

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

November 2015

Volume 46, No. 4

President's Chat

As I am writing this column in early October, the fall season has started to set in, with migration well underway and returning winter visitors arriving. There has been some good migration this fall, including the two Brown Boobies in Baltimore. This year seems to have raced by, and it is hard to believe summer is over.

Our Club year is off to a good start. I would like to thank all of you who have already renewed their club membership. If you have not yet renewed, this is a friendly reminder to please use the form on the back of this *Chat* to do so promptly. I would like to extend a special welcome to new members. It will be great to see you in the field and at Club meetings. I know you will enjoy having the chance to bird with our wonderful field trip leaders and other members.

Linda Friedland has lined up a number of good trips, as always. Check the calendar and sign up early. As you read this in November, the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) season is fast approaching. We have so many interesting counts around the area that it is hard to choose. Many thanks to the Club members who have participated in these counts over the years and certainly to the folks who serve as count compilers and sector leaders. CBCs are great fun, and I encourage folks who have not done



one to sign up. We can always use more counters, and CBCs are a fun way to meet new people and explore new areas of the county. The Seneca, Sugarloaf, Triadelphia, and Loudon counts are the counts that occur in Montgomery County.

The November meeting is on the 18th. Come out to hear Frank Hawkins talk about the Birds of Madagascar and the Indian Ocean. In December the meeting is on Wednesday the 9th and Alice Christman will speak on the state of the Chesapeake Bay.

Good Birding! ♪

— Ed Patten

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Winter Calendar

November 18 (Wednesday), 7:30 p.m. Frank Hawkins—Birds of Madagascar and the Indian Ocean Islands.

December 9 (Wednesday), 7:30 p.m. Alice Christman, Chesapeake Bay Foundation - State of the Chesapeake Bay.

January 20 (Wednesday), 7:30 p.m. Clive Harris, Bird Quiz. Test your knowledge against a selection of photos of birds that occur in the region.

February 16 (Tuesday), 7:30 p.m. Gerry Hawkins – Birds of Costa Rica covering the Caribbean slope lowlands, Caribbean slope foothills, Pacific slope lowlands and Pacific slope mountains. *Please note that this meeting is on a Tuesday.*

March 11 (Friday), 7 p.m. Annual Montgomery Bird Club Social, Audubon Naturalist Society, Woodend, Chevy Chase

Meetings take place at the Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Road, Potomac. From the Beltway, take Exit 39 (River Road/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 are 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 Ed Patten at 301-948-5648 or epatten1022@verizon.net.

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

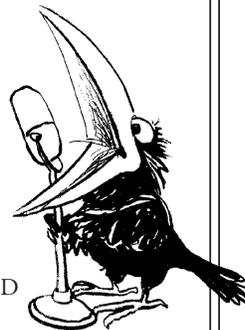
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Visit our homepage at www.montgomerybirdclub.org

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: stoncroft5@verizon.net.



For several years now, members have been able to receive the *Chat* electronically, which reduces printing and mailing costs. Please consider reading the *Chat* online to demonstrate how “green” we can be. The membership form (on the back) now asks members to opt in to receiving a paper copy in the mail. †

Have you seen the Montgomery Bird Club’s redesigned website? A big thank you to **Eric Skrzypczak** for his dedication and hard work in designing and maintaining the website! Check it out at: www.montgomerybirdclub.org †

On October 21, the Montgomery County Bird Club was treated to a presentation entitled, Birds of Vieques Island, Puerto Rico by **Daphne Gemmill**.

Little did Daphne know that her first visit to Vieques, Puerto Rico in 1983 would lead to her becoming known as the Vieques Bird Lady, to being an eBird reviewer for the island, and eventually to authoring a book on the status, abundance, and conservation of the island’s birds.

Daphne shared her love of the island and its birds through photographs and interesting snippets of ornithological history, interesting island bird trivia, and examples of citizen science. †

If you are interested in sharing your experiences at a birding festival for an article in an upcoming newsletter, please contact Patrick Newcombe at stoncroft5@verizon.net. Thanks!



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.).

November 7 (Saturday) OAKS LANDFILL. Explore this now-closed landfill adjacent to the Blue Mash Nature Trail. Mostly open terrain on a gravel road, including two pond views and one hill climb of moderate difficulty. Possible sparrows, raptors, and waterfowl. 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. Contact one of the leaders for reservations and more information. CO-LEADERS: Mark England 240-207-3132 (home) or 240-375-4500 (cell) and Ed Patten 301-948-5648.

 **November 11 (Wednesday) LBJs at BLUE MASH NATURE TRAIL.** Half day. Blue Mash is a good place to work on the basics of sparrow ID. In addition to the common species, like Song, Field, and Chipping, we'll keep an eye out for less-likely White-crowned and Swamp. This trip is primarily for beginners but all are welcome. Limit 8. For reservations, time, and directions, contact one of the CO-LEADERS: Lydia Schindler, lydiaschindler@verizon.net or Linda Friedland, linnetl@verizon.net

 **November 15 (Sunday) LOIS Y. GREEN PARK: Remembering Lou.** The third annual walk in honor of former MBC president and all-round naturalist Lou DeMouy who passed away in November, 2012. The trip will be led by current president Ed Patten. Meet at 7:30 a.m. Reservations required. For more information and reservations contact Ed Patten 301-948-5648.

November 22 (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, Virginia. A variety of migratory ducks and boreal migrants should be present. Meet at the parking lot in the center of the refuge at 8 a.m. Reservations are necessary. LIMIT: 20. For reservations and more information, call one of the LEADERS: Mike Bowen, 301-530-5764 or dhmbowen@yahoo.com, and Gerry Hawkins, 571-277-8406 or maineusa@comcast.net. **Directions:** From Maryland, take Rt. 495 south to I-95 south to Exit 161 (Woodbridge), follow Rt. 1 south, cross the Occoquan River, turn left at the light onto Dawson Beach Road and follow this road to the end.

December 6 (Sunday) LILYPONS/NEW DESIGN ROAD. Half day. Wintering field birds, targeting Fox and Tree Sparrows, possibly Virginia Rail and American Bittern. Call leader for reservation (required) and more info. LEADER: Clive Harris clivegharris@yahoo.com.

January 1 (Friday) EARLIEST BIRD WALK- GEORGETOWN RESERVOIR AND D.C. HOTSPOTS. Half day. Start the New Year right. Meet at 8 a.m. at Georgetown Reservoir, DC, by the gate leading to the dike between the pools. Reservations required. Limit: 20. LEADER: Mike Bowen 301-530-5764 or dhmbowen@yahoo.com.

January 13 (Wednesday) BLUE MASH. A mid-week walk to this popular site seeking winter birds: the expected cardinals, towhees and mockingbirds as well as raptors (Northern Harrier a possibility) and sparrows. We'll check for ducks on the pond. Expect to walk (waterproof boots suggested!) about a mile on level trails. The trip will be cancelled or postponed in case of sleet, ice or rain. Start at 8 am. Reservations not necessary. For directions or more information call or e-mail the LEADER: Stephanie Lovell 240-242-3235 or ctlovell1@yahoo.com.

 **January 17 (Sunday) BLACK HILL REGIONAL PARK.** All birders, but especially new birders, are welcome on this half day trip, which will focus on the identification of ducks at this premiere county spot for winter waterfowl. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Visitors Center to Black Hill Regional Park, and bring a spotting scope if you have one. For reservations (which are required) and more information, contact the LEADER: Gerry Hawkins 571-277-8406 or maineusa@comcast.net.

January 31 (Sunday) WINTER WATERFOWL ON THE POTOMAC. Half day. We'll plan to check the river for wintering ducks in a portion of the Urban Zone (a no firearms discharge area) between the mouth of Watt's 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 the end of Swain's Lock Road. Bring a scope if you have one. Trip will be canceled if icy conditions along canal towpath make walking treacherous. Reservations required. Contact the leader for reservations and more information. LEADER: Andy Martin 301-529-2066 or martinap2@verizon.net.

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Field Trips

February 7 (Sunday) OAKS LANDFILL, LAYTONSVILLE. Bundle up for a LATE AFTERNOON search for wintering sparrows and raptors, including possible Northern Harriers and Short-eared Owls, at this now-closed landfill adjacent to the Blue Mash Nature Trail. Mostly open terrain with some ponds, which we will check if not frozen 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 3:30 pm. on landfill entrance drive at 6001 Rt. 108, Laytonsville, Md. Contact the leader for reservations and more information. LEADER: Mark England 240-375-4500 (cell) or markengland@canamcontractors.com.

 **March INFORMAL LATE AFTERNOON WALKS until dusk.** Joint trip with ANS. Dates and times to be announced. Meet at the end of Seneca Road 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, flashlight and wear “muddy conditions” footwear. Reservations not required—all are welcome. For more info call the leader. LEADER: Jim Green 301-742-0036.

MARCH 12 (Saturday) PATUXENT RIVER PARK. Jug Bay Natural Area, Prince Georges Co., Half day. Joint trip with Audubon Naturalist Society. Waterfowl, Wilson’s Snipe, winter and early spring songbirds, Ospreys displaying. Meet at 8 am at the parking by the park headquarters. Wear muddy conditions footwear. Reservation required. Limit 15. LEADER: John Bjerke 240-401-1643.

‘Tis the Season for Christmas Counts!

Christmas Bird Counts are just around the corner. If you can help out, please contact the compiler. The counts in Montgomery County include:

Sunday, December 20 - Seneca CBC, MD and VA. Compiler: Jim Nelson, kingfishers2@verizon.net (preferred) or 301-530-6574.

Saturday, December 19 - Triadelphia Reservoir CBC, MD. Compiler: David Holmes, musiclbndr@gmail.com (preferred) or 410-730-7083.

Tuesday, December 29 - Central Loudoun CBC, VA and MD (this count includes 5 miles along the C&O Canal in Montgomery Co, MD). Compiler: Joe Coleman, 540-554-2542 or joecoleman@rstarmail.com.

Sunday, January 3 - Sugarloaf Mountain CBC, MD. Compiler: Janet Millenson, 301-983-9337 or janet@twocrows.com.



Welcome New Members!

Marian and Joey DeAngelo	Julia Misplon	The Chase Family
Geoffrey Edgar	Neil Stern	Diane Munro
Brady Hartley	Elaine Ting	Carolyn Smith
Aron and Amy Massey	Ed Vigezzi	Philip Harvey

Trip Reports

Bombay Hook, July 25. Leaders: John Bjerke and Cyndie Loeper. Participants: 15. Species: approx 65. The annual July ANS/MBC trip to Bombay Hook had great weather—very warm but low humidity and few biting insects. The main goal of this trip is studying shorebirds. The 11 species this year was below average (usually 15-18) and there were surprisingly few peeps. But there were still interesting studies of Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers and very good numbers of American Avocets and Black-necked Stilts. As was the case with many other searchers, we could not find the molting Ruff of the previous week.

There were exceptional numbers of herons and egrets; nine species in all. There were hundreds of Great Egrets and Snowy Egrets blanketing Raymond Pool and decorating many trees. We had our first Tricolored Herons in many years, worked on identifying juvenile Little Blue Herons, compared Yellow-crowned and Black-crowned Night Herons and had two Cattle Egrets. Ibis complemented the herons. This has been an irruption year for juvenile White Ibis in Delaware—over a hundred have been reported in the state, we had three.

We did some field and wire birding in the Allee House area and were rewarded with singing Chat and calling Bobwhite, hundreds of Bank Swallows and two breeding plumage male Bobolinks and one female Bobolink. There seemed to be Blue Grosbeaks and Indigo Buntings everywhere. And one mystery *Empidonax* flycatcher, perhaps a Willow?



Rock Creek Park, D.C., September 8. Leader: Wallace Kornack, Participants: 2. Birding started at the Ridge. Before long one of the participants spotted and identified a Wilson's Warbler. This was followed by seeing American Redstarts and a Chestnut sided Warbler. Then the birding became very slow and no warblers were found at the maintenance yard and only a single Redstart was seen at the dog run. Ordinarily the tour would end at the dog run but it was decided that we should return to the Ridge. There we saw a

first of the season Bay-breasted Warbler and a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher thereby ending on a high note.



Rock Creek Park, D.C., September 12. Leader: Wallace Kornack, Participant: 1. Weather: rain. As usual the tour started at the Ridge where we saw Chestnut-sided Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, and a Northern Parula. When it was learned that a Connecticut Warbler was seen in the maintenance yard, everyone hurried there. We spent a good amount of time trying to relocate the bird without success. The yard did yield see several warblers, including Black-and-white Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, and two female Black-throated Blue Warblers feeding on berries of the devil's walking stick. The participant was particularly pleased to hear the call and then see a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak. We ended the tour early because of rain.



Pennyfield to Violette's "Bird Stalk", September 20. Leader: Jim Nelson. Participants: 13, including leader. Weather: A lovely, generally sunny day with temps rising from 60's to 70's. Total species: 29. This walk is for folks who generally cannot get out as early. We met at Violette's Lock at 9:00, carpooled down to Pennyfield Lock, and then walked upstream along the C&O Canal towpath back to Violette's, ending at noon. The total species count was the lowest ever for this walk. Persistent warm weather and lack of cold fronts kept migrants away (no swallows, warblers, vireos, sparrows, tanagers, or orioles). The dry weather also meant the second impoundment was a meadow without water or mud to attract shorebirds, waterfowl, and large waders. Fortunately, a few good birds gave us interesting looks, including a very cooperative Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Violette's, a large flock of Blue-winged Teal flying down the Potomac, and an Osprey hunting over the river. The complete checklists from the walk can be viewed in eBird.



Trip Reports

Patuxent River Park, Jug Bay Natural Area, Prince Georges County, September 26. Leaders: Greg Kearns, Paul Baicich, John Bjerke. Participants: 15. Total species: at least 37. The annual ANS/MBC boat trip on the Patuxent in search of Sora encountered unusually high “low tides”. As a result we heard at least two dozen Soras but saw none although we devoted four hours to the effort.

We did have two migrating Osprey and numerous sightings of Bald Eagle (perhaps five individuals). There were large numbers of Wood Ducks and sizable flocks of Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal and Black Duck.

Perhaps the highlight was excellent views of three Red-headed Woodpeckers up Western Branch; the species is only occasionally seen at Jug Bay. A small flock of Bobolinks was seen by a few participants. As always, Greg’s knowledge of the marsh and its changes over the last 35 years was impressive and welcome.

Little Bennett Regional Park, October 4. Leader: Gemma Radko. Participants: 3. A warm and cloudy day, with some great birds along the Wilson’s Mill Trail. We saw seven warbler species, including Black-throated Blue, Palm, Black-and-White, Magnolia, Yellow-rumped, Common Yellowthroat, and American Redstart. We sighted Wood and Swainson’s Thrushes, and both kinglet species. Gray Catbird and Brown Thrasher were still lingering, as well as Eastern Phoebe.

A noteworthy highlight was a Peregrine Falcon sailing over the meadow as we headed back to our cars.



Cornell Lab of Ornithology Book Celebrates Its Centennial

In celebration of one hundred years of protecting birds, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology has produced *The Living Bird: 100 Years of Listening to Nature*, a beautiful book featuring stunning photography by Gerritt Vyn and thoughtful essays celebrating our relationship with birds. Barbara Kingsolver introduces the book, describing herself as a reluctant birder until she shared a special birding trip with her father. Other contributors include Scott Weidensaul, writing about the amazing abilities of birds, and Lyanda Lynn Haupt, writing about the impact of citizen science on her own life. To see the book trailer and a peek at Vyn’s amazing photography, go to www.livingbirdbook.org/trailer.

On November 2, Gerritt Vyn spoke at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. His talk is archived at www.allaboutbirds.org/the-living-bird-100-years-of-listening-to-nature.

NPR’s Terry Gross also interviewed Gerritt Vyn and Scott Weidensaul on Fresh Air, posing questions about sound recordings, bird calls, owl banding, and birds such as the Spoon-billed Sandpiper, the Bar-tailed Godwit, and the Red Knot, as well as more personal questions such as why they have devoted their professional careers to birds. You can listen at: npr.org/2015/10/20/450038490/flights-of-fancy-exploring-the-songs-and-pathways-of-the-living-bird.

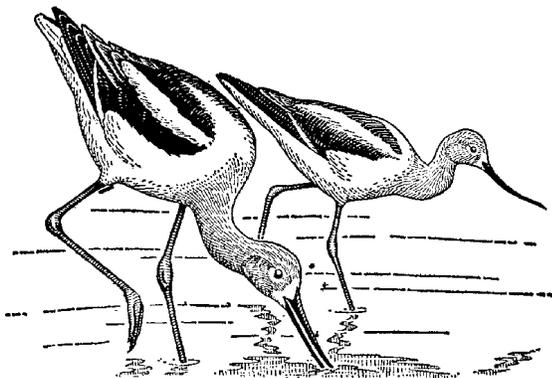


Birds of Note (late July through early October 2015)

The highlight bird for yet another season, the cooperative **Neotropic Cormorant** of Violette's Lock stayed until August 23rd. In late August and early September, Triadelphia Reservoir and its mudflats yielded some great shorebirds. Russ Ruffing was canoeing when he discovered unseasonal **Gadwall** and a cooperative **Baird's Sandpiper** on September 4th. Many birders were able to "tick" this uncommon sandpiper, which hung around for a week. Another rare shorebird was a **Sanderling** that Joe Hanfman, Howard Patterson, and Chuck Stirrat found on August 30th.

Dave Czaplak and Mike Ostrowski found a **Red Phalarope** at Violette's Lock on October 3rd. This exceptional bird was a result of Hurricane Joaquin's proximity, but, unfortunately, did not linger. On August 11, Dave Czaplak spotted a flock of 11 **American Avocets** at Violette's Lock, which were also a product of stormy weather. Other good shorebirds were the seven **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** Mike Ostrowski had at Summit Hall Turf Farm on September 3rd. At Violette's Lock, Dave Czaplak had flocks of both **Black-bellied** and **American Golden Plovers** on September 5th and 26th, respectively. On October 2nd, Mike Ostrowski had an **American Golden Plover** at Patton Turf Farm.

At Violette's Lock, Dave Czaplak had a couple of **Laughing Gulls** on August 10th-11th and a **Bonaparte's Gull** on August 11. Chuck Stirrat and Russell Hillsley discovered a **Black Tern** at Triadelphia Reservoir on August 11th, with further sightings by Adam Parr on the 20th. Dave Czaplak had a flock of nine **Black Terns** at Violette's Flock on August 18th, and Mike Ostrowski had two more on September 4th. **Common Terns** were noted at Riley's and Violette's Lock on September 23rd, 26th, 29th and



October 1st by David Czaplak, Mike Ostrowski, and David Roberts.

Concetta Goodrich found an early **Bufflehead** at Lake Frank on September 29th. David Gersten had a **Mute Swan** on July 18th in Rockville. After eradication programs, this species has become much scarcer in the entire state. The **Trumpeter Swan** at Lake Churchill steadily continues, with reports every couple of days.

An astounding count of 1345 Broad-winged Hawks by Don Simonson on September 21st broke Ebird's Montgomery County high count for this species. A Common Loon was observed by Dave Czaplak from September 26th to the 29th at Violette's Lock. David Roberts saw the same bird from Riley's Lock on September 26th. Dave Czaplak also found a Little Blue Heron at Hughes Hollow on July 20th. Mike Ostrowski found a Common Gallinule at LM Stevens Park that was seen erratically from late September to early October.

There were many reports of **Olive-sided Flycatcher** this fall. Robert Garriock found an one at Pennyfield Lock on August 24th; on the 28th, Dave Czaplak and Mary Ann Todd found them at Violette's Lock and Hughes Hollow. On August 30th, Woody and Rae Dubois observed an Olive-sided Flycatcher on the Wilson Mill Trail of Little Bennett Regional Park. Linda Friedland found another in the same location on September 4th. A **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** was found by Robert Garriock at the mini-train tracks of Wheaton Regional on September 7th.

The rainy days this fall has resulted in some excellent swallow fallouts on the Potomac River. Mike Ostrowski and Dave Czaplak found late **Cliff** and **Bank Swallows** at Violette's Lock on October 3rd. Adding to this achievement, they had to sift through an amazing 1,400 **Tree Swallows**, a new Montgomery County high count.

At Pennyfield Lock, Evelyn Ralston and Linda Friedland discovered a **Golden-winged Warbler** on September 26th. In Wheaton Regional Park, a

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very early **Orange-crowned Warbler** was found by Gail Mackiernan on September 23rd. Edward Patten found a **Connecticut Warbler** at Hughes Hollow on September 6th. Scott Baron found another **Connecticut Warbler** at Blockhouse Point Conservation Park on September 14th. At Rickman Equestrian Park, Dave Czaplak found the third **Connecticut Warbler** of the year, also on September 14th. Adam Parr found a **Mourning Warbler** at Northwest Branch Trail on August 23rd. Dave Czaplak came across another on August 29th in Hughes Hollow. The dedicated observers at Wheaton Regional found Mourning Warblers on at least six different days.

Robert Garriock found a **Marsh Wren** at the Wheaton Branch Stormwater Ponds on September 21st. Tom and Kelly Kimbis found another on September 23rd at Violette's Lock. On September 2nd, an early **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was found by David Gersten at Wheaton Regional Park. **Summer Tanagers** were detected at Wheaton Regional Park, Pennyfield Lock, and River Road this fall.

On September 6th, David Gersten was picking through a flock of Chipping Sparrows when he was rewarded with a **Clay-colored Sparrow** at Layhill Park. This bird stuck around for only a few days, but it was enough to start a Patagonia picnic table effect. On September 8, those searching for the Clay-colored were instead surprised with another great find, a **Lark Sparrow**.

In "twitching news", birders have reported 245 species as of October 6th, only 4 behind 2014's total of 249. In the couple of months left, some birds to keep an eye out for: Golden Eagle, crossbills, or maybe even an Evening Grosbeak. The top five listers in the county so far include Mike Ostrowski at 230, Dave Czaplak at 225, Mary Ann Todd at 204, Linda Friedland at 199, and Adam Parr at 197. †

—Kevin Ebert

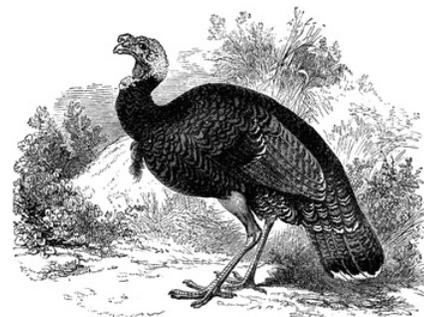
Oak Trees are for the Birds!

Have you noticed all the oak trees in Montgomery County? Did you know that there is more than twenty different kinds of oak trees in the Washington D.C. area? There are five types of oaks native to Maryland: the black, white, scarlet, red, and pin oaks.



Birds love oak trees! Many insect and several species of moth larvae feed on oak leaves. In fact, oaks support 534 species of caterpillars, more than any other type of tree in our region. The diversity of insects (and the spiders they attract) result in the oaks attracting birds. The oaks' acorns will also attract woodpeckers, crows and jays. Turkeys eat the acorns when they are on the ground and smaller birds will eat smaller bits of nuts. In addition, oaks provide shelter for nesting birds including cavity nesting birds.

If you want to learn more, an excellent resource is *The Sibley Guide to Trees* by David Allen Sibley. †



Camp Colorado: A Young Birder's Trip of a Lifetime

Earlier this summer, I had the privilege of attending the American Birding Association's Camp Colorado, located just south-east of Rocky Mountain National Park. The weeklong adventure was packed with exquisite sightings, and new life birds were in almost every bush, shrub, and tree. We birded in Colorado's many different ecosystems, among which were prairie, montane, alpine forest, and high elevation tundra.

The first days of camp were spent chasing the elusive American Dipper. My roommates and I became obsessed with finding the bird and constantly had our cameras at the ready in case it popped out of any one of the numerous creeks and rivers we were traversing. We finally spotted it in the south-western corner of Rocky Mountain National Park at the headwaters of Beaver Brooke in Wild Basin. While returning to our dorms after spotting the dipper, we managed an even better sighting—a female Dusky Grouse with four chicks. As if there was a fire in our van, all of us poured out onto the roadside, binoculars and cameras pressed to our faces. I had yet another stroke of luck, when the grouse passed by the log where I was hiding, oblivious to my presence just three feet away.

Our luck and awesome sightings didn't end there. At 11,000 feet, not much can survive. But birds somehow have adapted to the bitter cold and unrelenting

winds. Under the guidance of Raymond Van-Buskirk, lifelong birder and leader of the Rosy Finch Project, we learned how the tough-as-nails Rosy Finch has adapted to the alpine environment. The finch has special feathers over its nostrils to prevent frost buildup inside its nose. As we stumbled around, forced to take shelter due to the winds, the Rosy Finch was able to nimbly hop across snowfields to find frozen mayflies. While we were still in the alpine environment, we also spotted a pair of White-Tailed Ptarmigans. Like the grouse, they were incredibly approachable, and we were even able to read the bands on the birds' legs with the naked eye.

The mountains of the park are located just west of some remarkable prairie bird habitat. We spent a day at the Pawnee National Wildlife Reserve, where I sighted my first Burrowing Owl. The bird species on the prairie were completely different from those on the mountains. Even at our dorm, there were opportunities to observe new bird species, some uncommon. There were a pair of Yellow-Headed Blackbirds that were at unusually high elevations. We saw them almost every afternoon feeding in foliage around the dormitories and ignoring our presence. The counselors took a particular liking to taking "selfies" with them. In total, I saw 118 bird species, of which 64 were life birds for me. I had a wonderful time at Camp Colorado, in large part due to the camaraderie of fellow campers and expert staff, and, of course, the birds. ♪

—Owen Crise

Camp Chiricahua: A Birder's Paradise

Two MBC members, Patrick Newcombe and Kevin Ebert, were thrilled to have the experience of birding in Southeast Arizona this year. Camp Chiricahua is a unique young birder camp, being limited to 14 participants ranging in age from 14-18. It was interesting talking to other young birders from across the country, and even Canada.

We saw an amazing variety of birds in many different habitats, ranging from forested mountains over 8,000 feet high to deserts,

canyons, and riparian lowlands. Some of the highlights included Tufted Flycatcher, Plain-capped Starthroat, Rufous-capped Warbler, Black-capped Gnatcatcher, Elegant Trogon, and Whiskered Screech-Owl, plus magnificent, prolonged views of two screaming Northern Goshawks. Seeing 11 hummingbird species was also thrilling.

We came back after almost two weeks of birding with friends, and learning a lot about birds and birding. We will never forget this wonderful experience. ♪

—Patrick Newcombe





MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL



I/we wish to join the Montgomery Bird Club, a chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society, for the year beginning September 2015 and enclose dues for:

- Individual—\$30 (\$10 Chapter/\$20 State)
- Sustaining—\$70 (\$20 Chapter/\$50 State)
- Household—\$40 (\$15 Chapter/\$25 State)
- Life—\$1200 (\$200 Chapter/ \$1000 State)
- Junior—\$6 (\$1 Chapter/\$5 State)
- Associate*— \$8

**member of MOS through another chapter*

- \$ _____ **Dues**
- \$ _____ **Donation to Claudia Wilds Fund**
- \$ _____ **Additional Donation to MOS**
- \$ _____ **Total enclosed**

New Membership Renewal

Total number of Club members _____
(Household, Sustaining, or Life memberships)

Please make check payable to MBC/MOS and mail to:
Helen Patton, 429 Hamilton Avenue, Silver Spring, MD
20901

NAME(S) _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

Check if you **DO NOT** want your email address listed on the members-only section of our website.

List your cellphone here if you **DO** want it listed on the members-only section of our website. _____

Check if you would like to receive *The Chat* by mail. Otherwise, you will be notified when *The Chat* is posted on the club website.

Check if you would like to receive *The Maryland Yellowthroat* on the Internet instead of receiving it by mail.

Check if you would like to work on a committee.



The Chat
MBC/MOS
429 Hamilton Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20901

