

The newsletter of the Montgomery Bird Club of the Maryland Ornithological Society

February 2013

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President's Chat

Despite the cold wind finding its way through my home's cracks and crevices, I am warmed by the first seed catalogues that are arriving (and an L.L.Bean Fly-Fishing catalog to boot!), convincing me that spring and flowers and migrant birds can't be far away. But let's enjoy our winter birds as well.

Many of you have participated (in some brutally windy weather) in the Christmas Bird Counts (see our website for the CBC reports).

MBC participated in the Science and Environment Night at Waters Landing Elementary School in Germantown on Thursday, January 10. Andy Martin and I had a table of field guides and posters of our common birds to spark some excitement about the upcoming Great Backyard Bird count (February 15–18). We also had a poster-sized checklist for the students to mark the birds they see and handouts with bird-related activities they can do at home.

We are continuing to work with the Sierra Club on invasive plant removal at Blue Mash (see John Combs's request on page 6) and hope to participate for the second year in Earth Day celebrations at our local Izaak Walton League of America. Last year we had a poster about our club in addition to field guides, bird posters, and our own Site Guide on the table.

As Henry David Thoreau said, "One is not born into the world to do everything but to do something." With that in mind, I'd like to thank everyone who has joined in any of these activities. More thanks are due to all of our field trip leaders and a big welcome to several folks who are leading trips for the first time. And if you feel like trying something new, we need someone to take over the position of compiling "Birds of Note," which appears in every issue of the *Chat*. Andy Martin, who has done a great job for several years, would like to retire from this activity. Please contact me or *Chat* editor Susan Hunt if you are interested in doing this.

By now you should have received registration forms for the 2013 MOS Conference. There is also a registration form on the MOS website (www.mdbirds.org). This year the conference will be held May 24–26 at the Ramada Conference Center in Edgewood, Maryland (Harford County). Jean Wheeler and Janet Shields are looking for donations for the Silent Auction and Raffle. Any items can be brought to the conference when you go. I can also take them with me when I go to the next MOS Board Meeting on March 2. The recipient of the auction/raffle proceeds this year is the Harford Land Trust.

And let's not forget our own party! On the back of this *Chat* is the sign-up form for our Club Social on Friday, March 15, 2013 at the ANS Woodend mansion. Our honored guest will be Don Messersmith. This is a great chance for all of us to get together over delicious food, chat, and be amazed at the wonderful photos presented by our members. I encourage you to sign up early since space is limited. Please contact Ed Patten (epatten1022@verizon.net) if you would like to help with the Social or can bring appetizers.

Good birding! ♪

—Anna Urciolo

CONTENTS	
Winter/Spring Calendar	2
Chapter Chatter	2
Field Trips	3-4
Trip Reports	5-6
Preserving Blue Mash	6
Birds of Note	7
In Memoriam.....	8-9
MBC Social Sign-Up Form	10



Winter/Spring Calendar

Chapter Chatter

MOS/MBC Dues Are Tax Deductible

Dave Webb, MOS treasurer, has notified us that MBC and MOS dues are tax-deductible for the year 2012 and subsequent years. Under rules and regulations in IRS Publication 526, the member benefits received are not substantial and, therefore, “the dues can be deducted as a charitable contribution.” The full deductibility applies to the local Club’s portion of dues as well. ♪

Great Backyard Bird Count, February 15–18

Participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count is easy. Just watch birds for at least 15 minutes at the location of your choice on one or more of the count days. Estimate the numbers of birds you see for each species you can identify. Enter your results at www.birdcount.org. ♪

Condolences

The Club offers its sincere condolences to Don Messersmith and his family on the death of his beloved wife Sherry on November 22.

For many years, Sherry was an officer of World Nature Association, which became the Crowder-Messersmith Fund under the aegis of the Audubon Naturalist Society in 1999. She lived her life in helping others. One example of that commitment was providing micro-grants for environmental education projects in developing countries through the Crowder-Messersmith Fund.

Donations in Sherry’s memory may be made to the Audubon Naturalist Society, Crowder-Messersmith Conservation Fund, 8940 Jones Mill Road, Chevy Chase, MD 20815. ♪

— Daphne Gemmill

February 20 (Wednesday), 7:30 p.m., Night Flight Calls. *Andy Martin.* Andy has special audio equipment that he uses to monitor the night flight calls of migration (spring and fall). He will provide an overview of his equipment and talk about some of the birds he has found migrating through Montgomery County at night.

March 15 (Friday), 6:30 p.m., Annual Montgomery Bird Club Social, Woodend, Chevy Chase. Social hour followed by dinner and presentation to this year’s Guest of Honor, *Don Messersmith*. The evening will conclude with the traditional members’ slide show. See the back page of this issue of the *Chat* for the sign-up form and information about submitting photos for the slide show.

April 17 (Wednesday), 7:30 p.m., The Philippines. *Gail Mackiernan.* The Philippines encompasses 7,100 islands and, because of its isolation, hosts almost 200 species of birds found nowhere else in the world. However, continuing loss of forest has made many of them rare and hard-to-locate. Gail will talk about her recent trip to three of the largest islands in search of such “mega” birds as Philippine Eagle, Palawan Peacock Pheasant, and Azure-breasted Pitta.

May 15 (Wednesday), 7:30 p.m., Maryland’s Salt Marshes and Birds. *David Curson.* David will provide an overview of Maryland’s salt marshes and the birds that live there.

Meetings take place at the Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Road, Potomac. From the Beltway, take Exit 39 (River Rd/Rte 190) toward Potomac. After crossing Falls Rd (Rte 189), continue a quarter-mile to Gary Road on the right. Turn right on Gary Road, then take an immediate left into the church parking area. (OK to park in the adjacent elementary school lot as well.) Meetings take place in the Fellowship Hall, ground level. Doors open at 7 p.m. Cancellation policy: Club meetings are canceled if Montgomery County schools have been closed. If you have questions, contact Anna Urciolo at 301-251-9452 or urcioloa@sidwell.edu.

The Chat is published in February, May, August, and November by the Montgomery Bird Club, a chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society.

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Deadline for submissions is the 5th of the preceding month. Send items to Susan Hunt, 10705 Tenbrook Drive, Silver Spring, Maryland 20901. Phone: 301-530-2807, e-mail: shunt820@yahoo.com.



Field Trips

New Club members, new birders, and guests are cordially welcome on every field trip. Because some trips offer an easier learning environment, we have marked them with an . If in doubt, don't hesitate to contact field trip coordinator Linda Friedland at linnet1@verizon.net or 301-983-2136 (before 9 p.m.).

 **FEBRUARY 3 (Sunday) WINTER WATERFOWL ON THE POTOMAC.** Half day. We'll check the river for wintering ducks in a portion of the Urban Zone (a no-firearms-discharge area) between the mouth of Watts Branch and Great Falls. Expect some winter passerines along the C&O Canal as well. Meet at 8 a.m. in the Swain's Lock parking lot at end of Swain's Lock Road. Bring a scope if you have one. Trip will be canceled if icy conditions make walking treacherous. Reservations required. For reservations and more info, contact the LEADER: Andy Martin at martinap2@verizon.net or 301-529-2066.

FEBRUARY 9 (Saturday) COASTAL WORCESTER COUNTY. Full day (to dusk). Bring food, water, warm clothing. Spend a full day on the coast searching for winter finches, rare gulls, alcids, and any lingering rarities. Reservations required. LEADERS: Bill Hubick and Jim Brighton. For reservations and directions, contact Bill Hubick at bill_hubick@yahoo.com.

 **FEBRUARY 10 (Sunday) OAKS LANDFILL, LAYTONSVILLE.** Bundle up to explore this now-closed landfill adjacent to the Blue Mash Nature Trail. Mostly open terrain with some ponds. Probable wintering sparrows and raptors and possible waterfowl, if ponds are not iced over. Leader will have scope for distant birds. We have special permission to enter this "closed to the public" landfill so reservations are essential. Limit: 16. Meet at 8 a.m. For reservations and more information, contact the LEADER: Mark England at markengland@canamcontractors.com, 240-207-3132 (home), or 240-375-4500 (cell).

FEBRUARY 27 (Wednesday) BLUE MASH. Half-day walk to see what's about in the dead of winter. Maybe some bright red cardinals, maybe some chickadees, but what else could be hiding in the thickets? Meet at Blue Mash parking lot at 8 a.m. Reservations not required. Snow, sleet, or rain will cancel trip. For more information or directions, contact the LEADER: Stephanie Lovell at 240-242-3235 or amore2LL@comcast.net.

 **MARCH 5 (Tuesday); MARCH 7 (Thursday); MARCH 12 (Tuesday); MARCH 19 (Tuesday) INFORMAL AFTERNOON WALKS** until dusk. Joint trip with Audubon Naturalist Society. Meet promptly at 5 p.m. at the end of Seneca Rd at Riley's Lock "on the bridge." After checking out the river, we will proceed to Hughes Hollow. Highlights here will include waterfowl flying into roost. We will try for displaying woodcock if they are in the vicinity. Bring scope and flashlight, and wear "muddy conditions" footwear. Reservations not required—all are welcome. For more info, call the LEADER: Jim Green at 301-742-0036 (cell).

MARCH 9 (Saturday) PATUXENT RIVER PARK, Jug Bay Natural Area, Prince George's Co. Half day. Joint trip with Audubon Naturalist Society. Waterfowl, Wilson's Snipe, winter and early spring songbirds, Ospreys displaying. Meet 8 a.m. at parking lot by park hdqtrs. Wear "muddy conditions" footwear. Reservations required (15-person limit). Call the LEADER: John Bjerke at 240-401-1643.

APRIL 13 (Saturday) HUGHES HOLLOW AND VICINITY. Joint trip with Frederick Bird Club. Half day. We will explore the wetlands of Hughes Hollow, Sycamore Landing, and Riley's Lock. Species to be expected include Red-headed Woodpeckers, Wood Ducks, Blue-winged Teal, and many other marsh dwellers. A good chance for several warblers including Prothonotary and others. Meet at Hughes Hollow parking lot in the McKee-Beshers WMA at 7 a.m. For more information and reservations, contact the CO-LEADERS: Bob Schaefer (Frederick) at 301-831-5660 or robert.schaefer@gmail.com, or Jim Nelson (Montgomery) at 301-530-6574 or kingfishers2@verizon.net.

 **APRIL 21 (Sunday) HUGH MAHANES PRESIDENTS' WALK AT HUGHES HOLLOW.** Half day. Participation of all former Club presidents is encouraged, and everyone is welcome. This is a wonderful chance for newer birders to be in the field with "old hands" who enjoy sharing what they know. With a variety of habitats, Hughes Hollow is always interesting in spring. Depending on where interesting birds have been seen, we may also visit nearby areas. We will look for waterbirds on the move and early songbird migrants. Possible birds include Purple Finches, Blue-winged Teal, swallows, and maybe even an American Bittern. Meet at 7 a.m. at the Hughes Hollow parking lot. Reservations required. For more information, directions, and reservations, contact the LEADER: Anna Urciolo at urcioloa@sidwell.edu.

continued on next page

Field Trips

APRIL 27 (Saturday) BLUE MASH NATURE TRAIL/OAKS LANDFILL. Half day. Interesting walk at these adjacent and surprisingly birdy sites in Montgomery County. Waterproof boots helpful at Blue Mash but not needed at the landfill. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Zion Road parking lot. Reservations required. Trip is limited to 8 to 10 participants. For reservations and directions, contact the LEADER: Mark England at markengland@canamcontractors.com, 240-207-3132 (home), or 240-375-4500 (cell).

APRIL 28 (Sunday) OCCOQUAN BAY NWR. Half day. Explore the diverse habitats in this one-square-mile refuge at the confluence of the Potomac and Occoquan Rivers in Woodbridge, VA. A variety of raptors and migratory warblers, vireos, thrushes, and flycatchers should be present, and rails and bitterns are possibilities. Meet at the parking lot in the center of the refuge at 8 a.m. Reservations required. Limit: 25. For reservations, contact the LEADERS: Mike Bowen at 301-530-5764 or dhmbowen@yahoo.com, and Gerry Hawkins at 571-277-8406 or maineusa@comcast.net. Directions: From Maryland, take Rt. 495 south to I-95 south, LEFT Exit 161 (Woodbridge), follow Rt. 1 south, cross the Occoquan River, turn left at the light onto Dawson Beach Rd., and follow this road to the end.

 **MAY 5 (Sunday) LITTLE BENNETT RP.** Half day. Near peak migration for warblers and vireos, including those breeding in this varied habitat. Reservations required. For time, directions, and reservations, call the LEADER: Gemma Radko at 301-514-2894.

MAY 7 (Tuesday) ROCK CREEK PARK, DC. One-third day. Early migrant warblers, vireos, etc. Meet at 7 a.m. at Picnic Area #18, one-half mile below the Nature Center on Ridge Road. Reservations required. For more information or specific directions, call the LEADER: Wallace Kornack at 202-338-7859.

MAY 8 (Wednesday) WASHINGTON COUNTY: SEEKING BREEDERS AND MIGRANTS. Three-quarters to a full day. Explore some of Washington County's under-birded treasures. Expect some birding from the road, mixed in with some moderate hikes (nothing overly strenuous). Walking conditions could be wet in some areas. We will visit several parts of Indian Springs WMA, look for grassland birds in the farm country west of Hagerstown, and finish with stops at some historical shorebird habitats. Bring snacks, drinks, lunch, insect repellent, etc. Reservations required. Limit: 10. Carpooling strongly suggested. Meeting place will be north of Clear Spring and start at 7 a.m. For reservations and directions, contact the LEADER: Jim Green at 301-742-0036 (cell) or jkgbirdman53@gmail.com.

 **MAY 10 (Friday) BIRDING BY EAR ALONG THE C&O CANAL.** The emphasis is on listening, so tune up your ears for this half-day canal walk. We'll be on the lookout for nesting and migrant landbirds. Meet at 7 a.m. at the end of Pennyfield Lock Road. Reservations required. For more information and reservations, contact the LEADERS: Cyndie Loeper at cyndieloeper@comcast.net or 240-535-8584 or Ann Lucy at 301-229-8810.

MAY 11 (Saturday) IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE, B-CC CHAPTER. Half day. The Club's second official field trip to this large private property south of Poolesville. Woods, hedgerows, streams, fields, and ponds provide a wide range of bird habitats, and migration should be on its way by this date. Trip will start at 7 a.m. at the League's chapterhouse. Reservations required, but no attendee number limit. For reservations and directions, contact the LEADER: Mike Bowen at 301-530-5764 or dhmbowen@yahoo.com. B-CC Chapter Treasurer and MBC member Jim Tate will co-lead.

MAY 19 (Sunday) ROCK CREEK PARK, DC. One-third day. Migrant warblers, vireos, etc. Meet at 7 a.m. at Picnic Area #18, one-half mile below the Nature Center on Ridge Road. Limit: six. Reservations required. For more information or directions and to make reservations, call the LEADER: Wallace Kornack at 202-338-7859.



Welcome New Members!

Stephen Davies

Larry Fox

Tim and Lynn Friedlander

Rebecca Gleim



Trip Reports

(For the full field trip reports, please see our website.)

Oaks Landfill, Sunday, October 28. Leaders: Ed Patten and Mark England. Participants: 5. Species: 42. The day was cloudy with a steady breeze from the approaching storm. The October trip to the landfill is known for raptors and sparrows, and this trip was no different. The raptors included several Red-tails, Sharp-shinned, Northern Harrier, and an American Kestrel. Eight species of sparrow included Savannah, Chipping, White-crowned, and Swamp. Highlights included a Pectoral Sandpiper, Common Yellowthroat, and a Palm Warbler. Always enjoyable to bird this restricted area.



Dorchester County Bird Trip, Sunday, November 4. Leader: Andy Martin. Participants: 5. Species: 77. We checked a couple of points on the Choptank River but found very little activity—a single Common Loon, Laughing Gulls, 5-6 Bufflehead, Tree Swallows, and three Bald Eagles. A Wild Turkey was a pleasant surprise at the intersection of Leonard's Lane and Cosby. Best bird along Egypt Road was a Vesper Sparrow, and we also had four Northern Harriers (two "Gray Ghosts"), American Pipit, Horned Lark, Eastern Meadowlarks, a single Palm Warbler, and lots of sparrows including some White-crowns.

At Blackwater, they are still renovating the Visitor Center with expected opening in March. The Marsh Trail was closed due to leftover high water from Superstorm Sandy. Wildlife Drive held good numbers of passerines, and the higher than normal water pushed the birds closer to the trees and shrubs, giving us some great looks at Pine Siskins, both kinglets, a Hermit Thrush, Eastern Phoebe, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and lots of Yellow-rumped Warblers. Northern Pintails were numerous on the impoundments, and we did manage to find two Snow Geese. Out in the brackish water, there were a few rafts of Ruddy Duck and 50-60 Forster's Terns. Tree Swallows were everywhere. Along the entrance road to the Tubman Trail off Hip Roof Road, we flushed an American Bittern.

We ended the day at Shorter's Wharf. No Short-eared Owls for this trip, but we were entertained by a dazzling sunset, surrounded by the late fall marsh birds settling in for the night, including Great Blue Herons, Northern Harriers, Bald Eagles, Black Ducks, Marsh Wren, and a few fly-over Tundra Swans.

Blue Mash LBJs, Sunday, November 11. Leader: Lydia Schindler. Participants: 6. Species: 41. The weather was gorgeous, sunny and windless. Only our earliest birder got to see two Wild Turkeys across the street from the parking lot. Ducks on the landfill pond included Hooded Merganser, Ruddy Duck, scaup, and a good-sized flock of Green-winged Teal. Hawks were limited to a heard Red-shoulder plus 3 Red-tails, one of them being pursued by a Kestrel. Fox Sparrows were all around, perhaps 15 or 16—perched, glimpsed, and/or heard, their song lilting and their chip surprisingly robust.



Lois Green, Sunday, November 18. Leader: Ed Patten. Participants: 4. Species: 39. Highlights included seven species of waterfowl, including Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, and Ruddy Duck; several Red-breasted Nuthatches; and six species of sparrows.



Occoquan Bay NWR, VA, Sunday, November 25. Leaders: Gerry Hawkins and Mike Bowen. Participants: 10. Species: 53. Highlights: Seven sparrow species (plus Junco), with lots of Songs and White-throateds and a few Swamps and Fields. Three (Red) Fox Sparrows and two Savannahs were the standouts. A single juvenile White-crowned Sparrow gave us a quick view. Yellow-rumped Warblers and a Brown Creeper were seen. Eastern Bluebirds were everywhere. We had Pied-billed (17) and Horned (1) Grebes, a close flock of a dozen Hooded Mergansers, Ruddy Duck, Mallard, Gadwall, American Black Duck, Bufflehead, and very large rafts of Lesser Scaup and American Coot. Raptors included Bald Eagles, a Northern Harrier, Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, and a couple of Cooper's Hawks. Gulls observed were the usual three common wintering species—Ring-billed, Herring, and Great Black-backed—with several age classes visible for the gull aficionados.



Lilypons and Vicinity, Sunday, December 2. Leaders: Gail Mackiernan and Barry Cooper. Participants: 7. Species: 45. Weather: Extremely foggy. We started at the Bishop Claggett Center, which yielded the expected flock of White-crowned Sparrows, as well as two late Chippings.

continued next page

Trip Reports

The dense fog kept everything gray and quiet, but a close perched adult Cooper's Hawk provided a nice surprise for all. Two Golden-crowned Kinglets provided good views. By the time we arrived at the corn stubble field along Lilypons Road, it was beginning to clear. A rather small flock of Horned Larks was scanned for Lapland Longspurs, and suddenly we found a group of 10 of these northern

visitors amongst the larks! At least one male still retained a great deal of color. At Lilypons, the new fence necessitated a scramble down an embankment. A bit quiet, but we added a pair of perched adult Bald Eagles, both Red-tail and Red-shouldered Hawks, Hooded Mergansers, and American Black Ducks, a calling Raven, and a Phoebe as well as expected Swamp Sparrows. A good day with some nice birds.

Preserving Blue Mash

Dr. Doug Tallamy, an entomologist with the University of Delaware, has documented that the continued health of our native insects and birds depends on the survival of native plants. The invasion of non-native plants threatens the long-term survival of our native plants.

The diverse habitats surrounding the closed Oaks Landfill attract birds and other wildlife, but bird diversity has dropped off in recent years due to invasive non-native plants. The Department of Environmental Protection, the Montgomery County Sierra Club, and the Montgomery Bird Club are partnering to remove invasive plants and return the area into a birding hotspot. RIP (removing invasive plants) sessions will be held the third Sunday of the month from March to May, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Please plan to attend one or more of these third Sunday sessions and pay forward for your continuing birding pleasures. Tools are limited, so please bring clippers, saws, and loppers, if you have them. Long sleeves, pants, comfortable walking shoes or boots, hat, water, and binoculars are recommended. Meet at the Zion Road park entrance between Brookeville and Riggs Roads.

For more information and directions, visit <http://maryland.sierraclub.org/montgomery/calendar.html>. To RSVP, contact Mimi Abdu at mimi.abdu@maryland.sierraclub.org or 301-919-6060. ♪

— John Combs



Earliest Bird Walk to D.C. Hotspots, Tuesday, January 1, 2013. Leader: Mike Bowen. Participants: 14. Species: 34. Highlights: Some nice waterfowl, with a hen Hooded Merganser at Georgetown Reservoir; four Bufflehead, three Ruddy Ducks, and 50 Ring-necked Ducks at the Constitution Gardens Pond; and hundreds of Lesser Scaup on the Potomac, both sitting on the water and flying. The reliable group of Black-crowned Night-Herons was at the head of the Washington Channel, snoozing away and numbering 12 this year. It was a good raptor day, topped by one (possibly two) Merlins, an adult Peregrine Falcon perched on the 14th Street railroad bridge, and two Bald Eagles, sitting side by side on a large tree at the south end of the Hains Point golf course. We had 11 Pied-billed Grebes at Roaches Run. Passerines were really tough to find this year. No rare gulls this year, but we are already looking forward to the trip in 2014.



Black Hill Regional Park, January 13. Leader: Dave Powell. Participants: 7. Waterfowl species: 11. Weather: Very foggy. Viewing the waterfowl was tough with the fog, and we missed out on quite a few of the normal ones but found four dabblers, six divers, and Canada Geese. We did have some great views of both kinglets and a Brown Creeper while walking the Ten Mile Creek trail.

Petrel Update

Gail Mackiernan and Barry Cooper report that the Solander's Petrels they spotted in September 2011 in the Bering Sea have been accepted as a first record for the United States! They documented their sightings of at least 25 birds with more than 45 photos. The AOU has renamed the bird the Providence Petrel.

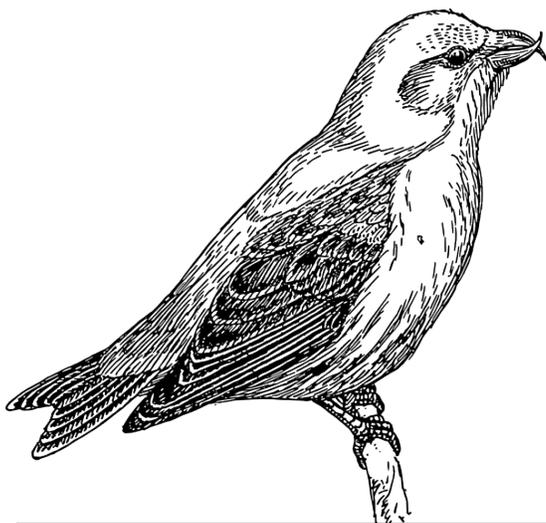


Birds of Note (late October 2012 to early January 2013)

What an incredible last few months of the year it's been for rare birds in Montgomery! According to Cornell Lab of Ornithology's and National Audubon's eBird online checklist, Montgomery County finished the year with a cumulative total of 257 birds for 2012. That's 12 birds better than the 2011 total of 245.

Some of the best birds to show up in Montgomery over the past few months came in on 10/30, following the passage of Tropical Storm Sandy. Dave Czaplak got over to the Potomac River just above Violette's Lock around 7 a.m. that morning to see what might be left behind. Dave and several other birders were not disappointed. Birds seen at Violette's Lock on 10/30 include **Brant**, **Black Scoter**, both **Red** and **Red-necked Phalarope**, **Dunlins**, **Laughing** and **Bonaparte's Gull**, **Arctic** and **Common Tern**, and **Pomarine Jaeger**. Toward the end of the day, a final surprise (initially spotted by Tim Guida) included probably what will be Montgomery's first record of a **Black Skimmer**.

Winter finches have been another big story across Maryland and the northeastern U.S. the first part of this winter. October saw a continuing irruption of **Red-breasted Nuthatch** and **Pine Siskin** across the county. Beginning in early November, both species of crossbills, a few **Evening Grosbeaks**, and a couple of **Common Redpoll** were reported. Tim Guida, Stephen Davies, and Gail Mackiernan and Barry Cooper all reported **Red Crossbills** in Montgomery. **White-winged Crossbills** were found by Paul Woodward on 11/15 at Hughes Hollow, Stephen Davies on 11/4 at Wheaton Branch Stormwater Ponds, and Dave Czaplak on 12/28 in the pine grove in back of the baseball fields adjacent to David Taylor School in Boyds. On 11/4, an **Evening Grosbeak** visited Brook Smith's yard near Black Hill RP.



Ed Patten reported another **Evening Grosbeak** from his yard near Washingtonian Woods Park in Gaithersburg. A Thanksgiving trip to his dad's house in Rockville netted expatriate Montgomery birder Michael O'Brien a flyover **Common Redpoll** on 11/21. Unfortunately, father Paul did not make it out the door in time to share in the sighting (or should I say "hearing"?) with his son. On 12/16, Evelyn Ralston, birding along Mt. Nebo Road during the Seneca Christmas Bird Count (CBC) also reported a **Common Redpoll**.

Noah Kahn's Silver Spring yard was graced on 12/9 with its second *Selasphorus* Hummingbird in the last two years. The bird was subsequently captured and banded by David Holmes and identified as a young female **Rufous Hummingbird**. This bird was still visiting Noah's hummingbird feeder as of 1/7.

In the category of not the "best way" to get a new bird on the Montgomery 2012 list, Russ Ruffing reported on 12/21 that a coworker of his accidentally hit and killed a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** with her truck while driving down New Hampshire Avenue near Denit Estates in Brookeville. The bird was banded, and Russ subsequently found out that the bird was a hatch-year female and had been captured only 69 days previously at the Kestrel Haven Avian Migration Observatory in Burdett (Schuyler County), New York. Unfortunate.

Finally, some good birds were reported during this year's round of CBCs. The Triadelphia CBC on 12/15 produced a **Short-eared Owl** for Rick and Alli Sussman over the old Oaks Landfill adjacent to Blue Mash. In addition to the aforementioned **Common Redpoll**, the Seneca CBC held on 12/16 yielded a **Snow Bunting**, three **Lapland Longspur**, two very late **Palm Warblers**, and a **Short-eared Owl** in the vicinity of Homestead Farm off Sugarland Road. A lingering **Great Egret** was seen at Riley's Lock near the turning basin. Montgomery's portion of the Central Loudoun CBC netted a single **Snow Bunting** and three **Lapland Longspurs** at the Patton Turf Farm, and Dave Czaplak found a **Greater White-fronted Goose** at Black Hill RP on the day of the Sugarloaf Mountain CBC.

In "twitching news," Dave Czaplak finished 2012 with an impressive 242 species in Montgomery. That's eight better than his 2011 total of 234. Mary Ann Todd and Jared Fisher also finished over the 200 species mark with 206 and 202, respectively. †

— Andy Martin

the Chat



In Memoriam

Judy McCartney

Everyone remembers Judy for her good cheer and her great sense of humor. A longtime member of the Montgomery Bird Club, she died on October 19 at the age of 85. Always willing to pitch in, whether at the Montgomery Bird Club or ANS, she served as Circulation Editor for the *Chat* and also served a term as MBC's representative to the Maryland Ornithological Society.

A reference librarian for the federal government, Judy found time to travel on many ANS trips—Costa Rica, Wales, Montana, Alaska, and more—and many local forays with MBC. Linda Friedland remembers trips to the Eastern Shore and Judy's "sparkle and liveliness that energized us as we drove and great enthusiasm for the birds we later encountered. Her cheerfulness and witty conversation made the rides back equally enjoyable."

Suzanne Richman remembers driving with Judy and others to Lake Erie to bird at Magee Marsh during spring migration and how easy-going Judy was in all the group decision-making. Suzanne also accepted Judy's invitation to join the Tuesday morning birding group. "I will always appreciate how Judy widened her circle of friends to allow me to join. I will miss her very sweet nature."

Lydia Schindler remembers Judy for her "quick, tart humor and her genial good nature and sense of fun." On an ANS trip to North Dakota, despite the stark landscape, spartan accommodations, and notable lack of fresh green vegetables, everyone had a good time, thanks to Judy's ability to see the positive in any situation.

Tricia Tice birded frequently with Judy and fondly remembers a trip to Lake Erie where Judy "kept up a marvelous amusing commentary on the state of politics in the nation." Tricia will miss having coffee with her at Starbucks after many a bird walk.

Judy and I had been friends for years, playing golf, attending theater and opera, and serving in various volunteer capacities for our condominium, before she introduced me to birding. I am so grateful for the legacy she left—the door she opened for me on a lifetime of happy birding, beautiful places, and wonderful fellow birders. †

— *Martha Morris*

Donations may be made in Judy's memory to the Audubon Naturalist Society, 8940 Jones Mill Road, Chevy Chase, MD 20815.

Barbara Holloman

I first met Barbara when I joined the Tuesday Bird Group, an informal group of birders who have been meeting for many years, at Judy McCartney's recommendation. Barbara showed up that morning with a wig and matter-of-factly talked about having cancer. There was no pity party, and she mentioned her treatments only to tell us that she had scheduled them on a day of the week that would allow her to feel better by Tuesday so she could come on the walks. The conversation always moved quickly to why we were all together in the first place and which bird was that, high in the Sycamore tree?

Barbara quickly "took me under her wing." I was still learning to identify bird songs and warblers. I remember one day at Pennyfield Lock on the Canal. Barbara was reeling off the names of the birds that were singing, but at one point she stopped, turned to us, and said, "OK, you all tell me what that bird is!" It sounded familiar, but we were at a loss to identify it. She waited a good while, putting us on the spot, before she told us it was a Downy Woodpecker. Since that day, I always think of Barbara when I hear the Downy's descending call. I mentioned this to her last fall on a walk, and she said it reminded *her* of *me*. We had a chuckle about that.

When one of Barbara's sorority sisters from the University of Maryland spoke at Barbara's funeral, she said that while Barbara was in the hospital, she mentioned that certain birds reminded her of people who had died. When her friend asked Barbara what bird she wanted to be remembered by, she said the chickadee. And when asked which chickadee, she said, "The Carolina Chickadee, of course!"

I'll be thinking of Barbara often while I'm traipsing through the woods.

At Barbara's funeral, her choral group "Friends of Barbara" sang songs for her; some of her daughter's friends, who called her "Mom Holloman" were there, as well as Girl Scouts who had been mentored by her and, of course, neighbors and birding friends. Barbara touched many lives, and I feel richer for having known her.

Our Tuesday Bird Group will continue but a little sadder, with the loss of two birders recently. †

— *Suzanne Richman*



In Memoriam

Louis D. DeMouy (1940–2012): A Tribute

Lou DeMouy, one of the best-known and admired birders in the Greater Washington area, passed away on November 8, 2012, after a long battle with mesothelioma, a rare cancer in the lining of the lung. He leaves Jane, his wife of 47 years, three daughters, and four grandchildren. Family, colleagues, and friends attended a funeral home viewing and funeral mass a week later.

Lou was that relatively rare local commodity, a through-and-through native Washingtonian. He attended Gonzaga College High School in DC and earned bachelor's and master's degrees in economics from Georgetown University. He served two years in the U.S. Army, after which he worked in the Navy Department, the U.S. Commerce Department, the MNCPPC, the Securities Industry Association, and the Securities and Exchange Commission. In 1975, Lou started a long and successful professional career in the Federal Energy Administration, which later became the U.S. Department of Energy. His division analyzed and published data relied upon by governments and the oil industry around the world. Lou traveled widely and became an internationally known and respected expert on energy statistics. After retirement from federal service, he became an in-demand professional consultant. He was extremely well-liked by his colleagues and by those who worked for him. One told me that "he was by far the best boss I ever had." As we birders know firsthand, Lou was the most charming and gracious human being there could be. His smile was gentle but warm and genuine and his wry sense of humor infectious.

Of course, those of us in the Montgomery Bird Club knew him primarily as a birder. He served the Club as a chapter director from 1992 to 1994, as president from 1994 to 1996, and then as state director from 1996 to 1998. In 2003 he was the Guest of Honor at the chapter's March Social, at which his many contributions to the chapter were formally recognized. At the state level, he served for several years as the manager and coordinator of the MOS Annual Conference, making arrangements with hotels and birding sites and setting up the necessary committees. Lou was active too in the Audubon Naturalist Society and took part in the yearly "Bloomin' Birdathon" to raise money for ANS programs—as recently as May 2012 he saw 78 species, even though his health was failing. He was a long-time sector coordinator for the annual Washington, DC,

Christmas Bird Count and for the Sugarloaf Mountain CBC in Montgomery and Frederick Counties.

There could be no more delightful companion on a day's birding in the field. Lou got a kick out of seeing and hearing even common local birds, and his wide range of interests made for interesting and stimulating conversation during those periods when the birds became quiet.

Indeed, there was much more to Lou DeMouy than a birder and energy information expert. He was a keen runner, completing four Marine Corps Marathons and annual Army 10-milers and Cherry Blossom 10-milers until poor health made it impossible. He was an avid reader, fascinated by all aspects of conservation, and was a whole-hearted and knowledgeable fan of our local professional sports teams. For five years he was a reading mentor in DC schools, winning an award in the Everybody Wins program. He also volunteered in his church's food pantry program.

It is terribly hard to have to bid goodbye to Lou. Perhaps the best way to say it is to use the phrase he always said at the conclusion of our phone conversations: "Take care."

Take care, Lou. †

—*Michael Bowen*

The times I spent birding with Lou we were most often part of a group—either on an MBC walk or with a few friends birding on the spur of the moment. It was always such a pleasure to have Lou with us. He had a real delight in all birds—even the most ordinary—and shared his great passion for continually learning new things about the natural world.

But most of all I will remember the phone calls made every so often when a rarity was out there that we felt everyone else in the entire birding world had seen except us. So off we would go chasing the Virginia's Warbler, the Pink-footed Goose, the Tufted Duck, or the White-winged Crossbill. Sometimes we got the bird; sometimes not. But we always had some sparkling discussions and finished with a sense that the time spent had been worthwhile. I will miss those wonderful times. †

—*Linda Friedland*



ANNUAL MBC SOCIAL

Friday, March 15, 2013

Guest of Honor: Don Messersmith

Join us for our annual social at Woodend, headquarters of the Audubon Naturalist Society, 8940 Jones Mill Road, Chevy Chase. The evening begins with a social hour at 6:30, followed by dinner at 7:30. Smokey Glen Farm of Gaithersburg will once again cater this delicious dinner.

The evening will feature the traditional members' slide show. John Hubbell will be the compiler. Please limit your presentation to your 10 favorite digital photos and send them to John at johngilhub@yahoo.com **no later than March 11** in digital form (either on a CD or a thumb drive) in the order you want them to be shown.

Because space is limited, places will go to the first 90 persons to reserve and pay. Send this form (or a copy) and your check (\$20 per person), payable to Montgomery Bird Club, to Ed Patten, 7 Midsummer Court, Gaithersburg, MD 20878. Ed's email is epatten1022@verizon.net.

Name(s) to appear on tags:

Phone #: _____

Signup deadline is Wednesday, March 6.

_____ Please check here if you would like a vegetarian meal. Vegetarian lasagna will be available.

_____ reservations at \$20 per person

\$ _____ enclosed



The Chat
MBC/MOS
P.O. Box 59639
Potomac, MD 20859-9639

