

President's Chat

The change of seasons is well underway. I am sure everyone is enjoying the migration. Speaking of change, we are still looking for a designer for the *Chat* to take over from Gemma Radko. We would especially like to thank Susan Hunt for all of her hard work as the editor of the *Chat*.

Thanks to Clive Harris for the excellent club social on March 20th. The guest of honor was Jim Nelson and we finished with a great members slide show.

The slate of Montgomery Bird Club (MBC) is as follows: Ed Patten President, Clive Harris Vice President, Rae Dubois Secretary and Chris Wright Treasurer. The state directors are Bill Adams, Andy Martin and Jim Moore. The Chapter Directors are Woody Dubois, Gail Mackiernan, Evelyn Ralston and Brooke Smith.

Thanks to Gail Mackiernan, as MBC Conservation Chair for sending an excellent letter to the Mayor of Rockville recommending that Rockville abandon the trap-neuter-release program because it is a threat to public health and destructive to wildlife.

On Saturday, April 25, our club participated in the Earth Day festivities at the Izaak Walton League of America, located at 20601 Izaak Walton Way in Poolesville, MD. We had a table with a poster about MBC, photographs of local birds, the MBC Site Guide and field guides.



On Sunday May 3rd we participated in the Meadowside Nature Center Raptor Festival. At the festival we had a display with photographs of raptors found in Montgomery county, the MBC site guides and field guides.

We answered questions about raptors and talked with several people that were new birders and were interested in becoming MBC members.

Clive Harris has reserved a shelter at Black Hills Park on June 6th for a Montgomery Bird Club picnic, details to follow.

Montgomery Bird Club is always looking for new ways to connect local birders with our club. We have had some discussions ANS about some joint efforts that may attract new members to both organizations. Cheers! ♪

— Ed Patten

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Spring/Summer Calendar

May 9 (Saturday), May Count. Wherever you're birding in Montgomery County on this day, bring along a copy of the May Count checklist (www.mdbirds.org/counts/namc/MDMayCountList2014.xls), and count all the birds you find. Submit completed checklists to compiler Diane Ford by email (dmford455@yahoo.com) or by snail mail (9813 Parkwood Drive, Bethesda, MD 20814) by June 15; eBird reports are also acceptable.

May 20 (Wednesday), 7:30 p.m. Phil Davis. "Behind the Scenes of the MD/DC Records Committee." Phil Davis has been the Secretary of the MD/DC Records Committee for 20 years. In his presentation, he will first address some obligatory "dull" records committee topics, including the history, role, and functions of the committee. Next, he will describe the committee's "historical canvas" and share intriguing images of and anecdotes about some of our region's more unusual and interesting records. Finally, in a masterful crescendo, he will divulge some behind the scenes "dirty little secrets" with some tales of MD and DC's little-known vintage records that will eventually comprise the committee's future publication, *The History of the Rare Birds of Maryland and the District of Columbia*.

The Club does not meet during the summer, but check out our website for news about bird sightings, and note the field trip schedule for the rest of May and the shorebird trip in August.

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 Road (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 Patrick Newcombe at 301-424-3259 or stonecroft5@verizon.net

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 Patrick Newcombe, 12005 Smoketree Road, Potomac, MD 20854. Phone: 301-424-3259, e-mail: stonecroft5@verizon.net



MBC Social

Over 60 people attended the MBC Annual Social on March 20, enjoying, as is our recent custom, an excellent barbecue dinner catered by Smokey Glen Farms, arranged by Jim Green. Many thanks to Jim for buying the beer and to Andy Martin for buying the wine and soft drinks. The Guest of Honor was Jim Nelson (see page 8 for his remarks).

The Social wrapped up with the annual slideshow, featuring excellent photos and drawings of birds from members. Many thanks once again to Gemma Radko for the superb bird nametags and to all who helped set up and clean up, brought appetizers, or just showed up to share in the event.

—Clive Harris

The World Series of Birding

On Saturday, May 9th, three teams from the Youth division of the Maryland Ornithological Society (YMOS) will be competing in the annual World Series of Birding. Participants include several members of the Montgomery Bird Club. The Marsh Gigglers are the middle school team, and the high school teams are the Kingfishers and Raucous Gulls.

Each of the YMOS teams will be competing in the whole state of New Jersey. We begin in the northern mountains and end on the southern coast. Our goal is 200 species. The World Series of Birding happens to fall on the day that the Cornell Lab of Ornithology is doing their Worldwide Big Day. We hope to add a species to the global total! More information on the World Series of Birding can be found at www.worldseriesofbirding.org

— Patrick Newcombe



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 linnetl@verizon.net or 301-983-2136 (before 9 p.m.).

MAY 3 (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 7:30 a.m. Reservations required. Limit: 25. Contact the LEADERS: Mike Bowen at 301-530-5764 or dhmbowen@yahoo.com, or Gerry Hawkins at 571-277-8406 or maineusa@comcast.net. Directions: From Maryland, take Rt. 495 south to I-95 south; take 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 3 (Sunday) LITTLE BENNETT RP. Half day. Near peak migration for warblers and vireos, including those breeding in this varied habitat. Reservations required. For reservations, time, and directions, contact the LEADER: Gemma Radko at 301-514-2894.

MAY 5 (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. Contact the LEADER: Wallace Kornack at 202-338-7859.

MAY 9 (Saturday) IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE, B-CC CHAPTER, CONSERVATION FARM. Half day. Again this year, the B-CC Chapter is generously providing access for a 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. Meet at 7 a.m. at the League's Chapterhouse. Reservations required. Limit: 12. For reservations and directions, contact the LEADER: Jim Nelson at kingfishers2@verizon.net or 301-530-6574.

MAY 9 (Saturday) MAY COUNT. Wherever you're birding in Montgomery County on this day, bring along a copy of the May Count checklist (www.mdbirds.org/counts/namc/MDMayCountList2014.xls), and count all the birds you find. Submit completed checklists to compiler Diane Ford by email (dmford455@yahoo.com) or by snail-mail (9813 Parkwood Drive, Bethesda, MD 20814) by June 15; eBird reports are also acceptable.

MAY 10 (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. Reservations required. For reservations and more information or directions, call the LEADER: Wallace Kornack at 202-338-7859.

MAY 13 (Wednesday) WHEATON REGIONAL PARK. Warblers, flycatchers, vireos, and orioles should all be here on this easy morning walk in an interesting park. Limit: 10. For more information about meeting time and place and for reservations (required), contact the CO-LEADERS: Woody and Rae Dubois at denguel@verizon.net.

MAY 15 (Friday) – MAY 17 (Sunday). MOS ANNUAL CONFERENCE. This year's conference will be held at the Clarion Hotel in Hagerstown, Maryland. Lots of trips are set up to a variety of areas. Information is available at www.mdbirds.org/activities/conference/MOSConf15.pdf. Contact Maureen Harvey at 410-795-3117 or pastpres@mdbirds.org for additional information.

JULY 25 (Saturday) DELAWARE COASTAL AREAS. Full day at Bombay Hook, Little Creek, Logan Tract, and other sites. Joint trip with ANS. Shorebirds, marshbirds, and some songbirds. Bring pack lunch. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Bombay Hook Visitor Center parking lot. Reservations required (15-person limit). Contact the LEADER: John Bjerke, johnbjerke1@mac.com or 240-401-1643. Cyndie Loeper will co-lead.



Trip Reports

Blue Mash, Thursday, January 15. Leader: Stephanie Lovell. Only one other person braved the 23°F temperature for this mid-week walk. The sky was blue and the sun was out, a change from the previous few days. The road was very icy, and we needed to carefully watch our steps. The usual suspects were stirring however, and once I took off the ear-smothering hat, the woods were full of chirps and twitters. Cardinals and titmice were abundant; a Carolina Wren woke up and loudly announced his presence; White-throated Sparrows were waking up too. The first pond was completely frozen over, as expected. We did have a Red-tailed Hawk flyover. He perched high in a tree, taking advantage of the morning sun. American Crows were vocal; oddly enough, no Canada Geese were stirring.

Crossing the road we came upon a group of titmice in the trees, and mockingbirds—both young and mature—were in the cedars. The best part was the group of at least half a dozen bluebirds, both sexes, at the second pond, sunning themselves in the bare tree branches over the frozen water; mixed in with them were some House Finches, one Yellow-rumped Warbler, and some goldfinch in winter clothes. We were able to cross the three low swales on the grassy edges without breaking through the ice; there was a lot of water in the ditches. On the path back around, there were lots of juncos picking at the grit on the path, along with a lone cardinal. A downy was on the trunk of a tree, and the Blue Jays were fussing at something we couldn't see. All in all a nice morning for a walk in the freezing sunshine.



Black Hill RP, Sunday, January 18. Leader: Gerry Hawkins. Ten people joined Gerry Hawkins for a very productive and enjoyable field trip to Black Hill Regional Park. During this waterfowl-focused trip we viewed Seneca Lake from the deck and surrounding grounds at the Visitors Center, the boat ramp area, and the Route 121 bridge. Highlights began early with the continuing Common Redpoll, originally found by club member Linda Friedland, and at least a half dozen Pine Siskins on and near the feeders at the Visitor Center for an extended period. Here we also saw our first of 16 species of waterfowl—two male Mallards foraging on the ground below the feeders.

More noteworthy waterfowl highlights included the continuing tagged Trumpeter Swan, eight Tundra Swans, 46 Redheads, of which 42 were males, male and female Canvasbacks, 12 Common Goldeneyes, including two males, Buffleheads, American Wigeon, Gadwall, Ring-necked Ducks, Ruddy Ducks, a single Lesser Scaup, a single American Black Duck, and large numbers of Hooded and Common Mergansers. Waterbirds also included a Common Loon and a Horned Grebe.

We also enjoyed watching an Eastern Phoebe perched at the top of a tree across from the parking area at the far end of the Rt. 121 bridge and looking for sparrows in the brushy hilly area across from this parking area, which produced a singing Fox Sparrow that we unfortunately could not locate. We also were unable to locate the Cackling and Greater White-fronted Geese recently found at the park by club member Clive Harris, perhaps because most of the geese we saw were seen in the distance by the Route 121 bridge and had left this area by the time we got there. We also did not see the recently reported Snow Goose, although we did see the resident mutt Snow Goose impersonator. Still, we were thrilled with what we did see, which included some of the most beautiful waterfowl in North America.



Winter Waterfowl along the Potomac River, Sunday, February 1. Leader: Andy Martin. Seven folks from the Bird Club enjoyed a great morning of birding along the Potomac River between Great Falls and Swain's Lock. We had a better than expected day weather-wise with quite cold (upper 20s) temperatures but very little wind. We ended up with 44 species for the day. Overall, landbirds seemed to be a little on the sparse side, but that was compensated for by a nice variety waterfowl.

We all met at Swain's Lock around 8 a.m. Walking across the canal and down to the river bank, we spent an enjoyable 30 minutes or so viewing the numerous ducks on the river. Species here included Mallard, Redheads, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, and Common Mergansers. A Pileated Woodpecker flew in to hammer on a tree hanging over the river.



Trip Reports

After perusing the river from the Swain's Lock area, we loaded back into a few cars and drove downriver to the Great Falls parking lot to set up a one-way walk along the River Trail and C&O Canal back to our starting point. From the concrete platform at Great Falls, we all got great looks at a few American Black Ducks, a pair of Gadwall, as well as more Ring-necked Ducks and Common Mergansers. We directed our spotting scopes towards the Bald Eagle nest on Conn Island, but the eagle pair was either not home or sitting so low that we could not see them from our vantage point. After the platform, we walked the River Trail upstream and added Hooded Merganser, Ruddy Duck, American Wigeon, Pied-billed Grebe, and American Coot to our list of waterbirds for the day. The River Trail and canal towpath seem to hold very few landbirds, but we did have better than average (meaning close up and out in the open) looks at two different Winter Wrens. The highlight of trip had to be a roosting Barred Owl. Sharp-eyed Bob Cantilli somehow magically spotted the bird cryptically resting on a branch that was wedged against the trunk of a large Sycamore Tree. The bird did not seem to mind our presence and we were able to get superb looks through both binoculars and spotting scopes. Towards the end of the trip, Brent Kruse spotted a flyover Bald Eagle that seemed to be partway between immature and adult plumage. The tail feathers were white but the bird's head was still dark. A great day to be out, with good weather, company and birds!



Oaks Landfill, Laytonsville, Sunday, February 8. Leaders: Mark England and Ed Patten. Participants: 21 plus leaders. Weather: Clear and about 50 degrees—a real aberration for February. Species: 14. Although our species total was low, all who attended this late afternoon birdwalk at the closed Oaks Landfill in Laytonsville were rewarded with some excellent sightings, particularly of raptors. There were an estimated six Northern Harriers (including one adult male), two Red-shouldered, and two Red-tailed Hawks, and two Short-eared Owls, which popped up and began hunting well before sunset, affording all terrific views, both in flight and perched on a pole less than 100 yards away. Later, a third owl appeared as we were leaving in the dark.

Before the group arrived at 3:30, Ed Patten and I made a brief scouting trip around the Landfill and flushed a light morph Rough-legged Hawk, so when the trip began, we dispensed with the usual search for sparrows (always reliable at this location) and went searching for this winter rarity. Unfortunately we were unable to relocate it. In addition to the great raptor show, we saw 5 Northern Flickers, 3 Savannah Sparrows, and a huge mixed flock of flyover Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles, easily numbering several hundred of each. Thanks to Ed Patten for helping lead and keeping this large and talkative group somewhat under control!



Patuxent River Park, Jug Bay Natural Area, March 14, 2015. Leader: John Bjerke. Participants: 6. Species: 33. The annual March trip by Audubon Naturalist and MBC encountered trip-long rain (causing about 20 cancellations). However, we still managed to welcome Spring with our first sighting of Tree Swallows and two Osprey pairs making a late return to their nesting platforms. Other interesting birds included two Bald Eagles near their nest, a perched Cooper's Hawk, two adult Lesser Black-backed Gulls, three very active Fox Sparrows digging up the mulch under a shrub, and two separate Rusty Blackbirds. We all got wet but it was an enjoyable morning nonetheless.



Informal Late Afternoon Walks, Tuesday, March 10, Thursday, March 12, and Tuesday, March 17. Leader: Jim Green. Our first trip was rained/fogged out with nobody showing up. The second and third trips had a nice variety of waterfowl but it was after large numbers of ducks had already pushed out and headed north a day or two earlier. We had good looks at Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers, Redhead and Canvasback. There was a White-winged Scoter seen prior to the start of one trip but not once we officially started. Most of the waterfowl was seen at Riley's Lock and downriver towards Violette's Lock. On our third trip we had very close looks at six Horned Grebes and it

continued next page

Trip Reports

gave us a great chance to see the large variety of plumages they exhibit in spring as they go from their winter plumage to their breeding plumage. On the turning basin along the towpath north of Riley's Lock we were able to find several Ring-necked ducks (and see the ring!) and also study a drake Greater Scaup at close range. Hughes Hollow was not abundant in waterfowl but we were able to study Wood Ducks, Hooded Mergansers and a small flock of Green-winged Teal in flight as they circled and landed in the western impoundment for the evening. Our signs of spring here included numerous Red-winged Blackbirds on territory and a dozen or so Tree Swallows.

Woodcock observations were similar both nights with 3-4 individuals each night. We witnessed one cooperative bird peenting, taking off displaying and landing in close proximity to where the group was standing in the field. Most people on both trips were able to see a woodcock on the ground about 20' or so in front of us. It is always a good feeling when we hear that last "Peent" and everybody heads for their cars feeling satisfied with the unique display of this wonderful bird. Both trips were well attended with 15 and 22 people respectively.

Hughes Hollow, Sunday, April 12. Leader: Jim Nelson. Participants: 17. Weather: Sunny, temps started in the low 30's rising to the 60's. Species: 52. The unseasonably cold start seemed to suppress the birds initially, but the group used its collective sharp eyes and ears to find many good birds. The delayed spring changed the mix of species a bit from the same walk last year on this date. We had several species that were first-of-year (FOY) for Hughes Hollow, per eBird, including White-eyed Vireo, a Solitary Sandpiper (living up to its name), and a Virginia Rail (unfortunately seen only by the leader). Two Vesper Sparrows were also a rare treat. We had many other species that were FOY for participants — Northern Harrier, (Yellow) Palm Warblers in several places, Pine Warbler, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers all over, Green Heron, Brown Thrasher, singing Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Swamp Sparrows, Chipping Sparrows, and Purple Finch. At the impoundments, we had flyover Wood Ducks, Blue-winged Teal, American Wigeon, and Hooded Mergansers, along with American Coot and Pied-billed Grebe in the impoundments. All the expected woodpecker species were present except the elusive Red-headed Woodpeckers which have not yet been reported at Hughes Hollow this year.



Welcome New Members!

Judith Bromley

Barbara Brown

James S. Firth

Clare Nielsen Neal

William Claney Rogers

Torre Taylor

Rebecca Cromwell

Edward & Karen Escalante

Paul Hagen

Gerry Hawkins,

Antony Heatwole

Martie & Jack Nebb

Birds of Note (mid-January through late March 2015)

A beautiful drake **Eurasian Wigeon** showed up on the Potomac River adjacent to Violette's Lock on 3/8 just after "ice out" conditions. The bird was found by Dave Czaplak and MaryAnn Todd and, to the delight of many county listers, remained in the area through 3/12. It has been 19 years since a Eurasian Wigeon was reported in the county. Cornell University's eBird project has one record of a male bird from Triadelphia Reservoir on 12/21/96.

On 1/17, Cindi Lostritto was the first to note a beautiful, full red plumaged male **Summer Tanager** coming to a feeder in the Kentlands area of Gaithersburg. This particular bird was very cooperative for county birders, being mostly easy to find near the feeders in the Beacon Hill Apartment complex. It stuck around for almost two months and was last reported on 3/9.

Black Hill Regional Park was a great place to visit for good birds in the county this past January. Birder's heading up to the park to get a glimpse of the **Common Redpoll** (initially found by Linda Friedland on 1/2) and the continuing **Trumpeter Swan** (found by Robin Skinner on 11/14/14) had a number of other great finds as well, resembling a local version of the "Patagonia Picnic Table" effect.

The Patagonia picnic table effect (also known as the Patagonia rest stop effect) is a phenomenon associated with birding in which an influx of birdwatchers following the discovery of a rare bird at a location results in the discovery of further rare birds at that location.

In addition to the aforementioned Common Redpoll and Trumpeter Swan, a **Greater White-fronted Goose** was reported from Black Hill RP by Mark Hoffman on 1/11. A single **Cackling Goose** was noted by Kye Jenkins on 1/4 and a **Snow Goose** on 1/15 by Suzanne Scherping. Dave Czaplak and MaryAnn Todd added some additional good sightings with reports of **White-winged Scoters** and a **Red-throated Loon** on the lake on 1/27. As of this writing (3/28), the Trumpeter Swan, recently dubbed "Harvey," was still being seen.

A **White-winged Scoter** was reported almost daily on the Potomac River at Violette's Lock from 2/25 to 3/26. Single **Red-throated Loons** were found at Black Hill Regional Park on 3/23 by Mike Ostrowski and at Violette's Lock on 3/27 by Dave Czaplak. Bob Cantilli noted a **Mute Swan** on the Potomac River at Great Falls while leading a trip



for the Audubon Naturalist Society on 2/14. **Red-necked Grebes** were seen on the Potomac at Violette's Lock late February into March.

It has been a good winter for **Short-eared Owl** and **Rough-legged Hawk** sightings at Blue Mash (and the associated defunct Oaks Landfill). Mary Erickson reported two **Short-eared Owls** there on 1/18. An MBC field trip to Oaks Landfill on 2/8 noted two (possibly as many as three). Sam Miller reported a **Rough-legged Hawk** (dark morph) over Blue Mash on 1/31. On subsequent days, a light morph **Rough-legged Hawk** was also reported from same area, so there were at least two separate birds.

Scott Baron observed twelve **Sandhill Cranes** in flight over Black Hill Regional Park on 3/17.

A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was seen at Violette's Lock on 3/9 and 3/15.

Chandler Wiegand found a **Dickcissel** at Hughes Hollow on 3/2. A very early **Cliff Swallow** was seen by Dave Czaplak at Violette's Lock on 3/21.

In January, birders waiting at the Black Hill Visitor Center feeders for the Common Redpoll to show also noted **Pine Siskins** and a **Purple Finch**. †

Jim Nelson's Remarks

I was very surprised, flattered, and humbled when Ed Patten told me the Montgomery Bird Club Council had selected me as this year's Guest of Honor for the annual club social. I really appreciate this wonderful plaque and the very special recognition it represents as I follow in the footsteps of so many notable past honorees. Thanks to Ed for his gracious remarks and to the many club members who have shared their kind comments with me. And thanks again to Jim Green and the other folks at Smokey Glen Farm for the wonderful food. They have been deliciously catering the Social since 2007 when Jim was the Guest of Honor.

Since joining the Montgomery Bird Club, I have really enjoyed the many people I have worked with on Club affairs and birded with through the years. In this "bowling alone" world, it is very gratifying to see MBC continue to attract new members, keep so many long-time members, and thrive. When I became an officer in MBC, I discovered the remarkable history of the organization and the many contributions made by both old-timers and new members. I have made many friends in the club and have enjoyed sharing the birds with so many of you on field trips and bird counts. Our members come from all walks of life and bring many dimensions to the club beyond their common interest in birds.

Even though I have been birding for almost 35 years and have been an incurable lister for almost 34 years, I don't have a very substantial life list. But I always look forward to the first arrivals of spring or fall, no matter how many times I have seen them. I also enjoy watching the birds in our small backyard, changing with the seasons. That is why I enjoy leading field trips, because it gives me an opportunity to share with newer birders the amazing array of birds we have here in the mid-Atlantic, including our year-round resident species, migrants passing through, summer breeders, and winter visitors.

I was introduced to bird counting through the Seneca Christmas Bird Count in 1983, and I never would have imagined I would one day become the count compiler. Then I added mid-winter and spring bird counts and Project FeederWatch. Now with eBird, every day is a count day, and every bird observed is significant. It's exciting to see all the ways that we as birders can give back to the birds by participating in "citizen science" and promoting conservation of habitat and species. I thank those of you who already participate in these sorts of activities, and I encourage others who haven't yet put your toe in the water to try these many ways you can expand your birding universe and help the birds we love.

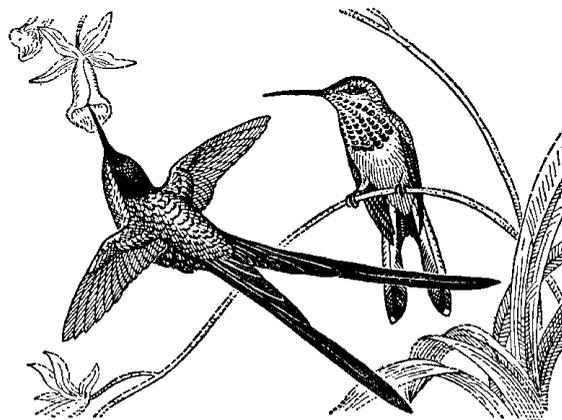
I will end by thanking you all again for this special honor. I look forward to many more years of birding with you. ♪

The Exquisite Birds of Ecuador

On April 15, Bob Mumford treated the MBC to a presentation on "The Exquisite Birds of Ecuador." A professional nature photographer and avid birder, Bob shared the best images of birds from his sixteen trips to Ecuador in the last seven years. These, along with several hundred other images, have been included in his book: *The Exquisite Birds of Ecuador*. He showcased some of the most interesting and colorful birds in that small Andean country, from tiny, iridescent hummingbirds to huge raptors. It included such rare and unusual birds as the weird Sungrebe, the secretive Ocellated Tapaculo, and the Banded Ground-Cuckoo. The show illustrated the amazing differences in shape, size and color that can be viewed in the birds of Ecuador.

Also included were some other natural history photos to provide context for the habitats occupied by the birds, critters such as the Giant Otter, various monkeys and reptiles and the elusive agouti.

Bob covered locations from the Napo River in the east to the Isla de la Plata in the Pacific and from Macara on the southern border with Peru to Gualchan close to the Colombian border in the north. He has experienced about all the challenges and discomforts one might expect in the field — short of a snake bite — yet remains in awe of the magical treasures that we call birds. ♪



Goodbye and Good Birding!

With this issue, Patrick Newcombe, assisted by Lisa Newcombe, takes over the editing of the *Chat*. I know they will do a wonderful job and provide a much-needed fresh perspective! I feel a little sad about relinquishing this task. I've had a wonderful six-year run of editing the *Chat*, and as a newcomer to the Club in 2009, this was just what I needed to get to know the members of the Montgomery County birding community. But my beautiful little granddaughter moved in across the street last summer, and I would rather be introducing her to the world of birds than editing articles about that world. A.

I would like to thank Gemma Radko for her design and layout of the *Chat*; Lydia Schindler, who did this for 11 years (while also doing the *Yellowthroat!*) and whose wonderful instructions when I first took this on were so helpful that I have passed them on to Lisa and Patrick; Linda Friedland, who not only organizes the field trips that offer us all exciting birding opportunities but was always the first to send me her copy; Andy Martin, whose "Birds of Note" summed it all up; the Montgomery Bird Club presidents who do such wonderful work, first as vice president and then as president—Jim Nelson, Steve Pretl, Anna Urciolo, and Ed Patten—and last but certainly not least, all the field trip leaders who not only led the birding trips but also took the time to share what they saw on the trips. Thanks to all!

Good birding everyone! ♪

—Susan Hunt

Meet Your New Editor

Hello All,

I am very excited to serve as the new editor of the *Chat*. The Montgomery Bird Club has been very important to me as I have developed as a birder. Our Club's members have helped and reached out to me, always willing to share their knowledge and enthusiasm of birding. Thank you for giving me such a great introduction to birding! I am very active in YMOS (Youth Division of the Maryland Ornithological Society) participating in Maryland Birds and Habitats Program at Washington College, the World Series of Birding, and many trips to the Eastern Shore with other young birders. I am especially interested in bird banding, research, and conservation projects. Thank you to Susan Hunt who has been a great guide and resource as I learn the ropes of the *Chat*.

Good birding! ♪

—Patrick Newcombe



Birds on PBS Nature

PBS Nature recently showed a program on bird nests, with amazing footage ranging from Osprey to Red Ovenbirds to Anna's Hummingbirds.

The program included information on the structural designs of different species' nests. A catbird's nest can support 2.7 pounds, but bounces back into shape after being compressed. However, robins evolved differently to build a stronger nest that holds nearly three times the weight, but cracks completely when compressed. The program also showed incredible footage of Chalk-browed Mockingbirds and Red Ovenbird's ongoing wars against Shiny Cowbirds, as well as the process of building osprey nests. Surprisingly, Australian Brush-turkeys make gigantic piles of leaves, and then lay their eggs inside them so that they are kept warm by the heat from the leaf pile without incubation.

A link to the documentary can be found at www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/animal-homes-the-nest-full-episode/11868/

To learn more about the filmmaker, and especially about filming hummingbirds, visit www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/hummingbirds-magic-in-the-air-web-exclusive-video-behind-the-scenes/5470 ♪

—Patrick Newcombe



Candidates for Officers and Directors 2015-2016

In accordance with Article V of the Montgomery Bird Club Constitution, at the May 20, 2015, Club meeting, the Nominating Committee will announce the following candidates to serve as officers and directors for the Club. Each person nominated has agreed to run and to serve if elected.

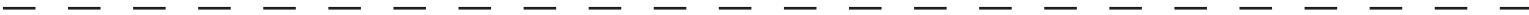
- President:** Ed Patten
- Vice-President:** Clive Harris
- Secretary:** Rae Dubois
- Treasurer:** Chris Wright

- Chapter Director:** Gail Mackiernan
- Chapter Director:** Woody Dubois
- Chapter Director:** Brooke Smith
- Chapter Director:** Evelyn Ralston

- State Director:** Bill Adams
- State Director:** Andy Martin
- State Director:** Jim Moore



There were no additional nominations from the floor, and nominations are now closed. The election will take place at the Club's May 20 meeting. The Officers and the State Directors serve one-year terms. The Chapter Directors serve two-year terms. ♪



The Chat
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