

Chip Notes

BALTIMORE BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER



FALL 2018 No. 405

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Breeding Bird Surveys

By Peter Lev; photos by Bill Hubick

Summer can be a slow time for birders. Nesting birds stay in the same place for several weeks, so there is no need to check for migrants arriving every day. Summer is, however, the appropriate time to survey the breeding bird population of a park or local patch.

In 2002-2006 MOS sponsored the second Maryland-DC Breeding Bird Atlas, which was eventually published by Johns Hopkins University Press. Elliott Kirschbaum and Debbie Terry were the Atlas Coordinators for Baltimore City/Baltimore County. I volunteered to atlas Lake Roland and vicinity—yes, “atlas” can be a verb. That experience gave me a great appreciation for Lake Roland’s varied bird habitats. But the best moment in my atlas area happened on a Saturday morning at Riderwood Elementary School, when fledgling Killdeer were jumping down from a flat roof. I had no idea they were nesting there!



Where's Waldo?

After a few years Debbie asked if I would also survey an area in Essex/ Middle River. It was new territory for me, and fun to explore. Notable finds were Osprey (a nest on a light pole), Grasshopper Sparrow, Purple Martin, Kentucky Warbler and Barred Owl. Sadly, some woodlands I visited were soon to be houses and apartment buildings. This sector may have a smaller list on the next statewide atlas.

Continued on page 8

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! We look forward to seeing you out there on our birding trips and at our meetings.

Freddi Flax	Baltimore	Mary Delia	Bowie
Dave Russell & Anching Tang ...	Baltimore	David Norbrook	Pikesville



Nesting Falcon....

President's Corner by Peter Lev



YMOS Backpack Award

YMOS (the Y stands for “Youth”) is a highly successful committee of the Maryland Ornithological Society devoted to teaching and encouraging young birders. As coordinated by George Radcliffe and Wayne Bell, this group sponsors field trips for young birders around our state. It puts on a Birdathon in March to raise money for the World Series of Birding in May. At the World Series, based in New Jersey, high school teams from YMOS dominate their age group and they sometimes see more species than any adult team.

To encourage youth birding at the chapter level, YMOS offers several backpack awards each year to young birders. Promising youngsters are recognized with the gift of a backpack, a pair of starter binoculars, and a field guide. It's often the case that being recognized is more important than the specifics of the gift.

In 2018 BBC reached out to Patterson Park Audubon (PPA) for help in finding the right candidate for a backpack award. PPA has an outstanding nature education program focused on the neighborhoods around the park. The winning candidate was Melaki Beckles, a rising seventh grader at Hampstead Hill Academy in Baltimore City. Alexa White of Audubon Green Leaders (a program for middle school students on climate change and the environment) described Melaki as follows: “Melaki has a deep passion for the environment and a keen eye for birds. He loves the unique colors and sounds of birds. He is almost always the first to identify newly sighted birds on Green Leaders’ bird walks in Patterson Park.” Thanks to Alexa, Susie Creamer, and Erin Reed of PPA for recommending Melaki for the award.



Melaki Beckles, sister Carter Griffin, mother India Griffin, Alexa White

NOTICE: NEW WAYS TO PAY BBC/ MOS MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

MOS will introduce a new, upgraded website in 2018-2019. It will have a great deal of chapter and statewide information, plus the option of paying for membership via PayPal. BBC members will be notified via email, monthly eNews, etc., as the new website goes online.

Conservation CORNER

Mystery of Bald Eagle Deaths Solved

By Joan Cwi

Do you remember the headline from two years ago announcing that thirteen bald eagles, mature and immature, were found dead on a Maryland farm—wings splayed, bodies intact and talons clenched. There were no signs of trauma to the bodies and it was speculated that they had been poisoned. A report on the cause of these deaths was recently exposed by the Baltimore Sun (June 20, 2018*). It took two years to identify the poison—carbofuran. Six of the eagles were sent to the Fish and Wildlife Service Forensics Laboratory in Oregon. Five of the six had eaten raccoon, some had eaten deer or chicken, the

sixth had eaten marsh rice rat. Carbofuran was found on the fur of the raccoon. It was speculated that the raccoon had died of the carbofuran and was subsequently eaten by the eagles.

Carbofuran has been under scrutiny by the Environmental Protection Agency for three decades. The granular form was banned in the mid-1990's, in part because it is highly toxic to birds. And in 2009 the liquid form, used on food crops, was disallowed for being an “unacceptable safety risk.” It is an acute toxin, meaning it can kill after a single exposure.

The owner of the farm was deemed to not to be responsible, and no one else has been identified. But there is no doubt the poison was used illegally, whether intended for the eagles or something else.

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/eastern-shore/bs-md-bald-eagles-dead-eastern-shore-20180620-story.html>



One of 13 bald eagles found dead on farm near Federalsburg on June 20, 2016



Birdbits.....

BBC Summer Picnic

On Sunday, June 10th, BBC held its annual summer picnic at Oregon Ridge. Despite the rain, we had about 32 people of all ages show up. As usual, the food and company were excellent. Below are a few photos of us enjoying the event.



Enjoying the meal and company...



Brent Byers and Mary Gruver-Byers



Jeanne Bowman, Joe Turner, Leslie Starr and Kevin Graff



Martin Granbom and daughters

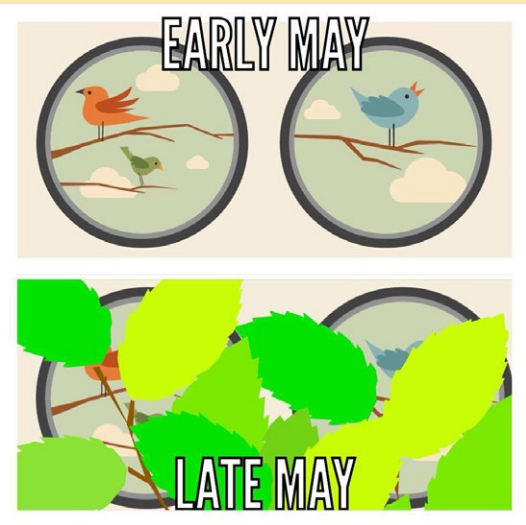


Debbie and Lou Taylor

Change in BBC Facebook Administration

As many of you already know, our premier youth birder, Claire Wayner, will be starting her freshman year at Princeton University this fall. And while we're confident she will continue her interest in birding and bird conservation there, it leaves us with a hole in our capabilities and sorrow in our heart. With her departure, we needed to find a replacement for her as our Facebook Administrator, and I'm happy to say that Cathy Czajkowski has agreed to take on this task. So next time you see her, give her the high five!!

A slow quarter, so here's a few bird cartoons to entertain you!



The oily bird gets the worm...

Travel Tips

Readers have requested a small section of Chip Notes be devoted to travel tips from our members. What they hope to see is a paragraph or two describing places within the US (outside of Maryland) or worldwide that they have enjoyed birding, and why. Below are the first two, sent in by Carol Schreter and Debbie Taylor. I also appreciate receiving more extensive trip reports, such as the article in this edition on Cape May contributed by Jim Highsaw.

Please consider contributing some of your favorites by sending them to me, Joan Cwi, at jafjsc@verizon.net by the next Chip Notes deadline.

Sanibel Island, Florida

I travel with a non-birder. Our favorite winter get-away to bird and bike is Sanibel Island on the Gulf Coast of Florida, just west of Ft. Meyers. I spend most of my time at the J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, on a 4-mile Wildlife Drive, or roaming the 6,400 acres of protected land around the island. Several days a week, I take bird or plant walks with knowledgeable Refuge volunteers.

I stay a week, or two, or three, so I rent lodging with a small kitchen. Want to know more? Call me....

Carol Schreter (410) 664-5151

C.Schreter@comcast.net



Maine Coast, Acadia National Park and Grand Manan Island

Maine, picture quintessential small sleepy fishing towns with lobster boats, lobster traps and lobster restaurants. Go for clean air, beautiful flowers, small town friendliness, lighthouses, bike riding, home-made baked goods and fresh ice cream.

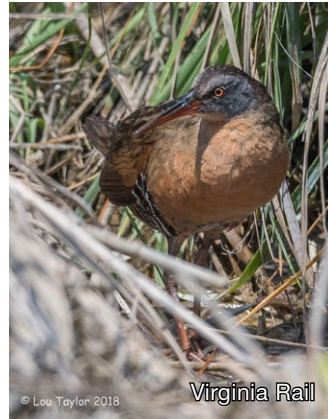
There are many nature conservancies and wildlife refuges, as well as Acadia National Park. Exploring during the busy season is possible by staying on the "quiet" side of Acadia.

Summer birding still allows additions to your life list. We saw a Little Egret, which was not supposed to be in the area, and we also watched a Virginia Rail pop out of a marsh. Many Chestnut-side Warblers and Black-throated Green Warblers were also seen. Definitely take the ferry to Grand Manan Island to find Puffins off Machias Seal Island.

Feel free to contact us for details.

By Debbie & Lou Taylor 410-852-9807

debrataylor11@gmail.com



Spring at Cape May

by Jim Highsaw and Linda Prentice

During May 12–19, 2018 we made our 41st visit to Cape May, NJ, staying in a comfortable rental house in Cape May Point. Rather than rush around compiling a long list of species, we took a more leisurely approach and took our time at each birding area. We also had to work around the intermittent rain showers which occurred that week. Here are some of the highlights for each area visited in Cape May County:

A variety of shorebirds and a Green Heron at the Wetlands Institute; Ospreys and a fly-by American Oystercatcher at the Coast Guard Ponds; a White-eyed Vireo on the nature trail at the State Park at the lighthouse and long-distance looks at a Magnificent Frigatebird (way out of its range) from the lighthouse parking lot; Red Knots, Ruddy Turnstones, Semipalmated Sandpipers, Dunlins and Willets at Reed's Beach, Kimble's Beach and Pierce's Point; stunning Indigo Buntings at the Higbee Beach WMA along with a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, a Pewee and lots of Box Turtles; nesting Marsh Wrens at Jake's Landing; and some warblers at the Garrett Family Preserve (Nature Conservancy). Some of the best birding of the trip was at the house in Cape May Point and around Lily Lake, where we had six warbler species, Yellow-throated

Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. We also photographed a Northern Flicker waiting out a rain shower on the side of a tree.

We also visited the Stone Harbor Sanctuary, Cape May Meadows and Shell Bay Landing, but did not find anything not seen in other places. A most enjoyable visit in spite of the weather !



Photo by Linda Prentice

Baltimore May Count Results

On May 12th of this year, 52 hardy BBC members spent 74 hours and 22 minutes walking and drove 42.7 miles counting birds for the national May Bird Count. In total we identified 142 species and counted 5,978 individual birds. Thank you Kevin Graff for coordinating this effort!

— See totals by species identified on page 9

Continued from page 1



Atlasing does not require seeing chicks in a nest—though that is always nice. If you find an active nest, or an adult feeding young, or obvious fledglings, that is “confirmed” breeding. “Probable” breeding during “safe days,” the period when a species is breeding and not migrating, has a much lower bar. If you hear a male singing in approximately the same place on two separate occasions, at least one week apart, that is an example of probable breeding. “Possible” breeding means only that you saw a species in your territory during safe days.



This summer I am once again atlasing, but on a much smaller scale. Lake Roland Nature Council (LRNC) is gradually restoring a Serpentine meadow on the west side of the park, and I was asked to do a study of the birds nesting

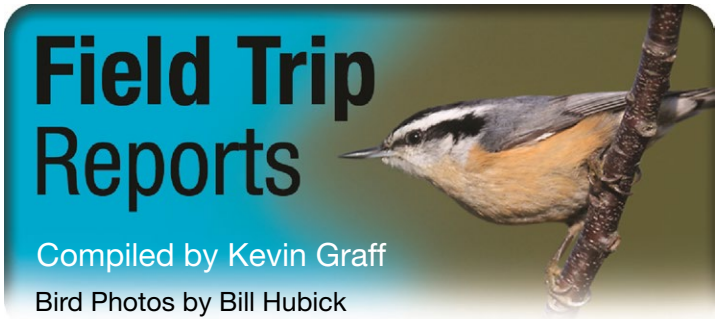
there. Roger Latham, LRNC’s consultant on the project, expressed particular interest in five species: Eastern Towhee, White-Eyed Vireo, Prairie Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Common Nighthawk. The Serpentine Barrens was part of my territory in 2002-2006, so I knew what breeding birds were present 15 years ago. Towhees were common, White-eyed Vireos less common, and I found one Prairie Warbler (a “possible” rather than “probable” breeder). No indication of Chat or Nighthawk. After several visits this year I can report that the situation is relatively stable. There are still lots of Towhees and White-eyed Vireos, perhaps more Vireos than in 2002-2006. No Prairie Warbler (alas!) or Chat. Nighthawks are doubtful, but I can’t really check—must be out of the park by sunset.



It’s been fun to be involved once again in a breeding bird survey. I hope you, too will get involved, when the chance comes your way.

Continued from page 7

Baltimore May Count Results 5/12/2018			
Canada Goose	160	Willow Flycatcher	1
Wood Duck	31	Least Flycatcher	4
Gadwall	2	Eastern Phoebe	19
Mallard	73	Great Crested Flycatcher	51
Northern Pintail	1	Eastern Kingbird	55
Wild Turkey	1	White-eyed Vireo	12
Double-crested Cormorant	56	Yellow-throated Vireo	13
American Bittern	1	Blue-headed Vireo	5
Least Bittern	1	Warbling Vireo	18
Great Blue Heron	23	Red-eyed Vireo	177
Great Egret	1	Blue Jay	120
Little Blue Heron	1	American Crow	114
Green Heron	6	Fish Crow	21
Black Vulture	40	Common Raven	5
Turkey Vulture	98	Horned Lark	1
Osprey	29	N. Rough-winged Swallow	30
Bald Eagle	7	Purple Martin	1
Red-shouldered Haw	31	Tree Swallow	106
Broad-winged Hawk	1	Bank Swallow	2
Red-tailed Hawk	21	Barn Swallow	66
Killdeer	4	Carolina Chickadee	101
Spotted Sandpiper	9	Black-capped Chickadee	
Solitary Sandpiper	9	Tufted Titmouse	113
Greater Yellowlegs	1	White-breasted Nuthatch	36
Lesser Yellowlegs	1	House Wren	65
Ring-billed Gull	12	Marsh Wren	2
Herring Gull	4	Carolina Wren	103
Great Black-backed Gull	3	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	140
Least Tern	19	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2
Caspian Tern	2	Eastern Bluebird	34
Rock Pigeon	40	Veery	9
Mourning Dove	121	Swainson's Thrush	22
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	4	Wood Thrush	75
Black-billed Cuckoo	3	American Robin	281
Barred Owl	1	Gray Catbird	208
Common Nighthawk	5	Brown Thrasher	4
Chimney Swift	110	Northern Mockingbird	43
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	29	European Starling	267
Belted Kingfisher	5	Cedar Waxwing	124
Red-headed Woodpecker	3	Ovenbird	79
Red-bellied Woodpecker	86	Worm-eating Warbler	7
Downy Woodpecker	43	Louisiana Waterthrush	21
Hairy Woodpecker	13	Northern Waterthrush	7
Northern Flicker	17	Blue-winged Warbler	1
Pileated Woodpecker	14	Black-and-white Warbler	22
American Kestrel	4	Tennessee Warbler	9
Eastern Wood-Pewee	56	Nashville Warbler	2
Acadian Flycatcher	41	Kentucky Warbler	1
		Common Yellowthroat	171
		Hooded Warbler	5
		American Redstart	87
		Cape May Warbler	2
		Cerulean Warbler	1
		Northern Parula	62
		Magnolia Warbler	39
		Bay-breasted Warbler	12
		Blackburnian Warbler	5
		Yellow Warbler	31
		Chestnut-sided Warbler	4
		Blackpoll Warbler	62
		Black-throated Blue Warbler	27
		Palm Warbler	1
		Pine Warbler	9
		Yellow-rumped Warbler	19
		Yellow-throated Warbler	4
		Prairie Warbler	18
		Black-throated Green Warbler	16
		Canada Warbler	25
		Wilson's Warbler	11
		Grasshopper Sparrow	2
		Chipping Sparrow	89
		Field Sparrow	19
		White-throated Sparrow	48
		Savannah Sparrow	2
		Song Sparrow	37
		Lincoln's Sparrow	1
		Swamp Sparrow	7
		Eastern Towhee	18
		Yellow-breasted Chat	5
		Summer Tanager	1
		Scarlet Tanager	52
		Northern Cardinal	261
		Rose-breasted Grosbeak	5
		Blue Grosbeak	6
		Indigo Bunting	62
		Bobolink	3
		Eastern Meadowlark	1
		Orchard Oriole	19
		Baltimore Oriole	58
		Red-winged Blackbird	207
		Brown-headed Cowbird	89
		Common Grackle	93
		House Finch	94
		American Goldfinch	199
		House Sparrow	147



APR 29–CYLBURN–As we gathered in the Cylburn parking lot, 2 male Baltimore Orioles briefly perched on a bare tree. The other highlight was a close Broad-winged Hawk. Cylburn is a pretty place to walk in the spring. 27 species. 14 participants. Leader: Peter Lev.

MAY 1–LAKE ROLAND – A nice surprise was the 2 Rusty Blackbirds seen from the boardwalk. We had 7 warbler species, including a gorgeous male Blackburnian. 62 species. 12 participants. Leader: Peter Lev.

MAY 1–PHOENIX POND–Pretty good bird activity: Bald Eagle flyby, Broad-winged Hawk soaring, 2 Blue-headed Vireos, 9 warbler species including Worm-eating Warbler and Louisiana Waterthrush and both orioles at the pond; Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Cliff Swallow and Swamp Sparrow at the flats. 65 species. 7 participants. Coordinator: Kevin Graff.



MAY 5–SUSQUEHANNA STATE PARK–We started the walk at the Rock Run Historic Area with lots of movement along river edge: Worm-eating Warblers, Louisiana Waterthrush, singing Prothonotary Warbler, male Scarlet Tanager along old railroad tracks. At the next stop at Deer Creek Bridge we saw a female hummingbird sitting on a nest above the creek (found by a Harford Bird Club member). Along the Wildflower Trail warblers were all over the place with 15 species



including 5 Cape May, 1 Blackburnian and a tough look at a singing Yellow-throated Warbler. Last stop at Deer Creek Picnic Area where we found a male Kentucky Warbler perched high for all to see. At end of path overlook open area, heard and seen: Prairie Warbler, Chipping Sparrows, Yellow-breasted Chat, Indigo Bunting. Highlights submitted by Kevin Graff. 81 species. 8 participants. Leaders: Brent & Mary Byers.

MAY 6–OREGON RIDGE/AG CENTER–At Oregon Ridge we had 11 warbler species plus Rose-breasted Grosbeak (9 of them) and Veery. At Center for MD Agriculture we saw all the target birds; Bobolinks, Grasshopper Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark and Savannah Sparrow. Great find! 67 species. 12 participants. Leader: Simon Best.

MAY 8–LAKE ROLAND–On a beautiful morning, the rather large group had a steady stream of bird sightings. Large numbers of Yellow-rumped Warblers, Cedar Waxwings, swallows. Exciting views of 2 male Baltimore Orioles squabbling near the dog park, and numerous other oriole sightings. 8 warbler species including 3 views of Chestnut-sided and Blackpoll Warblers. Overhead 2 Bald Eagles were soaring together. Heard the distant call of a cuckoo (yellow-billed) on the way back. Great morning. Too bad some folks pulled off before going down the lake trail. A long walk but worth it! 67 species. 23 participants. Leader: Mary Chetelat.



MAY 8–PHOENIX POND–Not as busy as last week, but a nice look at an adult eagle flyby upriver, a pair of Cooper’s Hawk flyby, good look at a Yellow-throated Vireo, more gnatcatchers flitted thru treetops, 6 warbler species including a closeup view of a male Chestnut-sided , Swamp Sparrow low in wet fields, distant male Scarlet Tanager on a perch, and both orioles at the pond. Water birds included a Great Egret, several shorebirds including Killdeer, Least Sandpiper, Spotted, Solitary and a Lesser Yellowlegs. Several Cliff Swallows were flying around and a stunning male Magnolia Warbler was visible at the flats. 62 species, 8 participants. Coordinator: Kevin Graff.

MAY 15–PHOENIX POND/MILFORD MILL PARK–Due to the cold front the night before, we switched to Milford Mill Park and found 65 species in four hours. Both cuckoos calling, 4 thrush species including 17 Swainson’s; 16 warbler species including 14 Redstarts and 6 Bay-breasted. A few of us saw a female Mourning Warbler skulked low near the end of boardwalk. A great day we had. 65 species. 6 participants. Coordinator: Kevin Graff.

MAY 20–CROMWELL VALLEY PARK–Migration was late this spring, so we had plenty of warbler activity. 9 species of warblers plus both orioles and a female Scarlet Tanager. An interesting wren drove us crazy in the field. Thanks to Matt Lince’s photo, we later identified it as a Marsh Wren. 45 species. 10 participants. Leader: Peter Lev.

MAY 22–PHOENIX POND/NORTH POINT STATE PARK–Due to rain forecasted, no one planned to go so Alan and Sue Young and Kevin Graff went to North Point State Park instead. Along entrance drive, we found 2 Snowy Egrets and a Little Blue Heron in a wet field; good timing with southern breeze with shorebirds on the move with flock of 6 Black-bellied Plover following by a Whimbrel. Short time later, we found a nice size flock of 21 Whimbrels flying right overhead. Terns out in bay included Least, Caspian and Common. Trip cut short when heavy rain appeared. 48 species, 3 participants.



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

Submit materials to
Joan Cwi – jafjsc@verizon.net

Moving or email change?
Send update to
Terry Ross at trosstva@gmail.com

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

October 24, 2018



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	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