

President’s Chat

By Emily Huang

This is my last President’s Chat, and as I ponder the topic for this occasion, I realize that saying what makes the Montgomery Bird Club so special will take up all my available word count and my remaining months as President!





I can’t name everyone whose devoted volunteer work sustains the Club and keeps it running, but it would be remiss not to mention the current Officers, State and Chapter Directors, and Committee Chairs, who are the people who really get things done. Scott Young, Evelyn Ralston, Ed Vigezzi, Chris Wright, and Anne Mytych all took special care of me when I was a new member, and then a new officer, of the Club. I can’t thank them enough for their support when things seemed to be coming at me a little fast. When I say that I joined MBC as a novice birder in 2018 and became VP in 2022, you will see what I mean! Finally, to Karen Cyr: thank you for a special friendship and a powerful partnership for avian good.

What does the Club mean to all of us? It means friendship and community—of shared time and experience with people who love birds and birding as much as we do. (And aren’t those some of the best people in the world?) It means partnership, with folks who want to make a positive difference for birds and for nature; in numbers, we are stronger. It means learning from all the wonderful Club members with such varied backgrounds and sometimes esoteric bird knowledge. And finally, it means opportunity, to see birds and places that we wouldn’t easily see by birding on our own, because birders are generous people who are eager to share their sightings and skills.

It’s been an amazing four years, and I can’t wait to see what comes next. Keep the birds in your heart and keep on birding.

Montgomery Bird Club is an organization in which I take pride, and it is made up of people I respect. In reflecting on my time as an officer of this Club, I inevitably think of all the people to whom I and others owe so much thanks.

I will start with Mark England, Vice-President for the past two years, and soon to be standing for President. Mark’s hard work for this Club did not begin two years ago—it’s been a mainstay for decades. Between leading more walks than any other trip leader, fostering beginner birders, wielding power tools, and lately taking on the administrative duties of being a State Director and VP, Mark can truly be said to embody the spirit of the MBC. His generosity is legendary, and I am grateful for Mark’s cheerful support and co-leadership.

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Club News

Elections for Officers and Directors

In May, we hold our annual election for Club officers and directors. The Nominating Committee for this year was announced in January. It is composed of Stella Tea (chair), Josephine Cox, and Anna Urciolo.

At the April 16 Club meeting, Stella will present the list of candidates for the open positions and ask if there are additional nominations from the floor. After additional nominations are received, or if there are none, the nominations will be closed.

Within a week thereafter, every active Club member will receive a special elections email with the final candidate list and instructions on how to vote electronically. The results of the electronic vote will be announced at our May 6 Annual Meeting at the Social.

Please participate! A quorum of 20% of the membership is needed for the vote to be valid.

Annual MBC Social May 6, 2026

Guest of Honor Ed Vigezzi

Join us for our annual social at the Woodend headquarters of Nature Forward, 8940 Jones Mill Road, Chevy Chase. The evening begins with a social hour at 6:00 p.m., with dinner at 7:30 p.m.

Smokey Glen Farm of Gaithersburg will once again cater this delicious dinner. Please bring appetizers to share!

The evening will feature our traditional recognition of the Guest of Honor and the brief, but awesome, slide shows by our members. For those interested in participating, please limit your presentations to 8 digital photos. You can send them to Mark England (montgomery@mdbirds.org) as a PowerPoint display, as individual photos, or as a link to a Dropbox (or similar) folder. Make sure that the photos are identified as to presenter and preferred order.

Space is limited! Places will go to the first 90 persons to reserve and pay.

We need to receive both the paid reservations and photo submissions no later than April 23.

This year we have a **convenient online reservation system!** Reserve your spaces online; then opt to pay either by credit card or by mailing a check.

To reserve, copy and paste this link into your browser:
<https://mdbirds.org/join/chapters/montgomery-bird-club/mbc-payment/>

Welcome New Members

Randy Bender and Bruce Youngpeter

David Blockstein

Jeremy Blum and Surabhi Dabir

Igor Bravemore

Jamie Brockmeier and family

Steve Bryant

Liz Bullock and family

Charlene (Chunying) Cai

Victoria Cain

Susan Daniels and family

Tammy Dickinson

Heidi Heller

Abby Levine and family

Michael McDavid

Chuck Mitchell

J Phil Morgan

Valerie Morris

William Mosher

Kiersten Newtoff

Alex Odett and family

Linda Peoples and family

Candace Pineau and family

Robert Podolsky and Monica

Meyer

Pamela Rowe

Michelle Saylor

Barbara and Paul Schneeman

Sharon Seidel

Denice Shaw

Beth Sinclair and Mark Morgan

Suji Singh

Katie Stein and family

Dawn Steinfeld and family

Carole Sztalryd Woodle

Alexandra Thompson

Elaine Turk

Olga Weber

Gretchen Wood and Clifton Barry



MBC Instagram Reaches 100 Followers!



Last October, the Toronto Blue Jays defeated the Seattle Mariners to advance to the 2025 World Series. This seemed like the perfect opportunity for me to make the first post on the new MBC Instagram account, @MontgomeryBirdClub. The post featured five facts about Blue Jays (the birds, not the team!), from their hawk mimicry to the lack of blue pigment in their feathers.

I created the account to share bird facts like these, spread awareness about MBC events, and bring birding to a wider audience. The power of Instagram became evident when our post about the North Bethesda Crow Roost lecture and “evening show” garnered over 500 views and resulted in an additional dozen

attendees. The most consistent series of posts is the Bird of the Month (formerly Bird of the Week) series. At the end of each month, I research and post about a bird, selected at random, from that month’s Montgomery County eBird list. These posts are complete with a spinner wheel, bird photos and descriptions, habitat information, vocalizations, fun facts, and where to find them in MoCo. As a new birder, I find that an added benefit of this series is how much I get to learn about our local birds myself!

Currently, I am the only one who posts to the account, but I welcome new contributors. If you’re interested, please contact me at luke.sumberg@mdbirds.org. Eventually, I will work up the courage to ask people on MBC walks to follow the account. Until then, please follow us and spread the word!

Luke Sumberg is a Montgomery County native but only recently discovered and joined MBC. His passion for birding grew from his thoughtful and supportive family. Early on, he was gifted a field guide and a Cardinal-red camera from his grandmother and his parents, respectively. His girlfriend, Hanna, gave him his first pair of binoculars and most of his favorite birding gear. At MBC, he helps coordinate the A/V setup for the monthly meetings and also runs the MBC Instagram account (@MontgomeryBirdClub). Luke lives in Bethesda and works at the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress, where he coordinates research about stress within military service members and their families.



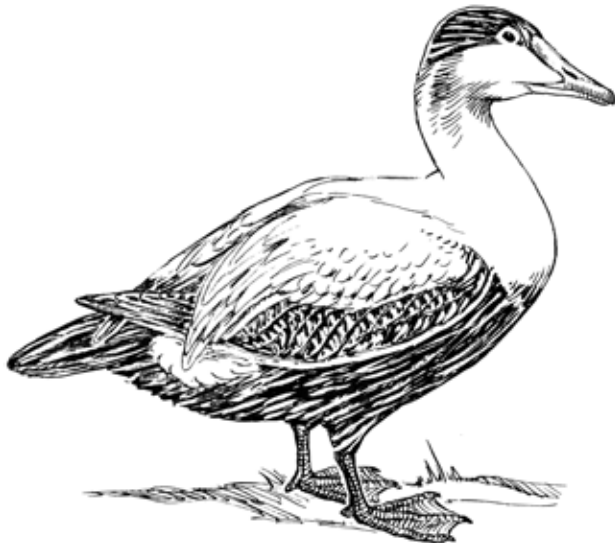
Birds of Note (Mid-November to Mid-February)

By Andy Martin

The Black-Jenkins Award of 1877! What is it and why is it the lead-in to Birds of Note? The Black-Jenkins Award was the binding arbitration decision approved by Congress 149 years ago that placed Maryland's state boundary along the VA shoreline of the Potomac, creating a loophole for future Maryland birders. As a result, any bird seen over the Potomac River is a MD bird!

So when a super rarity, a **Red-flanked Bluetail**, an old world flycatcher normally found across Eurasia, unexpectedly showed up at Great Falls Park, VA, on January 1, birders flocked to see it, hoping to put it on their life and Virginia lists and—if it flew out over the river—on their Montgomery list. And so it did, sallying out over the Potomac to forage on a mid-river rocky island. Over 50 birders added the **Red-flanked Bluetail** to their Montgomery life list.

And then, on December 2, Jared Fisher and Dave Czaplak reported another first-for-the-county: a **Common Eider** on the Potomac adjacent to Violette's Lock.



According to eBird, the **Red-flanked Bluetail** and the **Common Eider** bring Montgomery County's total species count up to 349.

In addition to these firsts, Montgomery birders saw many interesting birds this winter. On November 17, Joe Hanfman found a **Surf Scoter** and two **Black Scoters** at Triadelphia Reservoir. John Sojda observed four **White-winged Scoters** flying over the Potomac adjacent to Violette's Lock on December 8, and Dave Czaplak and

Mary Ann Todd noted four **White-winged Scoters** at Little Seneca Lake within Black Hill RP on January 24.

Mary Ann Todd and Dave Czaplak observed a single **Rough-legged Hawk** over the Potomac near Violette's on January 15. Stephen Davies reported two at Blue Mash on February 1.

Dave Czaplak noted a **Greater White-fronted Goose** at Little Seneca Lake on November 30. From early December into January 2026, **Greater White-fronted Geese** appeared on Gunner's Lake in Germantown, the Potomac at Violette's, and in agricultural fields near Poolesville. Individual **Snow Geese** were reported (usually mixed in with **Canada Geese**) from both the western and eastern portions of the county's agricultural reserve between December and January. **Ross's Geese**, sometimes as many as three together, were observed at Lake Whetstone in Montgomery Village and Gunner's Lake.

Three **Sandhill Cranes** were observed flying across the Potomac from the vicinity of Algonkian RP, VA, to Montgomery Co. in December and much of January. These cranes have not been reported since the January 26 "snowcrete" storm—perhaps they are looking elsewhere for better feeding opportunities? Clive Harris reported three **Sandhill Cranes** at the Poolesville GC (now "The Crossvines") during the Seneca CBC on December 14. Carrie Olszyk saw four **Sandhill Cranes** fly over the Blue Mash Nature Trail on December 6.

John Sojda found a **Red-throated Loon** at Little Seneca Lake on January 24.

Rich Mason was first to note a **Laughing Gull** at Triadelphia Reservoir during the Triadelphia CBC on December 20. On December 30, Mary Ann Todd and Dave Czaplak noted a first-cycle **Iceland (Kumlien's) Gull** flying downriver near Riley's Lock before it dropped down into the ponds on the VA side of the river.

Some unusual winter passerines included a **Baltimore Oriole** seen by Stephen Davies at Blue Mash on December 1. Tara and Ada Clifton's feeders in Rockville have hosted a **Baltimore Oriole** for much of the winter. Diane Ford and Joshua Heiser both noted a **Baltimore Oriole** in their Bethesda neighborhood near Rock Creek Park. Dan Neumann found a **Blue-headed Vireo** in a small "green space" at Asbury Methodist Village in Gaithersburg on January 22.



Individual **Orange-crowned Warblers** were reported at Rachel Carson CP by Dave Ziolkowski Jr on December 20; at the Asbury Methodist Village on December 29; and at Kathryn and Ryan Carr's North Potomac yard on January 1. **Pine Warblers** were reported from at least a dozen locations in December and January, mostly at feeders.

Mary Ann Todd and Dave Czaplak found a **Clay-colored Sparrow** at Woodstock Equestrian Park on November 26. Stacy Rabinowitz reported a "somewhat rare" for midwinter **Vesper Sparrow** at Royce Hanson CP on January 5.

While birding from Sugarland Rd, Dave Czaplak and Mary Ann Todd noted two **Lapland Longspurs** at Homestead Farm on December 15. Scott Young, Dave Roberts, James Fleming, and Roy Howard found a **Lapland Longspur** at Royce Hanson CP on January 27.

Birders tallied an impressive 262 species in Montgomery County in 2025, a tie with the county high count from both 2021 and 2023. Top listers include Jared Fisher (250), John Sojda (241), Mary Ann Todd (238), Ryan and Kathryn Carr (233), and Clive Harris (229).

Editor's Corner: Resources for Birding Hotspots

By Stella Tea

As of February 15, 2026, eBird's Explore Hotspots feature for Montgomery County (<https://ebird.org/region/US-MD-031>) shows the C&O Canal—Violette's Lock as the leader in species count at 279 species, observed by 1,372 eBirders across 15,923 checklists. That's a lot of checklists as a result of many passionate people, including Club members who led and participated in Club field trips! Currently tied at 130 species at the 99th and 100th most birdy county hotspots are Little Falls Parkway—Norwood Park in Chevy Chase and Damascus Recreational Park. As Andy Martin notes in this issue's Birds of Note on page 4, Montgomery County has observed 349 species to date according to eBird. What the 350th bird will be is anyone's guess.

As a new-ish kid on the block, Royce Hanson Conservation Park at Broad Run in Poolesville (<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L53737414>) was officially opened and dedicated on November 1, 2025. In just over 3 months, the park has already attracted 122 birders who documented 111 species. Although iconic birds have not been noted on its eBird hotspot page, birders and photographers have been delighted by good looks at Red-headed Woodpecker, Northern Harrier, Clay-colored Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, American Pipit, Bobolink, Dickcissel, Wilson's Snipe, and Nashville Warbler, to name a few. Check out Emily Huang's Hotspot Guide to Royce Hanson CP on pages 6 and 7 for essential information.

Speaking of birder's guides, MOS maintains a Birder's Guide to Maryland & DC (<https://birdersguidemddc.org/>), and the website offers several ways to search for hotspot information: alphabetically and by region, county, habitat, type, features, recently added, and map. On each hotspot page, the "At a Glance" section includes pertinent information about operating hours, cost, best seasons, tips (is there a bathroom?), and even rules and prohibitions. This local guide is an invaluable resource to anyone who is interested in planning a visit to a birding hotspot for the first time.

In early 2025, eBird introduced the checklist media feature (<https://ebird.org/news/new-checklist-media>) and took community science and accessibility to another level. eBirders can upload soundscape recordings and habitat photos to their checklists and annotate them with their insights, including notes on seasonal/environmental changes and additions or removal of site features and amenities. These checklist media are included on the eBird hotspot pages.

While not operated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the Birding Hotspots website (<https://www.birds.cornell.edu/landtrust/birding-hotspots-website/>) draws certain data from eBird and crowdsources other birding location information from the public. Each hotspot page includes a "Suggest Content" form that collects information such as Plan Your Visit, How to Bird Here, About This Place, and accessibility options. Regional editors are volunteers who help manage the information on this site.

Whether you are looking for local birding hotspot information or finding ways to contribute to the knowledge base at large, I hope our Montgomery birding community continues to explore, enrich, and empower. See you out in the field!



Hotspot Guide to Royce Hanson Conservation Park

By Emily Huang, MBC President

Royce Hanson Conservation Park at Broad Run

Parking at 21820 Club Hollow Rd, Poolesville MD 20837

<https://montgomeryparks.org/parks-and-trails/royce-hanson-conservation-park/>

(301) 495-2595

At a Glance

Hours: Sunrise to sunset

Cost: Free

Tips: No restrooms; benches and picnic tables available

Best Seasons: Spring and fall

Breeding Bird Atlas Block: Poolesville SW

Local MOS Chapter: Montgomery Bird Club

Royce Hanson Conservation Park (RHCP), just outside Poolesville in Montgomery County, is nestled within the county's nationally recognized Agricultural Reserve and was created through the Legacy Open Space program to protect the Broad Run watershed. The county acquired the 475-acre former working farmland in 2021 and has transformed it into a park focused on preserving rural, agricultural, and natural landscapes. The park opened to the public in the fall of 2025. There are five miles of trails, including a newly constructed multi-use natural surface trail that circles the park's extensive meadow and agricultural fields, as well as two trails through one of the largest tracts of continuous forest in the county.

RHCP comprises diversified habitats including wetlands and swamps, upland and riparian forest interior, agri fields, and restored meadows, all occurring within a cross-section of Triassic Shale geology and inclusions of Diabase bedrock. This geology helps create a unique hardpan floodplain forest habitat on the west side of the property that supports rare plant and wildlife communities. Because of these diverse habitats, many different families of birds can be seen, particularly songbirds and raptors favoring open grassland, as well as those of forest interiors. Heron, shorebird, and waterfowl species may also be observed, especially during migration.

Trail System

The 1-mile long, natural surface **Stacked Stone Loop** runs east from the parking lot and is ADA-accessible down to a large farm pond. As you travel to the pond, a dedicated wildlife food plot lies to the left, and to the right and surrounding the pond is an area of tall grass, scrub, and small trees that attracts a variety of songbirds, particularly sparrows. Past the pond, the **Stacked Stone Loop** encircles one of RHCP's large ag fields, which are under lease for corn and soybean crops. Along the way, a spur from the Loop takes you onto the newly cut, 1-mile **Putty Root Loop**, which travels through riparian forest overlooking Broad Run. The **Putty Root Loop** in turn allows access via **Club Hollow Lane** to **Senna Loop**, a 1-mile upland forest trail. These gently graded natural surface forest trails ascend about 50 feet in elevation at their highest level. Deer management helps preserve a variety of unique plant communities within the RHCP forest.

Other trails include the short **Corn Crib Trail** that runs southeast from the parking lot to the old barn and from there down to a small wetland pond, which boasts an attractive viewing gazebo. A wet grassy swale running out from the pond is an active bird spot, with songbirds hopping through even on the coldest days. Nearby, the **Bluestem Trail** (0.67 mile) runs through 52 acres of restored meadow and connects to the last large trail, the **Borderland Trail** (0.8 mile), which loops around the park's eastern ag field.



Birders not wishing to travel the entire five miles of available trails should take the **Stacked Stone Loop** to the large farm pond, taking care to scan the area in and around the pond and the cornfields to the north and west. Continuing the short distance to the head of the woodland **Putty Root Loop** can be rewarding, while a walk around the small wetland pond is definitely worthwhile. Red-headed Woodpeckers are regularly seen in the woods near the farm pond and below **Bluestem Trail**. Keep an eye out for raptors hunting over the fields.

Historical Note

Montgomery Parks describes RHCP's landscape as "rich in examples of history of the county across time, with activity of indigenous people encampment and activities of the Civil War, and farming before, during, and following industrialization." Archeological investigations on the site are ongoing. The park is named for Royce Hanson, who led the Montgomery County Planning Board of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) from 1972 to 1981 and 2006 to 2010 and is credited with creating the Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve.

Hunting Note

For all hunting program operations, Montgomery Parks' website is updated annually with scheduled parks and closures. Royce Hanson CP has both archery and lottery-based shotgun days; specific details on dates and times can be found here: <https://montgomeryparks.org/deer-population-management-schedule-locations/>.

Amenities

There are no bathrooms or trash cans on site, but there is ample parking with an information signboard. There are also a number of benches and a picnic area with tables.

Birdlife

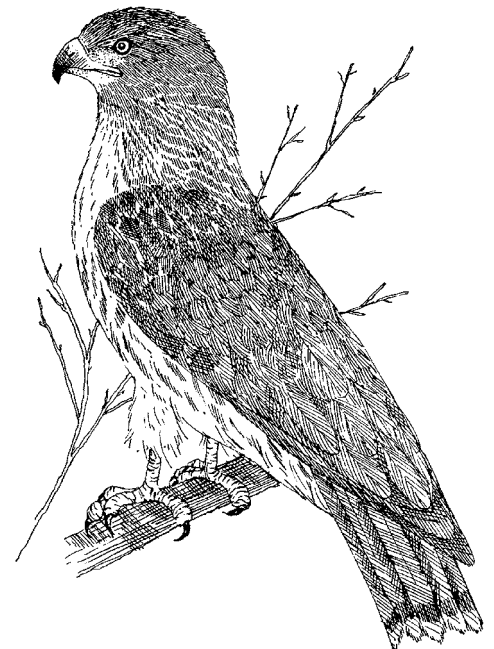
The documented birding history of RHCP is short, but in a single fall to midwinter season, 110 species were reported in eBird, and 105 species were recorded in two spring surveys conducted by Montgomery Parks volunteers, for a current tally of 141 species.

Raptors, including Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Harrier, and American Kestrel, are often seen hunting the open landscape. Eastern Red Cedars are spaced along the entrance road, and young Red Maple and oak trees have been planted along the new park paths. These trees are good places to spot woodpeckers and to look for warblers during migration. Meadow grasses, forbs (the scrub along the forest edges), and the wet swale below the barn yield a rich variety of sparrows in all seasons. Killdeer may be frequently seen at the edges of the large farm pond.

In spring, flycatchers, swallows, mimids, and orioles come in, and open and grassland species such as Grasshopper Sparrow, Bobolink and migrating American Pipits may be frequently found. Nest boxes are onsite for Wood Duck, American Kestrel, Eastern Screech Owl, Eastern Bluebird, and Barn Owl. Spring survey and Breeding Bird Atlas 3 data indicate that other nesting species to look for include Barred and Great Horned Owls, Red-headed Woodpecker, Eastern Kingbird, Willow Flycatcher, Common Raven, Tree Swallow, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-breasted Chat, Eastern Meadowlark, Orchard Oriole, Indigo Bunting, Vesper Sparrow, and Blue Grosbeak.

In spring and fall migration, expect to see Yellow-billed Cuckoo, many warblers and vireos, Scarlet Tanager, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Spring is an especially good time to bird the woodland trails. In fall or winter, a good variety of sparrows are seen, including Fox, White-crowned, White-throated, American Tree, Savannah, and Lincoln's, in addition to resident Song, Field, and Chipping Sparrows. Horned Lark and American Pipit are occasional visitors in the wintering cornfields.

Thanks to Dianna Rose/Montgomery Parks for background material; to Clifton Barry and Helena Boshoff, Montgomery Parks volunteers, for spring birding data.



Spring Meetings

By Mark England, MBC Vice-President

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

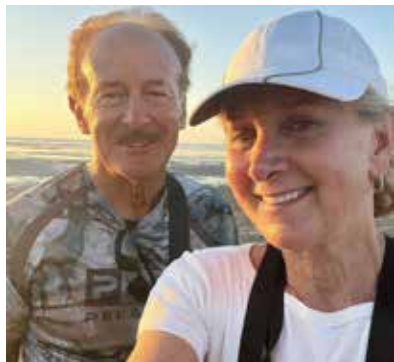


MARCH 19, 2026 (Thursday), 7:30 p.m. Wayne Klockner, ABA Executive Director, presents “Spring Jewels—Warblers in Migration.”

Spring migration is eagerly anticipated by birders due to the impressive array of warblers passing through the mid-Atlantic in April and May. While many adult male warblers are flashy and easily identified, others present a fun challenge for birders. This presentation includes a review of all of the warbler species likely to be encountered in Spring and will address both male and female plumages and behaviors.

Wayne Klockner is Executive Director of the American Birding Association. Previously, he had a long career in conservation with The Nature Conservancy in Maryland, Delaware, New York, Massachusetts, and Indonesia, fulfilling his dream

to protect natural lands and waters for all life. Wayne is a lifelong birder; as a preteen in New Jersey, his spark bird was the Dark-eyed Junco. He has subsequently pursued birds in 21 countries—and counting. But he most enjoys documenting the seasonal changes in regional birdlife in patches close to home. Wayne lives in Ocean City, Maryland, with his wife Lisa and a springer spaniel named Lizzy.



APRIL 15, 2026 (Wednesday), 7:30 p.m. Kathy Brown presents “Adventures in Panama, April 2025” (with photos by Charlie Brown).

Last year my husband Charlie and I toured Panama for 10 days with MOS. We stayed at the Canopy Tower overlooking the Canal Zone and Soberanía National Park and then traveled to El Valle de Antón, where the Canopy Lodge is located. We birded rain and cloud forests, continental divides, river valleys, savannas, and the Pacific Ocean, and saw more than 250 species. It was a lovely trip!

Kathy Brown has been a member of MBC/MOS for about 5 years and has been birding since 2018. She knew she was hooked when she spent 2 hours birding on a rainy afternoon in her own backyard. Kathy is a longtime member of Montgomery

County Road Runners, and she continues to enjoy her other passion, nursing, in which she has worked for 49 years.

Charlie Brown was convinced by Kathy to join the wonderful world of birding. Photography has always been one of his passions. In addition to using it in his career in cell biology, he now applies it to birding. And since golf is another passion, he discovered he could bird by golf cart. He is currently arranging to photograph the birds of Needwood Golf Course via golf cart.

MAY 6, 2026 (Wednesday), 7:30 p.m. Annual MBC Social at Woodend (in-person only)

Join us for our Annual Social at the Woodend headquarters of Nature Forward! The evening begins with a social hour at 6 p.m., with dinner at 7:30 p.m. Smokey Glen Farm of Gaithersburg will once again cater a delicious meal, and an open bar will be staffed by MBC bartenders. The evening will feature recognition of this year's Guest of Honor, Ed Vigezzi, as well as awesome slide shows by our members. Please see page 2 for details on how to register and submit your photos. Don't miss the fun!



Youth Birding

By Ryan Carr, Youth Montgomery Bird Club

It has been a slow winter for the YMBC! We had our December trip to Lake Needwood, but our January trip was postponed to February due to the snow. A group of us was able to get together on January 3rd to do a circuit of winter birding throughout the northwest part of the county where we ended up spotting a White-crowned Sparrow, an American Coot, two Snow Geese, and two Greater White-Fronted Geese.

Our Lake Needwood trip was productive with our group spotting 40 species including a Common Goldeneye, Fox Sparrow, and some great views of a Bald Eagle. Thank you, Jo Cox and Kathy Brown, for mentoring this trip. (eBird checklist: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S288133475>)

Our trip to Oaks Landfill was rescheduled due to the “snowcrete,” but once we got to go we had a great, but frozen, trip. While the ponds remained frozen, we found 22 species including a Savannah Sparrow, a bunch of Red-shouldered Hawks, great views of a Barred Owl, a Rough-legged Hawk flying over us, and a quick view of a single Short-eared Owl just after dusk. A huge thank you to Mark England for leading us through the property with the assistance of Lauren Carey and Gaurav Kapoor. (eBird checklist: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S303480092>)

We have a trip planned for February 28 at Blue Mash and are currently working on our spring schedule. Look out for upcoming dates soon via MailChimp 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 contact us at youth.birding@gmail.com.

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



Kathy Brown (far left) and Jo Cox (far right) joined the YMBC at Lake Needwood in December. Photo by Tara Clifton



A Rough-legged Hawk in flight seen from Oaks Landfill. Photo by Gavin Qian



(From left to right in back row) Lauren Carey, Ryan Carr, Gaurav Kapoor, and Mark England enjoyed a “frozen” good time with other YMBC members at Oaks Landfill in February. Photo by Kathryn Carr

Club 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 Club 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!

APRIL 8 (Wednesday) VIOLETS AT VIOLETTE'S

For something a little different, join us at Violette's Lock for a leisurely morning walk (10 a.m. to noon) in search of early spring wildflowers. We'll scan the towpath edges and take the side paths toward the river, hoping to find not only violets but also spring beauties, bluebells, trillium, and other plants that sustain insect life and produce the fruit that birds depend on. Limit: 10. LEADERS: Moira Davenport at moiradavenport@gmail.com and Karen Cyr.

APRIL 12 (Sunday) HUGHES HOLLOW

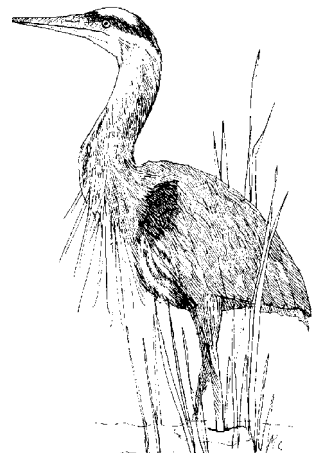
Half day. Expected species include Red-headed Woodpeckers, Wood Ducks, Blue-winged Teal, and many other marsh dwellers. A chance for several warblers including Prothonotary. Meet at 7 a.m. in the parking lot. Limit: 12. LEADER: Lauren Carey at ljcarey011@gmail.com. Gaurav Kapoor will co-lead.

APRIL 25 (Saturday) LAKE WHETSTONE

We'll begin with a view of the Great Blue Heron and Black-crowned Night Heron rookeries on the island and then walk the shoreline to see other waterbirds and local breeders. The path is flat and easy walking, making it a great trip for new birders. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Lake Whetstone dock in Montgomery Village. Limit: 10. LEADER: Lauren Carey at ljcarey011@gmail.com.

MAY 1 (Friday) BIRDING BY EAR AT PENNYFIELD LOCK

Spring is the time to listen for and learn to identify the songs and calls of migrant and local breeding birds. Trip geared to new birders. We'll take the towpath upstream to the watered impoundment listening for songs and calls. Meet at 7 a.m. in the Pennyfield parking lot. Limit: 6. LEADER: Leo Dilling at leodilling@hotmail.com.



MAY 2 (Saturday)

CROYDON CREEK NATURE CENTER

Come discover this lovely park during spring migration. We'll expect to see lots of migrants as they pass through the park, including many warblers. Meet in the parking lot at 7:30 a.m. Limit: 12. LEADER: Anne Mytych at amytych@yahoo.com.

MAY 3 (Sunday)

IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE, B-CC CHAPTER, CONSERVATION FARM

Half day. The B-CC Chapter is generously providing us access to this large private property south of Poolesville. Woods, hedgerows, streams, fields, and ponds provide a wide range of bird habitats, and migration should be well underway. Meet at 7 a.m. at the League's Chapterhouse. Limit: 10. LEADER: Emily Huang at emily.huang.woods@gmail.com.

MAY 9 (Saturday)

RICKMAN/WOODSTOCK EQUESTRIAN PARK

We'll explore this location for some spring early-morning birding on the west side of Route 28 (<https://rb.gy/gpdqda>). Meet at 7 a.m. Limit: 10. LEADER: Scott Young at scott4aves@icloud.com. Dave Roberts will co-lead.

MAY 10 (Sunday)

ROYCE HANSON CONSERVATION PARK AT BROAD RUN, POOLESVILLE

Celebrate Mother's Day with a morning bird walk at this fantastic new Montgomery County park. The park's diverse habitat has already offered excellent looks at raptors, sparrows, and woodpeckers. In the spring, we'll comb the ponds and field edges, hoping for warblers and other migrants. Meet in the parking lot at 7:30 a.m. Limit: 12. LEADER: Lauren Carey at ljcarey011@gmail.com.

MAY 13 (Wednesday)

BLUE MASH AND OAKS LANDFILL

Half-day trip. We'll start at the Blue Mash Nature Trail and then drive over to the Oaks Landfill to look for raptors, Blue Grosbeaks, migrant songbirds, and possible Dickcissels and Grasshopper Sparrows. *Reservations with a phone number required at least a week ahead of the trip for names to be submitted to the County.* Meet at 7 a.m. in the Blue Mash parking lot. Limit: 12. LEADER: Mark England at englandmark@comcast.net.

MAY 25 (MONDAY)

PATUXENT RIVER AT BROWN'S BRIDGE

On a morning walk, we'll look for Cliff Swallows building mud nests beneath this bridge in the northeastern part of the county. We will also explore wooded trails on WSSC property bordering the reservoir to observe other possible breeding birds including Scarlet Tanager, flycatchers, and thrushes. Be prepared for bright sunlight at the bridge and possible biting insects in wooded areas. Trip will be cancelled in case of heavy rain or thunderstorms. Limit: 10. LEADER: Paul Orsinger at paulorsinger@gmail.com. Cheryl Hogue will co-lead.

JUNE 5 (Friday) or JUNE 6 (Saturday)

RACHEL CARSON CONSERVATION PARK

Join us for a morning walk on Friday or Saturday as we explore the meadow and wood edges of this lightly visited park. We'll be looking for Indigo Buntings, Orchard Orioles, Scarlet Tanagers, and plentiful warblers. Meet at 7 a.m. in the parking lot. Limit: 12. LEADER: Lisa Norwalk at lhnorwalk@gmail.com.

AUGUST 15 (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. *Reservations with a phone number required at least a week ahead of the trip for names to be submitted to the County.* Meet at 5 p.m. at 6001 Rt. 108, Laytonsville, Md. Limit: 12. LEADER: Mark England at englandmark@comcast.net.

SEPTEMBER 5 (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. *Reservations with a phone number required at least a week ahead of the trip for names to be submitted to the County.* Meet at 5 p.m. at 6001 Rt. 108, Laytonsville, Md. Limit: 12. LEADER: Mark England at englandmark@comcast.net.



The Chat
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