Sorry for the delay

Computer software incompatibility has been a complete nightmare. I will be leaving as editor after the May-June issue. If the position interests you please contact me. Bryce Butler
capitano.bryce@verizon.net

ANNUAL COVERED-DISH DINNER
JANUARY 10

BYKOTA CENTER IN TOWSON
Wine and Cheese Social — 5PM, Dinner — 5:30, Lecture — 7PM

David Brinker will talk about sea level rise and marshbirds for our annual dinner. In 1985, while at the University of Maryland’s Appalachian Environmental Laboratory David worked on a survey and census of Maryland’s colonial nesting waterbird species. He was the first, and to date probably the only, person to radio track Black Skimmers. In 1987 he discovered Maryland’s first Brown Pelican nest. Since then he has continued to monitor the expansion of breeding pelicans into the Chesapeake Bay and has coordinated the banding of over 13,500 Brown Pelicans. Since 1990, David has worked for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources where he established their colonial nesting waterbird project and is currently a regional ecologist for the MD DNR’s Natural Heritage Program. David chaired the Maryland Ornithological Society’s Research Committee for 10 years.

Please RSVP Kevin Graff with your dishes and numbers (ASAP: Kevin requests you don’t wait until the last minute)
(410) 557-2456
WhiteMarlin2001@yahoo.com

Directions to BYKOTA CENTER
From the Baltimore Beltway (I-695) take exit 26 south, York Road. Turn right onto Bosley Avenue. At the third traffic light turn right onto Allegheny Ave. Proceed one block and turn right onto Central Ave, continue to 611 on your right, where parking is provided beside and behind the center.

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**A Voice in the Wilderness**  
Speaking Out about Avian Mortality at Windows  
By Joan Cwi and Wendy Olsson

Many people walked away from the September 1st 2009 Baltimore Bird Club lecture astonished at how many birds are killed annually from bird-glass collisions, and wondering how a problem of this magnitude can still be going on in our conservation-minded world. We had just heard Dr. Daniel Klem, a professor of Ornithology and Conservation Biology at Muhlenberg College, present his research over the past 30 years and discuss his frustration at trying to bring this issue to the forefront of public discussion, and persuade architects to build bird-friendly buildings and glass manufacturers to conduct more research on producing glass that birds can see.

So what exactly is the problem, and what are the solutions? Dr. Klem showed us evidence that avian mortality at windows is the second largest human-source of bird mortality on earth (second to habitat destruction). Birds are oblivious to sheet glass and plastic and act as if these surfaces are invisible to them. Injured birds may die from head trauma after leaving a perch from as little as one meter away as they try to get to habitat seen one to each other. Many cities have started Lights Out! Programs that encourage building managers to turn off building lights at night, especially during migration. While these programs do not address the core problem of glass construction, they do try to reduce the amount of nighttime light that attracts birds to buildings and tracks bird strikes on urban buildings to encourage remedial action from properties with heavy tolls. As you probably know, the BBC sponsors a Lights Out! Program in Baltimore. We are one of many, including Toronto, Chicago, New York, Indianapolis, San Francisco, and Houston that have such programs. Over the past couple of years, the American Bird Conservancy has dedicated a staff member (Christine Sheppard) to promote bird collisions awareness at the national level and promote resolution to this problem.

At the end of the lecture, Dr. Klem drew attention to the fact that avian conservationists have worked hard at addressing bird kills from communication towers, power lines and wind turbines, and to a lesser degree fatalities due to domestic and feral cats, but we fall behind on addressing collisions with glass. This is where we as consumers and bird lovers can play a larger role and demand a solution from window manufacturers, local and national green building councils, and those who enforce the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. He extended his hand out to each of us to make our voices known so

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### Annual Estimates of Human-Associated Avian Mortality in the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Mortality</th>
<th>Low (Millions)</th>
<th>High (Millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glass collisions*</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic and feral cats **</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting***</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles***</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric transmission lines**</td>
<td>174</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pesticides**</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication towers**</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Daniel Klem, Baltimore Bird Club Lecture 9/1/2009  
** Sibley Guides (www.sibleyguides.com/mortality)  
***U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

There are many short-term solutions that can help mitigate the problem, as detailed in the table below. But a long-term solution depends primarily on one thing—creating glass that birds can see that will also fulfill the aesthetic needs of humans. Dr. Klem noted that a promising and hopeful solution to bird collision prevention involved UV reflecting and absorbing elements to create a window covering pattern, using films to retrofit existing structures and as a standard of manufactured glass for new construction.

Dr. Klem has been working with several film and glass manufacturers, but they have not yet been willing to invest the capital to thoroughly research UV impregnated film and glass as a bird collision deterrent. (A possible exception is the German-manufactured ORNILUX glass. Despite bird-safe claims, Dr. Klem hasn’t been able to obtain samples to test and compare to ORNILUX test data.) This is where we as consumers and bird lovers come in—we need to help create that market by raising concerns with the window manufacturers and asking why solutions aren’t available for the issue.

### Avian Glass Collision Mitigation Techniques

- Cover windows with netting
- Move bird feeder to within 1 yard or less of glass surface (even attach it to the window!)
- Place decals or hang strings such that they uniformly cover surface of windows with no more than a hand’s width of clear glass between them
- Use one-way films to provide a minimal obstruction from inside while appearing opaque from outside
- Reduce the proportion of glass to other building materials in new construction
- Use ceramic frit glass in new or for remodeling existing structures
- When available, use UV-reflecting glass or tape in stripe or grid patterns
- Angle windows 20 to 40 degrees from vertical in new or remodeled construction

Dr. Klem also discussed the conservation movement within the building industry promoting the construction of so-called “green buildings.” He emphasized the need to continue pressuring the U.S. Green Building Council to incorporate more significant bird-safe glass and architectural and landscape practices into their evaluation points in their building rating system called Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). Planners use their LEED ratings to demonstrate that their buildings are environmentally friendly, but Dr. Klem contends (and we agree) that no matter how many recyclable materials, energy conserving features or erosion controls in a building, it should not be considered “green” if birds are dying by flying into its windows.

Despite the magnitude of the problem, we are only just beginning to see this issue addressed by the conservation community in a serious way. Many cities have started Lights Out! Programs that encourage building managers to turn off building lights at night, especially during migration. While these programs do not address the core problem of glass construction, they do try to reduce the amount of nighttime light that attracts birds to buildings and tracks bird strikes on urban buildings to encourage remedial action from properties with heavy tolls. As you probably know, the BBC sponsors a Lights Out! Program in Baltimore. We are one of many, including Toronto, Chicago, New York, Indianapolis, San Francisco, and Houston that have such programs. Over the past couple of years, the American Bird Conservancy has dedicated a staff member (Christine Sheppard) to promote bird collisions awareness at the national level and promote resolution to this problem.

Consumers and birders also must step up and play a larger role and demand a solution from window manufacturers, local and national green building councils, and those who enforce the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. He extended his hand out to each of us to make our voices known so...
this carnage could come to an end before we lose even more bird species for future generations.

A few popular links that reference Dr. Klem and his research: http://www.muhlenberg.edu/depts/biology/faculty/klem/ACO/Popular%20Links.htm

Field Trip Reports
Compiled by Kevin Graff

Aug 25 - Lake Roland - First day with little activity, mainly at the old house across the dam from our viewing point with few common birds plus a pair of flyover redstarts. Things got better at the trail above the dam that leads to small marsh area, where we got blue-headed and red-eyed vireos, lots of wrens and catbirds, wood thrush, and a few warblers. 40 species. 7 participants. Leader: Kevin Graff

Sep 1 - Cromwell Valley Park - Great view of 3 cuckoos near Lime Kiln. Lots of migrants including pewee, acadian and least flycatchers, white-eyed, warbling and red-eyed vireos, blue-winged, parula, chestnut-sided, magnolia, black-throated blue warblers, redstarts and yellowthroats. 2 Veery seen. Few hawks including 2 broadwings. 56 species. 8 participants. Leader: Debbie Terry

Sep 8 - Cromwell Valley Park - Along the Minebank Trail we saw 5 species of warblers. At one point we had a lot of warbler activity with everyone seeing American Redstarts, magnolias, Chestnut-sided and Black-and-white Warblers. Later in the morning, as we walked north, we saw and heard a Veery and Wood Thrush. 52 species. 14 participants. Leader: Debbie Terry

Sep 13 - Swift Night Out - Beautiful night - about 75 degrees and balmy. The swifts put on a power show - taunting us at first by having only a few warblers and then rapidly accumulating and pouring over, then rapidly and pouring out. It is interesting to see the increasing number of people who are attending Swift Night Out—all almost twice as many this Fall as last year. People are hearing about the event from Chesapeake Audubon Society, Nature Conservancy and word-of-mouth.

An increasing number of people are reporting to us other chimneys where they have seen a considerable number of swifts entering. They include two in Patterson Park (Baptist Church and St. Elizabeth’s Charter School), the American Legion in Perry Hall, Friends School on Charles Street, and Jane’s and Lynn’s Tire Service on Howard Street. And perhaps most astoundingly, only a couple of days after Swift Night Out, the swifts at the Bookbindery decided to change to the Florence Crittenton Services chimney, a much smaller chimney directly behind you as you face the Bookbindery.

Swifts have gotten a lot of positive press this year. On August 10th the Baltimore Sun wrote a front-page article titled “Migrating Birds Make Temporary Homes inside Baltimore Chimneys” in large bold letters (http://www.baltimoresun.com/features/bal-md.gr.chimney10aug10,0,2019063,story). The author, Meredith Cohn, was alerted to nestling Chimney Swifts in her neighbor’s chimney and wrote this article with a little help from her Swift Watch friends at BBC. In addition, WYPR (radio 88.1) recorded a delightful, 5-minute segment about Chimney Swifts that aired on their “Environmental Focus” program September 30th. Tom Pelton from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation interviewed Alice Nelson and myself at the Bookbindery chimney, using the swift chirping sounds as a background. If you want to hear this segment, go to http://www.wypr.org/Environment-Focus.html and click The Flight of the Swifts segment dated 9-30-09.

Finally, a mention of Spring count. Although not as impressive as Fall, this year we had 250 Chimney Swifts use the Druid Hill Conservatory chimney on April 26th. This count is a lot lower than previous Springs, but our elusive swifts were probably using another chimney that we have not yet discovered.
Identifying honeyeaters is similar to identifying warblers— not so hard if they will just sit still long enough to get a good look. There was, however, a definite loss due to being unable to bird by ear. I learn bird calls primarily from exposure in the field. Trying to learn a few hundred calls in advance was not even worth considering.

We did decide to hire a local guide for one day. We also took a few morning walks & night spotlighting walks offered at some accommodations, a morning river cruise, and a boat trip to the Great Barrier Reef. At our last accommodation, the owner took us out on an additional impromptu full-day field trip. Other than these, the rest of our 21 days in-country were self-guided.

And the birds? They were FABULOUS!!! I am in love with fairy-wrens, pardalotes & rosellas. Black-fronted Dotterels were too cute for words and Masked Lapwing faces were fascinating to look at. Instead of vultures, Black Kites rose early in the morning to clear the roadkill. We had 14 different parrot species, all of them lovely. Sunlit kingfishers and Rainbow Bee-eaters glowed in jewel-like tones. Emerald doves with bright green wings could still blend in with the leaf litter on the rain forest floor. If we were willing to walk far enough, a Beach Stone-Curlew waited (and posed) for us at Wonga Beach, just as the reference book said. A pair of Pacific Baza gave us multiple views from various angles, all that one could wish for in a life-bird. At Cassowary House, the male Southern Cassowary & his chick came daily for breakfast and tea; occasionally, the female also deigned to make an appearance. At Kingfisher Park, Kookaburras sometimes laughed through the night, accompanied by screeching Sooty Owls. At Mt. Clunie, the Superb Fairy-wren was making her nest in a bush next to the verandah while we sat & watched the male declare his territory & visit the verandah itself to show off his gorgeous colors. Also at Mt. Clunie one night, we heard Boobook owls calling from all around us, beneath the most incredible big-sky canopy of stars. Overall, we had 240+ species, depending upon how rigorous a “sighting” definition is applied. I tend to be inclined to record close encounters just for the memory, even if they were not entirely satisfactory enough to be granted life-bird status.

The bottom line? Dan & I flew to Australia and spent 21 days birding for less than the single person cost of a 10-day guided tour. So look at your budget, pick your destination and see what you can manage, birding (Photos: Georgia McDonald)

**Ventriloquist Birds Call to Warn Friends and Enemies**

Yellow-rumped warbler. Birds’ alarm calls serve both to alert other birds to danger and to warn off predators. And some birds can pull a ventriloquist’s trick, singing from the side of their mouths. (Credit: iStockphoto/Frank Leung)

ScienceDaily (Dec. 7, 2009) — Birds’ alarm calls serve both to alert other birds to danger and to warn off predators. And some birds can pull a ventriloquist’s trick, singing from the side of their mouths, according to a UC Davis study.

Many animals respond vocally when they detect predators, but it’s not clear to whom they are signaling, said Jessica Yorzinski, a graduate student in animal behavior at UC Davis who conducted the study with Gail Patricelli, professor of evolution and ecology. They might be warning others of the threat, but they might also be telling the predator, “I’ve seen you.” Yorzinski used a ring of directional microphones around a birdcage to record the songs of dark-eyed juncos, yellow-rumped warblers, house finches and other birds as they were shown a stuffed owl. All the birds were captured in the wild, tested, banded and released within 24 hours.

Overall, the birds’ alarm calls were relatively omnidirectional, suggesting that they were given to warn other birds as they were shown a stuffed owl. All the birds were captured in the wild, tested, banded and released within 24 hours.

The study was published Nov. 18 in the journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B and was funded by the National Science Foundation.
**CALENDAR**

**DEC 19** (Sat) dawn to DUSK BALTIMORE HARBOR CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2007 Count of all birds seen or heard in the count circle. Count totals submitted to National Audubon Society for nationwide publication. Birders of all experience levels urged to participate. For area assignment call compiler: Pete Webb, (410) 486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com. $5 donation per observer requested to help defray cost of compilation and publication of data results by National Audubon Society.

**DEC 19** (Sat) 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon SATURDAY MONITORING WALKS AT FORT McHENRY A continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort. Park in the Visitors Center parking lot. Meet at the Visitors Center. Automatically cancelled in bad weather. Leader: Jim Peters, (410) 429-0966. Meet at the main gate.

January 2010.

**JAN 1** (Fri) 8:30 a.m. LOCH RAVEN RESERVOIR Start the New Year birding. Varied habitats including woods, fields and the reservoir. Probably also birding other sites for a “Big Day” in Baltimore City & County. Leader: Kevin Graff, email whitemarlin2001@yahoo.com or call (410) 557-2456.

**JAN 6** (Wed) 8:00 a.m. FIRST WEDNESDAYS AT FORT McHENRY Monthly morning survey of bird activity at the wetland. Telescope can be useful. Automatically cancelled in bad weather (rain, sleet, snow, fog, etc.). Meet in the Park, outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Mary Chetelat, (410) 665-0769.

**JAN 10** (Sun) 5:00 p.m. COVERED DISH DINNER AND LECTURE AT BYKOTA CENTER IN TOWSON “Marsh-birds: Will they survive sea-level rise?” David Brinker of Maryland Department of Natural Resources will discuss the challenges faced by the birds that inhabit Maryland’s coastal marshes. For reservations and food dish coordination contact Kevin Graff at WhiteMarlin2001@yahoo.com or (410) 557-2456.

**JAN 16** (Sat) BALTIMORE MID-WINTER BIRD COUNT To participate in post-migration bird count in your choice of location in Baltimore City or County, call Pete Webb, (410) 486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com

**JAN 16** (Sat) 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon SATURDAY MONITORING WALKS AT FORT McHENRY Meet at the Visitors Center. Cancelled in rain, snow, sleet, fog. Leader: Jim Peters, (410) 429-0966.