

CHIP NOTES

Spring 2023, No. 423



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Carol Schreter, left and Joan Cwi, present and former chairpersons of the Conservation Committee.

Banner photo of Red-capped Manakin:
picture taken from video by Marty Brazeau

Conservation Committee Collage, The past 22 years

by Carol Schreter and Joan Cwi

The Baltimore Bird Club (BBC) Conservation Committee was formed in the year 2000 around Anneke Davis, our long-time Conservation Chairperson. Anneke, then age 70, was also a board member at the Maryland Conservation Council (MCC). She would come to the BBC Board with an issue of import to MCC and ask to speak to that issue in Annapolis or write to our legislators, saying this comes from the Baltimore Bird Club. We always said yes!

Our newly formed committee was a small group of Baby Boomers learning from an elder -- while she was still available to us. Carol Schreter was chair of this new BBC Conservation committee from 2002 until now. Joan Cwi was co-chairperson from 2005 - 2020.

From the outset, a major goal of this Committee was to get more people involved in protecting birds and bird habitat. So public education was important. We decided to focus upon Baltimore City and Baltimore County issues, knowing that our parent organization, the Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS), was active on state-wide and national environmental issues.

This new committee was always a fluid group. People might join for a time to gain support from BBC while pursuing an issue of personal interest such as meadows or bird feeding.

Highlights 2000-2022

- **Protecting local parkland is a constant challenge.** We spoke out about rezoning at Lake Roland (2004), about logging at Prettyboy Reservoir (2010), about allowing mountain bikes in Oregon Ridge Park (2022), or the construction of a MagLev (Magnetic Levitation) train (2021) from DC to Baltimore -- which would cut through Patuxent Wildlife Research Center.

Continued on next page

Conservation Committee Collage

The Past 22 Years

Continued from page 1

- **Letters to federal and state officials are routine.**

Other environmental groups such as MOS, Audubon or the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) might ask us to speak out on a state-wide or national issue. In the internet age, this often means an Action Alert to us as individuals, or as an organization, signing onto a letter that was already drafted.

- **The "Conservation Corner" column in each issue of Chip Notes** started in 2001, written by various members about their favorite projects. For example, Terry Ross in the Fall '22 issue described the dramatic fledging of two Peregrine Falcons at the newly restored Roland Water Tower.

- **Lights Out Baltimore (LOB)** started as a small project within the Conservation Committee. Wendy Olsson, our first leader, was concerned about birds colliding with glass windows in downtown Baltimore during migration. Volunteers walked the Harbor at dawn, 5-7 days a week. Deceased birds were collected, catalogued, frozen and delivered to the Smithsonian Institute or universities for research purposes. Injured birds were taken to Phoenix Wildlife Center for rehab. As the numbers of volunteers and injured birds increased, downtown businesses were asked to make changes to their windows. Lindsay Jacks took over this expanded effort in 2012, and BBC made the enlarged LOB a separate committee.

- **The Swift Watch.** Alice Nelson of Hampden taught us how to count chimney swifts during migration. In 2001 we began posting counts on the national "Swift Night Out" website. Under Joan Cwi we began advertising our count or field trip to Hampden neighbors. The Bookbindery proved to be the most active chimney, with thousands of swifts using it for a nocturnal roost during migration. Alas, this most active chimney was sold in 2022 and the new owner wants to raze the building and destroy the roosting chimney. Under Alice Nelson, our public education project has now become a habitat protection project.

- **Shade-grown coffee.** Consumer choices can help birds. In 2004 we distributed fliers telling people where they could buy shade-grown coffee, locally. Coffee grown in a diverse and shady woodland is suitable winter habitat for birds such as warblers that nest here, up north, in the summer. Now because of "greenwashing," fraudulent claims, we now recommend that people mail order from Birds and Beans Coffee, certified as shade-grown by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center.

- **Conservation lectures.** After a well-received 2006 lecture about shade-grown coffee by Russ Greenberg, coffee researcher for the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, this Committee started suggesting one conservation topic a year for our BBC lecture schedule. At that time, our lecture schedule was full of favorite trips and Birds of the World. Now conservation lectures are not uncommon.

- **Habitat Walks.** Until 2020, our "Habitat Walks" were occasional events, organized by Carol Schreter, to examine some bird habitat that had been enhanced, or damaged. Now Habitat Walks are routine. They unusually have two co-leaders, a bird person and a plant person, where the plant person has responsibility for some public landscaping project. Most interesting is how the co-leaders learn from each other. A 2022 trip to a new Leakin Park meadow involved staff from the Baltimore City Dept. of Rec and Parks. A November 2022 trip involved a private firm called Biohabitats, responsible for "Reimagine Middle Branch" which plans to alter 11 miles of shoreline in South Baltimore.



Sandhill Cranes in flight, Marty Brazeau

Conservation Committee Collage, continued from last page & Presidents Corner: Shout out to Baltimore Bird Club volunteers!

The Conservation Committee now includes ten BBC members. Most, not all of us, are also on the BBC board. We usually meet at a private home, every two or three months. We invite others to join us anytime, especially if they have an issue they would like to pursue, with BBC's help.

For people interested in protecting birds and bird habitat, there is always plenty to do. Success is not a word we use easily. We can perhaps stave off someone's environmentally destructive plan, for a time. But it's like whack-a-mole. The same issue, or others, can pop up at any time.

* * * * *

President's Corner

Shout Outs to Members in New Positions

Our lead article in this edition of Chip Notes highlights the accomplishments over time of our effective Conservation Committee, now skillfully led by **Carol Schreter**. But I'd like to give accolades to some members of our team in new positions who've stepped up this year.



Devi Abbott

Thanks **Devi Abbott** for your efforts in managing the June Summer Picnic and the January Covered Dish Dinner. Both were tremendous, fun, and successful affairs, especially needed after the long Covid dearth of getting together in person.

The picnic, which Devi arranged to have on her family's beautiful, protected acres on the Little Gunpowder River was enjoyed by over fifty of us. The food and drink, summer grilling, and especially the camaraderie of our members was special. And it all happened by the wonderful large and scenic pond. The Covered Dish Dinner at Cylburn's Vollmer Center was equally, if not more, successful. Devi had not even been to a dinner at the Vollmer Center before. She came out weeks ahead of time to survey the Center, located the tables, chairs, kitchen, outlets, etc., and then arrived a couple hours early the day of the dinner to make sure everything was set up just right. Nice work Devi!



Neville Fernandes

And here's to **Neville Fernandes**! He's been orchestrating the complex efforts to arrange for BBC Lecture speakers, and then set up the audio visuals for our hybrid virtual-live presentations, and more, recorded the proceedings and got the recordings posted through Terry Ross on our website. The speakers he's gotten have been excellent, especially David Curson who spoke at the Covered Dish Dinner. And don't forget Brad Balliett playing the bassoon live for compositions using bird song as the theme.

I thought it would be difficult to replace **Nancy O'Hara** as our Lecture Coordinator, but Neville stepped right in and went at it. And even more, he's our new eNews editor and distributor.

President's Corner

Shout outs to volunteers!

BBC Annual Picnic Pot Luck

Continued from page 3



Libby Errickson

And **Hello Libby Errickson**, our Community Science Chair. She ran a May Count, a Big Sit, and two Audubon Christmas Bird Counts this past year. She has also been instrumental in saving the chimney swift roost at the Hampden Book Bindery from being developed. That's special!



Marty Brazeau

Finally, **Marty Brazeau**! Marty wowed us first with his videos of birds on our Days Cove canoe trips, and then with his Oregon Ridge statement video which was used by the Friends of Oregon Ridge to help stop unwanted development of the park in Baltimore County's Master Plan. Plus he stepped up to the plate and became the layout person for Chip Notes. His first edition featured never before insertions of video links in the electronic version of the newsletter. Yay Marty!



Photos courtesy of Lou Taylor

BBC Annual Picnic Pot Luck

Sunday, June 12 11:30 a. m. - 2:30 p.m.



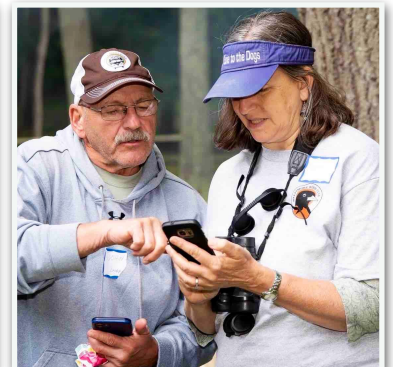
Mark Linardi and Mirat Shah



Joe and Linda Corcoran and grandson Joel



Charisma Burrows and Peter Kaestner



John Landers and Rachel Lachow



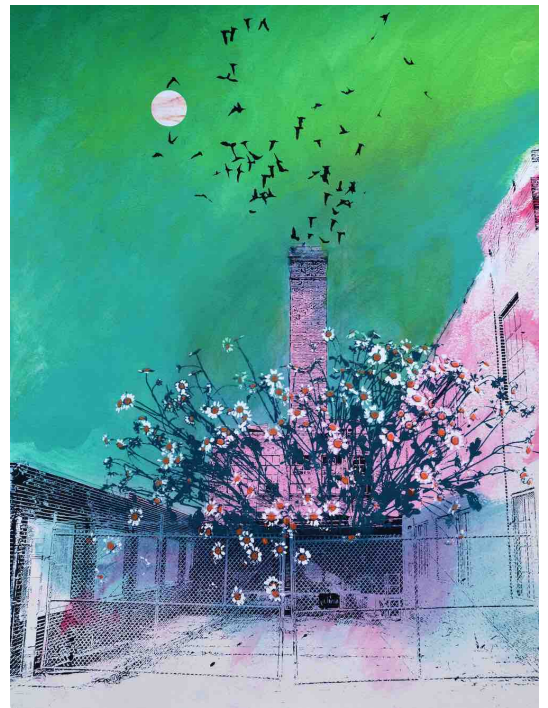
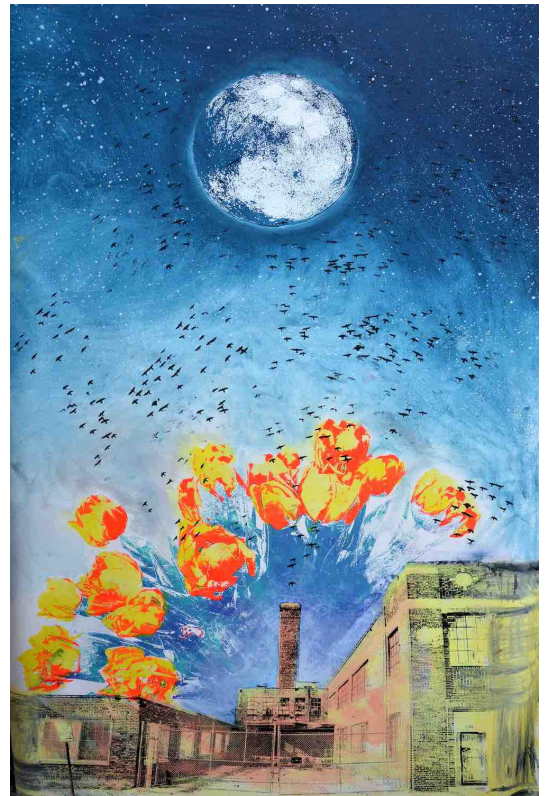
Matt Wallace, Sam Tillman, Kyle Gardiner

Valentines Day Card to Chimney Swifts by Libby Errickson

Chimney Swifts roost has now been spared! Artwork by Matt Muirhead that was featured in the *Baltimore Banner*

My Valentines this year are all the chimney swifts who roost in my neighborhood in the Hampden Book Bindery chimney during fall and spring migration. Over the last several months, the pending purchase of the building property by a developer who intended to demolish the building and its chimney to build a 6-story high rise (in a neighborhood that does not need it or want it) has threatened this important migratory stopover for the swifts. This chimney is considered one of the largest and most important swift roosts on the east coast flyway, and roosting swift numbers have been monitored by the [Baltimore Bird Club](#) for several decades. Yesterday we got news that the developer has backed out of the deal! The chimney is safe for now, and its owner has expressed a desire to work with the community regarding what uses people would like to see in the space. So while we still don't know what the future holds for this property, the possibility of saving the chimney is looking much brighter than it did just a few days ago.

Happy Valentine's Day, swifts! Happy Valentine's Day, beautiful Hampden community who worked to raise awareness and opposition to the development! I love living here so much. Pictures: two awesome paintings of the chimney by esteemed local artist [Matt Muirhead](#), a photo I took a couple years ago of the swifts heading into the chimney to roost, a photo of me intensely counting swifts published in [The Baltimore Banner](#) this past fall alongside a story about the swifts and the impending development.



Welcome New Members!

We saw the Costa Rica Birds Painted on our t-shirts!

We saw the birds painted on our t-shirts during our Costa Rica birding tour!

I painted Costa Rica birds on t-shirts for members of my February 2023 tour. On the next page is a description of the birds we saw matched with their paintings. You can join my Ecuador tour in September and a Northern Costa Rica tour that includes five birding boat rides in March of 2024. You can also enroll in my Community of Baltimore County birdwatching classes this Spring. Interested in a tour or class? Email me at tropicbirder56@gmail.com. Watch 206 Costa Rica birds I filmed on your TV or computer:

<https://youtu.be/18HWsynBYLk>

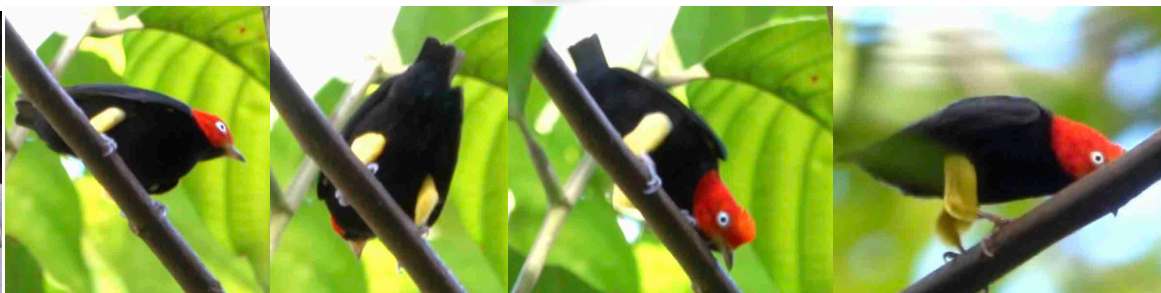
Marty Brazeau, Baltimore Bird Club Education Outreach Specialist

Guide Mario wearing his Red-capped Manakin t-shirt. We were able to get good views of this manakin at the Esquinas Rainforest Lodge performing his Michael Jackson-like dance on a branch to attract a green-colored female.

Welcome New Members!

A warm welcome to the Baltimore Bird Club! We hope you have enjoyed a wonderfully birdy winter here in Baltimore, or wherever your travels took you this season. Now soon Spring will be bringing us warblers. Looking forward to birding with you at Oregon Ridge Park, Loch Raven Reservoir, Cromwell Valley Park and more this spring!

Kristi Adkins ... Baltimore
Caroline Anderson ... Baltimore
Alex Boulton ... Baltimore
Jeffrey Elseroad ... Baltimore
Amy Johanson ... Baltimore
Heather Kangas ... Baltimore
Rebecca Lavin ... Baltimore
Peter Soldano ... Baltimore
Jordan Rainville ... Catonsville
Rachel & David Hausladen ... Cockeysville
Isabella Sorrell ... Kingsville
Mark Bradshaw ... Owings Mills
Mat Lam ... Parkville
Roger Marcus ... Stevenson



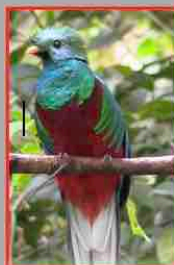
The group on the first day of the tour wearing their Costa Rica bird shirts.



Birding Trips and Tips

Continued: We saw the Costa Rican birds painted on our t-shirts during our tour!

7 Trogons!



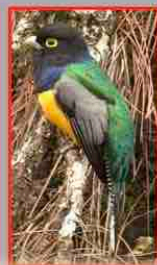
Resplendent Quetzal



Baird's



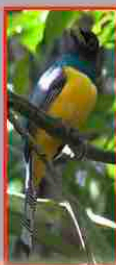
Black-headed



Gartered



Collared



Black-throated



Slaty-tailed

Shown are the 7 colorful species of trogons we observed perched in trees. I've seen trogons spitting out wild avocado pits. Several were found nesting in tree holes or termite mounds. Trogons are identified by tail patterns, eye rings, and belly colors.



Bay-headed Tanager: Frequently seen at feeders and in the canopy.



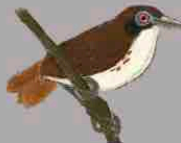
Crimson-collared Tanager: Seen during a roadside lunch spot feeder watch.



Roseate Spoonbill: Quite a few were seen along the *Tarcoles River* spooning in the mud for crustaceans.



Bi-colored Antbird: Seen at *Carara National Park* following ants that flush insects to be devoured by the antbird.



Golden-browed Chlorophonia: Filmed on the *Paraiso Quetzal Lodge* gardens trail. I was able to get very close to watch it feeding on berries.



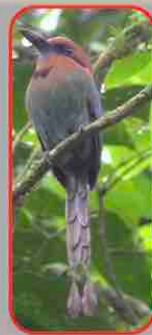
Crested Owl: *Wilson Botanical Garden* evening sighting with guide Mario.



Red-legged Honeycreeper: Seen feeding on flower nectar at the *Arenal Observatory Lodge* feeders.



Orange-collared Manakin: We saw this animated bird in a lek at *Carara National Park*.



Broad-billed Motmot: This bird was seen and heard during an *Arenal Observatory Lodge* rainforest hike.



Green Hermit



Fiery-throated Hummingbird



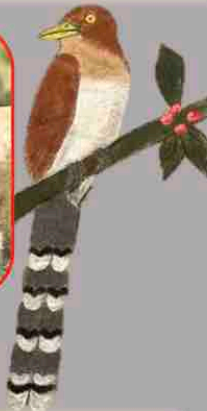
Magenta-throated Woodstar



Talamanca Hummingbird



Squirrel Cuckoo: Seen at the airport hotel perched in a tree over the pool!



White-crested Coquette: Gosh, we tried to find this bird among *Esquinas lodge* flowers. We did see many other hummingbirds..... including the four seen above.

October 16, 2023

Oregon Ridge Park,

Leader: Tim Carney.

Eight birders joined me for a Sunday morning walk at Oregon Ridge Park and the Agricultural Center. It was one of the most beautiful crisp fall mornings of 2022 and both spots were loaded with birds, especially sparrows. We had good views of a Blue-headed Vireo and Purple Finches at Oregon Ridge, and Kyle Gardiner spotted the rarest bird of the morning near the community gardens - a Red-eyed Vireo, which was running at least a week or two behind on its migration. The Vesper Sparrows didn't materialize at the Ag Center, but I've found that early morning or late afternoon is best for them (we were there from 10:00-11:20). Fortunately we found some other goodies, including two Eastern Meadowlarks, a Cape May Warbler feeding at a sapsucker well, more Purple Finches, and a calling flyover American Pipit.

October 23, 2022

Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge,

Leader: Peter Lev.

Seven participants. Weather: 50 degrees at 8 am, overcast, occasional drizzle. Fifty-five species. We had nine species of shorebirds; American Avocet and Marbled Godwit were life-birds for at

least two participants. Ducks were present in good numbers; hundreds of Northern Pintail plus Northern Shoveler, Black Duck, Gadwall, Green-winged Teal, Blue-winged Teal. A Peregrine

Falcon posed for us in a tree, and a Merlin gave a close flyby. Other flybys of interest were Eastern Meadowlark and Snow Goose (only one, in a formation of Canada Geese). It was a really nice day.

November 6, 2022

Middle Branch Park,

Leader: Nico Sarbanes.

As we came to the edge habitat across from 3030 Waterview Ave., I remarked to some in the group that the little shrubs (including groundsel) looked perfect for an Orange-crowned Warbler, and that since my first visit in January, I'd been hoping/expecting one to show up there. Less than a minute later(!), two small passerines popped up. I got on one, a bright Tennessee Warbler. Sam got on the other, which, while frustratingly furtive, we were quickly able to confirm was an Orange-crowned Warbler! Always a thrill to manifest a rarity in real-time! New species for (contd.)

Middle Branch Park, and a great city bird. Besides the Orange-crowned Warbler and Tennessee, among the species spotted were a Yellow-rumped Warbler, Horned Grebe, Laughing Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Double-crested Cormorant, Bald Eagle, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Merlin, Blue Jay, American Crow, Fish Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Hermit Thrush, Dark-eyed Junco, and White-throated, Song and Swamp Sparrows. We had twelve participants and forty species.

January 1, 2023

Loch Raven Reservoir – Old Picnic Area Trail

Leader: Joe Corcoran

On a beautiful 55 degrees sunny morning, 18 people saw 40 species of birds. Not only was this the first day of the year, good to begin year lists for Baltimore County, but it coincided with the rescheduled Loch Raven circle Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Highlights included 8 species of ducks with 130 Ring-necked Ducks, both Grebes, Pied and Horned, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, both Kinglets and 4 accommodating Brown Creepers. Plus there were good looks at a Hermit Thrush. And John Landers picked up a Great Horned Owl by getting to the trail early. It was a good birding start to the year and a good contribution to the Christmas Count.

January 15, 2023

Loch Raven Reservoir,

Co-leaders Peter Lev and Debbie Terry.

On a cold but sunny day, six birders visited four Loch Raven Reservoir hotspots: Loch Raven Point, Pearce's Cove, Primary Dam and Secondary Dam. We saw eight species of duck plus Pied-billed and Horned Grebes. John Landers found a perched Red-tailed Hawk and later identified a gliding Sharp-shinned Hawk. We saw and heard a Common Raven being harassed by Crows. We had twenty-nine species total.



Yellow-rumped Warbler, Marty Brazeau

Originally published in the Maryland/DC Breeding Bird Atlas Newsletter. Interview done by Gabriel Foley.

ATLASER SPOTLIGHT . Toby Pessoa Gingerich teaches high school math in Baltimore City

What made you interested in birds?

Birds really piqued my interest while tagging along birding with my youngest brother during a camping trip that included some spectacular dramas. A pair of Merlins were harassing Flickers nearly their own size (and later, a decidedly bigger Red-shouldered Hawk!). A Purple Finch was singing from the very top of a pine, then suddenly dove just ahead of a stooping Cooper's Hawk. When I finally got a good pair of binoculars and an eBird account, I was hooked!

Have you been involved with other atlases?

This one is my first atlas, but it did inspire me to contribute to the North Carolina atlas during a trip last summer.

What bird do you particularly like?

I'm still in love with Merlins. They're amazing fliers, and their feisty personality often leads to a great show, especially if some crows are foolish enough to bother one!

You can take binoculars, a field guide, and what other item?

I'm going to count my phone as my field guide, and pick a snack for a nice long day out.

What bird best reflects your personality?

I'll say a Hairy Woodpecker they're usually quiet and unobtrusive, but can be persistent and loud, too.

Who would you go atlasing with?

Lynne Parks. She has a fantastic ear, is wonderfully generous about sharing her knowledge, and is so — attentive to birds' behavior and n habits. Baltimore misses you, Lynne!

What's our biggest conservation issue?

Conservation's biggest problem is public policy that prioritizes corporate profits over the public good. Between habitat destruction, pollution, and the climate crisis, human activity is killing birds and other wildlife at terrifying rates. We all contribute to this each time we buy food, get in our car, or even put new tires on a bike, because this destruction is built into our social order.

We've built energy and transportation systems dependent on fossil fuels, an agricultural system dependent on big agribusinesses and their poisons (pesticides and herbicides), a whole geography of suburban sprawl and highways instead of walkable towns and public transit.

It infuriates me every time I visit North Point State Park. There's a historic trolley station but absolutely no way to get there now without a car! I applaud everyone who bikes to work, plants native shrubs, or becomes vegan, but personal action will not save our beloved birds or their natural world without major policy change.

Atlasing puts the focus on the whole bird and its place in the web of life. It helps me remember to slow down and really enjoy watching and listening to birds, and (re)discover what quirky, shy, feisty, fascinating neighbors they are. We collectively built the systems killing our planet, and we can build new, better ones, but only through equally collective action to promote sustainable policies, elect responsible leaders, and hold them accountable to deliver.

Concretely, we can all support MOS (and other groups) in conservation and advocacy, prioritize conservation when we vote, and encourage our friends and family to as well. As engaged citizens, we can make a much bigger difference than we could individually.

Where is your favorite place to atlas?

Druid Hill Park — there's a wonderful variety of habitats, and I've been amazed by what all I've seen there! Being able to walk up to the park has been a lifesaver during the pandemic.



Toby Pessoa Gingerich

Baltimore Bird Club

<http://baltimorebirdclub.org>

A Chapter of

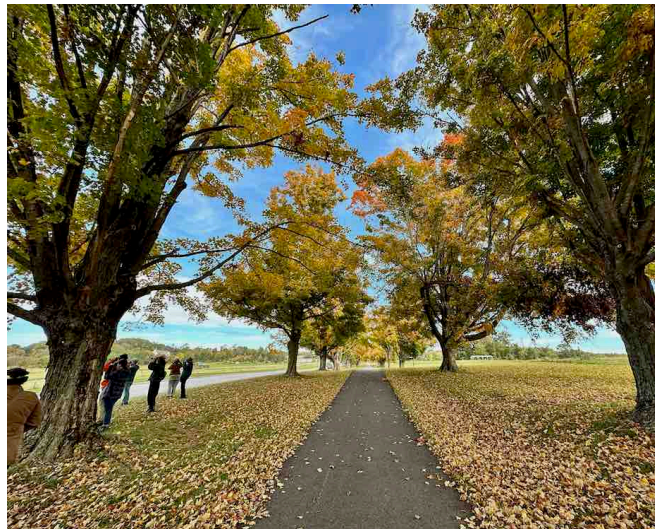
Maryland Ornithological Society

4915 Greenspring Avenue

Baltimore, MD 21209



Birding at Oregon Ridge Park, Scott Class



Birding at the Baltimore Ag. Center, Scott Class

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Alina Martin, Editor
Marty Brazeau, Design

Submit materials to
Alina Martin – alinacmartin@gmail.com

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

Deadlines for submitting articles
for upcoming issues:
April 24, 2023



Application

The membership year is September 1-August 31. New members only joining after March 1 will be members for the upcoming year as well as the remainder of the year that they enroll.

The most convenient way to join is at the Maryland Ornithological Society website using this address: <https://mdbirds.org/join/chapters/baltimore-bird-club/#toggle-id-3>, where you may pay your dues using PayPal.

OR, you may join by mail.

Make check payable to "MOS" and mail with completed application to:

Carol S Daugherty
MOS Treasurer
11925 Oden Court
Rockville, MD 20852