for nesting Vesper, Grasshopper, Field, and possible Savannah Sparrows, Bobolink, Dickcissel, Horned Lark, meadowlark, Willow Flycatcher, and Red-headed Woodpecker. Bring lunch. Rain date: June 26. Meet 7:30 AM at P&R lot, extreme east end of I-70 (inside I-695). [From I-695, take the I-70 exit east, “local,” NOT the Security Blvd exit, to lot at end of I-70 (inside I-695, west of city).] Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

H Cecil. Birding by Kayak. Explore the waters of the Elkton marshes with Sean McCandless. This is a good way to search for rails and shorebirds as well as terns during the high point of the migration season. Meet 7 AM at Brownie’s Shore, off Old Field Point Rd. Bring your own kayak and paddle. Also, of course, bring and wear a life preserver. Leader: Sean “Bird Dog” McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

Saturday, June 20

H Baltimore. Patapsco Valley SP, Granite Area. Nesting Birds. Blue-winged, Prairie, Pine Warblers, and Yellow-breasted Chat are among the 6 confirmed (11 possible) breeding warblers in the area. Boots recommended. [From I-695 take Liberty Rd (Exit 18/MD Rte 26) west for 2 miles to Old Court Rd (MD Rte 125). Turn left on Old Court Rd and drive 5.5 miles through Granite to the Patapsco River. Meet 7:30 AM. Park on the lane in the cemetery just after the Job Corps signs. Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6489 or oriolekec1@comcast.net.

H Harford. Broad Creek Scout Camp. One of Harford’s largest contiguous woodlands, this nature reserve is blessed with great habitat for woodland species as well as water and wetland dwellers. Meet 6:30 AM at Dublin ES. Contact Dave Webb at 410-939-3537 or porzana@comcast.net for more info. Beth Olsen will co-lead.

Sunday, June 28

PICNIC. **Washington.** 4 PM at Camp Harding. Bring your own plate, utensils, drink, lawn chair, and a dish to share. Call 301-797-8454 for directions.

Wednesday, July 8

MEETING. **Cecil.** Program TBA. 7 PM on the lower level of Wesley United Methodist Church, Old Chestnut Rd and Justice Way. For info, contact Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

H Indicates Field Trip

Saturday, July 11

PICNIC. Carroll. Summer Picnic at Amy Hoffman's. Another chance to talk birds, eat, drink, and have fun with fellow birders. RSVP to Amy at 410-549-3598 if you plan to attend.

Saturday, July 18

H Cecil. Summer Season at Fair Hill. Part of our "Seasons at Fair Hill" series. Summer at Fair Hill means specialty breeding birds: Scarlet Tanager, Veery, Wood Thrush, Ovenbird, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-winged Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Bobolinks, and more! Of course, the scenery at Fair Hill can't be beat—lush woods, rolling hills, extensive hayfields, and crystal clear streams. Be prepared for a longish hike over trails that are narrow and may be steep and muddy in places. Meet 8 AM at the Covered Bridge Parking lot at Fair Hill. (Parking fee required. Honor system in use; bring small bills to pay fee—\$3 MD residents, \$4 out-of-state visitors.) Leader: Richard Donham, donhamr@zoominternet.net.

Sunday, July 19

H Harford. DE Shorebirds. Fall migration begins early for shorebirds; this trip will look for the usual and the rare along the DE coast. Return in the late afternoon/early evening. Bring plenty of sunscreen, fluids, and lunch. Meet 7 AM at the 155/95 P&R. Contact Dave Larkin at 410-569-8319 or dlarkin@towson.edu for more info. Dave Ziolkowski will co-lead.

Saturday, July 25

H Harford. Hummingbird Banding. Meet 8 AM at Les Eastman's house at 4034 Wilkinson Rd near Susquehanna SP to watch and maybe help a master bander mark our tiniest feathered friends. Contact Les at 410-734-6969 or les@birdtreks.com for more info.

H Montgomery. DE Coastal Areas. Full day at Bombay Hook, Little Creek, Logan Tract, and other sites. Joint trip with ANS. Shorebirds,

marsh birds, and some songbirds. Bring pack lunch. Meet 8 AM at Bombay Hook Visitor Center parking lot. Make reservation (15-person limit) with John Bjerke, 240-401-1643. Cyndie Loeper will co-lead.

Sunday, August 2

H Talbot. Sunday Morning Walks in August. Tilghman Island for early migrants, flycatchers, warblers, swallows, vireos, gnatcatchers, tanagers, orioles, and waterbirds. Depart 7 AM from St. Michael's Village Shopping Center, St. Michaels. Leader: Jan Reese, 410-745-2875.

Saturday, August 8

HUMMINGBIRD HAPPY HOUR. Harford. Join Beth and Les Eastman at 5 PM at their gracious home to experience the buzz and flight of dozens of hummingbirds feeding from their many feeders. Participants are invited to bring a dish to share and a beverage of their choice to enjoy in the early dusk of this favorite occasion of the bird club. For more info, contact Les at 410-734-6969 or les@birdtreks.com.

Sunday, August 9

H Talbot. Sunday Morning Walks in August. Tilghman Island for early migrants, flycatchers, warblers, swallows, vireos, gnatcatchers, tanagers, orioles, and waterbirds. Depart 7 AM from St. Michael's Village Shopping Center, St. Michaels. Leader: Jan Reese, 410-745-2875.

Wednesday, August 12

MEETING. Cecil. Program TBA. 7 PM on the lower level of Wesley United Methodist Church, Old Chestnut Rd and Justice Way. For info, contact Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net.

Saturday, August 15

H Harford. Bombay Hook NWR. Join Dennis Kirkwood on a 3/4 day adventure at this birding mega-hotspot for shorebirds and the hottest rarities. Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Stilt Sandpiper, and Wilson's Phalarope top the list of regular fall highlights, but this is also a great time

to pick up seaward strays and western vagrants. Bring sunscreen, insect repellent, and lunch. Scopes helpful but not necessary. Meet 7 AM at the MD 155/I-95 P&R. Contact Dennis Kirkwood at 410-692-5905 or dkirkw@verizon.net for more info.

Sunday, August 16

H Talbot. Sunday Morning Walks in August. Tilghman Island for early migrants, flycatchers, warblers, swallows, vireos, gnatcatchers, tanagers, orioles, and waterbirds. Depart 7 AM from St. Michael's Village Shopping Center, St. Michaels. Leader: Jan Reese, 410-745-2875.

Saturday, August 22

H Baltimore. DE Bay. Full-day trip for herons and a wide variety of migrating shorebirds, including avocets. Be prepared for possible heat and biting insects. Minimal walking involved. Scopes very useful. Bring a lunch. Meet 7 AM at Nursery Rd P&R, I-695 Exit 8. Alternatively, meet 9:30 AM at the Bombay Hook Visitor Center lot. Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

H Harford. Conowingo Dam. Meet 7 AM at Fisherman's Park at the end of Shures Landing Rd. Join the Three Amigos for looks at waterfowl, waders, and early migrating warblers. Leaders are Dave Webb at 410-939-3537 or porzana@comcast.net; Tom Congersky at 410-658-4137 or jnjtcon@zoominternet.net; and Randy Robertson at 410-273-9029 at r.c.robertson@comcast.net.

Sunday, August 23

H Talbot. Sunday Morning Walks in August. Tilghman Island for early migrants, flycatchers, warblers, swallows, vireos, gnatcatchers, tanagers, orioles, and waterbirds. Depart 7 AM from St. Michael's Village Shopping Center, St. Michaels. Leader: Jan Reese, 410-745-2875.

MOS Calendar (continued from page 21)

PICNIC. Washington. 4 PM at Washington Monument SP. Bring your own plate, utensils, drink, lawn chair, and a dish to share. Call 301-797-8454 for directions.

Tuesday, August 25

Baltimore. Lake Roland. First in a series of weekly walks to follow the progress of Fall migration. Habitats include woods, lake, streams, and marsh. Meet 8:30 AM. See May 5 listing for directions. Leader: Patsy Perlman, 410-466-3998 or pattonyp@aol.com.

Sunday, August 30

Harford. Shorebird Banding. Meet 7:30 AM at Swan Harbor Farm Park near Oakington. It's a rare treat to see shorebirds in the hand, so don't miss this opportunity to study these confusing entities up close and personal. Meet 7:30 AM at Swan Harbor Farm Park near Oakington. Contact Mark Johnson for further info at 410-692-5978 or mark.s.johnson@us.army.mil.

Talbot. Sunday Morning Walks in August. Tilghman Island for early migrants, flycatchers, warblers, swallows, vireos, gnatcatchers, tanagers, orioles, and waterbirds. Depart 7 AM from St. Michael's Village Shopping Center, St. Michaels. Leader: Jan Reese, 410-745-2875.

MAY COUNT 2009

SATURDAY, MAY 9

The May Count this year will be held on Saturday, May 9. This will mark the 47th consecutive year that Maryland birders have conducted this survey of the bird populations in the state in the first half of May. By the second week in May, many of the species that nest in Maryland have returned to their breeding grounds, and they are temporarily joined by an array of warblers, vireos, and other migrants whose numbers peak in the state around this time.

Because species diversity is at its highest point, plumages are the brightest, and bird song fills the air, there is no better time in Maryland to bird than the first half of May. If you are willing to slap on some sunscreen and insect repellent, you will be rewarded with a great day of birding.

More volunteers mean better coverage. For those who are interested in participating for the first time, each County has an assigned compiler who can provide you with maps of territories that need coverage and pair you up with experienced birders who will show you the ropes. You will discover new spots to bird that you didn't know existed. Check the Calendar under May 9 for the names and numbers of the county compilers. You can download a field checklist for species seen during May Count from the MOS web site at www.mdbirds.org/counts/namc.

Due to their rural nature and smaller populations, counties on the Eastern Shore and in Western Maryland need additional assistance with May Count. Volunteers from the more populous parts of the state can explore new territories in these rural areas and will likely see species that they do not see in their home county.

Please join us in the field on May 9 for a great day of birding!

— Michael Welch, Statewide Coordinator
manddwelch@comcast.net
301-874-5828

BOOK REVIEW (continued from page 24)

up to his waist in order to photograph a nesting eider, apparently unaware that he was so far into the water). It exposes his ego and lays bare his vanity, too; when he was being hailed as the 20th Century Audubon, Roger often said he preferred to think of himself as “the first Peterson.”

In a compelling section of the book, Rosenthal relates Peterson’s disgust with up-and-coming field birders when they panned his newly revised (4th edition/1980) field guide. Roger felt that “the new Field Guide is more than a revision This one is a completely new book My goal has been to make the new Eastern guide the most critically accurate and effective field guide yet produced on any region of the world” The new edition sold over half a million copies by December of 1980 and was on the *New York Times* bestseller list in both hardcover and paperback. However, the emerging group of “expert” birders, who had cut their teeth on earlier Peterson guides, had hoped for a something more advanced. His revised version was picked apart in articles in *Birding* (Claudia Wilds criticized Peterson’s bill shapes) and in *Continental Birdlife* (Kenn Kaufman felt Peterson hadn’t done his homework). Peterson rebuffed his critics in the very same

issue of *Birding* in which the reviews appeared (how I would love to have a copy of that magazine!), reminding them that he was trying to teach people who don’t know how to identify birds how to identify them, as he was from the very beginning.

At nearly 400 pages of text, this is not a casual read. But it is a well-written account full of quotes and interviews (the author conducted over 110 personal interviews) with many of the people who knew him, right up until the last years of his life. People such as Pete Dunne, Scott Weidensaul, and Kenn Kaufman reminisce about Peterson, and it keeps his memory alive and relevant. When today’s young birders pick up their Sibley guide or their National Geographic, they should be aware that the field guide as we know it today, in all its permutations, started with this man and his revolutionary ideas. And he did not rest on his laurels after that first edition, but spent his lifetime revising and improving it, working on the fifth edition right up until his death in 1996. We are all better birders, better artists, and better conservationists because of him.

—Rick Sussman

BOOK REVIEW

BIRDWATCHER: The Life of Roger Tory Peterson, By Elizabeth J. Rosenthal

Don’t be fooled by that hefty page count—almost 50 of those pages are devoted to notes and bibliography in this welcome biography of the man who all but created birding in the U.S.

For those of us who carry multiple field guides on the back seat of the car, it is hard to imagine what birding was like in the days before Peterson published his first field guide, with its meticulous artwork and arrows highlighting the field marks. But Rosenthal does a fine job of detailing the impact that small book made. The first 1,000 copies sold out on the date of publication (April 27, 1934). Even more mind-boggling, Peterson was only 25 at the time.

Unlike many biographers, Rosenthal organizes her book thematically. Although the first few chapters are chronological, necessary to show the influences that led Peterson to his career as our premier birder, most of the book explores different aspects of this complex man. One section, for example, focuses on his conservation work; another is about his family relationships. Others detail his world travels and how he became a mentor to a whole generation of younger birders. This structure makes the book much more interesting to read, and it allows Rosenthal to explore different aspects of a man who was an expert at identifying birds, an ardent conservationist, and a focused and methodical artist, but probably not the best of husbands.

Each chapter is based on Rosenthal’s extensive interviews and research. In an unusual move, either the author or her editor decided against using numbered end notes. Instead, the “Chapter Notes” are actually lengthy bibliographies. While I don’t mind not seeing superscript numbers all over the page—they can be distracting, especially when the note they refer to is simply a bibliographical reference—it is a risky choice for a work of scholarship. Not that anyone will seriously challenge Rosenthal’s research: the list of personal interviews covers four pages. There is a center section of photos, but I wish there had been more, especially of his family and some of the contemporary birders he had influenced and taught.

Thanks to all of the interviews, which are quoted liberally throughout the book, this biography is a real pleasure to read. Instead of being a dry recounting of Peterson’s activities, it’s a collection of fascinating stories told by many of the people whose lives were enriched by his passion for birds. It makes me wish I’d had the chance to meet him in person. For anyone who loves birding, this biography is a must-read.

—Patricia Valdata

LAST CALL

...for **Chapter and Committee Annual Reports.** Submit them to MOS President Wayne Bell (wbell2@washcoll.edu) by May 15.

...for **Research Proposals.** Grants (generally no more than \$2,000) are available for ornithological research in the state of Maryland. Applications are due by June 1. Notification of awards will be made in about 8 weeks. For info, contact David Ziolkowski, 443-299-8453.

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BOOK REVIEW

BIRDWATCHER: The Life of Roger Tory Peterson, By Elizabeth J. Rosenthal • *The Lyons Press, Guilford, CT, 2008. 437 pages.*

Claudia Wilds once voyaged to Antarctica and South Georgia with a group of eminent birders, one of whom was Roger Tory Peterson. (Her cabinmate was Phoebe Snetsinger.) RTP, Claudia recalled, insisted on being photographed only from his “good” side. Claudia took devilish delight in snapping his other profile.

Herewith are two takes on the newest Peterson biography—in this case, both revealing the “good” side of an engaging book.

—Lydia Schindler



I am, admittedly, a huge “Peterson-ophile.” After all, it was Peterson, or more specifically one of his field guides, that first sparked my interest in nature when I was just a boy. Once I discovered the Peterson Field Guides it seemed that all of nature was at my fingertips and it was not long before I found fascination in the man himself. Over the years, I have collected and read as many of his books as I could

find, including his biographies.

The first of the biographies, *The World of Roger Tory Peterson, An Authorized Biography*, by John C. Devlin and Grace Nesmith, was published in 1977. It takes us up to his life just as he was divorcing Barbara, his second wife and mother of their two sons, and marrying Virginia. This was a good book for its time, and it gave a nice overview (albeit sugar-coated as he was still living) of his life, with many black-and-white photographs as well as examples of his pen-and-ink drawings and some of his finer artistic bird portraits.

In 2007 another biography appeared: *Roger Tory Peterson, A Biography*, by Douglas Carlson, and I read this one too. This book covers his life in chronological order, and while this may seem like a good idea, Peterson was so busy with so many different and often overlapping projects that this format seems to fall short and makes for a rather tedious read. I did find the last chapter of interest, though, as it picked up where the previous book left off. Most intriguing of all was Carlson’s examination of the establishment of the Roger Tory Peterson Institute in Jamestown, N.Y. in 1993, and the efforts of Virginia (and her daughters) “to cut the institute out of a huge portion of Peterson’s estate.”

Then in 2008, *BIRDWATCHER, The Life of Roger Tory Peterson* hit the bookshelves. This book, written 12 years after his death, gives perhaps the most honest treatment of Peterson. It delves into his early home life, painting a picture of a rebellious youth with an early interest in nature. It also shows the human side of him—his occasional disregard for his personal comfort or safety, so focused on birds was he (once wading in ice cold water