

## President's Chat

By Emily Huang

The North American Bird Conservation Initiative's "State of the Birds 2025"\* does not contain good news for birders and bird lovers. Across the board in the US, forest birds, shorebirds, grassland birds, and even waterfowl continue to show population declines following the highly publicized 2019 report that showed we'd lost a whopping 29% of our birds since 1970. Of particular interest to Maryland residents, eastern forest birds are steeply declining along the Atlantic coast due to inexorable losses of forests to development; in Maryland, this is true for species dependent on mature forest habitat and for those that breed in early succession forest habitat.

Hope comes through positive action, and I mean something more than rushing to get a list bird. Action can come in many different spheres and in degrees big and small, but doing something to help birds should be important to all of us. One local organization, the Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership (MBCP), offers some interesting directions for that action, including a partnership with the American Bird Conservancy called "Bird City Maryland" (<https://birdcity.org/maryland>). About a dozen communities in Maryland—including Frederick County—have committed to implementing bird conservation practices that benefit people as well, thus earning designation as a "Bird City."

MBCP Director Gabriel Foley says, "Currently, there are no Montgomery communities, but there's a lot of potential there. If Club members would like to see their community become a Bird City and more intentionally pursue bird-friendly actions, we can help; having someone locally connected to the community makes a big difference in getting a community enrolled."

Wouldn't it be great to get some Montgomery towns on the list?



Meanwhile, dozens of Club members are making their contributions to the cause in different ways. Katie Moore continues the work of monitoring the Blue Mash nest boxes, and Dave Duren and Diana Colangelo got their hands and feet seriously dirty to begin reactivating the Riley's Lock Prothonotary Warbler boxes. Dee Brown has stepped up to become the Club's new Secretary, replacing Elaine Kim, who served the Club with graceful competence in the past year—thanks, Elaine and Dee! And of course, we must applaud that super-volunteer, Evelyn Ralston, who has served MBC and MOS as a Vice-President or President for seven consecutive years.

Evelyn was MBC's Guest of Honor at this year's Spring Social, which gathered under the big tent at Woodend Sanctuary on the evening of May 15. As always, it was a convivial gathering with sparkling bartending and great food, culminating in remarks

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# President's Chat

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honoring Evelyn and the presentation of a painting by Diane Ford of her favorite bird, the Wood Thrush. (For details, see the article on page 10.)

To my mind, Evelyn's choice of her favorite bird is particularly apropos. Less flashy than the Baltimore Oriole, the beautiful Wood Thrush is nonetheless a classic resident of Maryland's forests and could easily stand in as our state bird. Take a moment to listen to its haunting and evocative song. Like most woodland birds, the Wood Thrush is declining, and that song is growing diminuendo. To save it, let's work together like never before.

\* "State of the Birds 2025" can be viewed at <https://www.stateofthebirds.org/2025/>.

## Editor's Corner

By Stella Tea

I always look forward to putting together the summer issue of *The Chat*. Like a school kid anticipating summer break and leisure, I am excited about sharing visual content that has the potential to enhance your enjoyment of birds and support for their causes. In this issue, you will find an article on a local documentary film (page 3) and, in another, mentions of a popular Netflix series, two fun and educational YouTube channels, and an online site for bird quizzes (page 6).

If you are looking for more ways to avoid a bummer summer because, let's face it, summertime is the quieter birding season, how about checking out eBird's new feature called Checklist Media (<https://ebird.org/news/new-checklist-media>)? You can upload photos and recordings to your checklists that showcase habitats, soundscapes, and experiences. The experience part is personal, and you can get really creative with it. Besides, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology is hoping this new feature will train Merlin to further differentiate bird sounds from other sounds, natural or otherwise. To learn more about Checklist Media, see <https://tinyurl.com/h873weus>.

For someone who is quite obsessive about using another platform, iNaturalist, to record my findings and to support community and conservation science, I will leave you with these wise words from the Cornell Lab: "For a more comprehensive way to catalog all aspects of the natural world, we recommend iNaturalist (<https://inaturalist.org>), where you can log plants, insects, mammals, fungi, and more with AI-assisted suggestions and input from a global community. Your observations in iNaturalist help drive biodiversity research and conservation. The iNaturalist community can also help you get accurate identifications for your 'Other animal' media that can be added to media on your eBird checklist. Once an ID has been added on iNaturalist, use the Classify and Caption fields to update the media on your eBird checklist."

It took a little longer to get this June newsletter out, but I hope it's worth the wait. Have a great summer and see you out in the field!

## Welcome New Members

Robert Anderson  
Graeme Clark  
Carolyn Copper  
Natalie Dickter  
Robin Downing and Kim Beene  
Amanda Freeman  
Emily Lange

Sylvia and Aron Lee with  
Julian and Raven  
Oliver Llewellyn  
Rachel Lloyd  
Rose Melnicki  
Burt Monroe  
Mikael Neville

Rosa Nine  
Shelley Nituama  
Katherine Payne  
Emily Rose  
Johanna Sholder  
Don Swenholt and Tina Harper  
Arielle Welch and Brian Doyle



# Annual Club Election Results

The 2025 Club Election results are in! By unanimous vote, the following MBC Officers and Directors have been elected.

## Officers

- President: Emily Huang
- Vice-President: Mark England
- Treasurer: Lisa Norwalk
- Secretary: Dorothy (Dee) Brown
- Past President: Scott Young

## State Directors

- Karen Cyr
- Francesca Grifo
- Cheryl Hogue
- Jim Ivett
- Ed Vigezzi

## Chapter Directors

- Josephine Cox
- Roy Howard
- Brooke Levey
- Luis Selva

## Meet the Club's New Secretary



Dorothy (Dee) Brown grew up outside of Boston, Massachusetts, and became transplanted in Silver Spring in 1980. Her interest in birds was birthed when she lived in Waltham, MA, next to a mid-sized pond. The pond attracted all kinds of migrating ducks, and

they intrigued Dee. When she was 60, with her children grown and gone from home, Dee looked into doing something with her own nascent interests. She bought herself a pair of binoculars and was gifted a weekend to explore Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge on the Eastern Shore. That weekend began this adventure into birding. Dee loves to be in natural habitats to see and hear whoever happens to be there that day. Being mostly deaf in one ear that does not qualify for a hearing aid (distortion), she gives many thanks to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology app Merlin. It is a happy event to be invited to do something helpful for MBC—a wonderful organization!

# “Bird Walk” Takes Flight

By Cintia Cabib

It was just over one year ago that I premiered my documentary “Bird Walk” to a full house at Brookside Gardens in Wheaton, Maryland. Since then, “Bird Walk” has traveled to the Films for Future Festival in Switzerland and flown to the Colorado Environmental Film Festival. Closer to home, the film has screened at numerous venues in the DC area, including the Community Stories Film Festival, Connie Morella Library, Busboys and Poets, and the Reservoir Center for Water Solutions.

“Bird Walk” features the birds and birders who have flocked to Rockville’s RedGate Park, where more than 170 bird species have been sighted, and follows the grassroots campaign that helped preserve this defunct golf course as a public park and avian oasis.

The 2025 “State of the Birds” report, published by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, reveals that North American bird populations continue to experience large declines in almost every habitat. The Eastern Towhee and the Chimney Swift, which are frequent visitors to RedGate Park, are listed as “Tipping Point” species that have experienced an accelerated decline in the past decade. As I filmed numerous bird species at RedGate Park, I became keenly aware of how the trees, ponds, shrubs, and grassy areas at the 131-acre site are critical in helping birds thrive and survive.

And now RedGate’s birds have another reason to sing. The Chesapeake Bay Trust awarded the City of Rockville funds to plant more than 2,500 native trees and shrubs at RedGate Park.



*Cintia Cabib with Friends of RedGate Park founder Wayne Breslyn at the “Bird Walk” premiere. Photo by Leila Cabib*

To receive news and updates about the film and upcoming screenings, visit <https://birdwalkfilm.com>, and sign up to receive my e-newsletter. Mark your calendars: “Bird Walk” will be screened at Rockville Memorial Library on Sunday, October 5 at 2 p.m.

# Birds of Note (Mid-February to Early May)

By Andy Martin

A plethora of great birds have shown up in the county over the past few months. Various rail species are among the highlights. Clive Harris found a **Purple Gallinule** at Hughes Hollow at McKee-Beshers WMA on April 9. A **King Rail** was another great find, being reported by Jared Fisher on April 22, also from Hughes Hollow. The **King Rail** was still being seen—and heard—as of May 10, the first county record for this species since 2012. **Virginia Rail**, **Sora**, and **Common Gallinule** were also reported from Hughes Hollow during the latter half of April.



*Purple Gallinule at Hughes Hollow. Photo by Carla Morris*

Gemma Radko found a **Swainson's Warbler** at Little Bennett RP along the Western Piedmont Trail on April 22. Jared Fisher reported two **Swainson's Warblers** in the same area on May 8.

Dave Czaplak reported a **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** on some utility wires along Edwards Ferry Rd near where it intersects with River Rd on May 4—a first county record for this species since 1997.

Josephine Cox found 20 American **White Pelicans** resting on some mid-river rocks on the Potomac River just upstream of Great Falls on the morning of March 31.

Bob Augustine noted the return of a possible breeding pair of **Mississippi Kites** to Welsh Park in Rockville on May 2. In the nearby Norbeck area, Tara, Ada, and Calla Clifton also noted the return of a nesting pair of **Mississippi Kites** on May 2. **Mississippi Kites** have also

been seen soaring over the Potomac River in the vicinity of Violette's Lock.

John Sojda noted a **White Ibis** at Hughes Hollow on April 20. Tara, Ada, and Calla Clifton reported a **Glossy Ibis** at the same location back on April 10. **Black-crowned Night Herons** returned in force to their rookery nesting island at Lake Whetstone in Montgomery Village in March. Mara Shenderay reported an initial 3 birds there on March 11, and by March 29 Kathy Brown counted as many as 80 **Black-crowned Night Herons**! Dave Czaplak found a **Little Blue Heron** near the Black-crowned Night Heron rookery at Lake Whetstone on April 23. Gretchen Wood and Clifton Berry found a **Snowy Egret** at Black Hill RP on May 3. An **American Bittern** was reported by John Sojda along Izaak Walton Way on March 28. John also reported a **Least Bittern** at Hughes Hollow on April 19.

Stephen Davies noted a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at Blue Mash on February 26 and reported an **American Golden-Plover** and a **Short-billed Dowitcher** from the same location on March 25 and April 30, respectively.

Mary Ann Todd reported a **Surf Scoter** on the Potomac River adjacent to Violette's Lock on March 14, and Dave Czaplak found 6 **White-winged Scoters** in the same location on April 26. Matt Cohen noted a flock of 30 **Snow Geese** passing over the Ritchie Ave area of Silver Spring on March 9.

Dave Czaplak and Mary Ann Todd noted a single **Black Tern** mixed in with **Forster's** and **Common Terns** over the Potomac River at Violette's Lock on May 9.

Two **Red-necked Grebes** were found by Lauren Carey at Triadelphia Reservoir on February 22.

Andy Hasselwander reported a **Summer Tanager** at Riley's Lock on April 29. Anecdotally, this species seems to be becoming increasingly common in the county, with at least six other birds found this spring.

Vickie Bailly reported a **Golden-winged Warbler** at Little Bennett RP on May 2. Brett Gleitsmann noted a **Mourning Warbler** at Wheaton RP on May 12.

Howard Youth found a **Marsh Wren** at Hughes Hollow on April 18. Stephen Davies reported a **Black-billed Cuckoo** at Blue Mash on April 20.

Montgomery County's total species list currently stands at 231. Top 5 listers as of May 13 include Jared Fisher, 214; John Sojda, 212; Ryan and Kathryn Carr, 205; Dave Roberts, 200; and Stacy Rabinovitz, 198.



# Summer Field Trips

By Linda Friedland, MBC Field Trip Coordinator

Once again, the Club has had a successful late winter and spring season with most trips fully attended and many with long waiting lists. Check out the trip reports, including a 2-day trip to Western Maryland on May 30 and June 1, on our website at <https://montgomerybirdclub.org/trip-reports/>. A note of thanks to Ed Vigezzi for keeping the site up to date with new reports as well as any changes or cancellations.

We typically don't schedule trips when the Club's program closes down for the summer but see below. And we will start up with a bang in September. We are already lining up leaders for the fall and early winter; it will be another exciting season!



If you are new to MBC or want to improve your birding skills, consider signing up when the trips are announced in *The Chat* and on the website at <https://montgomerybirdclub.org/calendar/>. This is a great way to gain new skills from our knowledgeable, experienced leaders and a good way to meet members of our local birding community. Watch for Club emails later this summer for more information.

*Moira Davenport (front row, far left) and Jo Cox (front row, far right) led a 2-day field trip to Western Maryland and yielded 59 species. Visit the eBird Trip report for details: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/379874>. Photo taken at Finzel Swamp in Garrett County*

Kudos and a big thank you to all our 2024-2025 trip leaders:

Angela Atwood-Moore  
Kathy Brown  
Lauren Carey  
Jo Cox  
Karen Cyr  
Moira Davenport  
Leo Dilling  
Mark England  
Francesca Grifo  
Clive Harris  
Gerry Hawkins  
Susan Higginbotham  
Rob Hilton  
Cheryl Hogue  
Emily Huang  
Gaurav Kapoor

Andy Martin  
Katie Moore  
Gene Murray  
Anne Mytych  
Lisa Norwalk  
Paul Orsinger  
Dave Powell  
Stacy Rabinovitz  
Jackie Raiford  
Evelyn Ralston  
Kathy Reitz  
Dave Roberts  
Lisa Shannon  
Lynne Wheeler  
Scott Young

## **AUGUST 2 (Saturday) and AUGUST 16 (Saturday) OAKS LANDFILL, LAYTONSVILLE**

Late afternoon visit from 5 to 7 p.m. to look for fall migrant shorebirds—if water levels are good. Also possible, American Kestrel, Blue Grosbeaks, Savannah Sparrows, Vesper Sparrows, and other breeding birds. Meet at 5 p.m. at 6001 Rt. 108, Laytonsville, Md. Limit: 12. Reservations required at least a week ahead of the trip for names to be submitted to the County. LEADER: Mark England at [englandmark@comcast.net](mailto:englandmark@comcast.net).

*Reservations are required for all MBC field trips unless otherwise noted. Contact the trip leader for reservations, directions, and other information. For recent field trip reports and Club guidance on in-person events including health precautions and inclement weather changes, please visit <https://montgomerybirdclub.org/>.*

# Meet a Field Trip Leader: Lauren Carey

A Chat with the Editor

## How did you get into birding?

I came from a very “nature-y” family for sure, so I have always been interested in birds. In late fall 2021, I lived along a lake called Lake Whetstone, and I saw a “weird” duck out on the water, and I couldn’t figure out what it was. I walked my dogs there every day, so I got binoculars but still couldn’t figure it out. I kept Googling and finally found out it was a Pied-billed Grebe. In the meantime, when I was looking at this grebe, I was finding Hooded Mergansers and other birds, so I started bringing my binoculars with me to this lake every day. I guess I was into birding now.



Pied-billed Grebe. Photo by Stella Tea

## How would you describe yourself as a birder?

As a birder, I am just repetitive. Maybe I am like a woodpecker of some type. I love woodpeckers, and you just keep working at the problems. My advice for people who asked me how to be a better birder is just go out constantly, like every day, in your backyard, in your neighborhood, go to parks, and just keep looking and looking. I want to be a Downy Woodpecker. They are really little and cute. You just persistently work until you get the thing.

## When did you join the Montgomery Bird Club?

I joined MBC not long after I found the Pied-billed Grebe and took my first trip to Oaks Landfill with Mark England in January 2022. We got there, and Mark was talking about the Northern Harriers and the Short-eared Owls, and I was like I’ve never seen them in my life. I

just learned that these birds existed like a month ago. This is fantastic. If you are not hooked before you go to Oaks Landfill, Oaks Landfill will hook you well.

## What are your favorite local birding hotspots?

I really liked Lake Whetstone. That was definitely a spark place for me. It’s good birding year-round. Like right now, having a rookery that size with the Black-crowned Night Herons and getting to see them nest and hatch. I really like Rachel Carson CP. I don’t feel like it gets birded as much. I love the forests and creeks. Having that whole environment where you have the deeper forest, the creek to bring birds in, and that nice big field, I’ve gotten some really fun stuff there: my very first Yellow-billed Cuckoo before I was even birding and a Mourning Warbler. Hughes Hollow just because again you can get such a good variety year-round. There are so many good spots in Montgomery County. We are really fortunate.

## When did you start leading bird walks for the Club?

I led my first trip at Hughes Hollow in October 2023. Mark told Linda Friedland that I could lead bird walks, so I got a sudden email, and I said sure!

## What inspired you to become a field trip leader and, to our delight, for both the MBC and the YMBC?

You can definitely blame Mark England. After the Oaks Landfill trip, I did multiple walks with Mark. Mark was very kind and very encouraging. He started asking me to co-lead with him, so I co-led a couple of trips. It was really nice to get my feet wet and have a little bit of confidence. I am a veterinarian, and I am not unused to talking in front of people. People just want to go out and go birding, and I don’t mind going birding with 12 people!

## What motivates you to keep leading bird walks?

I think the people. It’s exciting and interesting to be around people who are just as excited and interested in birds as you are. To be a part of that is fantastic. One other thing I definitely like is introducing people to the spot we are birding.

I really enjoy bird walks going to a place I am not necessarily familiar or comfortable with and having people who know the area give me a guide around, show it off to me, so that I can be confident the next time I come back. I strongly encourage people I bird with to come back and be here in all the seasons and see all that it has to offer.

*“If you are not hooked before you go to Oaks Landfill, Oaks Landfill will hook you well.”*



**What are some of your favorite birding moments?**

I have so many good ones. I always tell folks that if you don't feel like birding go birding. That's when you get your best birds. A couple of highlights are the Mourning Warbler at Rachel Carson. That was my favorite warbler, and I've only seen it once. I went there at the crack of dawn and just walked down a path to a dead end near the water. I happened to turn around, and I could see two-thirds of this bird, and I thought no way, there's just no way, and I had my phone out and put Merlin on. The bird was making noise and popped into view. A friend invited me to Sax-Zim Bog this year. It was an irruption year, and we got Great Gray Owl, Boreal Owl, Northern Hawk Owl, Snowy Owl, and Golden Eagle. That was a really fun trip, and the first time I got on a plane to go bird somewhere. My friend and I also did a pelagic, my first pelagic, out of Lewes, Delaware.

**What new birds are you excited to eventually get a chance to see?**

I am going to Texas to do the Rio Grande in December, and I am very excited for that but, honestly, one of my lifer birds I really want to see is an American Dipper. They look so great and fun like little songbirds but swimming in the water to go fishing. I want to go somewhere to see the dipper and other birds in the area.

**If you could go anywhere in the world to bird, where are some of your next top choices?**

I'd love to travel and hit all the continents, various regions of Africa, Australia, and Europe. For my short-term travel goals, I'd like to do all the counties of Maryland. Like you said, if I had all the time and money in the world, it would be really fun to do all 50 states.

**When you are not out in the field, how do you get your birding "fix"?**

I feed my little backyard birds, but I am using my bins still. When I am not out and about birding, I do a lot of various animal care as a veterinarian although I don't do much bird work, but right now, unfortunately, I am doing some work with avian influenza.

**Do you have other hobbies or passions besides birding when you can find the time?**

I enjoy hiking but it's been pretty much taken over by birdwatching. The first thing you learn when hiking is if you do not have your binoculars the interesting birds will show up, so you have to hike with binoculars. I do like kayaking when I have time. My latest thing that I've taken up is fencing. It mostly involves me getting beat up by children because they've been fencing since they were tiny.

**What are some of your favorite nature-themed books, podcasts, films, etc., that you would recommend?**

I am a terrible TV person admittedly, but I did end up watching *The Residence* because everyone was talking about it. I enjoyed that for sure. I am not a podcast person either, but I use YouTube videos as podcasts because YouTube videos don't require too much attention. I have a couple of people I like to watch birding stuff for: LycoBirds (hawk watch) and Badgerland Birding (fun and educational). It's passionate people talking about birds. I also like Birdie Game (<https://birdiegame.net>). It's like Wordle. You have 6 guesses, they show you up-close portions of a bird like feet, tail, head, etc. It's also interesting seeing the pictures super close and the various field markers. It makes you realize how important the little field markers are.

*Lauren Carey grew up playing outside on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and hiked the Blue Ridge Mountains while in veterinary school, but she didn't start birding until 2021 when she spotted a mysterious diving bird at a Montgomery County lake. She started bringing binoculars on her morning walks and finally identified not only a Pied-billed Grebe but many other birds she didn't have names for. She enjoys introducing fellow birders to her favorite birding spots via Montgomery Bird Club and Youth Montgomery Bird Club trips and looks forward to many more trips.*



# Youth Birding

By Ryan Carr, Youth Montgomery Bird Club

## Summer Field Trips

Upcoming trips for the YMBC include Rachel Carson Conservation Park (6/15), Burnt Mills West Special Park (7/6), and Oaks Landfill (8/31). Please reach out to [youth.birding@gmail.com](mailto:youth.birding@gmail.com) for more information.

## World Series of Birding 2025

This May, five YMBC-ers participated in the World Series of Birding, hosted by the New Jersey Audubon Society. The YMOS sent four teams of four kids this year, three at the middle school level and one at the elementary school level. For those who don't know, the World Series of Birding is a competition to see the most number of species in a specified time frame in Cape May, NJ, and the surrounding area. As a middle school team member, we birded from 3 a.m. to 10 p.m. in Cape May and Atlantic counties, while elementary teams birded from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. Each team had a driver and an adult mentor. We spent three days scouting and then used that information to prepare an itinerary for the competition day.

I was captain of the team, YMOS Wren Willet End. My team members were Will, Cam, and Ethan. Will, Ethan, and I were three of the YMBC participants. The other two YMBC participants were Leo and Gavin in the elementary division. They were members of the YMOS No Sora Feelings team, and the team placed first in their division.



*Close encounter with a Swallow-tailed Kite at Coral Avenue Seawatch, Cape May Point. Photo by Will*



*YMOS No Sora Feelings, from left to right, Gavin (captain), Leo, Evan, and Theo. Photo by Victor Prikhodko*

We arrived in New Jersey on Tuesday evening and started scouting Wednesday morning. Between Wednesday and Friday we submitted 96 checklists and found 151 species! While the middle school teams scouted together a lot of the time, each team had to prepare their own itinerary for the competition day based on scouting and the mentor and driver feedback. Our strategy was to start north with nocturnal species, go south to Cape May Island, and then work our way back north to hit Edwin B. Forsythe NWR in the late afternoon.



On the big day we had to get up at 1:15 a.m.! This allowed us to be in place at Tuckahoe WMA at 3 a.m. Those first two hours only netted us 4 species. As the day progressed, we realized that warblers were going to be difficult to find due to the high winds; however, this could be an advantage for raptors if we kept our eyes on the skies.

Our first highlight was at Higbee Beach WMA where we spotted a Roseate Tern by the jetty. After that, we worked our way to the Coral Avenue Seawatch, stopping at a few places along the way. At Coral Avenue we saw a Common Loon fly by, Royal and Common Terns flying around, a Bonaparte's Gull on the beach, a Parasitic Jaeger and Northern Gannet in the distance, multiple Mississippi Kites flying around, and, most important, we had a Swallow-Tailed Kite fly 15 feet above us! Our total there was 30 species. We are grateful to Aaron Reb and Tom Reed who made sure we all got eyes on the distant birds.

That morning we also learned of a female Painted Bunting that was occasionally visiting a feeder. It took us three trips to the house, but we did finally see it with a photo to boot! One of these stops also allowed us to see several swallow species at the nearby lake. We also talked to locals who showed us a Northern Waterthrush spot, which was fantastic. Around 11:30 a.m. we had 113 species but things were getting noticeably slower. The high winds were keeping warblers at bay, but we did have two Red-headed Woodpecker flyovers and a number of raptors. However, we hadn't visited the Ocean City Welcome Center, which has an amazing rookery. We got there at about 5:30 p.m. and found the following birds all nesting together: Great and Snowy Egrets, Black- and Yellow-crowned Night Herons, White and Glossy Ibises, plus Little Blue and Tricolored Herons.

Next, we visited a beach with Piping Plover nests. We got to the beach and looked around for about 15 minutes but could not find the plover. Sadly we headed to the car with a feeling of defeat. However, on the last dune before the path, we saw something sitting on it—it was the elusive Piping Plover! We were so glad that we ran around on the beach cheering.

Heading to our last daytime spot our total was 142 species. We arrived at about 7 p.m. and had about an hour of daylight left. Luckily, since we had scouted, we knew how to move through it fast and found 8 species we needed: Northern Shoveler, Ruddy Duck, Great Blue Heron, Whimbrel, White-rumped Sandpiper, Green-winged Teal, Gull-billed Tern, and Orchard Oriole.

*The elusive Piping Plover at North Point Beach. Photo by Will*



*YMOS Wren Willet End, from left to right, Ethan, Ryan (captain), Will, and Cam. Photo by Kathryn Carr*

Night set in as we were leaving so we parked our car and listened near a pond for any nocturnal species. After about 15 minutes we had heard only Chuck-will's-widow, which we had already found that morning. Then we heard it: A Least Bittern was calling from the pond! This put us at 151. For the next hour, we drove around in the Tuckahoe WMA/Tyler Road area listening for an Eastern Whip-poor-will. We finally heard one at 9:27 p.m., just 33 minutes from the deadline! We ended the day with 152 species and came in first place by just one species. We did miss a common bird though, the Eastern Phoebe!

# Spring Social Highlights

By Mark England, MBC Vice-President

The Montgomery Bird Club closed out the year in style with its traditional Spring Social on Thursday, May 15, at the Woodend headquarters of Nature Forward in Chevy Chase, Md. As usual, the event was catered by Smokey Glen Farm, which provided a delicious buffet of brisket, chicken, vegetarian lasagna, and assorted vegetable dishes, all topped off with a great variety of fruit pies for dessert.

About 70 people attended the event, which began with socializing over hors d'oeuvres and a wide array of beverages selected by Andy Martin. MBC webmaster and State Director Ed Vigezzi presided over a successful book sale in the Woodend library, raising \$97 for the Club while enhancing many members' bird book collections.

After dinner, Past President Scott Young announced the results of the recent Club election, first teasing that there had been an unprecedented election upset, but then reporting that the slate had unsurprisingly been unanimously elected. MBC President Emily Huang presented Valued Service Award certificates for Jo Cox, Karen Cyr, Pam Oves, and Scott Young for their contributions to the Club. Outstanding Service Award certificates and MOS pins were then presented to Lauren Carey, Francesca Grifo, and Paul Orsinger, and, in absentia, to Susan Hunt and Katie Moore.

The final award of the evening was for the guest of honor, Evelyn Ralston, Past President of MBC and current President of the Maryland Ornithological Society. Emily Huang read a biographical overview of Evelyn's life and then presented her with a beautiful painting by MBC member and artist-in-residence Diane Ford, which showed a Wood Thrush in the white flowers of a dogwood tree.

Evelyn thanked several past and present MBC members who helped her get started in birding in 2003, mostly as she took part in the weekly Saturday morning bird walks at Woodend.



The evening closed with a slide show of 112 (mostly) bird photos from 15 members, taken in a great variety of locations in the US and several other countries, often accompanied by viewers' oohs and ahhs. Nature Forward's new enormous high-definition television provided excellent views for the attendees.

The MBC wishes to thank our excellent bartenders, Jo Cox, Cheryl Hogue, Francesca Grifo, and Paul Orsinger, and all those who brought the delicious hors d'oeuvres. Finally, great thanks to Nature Forward and Executive Director Alison Pearce for again hosting the MBC Social, and to Pam Oves, of both MBC and Nature Forward, for coordinating the arrangements, making the coffee, and supplying her laptop for the slide show, among many other contributions!

*Evelyn Ralston, guest of honor, received a painting of her favorite bird, the Wood Thrush, from MBC President Emily Huang. Photo and painting by Diane Ford*



*The bartending quartet with their handmade MBC aprons, from left to right, Jo Cox, Cheryl Hogue, Paul Orsinger, and Francesca Grifo. Photo by Solomon Woods*



*The historic Woodend Sanctuary & Mansion in Chevy Chase, home to Nature Forward, provided a beautiful outdoor setting for the event. From left to right, Jo Cox, Moira Davenport, Evelyn Ralston, Anne Mytych, and Emily Huang. Photo by Solomon Woods*



*Huge thanks to Emily Huang and Mark England for organizing and presenting a wonderful program to wrap up another year of Club activities. Photo by Solomon Woods*



*Like many members in attendance, Anna Urciolo and Jim Ivett (left) and Alison Shelton and Gaurav Kapoor (right) took the opportunity to catch up during the Social. Photo by Solomon Woods*



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