

Chip Notes



BALTIMORE BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER

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Are you a member of the **BBC Facebook**? Over one hundred people have signed up on our Facebook page. Members enthusiastically share their birding pictures, thoughts, experiences, and questions in a spontaneous and rapid way. It is also the fastest way to learn about a rarity or field trip changes (cancellations, new time, bring boots, etc.). Open to all, BBC member or not. **Check Bird Bits on p. 6 for more information on how to join Facebook.**

Quarry Lake—Reclamation, Development and Ecological Restoration

Part 1: Creating a Lake

By Joan Cwi and Eric Hadaway



Remember when the Greenspring Quarry on Greenspring Avenue was just that—a quarry mining limestone for railbeds, roadbeds, and foundations? The quarry was active since before the Civil War. It was a deep hole in the ground, operating as a mine until 1999 when planning began for the current development that includes housing, retail stores, and a large lake and park. The ensuing 40 acre lake is one of the deepest bodies of water in Maryland at 365 feet deep, with the bottom of the lake at its deepest point 29 feet below sea level!

We are very lucky that the developers, Koren Development Company, Inc. had the foresight to bring, among others, Daft McCune Walker (DMW), Inc., on to their team in developing Quarry Lake at Greenspring. DMW is a local multidisciplinary land development consulting firm that was hired to evolve the working quarry and areas not being used for homes and retail space into an ecologically sensitive park. Eric Hadaway was a major player on the DMW team who was responsible for coordinating environmental compliance, wetland mitigation, stream restoration and reforestation. Eric is also a birder, and he agreed to tell us about this process while we stood on the gazebo overlooking the lake on a fine, albeit chilly morning in April. The nineteen people attending were there to learn how this huge rock ditch had turned into such an ecologically sensitive area that attracts more and more bird (and fish) species as time goes by.

(Continued on page 3)

President's Corner

by Joan Cwi



Spring migration is always a special time, and this year I got to experience it twice--first in Florida, and again here in Baltimore. The first time was on a mid-April trip to the Dry Tortugas National Park--a group of small islands located about 70 miles off Key West. It is here Americans built Fort Jefferson between 1846-1875 to protect the nation's gateway to the Gulf of Mexico. It has been maintained as a wildlife refuge since 1908 and designated a National Park in 1992. It is called "dry" because there is no natural source of fresh water on the islands.

The islands are a migration way station for birds and turtles (green loggerhead, Kemp's ridley, hawksbill and leatherback) that use it as a stopping point and a nesting area. Over 200 species of birds have been sighted on the island during spring migration, often in large numbers. Seven birds nest here, and we saw them all--Masked Booby, Brown Pelican, Magnificent Frigatebird, Roseate and Sooty Terns, Brown Noddy and, believe it or not, Mourning Dove. Numerous other birds were spotted during the boat ride soaring overhead, including Pomarine Jaeger and Least, Forster's, Royal and Sandwich Terns.

What was most heart-wrenching on the hot (95 degrees), humid day of my visit was the migrating passerines, stopping exhausted on their struggle north within the fort walls of this forlorn island. A fresh water watering hole was provided by park rangers, and flowering trees within the fort's walls provided some nutrition. Within an area the size of a baseball field, Red-bellied Hummingbirds abounded, as did warblers (Black-throated Blue, Ovenbird, both Waterthrushes, Black-and-white, Prothonotary, Tennessee, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded, American Redstart, Yellow, Wilson's, Pine and Prairie). We also spotted Orchard and Baltimore Orioles, Indigo Buntings, Summer and Scarlet Tanagers, several thrushes (Veery, Gray-cheeked, Swainson's, and Wood), Gray Catbirds, a Kestrel, and best of all, a Chuck-will's-widow napping in the vegetation!

The second time was here in Baltimore two weeks later when most of the migratory birds seen in Florida began arriving locally. I left the Dry Tortugas wishing them a safe journey northward, then beat them in the race back to Baltimore to greet them once again! Somehow a little disconcerting...sort of like entering a time warp.

Conservation CORNER

Banished: Scotts Bird Seed (by Carol Schreter) The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company was fined \$12.5 million dollars in October 2012 by a federal criminal court for coating their bird seed with pesticides from 2005 - 2008. This was done to deter insects from eating the seed while in storage. Even the Scotts company chemists had advised the company that the pesticide coating could kill birds. After I saw Scotts bird seed for sale at Watson's Garden Center in Lutherville (1620 York Road), I gave the buyer two articles about this court case, decision and penalty. I am glad to report that Watson's Garden Center has decided NOT to sell Scotts Bird Seed anymore -- although they still sell many Scotts Miracle-Gro lawn care products. Why did Watson's Garden Center stop selling the Scotts Bird Seed now? They seemed to agree with me that killing your customers is as dumb as it gets. For background on this court case, go to the Birding Community E-Bulletin (Scotts Decision, October 2012) at

www.refugeassociation.org/news/birding-bulletin

Monarchs in trouble--You Can Help! (by Dixie Mullineaux)

In March 2013 the Mexican government announced that the number of monarch butterflies that completed an annual migration to their winter home in a Mexican forest sank to its lowest level in at least two decades, due mostly to extreme weather and changed farming practices in North America. The area of forest occupied by the wintering butterflies, once as high as 50 acres, dwindled to 2.94 acres in the annual census conducted in December 2012, a 59 percent decline from the 7.14 acres of butterflies measured in December 2011. The latest decline was hastened by drought and record-breaking heat in North America when the monarchs arrived last spring to reproduce. But an equally alarming source of the decline, is the explosive increase in American farmland planted in soybean and corn genetically modified to tolerate herbicides, reports Dr. Chip Taylor, of Monarch Watch at the University of Kansas. It is possible that this beautiful spectacle of nature may end in our lifetime. You can help by planting milkweed plants! There is an organization called Monarch Live that sells milkweed seeds and plants that you can buy. Go to <http://www.livemonarch.com/free-milkweed-seeds.htm>

The Earth Needs a Good Lawyer (by Mary Chetelat) It doesn't make much sense to me, Mary Thater Chetelat, to live in a world where our air, water, open spaces, forests, deserts, beautiful vistas and fellow wild creatures are always under threat of pollution, poisoning, despoliation or simply loss, and NOT DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT! That is why I support the organizations Earth Justice and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). I originally thought that these groups were "legal arms" of other environmental organizations. However, I found that they are independent organizations, each having a rather small (considering all that they do, and compared to corporate giants) core group of attorneys, scientists and support staff that, with support of private donors and foundations, have won significant court battles on behalf of the environment. They help other groups, large and small, fight environmental abuse. They have my undying respect. Their mottos "Because the earth needs a good lawyer" and "The Earth's Best Defense" are mottos I can get behind. Check them out! I feel like they work for me.

Creating a lake is not an easy matter—neither politically nor physically. Before starting, the plan had to meet environmental standards on three levels—county, state and federal. A Baltimore County approved land reclamation plan, a state Department of Environment approved mining reclamation plan, and permits by the state Department of the Environment and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had to be submitted and approved. Phew! Not quite like plugging a hole in the dam with one’s finger...

Eric spread out his maps on the gazebo floor for us to see. The brown one (pictured) shows the 900 acre watershed outlined in yellow, the current development in red, and the location of the original streams (Moore’s Branch and Wellwood Branch) prior to diversion in blue. The lake fills by direct precipitation, natural ground water and the flow of a diverted stream. It took 10 years to fill up, and continues to be fed by the stream. Water-level control consists of a complicated discharge structure consisting of a weir wall located in an underground vault where water from 60-feet beneath the surface of the lake flows through a chamber that was designed to keep the lake surface at an elevation of 336’. Water overflow takes place at the east end of the lake from inside that structure, and is piped to the stream bank near Greenspring Avenue. Extremely important is the fact that the water flowing from the lake is very cold and very clean and super oxygenated, making the downstream reaches of Moore’s Branch suitable habitat for native trout and other important aquatic species. Because the majority of the watershed which drains into the quarry was developed prior to stormwater management laws, most of the storm runoff entering the lake is warm and polluted, but since the pollutant removal efficiency in the lake is nearly 98%, the water leaving the lake is significantly cleaner and colder, so Moore’s Branch, Jones Falls, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay enjoy the benefits of this “water quality retrofit”.



The only time water leaves the lake without passing through the “cold water discharge pipe” is when precipitation exceeds the 10-year statistical storm event and a small amount of surface water may flow across the exposed concrete weir wall visible at the east end of the lake. This is true also of the 100- and 500-year storm events - the weir wall was specifically designed to convey those extreme storm flows and was approved for construction only after undergoing a rigorous review by Maryland’s Dam Safety Division. As an added safety factor, a manually-operated control valve, located within the buried cold water discharge vault, can be opened to release water prior to forecasted extreme weather events, much in the same fashion as when flood gates are opened at the Conowingo Dam on the Susquehanna River.

Build and they will come! The lake and its shoreline has become a nesting area for many birds requiring water nearby—Great Blue Herons, Green Herons, Mallards, Canada Geese, and Belted Kingfishers. And the most amazing part is that bird watchers can easily view the nesting birds from the sidewalk surrounding the lake. Access to the lake proper is not allowed due to the extremely steep sides and blocked by a fence. Along the shallow eastern (Greenspring Avenue) edge American Bittern, Black-crowned Night Heron, Killdeer and Solitary and Spotted Sandpipers have been spotted. Of course there are gulls—Herring and Ring-billed, as well as raptors attracted by water—Osprey and Bald Eagles. And the array of waterbirds has been significant including: Double-crested Cormorants; Wood, Ruddy and American Black ducks; Blue-winged Teal; Bufflehead; Common and Hooded Mergansers; Greater and Lesser Scaup; Common Loon; Pied-billed and Horned Grebes; and American Coots. Stay tuned for *Part 2 Creating a Park*, which will appear in the Fall 2013 Chip Notes. It will discuss how the park and wetlands surrounding the park were developed from what, essentially, was rock dust and the ensuing birdlife now found there.

The Cuba We Would All Like to See

By Kathy Woods \ Photos by Hugh Simmons

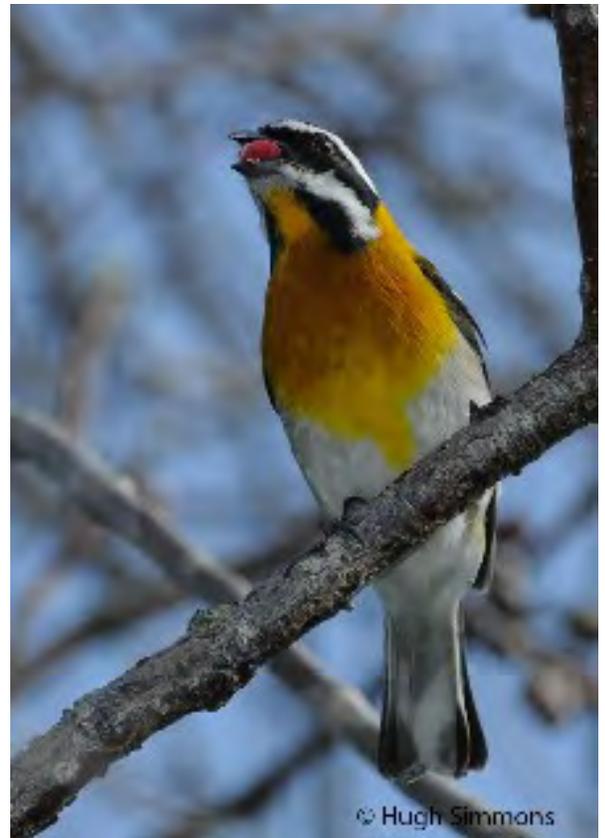
Kathy Woods, Master Wildlife Rehabilitator, is founder and head of Phoenix Wildlife Center in Phoenix MD. Kathy takes care of all the birds rescued during BBC's Lights Out Baltimore downtown forays. She went to Cuba with the Caribbean Conservation Trust for a bird monitoring project.

History, architecture, culture, jazz clubs, Studebakers, mojitos. Mangroves, tobacco, sugar cane, palm trees. Horse-drawn buggies and diesel buses sharing the road. Simple fare, gracious people, passionate guides. Touchable stars, green blue waters, white sand. Tody, trogon, Fernandina's flicker, Gundlach's hawk, Zapata wren; flamingoes, black necked stilts, and egrets.

Cuba: a land stuck in time, with little access to our every day "necessities", yet just as passionate about conservation and their endemics. We were fortunate to have seen 21 of the possible 26 avian endemics, with a total of approximately 150 species of birds tallied.

Our trip began and ended in Havana; in between we traveled by bus to many different locations; led at each site by a different local, knowledgeable, friendly guide. From the home of the man who wrote the book on Cuban birds to seeing a Stygian owl flapping against the night sky, our trip was magical.

The Hotel Mirador in San Diego de los Banos hosted us our first evening...complete with Cuban singers at dinnertime, the first of many serenades. Much birding by bus was done joyfully, including a crested caracara and Cuban black hawk. The afternoon was spent with a trip to a national park where the remains of another grand estate offered looks at broken statuaries, pink lotus blossoms, and looks at many endemics including the Fernandina's flicker. Also seen were great lizard cuckoo, Cuba emerald, West Indian woodpecker, Cuban green woodpecker, a tody, black whiskered vireo, Cuba oriole, Cuban grassquit and yellow-faced grassquit. This proved to be an incredible birding spot, so we returned the next day.



© Hugh Simmons

(Continued on page 5)

Cuba (continued)

Our next stop included LaGuira National Park and a fabulous cave where Che Guevera hid out, and the elusive Cuban solitaire. Scaly naped pigeon and Cuba trogon also greeted us there, as well as some very cool fruit-eating bats in the cave ceilings!



The next day (5:30am start) we were back at Hacienda Cortina where the highlight of my day was the Cuban pygmy owl. We made many roadside lake stops (snail kite) along with many of our “common birds” that I should mention...osprey, harrier, egrets, shovelers, scaup. A bee hummingbird entertained at a roadside stop. We ended up at Playa Larga, on the Bay of Pigs, with pristine waters and star-filled skies. Cuban parrots were heard from our bungalows.

The next day found us both at freshwater marshes and salt water wetlands. A Cuban pygmy owl greeted us at the start of the walk to find Zapata sparrows, black faced grassquits, all the while watching black and white warblers, American redstarts, palm warblers, and the Cuban emerald (hummingbird).

Joined by another passionate guide, we were able to see so much more; these guides really know where the birds are, and we were treated to a most incredibly rare chance to see and photograph the endemic Gundlach’s Hawk on her nest (pictured above).

We went on to see the Cuban gnatcatcher, Cuban bullfinch, the exquisite Western spindalis (photo on page 4) La Sagra’s flycatcher, the Bahama mockingbird, Oriente warbler. A look at the West Indian Whistling duck hiding in the reeds. We stayed for two days at Caya Coco and I felt like the rest of the guests had no idea what we were being treated to in the marshes! Black necked stilts, Mangrove cuckoos, meadowlarks, and flamingoes dotted the landscape.

All the while we were treated with courtesy, friendliness and warmth. Our amenities were frugal in some places, grand in others; the food unassuming but delicious nonetheless. In a land of 6,140 species of plants (52% endemic) 358 species of birds, 2999 varieties of snails, 62 species of frogs (96% endemic), where the everyday bird is a Cuban emerald, the Greater Antillean Grackle, or a West Indian woodpecker, this country is a wealth of history, culture and a birding paradise.



Birdbits.....



Spring Swift Watch

Pre-watch scouting two days before the scheduled event found no swifts using chimneys at the Roland Park Country School or Druid Hill Park Conservatory, but they were roosting in chimneys in Hampden and in St. Michael's the Archangel church near the Natural History Society of Maryland (NHS) building in Overlea (up Belair Road), so we decided to hold two watches simultaneously due to the geographic distance and to honor our alliance with the NHS.

The watch this spring took place on a dreary, drizzly, cold evening in April (the 28th). This must have turned off our regulars, as no one but the leader showed up for the Hampden watch, although the results were good—130 swifts entering the chimney in a 20 minute period. Four people joined our leader at the NHS, but alas only 25 swifts dribbled in.

The swifts continue to shift around finding their favored chimney du jour! And we keep seeking them out.



Join the BBC Facebook Group

To join the BBC Facebook, you need to have a Facebook account. But that is easy to do and you can do it in a way that is very private. Visit the Facebook website <http://www.facebook.com>, and then klik the Sign Up button. Fill in your full name, a valid email address and birth-day date (they need that to know you are an adult). Choose a password. You don't need to be a "friend" to anyone. You don't need to put in your birth year, photo or friends, etc. — just leave those fields blank. And you can set up your privacy settings so no one can search for you. Once you have joined Facebook, click on the BBC Facebook link <http://www.facebook.com/groups/382565775136349/> and request to be a member. It's as simple as that!

BBC Website Addition

Thanks to Alex Lima, who describes himself as "a curious person with peculiar tastes that likes organizing lists." we now have a bird list with electronic links to identify and obtain information on birds of Baltimore City and Baltimore County.

This list is designed to provide the birder with an idea of what may be expected in any given season. Seasonal abundance is shown for the 266 species that regularly occur here, as documented in the third edition of *The Field List of the Birds of MD*, aka *The Yellow Book*, by Marshall J. Iliff, Robert F. Ringler and James Stasz (1996). The species order follows that of the 2012 AOU Checklist. The links open to species accounts for each bird as found in Wikipedia and in All About Birds, the online bird guide of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Thank you Alex for helping us out! Check: <http://baltimorebirdclub.org/baltreg.html>

Welcome New Members!

BBC is always happy to have new members join our club. It is good to see diversity and growth in our membership. We plan on listing the names of new members in each Chip Notes. This past quarter we welcome new members:

Terry Lang

Lynn Roberts

Donna Marie Will

Any Bird Tails...I Mean Tales?

Hope you enjoyed Kathy Woods' description of her trip to Cuba. We'd love to have more stories about your birding adventures. Please send articles and jpg

Observations on Cedar Waxwings

By Mike Stahl /Photos by Mike Stahl

Mike is a member of BBC and has participated in our Lights Out Baltimore program since its inception five years ago.



Cedar Waxwings are the most beautiful birds found in Maryland. I will argue that point because I simply am right. They rely on their beauty for mating as there is no birdsong. The black masked eyes contrasting the off ivory breast and slate blue wings; the tail tip appearing as if it were dipped in bright yellow paint; and the scarlet shots in the wings simply make this bird a flower.

I see three or four a year in the local parks I wander and enjoy their gentle hiss and their luxuriant beauty. They are always either alone or in a pair. Often they perch for the length of time required for some good viewing and photographs. A couple of years ago I was walking around with friends at an urban reservoir not far from some good wooded park land. Suddenly within a few feet of us were two waxwings about 5 feet ahead. My hiking partners were interested in the waxwings and the birds continued to fly only a few feet in front of us giving us a lot of time to examine them. That was the first time it occurred to me that Cedar Waxwings are not terribly concerned about humans.

On February 19th, I was taking my usual morning walk around Baltimore's Inner Harbor. As I passed a tiny copse of Willow Oaks I found them filled with birds that were not routine. Initially I noticed a subtle coloring and crest and imagined Titmouse. Suddenly I saw a Cedar Waxwing and quickly understood that I was seeing 30 to 50 of them, certainly more than I was willing to count.



They bowled me over, there was an issue of my favorite bird in numbers I could hardly imagine. They were everywhere gobbling the berries that remained on the branches and on that day the berries were plentiful. I had never seen such an event--more waxwings than I could have ever expected. Sans a camera I approached the lower branches and found that the birds were little concerned with my presence. What I saw suggested to me that these birds were sort of naïve to the ways of the world. They allowed me to face them from only a couple of feet away. These birds don't know the ways of the city anyway.

I had never seen a Cedar Waxwing feed off the ground but I did now. They were grabbing all of the berries that they could get as they fell from the branches. The next day I brought a camera and snapped a large number of photos...some of which were salvageable. That allowed me to observe them further. What I think I learned was that they were less naïve than brave. As I approached them on a branch they seemed more defiant than fearful.



The next day I used a different camera and found that their behaviors did not change but my growing number of photos did. I was thrilled to be in their midst. It was as if they welcomed me which of course they did not. I was merely a sentient thing that they did not fear very much. There are very few joys that I have experienced that match embedding myself amongst Cedar Waxwings for a few days. I already knew they were beautiful and now I know that they are gregarious and that they flock at least for portions of the year. It was fun for three days but on Friday, armed with yet another camera my cache of waxwings was not to be. They had moved on.

Loch Raven Youth Count 2-9-13

By Claire Wayner

Photo by Bill Hubick

Claire is BBC's 2013 Youth Backpack winner. You can feel her enthusiasm as she sees 13 new species in a winter morning walk at a local hotspot!

The morning was frigid and windy, a morning when only determined birders would drag themselves and their binoculars out of bed and over to Loch Raven. The bird walk was planned as a youth trip, but I was the only youth who showed up to the hike, along with five adults. The day was so windy that, at first, it was doubtful that we would see any birds. But within the first five minutes, we saw a White-breasted Nuthatch, a male Downy Woodpecker, and several Carolina Chickadees foraging around a tree. "Odd for a chickadee to forage," someone noted. Pressing on, we hiked up an old dirt road, pausing at a clearing. My mom saw a bird soaring up above our heads, which we identified as a Bald Eagle. Then, a flash of movement and a spot of color in the trees caught my eye. I zoomed in on it, and found it to be a male Golden-crowned Kinglet—my first ever!



We approached a small shoreline, aiming to see some waterfowl. Here we were unfortunately exposed to the harsh wind, but there were a few rewards, namely grebes and mergansers. As we hiked on, we racked up more and more sightings. Eastern Bluebirds, Winter Wrens, a Red-bellied Woodpecker...the list goes on. Then the most exciting part happened. As we approached another shoreline looking for loons but finding none, I looked over to the left and saw a huge clump of moving gray dots. "What's that?" I asked. It turned out to be a mass of American Coots, with a few Gadwalls mixed in. Then came another surprise: a small raptor flew past us, landing in a tree nearby. After a thorough examination of our field guides, we identified it as a Merlin! Although the cold finally forced us to return to our cars, I left with a feeling of satisfaction, having seen 13 new birds thanks to the Baltimore Bird Club.

BBC Board of Directors

2013–2014

The following were approved unanimously by BBC members attending the April 2 Lecture. Also included are a list of BBC Standing Committee Chairpersons and others who also have voting privileges at Board meetings. Asterisks denote a name change.

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Facebook Manager, Mike Hudson



Field Trip Reports

Compiled by Kevin Graff

MAR 9 - Middle Creek - Inviting sunny weather, American Tree Sparrow seen well, field full of close-by Snow Geese, Horned Larks, Bluebirds, Harriers, Shovelers, American Wigeon, Gadwall, Coot, Green-winged Teals, Common and Hooded Mergansers, Bald Eagle, hundreds of Tundra Swans

on the water. Possible Rough-legged Hawk seen backlit on way back flying across the highway, tentative identification by silhouette. No confirmed rarities this time, no Wood Ducks or Tree Swallows yet at Middle Creek. We did see a Wood Duck at a pond near the Susquehanna River on the way home. 50 species. 9 participants. Leaders: Pete Webb & Kevin Graff.

MAR 17 - Irvine Nature Center - Chilly day, but we got the bonanza in flyby Wilson's Snipe, flying around in groups of 1 to 3 the whole time we were down in the lowland area. Another highlight in the lowland area was a group of six Rusty Blackbirds (adult males) which flew by and landed in the trees by the little stream. We got good looks at three of them. We heard some Tundra swans whooping it up overhead, and looked up to see a group of twenty-two flying over our heads going north. We were serenaded by a Fox Sparrow and also saw Chipping and Field sparrows. 39 species. 9 participants. Leader: Pete Webb.

APR 2 - Lake Roland - A cold windy day, but good to see some new faces. Walking the boardwalk, we were able to point out bluebirds, Carolina Wrens, phoebes, white throats and a Swamp Sparrow that popped up for everyone to see. The highlight of this walk was finding 4 Pine Warblers in one tree, one in bright yellow plumage. We also had a Bald Eagle perched in a tree along the lake. 43 species. 15 participants. Leader: Ruth Culbertson.

APR 7 - Cylburn Arboretum - On this cool, sunny morning the usual winter and year round species were seen. 19 species. 3 participants. Leader: Joe Lewandowski

APR 9 - Lake Roland - A beautiful spring/summer day, temperature reached 75 degrees. People just kept streaming in having been alerted to the RELP walks by both the BBC and RELP program schedules, the BBC Facebook page, as well as by googling bird walks in Baltimore. Special guests were a young mother with five children--her own and a neighbor's. The highlights of the walk included 9 Rusty Blackbirds easily seen from the boardwalk. They were busy tossing leaves in a marshy area in search of food. We thought we scored them again in the mud flats in the upper part of the lake, only to realize as we got closer that what we really were seeing was a flock of about 45 Cowbirds. Boo hoo. The lake, by the way, was very, very low due to it being drained to repair the dam. However, that allowed us to see both a Lesser Yellowlegs and a Great Egret working the flats. Warblers were starting to appear, including Yellow-rumped, Yellow-throated, and Palm. Both Green-winged and Blue-winged Teals were on the upper lake. Other special treats included Savannah Sparrows, an early Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and a Winter Wren. 53 species. 31 participants. Leader: Debbie Terry.

APR 13 - Smith Island - As always, a memory maker of a trip. We wore jackets for the chilly breeze off the water, but it wasn't as chilly as sometimes on the boat. Nice, close views of Gannets were a treat, as were a couple of close fly-by's by White-winged and Surf Scoters, birds we usually need telescopes to see well. On a rock jetty near the island, we saw some sandpipers on the rocks, in-

(Continued on page 11)

Field Trip Reports (continued)

cluding gaudy Oystercatchers with their big, bright red bills and dapper black-and-white body plumage. On the Island, we were treated to Clapper Rails giving us a full show, calling and standing in full view. We also got to see Black-crowned Night Herons, adult Little Blue and Tri-colored Herons, Savannah Sparrows, recently returned Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and early migrant Palm Warblers, and Glossy Ibis flying around. Both adult male and adult female Harriers were flying over the marsh, Boat-tailed Grackles were calling their distinctive sounds, and for most of us the Barn Swallows and Purple Martins were our first of the year. An unusual find was a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker found by one of our junior members along for the walk, a rare sighting for the island. A number of people felt the show-off Clapper Rails were alone worth the price of the trip.

The following are notes on birding after the boat ride at Point Lookout State Park and at Schoolhouse Pond on the way back to the park-n-ride and Baltimore. (My car's group of four continued with birding at Point Lookout State Park and later Schoolhouse Pond on the way back home, and saw singing Yellow-throated Warblers and Brown-headed Nuthatches at Point Lookout, and an unusual experience at Schoolhouse Pond - six Double-crested Cormorants were in one medium sized tree just starting to bud out its leaves next to the Pond. A seventh bird tried a few fly-by's hoping to find room for one more, while the birds in the tree made gurgling, croaking sounds to scare it off - it eventually settled in the next tree over. The Cormorants were in full breeding plumage, showing their double Crests on their heads. The sight of all those cormorants in a single tree and the sounds they made defending their perch were quite unique!). 72 species (Smith Island and cruise). 36 participants. Leaders: Joe Hanfman & Pete Webb.

APR 16 - Lake Roland - Red-shouldered hawk collecting nesting material. Other highlights: Hooded Merganser, Spotted Sandpiper, both kinglets, Northern Parula, Yellow-rumped & Palm Warblers. 51 species. 29 participants. Leader: John Landers.

APR 23 - Lake Roland - An enthusiastic group of birders had great looks at the first of the year Green Herons and Great Egrets. Also quick looks at a Blue-headed Vireo and Spotted Sandpipers. Great to be out birding. 55 species. 16 participants. Leader: Debbie Terry.

APR 28 - Quarry Lake - A beautiful day to begin our observations at Quarry Lake. Orchard Orioles were seen in pairs, the male singing a lovely song. These birds were in plain sight on the trees along the lake shore. In the cavities of the bank, we spotted birds going in and out busily; these were finally indentified as rough-winged swallows. Some birds from last year seem to be coming back and searching for nesting areas. Among these were the belted kingfisher, kingbirds, and spotted sandpiper. However, our big find was the green heron fishing in the brook along the Green-spring Avenue sidewalk. We all agreed the birds really like Quarry! 31 species. 10 participants. Leader: Joan Hellman.

APR 30 - Lake Roland - Only three intrepid birders joined the leader on this cold (55 degree), rainy, windy morning. Although bird calls could be heard, the birds were hunkered down and hard, often impossible, to see. All of us walked the boardwalk and went to the dam, after which the less-than-intrepid leader spun off while the remaining three continued. In all, it wasn't a bad day. Three swallow species at the dam—Northern Rough-winged, Tree and Barn. Lots of vireos (White-eyed, Warbling, Red-eyed and good looks at Yellow-throated); returning warblers included Northern Parula, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, and Common Yellowthroat. And Blue-gray Gnatcatchers have definitely returned. 53 species. 3 participants. Leader: Joan Cwi

BALTIMORE BIRD CLUB

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Submit materials to
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Moving or email change?

Send correction to
Catherine Bishop at jcbishop1@verizon.net
Or... 6111 Bellona Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21212

Deadlines for submitting articles

for upcoming issues:

FALL: JULY 24, 2013



**Baltimore Bird Club
APPLICATION**

*Membership year is September 1-August 31. Individuals/households
joining after March 1 may pay half-year rate. A full year's dues received
after April 30 will be applied to the next membership year.*

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

How do you want your newsletters delivered? Electronically _____

Hard Copy _____

Check dues category and circle amount sent.

Category	1-YR	½ YR	Chapter Only+
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$35.00	\$17.50	\$15.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Household	\$45.00	\$22.50	\$20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$100.00		
<input type="checkbox"/> Junior*	\$10.00	\$5.00	\$5.00

* Through 17: record age here _____

+Chapter Only membership is available to MOS members who are already members of another MOS chapter or who are MOS life members.

Mail completed application with check payable to Baltimore Bird Club, Attn: Membership Chairman, 4915 Greenspring Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21209