

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

May 2014

Volume 45, No. 2

## President's Chat

A tribute (sung to the tune of "Harrigan"—you young'uns might have to Google this).

*V - O - L - U - N - T - E - E - R spells "Volunteer."  
(Add an "S"!)*

*They are folks who keep our wheels a-churning,  
Offering their help and time and learning.*

*V - O - L - U - N - T - E - E - R, you see  
We could not run our club if we didn't have 'em, Bub,  
So volunteers, thanks from me!*

And you thought Thanksgiving was in November! I have had the honor of working with a wonderful Council for the past two years. This year **Cecily Nabors** has finished up her stint as Chapter Director. Cecily always had a searching question or thoughtful advice to offer during the meetings. **Steve Pretl** has worked tirelessly as Vice-President, President, and Past President and contributed constantly during this six-year adventure. Thank you both.

I am grateful for all of the work done by our continuing Council members: **Ed Patten**, soon to be President; **Rae Dubois**, Secretary; **Sally Wechsler**, Treasurer; State Directors: **Jim Moore** and **Andy Martin**; Chapter Directors: **Woody Dubois**, **Evelyn Ralston**, and **Bill Adams**, who will become a State Director next month. Bill fills the vacancy created by the death of **Chris Barnard** in February. (See page 8 for a tribute to Chris.)

Thanks to the Nominating Committee of **Jim Nelson** (chair), **Linda Friedland**, and **Lydia Schindler** for creating a fine slate of nominees for 2014-2015. (See the back page of this *Chat*.)

A great deal of appreciation also goes to **Linda Friedland**, who always finds wonderful field trip leaders and a great variety of habitats for these trips.

Thanks to all of our members who have volunteered to lead these field trips. You shared your wealth of knowledge and love of birding with eagerness and a big dollop of good humor.

Thanks to all of you who brought tasty refreshments for our meetings and who helped set up and take down chairs.

Thanks to **Ed Patten** for organizing a wonderful Social this year. Read more about the Social on page 6.

Please consider finding a little space to volunteer for our Club, whether it's representing us at a nature festival, offering some birding experience for the Cub Scouts, or contributing your time and knowledge in becoming a Club officer. It's a nice feeling to give back to the Club and you get a song, to boot!

This is my last *President's Chat*. I have certainly enjoyed working for the Club as President and have learned so much during the past two years. Thanks for all of the support and goodwill. Cheers! ♪

—Anna Urciolo

CONTENTS	
Spring Calendar .....	2
Club Activities.....	2
Field Trips .....	3
Trip Reports .....	4-6
MBC Social .....	6
Birds of Note .....	7
In Memoriam.....	8-9
Don's Big Birding Trip, Part 2 .....	10-11
Slate of Nominees, 2014-2015 .....	12



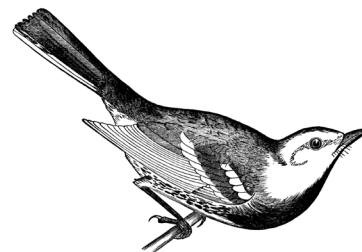
# Spring Calendar

## Club Activities

On Tuesday, April 8, our Club presented a short program about common birds and their calls to a Cub Scout den at Westbrook Elementary School. The Cub Scouts also made bird feeders and filled out some not-so-tricky bird word searches.

On Saturday, April 19, our Club participated in the Earth Day festivities at the Izaak Walton League of America in Poolesville, MD. We “manned” a table with a poster about MBC, common bird posters, field guides, word find sheets for kids, MBC business cards, and more.

On Sunday, May 4, our Club will travel to Meadowside Nature Center for a Raptor Festival. We will have an exhibitor’s table at the event and present the same goodies we brought to the Izaak Walton League’s festivities. ♪



“The [Maine] woods ... were bright with the moving, flitting forms of many warblers—the exquisite powder-blue parula with his breast band of orange and magenta; the Blackburnian, like flickering flames in the spruces; the myrtle, flashing his yellow rump patch. But most numerous of all was the trim little black-throated green warbler, whose dreamy, nostalgic song drifted all day long through the woods, little wisps of song lingering like bits of fog in the tree tops.”

— from *Lost Woods: The Discovered Writing of Rachel Carson*

**May 10 (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](http://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](mailto:dmford455@yahoo.com)) or by snail mail (9813 Parkwood Drive, Bethesda, MD 20814) by June 15; eBird reports are also acceptable.

**May 21 (Wednesday), 7:30 p.m.** *Gail Mackiernan.* “Birding in Ethiopia.” In March 2013, Gail Mackiernan, her husband, and two British friends traveled by Land Rover more than 4,000 km through this unique country’s mountains, deserts, and canyons. Along the way, they encountered over 500 species of birds, a number of rare mammals, and many varied cultures found in this ancient land. Gail will share the group’s experiences as well as numerous photos of the country’s abundant wildlife.

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 Anna Urciolo at 301-251-9452 or [urcioloa@sidwell.edu](mailto: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.

**Editor:** Susan Hunt      **Designer:** Gemma Radko      **Circulation:** Jane Farber and Jeanne Lacerte

**President:** Anna Urciolo: 301-251-9452  
[urcioloa@sidwell.edu](mailto:urcioloa@sidwell.edu)

**Membership:** Helen Patton: 301-588-5418  
e-mail: [helen@dataprompt.com](mailto:helen@dataprompt.com)


Visit our homepage at [www.montgomerybirdclub.org](http://www.montgomerybirdclub.org)

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

**MAY 4 (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. For reservations, contact the LEADERS: Mike Bowen at 301-530-5764 or [dhmbowen@yahoo.com](mailto:dhmbowen@yahoo.com) or Gerry Hawkins at 571-277-8406 or [maineusa@comcast.net](mailto:maineusa@comcast.net). Directions: From Maryland, take Rt. 495 south to I-95 south; take LEFT Exit 161 (Woodbridge) and follow Rt. 1 south, cross the Occoquan River, turn left at the light onto Dawson Beach Road, and follow this road to the end.

 **MAY 4 (Sunday) LITTLE BENNETT RP.** Half day. Near peak migration for warblers and vireos, including those breeding in this varied habitat. Reservations required. For time and directions, contact the LEADER: Gemma Radko at 301-514-2894.

**MAY 6 (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 and for reservations, call the LEADER: Wallace Kornack at 202-338-7859.

**MAY 9 (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](mailto:cyndieloeper@comcast.net) or 301-530-8226 or Ann Lucy at 301-229-8810.

**MAY 10 (Saturday) IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE, B-CC CHAPTER.** Half day. The Club's third 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 well on its way by this date. Trip will start at 7 a.m. at the League's chapterhouse. Reservations required but no limit. Driving directions will be provided to those who make reservations. For reservations and more information, contact the LEADER: Jim Nelson at [kingfishers2@verizon.net](mailto:kingfishers2@verizon.net) or 301-530-6574. B-CC Chapter Treasurer and MBC member Jim Tate will co-lead.

**MAY 11 (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 more information or specific directions and for reservations, call the LEADER: Wallace Kornack at 202-338-7859.

**MAY 16-18 (Friday-Sunday) MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY CONFERENCE AT SOLOMON'S ISLAND.** For more information, visit [www.mdbirds.org](http://www.mdbirds.org).

**MAY 21 (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 Wildlife Management Area, 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](mailto:jkgbirdman53@gmail.com).

**AUGUST 23 (Saturday) DELAWARE COASTAL AREAS (joint trip with Audubon Naturalist Society).** Full day at Bombay Hook NWR, Ted Harvey WMA, possibly Little Creek, and other sites. Shorebirds, marsh birds, and some songbirds. Bring pack lunch and water. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Bombay Hook Visitor Center parking lot. Reservations required (15-person limit). Make reservations with the LEADER: John Bjerke at 240-401-1643 or [johnbjerke1@mac.com](mailto:johnbjerke1@mac.com). Cyndie Loeper will co-lead.

# Trip Reports

**Black Hill Regional Park, Sunday, January 19.** Leader: Dave Powell. I led a beginners' waterfowl trip to Black Hill. Only one person joined me on a beautiful, chilly morning. Waterfowl numbers were down from previous years, probably due to the developing ice, especially in the coves. Highlights were several Common Goldeneye, Tundra Swans, Gadwall, and Green-winged Teal among the 11 species of waterfowl. Other nice birds seen were Horned and Pied-billed Grebes.



**Winter Waterfowl on the Potomac, Sunday, February 2.** Leader: Andy Martin. Thirteen folks enjoyed a great morning of birding along the Potomac River between Great Falls and Swain's Lock. We had a beautiful day, with temperatures rising to the 50°F mark with sunny to slightly overcast conditions. Super-frigid weather in the days preceding the trip drove many ducks out of nearby frozen ponds and lakes toward the only open water available, the Potomac River. We ended up with 42 species for the day. Overall, land birds seemed to be a little on the sparse side, but it was by far the best waterfowl variety and numbers for this trip in the three years it has been run.

We met at Swain's Lock around 8 a.m. Walking across the canal and down to the river bank, we viewed numerous ducks on the river. Species included Gadwall, American Wigeon, American Black Duck, Mallard, a male Canvasback, an estimated 65 Redheads, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, and Hooded and Common Mergansers. In addition, fairly close views of both Greater and Lesser Scaup made for a teachable moment in differentiating between these two species.

We then drove down river to the Great Falls parking lot to set up a one-way walk along the River Trail and the canal back to our starting point. The river was bit more frozen in this section, but we managed to add Ruddy Duck, American Coot, and over 50 Canvasback to our day's waterbird list. From the concrete platform overlooking the start of Great Falls, we had great scope views of the Bald Eagle pair on their nest on Conn Island. Along the River Trail we had good looks at Brown Creepers, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and some cooperative Golden-crowned Kinglets.

All in all, a great day to be out, with good weather, good company, and good birds!



**Oaks Landfill, Laytonsville, Sunday, February 9.** Leader: Mark England. Participants: 8. Weather: Overcast, mid-20s. For whatever reason, mid-20s temperatures seemed to be "penetratingly cold," as Lydia Schindler pointed out. Therefore, we decided to take heated cars around the landfill roads, occasionally stopping and getting out to bird. It was not a particularly birdy two hours, but we saw 18 species including Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Pileated Woodpecker, and a flock of about 12 Northern Flickers near the end of the walk. We had a good assortment of sparrows as usual, including one Savannah, one Swamp, two Field, and numerous Song and White-throated Sparrows as well as Dark-eyed Juncos. The clear highlight was three quite close American Tree Sparrows feeding out in the open, easily seen by all.



**Informal Late Afternoon Walks Until Dusk, March 4, 6, 11, and 18.** Leader: Jim Green. The usual route for these walks is Riley's Lock, then Hughes Hollow, and then Sycamore Landing Road (hoping for American Woodcock display). Two of this year's trips were before daylight savings time and two occurred afterwards. The highlight of all the trips was the large variety of waterfowl species seen on the Potomac between Riley's and Violette's Locks AND the significant number of a lot of these species. Although everybody has complained about our never-ending winter, the prolonged colder temps further north and to the northwest gave Montgomery County birders some great sightings. As I mention the various species, I have included the high count seen for each and the respective date.

The first trip took place the day after one of our numerous snowstorms. It was windy and cold, and the leader was the only participant. On another trip, the temperatures pushed 50°F, and 18 or 19 people showed up.

The Red-necked Grebes (19 on 3/4) were without a doubt the gold-medal winners and were seen on every trip. As we reached mid-March, some of the grebes began showing



# Trip Reports

breeding plumage. Vocalization was also heard by some on one trip. We hit the hat trick with three species of grebes—with Horned Grebes in various stages of plumage and Pied-billed as well. White-winged Scoters (19 on 3/11) are another species that we feel lucky to see one as they pass through. This was another species seen on all four trips, and so they were awarded my silver medal. Scoped views included males, females, and immature males.

The bronze medal goes to the Long-tailed Duck (46 on 3/4). On at least two of the trips, we didn't see this species at first. But both times after I gave my five-minute warning to move on to Hughes Hollow, the Long-tailed Ducks began to fly up river and literally drop down in front of us. Twenty minutes later they were still there and so were we. Again, we saw a variety of plumages, and everybody had nice views of this beautiful bird through the scope. On March 4 when I recorded the high count, they flew into view in groups of 11, 24, and 11.

Other diving ducks seen on most trips included Canvasback, Redhead, and both Scaup. There was a huge raft of Redheads that hung around for over a month. The high count (approximation) was over 500 on March 6. We also enjoyed all three species of mergansers.

Dabblers on the Potomac River included American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, and Northern Shoveler. On one of the trips we found a very cooperative shoveler in the turning basin of the canal, and all enjoyed scope views. Tundra Swans (46 on 3/6) were present on the river on the first two trips.

While we were looking at ducks at Riley's, some of us heard a Winter Wren singing, saw a Hermit Thrush, and—one of the few signs that spring would soon be here—an Eastern Phoebe.

Our ventures at Hughes Hollow gave us good looks at Hooded Mergansers, American Wigeon, Gadwall, Ring-necked Ducks, and Wood Ducks. We did not spend as much time watching them fly into roost as other years due to the longer time spent at Riley's. Tree Swallows began to increase in numbers on the later trips; we flushed a few Wilson's Snipe off of the path; and we were treated to the manic laughing call of Pied-billed Grebes on March 18.

On this last trip, since there were only four of us, we spent some time walking Sycamore Landing Road and had stunning views of three Red-headed Woodpeckers. This was the only time that we had American Black Ducks on the list. There were several seen in flight among the Wood Ducks that flushed from the wet woodland.

I never thought I would admit this, but the honorable mention this year fell on the shoulders of the American Woodcock. The weather conditions were not cooperative, with temperatures never being above 50°F by the time we reached the fields on Sycamore Landing Road. We had glimpses of displays but strained to hear them. A few people saw a bird in flight. If last year's trips were nicknamed the year of the woodcock, that honor this year definitely went to the waterfowl.

Thanks to all who braved the elements to join the trips and who shared their scopes, especially when we were approaching 20 birders, and to Chris Wright, who kept the eBird lists on that trip.



## **Patuxent River Park, Jug Bay Natural Area, Saturday,**

**March 8.** Leader: John Bjerke. Participants: 16. Species:

42. The spring weather finally arrived, and we had a very pleasant morning exploring trails around Jug Bay. It seemed for a while that there would be no Ospreys. A bird had been reported as early as February 22, but recent storms, particularly across Georgia and the Carolinas, had inhibited the return of most of the nesting pairs. We finally got very good views of one bird repeatedly flying just above the river and dragging its feet through the water. Then it went in for a bath. Senior Naturalist Greg Kearns noted that the birds probably do this to wash off the residue of a recent meal. We did have multiple sightings of Bald Eagles; there are at least two active nests in the area. Other highlights included 5 Rusty Blackbirds, a very cooperative Hermit Thrush that posed repeatedly at short distances, and a small group of Golden-crowned Kinglets that were very active. At least 1,000 Red-winged Blackbirds flew overhead in groups of 100 plus.

*continued next page*

# Trip Reports

**Hughes Hollow and Vicinity, Saturday, April 12.** Joint trip for Montgomery and Frederick Bird Clubs, starting at Hughes Hollow and concluding on Sycamore Landing Road. Co-leaders: Jim Nelson (MBC) and Pat Caro (FBC). Participants: 22. Weather: Temps started in 50s, rising to 70, mostly sunny. Species count: 53. The group started off well at Hughes Hollow with an American Bittern flying into a large tree and posing for us. We had lots of first-of-year birds for many participants—(Yellow) Palm Warblers in several places, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers all over and very vocal, a Common Yellowthroat singing, White-eyed Vireos in several locations, a Barn Swallow, 2 Green Herons, and several very vocal Brown Thrashers. We had nice looks at Red-headed Woodpeckers in the usual spot at the back of the impoundments at Hughes Hollow and along Sycamore Landing Road. In both areas we had singing Ruby-

crowned Kinglets. A female Rusty Blackbird was feeding in the mud at the back of the impoundments, and we had single Swamp Sparrows in both locations, including one at Sycamore Landing Road that posed very cooperatively. A few folks saw an early Broad-winged Hawk above Sycamore Landing Road. Six Bonaparte's Gulls drifted down the Potomac at Sycamore Landing. Not many other water birds, but at Hughes the group enjoyed flyover Wood Ducks, Blue-winged Teal, Common Mergansers, and 3 unidentified Yellowlegs, along with Ring-necked Duck, American Coot, and Pied-billed Grebe in the impoundments. At Sycamore Landing we had Bufflehead and distant female/immature male mergansers in bad light, and an adult Bald Eagle posed near a nest across the river. All in all, a very nice day to be out.

---

## Montgomery Bird Club Social

Seventy Montgomery Bird Club members and guests enjoyed wonderful food, company, and photos at the annual Social on Friday evening, March 21. Lisa Alexander of the Audubon Naturalist Society once again made the beautiful ANS headquarters at Woodend available, although she was unable to attend this year. We are very grateful to have this continuing association with ANS. Raj Sakaria, the ANS Property Manager, organized the table setup prior to the festivities and the cleanup afterwards.

Ed Patten did a marvelous job of organizing all of the projects and people who produced such a delightful evening.

Smokey Glen Farm provided us with a tasty barbeque dinner, complete with delicious fruit pies. Thanks to Jim Green for handling the dinner arrangements; Jim also shared bartending duties with Andy Martin, who purchased and tended the wine-pouring along with Howard Lefkowitz.

There are many additional thank-yous to hand out: to Gemma Radko who designed the beautiful nametags; John Hubbell, who organized the member slide show, which

was truly outstanding; and Helen Patton who shopped for all of the snappy paper products and accoutrements. More thanks go to all of the Club members who provided the delicious appetizers and to our great photographers and artists who submitted their pictures for us to drool over.

After the meal, we applauded Gail Mackiernan, this year's Guest of Honor. Gail has had many jobs in our Club, including tackling weighty problems as Conservation Chair. Gail writes:

*I want to thank all of the members of MBC for a great evening at the Annual Social. Being selected as Guest of Honor was a tremendous compliment and I shall try to live up to the title. The plaque is now hanging in my hall—every time I look at it, it reminds me of all the wonderful people at the Montgomery Bird Club. Thank you all!*

The evening was topped off by all of us admiring the superb pictures, photos, and sketches presented by our talented members. Everyone had a great time! ♪

— Anna Urciolo



# Birds of Note (January through March 2014)

As of April 5, as I sit down to write the “Birds of Note” column, it appears that most of us will not get to “tick” a **Snowy Owl** off our Montgomery lists for this year. Despite some hard searching by a number of dedicated birders, no Snowy ever showed up in a consistent or pursuable location. One birder who did report a Snowy Owl in the county over the past few months was Don Simonson. Don was looking out the window of his home office in Darnestown on 2/14. The bird was viewed in flight for about 45 seconds chasing a Red-tailed Hawk. Don and his wife Marcia jumped in their car to try and relocate the bird but did not see it again. This is actually Don’s second Snowy Owl for Montgomery, having seen one near Dickerson in November 1991.

Icy conditions to our north this winter pushed some great waterbirds down our way over the past few months. Mike Ostrowski found a **White-winged Scoter** at Edward’s Ferry on 2/1. **White-winged Scoters** (as many as nine at one point) were reported almost daily from the Potomac River between Violette’s and Riley’s Lock for much of February and March. Another bird that irrupted out of the north into the mid-Atlantic was the **Red-necked Grebe**. Mary Ann Todd found some of the first ones to arrive, reporting four on the Potomac River at Violette’s Lock on 2/4. On 4/2, while chasing a Surf Scoter found by Mike Ostrowski earlier in the day at Little Seneca Lake, David Kidwell noted an astounding 22 **Red-Necked Grebes!** Double-digit numbers of **Long-tailed Ducks** were also seen on the Potomac River in late February and March. A **Red-throated Loon**, found on 2/28 by David Kidwell, stuck around for a few weeks thereafter on the Potomac upstream of Violette’s Lock.



Photo by  
Mike Bowen

Six **Greater White-fronted Geese** were found by Dave Czaplak and Mary Ann Todd on the Potomac adjacent to White’s Ferry on 1/26. A few days later Chandler Wiegand

reported two more a little farther downstream at Edward’s Ferry. Mike Ostrowski noted a single **Greater White-fronted Goose** mixed in with a flock of Canada Geese feeding in a field off Martinsburg Road on 3/2. Chandler found four **Cackling Geese** at Triadelphia Reservoir on 1/4. Diane Ford noted a **Cackling Goose** at the Darnestown Road Ponds off Rte 28 on 1/25. Dave Czaplak reported six **Cackling Geese** on the Potomac River near Violette’s Lock on 2/22.

Dave Czaplak reported a **Rough-legged Hawk** near Violette’s Lock on 2/15. David Gersten spotted a **Merlin** from his Silver Spring yard on 1/12. Two **Peregrine Falcons** were seen by Larin Canella on the Lee Building in downtown Silver Spring on 1/22. Rae and Woody Dubois observed a **Short-eared Owl** at the Oaks Landfill adjacent to Blue Mash on 1/12.

Dave Czaplak reported a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at Violette’s Lock on 3/14. Jim Green found an adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** mixed in with a flock of Ring-billed Gulls on the Hughes Road Polo Grounds on 4/1.

Jared Fisher and Chandler Wiegand reported some “good for the middle of winter” birds in January. Chandler spotted a **Virginia Rail** at Hughes Hollow on 1/5, and Jared found an **American Woodcock** at Blue Mash on 1/17. Conceicao Andrade reported 30 **Wilson’s Snipe** on 3/4 at her farm near Poolesville.

A single **Lapland Longspur** was found by Mary Ann Todd at the Patton Turf Farm near Poolesville on 2/12.

Some interesting birds showed up at county backyard feeders this winter. Jason Berry reported a **Summer Tanager** in a Bethesda backyard on 1/17. A **Pine Warbler** showed up in Jack and Helen Schultz’s Montgomery Village yard on 2/5. An **Orange-crowned Warbler** was an unexpected visitor to Woody and Rae Dubois’s Wheaton area yard on 2/26. Jim and Ann Nelson had a good candidate for a **Brewer’s Blackbird** come to their backyard feeder on 3/14. Tom Kimbis reported a **Pine Siskin** at his North Potomac feeder on 1/21. Ed Stedman noted a **Purple Finch** in his Kensington yard on 1/3 and also had a “sparse” for this winter **Red-breasted Nuthatch** at White’s Ferry on 2/1. †

—Andy Martin



# In Memoriam

## Chris Barnard: A Tribute to a Birder, Photographer, and Friend

Chris Barnard, a Maryland birder and excellent photographer, passed away on February 7, 2014. He leaves his wife Janet and two children. There was a memorial reception at the family home on February 22.

Chris graduated from American University with a degree in Fine Arts and specialized in photogrammetry. Photogrammetry is the science of making measurements from photographs. The output of photogrammetry is typically a map, drawing, measurement, or a 3D model of some real-world object or scene.

Chris worked for the Department of Homeland Security as a remote sensing advisor.

In Montgomery County, Chris was an active member of the Montgomery Bird Club. Most recently he was one of the Club's State Directors to the Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS). He was also a regular participant in both the Seneca and Sugarloaf Christmas Bird Counts. Chris was noted for his good nature and his smile. I never heard Chris say a bad thing about anyone, and he was always more than willing to help. I would often run into Chris in the field, and he was just a pleasure to be out with. Even if the birding was slow, it was still an enjoyable day.

Most of all, I think Chris was one of the best bird photographers in Maryland. His knowledge of photography combined with his birding skills produced some excellent shots. I had the pleasure of traveling with Chris to Minnesota on a birding trip. We found some excellent birds on that trip and had some great conversation with the locals in Minnesota, and I learned a lot about photographing birds. Although I don't have any pictures of Chris, he is best known for the pictures he took of birds, as in his photo of the Northern Hawk Owl we saw in Minnesota.



To me that trip sums up what I know about Chris: great birding, great conversation, and an opportunity to take some great pictures along the way. †

—Ed Patten

*Editor's Note: Memorial contributions may be made in Chris's name to the Maryland Ornithological Society, 4141 Quail Way, Havre de Grace, MD 21078; attn: David Webb.*

---

## Phil Brody: A Tribute

Phil Brody, who passed away on March 24, was a long-time member of the Montgomery Bird Club. I met him through his wife, Doris, when I joined her in monitoring the bluebird boxes at Avenel Country Club. Doris would expound on Phil's love of photography and his passion for taking pictures of birds and whatever else came his way. The Brodys often went to Costa Rica for the entire month of February, and this is where Phil photographed a Harpy Eagle, right from their balcony. I was a happy audience of one, who was blessed with seeing all of his pictures from their trips. I also believe that he photographed a black bear pawprint at Hughes Hollow!

Phil always asked questions. When I had just finished answering one of them, he was already zipping into his next one. When I was visiting last fall, Phil showed me his latest photos of insects who were attracted at night to the light shining through their large windows. These bugs no longer looked like what we would call bugs, but had been transformed into gems. That was Phil, always curious and delighted to share his knowledge, another real gem. I will miss him. †

—Anna Urciolo

*Editor's Note: Memorial contributions may be made in Phil's name to the Audubon Naturalist Society, 8940 Jones Mill Road, Chevy Chase, MD 20815.*





## S. Harvey Mudd: A Retrospective

Any attempt to review and summarize the accomplishments and impact of Harvey Mudd, who passed away on January 21, would more than fill the pages of this newsletter. Yet those who knew him will attest to the fact that he was simply an unassuming gentleman possessed of great talent and persistent thoroughness. This is not the venue to elaborate on his critical work at the National Institute of Mental Health. Suffice it to say that his studies on the synthesis and metabolism of the essential amino acid methionine led to the elucidation of defects in those and related processes that are characteristic of several human genetic diseases. His work there began in 1957 and continued until his death.

Harvey loved birding. He was an early member of the newly formed American Birding Association (ABA), joining in 1972, just two years after it was formed. His enthusiasm led him to sign up in 1973 for one of the first birding expeditions to Alaska.



Participants in the 1973 Alaska bird tour included (left to right) Harvey Mudd, Bob Pyle and Paul DuMont.

Harvey's adventurous spirit surfaced again in January 1984 when a Slaty-backed Gull was found on the Mississippi River north of St. Louis at Alton Dam. I decided to chase it with my sons John and Michael. Having room for one more in my Nissan Sentra wagon, I mentioned our plan at a meeting of the Montgomery Bird Club, and Harvey enthusiastically joined us. We drove overnight, taking 100-mile turns at the driving while one of us got to sleep in a sleeping bag in the back. The sleeping part didn't work very well to say the least. We arrived around 7 a.m. and, in due course, located the bird out on the ice. After excellent scope views, we consulted with some of the local

birders and found a good place to see another rarity, the Eurasian Tree Sparrow, making it a twofer for the trip. On our way home, we ran into a sudden ice storm just west of Indianapolis. Naturally, Harvey happened to be the driver in an unfamiliar car, and the conditions were dreadful. But he kept us on the road as we crept into the city and found a motel, which was a good thing since we'd had precious little rest for 36 hours.

Harvey was not content to just build up his ABA area list; his fascination with birds and thoroughness led him to seek to see birds around the world. The growth of his ABA and world lists is recorded in the annual ABA list report beginning in 1974. Being typically thorough and thoroughly persistent, he and Marion visited every continent and logged impressive totals.

The MD/DC Records Committee owes Harvey an enormous debt. He became a member in 1987, serving three terms, and was elected chair in 1997, serving until 2001. Phil Davis, the secretary of the committee, recently recounted examples of Harvey's thoroughness and persistence in service to the committee. In one remarkable case, Harvey tracked down a rumored stuffed Sandhill Crane at an Eastern Shore farm. He and Marion visited the farmer, who indeed retrieved the dusty crane from his attic. Marion photographed the stuffed bird, and it became the first accepted Sandhill Crane record for Maryland. That is known as going the extra mile.

But local birding was never neglected as Harvey participated in the Seneca Christmas Count faithfully from 1969 onward and responded to each and every rarity sighting both in the county and the state. In fact he initiated the compilation of the MD and DC Locality Lists for reporting state and county life and annual list totals. Whether in the lab or in the field, Harvey always thrived on being in touch with nature. He never grew tired of birding, and his enthusiasm was infectious. That outlook of his ranks with his many other contributions to the birding community, has affected scores of birders, and will be sorely missed. †

—Paul O'Brien

Dear Family, Friends, & Colleagues of S. Harvey Mudd:  
We invite you to join us in remembering Harvey and celebrating his life on Saturday, May 3, from about 12:00 to 3 p.m. at Woodend/Audubon Naturalist Society, 8940 Jones Mill Road, Chevy Chase, Maryland.

If you will be coming, please email Marion:  
marion9507@starpower.net



# Don Messersmith's Big Birding Trip, Part 2

In Part 1 (see the February *Chat*), I told about traveling from Maryland across the Great Plains. Continuing my narrative of my Big Trip, as I enter the State of Washington at Spokane, I am now in the Pacific Time Zone; it's July 11 and I have been on the road a little more than two months.

In the Little Spokane Natural Area and Riverside State Park, a Western Wood Pewee and a White-breasted Nuthatch that goes up the tree trunk when foraging (a possible future separate species) were the highlights. I drove on west across more arid prairie land. For the next couple of days, I was in wheat-growing country until I got to Grant County, which produces more potatoes than any other U.S. county. A bird of note was a drab-colored Brewer's Sparrow seen well. Later in the agricultural Kittitas Valley, I found a good birding spot where I saw Williamson's Sapsucker, Hammond's Flycatcher, Western Tanager, Spotted Towhee, Pygmy Nuthatch, Tree Sparrows, and more.

I crossed the Cascade Mountains at Snoqualmie Pass at 3,022 feet and visited my nephew and family in Sammamish. At the south end of Puget Sound, I visited Nisqually NWR where I saw Willow Flycatcher and Bewick's Wren. Then I headed to the Olympic Peninsula, a beautiful area of Douglas Fir forests, beaches, parks, but I saw few birds on my much-too-fast trip around the peninsula. Finally, on July 17, I saw the Pacific Ocean. Like William Clark of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1805, I exclaimed "The ocean at last!"

I headed south on U.S. 101 to Twin Harbors State Park where it was very cold. I saw Northwestern Crows, Black-capped and Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Spotted Towhee, and a Rufous Hummingbird. Later I reached the Columbia River where I saw Double-crested, Brandt's, and Pelagic Cormorants and Herring, Thayer's, and Glaucous-winged Gulls. Then I crossed the 4.1-mile long bridge over the Columbia River and into Oregon.

For a couple of days I followed the Oregon Coast on U.S. 101. At Ecola State Park by the ocean, I saw my only Black Oystercatcher, some Common Bushtits, and Cedar Waxwings. At Cannon Beach I photographed the huge Haystack Rock, and on other stacks (rocks), I saw

thousands of Common Murres, Tufted Puffins, Brown Pelicans, and gulls. I turned inland, crossed the Coastal Range, and stopped in Salem, the state capital. In Corvallis I visited the Jackson/Frazier Wetland but observed only common birds. I drove through the Willamette Valley and into the Cascade Mountains to the home of Bob and Linda Fleming. Bob is a tour leader, world traveler, and specialist on the Himalayas. One day we went with a birder high into the Cascades to look for Black-backed Woodpecker, Green-tailed Towhee, and Dusky Grouse. Although we didn't see these birds, we did see Townsend's Solitaire and Lewis's Woodpecker. On another day, Bob and I drove to Salt Creek Falls to look (unsuccessfully) for Black Swifts, which nest there. Two more days driving south through Oregon's scenic Siskiyou Mountains brought me to California.

I could see 14,162-foot Mt. Shasta with some snow near the summit, but in the Central Valley it was very hot—97°F at 8 pm. The next day in a Live Oak woodland, a White-headed Woodpecker crossed the road. This is very hot (102°F), arid country, so I decided to cross the Coastal Range to get nearer the ocean. State Route 36 runs from Redbluff to Rio Dell. It is narrow, has many hairpin turns where the speed limit is 10 mph (I drove 5 mph), and, although scenic, is perhaps the scariest road I have ever driven. Luckily there was little traffic.

A visit to Humboldt Bay NWR added Golden-crowned Sparrow and Black Phoebe to my trip list along with several common species. The next day I drove through part of the "Avenue of Giants," the Redwood trees. The next day I reached Berkeley, where I visited another nephew and niece. They took me birding by the Borrego Reservoir where the best birds were Acorn Woodpecker, Common Bushtits, Anna's Hummingbird, Violet-green Swallows, California Scrub Jay, Steller's Jay, and California Towhee.

The next day, while waiting for my daughter, Heidi, to arrive at Oakland Airport, we went to a nearby wetland that had Ring-billed and California Gulls, Caspian Terns, Black Phoebe, Black-necked Stilts, and, best of all, a California Clapper Rail, an endangered subspecies. We next visited Naiping Shen, one of the Chinese students Sherry and I had sponsored in the 1980s. We had a nice time of sightseeing around the San Francisco Bay area,



Point Reyes, Tiburon, and Half Moon Bay where Heidi saw the Pacific Ocean for the first time. Heading south we stopped a few hours to visit the San Juan Baptiste Mission built in 1799 and still in use. We later crossed over the 4,000 foot Coastal Range to Morro Bay. Beside the huge Morro Rock we saw Western and other gulls, White-crowned Sparrow (*gambeli* race), but of more interest were the Sea Otters and a California Ground Squirrel. Then we headed to Los Angeles where I visited a friend who had been my childhood playmate in the first and second grades in Toledo. (We found each other a few years ago over the Internet.) Heidi was fascinated with our reminiscences about life in Toledo in the 1930s.

Our next destination was San Diego, where we spent four days visiting Sherry's brother, Paul, and his family. Over these few days, we went to La Jolla for a day at the beach, a walk to a nearby park where pretty Heermann's Gulls were common, church on Sunday, swimming in their backyard pool, and birding at Famosa Slough where there were Great Egrets, Great Blue Herons, Black-necked Stilts, Willets, and a Black Phoebe. One day we visited Cabrillo National Park, which commemorates Juan Cabrillo who discovered San Diego Bay in 1526. After a good fish dinner (accompanied by Great-tailed Grackles) we went to Balboa Park, which was built in 1915 for the Pan-American Exhibition.

We left their house, made a short visit to a Washington, DC, friend from the 1950s, with more reminiscing about our biking and hiking days back then with the American Youth Hostels. From his house we took I-5 to the new I-8

and at 10:45 a.m. Pacific time on August 7, I turned east, heading for home. Now we crossed hot, almost barren desert, made a detour to look at and photograph the Mexican border, and later passed through the agricultural Imperial Valley, which gets its water from the Colorado River. Hay seems to be the principal crop here. As we crossed the Colorado River, we entered Arizona and stopped in Yuma where the temperature was 109°F. The next day we followed I-8 through more dry, scrubby desert with low bushes, spindly ocotillo, and cacti. The only break in all this was Dateland, where there are groves of date palms looking like a scene in Egypt. In Phoenix we did some sightseeing in the center of the city and after lunch returned to the car where the thermometer read 115°F! We visited some friends of Heidi's and spent the night in Scottsdale.

The next day Heidi flew home from Phoenix, and the following day I continued east on I-10 to Tucson. I visited the Sonoran Desert Museum, which has plants and animals from the surrounding area of many saguaro cacti. Here I saw only one bird, a Bendire's Thrasher. There were exhibits of prairie dogs, a young cougar, and a Mexican wolf. From there I drove on to Sierra Vista, which at 4,140 feet is cooler. For the next five days, I went to various well-known birding spots such as Patagonia Lake (Neotropic Cormorants), the Patagonia Rest Stop (Thick-billed Kingbird, a life bird for me, Western Tanager, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Western Kingbird, and others).

Please see the MBC website at [montgomerybirdclub.org](http://montgomerybirdclub.org) for the continuation of this report. †

—Don Messersmith



## Welcome New Members!

Mariana Acevedo  
Jennifer and Jason Brodsky  
Margaret Brown  
Culotta Family  
Judy Davis  
John and Rhoda Dicken  
Jeffrey Fisher

Karen Grisez  
Mary Frances Inglehart  
Tom and Sammy Kimbis  
Mary Kimm  
Aaron Kirchoff  
Newcombe Family  
Natalie O'Reilly

Sandra and Owen Rennert  
Thomas Stock  
Susan Stone  
Julie Super  
Scott and Alice Young  
Marion Zatz



# Candidates for Officers and Directors 2014-2015

In accordance with Article V of the Montgomery Bird Club Constitution, at the April 23, 2014, Club meeting, the Nominating Committee announced 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:** Sally Wechsler

**Chapter Director:** Gail Mackiernan

**Chapter Director:** Brooke Smith

**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 21 meeting. The Officers and the State Directors serve one-year terms. The Chapter Directors serve two-year terms. Chapter Directors Woody Dubois and Evelyn Ralston, elected last year, have one year remaining in their terms. †

—*Jim Nelson, Chair, Linda Friedland, Lydia Schindler*

---

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

