



December 2021

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## President's Chat

This is my seventh *President's Chat* and the first one in which I will avoid mentioning the p.....c and C....D-19. I want to give you something else to think about. Let me try.

It often occurs to me that birding brings us closest to reaching a truth, a small truth perhaps but a truth nevertheless. When I worked as a scientist, I was looking for some truth on cellular organization, but it was slow going. In birding, things go much faster.

When we bird, it is essential that we truthfully identify the species we are observing. Unsurprisingly, both newbies and confirmed birders make errors. But there are several rapid ways to correct our errors. First, the bird itself may give you a second chance. You see a bird, but it does not cooperate, it moves too much, and doesn't let you take a decent photo. Then you cannot see it at all. How frustrating! It looked so much like the rare warbler you so much want to add to your list. What a bummer. But do not go. The bird may return and give you a better view or photo. Really. This has happened to me more than once. You may not get the rare warbler, but you will not have the wrong ID and may get another bird for your list.

Then, your photos may contain details you did not observe through your binoculars. Last July, some of us birded southeastern Arizona. At Patagonia Lake, we saw Double-crested Cormorants. But as we were leaving the area, Scott Young asked, "Could these be Neotropical Cormorants?" Sure enough, the birds had chin patches showing the characteristic V-shaped border. None of us had noticed that detail, but the cameras had registered it and Scott



paid enough attention to correct us rapidly. It is helpful to take photos of birds that you have little time to observe. And, of course, it is important to know the birds well!

Finally, if you submit your observations to eBird, a reviewer may ask you for incontrovertible evidence.

It is very annoying to have a reviewer challenge you (I know). Change my tiny Cackling Goose into a big Canada? My Olive-sided Flycatcher into a mere Pewee? But in the end, if there is serious, justified doubt, isn't it better to go with the most sensible interpretation? Given how truth seems elastic these days, I wouldn't mind seeing the stringency of eBird reviewers extended outside the field of birding ... to newspapers and social media, perhaps?

I wish you a happy 2022, good health, and many exciting birds.

—Evelyn Ralston

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## Editor's Corner

I can't believe this is my fifth *Chat*. As I prepare for this issue, arranging and rearranging yellow sticky notes on my wall and sending/responding to what seems like countless emails, I am super excited to see it coming together and am thankful for the guidance, generosity, and patience that the *Chat* Crew has shown me in the past year. My sincere thanks to Pam Oves, Susan Hunt, Andy Martin, Linda Friedland, Evelyn Ralston, Scott Young, Chris Wright, Moira Davenport, and Ed Vigezzi, plus a shoutout to Becky Cromwell who has contributed three of her stories.

Speaking of stories, haven't we all experienced missed opportunities and delightful surprises while birding? When my family visited Michigan for the first time over the summer, I swore I had found a rare bird at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area except that it didn't show again and I have no evidence to support my claim. Nobody else in my family saw it. But I got great views of several Sandhill Cranes by the road on the way there. So, Becky and Ryan are not alone! I hope you will read their stories on page 7 and consider sharing yours with the Club.

—Stella Tea

## Meeting Schedule

The Club plans to start providing a hybrid format beginning with the December meeting (fingers crossed). We plan to resume in-person meetings at the Potomac Presbyterian Church for those who are interested while providing Zoom links for virtual participation. Let's test the water and make adjustments as we move forward. Links to the meetings will be provided separately.

### **DECEMBER 15, 2021 (Wednesday), 7:30 p.m.** **Holiday Wine & Cheese, Mystery Birds and other fun!**

Relax, meet other members, and make new birding friends over wine and cheese. Then sharpen your visual and auditory bird identification skills for the traditional Bird Quiz that will be presented by the Club's VP Scott Young. If you have any ambiguous bird photos with corresponding good, decisive shots, please forward them to Scott at [montgomerybirdclub@mdbirds.org](mailto:montgomerybirdclub@mdbirds.org). He will use them as part of the quiz. Other suggestions to make this annual pre-holiday, social meeting extra fun will be appreciated!

### **JANUARY 19, 2022 (Wednesday), 7:30 p.m.** **Progress Update on the Maryland & DC Breeding Bird Atlas 3 by Gabriel Foley**

Two years of data collection are now complete for the Maryland & DC Breeding Bird Atlas 3 (BBA3). This five-year community science project is documenting the distribution, abundance, and timing of each bird species that breeds in Maryland or DC. When complete, the BBA3 dataset can be compared to similar past projects and will provide an unparalleled record of how local bird distributions have changed over the last 40 years. Atlas Coordinator Gabriel Foley will provide an overview of how the project collects data, an update on the current status, and discuss how you can get involved and submit your own observations.

### **FEBRUARY 16, 2022 (Wednesday), 7:30 p.m.** **Birding in Cuba by Don Messersmith**

The memorable trip that Don Messersmith will recount was organized by the Audubon Naturalist Society and led by Mark Garland. It visited many of the best birding areas in this nearby country. The group saw all but two of the 21 endemic species plus some wintering U.S. warblers and other birds (151 total) in just two weeks, in addition to experiencing some of the culture, historic sites, good food and music. Don, the last known Charter Member of the MBC, is a retired University of Maryland Professor of Entomology and Ornithology, and has taught Ornithology courses for over 50 years. As a pioneer in leading bird tours, he has traveled to every continent as a tour organizer and leader with his own company, World Nature Tours, and other organizations.

### **MARCH 11, 2022 (Friday), 7:30 p.m.** **Club Social at Woodend**

Save the date! The much anticipated annual Social, after several cancellations, will return to the beautiful setting of Woodend, the Chevy Chase home of the Audubon Naturalist Society. We plan to meet in person to honor the Member of the Year, enjoy members' presentation of their most beloved recent photographs, and have a delicious dinner. Look for more information in future communications.



# Club News

## Membership Dues Reminder

Has your MOS/MBC dues notice slipped your mind? Your membership dues help sustain all our activities and those of the MOS and allow us to contribute to environmental conservation. Included in your membership are the MBC newsletter *The Chat* and the MOS newsletter *The Maryland Yellowthroat*. Don't miss out and renew soon. See payment instructions on page 11 or search your emails for the subject line: Your membership in MOS and MBC will expire soon! The email was sent on July 31.

—*Moira Davenport, Membership Chair*

## Helen's Tree Planting Ceremony

On a crisp, sunny Sunday in October, friends and family of former MBC President Helen Patton gathered at Woodend, home of the Audubon Naturalist Society, to honor her memory. Helen contributed in many ways to ANS, including planting trees for the newly restored woodland (with a pat and an admonition to “grow well, little tree”) and volunteering for years as a *Voice of the Naturalist*. The highlight of the new ANS Woodland Trail is the creative Outdoor Classroom, which bears a sign naming it for Helen Ann Patton.

Fittingly, we were gathered for a tree planting, and the tree was a young sycamore donated by our own Mike Bowen. In the crowd were more than two dozen longtime MBC members. A series of speakers—Mike, ANS Executive Director Lisa Alexander, Helen's cousin, Helen's neighbor, and Chris Wright—fondly recalled Helen's warmth and enthusiasm as well as her many and varied accomplishments (she was a pilot! she sang with a barbershop group! she wove her collection of beautiful yarns into fabulous fabrics!).

After the tree was set in place and just as Mike was about to throw a spadeful of soil around the root-ball, a call rang out: “Peregrine Falcon!” Everyone (all the birders, at least) looked up, and indeed a most beautiful Peregrine, perfectly lit by the sun, was streaking right overhead. A minute later, a Golden-crowned Kinglet briefly lit on Helen's tree. Then a loud Pileated Woodpecker chimed in. There was no doubt that Mike had found the perfect way to commemorate Helen.

—*Evelyn Ralston and Lydia Schindler*



Family, friends, and Lisa Alexander (3rd from left) listen while Helen's cousin (far right) speaks. Photo by Evelyn Ralston



Mike Bowen plants the sycamore with Don Messersmith in the background. Photo by Evelyn Ralston

# Conservation Update

## Planned Developments May Threaten Wheaton Regional Park

The Montgomery Bird Club and the many birders who frequent Wheaton Regional Park (WRP) are concerned about proposed changes to the park laid out in its newest Master Plan. Those of us who attended the Montgomery Parks webinar in September soon realized that the planners had little or no appreciation of the importance of this park for birds (or for birders). Planned development could seriously impact habitat for birds and access/enjoyment for birders and other nature-lovers.

First, some statistics: Noah Strycker's article in the October 2021 issue of ABA's *Birding* magazine notes that Montgomery County, MD stands 19th out of 3,138 counties in the United States for the number of complete eBird checklists submitted as of December 2020. WRP contains four eBird hotspots, with about 6,000 checklists submitted and almost 190 species recorded. This puts it into the top 4 or 5 birding areas in MoCo and first among all Montgomery County parks. While more birders visit during spring and autumn migrations, examination of eBird data shows submittals in every month of the year. Indeed, these are impressive statistics especially considering that not everyone uses eBird.

Obviously, WRP is important for birds as well, especially neotropical migrants, which are among our most rapidly declining species. Located on the Atlantic Flyway, it is a green oasis almost completely surrounded by developed areas. As such, it is a "migrant trap" where birds, hungry and tired after a night's flight, alight at dawn to feed and rest. These birds initially concentrate at the highest points of the park (i.e., near the Shorefield parking lot) where the sun's rays reach first and insects first become active. Birds then disperse to feed in the wood edges along the mini-train tracks and in the limited field habitat in the area, particularly along the western side of Pine Lake.

Unfortunately, this is the very area that may be most seriously impacted by development plans. These include removal of trees and vegetation at Shorefield to allow construction of a large family picnic pavilion, adding basketball courts and a food truck area. Plans to pave natural trails, including the popular gravel trail along Pine Lake (see photo), to encourage "mixed use" of trails and increased use by mountain bicyclists are also worrying. Any removal of vegetation, coupled with a significant increase in noise and disturbance, will seriously impact migrants when they are at their most vulnerable and are incompatible with any quiet enjoyment of nature.

—continued on page 5



Birders and photographers on and near the gravel trail by Pine Lake in Wheaton Regional Park. Photo by Gail Mackiernan



There is, fortunately, somewhat less threat to WRP breeding birds based on our Breeding Bird Atlas data so far; the majority of the most vulnerable species breed in more heavily wooded areas of the park. However, even here the park planners would like to see mountain biking introduced to the now-quiet natural trails.

It is ironic to have these areas threatened at a time when birding and other nature-oriented activities are seeing a surge of interest. During the pandemic, there has been a significant increase in new birders and wildlife photographers visiting WRP. This reflects the national growth in these hobbies in the past two years. In fact, MBC gained 75 of its current 341 members during the past year and saw an increase in young and ethnically diverse members. While increased use and accessibility of the park to the local community is a worthy goal, we feel the planning board has neglected existing park uses in its enthusiasm for new “hard” construction and activities. For example, the Master Plan does not address needs for restoration and enhancement of natural areas, which have been degraded over past years by invasive plants, storm damage, and deer overpopulation.

The Montgomery Bird Club is drafting comments, and we may seek help from members to contact the County Council, as well as the Parks Department, as events move forward. Stay tuned!

—Gail Mackiernan, Conservation Chair



American Avocet found by Gail Mackiernan and Barry Cooper on September 2, 2020. Photo by Stella Tea



Baltimore Oriole during spring migration. Photo by Stella Tea

## Montgomery Birds of Note (early August to mid-November 2021)

A juvenile **Wood Stork**, showing up along the C&O Canal and Potomac River adjacent to the Pennyfield Lock area between September 2 and 21, qualifies as one of the best birds seen in Montgomery over the past few months. This is a first for the county record according to Cornell University’s eBird project. Along with the **Wood Stork**, there have been quite a few reports of **Cattle Egrets** in the county over the past few months. Toward the end of October (the 30th to be exact), 9 **Cattle Egrets** were reported at Summit Hall Turf Farm (TF). An additional 3 **Cattle Egrets** have been noted off Route 118/Germantown Rd between November 6 and 9.

Jim Ivett was first to find a flock of 7 **White-winged Scoters** on Little Seneca Lake within Black Hill Regional Park (RP) on November 2. Dave Czaplak noted a single **Black Scoter** on the Potomac River adjacent to Violette’s Lock on November 7. A single **Ross’s Goose**, mixed in with a gaggle of Canada Geese, was first spotted by Lisa Burke on Lake Hallowell on November 6. It was relocated later by Jared Fisher in the early morning of November 11 at Blue Mash, and it continues to be seen at Lake Hallowell as recently as November 21.

—continued on page 6

## Birds of Note (continued)

John Sojda spotted Montgomery's second of the year record of a **Golden Eagle** flying over Homestead Farm near Poolesville on November 12. Montgomery's first **Golden Eagle** for 2021 was seen over Blue Mash Nature Trail on April 3 by Monte Tarbox, Gail Mackiernan, and Barry Cooper. It seems the last day in 2021 that the Welsh Park, Rockville, breeding pair of **Mississippi Kites** were seen was August 25, courtesy of Jim Ivett and Michael Bowen. Gail Mackiernan reported an additional **Mississippi Kite** from Wheaton RP/Brookside Gardens on September 11. My (your author's) "fingers crossed" that a Mississippi Kite pair will find Rockville's Welsh Park to their liking again in 2022.

John Sojda found an **Upland Sandpiper** mixed in with some **Killdeer** and **Pectoral Sandpipers** at the Summit Hall TF on August 12. A **Sanderling** was also noted from Summit Hall TF on August 20 by John. **Sanderling** reports also came in from Dave Czaplak and Mary Ann Todd on September 12 at Violette's Lock and also from Vickie Baily on September 29 at Lake Whetstone. Two **American Golden-Plovers** were seen at Pennyfield Lock by Mary Ann Todd on September 2. An additional **American Golden-Plover** was found at the Hughes Road Polo Fields on October 6.

Jared Fisher was the first Montgomery birder to take advantage of Virginia birder Eric Anderson's report of a **Neotropic Cormorant** on the Potomac River adjacent to Algonkian Regional Park, VA. Jared was already birding at Riley's Lock the same morning (August 28), and when the report came in, he quickly hiked upstream along the C&O Canal to the southern tip of Sharpshin Island and photographed the **Neotropic Cormorant** mixed in with a bunch of **Double-crested Cormorants** on a midstream logjam.

On the morning of September 19, John Sojda was birding Black Hill RP near the Cabin Branch Trail head when a *catharus* thrush species flew past and caught his attention with the bird eventually landing about 30 feet away. Getting his binoculars on the bird suggested that he had a **Gray-cheeked Thrush**. The bird failed to cooperate for a photo, but it continued to vocalize from its hiding spot and, with quick thinking, John was able to use his mobile phone to make a recording. Later, back at his home, analysis of the call with the Merlin App plus further consultation

with other local birders confirmed that John had not found a **Gray-cheeked Thrush** but instead a much rarer "for the county" **Bicknell's Thrush**.

**Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** and **Philadelphia Vireos** seem to be neotropical migrants that are always just a little bit easier to find in Montgomery during fall migration when they are on the way back south to warmer climates. Dave Roberts and Oliver Patrick found a gorgeous **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** in the vicinity of the Violette's Lock parking area on September 2. Timothy Forrester reported a **Philadelphia Vireo** at Blue Mash Nature Trail on September 3. And an additional 9 or 10 **Philadelphia Vireo** sightings came from other Montgomery birders through the end of September.

With reports of a **Cerulean Warbler** on September 4 near Damascus and a **Connecticut Warbler** sighting at Wheaton RP on September 7, Robin Skinner and Karen Cyr enabled Montgomery to reach the 34 Wood Warbler species mark for the year. And we can make it 35, if we count a **Brewster's Warbler** (Blue-winged x Golden-winged Warbler hybrid) reported last May.

A **Nelson's Sparrow** was seen at the Oaks Landfill by Laura Berkson and others on an October 6 field trip led by Mark England. Tom Kimbis noted another **Nelson's Sparrow** at Lake Needwood on October 23. Anne Mytych noted a **Clay-colored Sparrow** at RedGate Park in Rockville on October 3.

As of mid-November, 258 species have been reported in Montgomery so far in 2021—two species short of all-time yearly county record of 260! Jared Fisher currently stands at a very impressive 241 species reported for the year, one bird short of Dave Czaplak's modern record of 242 in one year. Max Wilson is 10 behind at 232. An additional 9 birders (John Sojda, Mary Ann Todd, David Roberts, Team "Dubois" [Woody and Rae], Dave Powell, Nathan Tea, Brooke Levey, and Robin Skinner) have all surpassed the 210 species mark. I, personally, am hoping for a few more surprises to round out the year!

—Andy Martin



# Member Stories

## **My Favorite Birding Memory from 2021 by Ryan Carr (age 10)**

My favorite birding memory from this year happened in March when I was hiking the Ten Mile Creek trail at Black Hill Regional Park. We were on the upper trail along Little Seneca Lake when I spotted something white in the water. I thought it might be something special, so my friend and I jumped down the 10-foot cliff to the trail closer to the water to check it out. When we had a better view, I realized it was just a rock. However, when I looked next to it, I saw a Trumpeter Swan floating there. In the next few minutes it gracefully glided toward us and did a 360-degree spin. We stood there watching it for a long time. It was incredible to have such a good view of a rare bird. I'll always remember that day.

## **Close Encounters by Becky Cromwell**

On a sunny day in the spring of 2005, I went birding with my fiancé John along the C&O Canal to see some early migrants. We were walking north from Violette's Lock when we encountered two men walking south toward us. They both had binoculars. One looked older than the other. We guessed that they were a father and son who were out birding. We greeted them and continued walking.

After birding for about two hours we got discouraged. We had seen a few bluebirds and one Baltimore Oriole but discouragingly few warblers. When John stopped to tie his shoe, I saw a small bird with a yellow patch on its head. It flew before I could glimpse the wings or face. We turned south, heading for a picnic table where we could sit and have lunch.

Now, we saw the same pair of men walking back in our direction. We stopped to compare notes. Had their luck been better than ours? No, they had only seen a few interesting birds. The younger man inquired "and how about you?"

I hesitated for a moment. "Well I might have seen a warbler for a few moments, it had a yellow cap on its head."

The man's eyes grew large, and he actually reached out and touched my shoulders. I was flustered but charmed by his boyish enthusiasm. "That could have been a Golden-winged!" he exclaimed. "Where did you see it?"

"I think it was in some low bushes near Riley's Lock."

Off they went. We found a picnic table and looked up the Golden-winged Warbler on my phone to see what all the fuss was about. Yes, it was a striking bird, with bold markings on the face and gold splashes on its head and wings. In the meantime, two female cyclists asked if they could share the table with us. We sat around for a few minutes, eating and chatting. One of the women asked: "Did you see Bill Gates and his dad? They were birding on the towpath this morning!" My jaw hit the table.

Sixteen years later, I'm not sure if I saw a Golden-winged Warbler that day, but I know that I had a close encounter of a different kind!

## **Beyond Club News: Name Change for the Audubon Naturalist Society**

After listening to the voices of Audubon Naturalist Society members, volunteers, program participants, donors, board members, and partners, the organization has decided to update its name in order to move forward toward a stronger, more inclusive future. ANS acknowledges that John James Audubon's art was a catalyst for bird conservation in our nation and that the Audubon community has achieved much together over the past century. However, retaining the Audubon name without regard to the pain that he inflicted on Black people and other people of color is a disservice to the ANS community. While the organization remains committed to its mission and vision, the decision to change its name is part of the organization's ongoing commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility. The new name and brand identity will be decided after a deliberate and thoughtful process of listening and learning from the current ANS community as well as its partners in the region. If you're interested in being part of the renaming process, you can learn more at [anshome.org/namingthefuture](https://anshome.org/namingthefuture).



# Winter Field Trips

MBC field trips follow the CDC's recommendations for safety during the pandemic. In addition, all trip participants must be fully vaccinated except children and those with medical exemptions. Unvaccinated individuals are required to wear a mask. Please see our website at [montgomerybirdclub.org/calendar/](http://montgomerybirdclub.org/calendar/) for up-to-date details and inclement weather guidance.

The Club has planned a wide array of trips, thanks to leaders who volunteer their time and expertise. Here are some tips to help ensure that our trips are productive and enjoyable for everyone:

- Stay with the group, keep talking to a minimum, and walk with a soft tread.
- Let the leader lead, staying behind him or her, and remember that the leader is here for the whole group. Don't forget that shorter folks may be standing behind you.
- When the leader gets a bird in the scope, take a quick look, then move aside so that others can get a view before the bird flies.
- If possible, avoid pointing if a bird is close by, as that movement may flush it. Unfortunately, this is not always easy to remember!
- Leaders often use the clock-face method of helping birders locate a bird—"The bird is at 11 o'clock in that sycamore tree." Imagine the tree as the face of a clock, and look for the bird on a branch on the left side of the tree near the top.
- See lots of good birds!

—Linda Friedland, Field Trip Coordinator

For recent field trip reports, please visit [montgomerybirdclub.org/trip-reports/](http://montgomerybirdclub.org/trip-reports/).

## **JANUARY 6 (Thursday)**

### **BLACKWATER NWR**

Full day, starting at 9 a.m. along the Choptank River in Cambridge, Md. Waterfowl, overwintering songbirds, and raptors, plus optional late afternoon marsh watch. Brown-headed Nuthatch possible. Bring lunch and drinks. Limit: 12. For reservations (required) and more information, contact the LEADER: Mark England at 240-308-4114 or [englandmark@comcast.net](mailto:englandmark@comcast.net).

## **JANUARY 9 (Sunday)**

### **BLACK HILL REGIONAL PARK AND GUNNERS LAKE**

All birders, but especially new birders, are welcome on this half-day trip, which will focus on the identification of ducks at these premier county spots for winter waterfowl. We will start at 8 a.m. at the Visitors Center at Black Hill Regional Park. Bring a spotting scope if you have one. Limit: 15. For reservations (required) and more information, contact the LEADER: Gerry Hawkins at [maineusa@comcast.net](mailto:maineusa@comcast.net) or 571-277-8406 (cell).

## **JANUARY 15 (Saturday)**

### **RILEY'S LOCK**

Join us for a morning at and around Riley's Lock where we will first spend some time scanning the river for waterfowl. After that we'll head upstream on the towpath, checking the turning basin for any elusive waterfowl and then continue on looking for winter woodland birds. (Perhaps the Evening Grosbeaks will return?) Start at 8:30 a.m., and bring a scope if you have one. Limit: 8. For reservations (required) and more information, contact the LEADER: Scott Young at 202-313-1444.

## **JANUARY 16 (Sunday)**

### **OAKS LANDFILL, LAYTONSVILLE**

Bundle up for a 2 to 2½ hour LATE AFTERNOON search for wintering sparrows and raptors, including possible Northern Harriers and Short-eared Owls. Mostly open terrain with some ponds, which we will check if they are not frozen over. Reservations required at least a week ahead of the trip for names to be submitted to the county. Limit: 16. We will gather at 3:15 p.m. on the landfill entrance drive at 6001 Rt. 108, Laytonsville, Md. For reservations and more information, contact the LEADER: Mark England at 240-308-4114 or [englandmark@comcast.net](mailto:englandmark@comcast.net).





# Winter Field Trips

**JANUARY 22 (Saturday)**

## **OCEAN CITY AND THE COAST**

We will bird the Ocean City inlet in the morning, looking for sea ducks, gulls, wintering shorebirds, and anything else that might be around (hopefully Razorbill). After that, we will check a few local areas around OC and then, depending on what is being seen in the area, head further north, possibly to Indian River Inlet or a little further inland. We will start at 8 a.m. in the Ocean City Inlet parking lot, so either get up early or stay overnight in the area! Scopes would be useful. Limit: 8. Possible additional birding on the way down Friday afternoon, including a stop by Salisbury landfill, depending on the weather and the leader's availability. For reservations (required) and information, contact the LEADER: Clive Harris at [clivegharris@yahoo.com](mailto:clivegharris@yahoo.com).

**FEBRUARY 9 (Wednesday)**

## **GUNNERS LAKE, GERMANTOWN**

This little body of water has established a deserved reputation over the years for a nice variety of wintering waterfowl and rather close views of the birds. If the lake is frozen over at the time of the trip, we will switch to a nearby larger body of water. Participants are invited to bring telescopes, since the leaders may not be at liberty to share theirs because of pandemic restrictions. Walking will be along a level, paved path. We will begin at 8 a.m. along the north side of Wisteria Drive, where there is ample parking. Specific maps giving directions will be sent to participants. Limit: 10. For reservations (required) and more information, contact the LEADER: Mike Bowen at 202-236-0510 or [dhmbowen@yahoo.com](mailto:dhmbowen@yahoo.com). Anne Cianni will co-lead.

**FEBRUARY 12 (Saturday)**

## **OAKS LANDFILL, LAYTONSVILLE**

Bundle up for a 2 to 2½ hour LATE AFTERNOON search for wintering sparrows and raptors, including possible Northern Harriers and Short-eared Owls. Mostly open terrain with some ponds, which we will check if they are not frozen over. Reservations required at least a week ahead of the trip for names to be submitted to the county. Limit: 16. We will gather at 3:30 p.m. on the landfill entrance drive at 6001 Rt. 108, Laytonsville, Md. For reservations and more information, contact the LEADER: Mark England at 240-308-4114 or [englandmark@comcast.net](mailto:englandmark@comcast.net).

**FEBRUARY 13 (Sunday)**

## **HUGHES HOLLOW**

Join us for a morning of winter marsh and woodland birding. Targets are sparrows, winter songbirds, and possibly ducks. We will start at the parking lot. Dress for the weather; bring water and a snack if you like. We will not be too far from the parking lot if anyone needs to leave early. Beginners and young birders are encouraged to join. Limit: 12. For reservations (required), time, and other information, contact the LEADER: Nathan Tea at [snowmie700@gmail.com](mailto:snowmie700@gmail.com).

**FEBRUARY 24 (Thursday)**

## **LOIS Y. GREEN CONSERVATION PARK**

Morning walk through the varied habitats of this excellent 250-acre park, including two ponds, fields, and deciduous and coniferous woods. We'll be looking for overwintering songbirds, waterfowl, and raptors. Start at 8 a.m. in the parking lot at 8711 Snouffer School Road, Gaithersburg, Md. Limit: 12. For reservations (required), contact the LEADER: Mark England at [englandmark@comcast.net](mailto:englandmark@comcast.net) or 240-308-4114.

## Youth Birding

The YMOS is gearing up for the 2nd annual virtual Photo Big Day on December 11-12, raising funds to support an environmental cause. The group has also begun forming teams to participate in the next New Jersey Audubon's World Series of Birding event in May 2022, hopefully in person! In between, there will be a fundraiser for the WSB and a number of other exciting trips and events. For more information, visit the Young Birders page on the MOS website ([mdbirds.org/young-birders/](http://mdbirds.org/young-birders/)), the MBC website ([montgomerybirdclub.org/young-birders/](http://montgomerybirdclub.org/young-birders/)), the Youth Maryland Ornithological Society page on Facebook, or contact George Radcliffe at [radclifg@gmail.com](mailto:radclifg@gmail.com).

—Stella Tea



# Christmas Bird Counts

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) season is rapidly approaching. This year will be the 122nd year that CBCs have been conducted. The annual CBC has been organized by National Audubon for many years, and the resulting data is available to everyone in a public database online at [netapp.audubon.org/CBCObservation/](http://netapp.audubon.org/CBCObservation/).



The compilers of our local CBCs can always use new volunteers to help with the counts. Participating in a CBC can be fun and educational, and you are contributing to a very valuable, long-term citizen science effort. You can participate in the CBC as a field counter, or, if you don't want to count in the field and you are located inside one of the count circles, you can participate by counting birds at your feeders and around your yard.

Audubon has set out requirements for count compilers to conduct safe CBCs during the pandemic, as was required last year. Activities must comply with all current state and municipal COVID-19 guidelines, which can change suddenly. As of this writing (November 8), masking is not required outdoors but could be if case numbers were to increase, if social distancing is not possible while in the field, or if unvaccinated birders participate. Carpooling, if necessary, should be restricted to existing familiar or social “pod” groups.

Many of you have been participating in the CBC for years and may already be hearing from your CBC leaders about this year's counts. If you would like to participate again or try out a CBC, contact one of the compilers below.

## **Triadelphia Reservoir CBC: DECEMBER 18 (Saturday)**

Compiler: David Holmes, [musiclbndr@gmail.com](mailto:musiclbndr@gmail.com) (preferred) or 410-730-7083 (home) or 410-952-3584 (cell).

## **District of Columbia CBC: DECEMBER 18 (Saturday)**

Compiler: Larry Cartwright, [prowarbler@verizon.net](mailto:prowarbler@verizon.net) or 703-941-3142. Alternatively, contact the Audubon Naturalist Society through Carol Hayes at [Carol.Hayes@anshome.org](mailto:Carol.Hayes@anshome.org) or 301-652-9188, extension 10.

## **Seneca CBC: DECEMBER 19 (Sunday)**

Compiler: Jim Nelson, [kingfishers2@verizon.net](mailto:kingfishers2@verizon.net) (preferred) or 240-515-4517 (cell).

## **Central Loudoun CBC: DECEMBER 28 (Tuesday)**

Compiler: Joe Coleman, [joecoleman@rstarmail.com](mailto:joecoleman@rstarmail.com) or [jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org](mailto:jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org) or 540-554-2542 or sign up at [www.loudounwildlife.org](http://www.loudounwildlife.org). This count includes 5 miles along the C&O Canal in Montgomery Co. MD.

## **Sugarloaf Mountain CBC: JANUARY 2 (Sunday)**

Compiler: Janet Millenson, [janet@twocrows.com](mailto:janet@twocrows.com) or 301-983-9337.

## Welcome New Members



**Martine Adler**

**Bilcha Ahmad**

**Vickie Baily**

**Laura Berkson**

**Allie Bluestein**

**Stacey Boehm-Russell**

**Cintia Cabib**

**Lauren Carey**

**Amy Casiano**

**Tara Clifton**

**Jyoti Dayal**

**Sarah Demarest**

**Leo Dilling**

**Geri Drymalski**

**Beth Durham**

**John Eldred**

**Jennifer Fink**

**Warren Fishbein**

**Serrin Gantt**

**Althea Harlin**

**Ayan Kishore**

**Ronald LaCoss**

**Stephen Lofgren**

**Linda Luisi**

**Kay Madsen**

**Sarah Mangelsdorf**

**Grimm**

**Meletta Mellon**

**Trent Palmer**

**Elizabeth Purcell**

**Audrey Shen**

**George Tabora**

**Jim Thomas**

**Alba Tirado**

**Peter Tunon**

**Karen Voldal**

**Christopher Wells**

**Stephanie Yang**

—Jim Nelson





**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL**  
**Montgomery Bird Club - a Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS)**

Your dues payment includes membership to both MBC and MOS until September next year.

If at all possible, we prefer that you pay online on the MOS website, with a credit card or PayPal.  
Go to [mdbirds.org/join/chapters/montgomery-bird-club](http://mdbirds.org/join/chapters/montgomery-bird-club) and select "Join/Renew."  
See classes of membership at [mdbirds.org/join/about-mos/manual-of-operation/](http://mdbirds.org/join/about-mos/manual-of-operation/).

**If you cannot pay online, please send this form with a check payable to**  
*Maryland Ornithological Society to*

**Carol S Daugherty, MOS Treasurer, 11925 Oden Ct, Rockville, MD 20852**

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- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual—\$30 (\$10 MBC/\$20 MOS)                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Household—\$40 (\$15 MBC/\$25 MOS)      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining—\$70 (\$20 MBC/\$50 MOS)                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Junior—\$6 (\$1 MBC/\$5 MOS) (under 18) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affiliated—\$8 (membership through another chapter) |  |

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL DUES

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ DONATION TO CLAUDIA WILDS FUND (to augment the Club's regular income for promoting local understanding of birds and the need for habitat protection)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Total enclosed**                       New Membership    OR     Renewal

Total number of Club members \_\_\_\_\_ (Household, Sustaining, or Life Memberships)

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STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

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PHONE NUMBER(S) \_\_\_\_\_

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Check if you would like to receive the MOS newsletter *The Maryland Yellowthroat* by mail. Otherwise, you will be notified when *The Maryland Yellowthroat* is posted on the MOS website.

The Chat  
MBC/MOS  
7101 Ridgewood Ave  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815



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**President:** Evelyn Ralston

**Membership:** Moira Davenport

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