

Chip Notes

No. 375

SPRING 2011



BALTIMORE BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER

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The fastest, easiest way to know what is happening--field trips, lectures, events and more all posted in a timely manner.

www.meetup.com/baltimorebirdclub/

Chip Notes Editor Position Filled!

We are happy to announce that long time BBC member Roberta Ross has volunteered to become our new Chip Notes Editor beginning with the Summer issue. So please submit your pieces to her at robertabross@aol.com. If mailing, her address is 4128 Roland Avenue, Baltimore MD 21211 and her telephone number is 410-467-8137.

“Cylburn Is for the Birds” — a Celebration of Urban Birds”

Please mark May 1st on your calendars to help us celebrate birds and the grand opening of the Trail Tracker (see President's Corner) at Cylburn Arboretum. The BBC, in collaboration with the Cylburn Arboretum Association and the City of Baltimore, is holding this all-day event to make the public—in particular families and youth-- aware of the birding treasure found in this urban park called Cylburn Arboretum.

We plan to sponsor many events and have a major dignitary conduct the “ribbon cutting” at the official opening of the Trail Tracker.

As you may know, the Arboretum is a quiet, forested urban oasis of 207 acres in the midst of a major interstate, hospital and neighborhoods. The park draws urban families to its grounds, but the emphasis so far has been more on parks and plants than birds. This year, the BBC has begun to invest in introducing Cylburn as a birding hot spot by providing a series of bird-related programs and field walks, helping with the staffing of the Carriage House Nature Museum, and beginning to inventory the BBC specimen collections housed at the Mansion. And perhaps most significantly, we purchased the interactive eBird Trail Tracker from Cornell University for use by the general public that is housed in Cylburn's Visitor Center.

Our “Cylburn Is for the Birds” will be a daylong event. As this article is being written, we are in the early planning stage, but below is a description of how we envision the event. The morning begins with a field trip for birders

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Thanks to generous gifts from the BBC's Dorothy Blake Martin Fund and Harriet Felscher in memory of her friend Ruth Audrey Whittemore, an eBird Trail Tracker kiosk will soon be operational in The Vollmer Center lobby at Cylburn Arboretum. To kick it off, the Baltimore Bird Club is sponsoring *Cylburn Is for the Birds* on May 1 (see article and picture on the front page).

The eBird Trail Tracker is an electronic gateway to information on birds and bird sightings at Cylburn. Using simple touch screen technology, you can see which birds are being reported at Cylburn (and other hot spot locations in Baltimore City and County), find out where the birds are located at Cylburn, record your own observations at Cylburn, and view photos, audio, video, and life histories of birds at Cylburn. When idle, the eBird Trail Tracker automatically plays a slideshow of the day's observations. The observation records become part of eBird, an online real time checklist program that scientists, birders, and anyone with internet access can use to review bird observation information from specific locations across North America.

The eBird Trail Tracker was developed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society and is currently being used at various national parks and wildlife refuges across the country. The Trail Tracker at Cylburn is the first in Maryland. We hope the Trail Tracker

will offer opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds, including elementary and middle-school children, to learn more about birds and the scientific process by participating in real, hands-on research projects. Remember each time you notice a bird, you are holding a piece of a puzzle. By sharing your sightings with others through eBird, you will make it possible to complete the picture people need to better understand and protect birds well into the future.



Photo by: Bill Dellenges

Ruth Audrey Whittemore

Ruth Audrey Whittemore (1916-2009) and her husband, Louis Whittemore, Jr., were members of the Baltimore

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the Falkland Islands

By Joan Cwi



Photo by: John Fleishman

In camouflage Joan approaches the huge breeding colony of Rockhopper Penguins.

Why do penguins tug at our heartstrings? Because they walk like us? Because they are dressed in formal wear? Because they are so curious? For more about these endearing creatures visit the article *From the End of the Earth* in Chip Notes online version. Thank you BBC for this opportunity to write an article and submit lots of photos to our readers.

For more photos and penguin tales go to page 13 of our online edition of the Spring Chip Notes on the BBC website: baltimorebirdclub.com, then SPRING 2011 issue of CHIP NOTES

Birder Cam

Birder Cam is a section of Chip Notes that will highlight community and BBC members who have done something of general interest to local birders and/or have benefited the club and birding in important ways.

This Spring Birder Cam spotlights a number of people who have made outstanding contributions to BBC. These awards were presented at the annual Covered Dish Dinner in January.

The scene-stealer awards went to our **Youth Backpack winners**—all seven years old! This year's winners were **Brigid Dix** (first place), **Sam Keleman** (second place)—both from Baltimore—and runner-up **Madeline Richard** of Phoenix, MD. The three were beaming as they received their awards. Their loot ranged from bird-related items such as binoculars, field guides, stickers to make windows safer for birds, a BBC membership, and birding software. Each participant took on our challenge with gusto. Brigid put together a flyer alerting the public regarding the danger that windows posed to birds and how people could address the issue by adding visual patterns to glass. She also included photos of what she had done to fix her own windows. Sam drew the features of his own back yard and included species in his yard, the Northern Cardinal and a Bald Eagle flying overhead. He also included drawings of the nests, food, and the Bald Eagle and Cardinal themselves. Madeline also tackled her own back yard. She identified and drew pictures of the most frequent feeder visitors in her yard as chickadees and finches, that they like to eat seed, and that she's got lots of trees in her yard, making for excellent bird habitat!

Post-covered dish dinner reports from Brigid, Sam, and Madeline's parents indicate they were thrilled with their winnings. We look forward to seeing Madeline, Brigid, and Sam and their parents at BBC outings this year. Thank you to the Mt. Washington Elementary School Green Club and to the Timonium Wild Bird Center for providing us with the outlets to get our winning submissions! Please check our website for details on this year's contest! They should be out on the website by late March, and pass it on!

Maybe not as photogenic, but critical to our club are the other awardees. Both BBC members and people outside the club received certificates to thank them for their contributions to our activities.

Keith Eric Costley received a **Dedicated & Creative Service Award** for many activities, including monitoring multiple-days-per week for Lights Out Baltimore; his graphic design support for LOB, Chip Notes and the eBird Trail Tracker; and for leading field trips and assisting at Fort McHenry. Kudos Keith for the class act you offer our membership.

Hawk watcher extraordinaire **Jim Meyers** was presented a **Dedicated Service Award** for his hard work and dedicated organizing of the Cromwell Valley Hawk Watch. Jim also keeps the club abreast of activities at Cromwell that might impact birdwatching there. Thank you Jim for years of hard work for a better understanding of hawk migration.

Another **Dedicated Service Award** went to **Gene Scarpulla** for his many years of excellent survey work and field trip leadership on Hart Miller Island—despite the mosquitoes and hurricanes. Alas, Gene was not able to attend the dinner to personally receive his certificate, so it was mailed to him. Gene has done so much for the club over the years, and we are all anxious to see what he may have in mind following his recent retirement!

To wildlife rehabilitator **Kathy Woods** we gave a **Certificate of Appreciation** for rehabilitating injured birds found during our Lights Out Baltimore campaign, training the next generation of rehabbers, and educating the public about wildlife. Every year dozens of birds continue their migration (or non-migration as the case may be) due to Kathy's tireless ministrations and outreach. For this we express our gratitude. Kathy made front-page news in the Sunday Sun (January 30) for her work rehabilitating the Red-tailed Hawk that flew into and BROKE the window at John's Hopkins University's Homewood campus. Check this link for the complete hawk rescue story:

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/bs-md-hawk-rehabilitation-20110129,0,5736251.story>

Awards were also presented to two non-BBC members. A **Certificate of Appreciation** was given to **Victor Miranda** from Baltimore City for creating the maps of Cylburn Arboretum that will be used in the eBird Trail Tracker kiosk. And a **Heartfelt Thanks** award was extended to **Jaime Gardener**. As night watchman during our meetings at Cylburn, Jaime is unfailingly kind, helpful and polite—even when we go over our allotted time. Jaime even let us meet in his break-room when our regular meeting place was too cold!



Photo by: Hugh Simmons

Youth Backpack winners Sam Keleman, Madeline Richard and Brigid Dix .



Photo by: Hugh Simmons

Jim Meyers accepts
Dedicated Service Award



Photo by: Hugh Simmons

Kathy Woods accepts
Certificate of Appreciation



Baltimore Orioles Junior Birding Club

SPRING 2011



Join other
young birders,
go outside,
and see birds

Are you between 8 to 15 years old and enjoy birding? Join the **Baltimore Orioles Junior Birding Club** (BOJBC). You will increase your —bird IQ as you attend special youth-centered bird hikes and learn from seasoned birders.

Our spring program will focus on how to locate and identify birds with binoculars, field guides, and I-pod Apps. You will learn how to use the eBird website to survey bird populations. As you progress in the club, you will be able to attend a week-long residential bird study camp on the Chesapeake Bay. Members must be accompanied by a parent or a sanctioned adult.

Call leader Marty Brazeau at 410-583-0275 for more information.

Spring 2011, Trip Schedule

To register for trips, e-mail Marty Brazeau at baltimoreyouthbirding@yahoo.com

1. Saturday, March 19 See Bald Eagles at Conowingo Dam in Harford County, 8:30 A.M. -2:00 P.M. Bring lunch and water. We will carpool from the Towson area. You can also arrange to meet the group at Conowingo.





Cromwell Valley historic lime kiln

2. Saturday, April 9, Birding at Cromwell Valley Park, 8:30 A.M. -12 Noon. We will look for early spring migrant birds as well as scope out the ducks on Loch Raven Reservoir. Meet at the Willow Grove parking area.



Cylburn Mansion and surrounding gardens is lure for many birds.

3. Saturday, April 30, Birding Workshop for Kids at Cylburn Arboretum, 8:30 A.M.-12 Noon

On a bird walk learn how to use a field guide, binoculars, and an I-pod to identify and study birds. Our bird museum scavenger hunt will focus on the adaptations of birds. Learn about how you can input bird population information online.



4. Saturday, May 14: Cromwell Valley Park 8 A.M. to 4 P.M. May Count. (INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY) All-day count of birds in Baltimore City and County. Join the youth birding team. We will be able to see some spectacular birds. Orioles guaranteed! We will break into manageable birding teams led by experienced leaders.

5. June 3-5, Youth Birding Weekend at Carey Run Sanctuary, Friday Night-Sunday noon

Join us for the weekend in the mountains of Western, Maryland as we stay at a 162-acre bird sanctuary near Frostburg, Maryland. We will visit local state parks to bird. Fee for food, lodging, and park admission. (Approximately \$30/person) This trip is limited to 15 persons.



Carey Run Farmhouse

Conservation CORNER

BBC Conservation Committee

Sharing Birding Books and Equipment

By Mike Hudson

Hi fellow birders! As many of you know at the covered dish dinner earlier last month, I came and spoke about a very important conservation program that BBC has become involved with recently: the Birder's Exchange. Birder's Exchange is a world renowned conservation and education based program run by the American Birding Association (ABA). Birder's Exchange focuses on providing new and used materials to scientists, conservationists, and educators in Latin America and the Caribbean. Some materials that ABA collects for Birder's Exchange are binoculars, cameras, spotting scopes, field guides to birds of the Neotropics **and North America**, backpacks, and laptops. These materials are distributed throughout countries where they are needed by scientist and teachers. The countries where materials are sent to are Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and Venezuela. Examples of just a few organizations and institutions that receive these materials are the Parana Pine Forest Project (Argentina), the Scarlet Ibis Project (Brazil & Venezuela), the Harpy Eagle Project (Brazil), Tirimbina Forest Center (Costa Rica), and Bird Trafficking in Mexico (Mexico). Many of these organizations do very important work with the conservation of rare and endangered bird species.

The Harpy Eagle Project for example is a project dedicated to studying the elusive and endangered American harpy eagle. These impressive birds are some of the most powerful raptors in the world. They are mysterious and their fast shrinking habitat makes their continued survival in the wild unsure. This project based in Brazil use radios, binoculars, spotting scopes, and more donated by Birder's Exchange to monitor 25 nest sites of the harpy eagle as well as track 3 immature birds attached with telemetry equipment.

An example of an organization with a more education based mission is the Tirimbina Forest Center.

The center, which lies in the mountains of central Costa Rica, is one of the best places to go to find many birds typically encountered further south, such as king vultures and sunbittern. In addition to the excitement of seeing such incredible species, it is also a very educational experience. The guides don't just point out the birds, but they teach about the threats facing the species and why montane rainforest is important to their survival. Many of the optical equipment used by the guides, as well as the bird guides they use, are donated by Birder's Exchange. Without these supplies Tirimbina couldn't work at its current capacity, nor would it be a leader in ecotourism among Central American organizations.

So far we have collected 39 bird guides to Latin America and the Caribbean. Thank you so much to everyone who have donated books to us so far!! For anyone else who is interested in helping, please do not hesitate to contact me at birdman96@verizon.net or Dixie Mullineaux at acubird@earthlink.net.

Chimney Swifts at Dusk



Sunday, April 24th 2011 at 7:30 pm is the scheduled spring swift watch. But those rascally swifts have been changing chimneys on us lately, so please check the BBC website (<http://baltimorebirdclub.org/>) to see which chimney they are using this spring! The BBC swift watch team will scout in advance to find the best show in town.



Lights Out Baltimore Continues Outreach & Monitoring Data Show Baltimore Isn't Always for the Birds



Lights Out Baltimore (LOB) volunteers continued their monitoring in downtown Baltimore City in 2010, and also got data from the Cylburn Vollmer Center staff on bird mortalities at their new facility. The data collected (for all buildings monitored) puts our total at over 750 birds since informal monitoring began in 2004. Sadly, many of these birds were found at the same buildings. We are grateful to building managers for allowing us to collect data and, in some cases, collecting data themselves. LOB looks forward to working with them to create feasible, cost-effective solutions to reduce the number of birds killed needlessly because of collisions with glass.

used for research and educational purposes. We rescued over 70 birds – 64 of which were taken to wildlife rehabilitators (Phoenix Wildlife Center or our backup “All Creatures Great and Small”). Survival rate was 83%.

MOS President and bird bander Mark Johnson, and fellow banders Jay Rubinoff and Les Eastman sexed, aged, and measured the collected specimens from Fall 2010 to determine if specific age groups were susceptible to window strikes. As Mark stated in the January 2011 edition of the MD Yellowthroat, “fall migration is typically very productive for banding, given the large proportion of hatching-year birds (those born that year) migrating south. It is generally thought that mortality is high for these relatively inexperienced birds. However, although the data are still under review, it appears that the proportion of older birds killed by glass was much higher than expected. This is particularly troubling since these are likely some of the most reproductively productive individuals in the populations of their respective species.”

We continued our efforts to convey the urgency of this issue through outreach. Presenters start the presentation by asking everyone in the audience who has seen a bird hit a window to raise their hands. Inevitably, approximately 70% of the audience raise their hands. Even so, many people (even birders) do not understand that death by glass is a significant cause of bird mortality, and that the “one bird” that hit their window adds to the horrifying tally of hundreds of millions, more likely a billion, birds killed annually. We also offer do it yourself options for reducing bird strikes on windows. While many bird conservation issues require lobbying for legislation and land preservation, fixing a problem window is something that anyone of almost any age can do, without spending a lot of money or time.

Our outreach included presentations to the Baltimore Bird Fanciers, which ironically received an abandoned or lost Macaw after it had collided with glass in Baltimore County. We also presented to the PG Audubon Society, where the talk was in conjunction with the newly-formed Lights Out DC/City Wildlife program. LOB’s presentation to the Mt. Washington Elementary School Green Club resulted in some spirited bird bingo and club leaders followed up, in the next green club meeting, by making “visual noise stickers” to apply to school and home windows that have been a problem. We recently made a presentation to the Sierra Club, and even these environmentally sensitive people were largely unaware of the impact glass is having on our birds.

On another exciting front, Wilmington, DE has begun a Lights Out Program and the Lights Out DC program is going

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Photo by: Keith Eric Costley

Gray Catbirds and White-throated Sparrows are frequent victims of building strikes in Baltimore.

2010 LOB volunteers logged a whopping 400+ hours monitoring, helping birds in need, doing specimen inventory, and performing outreach.

Lights Out volunteers monitored, when resources and weather permitted, during spring migration 2010 (Mid-March – End of May) and fall migration 2010 (mid-August – into early November), and collected 312 specimens that were donated to the Natural History Museum in Washington, DC. Instead of being swept into the trash, as happens in cities where monitoring programs do not exist, these birds will be

President's Corner

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Bird Club in the mid 1960s. After retiring from the IRS, Ruth and Louis moved to Mesa, AZ where she became a Master Gardener. She and her sister Alice were the first women members welcomed into the East Valley Men's Garden Club. An environmentalist and careful observer of birds, animals and plants, Ruth created a desert xeriscape garden planted exclusively with native trees and plants. A true oasis for birds and small mammals, Ruth lovingly tended this habitat into her 92nd year. Her friend, Harriet Felscher, who volunteered at Cylburn for many years, made this donation in Ruth's memory to continue Ruth's individual efforts to support and protect birds and wildlife against the odds of urbanization. Thank you Harriet and Ruth.

The Baltimore Bird Club also wants to acknowledge and thank Keith Eric Costley and Mark Linardi for their contributions to the kiosk. Keith generously gave his time to the graphics design on the kiosk and Mark donated the use of his photograph of the beautiful Baltimore Oriole used on the kiosk and other outreach materials. And if any of you are able to spend some time in The Vollmer Center lobby, you will be entertained and informed by the video presentation of activities at Cylburn, which include photos by Mark and Bill Hubick of birds found on the grounds each season.

Right of Entry Into City Watershed Property

Many birders have asked if they can hike or bird on Baltimore City reservoir property or must they have permission? The answer is as follows.

Individuals who wish to hike or bird on city reservoir property may do so without permission from Baltimore City. It must be understood, however, watersheds are not parks. They were created to buffer their reservoirs from harmful runoff. Therefore, users are asked to stay on the fire trails.

However, any organized group, such as The Baltimore Bird Club, must apply for a Right of Entry from Baltimore City to hold organized activities on watershed property. The Baltimore Bird Club has written permission from the City Watershed authority for our scheduled bird walks. Leaders of these trips must carry a copy of our access grant from the City. If you have questions, please contact Debbie Terry at dterry12@verizon.net.

Prompt Membership Action Allowed Approval of Time-Sensitive Changes to BBC's Bylaws

At the Potluck Dinner on January 9th, members voted unanimously to accept the proposed changes in BBC's Bylaws thereby allowing us to adhere to new regulations imposed by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in order to keep our tax exempt status. Not only did attendees approve—many other members sent proxy approvals by email, as well as offering well-considered comments regarding the proposed changes. Thanks to all of you for your help.

Since all members received a letter explaining the need for these changes as well as copy of the proposed changes, we will not go into detail here. Suffice to say that the incorporated changes consisted of the following legalese required by the IRS.

- Most of these changes are in Article II, Purpose, which has been modified to incorporate the requisite federal language.
- The title of this document has been changed to include the word "Constitution" and Bylaws.
- The title of Article III, "Membership" has been changed to include "... Dues and Fiscal Year."
- Article III, Section 6 has been added stating that the BBC fiscal year will correspond to the MOS fiscal year, now beginning May 1st.
- Requisite signatures include the current President.

Keep your eye out for further changes. These changes did not alter any of BBC's core operating principals. But, as has been discussed in previous Chip Notes articles, there have been many changes in BBC over the last few years. Over the spring and summer we plan on reviewing our current "Constitution" and Bylaws as well as our Manual of Operation make sure they reflect our current needs. So be prepared for another update—although this time it should not need an expedited review!

“Cylburn Is for the Birds”

— a Celebration of Urban Birds”



Photo by: Mark Linardi

The Great Horned Owl

(Continued from page 1)

and the beginning of a daylong Big Sit. The Big Sit will focus on families and youth. There will be a “Breakfast with the Birds” provided after the field trip. Mid-morning will highlight the ribbon-cutting for the Trail Tracker, followed by a symposium on new technologies useful for birders such as GPS, iPods, and the Trail Tracker. We also plan to have food vendors for those wanting to make a day of it.

The afternoon will focus on booths and sessions. The planned booths include things like local bird store vendors, optics companies, native plant vendors, a Lights Out Baltimore display, and displays from other city parks. Booths will be available for the whole af-

ternoon. We hope to also have a bird rehabber with live owls and hawks.

Starting after lunch there will be multiple 45-minute youth-oriented activity sessions that focus on various aspects of birding such as building bird feeders and bird houses, gardens for birds and butterflies, planting for birds, and using binoculars. We are also negotiating with our two major-league teams to bring in their mascots—birds of course (raven and oriole)—because they are big draws at events like this. And families can still visit the Big Sit site to see how bird numbers are accumulating.

The grounds at Cylburn have a heavy horticultural focus on native plants and offer a great educational opportunity to integrate lessons on habitat and birds. In conjunction with the Cylburn Arboretum, we plan on giving an activity session on gardening for birds and butterflies. As part of this session, participants (children) will be instructed on which plants feed birds and butterflies by showing them the plants in the Cylburn gardens. They will also be given an egg carton with sunflower seeds planted in the individual containers that they can plant at home. For adults, there will be a session on native gardens and planting for birds in the urban/suburban environment.

So don't miss the excitement—and pray for good weather for this huge and fun undertaking that BBC is undertaking. **If you have any good ideas to offer or you want to help us, please contact May Day Coordinator, Gail Frantz, at 410-833-7135 or guineabird@aol.com.**

MAY COUNT HEADS UP!

The May Count (International Migratory Bird Day) is scheduled for Saturday, May 14.

If you want to help, contact Joel Martin (410-744-9211 or jcdlmartin@aol.com) for an area assignment.

Plea for Bird Notes and Bird Records

By Pete Webb for Kevin Graff

Anybody with historic records of bird sightings, lists of birds seen in the yard or on trips in Maryland, field journals, copies of field trip reports, historical sightings etc. - please forward a copy of the records to Kevin Graff, <whitemarlin2001@yahoo.com> or 4027 Old Federal Hill Road, Jarrettsville MD 21084, or bring them (or copy of them) to one of our club meetings.



Photo by: Mark Linardi

House Wren

This is especially important for older members of our organization; some have recently retired and moved away or passed away without giving us their records, and the valuable historical data has been lost! Please consider passing them on to us first, or at least a copy, so the information can be archived. Some of our club members are known to have collected extensive records of birds seen on trips, in the yard, or around town; this data needs to be preserved in the archives so we can compare bird sightings from years gone by with the present. Old magazines and publications related to birds are also worthy of preservation; we have a collection, but there are gaps in that collection these might help fill.

In particular, while Kevin has copies of actual club field trip reports from Lake Roland from 1970 to 1980, and from 2006 to present, trips from 1946 through 1969 and from 1981 through 2005 are missing from our records.

And we have a collection of bird-related publications and magazines from around the country, but there are major gaps in the collection that need to be filled if possible. These publications do exist in the national archives in Washington, D.C., but it would be nice to have copies available in our collection for visiting students, scholars, etc.

Anything you can contribute would be deeply appreciated! Thank you!!!

MOS Annual Conference

Just a reminder that the MOS Annual Conference will be held May 20-22, 2011 at WISP Resort near Deep Creek Lake in Garret County. Kevin Dodge will be keynote speaker. Proceeds from the Silent Auction/Raffle will be given to the Allegheny Highlands Conservancy and Claire and Dave Horvath will again bring products from their nature store. Something new this year is a corporate sponsor-Tropical Birding Tours will be contributing \$1,000 towards conference expenses and give two workshops and a talk.

They will also have an information table.

Kevin Graff also pointed out that WISP is only a short distance-four-hour drive-from Magee Marsh in northwest Ohio, one of the warbler hotspots in migration. Check out Paul Noell's article on this super migration spot in the Winter 2010 Chip Notes. He and his travelling companions found 23 warbler species (including a Kirtland's!) and 123 total species in three days.

May 20-22, 2011



Care about Birds?

Lights Out Baltimore Call for Volunteers!

By the Lights Out Baltimore! Committee

Have you ever seen an Ovenbird up close, saved the life of a White-Throated Sparrow, or educated family, friends, or neighbors on the dangers windows pose to glass? *Lights Out Baltimore!* volunteers have rescued hundreds of birds in need in downtown Baltimore and have counted/collected over 750 birds that have succumbed to injuries after colliding with glass.

Care to join us in monitoring this spring, or do you live or work near a problem building? Be part of the solution! If you would like to help or would like more information, please email us at save-birds@verizon.net.

Lights Out Baltimore Continues Outreach & Monitoring Data Show Baltimore Isn't Always for the Birds



Photo by: Keith Eric Costley

On cold mornings, birds must attempt to conserve heat after a window strike. This Black-throated Green Warbler has its head tucked in and its contour feathers fluffed out.

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on its second year. San Francisco has drafted bird-safe building standards. As quoted on WildlifeExtra.com, 'In considering city-wide building standards to protect birds, the San Francisco Planning Commission is showing national leadership on this tragic wildlife issue. ABC (American Bird Conservancy) is pleased to have worked with Golden Gate Audubon to provide expertise to help develop this very forward-thinking and wildlife-friendly approach to a problem that is plaguing cities today - how to prevent up to one billion birds from dying each year in building collisions across America,' said Dr Christine Sheppard, manager of ABC's Bird Collisions Campaign. Standards on a state/local level are extremely important since they help create a market for wildlife-friendly products such as Ornilux glass. This innovative product uses a special ultraviolet (UV)-reflective coating that appears almost transparent to humans, but is clearly visible to birds, because they can see a broader UV spectrum than humans. According to asknature.com, the inspiring strategy for this product is imitating how the strands in orb-weaver spider webs warn birds and attract insects using UV-reflecting silk. While certain insects may be attracted to the UV properties of the silk, birds are deterred, making for less repairs for the spiders and no web tangles for birds.

Lights Out Baltimore will continue its monitoring and outreach efforts this spring. If you are interested in helping, please consider attending an LOB volunteer orientation session. See LOB Call for Volunteers on page 10.

**Attention youth birders!
The Maryland Ornithological
Society announces
their program for
Maryland students
grades 8 – 12**

MARYLAND BIRDS AND BIRD HABITATS

Field Research in the World of Birds

**June 19- 24, 2011
Washington College
Chestertown, MD**

Many scholarships will be available from the Maryland Ornithological Society and many of the local birding chapters.

Program Activities:

1. Birding by Habitat – Learn local habitats and birds found within each
2. Birding by Ear – Learn to identify birds by call and song
3. Nestbox Monitoring – Monitoring bluebird boxes, mapping, and accessing data
4. Breeding Determination – Use behavioral clues to determine breeding status for different species.
5. eBirding – What to do with your data
6. Accessing Local Environmental Data – MD/DC Bird Breeding Atlas, NA Bird Breeding Survey, eBird
7. Designing Authentic Science Research Projects Using Birds as a Focal Point

For more information, go to:

[http://www.mdbirds.org/activities/
MOS_Program_Brochure_Students_2011.pdf](http://www.mdbirds.org/activities/MOS_Program_Brochure_Students_2011.pdf)



Oct 16 - Irvine Nature Center - We enjoyed seeing a couple of Black-throated Blue and Palm Warblers up close. Other highlights included two Blue-headed Vireos, several Tree Swallows and some very cooperative Chipping Sparrows and Eastern Bluebirds. A few birders added Savannah and Vesper Sparrows to their list.

43 species. 26 participants. Leader: Keith Costley.

Oct 23 - Hawk Mountain - On the way up I-83, we saw a horse field with a bank of fog and frost on the grass, our first frost seen this year. Fall foliage was about two-thirds of the way towards peak color, but not there yet, even on the top of the ridge at Hawk Mountain. The hawk flight was fairly slow. The predicted 7-9 MPH west breeze was more like 2-5 MPH, not enough for good lift on the slopes of the ridges, and the intermittent cloud cover kept sunlight suppressed, minimizing uplifting thermals for the hawks and vultures to ride up on. We saw a couple dozen Sharp-shinned Hawks, a couple of Cooper's Hawks, three male Northern Harriers, and two Bald Eagles over the span of five hours watching from the scenic North Outlook at Hawk Mountain. Most of that time was spent waiting for the next hawk to fly by. We were up there from about 10 am to 3 pm. Coming back down, we stopped by the visitor center and viewed the activity at the feeders visible through large windows. We were treated to Black-capped Chickadees, a Hermit Thrush or two, Purple Finches, a Golden-crowned Kinglet on a bush near by, and more routine feeder birds plus Robins. No Cedar Waxwings this time. We had a couple of Pine Siskins fly by when we were up on the outlook, none at the feeders.

39 species. 7 participants. Leader: Pete Webb.

Nov 20 - Blackwater - The marsh woods trail near the beginning of the wildlife drive was good as always, with Brown-headed Nuthatches, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Brown Creepers, Hermit Thrushes, Sapsuckers and a couple of flyover Pine Siskins. As usual, Bald Eagles were numerous and easy to see, but the supply of ducks was limited and no geese other than Canada Geese were found. At Hooper's Island (southwest corner of Dorchester County) we were treated to both Surf and Black Scoters (both male and female), some close-by Sanderlings, Long-tailed Ducks, a Horned Grebe, and a Savannah Sparrow. At Cedar Creek Road, we did see the one Rough-legged Hawk,

and Pete heard several Virginia Rails calling and one Great Horned Owl hooting. Skeins of migrating Tundra Swans flew by as the sunset lent color to the skies they were flying through.

70 species. 7 participants. Leader: Pete Webb.

Dec 4 - Point Lookout - Lack of participants again, Pete Webb and Kevin Graff decided to do local birding around Baltimore. It was very productive. We picked up a good size raft of 186 Gadwalls and few other waterfowls, and a Red-breasted Nuthatch and Hermit Thrush at Marshy Point; a Common Loon and 2 Bonaparte's Gulls at Miami Beach Park; scores of ducks at Oxygen Pond; Green-winged Teals at White Marsh wetlands; a Merlin and 2 Winter Wrens at Sherwood Farm section of Cromwell and a Kestrel at Southwest Area Park.

70 species. 2 participants.

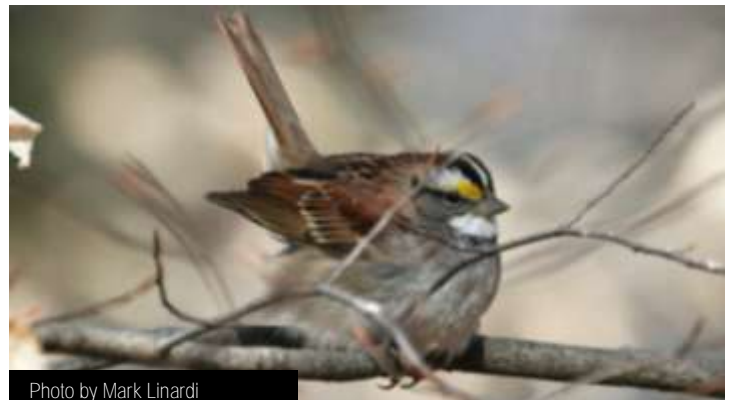


Photo by Mark Linardi

A White-throated Sparrow

Jan 1 - New Year birding - There was more ice on the reservoir during Loch Raven walk. We managed to see a few ducks including 40 Redheads and a single Ruddy Duck which is not easy to find. At the far end of the cove we saw Killdeers, 8 Common Snipes and a Rusty Blackbird. Black-capped Chickadees kept coming and going from the feeders. Afterwards, three of us headed to Marshy Point and got a few ducks, Mute Swans, 2 Hermit Thrushes. Our last stop at Miami Beach Park found it to be entirely frozen. There were hundreds of gulls all over.

Have any bird stories you want to share?

How about special behaviors or sightings you've observed, trips of interest you've taken, fascinating factoids you have discovered, books that kept you captivated, or anything else you think others might also want to know about?

If so, please send them to Roberta Ross
(robertabross@aol.com) so we can include them
in the Summer Chip Notes.



Photo by Joan Cwi

King Penguin chick learning how to read.



Photo by Joan Cwi

A bellowing Elephant Seal.

Postcards From...

the Falkland Islands

By Joan Cwi

All photos by Joan Cwi unless otherwise noted.

"Joan, could you take a look at this?" my partner John asked. "This" was a Google earth image of Pebble Island in the Falkland Islands where we were headed for a week of bird watching. What we saw was four buildings and no roads. "Where are we staying and what can we possibly do here for three days?" The answer came soon enough. PENGUINS GALORE!!!! And several other avian treats to boot.

Let me back up. The Falkland Islands are at the bottom of the earth. And penguins only exist at the bottom of the earth in the Southern Hemisphere. There is plenty of ocean and not much land down there, but this is **the domain of the world's penguins with a few exceptions. Turn a globe upside down and Antarctica fills the middle of the Southern Hemisphere.** By 50 degrees latitude, only the tips of Chile, Argentina and New Zealand, along with numerous oceanic islands are visible in the vast expanse of ocean. In comparison, at 50 degrees latitude from the North Pole you would be crossing the northern United States, central Europe, and the heart of Russia. To get to the Falkland Islands you have to fly to the tip of Chile (Punta Arenas) via Santiago, then take a 3-hour flight to the Falklands in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. There is only one flight a week—you leave Punta Arenas on Saturday and come back the next Saturday. You land at a major military airport (remember the Falkland Islands war in 1982?) at Port Stanley. To get to other islands you fly via FIGAS, their state run airline. These small red planes seat 10 very closely. It has been compared to flying in an MRI machine. They land on grass or dirt runways on that have just been cleared of sheep and geese by the locals.

We birded at three islands—East Falkland, Pebble and Sea Lion. Despite the distances, accommodations and food were very good in the small island lodges. Other than the flights, the only other transportation was by jeep on Pebble and Sea Lion, as there are no roads to speak of.

East Falkland Island had some paved roads, but the way to the King Penguin colony still required a jeep for the last 1.5 hours of the journey. The islands are stark and there is constant wind. November was their spring and the temperatures were in the low 50's with intermittent rain.

What a treat to be there! Penguins have to be the cutest birds on earth with their tuxedos and Charlie Chapman waddle. Because they are protected in the Falklands, they have no fear of humankind and are as curious about us as we are of them. And being spring we got to see breeding and brooding behaviors. All penguins have to nest near the ocean where they feed on fish and krill. Although they may seem awkward waddling across land, in the water they are mini-torpedoes essentially "flying" through the water using their flippers (wing bones fused to form stiff, durable paddles) for swimming underwater.

In all we saw five penguin species. In order of average height they were Rockhopper (21.5"), Macaroni (27.5"), Gentoo (31"), Magellanic (27.5"), and King (37.5") and their weight ranges from 5 to 35 pounds. The Rockhoppers are the most fun being small, raucous, gregarious and adventuresome. They are aptly named as they not only waddle along like other penguins, but also jump from rock to rock with great agility. The colony we saw is up a steep cliff where a steady stream of birds could be seen hopping up and down on the way to fishing grounds. Rockhoppers nest in scratches in the earth in large colonies that are full of braying, chasing and general chaos. They are very curious and if you sit still they will come right up and check you out. Colorful (for a penguin), they have red eyes, pink feet and yellow eyebrows! Frequently a Macaroni Penguin, with its Homer Simpson hairdo, can be found in the midst of their colonies.

Gentoo Penguins also nest in large colonies, but they are not as crowded as the Rockhopper's. Their nests consist of small mounds of earth and debris. Note the photo showing how close their nesting colony is to the Sea Lion Island lodge. From there they have to travel about a half mile back and forth to the ocean to feed. The Brown Skua is a serious predator of Gentoo eggs on Sea Lion Island, and occasionally a huge male Elephant Seal would just wallow through the nesting colony, destroying a path of nests and eggs. Bull Elephant Seals would also imperviously thunder through the lodge's yard taking out the vegetable garden, fencing, and probably any human en route. No one messes with the male Sea Lions, except the Orcas visible offshore who find them to be tasty tidbits.

The Magellanic Penguin is more reclusive, digging burrows to lay eggs. Their nests tend to be more scattered. They are also less inquisi-

Postcards From...

tive. We only saw a couple dozen of this species scattered throughout the islands.

The King Penguin...how to describe this bird that for all intent and purposes appears to be a royal butler. It is only a few inches shorter than the Emperor Penguin (of *March of the Penguins* fame) and has many colonies on East Island, none of them easy to get to. We visited Volunteer Point in the north of East Falkland, a 2.5 hour drive from Port Stanley, half of it over sheep ranch property with no roads of any kind. **We arrived at the visitor shack, our backs barely intact from the bone-jarring ride, into a bitterly cold, windy, rainy day—perfect penguin weather!**

Like the Emperor Penguin, the male King Penguin carries the egg on his feet until hatching. But their breeding territory is on remote islands, not 60-miles inland in the Antarctic. By the time of our arrival, the eggs had hatched and we got to see these teddy-bear chicks in brown down imitating their parents braying and posturing. Some had reached that awkward adolescent stage where they were half down and half sleek, weather-tight feathers. Chicks frequently begged for occasional nips from **their parents' beaks.**

And so the story ends. There were many other wonderful birds and adventures in the Falklands, but this article is too long already. I want to relate just one more penguin story. Because I blathered on so much about penguins, my nephew gave me a book on penguins for Christmas-- *The Great Penguin Rescue* by Dyan deNapoli. It is the true story of the rescue of 40,000 African Penguins (very similar to the Magellanic pictured above) after the foundering of the ship, MV Treasure, and release **of oil off the coast of Africa. It's an incredible story about the rescue process, the heartbreaking scenarios encountered, and the dedication of thousands of volunteers.** Her description of how these usually raucous and braying birds now stood silently, oil-covered, in a state of shock was numbing. She describes the laborious scrubbing of oil from every penguin feather, force-feeding each bird individually and the excruciatingly painful penguin bites all received. (African Penguins have a hood at the end of the beak to catch fish.) I also learned that penguins can inflict serious bruising shin-bashing with their flippers! A great book—highly recommended.

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Photo by Joan Cwi

King Penguin chick learning how to read.

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Moving or email change?

Send correction to
Catherine Bishop at jcbishop1@verizon.net
Or... 6111 Bellona Avenue
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**Deadlines for submitting articles
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SPRING: January 24 for March-May
SUMMER: April 24 for June-August
FALL: July 24 for September-November



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