

# Chip Notes

BALTIMORE BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER



FALL 2015 No. 393

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## Sketching is for the Birds!

by Joan Cwi

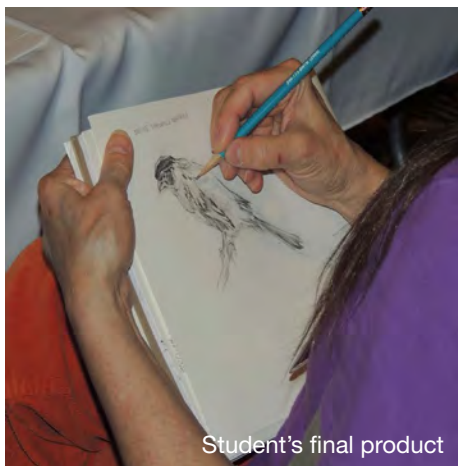
Ask and you shall have! MOS members have been asking that, in addition to the field trips and other traditional events at the annual convention, seminars or trips be included in other topics, albeit bird-related. Hence the inclusion of field trips that emphasize butterflies, insects and mowing meadows.



Ikuma's mishappen merg

This year there was another new event—a morning sketching workshop for those interested in drawing birds. I had a foretaste when Ikumi Kayama, the teacher, called to make arrangements to pick up some of our mounted birds to use as models for students to draw. Kevin Graff and I met her at our Cylburn office one afternoon and helped her sort through the collection to find nine perfect specimens. (Well, perfect in terms of bird shapes, although our “loaner” collection is a bit on the scruffy side...) Our mounted birds are protected from insects the old fashioned way—with moth balls. When first released from storage, the smell is strong—think about that woolen sweater fresh out of summer storage. I forgot to warn Ikumi about this as she packed the boxes in the car for transport to Hagerstown—but as she said to me, she learned quickly!

*Continued on page 3*



Student's final product

## WELCOME!

A warm Baltimore Bird Club welcome goes out to the following members who have joined us since the Summer Chip Notes was published. Thanks for joining and we look forward to seeing you out there on our birding trips and at our meetings!

### From Baltimore

William Bitman .....Baltimore  
 Josie Kalbfleisch.....Baltimore  
 Rockey D Matthews, Sr. ....Baltimore  
 Daisy Sudano Pelligrini .....Baltimore  
 Rich Stein .....Baltimore

### From Other Cities

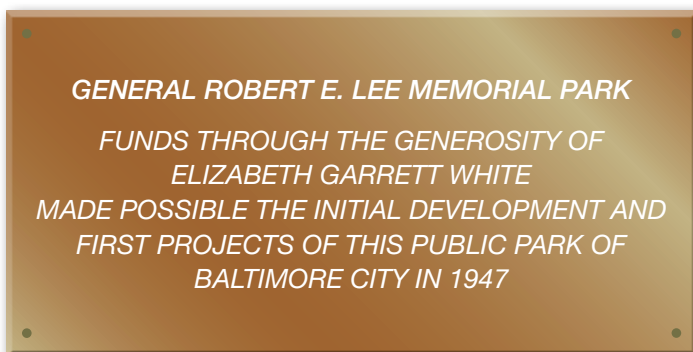
Tina Snyder .....Owings Mills  
 Susan and Don  
 Tannenbaum.....Owings Mills



## What's in a Name?

For seven decades the Baltimore Bird Club conducted field trips to their beloved "Lake Roland," tucked away just above the City line and slowly decaying. When Baltimore County took over the park in 2009 with promises to improve conditions, they created websites, signs and GPS directions using the formal Robert E. Lee Park (RELP) name. It is ironic that just as we were winning our struggle to get BBC members to use the name Robert E. Lee Park instead of the old familiar term Lake Roland, we may well be reverting once again.

Recent events in Baltimore City and Charleston SC have made us all re-examine the name and its broader context. First, a little history. In the 1940's the 450 acres of land surrounding the lake were consolidated to form Robert E. Lee Memorial Park. *But why the name Robert E Lee?* Lee was a Virginian, not a Marylander and had no particular connection to this area. A clue is provided in the park itself. Our super-sleuth, Carol Schreter, found a handsome bronze plaque atop a stone pillar located on the RELP peninsula along the paved Loop Trail by the Dog Park. It reads:



*Continued on page 8*

## Conservation CORNER

### Mowing for Wildlife: The First Year at Cromwell Valley Park

By Rose Anderson

I joined the BBC Conservation committee last year after the shock of finding fields at Cromwell Valley Park mowed down in the first week of July. Not only would such an ill-timed mowing be fatal to any ground-nesting birds who happened to be raising young there, it also destroys the host plants of the butterflies we all enjoy after spring migration. I had several opportunities to speak with county decision-makers, opening a friendly and mutually beneficial conversation that will lead to better field management in the long term.

Ideally, wild fields should be mowed only to prevent reforestation, and mowings should take place in very early spring once wintering birds no longer need the cover. But the solution is not as simple as asking the county to put wild fields on a three-year March mowing rotation.

In most cases, untimely mowings aren't done out of ignorance or any unwillingness on the county's part to preserve wildlife habitats. Summer mowings happen because Canada thistle is a noxious weed under Maryland law. The county is required remove it before it goes to seed and puts farmers' crops at risk. Unfortunately, thistle season coincides with nesting season, and that's when the county mowers have to come in and do their job. July mowings will continue until we do something about the thistle.

This spring and early summer I documented the scope of the problem and looked at ways to make removal of Canada thistle feasible without mowing. It is an aggressive perennial with deep root systems and suffers no permanent damage

*Continued on page 9*

I was immediately smitten with Ikumi and decided to “audit” the class to get photos and see if there might be a Chip Notes article here. One of those fortuitous decisions!

First, some background. Ikumi is an award-winning medical and scientific illustrator who has her own business, Studio Kayama. Her fifteen bird watching students came prepared with the appropriate drawing tools, or purchased them from her. With a casual, humorous manner, she talked about her love of birds and how she approached a drawing, beginning with the four basic shapes, a circle, oblong, triangle and rectangle. With ferocious intensity, our members starting practicing these simple forms. Intensity was the word of the day—members were so focused on their work they did not even notice me sneaking around taking photos.

Next was a sketching exercise called blind contour, in which one looks at the subject and without looking down at the paper, draws the contour. This is a practice to coordinate eyes and hand. To demonstrate, Ikumi sketched our merganser model. She drew the right profile first, starting at the top of the head, then the beak, neck, chest and belly, right leg, left leg. Never looking down, she then drew the left side, ending with the top of the head--terminating underneath the merg's beak (see photo page 1). The resulting laughter loosened everyone up knowing if the pro wasn't always perfect, they didn't have to be. More exercises followed on gesture sketches--trying to loosely capture the overall shape, and diagrammatic sketches--mixing words and drawings for record keeping.

Then the finale as students made rough sketches, filling in details. In two hours, the results were amazing. By this point, these novice artists proudly held up their completed work for me to photograph! Some drawings could be used to illustrate a book, others a cartoon column, but amazingly they all captured the essence of the bird. Thank you notes from attendees expressed

their appreciation for their newfound talent. We are all encouraging MOS to include Ikumi's class again next year!

Websites:

<http://studiokayama.com/bird-sketching-mos-2015/>

<https://www.facebook.com/StudioKayama>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cX8sqJYj06I>

## Birders at work



Ikumi Kayama with her sketches

## Baltimore's Water Wheel

By Joan Cwi

*Last month we mentioned how Baltimore City was using the storm water remediation fee to purchase additional street sweepers to reduce trash runoff. Here is another step the City has taken to clean the Bay.*

The Inner Harbor waters are looking cleaner lately, as our early morning Lights Out Baltimore collectors have noted. The mayor promised to make the harbor swimmable by 2020. But we are a throw-away society. So what is making the difference?

It just might be that strange-looking Water Wheel at the foot of Pier 6. Every time it rains, trash, debris and pollutants are carried into storm drains that spill into the Jones Falls and

Chesapeake Bay. This Water Wheel sucks up 50,000 pounds of trash daily, and moves it on a conveyor belt into a floating dumpster. The dumpster is then hauled daily, over water to the nearby RESCO waste-to-energy plant. There, the collected debris is converted to electrical energy.

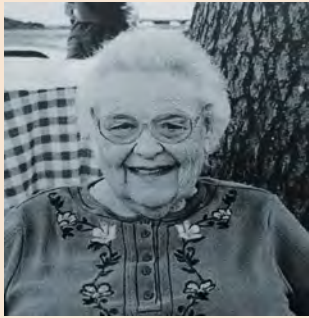
This Water Wheel is one-of-a-kind, designed by a local architectural firm, Ziger/Snead, and funded by the Maryland Port Authority and Constellation Energy. A model of energy efficiency, the Water Wheel operates on water current and solar power, puts oxygen back in the water, removes organic waste and educates people about pollution. Witness the video that became an internet sensation—it's an eye opener!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5l7s6wC50g>



## Catherine Bishop, RIP

March 1, 1927 – June 18, 2015



Several BBC members attended Catherine's memorial service at the Church of the Nativity, Cedarcroft. Her pastor gave the homily, in which he characterized Catherine as a "specific lady,"

that is, someone who is precise and particular. She even specified that the anthem "*His Eye is on the Sparrow*" be included in her funeral service. The pastor went on to tell the story about when he joined the congregation a couple of years ago, she made it clear exactly

how the choir and the church library worked—two things she controlled. The congregation chuckled, including we BBC members recalling her tenure as membership secretary. Catherine was an active BBC member for forty-seven years. She joined the BBC in 1968, was part of the nomination committee from 1999-2001, and membership secretary for the decade from 2003-2014. She worked on various projects, including the recent Breeding Bird Survey. And Catherine has not forgotten us in passing. We've been notified by the Register of Wills that she has left a donation to BBC, amount not yet known.

Thank you Catherine for what you have contributed to us both in the past and in the future.

## Hi Fellow Baltimoreans!



Do you recognize me? I'm the juvenile Peregrine Falcon that resides in the Nature Museum at Cylburn. In 1985 I was born in downtown Baltimore on the ledge of the USF&G (now Transamerica) building. My parents were Beauregard and Blythe. For those who

remember, Blyth was Beauregard's second wife after Scarlet. Their courtship resulted in four fertile eggs. Note the colored bands on my legs in case you want to double-check. All the USF&G peregrine eyases are banded while still in the nest and their later movement tracked to the degree possible. We all fledged, but my sister and I were daredevils. We were killed at a young age **flying into reflective glass** in nearby buildings. Thank you USF&G and Maryland Department of Natural Resources for donating my body to the Baltimore Bird Club for display at the Nature Museum. Come see me there! **And special thanks to Lights Out Baltimore for taking on this major challenge to bird fatality worldwide!!**



This year's crew—check out those feet already!

*If you want to learn more about the falcons that have nested downtown since 1977, including a new web cam of current activities, visit*

<http://www.chesapeakeconservancy.org/peregrine-falcon-webcam>

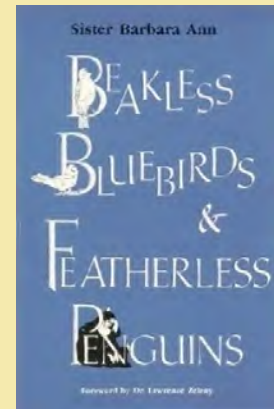
*Since this year's eyases have fledged, there are hours of no activity on the cam followed by a flash of excitement. Links are also available to information about the history of nesting falcons on this building, thanks to the Chesapeake Conservancy and donors.*



## Birdbits.....

### Book Review: Beakless Bluebirds & Featherless Penguins\*

An unlikely title; an unlikely author; an incomparable treat! Sister Barbara Ann has been a BBC member for eons, but tucked away unnoticed in All Saints Episcopal Convent in Catonsville. But she's now been discovered as several of our members have recently read her book, printed a quarter of a century ago. And we are unanimous in our admiration of the author in terms of love of birds and gardens, her humor and empathy, to say nothing of the blending of simplicity and sagacity. The same can be said for her drawings that are scattered throughout. This is the story of how the nuns of All Saints rescued two baby bluebirds (male and female) that had been gravely injured by a pugilistic house sparrow who also killed the parents. The nuns raised the pair through adulthood in the confines of the convent. The birds could never be released because their beaks had been so badly damaged they could not feed themselves.



The book is interspersed with the author's experiences, observations, and study of nature. I don't know which story I enjoyed most. Of course the stories about the developing Eleanor and Joshua (the injured bluebirds) were poignant and amusing, but perhaps next to them one of my favorites was the story about a child witnessing a religious statue being flung out of groundhog burrow by a new resident--years after Sister Barbara Ann had buried it there to get rid of it. "It's a miracle" the child declares! Not being Catholic I had to search for a reference to featherless penguins expecting them to appear at any moment in Sister Barbara Anne's office floor, but finally found it's true meaning after more carefully reading the opening chapter!

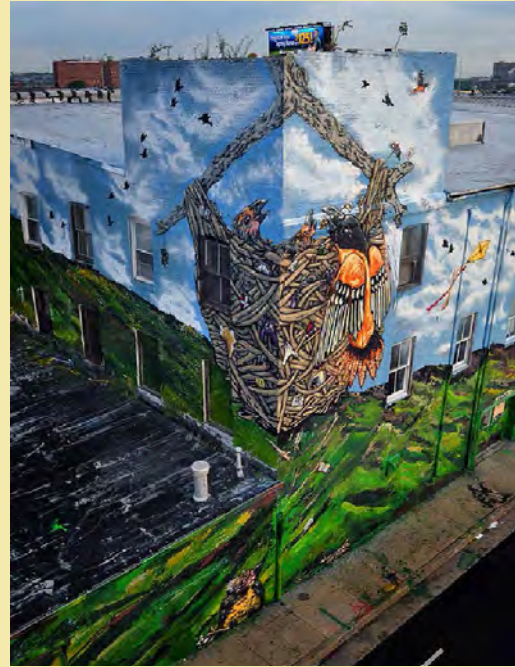
Savor this book! I wrote to Sister Barbara Ann asking if in the future we could use some of her chapters in Chip Notes, and she enthusiastically agreed. So keep your eyes peeled.

\*Sister Barbara Ann, *Beakless Bluebirds & Featherless Penguins*, Scriptorium Publications, 1990. Available on Amazon.

## Another Urban Façade Artist!

Funny how when one becomes sensitized to something, one sees it everywhere! Featured in the Summer Chip Notes were some Baltimore facades with paintings of birds. Since then another Baltimore urban artist has been discovered with interest in birds, Stefan Ways. Stefan lives in Portland Oregon now, but his Baltimore-based work is inspiring.

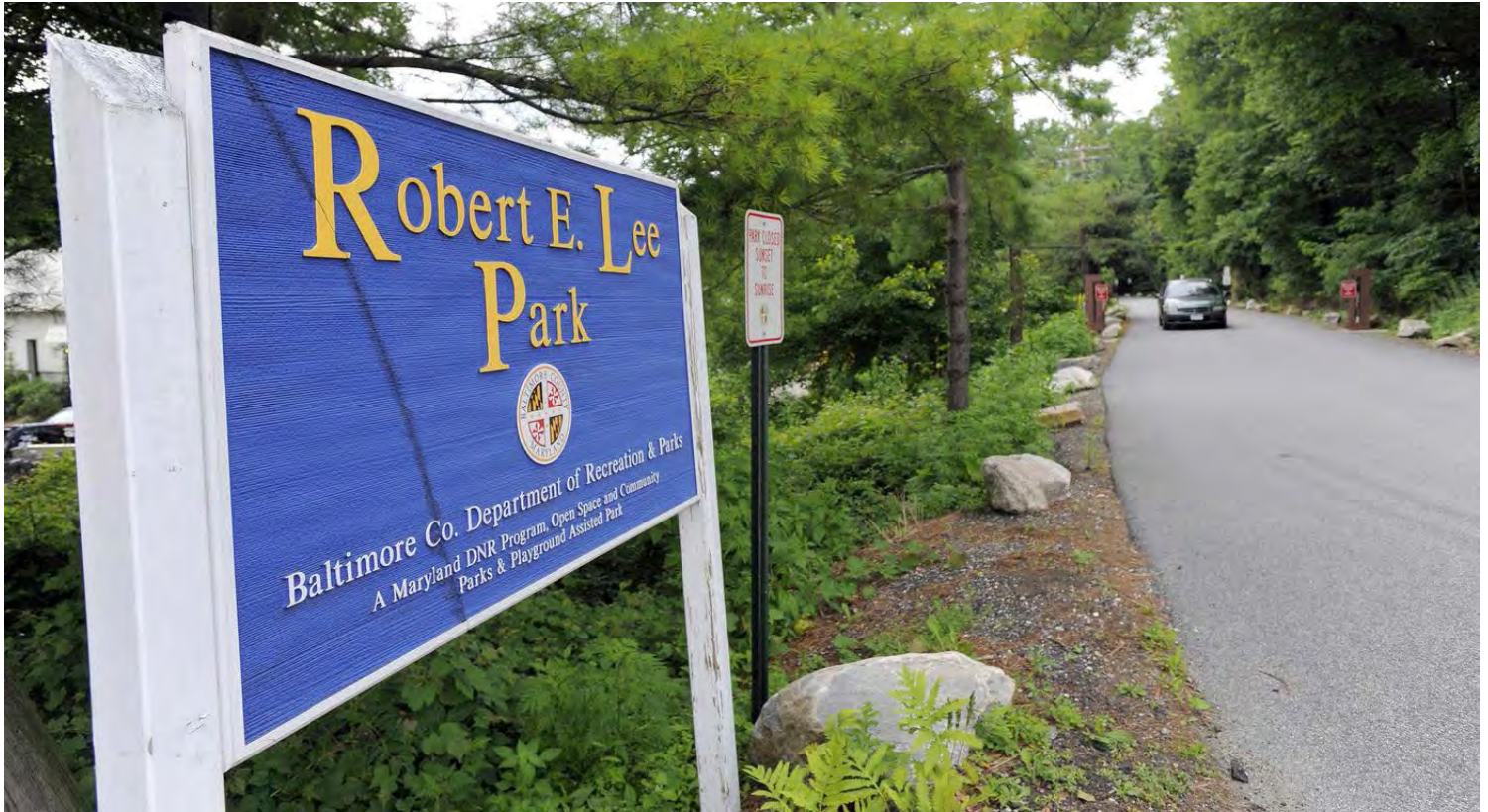
You can see more of his works at <http://stefan-ways.wix.com/stefan-ways-lexterior/cjg9>



Waner Street Mural Project



Blue Heron Preying on Paint Fish, 36th and Keswick Road



The Baltimore Sun reported in an editorial dated June 24, 2015, that Elizabeth Garrett (married name White), an heir to the B&O Railroad fortune, died in 1917 leaving no doubt in her will about her southern sympathies. Her will left funds for a statue of Lee to be placed in Druid Hill Park, but it never materialized. Nearly three decades later, her beloved nephew and will executor, Robert Garrett, while serving as chairman of the city's Board of Recreation and Parks, got permission to use \$80,000 from the estate to establish a park named for Lee on the city-owned land around Lake Roland.

But Carol found out even more. She references a book called *Druid Hill Park: The Heart of Historic Baltimore*.<sup>1</sup> Chapter 8, entitled "Racial Turmoil and Civil Rights," details the struggle to integrate Druid Hill Park. In 1949, following a bitter battle, the Park's Board voted to allow true integration at Druid Hill Park. Robert Garrett, described as "a fierce and lifelong segregationist" was outvoted and so he resigned from the Board. But by then RELP had been established.

*So what's in a name?* The historical link to slavery, segregation and the fact that the park honors a prominent figure in the Confederacy with no ties to this area, has long struck some as inappropriate, especially in a City that is predominately black and a County now 32% black.

It is time for change. Baltimore County Executive Kevin Kamenetz has moved to rename RELP Lake Roland Park and he has the full support of Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps by the time this article is printed, the name may be changed again to something evocative of the peace and tranquility it offers area residents!! Perhaps even back to Lake Roland, the name we have always used and loved.

<sup>1</sup> *Druid Hill Park: The Heart of Historic Baltimore* by Eden Unger Bowditch and Anne Draddy, 2008, pp 127-130.

<sup>2</sup> *City to Choose New Name for Robert E. Lee Park*, "The Baltimore Sun, July 18, 2015, p. 1



when cut down along with everything else around it. Selectively removing the healthy thistle plants will exhaust the deep root store as the thistle struggles to compete with the surrounding cover.

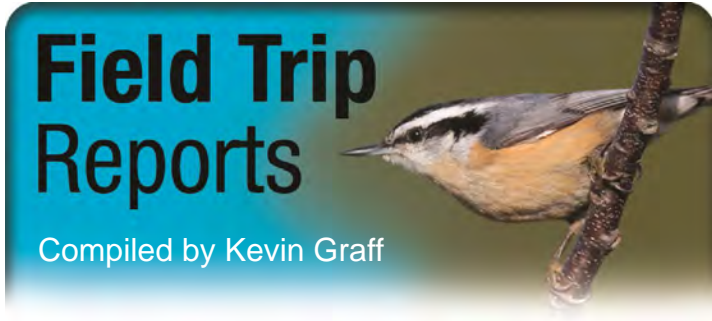
This problem has gone unchecked for many years and will take time to fully resolve. However, this first year marked significant progress. Laurie Taylor-Mitchell, a member of CVP's Nature Council, is reviving the habitat restoration team at Cromwell Valley Park. In cooperation, we removed a 40 ft. by 40 ft. area of the worst concentration of thistle to start diminishing the seed bank. I also removed thousands of thistle plants from areas in front of Sherwood House and Willow Grove Nature Center. I tested a variety of methods and found that we have some unexpected advantages:

1. Thistles tend to be concentrated at the edges of the fields, making the infestation seem worse than it actually is.
2. Weevils introduced for thistle control at some time in the past are eating some of the plants.
3. Much of the thistle is diseased, so that of all plants only a percentage of them are healthy enough to produce flowers or seeds.

There is hope, but those of us who want to see healthy numbers of our favorite birds happily singing at Cromwell must work together to provide the habitat for them. We need volunteer power to remove invasives and plant natives. We'll let you know when this effort renews in the spring!



Unplowed meadow with common milkweed at Cromwell Valley



Photos by Bill Hubick

**MAY 2 - ROCK RUN AREA, SUSQUEHANNA STATE PARK** - 20 warbler species seen or heard. The Prothonotary Warbler put on a nice show, a Yellow-throated Warbler was seen, we caught a look and a listen to Yellow-throated Vireos, a couple of glimpses of a Cerulean Warbler or two, heard a Kentucky Warbler, had nice looks at Scarlet Tanagers and a couple of Indigo Buntings freshly back for the summer, and saw an Orchard Oriole. With a stopover at Swan Harbor Farm afterwards, we also saw Glossy Ibis, a Virginia Rail and Horned Larks and heard King Rail and Sora. 103 species. 16 participants. Co-leaders: Pete Webb & Kevin Graff.

**MAY 3 - GWYNNS FALLS/LEAKIN PARK** - This walk featured eight species of warblers, and a nicely seen Scarlet Tanager. The group also got good looks at Northern Rough-winged Swallows and saw four species of thrushes. Northern Rough-winged Swallows and Wood Thrush are known to breed in the Park. 45 species. 19 participants. Leaders: Paul & Elise Kreiss.

**MAY 3 - SWIFT WATCH AT DUSK, SCOTTISH RITE TEMPLE** - On one of the first warm evenings of the year, we gathered together on the sidewalk of 39th Street to watch the chimney at the Scottish Rite Temple. Nothing happened. Then, as dusk approached, ever so slowly a few swifts appeared, then more, then more. Two went down about 8:10 pm, the rest of the swifts disappeared and slowly returned. Then at 8:20, as though a starting shot was sounded, the remaining 230 swifts funneled down within two minutes! A nice show. 18 participants, including neighbors who joined to find out what the fuss was about. Leaders: Joan Cwi, Alice Nelson, Carol Schreter.

**MAY 5 - ROBERT E LEE PARK** - At the head of the boardwalk we saw a Magnolia Warbler, our nesting Red-bellied Woodpecker, a flyover Green Heron and a half dozen Blue Jays. As the sun rose a multitude of different calls began with and everyone singing at once. Highlights included a Blackburnian Warbler and spotting both Orchard and Baltimore Orioles (both males) on the same branch. Also seen side by side were Solitary and Spotted Sandpipers; Blue-gray Gnatcatchers on their nest, 2 Wood Ducks sitting in a tree; and a pair of Yellow Warblers on their nest. Vireos finally showed up in significant numbers including White-eyed, Blue-headed, Yellow-throated and a plethora of Red-eyed. We fell short on our hoped for number of warbler species, but did get 65 species in all. Everyone seemed pleased with this good mix of birders and birds. 65 species. 21 participants. Leader: Ron Davis.

**MAY 16 - MILFORD MILL PARK** - Two separate sightings of a Gray-cheeked Thrush, the first seen together with a Swainson's Thrush by the stream—a nice comparison of those two. Then 2 hours later a second sighting a half-mile uphill, possibly a second individual Gray-cheek, by itself on the path and then among rocks not far from the path. Another unexpected sighting was three Double-crested Cormorants soaring high overhead, kettling for altitude and evidently on their way from the Chesapeake to the Great Lakes. The best warbler was a somewhat elusive Bay-breasted, seen a few times briefly in the thick of the tree leaves, between the two clearings on the streamside trail. Other warblers included Northern Waterthrush, Black-and-white (heard), American Redstart (one put on a show at the trailhead), Northern Parula, Magnolia, and Black-throated Blue. 8 warbler species total, but no repeated sighting of yesterday's Mourning Warbler. 42 species. 8 participants. Leader: Pete Webb.

**MAY 12 - ROBERT E LEE PARK** - Highlight: Barred Owl seen from boardwalk across train tracks; 5 Baltimore Oriole sightings; numerous birds calling but the leaf-out made them hard to find. Good close look at a Black Vulture perched. 64 species. 22 participants. Leader: Mary Chetelat.

**MAY 19 - ROBERT E LEE PARK** - Yesterday's heavy rain caused brown water to pour over the dam, where a perched, local, Red-shouldered Hawk was continually mobbed by a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher pair. The hawk just moved its head a little and was not concerned. There were more signs of nesting--a Great Crested Flycatcher pair were collecting nesting material; a female Scarlet Tanager showed us her nest "construction in progress" and a bright male finally came by to observe; and a mockingbird pair displayed their mating aerial and then ground dance with plenty of posturing. Warbler foraging groups were found scattered throughout the park and they were more numerous than in other recent bird walks. Other waves of migrant species included: Swainson's Thrushes, Magnolia and Blackburnian Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chat, Cedar Waxwings and others. Several Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were also spotted. 66 species. 19 participants. Leader: Chris Davidson.

**MAY 23 - BOMBAY HOOK NWR** - No rarities, but everyone really enjoyed the birds this day. Nice show by Seaside Sparrow, Marsh Wren, Willow Flycatcher, Tree Swallows in a "high rise" (trees with holes they were nesting in), Cedar Waxwings close by in a small tree, could see red dots on the wings, Blue Grosbeaks, Glossy Ibis, Black-necked Stilts, and other sandpipers, and Forster's Terns. 83 species. 8 participants. Leader: Pete Webb.



Ruffed Grouse

**MAY 30 - KIWANIS PARK** - The Great Egret nests are in pine trees on the north side of the pond, most in plain view! Some had 2 young, some 3 or even 4, some just one. We could hear the youngsters begging from across the pond, where



Elusive Black-crowned Night-Heron

we had our best view at a city park pond in the middle of York, PA! Black-crowned Night Herons were also there, but tucked into the branches and harder to see. As we watched, both heron types flew in and out bringing more nest materials. Afterward, we went to a member's home near Prettyboy to have lunch with the birds. Seen/heard at or near feeders: Red-shouldered Hawk, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, White-eyed Vireo, Purple Martin, House Wren, House Finch. We had a morning surprise with the appearance of a Ruffed Grouse! 41 species. 2 participants (the leaders!).

**MAY 31 - QUARRY LAKE** - As is usual at Quarry Lake - nesting birds are easy to find. We saw Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, American Robin, Tree Swallow and Eastern Kingbird on nests as well as many Canada Geese goslings. Highlights included a female Wood Duck, Green Heron and both Orchard And Baltimore Orioles. A Common Loon was present on the lake but flew off before anyone else arrived. 41 species. 15 participants. Leader: John Dennehy.

**JUN 5-7 CAREY RUN WEEKEND IN WESTERN MARYLAND** - Nine birders spent the weekend birding in Washington, Allegheny and Garrett counties. We saw/heard warblers, sparrows, lingering shorebirds (a few), Golden-crowned Kinglet, Meadowlark, Bobolink, and so on. Great looks at breeding Chestnut-sided Warblers. On Sunday, June 7 we ended the trip with superb looks at Henslow's and Grasshopper Sparrows--several of each! 85 species (or so). 9 participants. Leader: Peter Lev.

BALTIMORE BIRD CLUB  
http://baltimorebirdclub.org

A Chapter of

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
4915 Greenspring Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21209

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**Joan Cwi**, Editor  
**David Nelson**, Design

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**Moving or email change?**  
Send update to  
**Roberta Ross** at [robertabross@aol.com](mailto:robertabross@aol.com)

**Deadlines for submitting articles  
for upcoming issues:**

**October 24, 2015**



## Baltimore Bird Club APPLICATION

*Membership year is September 1–August 31. New members only 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Benefits include membership in the BBC and Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS), free field trips, quarterly BBC and MOS newsletters sent electronically, lectures and other events.

### Check dues category and circle amount sent.

Category	1-YR	½ YR	\$15.00
Individual	\$35.00	\$17.00	\$20.00
Household	\$45.00	\$22.50	\$5.00
Sustaining	\$100.00	\$5.00	
Junior*	\$10.00		<b>Chapter Only+</b>

\* 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