

President's Chat

By Emily Huang

Last week on vacation I watched an Atlantic Puffin preen itself, so vigorously that it spun over and around like a tumbleweed in the ocean. Once upright again, it turned its head left, right, then plopped on its belly to face plant (splat!) in the water. I usually avoid the words "silly" or "comical" to describe bird behavior, but this puffin was really kicking me in the funny bone. I was tempted to believe it and its many friends at Maine's Eastern Egg Rock were putting on a show for our entertainment!

Of course, birds do what they do, not to entertain us, but to live and survive; and my favorite trio of bird species from this trip have fascinating survival stories. The Atlantic Puffin, the Common Loon, and the Piping Plover—all charismatic and even iconic birds—are at different levels of conservation concern, with the Piping Plover at the stomach-wrenching "tipping point" of accelerating decline. We were able to



forget this sober fact at the Connecticut Audubon Society Coastal Center, where efforts to protect Piping Plover nests appear to be paying off. Behind the Center, my husband Solomon and I walked slowly amidst the shorebirds—one of the best things to do, ever—and enjoyed the clear high piping of these sandy-pale, adorably baby-faced plovers. It was a wonderful opening to a week of shore and ocean birding.

But it was on a boat tour to see puffins that I learned the story that's been in my mind ever since. Against a backdrop of splashing waves and screeching gulls, an Audubon naturalist told us the story of ornithologist Steve Kress, who was determined to bring breeding puffins back to the Maine islands from which they had been extirpated. Project Puffin launched in 1973 with the arduous work of transplanting and raising hundreds of baby puffins on Eastern Egg Rock. Kress and colleagues

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One of the adorably baby-faced Piping Plovers posing charismatically at the Connecticut Audubon Society Coastal Center in Milford, CT. Photo by Emily Huang

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President's Chat

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hoped the puffins would instinctively return to breed; however, while the birds did return, they seemed shy of starting nests on the island.

The turning point, our naturalist informed us, came when the ornithologists ingeniously applied their knowledge of puffin behavior. To persuade the highly social puffins to raise young on Eastern Egg Rock, the illusion of a busy seabird colony was created by sprinkling the island with realistic wooden puffin decoys, reflective mirrors, and loudspeakers playing the shrill calls of Common Terns. The puffins were eventually persuaded, and today Eastern Egg Rock is a pandemonium of breeding seabirds!

After the boat tour, while kayaking at dusk with a mother and baby loon, I thought about Kress and the story of what one individual could do for birds. I am thinking still. I think of the volunteers that monitor loons in Maine and the people who teach beachgoers to share beaches with plovers. We can't all pack up and move to an island to raise birds (I wish!), but I'm reasonably certain that we can all take one personal action to help them. As the wise woman says: When you give your heart to birds, your heart takes wing.

Editor's Corner

By Stella Tea

I am going to let you in on a little secret: The Editor's Corner is the last article written in *The Chat*. Sure, I often think about what to say during the weeks of planning, coordination, organization, and review, but the words I want to share with you do not reveal themselves until I read the full draft from front to back. Then, the words are limited to what can fit into the remaining available space.

I am going to let you in on another little secret: My favorite magazine is *Reader's Digest*. Although I no longer subscribe to it, I still enjoy reading it on my travels. There is just something about the carefully curated mix of topics and bite-sized articles that are often uplifting and inspiring, whether they are about current events, human interest stories, medical and technology breakthroughs, or humor.

While *The Chat* is no *Reader's Digest*, I am once again inspired and uplifted by the various efforts included in this issue. From the Club's conservation projects and volunteer opportunities (page 3) and Emily's personal call to action (above) to the spectacular lineup of field trips (pages 6 to 8) and meeting presentations (page 5), it is gearing up to be another impactful start of a new year of Club programming.

Whether you are a new birder, an experienced birder, or somewhere in between, the Montgomery Bird Club website, <https://www.montgomerybirdclub.org>, offers a ton of resources, including on conservation: Why Birds Are Important, Bird Conservation Introduction, How Can I Help Birds?, Wider Conservation Issues, and more. I hope you find *The Chat* a helpful resource as well.

Personally, I am looking forward to participating in Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Project FeederWatch for the second time since the last season. If you are interested in learning more about this program and participating in community science and bird conservation, visit <https://www.feederwatch.org> and check out the *First-Time Participant in Project FeederWatch* article in the March 2025 issue on the Club website: <https://www.montgomerybirdclub.org/newsletter/>.

I look forward to discussing your suggestions and comments. Please contact me at montgomerybirdclub@mdbirds.org. Happy fall birding. See you out in the field!



Membership Updates

By Moira Davenport, MBC Membership Chair

Time to Renew your MOS/MBC Membership!

Our membership renewals are due on September 1 of each year. Thank you to all those who responded to the email from MOS with links to payment options. If you missed it, please take a moment to pull up the email that links to your membership record for easy payment. Or you can go directly to <https://mdbirds.org/join>.

Electronic payments are preferred, but if you wish to pay by check, please use the form on page 11, which also includes the address to send your payment.

Our 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*; the MOS newsletter, *The Maryland Yellowthroat*; and the MOS journal, *Maryland Birdlife*. Many thanks for your continued support!

Welcome New Members

- * Patricia Britton
- * Benjamin and Bronwen Dearden
- * Tracy DuVernoy
- * Daryl Hawkins, John Hawkins, and family
- * Bradley Klenow
- * Terry Meehan and Peg Schultz
- * Richard Moore
- * Danielle Nagele
- * Cydnee Parsley
- * Bereket Tesfu, Deborah Girma, and family

Montgomery Bird Club Works for Birds

By Emily Huang, MBC President

Every week in every month of the year, the Montgomery Bird Club boosts for birds! In addition to the important effort of letter writing and making advocacy calls, the Club's activities include hands-on conservation work.

As MBC president and with other MBC and MOS officers, I attended meetings to help update the Maryland Department of Natural Resources' State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP)—a guiding document for conservation efforts concerning each state's Species of Greatest Conservation Need, as well as the habitats in which they are found. Our discussion will help set the state's priorities for wildlife conservation for the next 10 years. I also attended a meeting sponsored by the Chesapeake Chapter of Quail Forever to promote practices for "Recovering Bobwhite Quail in Montgomery County"—not just as release birds but as a sustainable wild population. I traveled to the Izaak Walton League, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chapter in Poolesville to learn about the habitat needs of the Northern Bobwhite and the potential role of prescribed fires to create a hospitable environment for quail and other wildlife, including wild turkeys and woodcock.

Vice-President Mark England and I visited the Blue Mash Nature Trail this July with Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection employees Dan Rogers and Laura Miller to discuss improving the viewshed to the large pond in Oaks Landfill. If successful, expect better winter waterfowl viewing and more opportunities for photography. And in exchange for a wider, less obstructed view of the pond, the Club will help maintain a healthy plant environment at and around the fence line between the Blue Mash Nature Trail and Oaks Landfill. This will include trimming oriental bittersweet from the surrounding trees, so bring a pair of garden shears with you and brush up on your knowledge of invasive plants.

Speaking of invasive vines, Mark is also spearheading an effort to prevent English ivy from killing the big trees at Riley's Lock. Some of the vines have become as thick as your arm, and if you have a garden, you likely know how difficult it is to combat English ivy. We will work under the aegis of the C&O Canal Trust, and Mark will need some hardy volunteers; stay tuned!

Finally, most Club members are aware of the MBC's efforts to promote and maintain county nest boxes for cavity nesting birds, which has taken us into areas such as Blue Mash Nature Trail, Riley's Lock, and Wheaton Branch Stormwater Ponds (as maintained by the Friends of Sligo Creek). Currently, I am working on an exciting partnership with Brookside Gardens to put up nest boxes at the Gardens, including a multi-compartment Purple Martin nest box. Again, this effort will require hands-on commitment from Club members, so if you'd like to work with your hands and want to make a difference, we have an excellent opportunity for you! To learn more about any of the above activities, contact Emily or Mark at montgomerybirdclub@mdbirds.org.



Annual Financial Report

By Lisa Norwalk. MBC Treasurer

I am pleased to report that the Club finished the 2024-25 fiscal year with a remarkable 528 memberships, \$24,000 in the bank account, and an additional \$46,000 in the Vanguard account. This performance is due to an energetic program of bird walks, a combination of in-person and Zoom monthly meetings, and a lively and informative monthly email newsletter and the quarterly *Chat*. The annual Social Dinner, held as always at Woodend Sanctuary courtesy of Nature Forward, was a great success with 70 attendees. We also received \$1,300 in grants and donations, thanks to our generous members.

As required by the bylaws, a financial report and budget approved by the council on June 17, 2025, are presented below.

Montgomery Bird Club 2024-2025 Summary and 2025-2026 Budget Status of Funds as of June 17, 2025		
	2024-2025 Final	2025-2026 Budget
INCOME		
Dues	\$4,673.00	\$4,750.00
Grants/Donations	\$1,300.00	\$1,500.00
Social/Picnic	\$3,120.00	\$3,000.00
Miscellaneous Income	\$20.00	\$200.00
Total	\$9,113.00	\$9,450.00
EXPENDITURES		
MOS	\$40.00	\$50.00
<i>The Chat</i>	\$2,452.00	\$2,500.00
Website	\$99.00	\$150.00
Office Supplies/Misc	\$333.00	\$400.00
Meetings/Speakers' honoraria	\$1,124.00	\$1,500.00
Social/Picnic	\$2,588.00	\$2,600.00
Donations to other organizations	\$2,000.00	\$2,250.00
Total	\$8,636.00	\$9,450.00



Fall Meetings

By Mark England, MBC Vice-President

The Club's monthly meetings are recorded and are accessible at our YouTube Channel: <https://bit.ly/3MH3FB4>.



SEPTEMBER 17, 2025 (Wednesday), 7:30 p.m. Clive Harris presents “Birding Central Asia—from Mountains to Steppes to the Desert”

In 2024, Clive visited Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan on an organized birding trip. This fascinating region, rich in history, has a wonderful mixture of birds, bringing together birds migrating on three pathways—to and from Africa, South Asia, and East Asia—as well as species that live year round in the high mountains and the dry grasslands. He will tell us about the birds he saw on a journey that spanned the Tien Shan mountains, the green steppes of northern Kazakhstan, and the forbidding Kyzylkum desert of western Uzbekistan.

Clive started birding as a young boy, going on walks with his father when the family lived in Hong Kong in the 1970s. He moved to the U.S. in 1993 with his wife and has been here ever since, apart from a four-year interlude in India. His favorite groups of birds are gulls, shorebirds, and waterfowl—all birds you can aim a scope at! As well as being a past-president of the Montgomery Bird Club, he has served two terms on the MOS Maryland/District of Columbia Records Committee.



OCTOBER 15, 2025 (Wednesday), 7:30 p.m. Scott Young presents “Birding Travels in Bhutan”

In 2024, Scott Young traveled to the landlocked Kingdom of Bhutan north of eastern India where he saw several hundreds of bird species at sea-level altitudes near India to thousands of meters in the Himalayan foothills. Besides fabulous birds, Bhutan is home to other amazing animals and plants. Bhutan culture, which embodies the search for happiness and well-being, makes this a special country to visit.

Scott trained as a neurologist and neuroscientist. He is currently a Scientist Emeritus at the National Institutes of Health, having retired from the National Institute of Mental Health. At the NIMH, he discovered an essential brain area for social memory, finding a way to greatly enhance this memory in a model system. As past-president of the Montgomery Bird Club, he helps with Council tasks and leading bird walks.



NOVEMBER 19, 2025 (Wednesday), 7:30 p.m. Claire Nemes, PhD, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, presents “Using Weather Radar Data to Map Migratory Stopover Sites”

During migration, songbirds spend more time foraging and resting than they do in flight. Protecting stopover habitat is essential for the conservation of migratory bird populations. Weather radar, which is also used to create BirdCast migration forecasts, is a fascinating and powerful tool for understanding patterns of stopover habitat use. Claire Nemes will share her postdoctoral research in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Natural

Resources to map out stopover hotspots across the state using weather radar data. The DNR along with birders, conservation groups, and resource managers can use these maps to help conserve Maryland's migrants.

Claire grew up in Maryland and joined MBC after reading about Golden-crowned Kinglets got her hooked on birds. She completed her PhD and postdoctoral research in migration ecology at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science Appalachian Lab in Frostburg. Claire is now a postdoc studying American Kestrel movement at the Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute. She's a big fan of confusing fall warblers and loves everything about migration!



Fall Field Trips

By Linda Friedland, MBC Field Trip Coordinator

Reservations are required for all MBC field trips unless otherwise noted. Contact trip leaders for reservations, directions, and other information. If you need to cancel, please notify the leader well in advance so those on the (often long!) waiting lists will get a chance to participate. For recent field trip reports and for guidance on in-person events and inclement weather changes, please visit <https://www.montgomerybirdclub.org/>.

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:

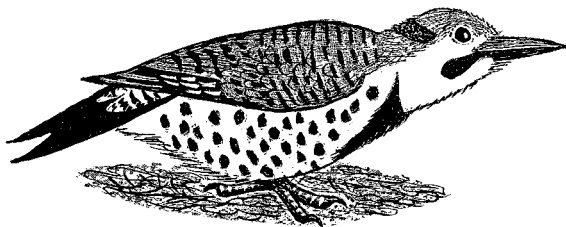
- Stay with the group, keep talking to a minimum, and walk with a soft tread.
- Let the leader lead, staying behind them, and remember that the leader is here for the whole group. Don't forget that shorter folks may be standing behind you.
- When the leader gets a bird in the scope, take a quick look, and 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 birds!

SEPTEMBER 7 (Sunday) WHEATON REGIONAL PARK

On this walk, aimed at new birders but open to all, we'll spend a morning exploring Wheaton RP (accessible by Metrobuses M20 and M22). Starting at 7:30 a.m., we'll use our eyes and ears to identify forest birds, likely some waterfowl, and perhaps early migrants. Limit: 16. LEADER: Cheryl Hogue at cheryl.hogue@gmail.com. Lisa Norwalk will co-lead.

SEPTEMBER 10 (Wednesday) PENNYFIELD TO VIOLETTE'S BIRD STALK

Half day. We will gather at 8 a.m. in the Violette's Lock parking lot at the end of Violette's Lock Road. We will then carpool to Pennyfield Lock and walk back up the C&O Canal towpath to Violette's. This walk should net an interesting mix of late warblers, other land bird migrants, and maybe a few early winter visitors, as we scan the skies and river for raptors and waterbirds. Limit: 10. LEADER: Leo Dilling at LeoDilling@hotmail.com.



SEPTEMBER 14 (Sunday) HUGHES HOLLOW

This half-day trip is targeted at newer birders, but all are welcome. We will meet in the Hughes Hollow parking lot at McKee-Beshers WMA at 7:30 a.m. We will explore the wetlands and fields of Hughes Hollow. Species to be expected include migrant warblers, Green Heron and other waterbirds, and possibly raptors. Limit: 10. LEADER: Clive Harris at cliveharris@yahoo.com.

SEPTEMBER 15 (Monday) HART-MILLER ISLAND, BALTIMORE COUNTY

This half-day MBC trip is organized by Maryland Environmental Service. We will travel to the island on their boat and then around the island on a tour bus. We will look for migrant songbirds in the woods and then visit the dredged material cells on the island to look for shorebirds, terns, gulls, and other waterbirds. Bring bug spray, sunblock, rain gear, camera, binoculars and spotting scope, and water to drink. The tour will run rain or shine although it may be cancelled in the event of severe weather. Meet at the MES land base, 2024A Riverview Road, Essex, MD 21221, by 8:45 a.m. Approximate return to the land base will be 12:30 p.m. Limit: 20. LEADER: Clive Harris at cliveharris@yahoo.com. **NOTE: The boat will leave at 9 a.m. sharp and will not wait for latecomers.**



SEPTEMBER 20 (Saturday)
WESTERN CHARLES COUNTY

Join us for a Fall Migration Run to Western Charles County. The focus will be Nanjemoy, a heavily wooded section of the county that also has a significant amount of riparian forest along the Potomac River. We will meet and begin our trip at Mallows Bay - Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary. NOTE: Carpooling is necessary, and we are limited to three cars. We will carpool from Mallows Bay for a run down Riverside Road/Rt 224, stopping along the way at several bridges over narrow coastal guts, and possibly at Purse State Park and the Lion's Club-owned Camp Merrick, situated along the Potomac River (our probable lunch break location). We will end our run at Friendship Farm Park, a Charles County Park at Nanjemoy Creek. This should be a rich time for migrants. Limit: 10. LEADERS: Francesca Grifo at francescatgrifo@gmail.com and Lynne Wheeler at somdaudubon@yahoo.com.

SEPTEMBER 20 (Saturday)
CROYDON CREEK NATURE CENTER

Come discover (or rediscover) a Montgomery County birding gem. Some 140 species of birds have been recorded in this park. Multiple warblers and thrushes are possible. Some moderate hiking. We will start at 7:30 a.m. in the Nature Center parking lot. Limit: 10. LEADER: Emily Huang at ephuang@verizon.net.

SEPTEMBER 21 (Sunday)
RICKMAN/WOODSTOCK EQUESTRIAN PARK

Join us for some early morning autumn birding as we explore the Equestrian Park on the west side of Route 28 (<https://rb.gy/qpdqda>). We'll begin at 7:30 a.m. and bird the broad fields and separating woods for warblers and sparrows, vireos, woodpeckers, and raptors. Limit: 12. LEADER: Scott Young at scott4aves@icloud.com. Dave Roberts will co-lead.



SEPTEMBER 24 (Wednesday)
OAKS LANDFILL

Explore in carpools this now-closed landfill adjacent to the Blue Mash Nature Trail. Mostly open terrain on a gravel road, including two pond views. In addition to sparrows, raptors, and waterfowl, shorebirds are possible if there are mudflats at the big pond. The leader will have a scope for distant birds. We will meet at 8 a.m. at 6001 Rt. 108, Laytonsville, Md. Limit: 16. LEADER: Mark England at englandmark@comcast.net. NOTE: The County requires all participants to provide their names and phone numbers when they register for this trip.

SEPTEMBER 27 (Saturday)
REDGATE PARK POP-UP

No reservations needed! We'll search this Rockville park for sparrows and southbound migrants. The paths are mostly paved, but there are some steep hills. There are no bathroom facilities, but there is a port-a-potty at the parking lot. Distance: 1 to 2 miles. Time about 2 hours. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot at Redgate Park, 14500 Avery Rd, Rockville, MD 20853. Walk cancelled in the event of pouring rain. LEADER: Lisa Norwalk at llnorwalk@gmail.com.

OCTOBER 4 (Saturday)
WHEATON REGIONAL PARK

Early and mid-October can be quite productive in Wheaton Regional Park, which is often particularly good during fall migration. Warblers, vireos, thrushes, and sparrows are all possible. All are welcome, and beginners are particularly encouraged to join. We will begin at 7:30 a.m. and finish around 10 or when bird activity drops off. Limit: 10. LEADER: Rob Hilton at rob.hilton.2010@gmail.com. Lisa Shannon will co-lead.

OCTOBER 5 (Sunday)
HUGHES HOLLOW

Join us for a morning of marsh and woodland birding. Targets are fall migrants such as warblers, sparrows, and ducks. Beginners and young birders are especially encouraged to join. We will gather at 7:30 a.m. at the Hughes Hollow parking lot. Limit: 10. LEADER: Lauren Carey at ljcarey011@gmail.com.

OCTOBER 8 (Wednesday)
CARDEROCK RECREATION AREA

Join us for a leisurely morning walk on the C&O Canal towpath. We will meet at Carderock at 8 a.m. and will walk upriver looking and listening for woodpeckers, kinglets, and sparrows. Possible ducks include Wood Duck, American Black Duck, and Common Merganser. This walk is geared toward new and beginning birders but is open to all. Limit: 8. LEADERS: Gene Murray at eugenemurray@comcast.net or Susan Higginbotham at smhigginb@gmail.com.

OCTOBER 12 (Sunday)
OAKS LANDFILL

Explore in carpools this now-closed landfill adjacent to the Blue Mash Nature Trail. Mostly open terrain on a gravel road, including two pond views. In addition to sparrows, raptors, and waterfowl, shorebirds are possible if there are mudflats at the big pond. The leader will have a scope for distant birds. We will meet at 8 a.m. at 6001 Rt. 108, Laytonsville, Md. Limit: 16. LEADER: Mark England at englandmark@comcast.net. NOTE: The County requires all participants to provide their names and phone numbers when they register for this trip.



OCTOBER 17 (Friday)**WAGGONER'S GAP HAWK WATCH**

All-day trip. We'll meet in the morning at a local Park & Ride along I-270 to carpool to this site outside Carlisle, PA. We will walk up a short, steep path to the angled boulders atop the ridge where we'll spend several hours enjoying excellent views of migrating hawks. Bring a cushion to sit on, a sack lunch and snacks, a warm beverage, and layers of warm clothing, including a wind-resistant outer layer. There is a portable toilet at the lower end of the path. We will head home in the early afternoon, possibly stopping at a farm stand along the way for freshly picked local apples. Total driving time to and from the site is 4 to 5 hours. Limit: 8. Rain date October 18. LEADER: Cheryl Hogue at cheryl.hogue@gmail.com.

OCTOBER 19 (Sunday)**LITTLE BENNETT RP FOR BEGINNERS**

All are welcome on this half-day trip, but we especially encourage those new to birding to join us. Starting at 7:30 a.m., we'll slowly walk some of the woodland trails looking for migrant and resident birds. Limit: 10. LEADER: Paul Orsinger at paulorsinger@gmail.com. Leo Dilling will co-lead.

OCTOBER 25 (Saturday)**REDGATE PARK**

Come explore this "new" park on a former golf course. The area offers multiple habitats, including a small marsh, wooded areas, and lots of meadow areas for potential winter sparrows. In its first 10 months as a park, birders identified 147 species. Some parts have steep hills. Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot. Limit: 12. LEADER: Anne Mytych at amytych@yahoo.com.

NOVEMBER 1 (Saturday)**ROCK CREEK'S NORTH BRANCH STREAM VALLEY**

Discover upper Rock Creek's watershed with a variety of habitats. We will start along open fields and marshy areas next to Bowie Mill Park with the opportunity to see a variety of sparrows, hawks, fall migrants, and turkeys if we're lucky. Previous lists included 8 species of sparrows including Fox, White-crowned, Swamp, and Savannah Sparrows. Depending on the weather, we'll opt to explore a section of the stream valley for woodpeckers and other resident woodland species. Meet at 8 a.m. at Bowie Mill Park (<https://tinyurl.com/yswz6v95>) next to Sequoyah Elementary School. Limit: 16. LEADER: Jo Cox at jobird11@gmail.com. Kathy Reitz will co-lead.

NOVEMBER 4 (Tuesday)**LOIS Y. GREEN CONSERVATION PARK**

Morning walk through the woods. We'll be looking for overwintering songbirds, waterfowl, and raptors. Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot at 8711 Snouffer School Road, Gaithersburg, Md. Limit: 12. LEADER: Mark England at englandmark@comcast.net.

NOVEMBER 11 (Tuesday)**REDGATE PARK: SEEKING SPARROWS**

If you are just starting to sort out the sparrows, join us for our annual Veterans Day walk. We'll work on ID-ing familiar species such as Song and White-throated Sparrow, while looking for less common ones like White-crowned and Swamp. This trip is geared to beginners, but all are welcome. Limit: 12. LEADER: Jo Cox at jobird11@gmail.com. Kathy Reitz will co-lead.

**DECEMBER 7 (Sunday)****BLACKWATER NWR**

Full day (to dusk). Early waterfowl and lingering migrants plus late afternoon marsh watch. Brown-headed Nuthatch possible. Bring lunch and drinks. Limit: 12. LEADER: Mark England at englandmark@comcast.net.

DECEMBER 13 (Saturday)**LOIS Y. GREEN CONSERVATION PARK**

Morning walk through fields and woodland edges. We'll be looking for sparrows, waterfowl, and raptors. Trails are well maintained with some hills. Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot at 8711 Snouffer School Road, Gaithersburg, Md. Limit: 12. LEADER: Leo Dilling at LeoDilling@hotmail.com.

DECEMBER 16 (Tuesday)**BLUE MASH NATURE TRAIL**

Join us for a morning at one of Montgomery County's top Hotspots. We'll be looking for raptors and overwintering sparrows and waterfowl. The path can be muddy and overgrown, so waterproof boots are recommended. Meet at 8 a.m. in the Zion Road parking lot. Limit: 10. LEADER: Lauren Carey at ljcarey011@gmail.com.



Youth Birding

By Ryan Carr, Youth Montgomery Bird Club

This summer the YMBC visited White's Ferry, Rachel Carson Conservation Park, Burnt Mills West Special Park, and Oaks Landfill. We are grateful to Angela Atwood-Moore, Michelle Browning, Lauren Carey, Mark England, Andy Martin, Carla Morris, and Stella Tea for mentoring us this season. We would also like to give a big shout out to Becky Gatwood and Stella Tea for their generous bird book donations!

White's Ferry was a new destination for the YMBC. It was a great spot with views of the river and the towpath in a wooded area. The weather was great and we had a successful morning finding 53 species including great views of nesting Prothonotary Warblers and a late White-throated Sparrow. It was also cool to see the old ferry.

Somehow we managed to plan the Rachel Carson Conservation Park trip on the only coolish morning in June. We spent the morning exploring the park and not only finding 40 species but Gavin found a Cream-edged Dichomeris Moth, which was the first ever recorded in the Maryland Biodiversity Project for the county.

Burnt Mills West Special Park was also a new destination and a hidden gem for summer birding! With plenty of shade and a creek in the woods, it

YMBC members scanning the river for birds at historic White's Ferry, currently closed, in Poolesville. Photo by Kathryn Carr



allowed for birding in multiple habitats while under the cover of trees. During our walk we identified 38 species and had a great time.

We visit Oaks Landfill in the coming weeks and can't wait. It's always a special trip to visit there.

Coming up we have trips scheduled for **September 14 at Jug Bay**, **October 18 at Violette's Lock**, **November 16 at the Sycamore Landing Fields**, and **December 7 at Lake Needwood**. Look out for the reservation link to come out soon via email and the MBC website. We'd love to have some new members join us!

We are always looking for new mentors. We handle all of the administrative work, you just pick the place and show up. If you are interested in being a mentor on a walk or want to tag along to see what being a mentor is like, please reach out to us at youth.birding@gmail.com.

The Youth Maryland Ornithological Society (YMOS) season started in August. You can learn more at <https://mdbirds.org/young-birders/> or by reaching out to George Radcliffe at radclifg@gmail.com.



Lauren Carey (left), Michelle Browning, and Stella Tea (far right) joined the YMBC on a cool morning walk at Rachel Carson CP. Photo by Kathryn Carr



Birds of Note (Early May to Early August)

By Andy Martin

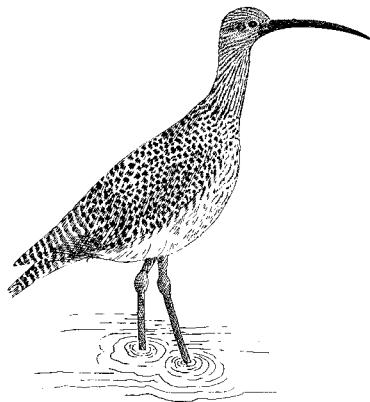
A **Chuck-will's-widow** was a great find by Jared Fisher along Izaak Walton Way near Poolesville in the “wee” hours of the morning on May 11. A “heard only” bird for Jared and only the 4th record for this species in Montgomery County, according to Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s eBird Project.

Stephen Davies observed six **Black-bellied Whistling Ducks** in flight over Blue Mash Nature Trail on July 14.

It has been another interesting year for **Mississippi Kites** in our county, hosting two different nesting pairs. One nest is located again at Welsh Park in Rockville and another one in the Norbeck area near Meadowside Nature Center. As of this writing, each **Mississippi Kite** pair had produced one chick.

Some interesting shorebirds have been found in the county over the past three to four months. Some northbound species reported in May and June include **Black-bellied Plover, Dunlin, Red-necked Phalarope, Ruddy Turnstone, White-rumped Sandpiper, and Whimbrel.**

A single **Black-bellied Plover** along with a **Semipalmated Sandpiper** were noted in a wet area of the Patton Turf Farm on May 13 by Dave Czaplak and Mary Ann Todd. Thirty-three **Dunlin** were found by Jared Fisher at the Summit Hall Turf Farm on May 14. The same day and downriver at Riley’s Lock, Clive Harris reported a **Red-necked Phalarope**. Dave Czaplak and Mary Ann Todd were on hand at Violette’s Lock on the morning of May 25 to observe three **Ruddy Turnstones** drop in for about an hour’s rest on a midstream log before resuming their journey upriver. And Jared Fisher noted an amazingly large (by Montgomery County standards) flock of 60 **Whimbrels** flying upstream over the Potomac River adjacent to Violette’s Lock on May 23. Jared, Mary Ann, and Dave were able to pick out a single **White-rumped Sandpiper** among a flock of 30 or more **Semipalmated Sandpipers** in a flooded field off Sycamore Landing Road on May 31.



Some already southbound shorebird species noted in recent weeks include an **American Avocet** found by Dave Czaplak at Violette’s Lock on July 25 and a **Sanderling** was reported from the same location by Jared Fisher on August 1.

Amy Christianson and Roy Howard noted a flyover **Laughing Gull** while birding in the vicinity of Homestead Farms near Darnestown on May 16.

At least one of the two **Swainson’s Warblers** reported in last issue’s “Birds of Note,” was still being seen as of July 19 along the Piedmont Trail in Little Bennett RP. It is unclear whether the two **Swainson’s Warblers** found in Little Bennett RP this season were able to nest successfully.

Robert Anderson reported a **Cerulean Warbler** at Cabin John RP on May 10. Jared Fisher also found a **Cerulean Warbler** at the corner of River and West Willard Rds on May 10.

Robin Skinner reported an **Olive-sided Flycatcher** at Little Bennett RP near Clarksburg on May 20. Roy Howard noted a **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** along Sycamore Landing Rd, also on May 20, and Gabriel Urso found an **Alder Flycatcher** at Little Bennett RP on May 10.

Zachary Kuhn and Claire Heh noted a flyover **Glossy Ibis** at Hughes Hollow on August 12.

It has been a good summer for **Least Bitterns** at Hughes Hollow within McKee-Beshers WMA. Matt Felperin and Susannah Parker reported as many as seven birds there on August 3.



Montgomery County’s total species for the year (as of August 12) stands at 245. Top 5 listers as of August 12 include Jared Fisher, 230; John Sojda, 221; Mary Ann Todd, 217; Ryan and Kathryn Carr, 217; and Dave Roberts, 209.



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Editor: Stella Tea

Designer: Pam Oves

Proofing: Susan Hunt

Art: Gemma Radko

President: Emily Huang

Vice-President: Mark England

Membership: Moira Davenport

Contact: montgomerybirdclub@mdbirds.org



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