Welcome!
A warm Baltimore Bird Club welcome goes out to the following members who have joined us since the Winter Chip Notes was published. Thank you for joining and we look forward to seeing you on our birding trips and at our meetings!
Rebecca Castle, Baltimore
Milana Isaacson, Baltimore
John Robinson, Baltimore
Debbie & Lou Taylor, Reisterstown
Robin Zimmerman, Upperco

Huzzah to the Dead Bird Society!

Our Lights Out Baltimore Team has recently received a lot of publicity regarding the plight of birds killed by window strikes. Under the exceptional leadership of Lindsay Jacks and the artistic awards recently given to Lynne Parks, there has been a cascading effect of interest about the subject in local media. If you haven’t been keeping pace, check out these awards and articles. Bit-by-bit word is getting out about this serious bird fatality issue, both regionally and nationally.

May, 2013. Lynne is notified that she is one of three recipients of the $25,000 Baker Artist Award based in large part on her photographs of dead birds found during LOB walks. [www.bakerartistawards.org/blog/2014/01/2013-msb-winner-lynne-parkss-work-featured-on-fast-company/](http://www.bakerartistawards.org/blog/2014/01/2013-msb-winner-lynne-parkss-work-featured-on-fast-company/)

February 23, 2014. The Baltimore Sun published an article by Julie Scharper titled “Art exhibit takes the bird’s-eye view” describing LOB and Lynne’s award. [www.baltimoresun.com/entertainment/arts/bs-ae-lynne-parks-birds-20140218,0,7251616.story](http://www.baltimoresun.com/entertainment/arts/bs-ae-lynne-parks-birds-20140218,0,7251616.story)

February 26-April 6, 2014. The Baltimore Museum of Art holds an exhibition of the Baker awardees including sixteen of Lynne’s award-winning photographs along with a description on how Lynne’s photographs document the disorienting
MDBirding, BBC Facebook, eBird, Google searches…the list goes on for electronic sources of regional and national bird information. Bird information is fed to us instantaneously by phones, pads and laptops. This easy access is both amazing…and hurtful. Amazing because everyone can have easy access to information about the birds and where they are at that moment. Hurtful because bird club membership has dropped considerably across the nation since the availability of electronic information, including for BBC and MOS. After all, the net is free.

What does the regional bird club do that the internet cannot do? At BBC dues go to providing field trips and lectures, publishing newsletters and eAlerts, providing bird education and outreach, undertaking habitat and other bird conservation efforts, and collecting scientific data to track bird activities. These pursuits wouldn’t happen without MOS and its regional chapters. And it is available to everyone—FREE—online. We are not a closed organization, but our minimal operating costs come from dues and contributions paid by members.

We could buzz all we want about what birds are seen where, but the where will diminish precipitously without the dedication and passion of our organizations. And this is especially true at the regional level. Although organizations like Audubon and American Bird Conservancy are there to fight the big fight, even they are fed data from groups such as ours to back up their arguments. And they aren’t the ones to take on local issues like potential of clear-cutting at Prettyboy Reservoir or Lights Out Baltimore.

I guess I’m preaching to the choir since those reading this article are probably BBC members already. But please spread the word. I checked the 340 members on the BBC Facebook page, and only 18 (5%) are members of BBC/MOS. Our joint BBC/MOS annual dues of $35 support our birds…a small price to pay for helping to maintain these treasured creatures throughout the state of Maryland.

Honeybees are still in big trouble, with Maryland hive losses up to 50%. What you can do to help? First, do not get rid of your dandelions—they are crucial for early pollen and nectar.

Second, avoid using a group of pesticides called neonicotinoids on your lawns and gardens! They are lethal to both bees and birds.

Iminacloprids are the worst offenders. Brand names are: Admire, Advise, Alias, Confidor, Imida, Impulse, Legend, Gaucho Leverage, Macho, Merit, Nuprid, Pasada, Prey, Provado, Premise.

Other neonics to avoid: Actara, Platinum, Helix, Cruiser, Adage, Meridian, Centric, Flagship, Poncho, Titan, Clutch, Belay, Arena, Assail, Intruder, Adjust, Calypso, Safari, Venom.

Remember that by helping the bees you are helping the birds.
Joy Wheeler (1927-2014): In Memoriam

Joy was appropriately named. She is probably best known among her fellow-birders for her more than three decades of work for the Baltimore Bird Club and Cylburn Arboretum (as well as a myriad of other nature-oriented organizations) and for introducing the children of Baltimore City and County to the joy and wonders of nature. Her work at Cylburn had many facets. She worked on the Nature Museum when it was in the third floor of the Mansion and helped with obtaining funding and plans for the new museum in the Carriage House. She served as BBC representative to Cylburn for many years.

Her work with children included being involved in Story Hours, school children visits to Cylburn, going to schools to talk to students about nature studies, and running the Junior Nature Camp (now defunct). As fellow-birder, Patsy Perlman, states in Joy’s obituary, “To children she was like Santa Claus. Many of our young adult birders remember with fondness how, at a young age, Joy influenced their love of nature and birds. They just followed her around.” And what goes around comes around…Marty Brazeau, BBC’s long-term youth activities chairperson, writes “I have known her and birded with her since high school. I am sorry to hear the sad news. She did live a full and long life.”

And if this wasn’t enough, Joy helped shape the BBC club by serving in many other roles. Beginning in the mid 1970’s, she performed as BBC president for two years and vice-president for three, and as BBC’s representative to MOS and Chip Notes editor for several years. In addition, for three years she was BBC program chairperson and Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) Librarian. Joy also wrote book reviews for Maryland Bird Life. Recently she was influential in bringing the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology’s Trail Tracker to the Vollmer Center. And then there are all the trips she led—to places like Northampton Furnace Trail, and to Greenmount, Mount Auburn and Loudon Park Cemeteries, to name a few.

BBC honored Joy in 2010 with a Distinguished Service Award for a quarter century of service in Club activities at Cylburn, especially for introducing the children of Baltimore City and County to the wonders of nature, for serving as BBC liaison to Cylburn, and for all the other club activities she performed over the years. With this memoriam, we honor her once again for all she has done for nature, children, and our Club.
Another Farewell

Robert Dwight died on March 22nd. BBC members will remember him as the person who donated funds to move the Nature Museum from the Cylburn Mansion to the Carriage House. He also supported expansion of the Carriage House with an eye toward accommodating all our nature collection. Robert, an avid shorebird watcher and shell collector, was instrumental in curbing development on Assateague Island. Thank you Robert for your gifts to birds and bird watchers.

Nikki sports a new tattoo!

*Nikki DeBraccio is an ardent new birder who is becoming expert at astounding speed. She is also a frequent contributor to BBC’s Facebook page. Readers might enjoy sharing her enthusiasm for birding!*

“This crazy new birder got a Baltimore Oriole tattooed on herself, LOL. The photo was taken by Mark Kratz -- thanks Mark! Seriously though, I have other tattoos... I wanted a realistic bird for a long time. I think this one turned out well. Inked by Guy Arnold at Flesh Tattoo in Harford County, MD.”
Update on Wisdom and Moonbird

In the fall 2013 Chip Notes, we reported on two amazing bird—Wisdom, a Laysan Albatross, banded as a chick in 1956 by Chan Robbins on the Midway Atoll who had just successfully hatched chicks at the tender age of 62; and Moonbird, Red Knot B95, who was banded in 1995 (age uncertain) making him a survivor of the 10,000 migration to Tierra del Fuego for at least 20 years. I am happy to report that this year Wisdom celebrates her 63rd birthday and is still raising chicks, and Moonbird, age 21+, was spotted again at Mispillion Harbor in Delaware.

Greater Bird-of-Paradise (Paradisaea apoda)

The Cylburn Mansion is sporting a dramatic new display—a mounted bird-of-paradise! This skin was donated to the Baltimore Bird Club in 2004 by Alfred Sommer, MD, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The skin was presented to Dr. Sommer by the people of Indonesia in gratitude for his discovery that large doses of Vitamin A substantially reduced blindness and mortality in children.

Dr. Anthony and Patsy Perlman had this incredible skin mounted and framed for exhibition and it fits in perfectly in this Victorian abode. The Victorians loved natural history and taxidermy and frequently decorated with specimens, especially tropical birds, from around the world!

Thank you Tony and Patsy for this generous gift to BBC and Cylburn!
Summer in Terra Nova (AKA Newfoundland)

Part Two: Wonderful Western NF

By Karen Morley

It’s a shorter ferry ride from northeastern Nova Scotia to the town of Port aux Basques on the south-western edge of NF than it is to the Avalon Peninsula on the eastern side of the province (covered in the last issue of Chip Notes). There’s daily service on this route because it is the main commercial link to the island. It is fascinating to watch the ferry crew load the large numbers of 18 wheelers along onto the ferry – it’s like a well choreographed dance. Traveling during the day provides great opportunity for pelagic birding – Northern Fulmars, Greater and Sooty Shearwaters, Leach’s Storm Petrels, Black Guillemots and Gannets can be seen. One cautionary tale regarding the ferries….inclement weather and other incidents (engine trouble or crashing into the dock, for example) can alter the schedules. If you are taking either ferry try to put an extra day in NF into your schedule…..there will always be something interesting to see if all is going smoothly and if not, you will be grateful that your trip is not cut short by delays.

After arriving in Port aux Basques we drove up the western coast to the top of the Great Northern Peninsula making only a few stops along the way. It’s an 8 hour trip so plan accordingly. CAUTION: there are a lot of moose in NF. As many as 900 moose vs. vehicle accidents occur annually. (Interesting fact: moose are not native to NF; 4 moose were introduced in 1904 as a protein source for poor Newfoundlanders. There are now more than 150,000 moose and they have become cultural icons and road hazards.) We then worked our way back down to Port aux Basques making 3 or 4 night stops in significant locations. We saw a lot of moose and some caribou, the native deer of Newfoundland. Some birds along the way north were Song Sparrows, Bald Eagle, Ring-billed, Black-backed, and Herring Gulls, Common Tern, and Belted Kingfisher.

Our first stop was in St. Anthony which is a good base to explore the northernmost tip of NF. As I mentioned in the previous article, in 1000 CE Leif Eriksson and his Vikings established a trading settlement at the northern tip of NF at L’Anse aux Meadows. A replica of a Viking large hall gives you an idea of what life was like back then, complete with reinactors. To get to the site you walk through a forest of ancient spruce and balsam fir commonly found in coastal Newfoundland that they call Tuckamore……..it’s stunted from frost and wind that nip back the new growth. These trees are hundreds of years old yet only a few feet tall creating an impenetrable elfin forest. Many boreal songbirds can be found in Tuckamore but because we were there in mid August, most songbirds had already flown south. There were Arctic and Common Terns though along the coast, and Northern Harrier, Robins and White-crowned Sparrows in the meadows.

We had better luck on a boat trip out of St. Anthony to see ice bergs, whales and sea birds. St. Anthony is at the top of Ice Berg Alley…….there is even an ice berg graveyard where many bergs crash into the land. Unfortunately, we were too late to see any significant ice bergs – although the natives do make a living selling 10,000 year old ice berg water (the purest water on earth), ice berg vodka and ice berg beer. But we certainly did see whales, dolphins and a 7 ft long Leatherback Sea Turtle! Also present were the greatest number of Great Black-backed Gulls I have ever seen. They are resident there and certainly own the place. Herring Gulls are plentiful as well. Besides the gulls we saw Black Guillemots, Great and Sooty Shearwaters, and Northern Gannets. The leader of this “discovery” trip, a biologist and conservationist, had lots of tales to tell especially about late spring in St. Anthony when the ice

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flows break up. It appears that the Polar Bears ride the ice down and sometimes disembark in St. Anthony. There’s a big one mounted in the local museum. Fortunately, as the weather warms up, the bears generally move back north. If not, there might be two in the museum.

One curiosity seen all along the roads on the northern peninsula is garden plots. They are not near homes so seem strangely placed roadside. Turns out since the soil up there is so acid and tannic, it’s difficult to grow vegetables and flowers. But when the road crews come in to dig up the ground to build a road, they cut through the matted peat and unearth good soil. So locals arbitrarily stake a claim and plant a garden in the good soil. We were looking at one plot when a lovely Short-eared Owl flew in to perch on the fence post to look at us. Another curiosity is teepee shaped woodpiles along the roads. The locals cut wood during the winter and bring the logs to the road on sledges. They stack them to dry out over the summer so they have wood to burn next winter. Since just about everyone who lives up on the northern peninsula knows everyone else, no one takes vegetables or wood from their neighbors’ garden or woodpile. It’s the same with the crab and lobster pots that are stored along the roads off season. It’s a nice reminder of an older and more trusting time and way of life. Other birds seen in the St. Anthony vicinity were Lincoln Sparrow, American Black Ducks, Mallards, Ruddy Turnstones, Greater Yellowlegs, and a Rough-legged Hawk.

Heading back south you pass through large areas of bog and meadows. To the east are the Long Range Mountains, the northern tip of the Appalachians. At St. Barbe you can get a ferry across the Strait of Belle Isle to Quebec and Labrador. It’s an easy way to get a couple of birds for your Labrador list. One of the most exciting stops is at Flower’s Cove where you can walk along the shore to find Thrombolites. They were the only known form of life on earth from 3.5 billion years to 650 million years ago and are the remnants of the bacteria and algae that created the air that made earth habitable. Very rare, they can only be found in Newfoundland and western Australia. Birds seen on this drive were Osprey, the usual gulls, Northern Harrier, Crows, Ruddy Turnstones, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Piping Plovers and Semipalmated Sandpipers.

Next you come to NF’s crown jewel, Gros Morne National Park. A World Heritage site, Gros Morne tells the story of the earth’s transformation. Geologists used rocks from here to prove and illustrate the theory of plate tectonics. The ancient ocean here was thrust up to become part of the Appalachian Mountains when two continents collided. Later glaciers carved out massive cliffs in the 1.2 billion year old rock creating several fjords on their path to the sea. As the glaciers melted and the weight of the ice was gone, the earth rebounded and it’s now a one mile walk through forest, bogs and meadows to the entrance to Western Brook Pond, an ex-fjord with cliffs 2000 ft. high. The salty water was eventually flushed out and it is now fresh but almost completely devoid of nutrients so not much lives in Western Brook Pond. On the one mile walk to the boat the stunted forest is alive with Boreal Chickadees, White-throated Sparrows, Arctic Tern, Common Tern, American Crow and Northern Harrier. At another geological site, where organisms from shallow and deep water sea life formed a carbonate bank 500 million years ago, we saw Caspian Tern, Piping Plover, Semipalmated Sandpipers, Double-crested Cormorant, Common Eider and Black Ducks.

At the Tablelands you can walk on examples of the exposed mantle of the earth where an ancient
A Touch of South Carolina

by Jim Highsaw and Linda Prentice

In mid-January 2014 we decided to start exploring some of the birding areas in central South Carolina. Using Santee, SC as a base, we birded in four parks and wildlife refuges - Santee State Park and Santee National Wildlife Refuge on Lake Marion, Congaree National Park on the Congaree River near Columbia, and the Woods Bay Natural Area near Florence. We found lots of birds and few people. Santee SP has some nice woodland trails and good views of Lake Marion. Near the park entrance we found a Loggerhead Shrike. On a woodland trail we found a couple of nice mixed flocks which included both Kinglets, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Brown Creepers, Hermit Thrush, Carolina Wrens and Red-bellied Woodpeckers. At the boat launch area we found different birds - Common Loon and Pied-billed Grebe in the lake, and Bluebirds and Pine Warblers foraging in an area where logs and tree branches had washed into a protected area behind a dock. At a place where a creek empties into the lake we found an Anhinga and a Belted Kingfisher.

The 7-mile Wildlife Drive in the Santee NWR had a nice mix of land and water birds. Highlights here included a male Northern Harrier, Phoebes, more Kinglets and Sapsuckers, a Towhee and some Alligators sunning themselves.

The 1.1 mile elevated Boardwalk through the flooded forest at Congaree National Park was probably the best birding of the trip. Highlights here included Blue-headed Vireo, Hermit Thrush, numerous Pileated Woodpeckers, plenty of Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and White-breasted Nuthatch.

There was little bird activity on a cold morning at the Woods Bay Natural Area, but we did find a Hermit Thrush and enjoyed the 500-foot Boardwalk through the wetland area.

For sheer numbers of birds, we would probably go back to Congaree NP. For total number of species, we would probably go back to Santee SP, although we didn’t have time to fully explore the Santee NWR which has four different areas. We hope to return next year and start exploring the coastal areas.
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MAR 15 - BLACKWATER NWR - Bald Eagles everywhere, with huge collections of Snow Geese and Tundra Swans, lots of ducks, and two Trumpeter Swans at the end. Disappointment: missed the brown-headed Nuthatches this time, woodland birds were sparse or almost absent. 63 species. 8 participants. Leader: Pete Webb.

MAR 16 - IRVINE NATURE CENTER - Newly arrived Tree Swallows were calling and excitedly checking out the boxes to claim for nesting. Eastern Bluebirds, Brown Thrasher, Fox and Savannah Sparrows seen. Seven Snipe flushed up and flew around (one or two at a time); at very end, one Woodcock was found next to the parking lot. Disappointment: no Vesper Sparrows or White-crowned Sparrows; woodland birds were sparse. 41 species. 8 participants. Leader: Pete Webb.

MAR 22 - MIDDLE CREEK - The most memorable part of the trip was not birds, but the Wood Frog extravaganza in a little vernal pond next to the road in the woods - Kevin counted 78 in the pond and 13 more hopping down the hillside to join the frenzy. We watched some of them sit at the edge and then hop in to join the party. They were chuckling up a storm and didn't mind having people standing at the edge of the road to watch the show. Birds - as usual for this trip, there were tons of Snow Geese and Tundra Swans filling most of the open water on the reservoir. At the visitor center we were treated to both Black-capped and Carolina Chickadees and very good views of up to seven American Tree Sparrows, probably the most I've seen at any one place and time. All along the roads, Tree Swallows were recently back from their winter grounds and excitedly chattering and picking out their nest boxes. We saw nice collections of various species of ducks in small ponds near the roads, including Gadwall, American Wigeon, Black Duck, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Hooded and Common Mergansers. From the trail, we spied on a distant Great Blue Heron rookery, with 12 nests in the trees. In an open roadside field, we heard and saw three Horned Larks displaying. Got nice scope views of one or two of them. There also were Bald Eagles, Eastern Bluebirds, and distant flyover Red-tailed, Red-shouldered and a Cooper's Hawk and a female American Kestrel and a Raven seen in flight. 51 species. 6 participants. Leader: Pete Webb.

APR 1 – ROBERT E LEE PARK - We had several new people join our first RELP bird walk since last spring. Right off the boardwalk was a Hermit Thrush, Eastern Bluebirds and Eastern Phoebes. Later, across the lake, two Bald Eagles were seen on their nest. This was thrilling for our new walkers. Great to see and hear a Brown Thrasher sitting out for all to see. The warbler of the day was Yellow-rumped. 42 species. 13 participants. Leader: Ruth Culbertson.

APR 8 - ROBERT E LEE PARK - Fair amount of sightings of some early migrants: Brown Creeper and Winter Wren, and the start of warblers--Yellow-rumped, Palm and one Parula heard (believed not to be a mimic). Also seen were shorebirds, Green-winged Teals, Pied-billed Grebe, and a Black-crowned Night-Heron. Raptors included Red-shouldered and Cooper’s hawks. Special were views of Golden-crowned Kinglets and Rusty Blackbirds, all POINTING TO MORE MIGRANTS ON THE WAY as the flora bloom and insects hatch. ALSO a good sampling of 17 birders with varied experi

(Continued on page 11)
ence. Results shared with park rangers too. 47 species. 17 participants. Leader: Chris Davidson.

APR 15 - ROBERT E LEE PARK - rained out.

MAY 1 – SWIFT WATCH AT DUSK, MARYLAND NATURALIST CENTER – This first of two chimney swift watches was co-sponsored with the Maryland Naturalist Center. From their parking lot we observed 384 swifts enter the chimney of St. Michael the Archangel Church (across the street) in less than 10 minutes. In addition to the swifts we got to watch a Red-tailed Hawk making its nightly foraging. Using one of the church spires as its base, the hawk made repeated rounds searching for food. The hawk was not the least bit interested in the swifts swirling around him, but we spectators got to compare the slow, more lumbered flight pattern of the hawk compared to the swifts’ rapid, erratic wingbeats. 14 participants. Leader: Carol Schreter

MAY 4 – SWIFT WATCH AT DUSK, ROLAND PARK COUNTRY SCHOOL – Although there were more leaders than participants, it was still a lovely show on this pleasant evening. 267 swifts entered the chimney on the north side of the RPCS’s athletic field, most within ten minutes with about 20 stragglers dribbling in in the dark over the next ten minutes. We also checked the Gillman School chimney across the street, and 150 swifts entered there in about 5 minutes. 2 participants. Leaders: Joan Cwi, Alice Nelson, Carol Schreter

Huzzah to the Dead Bird Society! (continued)

effect of glass on the ability of birds to navigate safely.


Spring, 2014. In Bird Conservation, the American Bird Conservancy published an article titled “Still Life with Bird: An Artist Honors Victims of Window Collisions.” It is beautifully illustrated with Lynne’s photos.


Yet to come. Requests are coming in for speaking engagements as far away as Kentucky!
Chip Notes, newsletter of the Baltimore Bird Club, is published quarterly. Current issue: Summer 2014

Joan Cwi, Editor
Karen Morley, Design

Submit materials to
Joan Cwi - jafjsc@verizon.net

Moving or email change?
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Or... 2211 W. Rogers Ave., The Outlook, Apt 109
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Baltimore Bird Club
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