

Chip Notes

BALTIMORE BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER



SUMMER 2019 No. 408

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My Neighbors

Article by Terry Ross

For the last several years my pleasant Baltimore neighborhood has been disrupted by a couple of very obnoxious neighbors. They are often loud, they are brutal, they do not clean up after themselves—and their children can be even worse. I know where they live: these neighbors are Peregrine Falcons who have taken up residence in the Roland Water Tower at 4210 Roland Avenue. This may be their last year in my neighborhood, and despite their misbehavior I will be sorry if they move out.

I don't know how long I have had these neighbors; I first learned about them in 2015, but there is an eBird report from the previous year, and some people who live by the tower tell me they have been seeing peregrines for longer than that. The peregrines have become an important chapter of the Roland Water Tower's long history.

Continued on page 8



Water Tower Female Peregrine Falcon
Photo by Terry Ross

WELCOME!

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

Thomas Crusse..... Baltimore
Angie Gipson Baltimore || Beth Russo | Baltimore |
| Megan & Walter Shook..... | Baltimore |
| Lydia Thomas | Baltimore |

Muffin and Sam Dell Cockeysville || Derek Hudgins..... | Cockeysville |
| Shirley Crow | Nottingham |
| Pam Lucas..... | Ruxton |

President's Corner

by Peter Lev



Remembering Catherine

Photos by Lou Taylor

J. Catherine Bishop was for many years Membership Secretary of the Baltimore Bird Club. She always conducted BBC business with a twinkle in her eye. For example, there was one year when I just didn't get around to paying my dues. Catherine called and said "Peter, I know you meant to send in your check." I mumbled some excuse, because I had meant to pay my membership. Catherine replied "That's what I thought. No problem at all, just send me a check." All this in a friendly, upbeat way. A nagging phone call became kind of fun.



When Catherine died, then-BBC President Joan Cwi was surprised to learn that she had left some money to the club. Joan was more surprised to learn the amount—\$126,800. Catherine's position at Johns Hopkins University Library had been modest. But, as we discovered, she lived simply and had saved an impressive amount. With no close relatives, she made bequests to her employer, her church, and even the Baltimore Bird Club.

Some of Catherine's bequest went toward current expenses, but most of it went into the BBC Memorial Fund. That fund supports educational programs,

conservation projects, local ornithological research, and ways to grow or improve the club. Over the past few years we have supported a project which tracked the movements of Snowy Owls, a conservation-themed art exhibition, scholarships for a Boy Scout nature camp, and so on. Catherine's generosity lets us do more of this locally-focused philanthropy.

Also, the BBC Board of Directors wanted to do something just for Catherine. We approached Cromwell Valley Park about a memorial bench, but they weren't interested. However, Lake Roland did have a memorial bench program. So Catherine now has her own bench at Lake Roland, near the steps that lead down to the Light Rail tracks. It's on the route that we always take for field trips. Next time you visit Lake Roland, take a moment to read the inscription: "In memory of J. Catherine Bishop, Baltimore Bird Club." And by all means use the bench! Catherine would have appreciated such a practical token of our esteem.

March Madness

March was a crazy time for BBC. It began on March 5th with a selection of officers for next year, and beside the usual lecture and Board meeting, included our rescheduled annual Covered Dish Dinner, provided a lecture/luncheon at the Waterfront Café, and hosted a book premier at the Vollmer Center for *Birds of Maryland, District of Columbia, and Virginia*. See below for more.

Mar. 3 (Sun) Annual Covered Dish Dinner

Vollmer Center, Cylburn Arboretum

BBC's major social event of the year had to be rescheduled from January to March due to a January snowstorm. Not to be outguessed, it snowed again on March 3rd (but not as much), and to our surprise and delight 67 of you hardy souls turned out anyway.

Our speaker, world-renowned world birder Peter Kaestner, shared stories from his Forrest-Gumpian life in a lecture called, "From Zero to 9000—a life of listing." Peter is the first American to see 9000 species of birds (he's up to 9192), and is the #1 world lister on eBird.

In addition to the lecture, We had the usual festivities—talking with friends, buying books and BBC T-shirts, a raffle, and of course, a wonderful potluck dinner.

Mar. 23 (Sat) Baltimore Bird Club Luncheon, Birds of the Chesapeake

At Island View Waterfront Café, 2542 Island View Road, Essex MD

This was a new event for BBC, and was organized by Kevin Graff. In celebration of spring migration, BBC gave two lunchtime presentations on migrating birds. And from the waterfront view of the Café, we all got to see many of the birds we were talking about. Attending was a mixed crowd of 26 BBC members as well as numerous other birders from various parts of Maryland.

First Jim Rapp talked about what birds we'd expect to see and when to expect them. And, almost as if he had choreographed it, many of the birds would suddenly appear outside as he discussed the species! Of course there were the ubiquitous Canada Geese and Mallards, but then suddenly there were Buffleheads, Gadwalls, and Greater Scaups. Most impressive were the two last birds he discussed, Bald Eagle and Osprey. We had been watching the Osprey nest with two birds during the whole lecture, but as Jim talked about how the Eagle and Osprey were ardent enemies, an eagle flew in over the nest and the two Ospreys took out after it. We saw 26 species, just while we were sitting there enjoying ourselves.

Joan Cwi gave a presentation on bird migration discussing this awe-inspiring natural phenomenon in terms of distances and flights, the different patterns of migration and the reasons for the differences, and giving specific examples different migration patterns of for birds you see in your backyard.



Mar. 24 (Sun) Book Launch, Birds of Maryland, Delaware and the District of Columbia

Vollmer Center, Cylburn Arboretum

Author Bruce Beehler and photographer Middleton Evans presented their new book at the Vollmer Center.



Bruce Beehler and Middleton Evans autographing books for attendees.

Bruce is a distinguished ornithologist who more or less grew up at Cylburn; his mother was a Baltimore Bird Club volunteer. Middleton is a brilliant nature photographer. Bruce and Middleton both spoke to an audience of about 140 people about their experiences in writing this marvelous book! They dutifully signed over 100 books bought by the audience. This event was co-sponsored by BBC, MOS, Cylburn Arboretum Association and Johns Hopkins University Press.



Jim Rapp lecturing to an intense audience



Birdbits.....

Nesting Bald Eagles at Masonville Cove

In addition to the Peregrine Falcon on the water tower, there have been two other interesting nestings in our area.

By Tim Carney

A pair of Bald Eagles is nesting at Masonville Cove for the first time since restoration efforts began. MDOT MPA, MES, USFWS, and Living Classrooms Foundation are collaborating to minimize disturbance to these birds, which are likely a young pair undergoing their first nesting attempt. Effective immediately, access to Masonville Cove is limited to a small area outlined in green directly behind the Education Center during the 2019 breeding season (see map).



Masonville Cove Eagle nest. Photo by Tim Carney

We anticipate that access will gradually be increased towards the end of breeding season (approximately mid-May), and will be fully reinstated after the young eagles fledge (approximately late May). Onsite activities are also being limited or suspended

during this time period, and onsite staff will be monitoring the eagles' behavior during the few activities which occur near the nest to assess any need for additional restrictions.

Much of Masonville Cove, including most of the waterfowl, can still be observed from the limited areas of access. We invite you to come enjoy the cove and to view the eagle nest from the Education Center balcony.



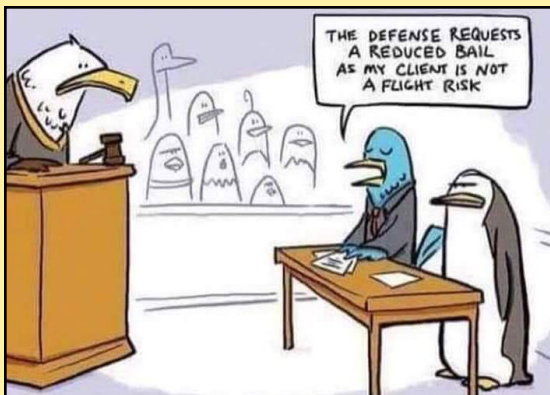
Nesting Northern Ravens in downtown Towson

In April a Raven's nest with 4 young was seen in Towson on the east face of the General Dynamics building on the center part of the east face, just above the last set of horizontal windows. They were easily viewed with a spotting scope from the rooftop parking lot of the Baltimore County Public Library. It costs a few bucks to park there, but the view was not only good for the nest but also good for watching the adults as they hunted and flew around downtown Towson!



Photos from Green Towson Alliance

As reported by Jim Meyers on Facebook, of particular interest is how the adults reacted when raptors got too close to the nest. Red-tailed Hawks seemed to be tolerated somewhat, while Turkey Vultures were escorted away quickly. Perhaps this is because Ravens are known to cache food that Vultures may find. The chicks have now fledged, and they and their parents have been sighted flying around in downtown Towson.



Florida East Coast

by Jim Highsaw and Linda Prentice

During February 12–15, 2019 we visited birding areas on or close to Florida's east coast, from Titusville south to Boynton Beach. These included the Merritt Island NWR, the Viera Wetlands, the Loxahatchee NWR and the Wakodahatchee Wetlands. Wakodahatchee was a new area for us, the others were repeat visits. We managed to work around some bad weather and some dike road closures and found plenty of good birds and took some good photos.



Limpkin at Loxahatchee NWR
Photo by Jim Highsaw

After a night in Titusville, we drove to the Merritt Island NWR Wildlife Drive and discovered it was closed because of heavy rains. So, we went to the Visitor Center and walked on the Boardwalk Trail. Right off the bat we found a Painted Bunting and further along a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers, a Yellow-rumped Warbler, a White-eyed Vireo and a Carolina Wren. On the way back to Titusville, we stopped at the Indian River bridge and found a pair of Lesser Scaup in the river. After lunch we went to the wetlands at the Blue Heron Water Treatment Plant and found a nice assortment of birds, although nothing unusual. Favorites included Little Blue Heron, Glossy Ibis, Red-shouldered Hawk, Belted Kingfisher and Palm Warbler.

The second day we drove south to the Viera Wetlands and discovered the dike road was closed. However, near the entrance we found a Roseate Spoonbill and a couple of Wood Storks. Then we continued driving south to our motel in West Palm Beach. We started the third day with a visit to the Loxahatchee NWR, where we hadn't been since 1992. First we birded on the Boardwalk Trail through the cypress swamp behind the Visitor Center. Part way along the trail we encountered a nice mixed-species flock which was very cooperative. It included a Yellow-throated Vireo, a Blue-headed

Vireo, a Black-and-White Warbler, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, some Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and a Downy Woodpecker. Then we finished the Boardwalk Trail and walked over to the Marsh Trail around the impoundments. Here we got some good photos of Limpkins and Great Blue Herons, and saw a variety of wading birds including a Roseate Spoonbill.

After lunch we visited the nearby Wakodahatchee Wetlands, a new area for us. We were kind of surprised at how popular it is, and how close the boardwalk is to nesting Wood Storks, Great Blue Herons and Anhingas. We found some species here not seen elsewhere on the trip, including Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Purple Gallinule and Green Heron.

On the last day we drove north to Viera, reached the Wetlands just as the road was opened, and enjoyed seeing Limpkins, Wood Storks, a Roseate Spoonbill, herons, egrets, ibis and other water birds. After lunch we drove back to Titusville and spent the rest of the day on the Wildlife Drive at Merritt Island. Some of the highlights were Bald Eagle, Blue-winged Teal, Tricolored Heron and Forster's Tern. We headed back to Baltimore with some good photos and glad that we had a nice day at Loxahatchee after a long absence.

Jungle Lodge in Belize

By Carol Schreter

I'm basically a backyard birder. Who else lives here? How do they interact? What do they eat? So as a birdwatching traveler — I prefer to visit some interesting eco-lodge and stay a week or so.

With a birding friend in March 2019, I spent 6 nights at Chan Chich Lodge in northwest Belize, which I first visited 16 years ago. It was as magical as I remembered. This is an upscale lodge located in the rainforest by the Guatemalan border, on 30,000 acres of private conservation land. It sits amid 200,000+ acres of public conservation land and sustainably managed forest.

This lodge is built upon a Mayan plaza. We slept in a thatched roof cottage with a wrap-around porch, perfect for watching wildlife. They served delicious 'farm to table foods,' grown by the same owners at their nearby farm. Formerly known as British Honduras, most people speak English, at least to us tourists.

Ocellated Turkeys gave us a show each evening, as they gathered to roost in nearby trees. We took 6:30

AM bird walks, even before breakfast, and daytime birding excursions into varied habitats. Night sounds abound, particularly from Pauraques.

Thanks to the expert bird guides on staff, I got good looks at 125+ species of birds, including Trogons and Honeycreepers, exotic woodpeckers and parrots. Monkeys move overhead. A Puma, or mountain lion, crossed our path in daylight. A Tapir with young crossed the road at night. I especially enjoyed birding their shade-grown coffee plantation, where we spotted Keel-billed Toucans and familiar Warblers (in their winter home or heading North).

I extended this trip with 3 nights by a lowland river, at Laminai Outpost, where we saw a new cast of characters, the waterbirds, including Snail Kites and Boat-billed Heron. For convenience, I arranged this trip via a US-based travel agent Caligo Ventures.

See:

<https://caligo.com/independent/belize>

<https://www.chanchich.com/the-lodge/>



Continued from page 1



Peregrine Falcon perched high on Water Tower
Photo by Joan Cwi

The tower was built in 1904-05. Inside the tower is a large water tank that was used to supply water to the Hampden neighborhood for about 15 years. Since the 1930s the city has relied on reservoirs, and the tower was just a handsome neighborhood landmark. Over time it became less handsome. Parts of it have fallen off and pigeons and other creatures made a home in the top story. The area around the tower was fenced off in 2009 so nobody would be injured by falling debris, and a few years later the top story was cleaned and also screened off to prevent its becoming a pigeon roost again. Along the way, the tower had accidentally become suitable for peregrines. The eight-sided tower has many perches. The tower's height and the fence around it have provided

At some point the Roland Water Tower will have to be either restored or demolished, and the good news is that there will be a restoration.

enough privacy for the peregrines, despite the many people and cars coming within 150-200 feet of them every day. There are holes in the eaves under the tower's roof, and that is where the peregrines nest. Birds suitable for the taking can be found year-round.

Most days this year I have walked up the block to the tower, and on most of those days I have seen them. In February they were particularly noisy in their courtship flights, and if there are new peregrines born later this spring, the noise level will increase again. Everybody in the neighborhood I have talked with would miss them if they left. The peregrines' closest human neighbors tell me that there are fewer pigeons in the neighborhood than there used to be, and perhaps also fewer rats and mice. I have only seen them eating birds. Pigeon feathers and other pigeon parts are often found under the tower. One day when the victim was a Blue Jay the peregrine's plucking the carcass produced an effect like blue snow falling from the tower. A neighbor I told this story to said, "you should see them with a cardinal." I have encountered many other birders, photographers, and also

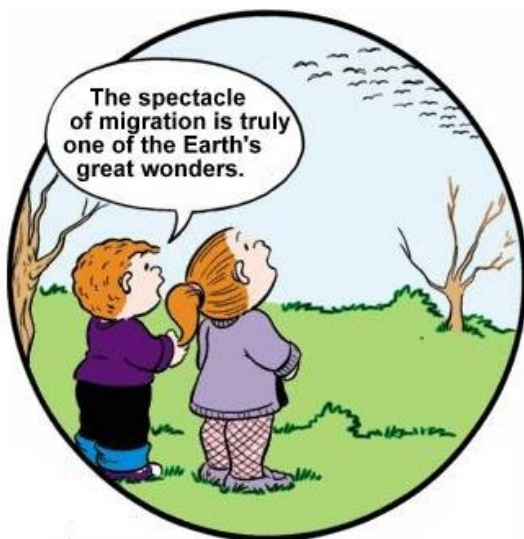
neighbors I had not met before. A deliveryman got out of his truck to show me pictures he had taken. One neighbor told me that he had found his cat and one of the new peregrines hatched two years ago in a confused face-off, neither knowing what to do with the other. One day I saw a young man photographing a plaque on the side of the tower; he was the great-great-grandson of E. Clay

Timanus, who was mayor when the tower was built.

At some point the Roland Water Tower will have to be either restored or demolished, and the good news is that there will be a restoration. The Roland Park Community Foundation has been

working with city officials and departments and many other organizations, such as the Friends of the Roland Water Tower. Since the repairs on the tower will not start until the end of this year at the earliest, the peregrines should be fine for this breeding season. As for the future, that's the question. The peregrines often roost on the outside of the tower, but they nest inside the roof, and sealing the roof is a high priority for the repairs. Could something be placed on or under the roof that could be a suitable nesting site? Even if some kind of man-made nest scrape could be put on the tower, would the peregrines use it?

There has been discussion of eventually opening the tower and allowing people to climb the interior staircase to the top story for a view of the city. This would put people very close to where the birds are now at home. When peregrines nest on skyscrapers the people who work in the buildings are not generally seen or heard by the peregrines, but it's hard to see how the Roland Water Tower peregrines could be shielded from people visiting the top. If this does turn out to be the last year I will have to put up with my noisy violent neighbors, I intend to enjoy them as much as I can.



"Actually, those gulls are going to the landfill"

On April 2nd members voted for a new slate of BBC Officers and Directors for Sep 2019-Aug 2020

Voting took place in the Greenhouse Classroom, Cylburn Arboretum

CONGRATULATIONS TO NEXT YEAR'S BBC OFFICERS!

President

Mark Linardi (replacing Peter Lev)

Vice President

Kevin Graff

Treasurer

Richard Krejci

Recording Secretary

Mary Shock

BBC Director

Cathy Czajkowski

BBC Director

Nancy O'Hara

BBC Director

Daisy Sudano (replacing Debbie Terry)

State Director

Joan Cwi

State Director

Mary Anne Fluke

State Director

Peter Lev (replacing Mark Linardi)

Field Trip Reports

Compiled by Kevin Graff

Bird Photos by Bill Hubick



FEB 15-18-CAPE HENLOPEN-OCEAN CITY WEEKEND

A cold weekend, but we managed to get many target birds. We started at Bombay Hook at the nature center where Bob Ringler found an uncommon winter resident, American Tree Sparrow. Lots of ducks along wildlife drive, a few raptors. Then headed down to Prime Hook where there wasn't much, then moved along to Indian River Inlet where we found Brant, Common Eiders, three Scoter species, at least 2 Razorbills in good view and 3 Great Cormorants.

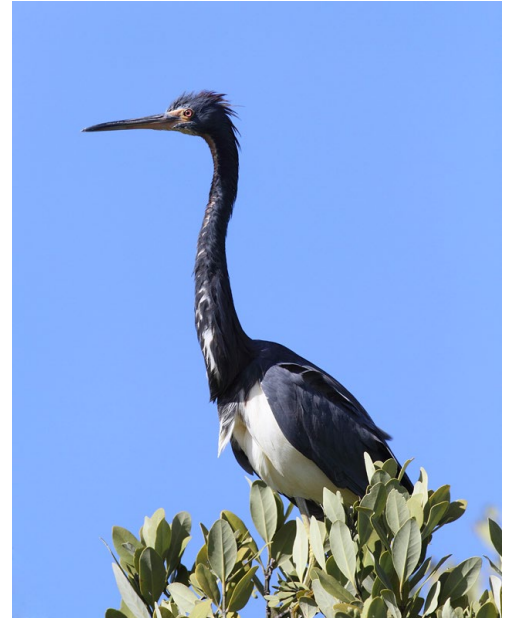


Cape Henlopen State Park

Next morning we met with weekend groups at Cape Henlopen State park where Red-breasted Nuthatches put on a good show at the feeders. There were 5 Dunlin at the sandbar. Next stop was at Silver Lake where we counted 359 Canvasbacks. Then on to a very birdy Burton Island near Indian River Inlet with 35 species in

one hour and 5 min. The best one was an overwintering Tricolored Heron. Last stop at Ocean City Inlet where we found a distant Glaucous Gull on a post. Next day at Assateague's Bayside Point we got a flyover Killdeer and a Catbird. At the next stop at Bayside Pond we had a nice view of 6

Redheads. With winds picking up, we hurried to Ocean City Inlet and picked out an immature male King Eider among the Common Eider flock. Harlequin Ducks (hens) were swimming



Tricolored Heron

nearby, and a single Razorbill was seen near the green buoy. Last stop at West Ocean City Pond before we called off the trip due to gusty winds, we picked out 14 waterfowl species including a raft of 326 Canvasbacks. Before heading home we made a quick stop at the inlet but found nothing new. The next stop was at famous Oakely Street in Cambridge where waterfowl were found up close by the wall, including a hybrid Redhead/Canvasback among hordes of ducks waiting for a handout. The last stop was Pickering Creek Audubon Center to see a continuing Northern Shrike. A good time was had by all. 92 species 8 participants. Leader: Kevin Graff.

MAR 26-LAKE ROLAND—Our first bird walk of the spring at Lake Roland was chilly and breezy. Best birds of the morning were close views of Phoebe that seemed to be everywhere, as well as Brown Creepers, Tree Swallows and a bright male Bluebird. 30 species. 6 participants. Coordinator: Debbie Terry.

APR 2-LAKE ROLAND—A very enjoyable day. Wonderful long and close looks at Pine and Palm Warblers at several different spots during our walk. All participants contributed to finding and identifying birds. A great group. 40 species. 12 participants. Coordinator: Debbie Terry.



Pine Warbler

APR 13-MASONVILLE COVE/SOUTHWEST AREA PARK—Slow day due to weather. We found a handful of ducks including a pair of Canvasbacks and a hen Blue-winged Teal. There was a single Purple Martin flying around. Instead



Canvasback Duck

of going to Middle Branch Park, we went to Southwest Area Park. We made the right choice as we found a female and two fledged Great Horned Owls. Several raptors including Osprey, Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk and Red-tailed Hawk. Hen Hooded Merganser flew over. Male Common Yellowthroat chipping away. 58 species. 11 participants. Leader: Kevin Graff.



Lake Roland Dam

BALTIMORE BIRD CLUB
<http://baltimorebirdclub.org>

A Chapter of

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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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:**

July 24, 2019



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