



June 2026

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President's Chat

By Mark England

As I sit here writing my first President's Chat, I remember clearly when it was first suggested that I might be MBC President someday. It was at the end of a September 2005 Council meeting—my first ever—at MBC President Hugh Mahanes' house in Kensington. I was a new Chapter Director, and as we were leaving, State Director Don Messersmith whispered a warning to me: "Watch out, they'll want you to be president someday!" Well, Don, you were proven right as usual, though it has taken 21 years to get here!

Time, plus retiring from my job in commercial construction and some gentle persuasion in 2024 from our exceptional Past President, Emily Huang, got me to this point. Following Emily's example, I look forward to continuing the smooth functioning of the MBC for the benefit of its members. Some of those benefits include the many popular and always filled field trips organized by Linda Friedland; the outstanding quarterly *Chat* edited by Stella Tea with the assistance of proofreader Susan Hunt, designer Pam Oves, and graphic designer Gemma Radko; our monthly meetings with speakers on a variety of interesting subjects; the bimonthly e-newsletters; and the always fun December and May Socials.

Thanks to Emily's generous and detailed guidance over the past two years, I feel well-prepared to take on the Club presidency, and I look forward to working with the newly elected Council and our new Vice-President Cheryl Hogue. Cheryl has contributed to MBC for many years as a trip leader and as both a Chapter and a State Director, while also serving as chair of the DEI Committee of the Maryland Ornithological Society. I expect we will share many calls and emails discussing Club business over the next two years. We wish Cheryl a good recovery from a badly broken foot, which required surgery the day after the May Social, which she still managed to attend and also contribute to the photo slide show!

Elsewhere in this issue, you will find the 2026 MBC election results in which 129 votes were cast for the



nominated slate. Thanks to those who voted and to the Nominating Committee for finding first-time Chapter Directors Hanna Nettles, Luke Sumberg, and Gaurav Kapoor, and new State Director, Wendy Ayres. I look forward to hearing their comments and ideas in the months ahead. Thanks to the new Council members for agreeing to serve and to those who have completed their terms.

Finally, on behalf of the MBC, I'd like to wish Lydia Schindler great happiness as she moves to St. Augustine, Florida, to live across the street from her daughter. During her many years as a Club member, Lydia has been MBC President, field trip leader, and superb writer and editor of *The Chat* for 11 years. In addition, for some 15 years, she was the Voice of the Naturalist—the best way to hear the latest unusual bird sightings before eBird alerts. Every week Lydia went to the ANS Woodend headquarters to transcribe phoned-in sightings, and by Tuesday, you could call the Voice of the Naturalist to hear her up-to-date recording of the previous week's sightings. Thank you, Lydia, for all that you have done for the Montgomery Bird Club!

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Annual Club Election Results

The 2026 Club Election results are in! By unanimous vote, the following MBC Officers and Directors have been elected. In addition, they are supported by Committee Chairs, the Webmaster, and other volunteers.

Elected Officers

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

Elected State Directors

- Wendy Ayres
- Karen Cyr
- Francesca Grifo
- Ed Vigezzi

Elected Chapter Directors

- Roy Howard
- Gaurav Kapoor
- Hanna Nettles
- Luke Sumberg

Committee Chairs

- Conservation: Gail Mackiernan
- Field Trips: Linda Friedland
- Membership: Moira Davenport

Webmaster

- Ed Vigezzi

Meet Our New Club Directors

Congratulations to all the 2026-2027 elected volunteers! We want our members to know how important our Council members and other volunteers are to the Club's vitality. In this issue, we introduce the Club's new directors.

Wendy Ayres, State Director (1-year term)



Wendy grew up in Old Saybrook, Connecticut. From an early age, Wendy has been fascinated by wildlife and travel. She served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Fiji islands. Following graduate school, she joined the World Bank and was lucky enough to be posted

in Kenya from 2003 to 2020. While on safari in Kenya, she encountered her spark bird, the Hamerkop, which builds the largest nest of any bird in the world. Back in Bethesda, Wendy started participating in bird walks offered in various state and regional parks, where she learned about the Montgomery Bird Club and joined soon thereafter. Wendy is never without her binoculars, whether watching the birds in her yard or in a foreign country far from home.

Gaurav Kapoor, Chapter Director (1-year term)



Raised in the DMV, Gaurav's lifelong intrigue with history and civic action led him to degrees in International Affairs and Public Administration. For 15 years, he has channeled this passion into sustainable development, energy efficiency, and affordable

housing. Gaurav's inquisitive nature eventually drew him to photography, which led him to birding. Firmly believing that environmental conservation is everyone's responsibility, he aims to expand outdoor opportunities so others can experience the nature he has enjoyed all his life. When he's not taking pictures of birds, you can find him pursuing some of his other interests: woodworking, native gardening, motorcycling, writing poetry, singing, and cooking. He is also really good at taking naps.



Hanna Nettles, Chapter Director (2-year term)



Hanna grew up on the Outer Banks in North Carolina. She attended her first bird walk at the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge where she first gained appreciation for her spark bird, the Red-winged Blackbird. Always a student, Hanna enjoys how much there is to learn about birds and the welcoming environment

MBC provides to gain that knowledge. Hanna works in Bethesda as a Research Coordinator on projects concerning mental health interventions for military service members and disaster response workers. You can find her during her weekends birding with her boyfriend, Luke; coaching her middle school girls volleyball teams; and reading for her book clubs.

Luke Sumberg, Chapter Director (2-year term)



Luke 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 also helps coordinate the A/V setup for the monthly meetings and 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.

Membership Updates

By Moira Davenport, MBC Membership Chair

We Hit Another Milestone!

A big thank you to everyone for helping us reach a record number of members this year! We're closing out the membership year with more than 600 members, thanks to the continued support of returning members and a large number of new members. Because of you, MBC continues to thrive as a dedicated community of people who share a love of birds and the joy of birding!

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*.

Welcome New Members

John Andrews and Cecilia
John Badger and Jessica Faupel-Badger
Aaron Becker and Karen
Mark Buck and Laurie
Kathleen Clemente and Jose
Claire Darby and Mike and Aaron Alonzo
Naana Donkoh
Deborah Eichhorn
Matthew Evans
Emily Glaeser and Michael DeChant
Jane Hartman
Jamie Hoffmann
Christine Kurkjian

Leslie Leventer and Steve
Christine Morano Magee and Christopher Magee
Monica Medrek and Kevin, Sophia, and Sasha James
Briana Newkirk
David Patch
Sheila Patel
Jan Rieke and family
Cynthia, Stormi, and Malaki Robinson
Sam Salem
Kathy Sebetka
Anne Smiley and Hashem Mekki
Dianne Whitaker
Yilan Xiang



In Memoriam: Barry Cooper (1939-2026)

Longtime MBC Member Barry Cooper passed away on March 4 at Casey House hospice in Rockville, Maryland, after a lengthy illness. Barry was Gail Mackiernan's husband, one-half of a world-birding twosome since their marriage in 1992.

Barry was born in Surbiton, England—a suburb of London—in 1939, as war clouds spread over Britain. During the Blitz, he and his older brother Brian were sent north to a family in Nottingham. However, his mother and younger brother John, a toddler, had to remain in London as mum was working on production of war material.

From boyhood Barry's major passion was birdwatching—sparked by following Brian around as he earned his Boy Scout nature badge. It is almost impossible to find a photograph of Barry without a pair of binoculars around his neck! He, along with his brother John and some close friends, started a ringing (banding) station in the 1960s, at the edge of the towering white chalk cliff of Beachy Head in East

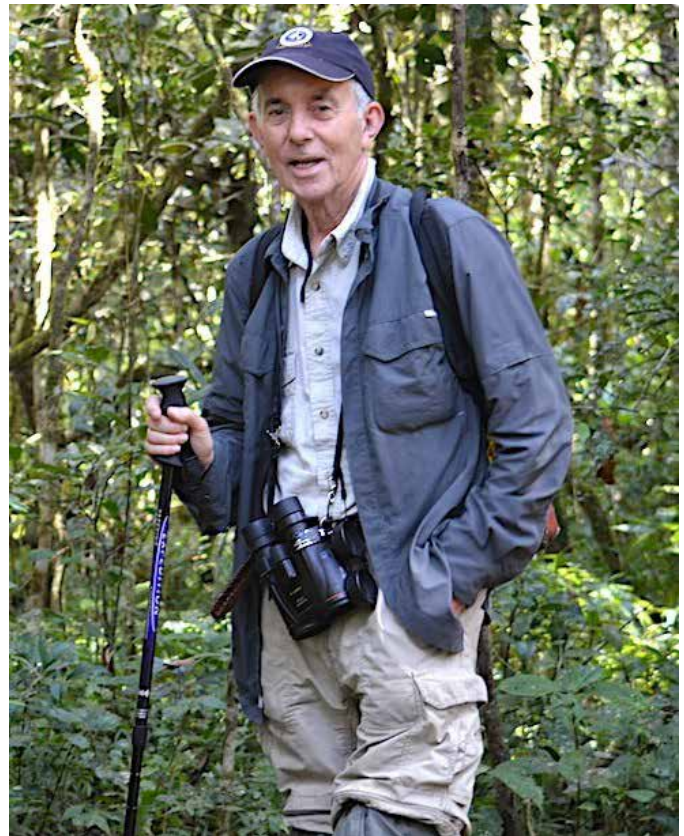
Sussex. Several rarities were recorded there by the group, including the first Hume's Warbler for Britain. The station remains active today, and over the decades has acquired vital information on migration in and out of the British Isles.

Barry's birding adventures continued unabated in the US, when he and his first wife Laura emigrated to the United States in 1970, seeking better opportunities in the new world. The couple eventually settled in Maryland, where Barry's two children, Adam and Claire, were born. Barry was a devoted parent and, with the birth of Adam's daughter Evelyn in 2006, a proud grandfather. His first marriage ended amicably, and Barry later met Gail on an MBC birding trip to Ocean City that he led in 1988.

After their marriage in 1992, Barry and Gail traveled to over 70 countries searching for feathered treasures, including some of the world's rarest birds like the Cherry-throated Tanager and the 'Akikiki, a Hawaiian honeycreeper now extinct in the wild. Barry continued to have luck in finding his own rarities, including several Red-necked Stints in Delaware and (with Gail) the first Providence Petrels for North America (off Attu in 2012).



Barry closely observing a Peruvian Diving Petrel off the west coast of South America in 2017. Photo by Gail Mackiernan



Barry birding in Madagascar in 2015. Photo by Gail Mackiernan



Barry retained both his accent and his British sense of humor—as well as occasional exclamations of “blimey!”—despite his 50 years in the US. Professionally, he was a commercial banker with Signet Bank, working his way up from teller and retiring in 1997 as a bank Vice-President.

Gail would like to thank the Club and all the members of MBC for their many kind words, phone calls, and cards. The family will hold a Celebration of Life in Barry’s honor at noon on July 18 at Glenview Mansion in Rockville, and everyone will be invited!

Members are encouraged to visit Barry’s Obituary page at <https://gb774.app.goo.gl/Jbz2C> and leave thoughts and memories there.



Conservation Updates

By Gail Mackiernan, MBC Conservation Chair

As Conservation Chair for MBC, I also serve on MOS’s Conservation Committee, chaired by Robin Todd. Robin’s Conservation Corner report appears on pages 5 and 6 of the February 2026 issue of *The Maryland Yellowthroat* (<https://mdbirds.org/publications/the-yellowthroat/>). He focuses on the 2026 Maryland State Legislative session, which saw several bills introduced that directly or indirectly impacted birds or their habitats. My report will deal only with issues on which I submitted testimony. (Unfortunately, since the legislative session overlapped with the time when I was dealing with my husband’s final illness and death, I was not as active as in previous years.)

Conservation Committee Report

MBC members should refer to Robin’s report and be aware of looming issues, especially that of the MidAtlantic Resiliency Link (MARL) powerline, which will impact protected lands in Maryland and is being constructed mainly to fuel data centers in Virginia. I submitted written testimony to the relevant committees, as well as copying every legislator from Montgomery County on these issues:

Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

MBC Position: Favorable. Submitted that reducing plastic litter would reduce microplastic and nanoplastic pollution of bird habitats, including waterways. Microplastics are found in almost all Bay fish now and may constitute a threat to breeding Ospreys and Bald Eagles, as well as fish-eating ducks, grebes, and cormorants.

Local Government - Trap-Neuter-Return Policies for Community Cats - Requirements and Restrictions (Ash’s Law)

MBC Position: Opposed as written. As written, the proposed legislation would greatly reduce—if not totally prevent—the ability of local governments to put any restrictions on the siting or the oversight of trap-neuter-release cat colonies. We oppose it not only because of the threat to birds but on the growing issue of feral cats as rabies vectors (e.g., last year Frederick Co. had more rabid cats documented than rabid foxes) as well as lack of consideration for cat welfare (e.g., no oversight of colonies).

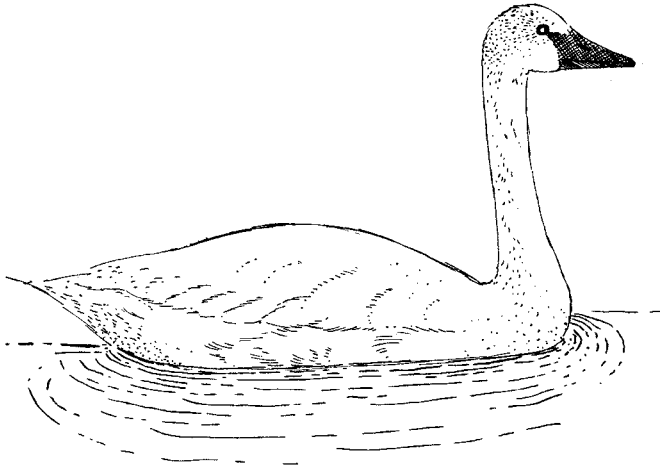
Fish and Wildlife – Endangered and Threatened Species and Migratory Birds – Regulations, Lists, Petitions, Essential Habitats, and Takings

MBC Position: Favorable. The legislation was an attempt to rectify—at least at the state level—the weakening of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act re: “takings” by the current federal administration. The Maryland bill was itself weakened in committee although it passed. However, we may need to go to the trenches again next year on this issue.

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

By Andy Martin

Damon Riley identified 6 **Trumpeter Swans** at Blue Mash Nature Trail on March 31. Jared Fisher found 3 **Surf Scoters** at Violette's Lock on April 5. And a tantalizingly "close to Montgomery" rarity, a **Harlequin Duck**, was photographed sitting on a riverside rock at Great Falls NP, VA, by William Paquin on February 25.



A migrating **Black-billed Cuckoo** was a great find by Jared Fisher along Izaak Walton League Way near Poolesville on April 29. Another **Black-billed Cuckoo** was spotted by Leah Haygood on May 1 at Wheaton RP.

Jared Fisher heard an **Eastern Whip-poor-will** along Izaak Walton League Way during the early morning hours of April 20 and detected another on April 24 in the vicinity of his Darnestown area yard.

The first **Common Nighthawk** of the year was observed by Carla Morris on May 5 over Watkins Ponds/King Farm area in Rockville.

Ryan and Kathryn Carr reported a **Virginia Rail** at Hughes Hollow in McKee-Beshers WMA on April 2. That same day Kyle Hartmann found a **Sora** at Hughes Hollow. Dave Czaplak noted a **Common Gallinule** there on April 14.

Jim and Jan Ivett reported a **Long-billed Dowitcher** at a partially drained pond at Homestead Farm near Poolesville on April 30. A **Dunlin** and **Pectoral, Least, and Solitary Sandpipers** were foraging at the same location. An additional **Long-billed Dowitcher** was found at Black Hill RP on May 1 by Brooke Levey. Dave Czaplak reported a **Black-bellied Plover** on the

Potomac River adjacent to Violette's Lock on April 30. Clifton Barry noted a **Semipalmated Plover** at Royce Hanson CP on May 5. Igor Taimassov found 2 **Semipalmated Sandpipers** at Blue Mash on May 4.

John Sojda observed 2 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** flying over Violette's Lock Rd on February 14. Dave Czaplak reported 3 **Laughing Gulls**, also in flight, over the Potomac River at Violette's Lock on April 19.

Clive Harris noted a **Red-necked Grebe** on the Potomac River near Sycamore Island on February 24. In the days that followed, a **Red-necked Grebe** was reported further upriver between Violette's and Riley's Locks. Gene DeAnna observed a **Red-necked Grebe** at Hughes Hollow on March 26.

Victor Ramirez found a female **Anhinga** at Lake Whetstone on May 7.

Mark Ross noted a **Least Bittern** at Hughes Hollow on April 15. Two **Least Bitterns** continued to be reported from Hughes Hollow through May 10. An **American Bittern** was reported at Hughes Hollow

in April. Stella Tea found another **American Bittern** at Meadowside Nature Center on April 26, only the second posted from that location. Gretchen Wood noted a **Little Blue Heron** at Black Hill RP on April 6. Matt Cohen saw a **Little Blue Heron** by Pine Lake at Wheaton RP on May 7. A **White Ibis** was found at Hughes Hollow on April 6. And, remarkably, as many as 15 **White Ibises** were found initially by Matt Peppe at Lake Needwood on May 8. A **Glossy Ibis** was found



by Jared Fisher at Hughes Hollow on April 12. **Glossy Ibises** were also reported from the Potomac River adjacent to Violette's Lock and at Lake Whetstone. On May 7, while chasing the Lake Whetstone **Anhinga**, a few lucky Montgomery birders were rewarded with what Virginia birder Matt Felperin described as "a grand slam"—a "wader" species sextet of a **Little Blue Heron, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, both Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned Night-herons, and a Great Egret.**



The first **Mississippi Kites** of the year were seen over the Potomac River near Violette's Lock on April 28 by Jared Fisher. And Bob Augustine reported the return of a **Mississippi Kite** pair to their traditional county nesting location in Rockville's Welsh Park on May 5.

Jared Fisher recorded a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** calling near his Darnestown home on the night of February 12.

Tom and Kelly Kimbis noted a **Least Flycatcher** in North Potomac on April 28. Matt Cohen reported an **Acadian Flycatcher** at Wheaton RP on April 24.



On April 7, Scott Young noted the return of **Cliff Swallows** to their annual nesting colony location on and underneath the Monocacy Aqueduct near Dickerson.

A **Sedge Wren** was a great find by Leo Prikhodko on May 3 while he was birding an (as yet) undeveloped parcel of land reserved for a future Montgomery County Elementary School located off Cavanaugh Dr in North Potomac. Leo also reported a **Marsh Wren** at Hughes Hollow on April 5.

Ryan and Kathryn Carr reported the first migrating **Bobolinks** of the year at Homestead Farm near Poolesville on April 25.

Jared Fisher found a **Golden-winged Warbler** at Violette's Lock on April 22. Jacob Hall reported an **Orange-crowned Warbler** at Hughes Hollow on April 12.

Chaiby Leiman found a **Summer Tanager** in Sligo Creek Park in Silver Spring on April 18.

The total number of species reported in the county stands at 230 as of May 10. This number is just three species shy of the 233 that were noted on this same date in 2021.

Editor's Corner

By Stella Tea

While some of my friends, including several MBC members, attended the Biggest Week in American Birding in northwest Ohio, my son Nathan brought me to northeast Ohio the day after his college graduation, and we birded with the organizers of Trumbull County's Big Birding Weekend. Relieved from the hectic schedule in the previous days and weeks, we spent half a day leisurely birding and finding other cool wildlife including a Smooth Turtle Leech (lifer!) on the back of a snapping turtle.

Although Nathan can always count on Maryland being his home, his next chapter will continue in Ohio. I am grateful to the Ohio birding communities who welcomed and supported him in the last four years. I hope that these meaningful connections, whether professional or personal, will continue to shape him as a steward of the natural world. I am also grateful to MBC for providing a purposeful and caring environment for all Club members, including young birders like Nathan who joined MBC when he was just a freshman in high school.

From the camaraderie captured in the President's Chat (page 1) and the May Social Highlights (page 10) to the ongoing bird advocacy on all levels reported in the latest Conservation Updates (page 5), I hope you will agree with me that this *Chat* reflects my sentiments of such an environment and the people who make it possible—the same people who share interesting bird sightings, volunteer their time and expertise, and most of all offer their friendship and mentorship.

Whether you are a returning member or a new one, MBC has a lot to offer, and I urge you to visit the Club website (<https://www.montgomerybirdclub.org/>) for information and inspiration. If you have suggestions for *The Chat*, I would love to hear them! Feel free to contact me at <https://www.montgomerybirdclub.org/contact/>. Have a great summer and see you out in the field!



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. Reports can be found on our website at <https://www.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.

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://www.montgomerybirdclub.org/calendar/>. Look for Club e-newsletters later this summer for more information.

Reservations are required for all MBC field trips unless otherwise noted. Contact the trip leader for reservations, directions, and other information.

Kudos and a big thank you to all our 2025-2026 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
Rob Hilton
Cheryl Hogue
Emily Huang
Gaurav Kapoor

Andy Martin
Anne Mytych
Hanna Nettles
Lisa Norwalk
Paul Orsinger
Dave Powell
Stacy Rabinovitz
Evelyn Ralston
Kathy Reitz
Dave Roberts
Lisa Shannon
Luke Sumberg
Lynne Wheeler
Scott Young

Bonus Summer Field Trips!

AUGUST 15 (Saturday) and SEPTEMBER 5 (Saturday) OAKS LANDFILL, LAYTONSVILLE

Both trips are full; waitlist is available

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: 18. LEADER: Mark England at englandmark@comcast.net.

AUGUST 25 (Tuesday) HALF-DAY FIELD TRIP TO POPLAR ISLAND, TALBOT COUNTY, MD

Please consider giving others the opportunity if you have visited the island before

At this time of year shorebird diversity can be very high if the conditions are right. The island is also productive for terns, egrets, herons, and other large waterbirds and

rails. Early songbird migrants can also be expected if the conditions are right. Participants will travel to the island by boat, which will leave the land base at 21548 Chicken Point Rd, Tilghman Island, MD 21671 by 9 a.m. Please arrive by 8:30 a.m. and park at the land base address provided. The boat ride is approximately 50 minutes roundtrip. Once onsite, participants will be taken to various birding stops via bus with some limited walking. We expect to arrive back at the land base at around 1 p.m. Bring water and snacks, sun screen, bug spray, and a hat or cap. There is one stop for the restroom. Please bring a scope if you have one. Limit: 24 (including leaders). LEADER: Clive Harris at clivegharris@yahoo.com. Jim Green will co-lead.

AUGUST 30 (Sunday) HUGHES HOLLOW

This half-day trip is targeted at newer birders but all are welcome. We will start 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 clivegharris@yahoo.com.



Youth Birding

By Ryan Carr, Youth Montgomery Bird Club

In May, the YMOS sent five YMBC middle school members to the New Jersey Audubon's World Series of Birding (WSB). Ethan L, Gavin Q, and I were on the team YMOS Knot Again! and Will K and Leo P were on the team YMOS Plover Thinking It. In April, we also had our trip at Hughes Hollow in very rainy conditions! We thank Clive Harris and Dave Powell for sticking it out with us. Despite the weather, we still had a great day with 41 species identified. (eBird checklist: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S324220460>)

For the WSB, we scouted the Cape May, NJ, area together for the first few days and found some great birds. Scouting highlights include a White-winged Scoter, a Piping Plover, a Mississippi Kite, a Broad-winged Hawk, and 19 different warbler species! Once the big day on Saturday arrived, we woke up at 1:30 a.m. so that all middle school teams were in position by 3 a.m. The morning progressed slowly for my team as it took until about 11:30 a.m. to reach 100 species. The day continued with us adding on a few species until about 5 p.m. when we reached 135 and headed to our last daytime spot. We spent the rest of the daylight

at Edwin B. Forsythe NWR where we spotted 19 new species which put us at 154. Our last bird of the day came at a random road when Ethan called in a Great Horned Owl. This brought us to our final total of 155 species.

The YMOS Knot Again! finished in first place, had a great time, and got cool birds including Eastern Whip-poor-wills, a Chuck-will's-widow, Northern Pintails, an American Golden-Plover, a Marbled Godwit, a Parasitic Jaeger, Gull-billed Terns, an American White Pelican, and so much more! The YMOS Plover Thinking It finished strong and tied for second place with the YMOS Runaway Wrenegades with 141 species each.

A big shoutout to our mentor Jack Hutchison, a YMOS graduate and an Eastern Shore biologist, who mentored many of us, birded with our team nonstop, and ensured our IDs were correct. We are grateful to George Radcliffe who organized everything and let so many kids be involved in this incredible learning experience. Last, thank you to all of our parents who made this happen. We are all so thankful we could participate!

We have trips planned for May 25 at Little Bennett and June 14 at Royce Hanson Conservation Park. Look out for more dates soon via the Club e-newsletters and the MBC website. We'd love to have some new members join us!



Clive Harris and Dave Powell joined the YMBC on a rain-soaked (but productive!) outing to Hughes Hollow. Photo by Kathryn Carr

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.

Is your child interested in birding in other parts of the state? The Youth Maryland Ornithological Society (YMOS) has trips all over! You can learn more at <https://mdbirds.org/>.



Spring Social Highlights

By Mark England, MBC President

Seventy-seven members of the Montgomery Bird Club attended the Club's Spring Social on Wednesday, May 6, at Woodend, the headquarters of Nature Forward in Chevy Chase, Md. Before dinner, Club members socialized while enjoying hors d'oeuvres and a selection of beverages brought by longtime event barkeeper Andy Martin, assisted by Francesca Grifo and Paul Orsinger. A delicious dinner followed, catered by Smokey Glen Farm, as it has been for years, and topped off with a variety of fruit pies.

After dinner, President Emily Huang announced that Club members had unanimously elected the 2026-2027 slate of candidates through online voting. A fourth State Director, Wendy Ayres, was approved by voice vote of the attendees, as permitted by Club bylaws. Emily then presented a Valued Service Award certificate with an MOS pin to Membership Chair Moira Davenport and Outstanding Service Award certificates to Linda Friedland, Gaurav Kapoor, Lisa Norwalk, Jim Ivett, and Luke Sumberg for their significant contributions to the Club.



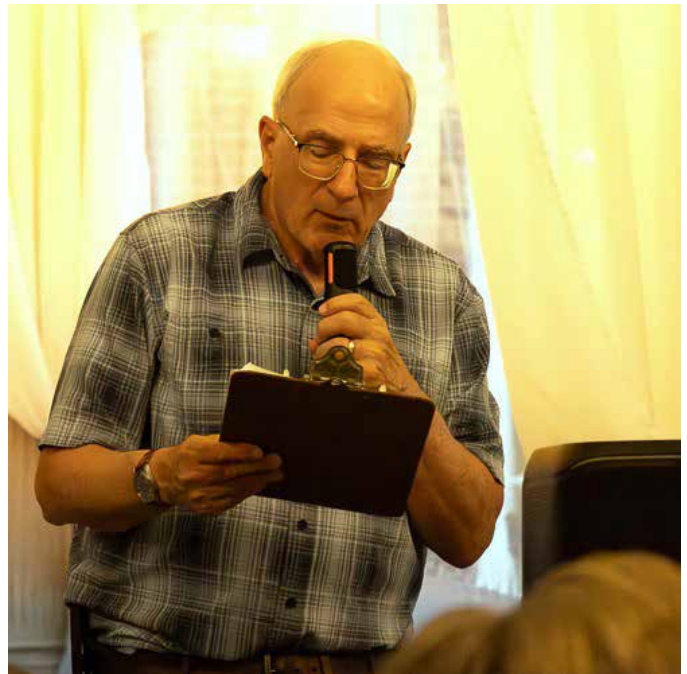
Ed Vigezzi, guest of honor, posed with MBC President Emily Huang and MBC artist-in-residence Diane Ford with her painting of an American Flamingo. Photo by Evelyn Ralston

The final award of the evening was for the guest of honor, Ed Vigezzi, for his many years of service as a State Director and MBC webmaster. Emily described how Ed worked out a system to remotely keep the minutes of MOS Board meetings in real time, how he helped initiate and implement the MBC youth birding program, and how he has diligently and quickly updated the Club website for years.

Roy Howard also spoke about Ed's generosity with his time, skills, and knowledge to fellow birders, his family, and the Club. Ed was presented with a beautiful painting of a glowing American Flamingo by MBC member and artist-in-residence Diane Ford, created with a scratchboard gesso technique. As he held up the painting, Ed related his fond memory of driving to southern Pennsylvania to see the storm-blown flamingo in September 2023.

Newly elected MBC President Mark England then offered his thanks to Emily for her guidance to him as MBC Vice-President, and the members gave her a warm round of applause for all she has done on behalf of the MBC over the last four years.

Mark announced that Lydia Schindler, a longtime Club member since the 1980s, was attending her last MBC Social before moving to Florida. He described to the audience how Lydia had compiled phoned-in bird sightings for some 15 years as the "Voice of the Naturalist" at ANS (now Nature Forward), long before the advent of real-time eBird alerts. Mark



Mark England, newly elected MBC President, emceed the event. Photo by Evelyn Ralston

presented Lydia with the MBC/MOS medal as a token of appreciation for her distinguished service to the Club.

The evening closed with a slide show of 98 (mostly) bird photos from 14 members, taken in the US and elsewhere. A new wireless PA system provided amplification for the attendees, and the photographers were better able to describe their photos. The Social ended shortly after 9 p.m., with many picking up leftovers bagged by the caterer. The MBC wishes to thank all those who brought hors d'oeuvres or desserts; Andy Martin for purchasing, delivering, and serving drinks and Francesca Grifo and Paul Orsinger for helping with this important endeavor; and, especially, Nature Forward and Executive Director Alison Pearce for once again hosting the event at Woodend. Special thanks to Pam Oves, of both MBC and Nature Forward, for coordinating the Social and without whose assistance the event would not have succeeded!



Kathy and Ed Vigezzi shared a moment at the Spring Social. Photo by Evelyn Ralston

Diane Ford: Winner of the California Upland Game Bird Stamp Art Contest

Diane's entry in the 2025-2026 California Upland Game Bird Stamp Art Contest won first place. Her design of a pair of Band-tailed Pigeons visiting a toyon shrub, a native plant of coastal California, was inspired by her own homing pigeons, which ensured the "anatomical accuracy" required of entries. Diane was also the winner of the 2025 Washington State Duck Stamp Competition and the 2021 California Duck Stamp Art Contest, which were featured in the March 2025 and September 2021 issues of *The Chat*, respectively. Congratulations, Diane! To view the press release, visit <https://wildlife.ca.gov/News/Archive/maryland-artist-wins-california-upland-game-bird-stamp-art-contest>.



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