

Chip Notes

BALTIMORE BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER



WINTER 2018 No. 406

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Lights Out Baltimore is Spreading Its Wings!	1, 8
Welcome New Members	1
President's Corner	
Local Patch	2
Conservation Corner	
Backyards—for the Birds	2, 3
Bird Bits	
A Day in the Life of the BBC	
General Information Person	4
When it's cold enough to see your tweets!	4
Observations by Birders	5
Cartoons only a birder will understand!	5
Scout Naturalist Program	6, 7
Chimney Swifts and Bird Migration	8, 9
Field Trip Reports	10, 11
BBC Info and Application	12



Lights Out Baltimore is Spreading Its Wings!

By Lindsay Jacks

Fall migration is typically our busiest time of the year and this fall is living up to its word. We recently worked with a student, Isabelle, at Towson University concerned about collisions. With her leadership and advisement from Dr. Scott Johnson, Towson University now has its first collision monitoring program to document the deceased birds and rescue the injured ones. Isabelle has recruited about 20 students to walk the campus daily. We are excited for this new partnership and hope that the collisions found can encourage bird-friendly development on future campus projects.



Virginia Rail rescue

Another new partnership is Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. We began delivering to them deceased birds that we found during that morning's LOB shift for research purposes. Songbirds have unique adaptations in key genes, so the deceased birds will be donated to study the biochemistry and genetics for aging and cancer research. Normally, all of the birds are donated to Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History, but now we are now happy to donate a portion of the collected birds to a local institution to contribute to research.

We also have a new rescue partnership with Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter (BARCS) downtown. When Animal Control rescues an injured window collision bird or one is brought to BARCS, the coordinators at BARCS will contact LOB for help to secure transport to Phoenix Wildlife Center. Recently, Animal Control rescued a stunned Virginia Rail found next to the Ravens Stadium, took the bird to BARCS, and we happily transported the bird to Phoenix Wildlife Center. The bird was successfully released!

Continued on page 8



Silver-haired bat rescue

WELCOME!

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

Andrea Albertini Baltimore
 Jennifer Griffiths Baltimore
 Kirsten and John Held Baltimore
 Steve Fauser Cockeysville
 Devi Abbott Timonium
 Terry Aman Towson
 Carleen Davis New Freedom, PA

President's Corner by Peter Lev



Local Patch

“Local patch” is a phrase we picked up from the English, who were obsessively birding before Americans adopted this pastime and passion. A local patch is a small area close to home that has a surprising variety of bird life. It is not exactly “backyard birding,” though many birders choose a home with a bird-welcoming backyard. Instead, one’s local patch is a spot full of birds but not birders, a place discovered and visited by one or a few people.

My friend Dave Larkin, who happens to be English (but long resident in the United States), introduced me to his local patch on the Towson University campus about fifteen years ago. It was a wooded stream valley behind the athletic fields where one rarely met another person. Dave had a list of 80 or 90 species he had observed in this area. Birding together before work, we expanded the list to 129. A great pleasure of a local patch is that you learn, by repeated visits, every variation of habitat and season. We learned where and when to look for Hooded Warbler in spring, which hillside was best for migrating thrushes, and so on. Alas, the area diminished from year to year because of construction, and eventually we stopped going there.

Lake Roland is a park with lots of odd, hidden corners. The heavily visited areas cover only a small portion of the park’s 502 acres. I live nearby, and at Lake Roland I have three or four local patches. The old rugby field, accessed from L’Hirondelle Club Way, is good for sparrows in October. The marsh down the hill at the end of the Woodbrook Trail has warblers and other migrants in fall. The rarely visited Serpentine barrens has some interesting breeding birds and—I’m just discovering—it can be a migration magnet. On the weekend of September 15-16,

2018, I had nine warbler species plus Red-breasted Nuthatch (several), Baltimore Oriole and Merlin. That compares pretty well with heavily birded hotspots like Washington’s Rock Creek Park.

By contrast, I haven’t found my own little patch of Cromwell Valley Park. Birding is so good near the hawk watch and on the south bank of the stream that it’s hard to spend time anywhere else. So at Cromwell I follow the well-beaten path. At Lake Roland, I visit my local patches and dream of new micro-habitats to explore.

Conservation CORNER

Backyards—for the Birds

By Mary Shock

Feeding Wild Birds in America: Culture, Commerce & Conservation, by Paul J. Baicich, Margaret A. Barker, and Carrol L. Henderson, Texas A&M University Press, 2015.

Bird feeding. Simple! Nail the bird feeder your kid built in school to a tree out back, fill it with seed from the grocery store, and let the fun begin. Not so fast. Bird feeding, as described in *Feeding Wild Birds in America* is much more complex and has a long and storied history.

Feeding Wild Birds in American began as a brief history of bird feeding commissioned by Wild Bird Centers of America. The authors then expanded their research into a book highlighting the start of bird feeding in the late 1800s to the development of a multi-billion dollar market for bird-feeding gear. The book focuses on the basics: food, water, and shelter, but it is not a “how-to” book. Instead, as promised by the title’s reference to culture, commerce and conservation, the authors track events in the larger world and relate the affairs of history to the practice of bird feeding.

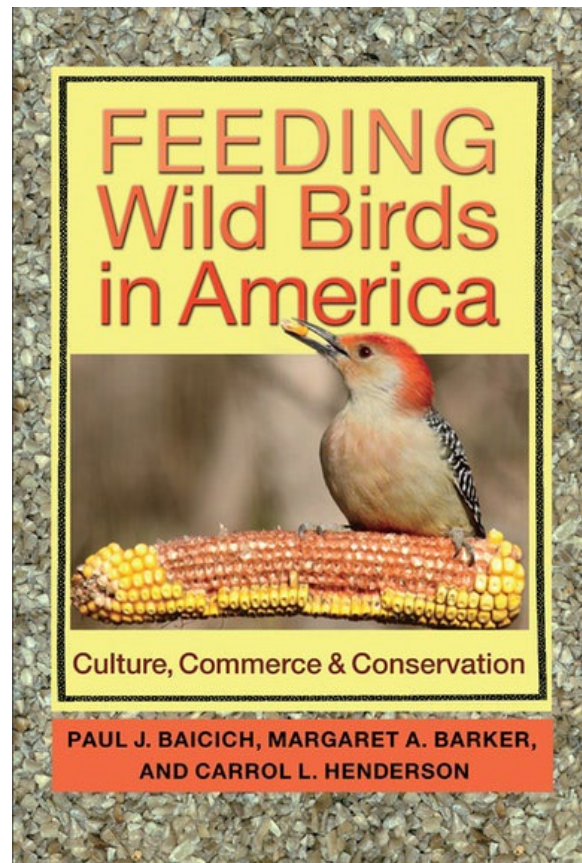
In the 1800s most of the U.S. population lived on farms and in rural areas. Householders watched birds for entertainment. They tacked feeding trays filled with table scraps and leftover seeds to their window sills or nailed a few pieces of fat to a tree. The pastime changed with industrialization when the population moved to the cities, and then changed again with the shift to the suburbs. Currently, the U.S. supports a large market for year-round feeding, suburban backyard stewardship, and eco-friendly landscaping. Householders aim to save the birds and still watch birds at the feeder for entertainment.

Feeding Wild Birds in America is packed full of stories about innovations in bird feeder construction, the development of seeds, and the people behind the pastime and business of bird feeding. My only criticism of the book is the overwhelming number of naturalists, conservationists, and inventors the authors describe. At times the reader forgets one personality to the next because so many are mentioned. One standout is Peter Kilham, recognized as the founder of the modern tubular bird feeder. Kilham based his design on the homemade feeder log, a log hung vertically with holes drilled in the sides for suet or peanut butter. Kilham then projected himself into the invention space, and according to his son: “He started by imagining himself to be a bird on a perch. Then he envisioned the geometry that would be most accommodating to the bird.”

So what do birds prefer to eat from their tubular or log feeders? Rendered fat, thistle, peanut butter, or sunflowers, and if sunflowers, gray-stripe or blacked-stripe? *Feeding Wild Birds in America* traces the research behind the modern seed you find in grocery and specialty stores. We read about Civil War veteran Foster Ellenborough Lascelles Beal who practiced stomach content examination to learn what birds preferred. Marylander Aelred Geis, the first U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service urban bird expert, reported in the

1980s on the attractiveness of various types of bird foods to the wide array of birds that come to feeders. He found the generic mix of assorted small seeds such as red millet, milo, and cracked corn most often attracted House Sparrows, European Starlings, and grackles. Chickadees prefer black-oil sunflowers. Indigo Buntings are attracted to white proso millet.

Feeding Wild Birds in America is printed on coated paper and includes illustrations, advertisements, photographs, and separate segments covering suet, bird baths, hummingbird feeders, and “Useful Bird” promotions, to name just a few. It is a beautiful and fascinating book and particularly interesting because it places bird feeding in a larger historical context.





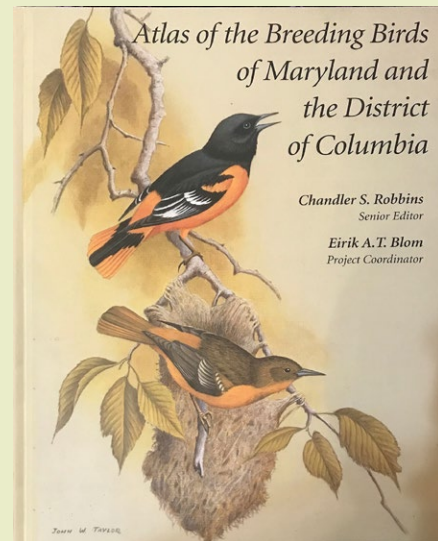
Birdbits.....

A Day in the Life of the BBC General Information Person

Carol Schreter, who answers requests that come in from people calling our general information line, just reported on the following case, which she calls one of the most interesting she has ever had. A TV prop person wanted signed authorization to place the **Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Maryland and the District of Columbia** (the 1996 version) on a coffee table during a TV segment about a birdwatcher. She wrote

*“As I mentioned on the phone, I work in the Set Decoration Department on the CBS series “NCIS New Orleans.” We would like to use the book **Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Maryland and the District of Columbia** as set decoration in a character’s home in an upcoming episode.”*

She was referred to Robin Todd, MOS president, who signed the authorization form for them.



When it's cold enough to see your tweets!

This photo has been all over facebook and the websites, but it is so unusual (hopefully not photo-shopped) and seasonal, we couldn't resist!

From photographer
Mikhail Kalinin

https://35photo.pro/photo_1819651/

Observations by Birders

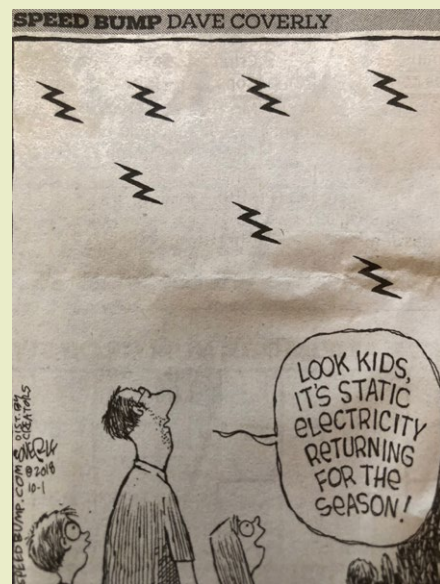


Last August, Terry Ross reported on this wall mural he discovered in Hampden when his regular bike shop had changed location and he had to walk a different route to get home. The sunflowers are real.



Miniature painting of a Chimney Swift by Ikumi Kayama.

Cartoons only a birder will understand!



Scout Naturalist Program, partially sponsored by the Baltimore Bird Club, a great Success.

by Marty Brazeau, Scout Naturalist Coordinator

At the request of Marty Brazeau, the Baltimore Bird Club, through its Memorial Fund, agreed last winter to help fund scholarships for the Seton Scout Naturalist Program, an overnight training program for Boy Scouts 13 years old and older. Below is a report by Marty on the success of this endeavor.

As a result of the Seton Scout Naturalist Program, held at Camp Rodney from August 5-11, eight Scouts and six adult Scout leaders learned how to lead a:

- Nature hike
- Stream study
- Night hike
- Wildlife observation focused five-mile hike
- Nature-themed campfire
- Many nature themed hands-on games

Two adult Scouters and two older Scouts from the Baltimore area greatly appreciated receiving scholarships to attend the program from the Baltimore Bird Club that paid for each of them \$345 dollars of the \$445 fee. Marty Brazeau, longtime BBC member, lead the program along with two other adult nature leaders. Participants received materials and equipment, including a field guide to local fauna and flora, and a kick seine (stream organism capture net) and food web game to enable them to present a nature-themed weekend for their Scout troop.

Graduates of the program are now leading programs for Scout units. They will be awarded a green jacket labeled "Seton Scout Naturalist" after they present required nature programming.

Below are a few samples of what graduates are reporting regarding their experience. Robert and Katie Carrigan, father and daughter BBC scholarship recipients, presented nature programming during a September weekend for two troops from the Chesapeake District. Robert writes: "We camped at Camp Rodney. We had three adults, ten scouts, and one prospective



Seton Scout Naturalist Program attendees

scout and his father who is looking to join our troop. All of the scouts and youth commented that this was one of the best camp weekends they have attended. Working the activities (learned from the Scout Naturalist Program), we were able to cover all of the requirements for the Nature merit badge. One of the scouts who just earned the badge at Hawk Mountain last summer said this program was much better and he learned a lot more.”

“Katie and I also plan to present the naturalist program to cub scouts, boy scouts, parents, and our girls planning to join our new Scouts BSA female troop, when we have our Thanksgiving Camp in November. Again, we will be at Camp Rodney at one of the larger cabins.”

Bridget Nadolny, a parent of Matthew Nadonly (grandson of BBC members Brent and Mary Byers) writes: “I just wanted to share some pictures from the stream study Matthew and Rohan completed with Cub Scout Pack 1742 at Hemlock Gorge. The water was cold but the activity was fun and informative. Very impressed with Matthew’s and Rohan’s ability to manage the group and share their knowledge. Matthew and Rohan also led a night hike with their scout troop at Camp Cone, Gunpowder State Park. Surprisingly the older boys enjoyed playing bat and moth game. Thank you, Marty, for giving them this opportunity.”

Scout Naturalist father and son team, Chuck and Elyjah Bassford, sponsored by the Oregon Ridge Nature Center, led an interpretive walk recently on the trail leading up to a cave. They will also be leading two publicized programs in the Spring at Oregon Ridge. Elyjah now wants to create a nature trail for Oregon Ridge or another area park.

You can see Elyjah, Rohan, Matthew and other Scout Naturalists on this informative online ten-stop nature trail created for Camp Rodney during our training. You can view the YouTube video at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_unfLcsWtg&t=736s

Scout Naturalists saw quite a few birds during their training. Elyjah Bassford commented that he enjoyed seeing roosting eagles on an early morning canoe trip along the Chesapeake Bay.



Rohan (No. 32) working with attendees on Nature Merit Badge

Marty is now hoping to present a similar program for Baltimore Area Scouts at a camp in the Adirondacks, expanded to 12 days, that will also include a nature-themed canoe trip.

Julie Seton, granddaughter of Ernest Thompson Seton, the naturalist founder of the Boy Scouts of America, flew in from New Mexico, and presented an overview of her grandfather’s life during the first evening of the program. She, along with Marty Brazeau, would like to see the program integrated into the Boy Scout program nationwide.

Thank you again for the generosity of the Baltimore Bird Club.

Continued from page 1

Besides, new partnerships, Lynne Parks, LOB Outreach Coordinator contributed her photography to an exhibit curated by Deborah Donelson held at Fleckenstein Gallery in the heart of Baltimore—Hampden. “The Living Sky and the Plight of Birds, An Homage” exhibit, which ran September 8- October 27, was in celebration of this year’s proclamation of naming 2018 the Year of the Bird. The exhibit displayed bird conservation driven works of art by Deborah, photographs by Lynne, and held events highlighting the work of Lights Out Baltimore, Phoenix Wildlife Center, and Patterson Park Audubon Center.



Living Sky Exhibit

While we are still monitoring downtown daily to rescue birds, the most exciting update we have is that this fall marks the 10-year anniversary of Lights Out Baltimore. Ten years ago, founder Wendy Olsson reached out to the Baltimore Bird Club and its members to join her and the efforts to reduce bird collisions in Baltimore city. With the support of the Baltimore Bird Club adding LOB as a project, over 1000 migratory birds have been rescued, 3000 birds found dead, 6 buildings signing the pledge to turn lights out, 2 downtown buildings adding bird-safe film to reduce strikes, 10+ art shows, and more. The rescued birds in 10 years encompass 101 species include Whip-poor-wills, Brown Creepers, Barn Owl, Magnolia Warblers, and our infamous Yellow Rail in 2016. In addition, to birds, we have rescued 45 bats downtown on our walks. We began rescuing grounded bats in 2013 and have rescued 5 species since.

In celebration of our 10-year anniversary (<https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/10yearslob/>), we will roll out a new logo, marketing items, fundraising campaign to retrofit buildings, and highlight on social media the work we have done these 10 years thanks to the support of the Baltimore Bird Club and Phoenix Wildlife Center. To further our anniversary campaign, as the Director of LOB, I recently left my job at the National Aquarium to focus on making Baltimore safe for migratory birds. I am fortunate to land a wonderful job as the Volunteer Coordinator at The Family Tree (familytreemd.org), a non-profit leading Maryland in the prevention of child abuse. This job allows me more time to focus on LOB, a chance to coordinate volunteers which I do non-stop for LOB, and hopefully make more strides to reduce collisions in our city.

From a new logo to new partnerships to an art show to my personal career change, LOB has proved to not only be busy this fall migration but ever-changing. If you want to volunteer to save birds with us, contact

lightsoutbaltimore@gmail.org.

Follow us on social media for updates about bird conservation, bird collisions, and Baltimore birding!

<https://www.facebook.com/savethebaltimorebirds/>

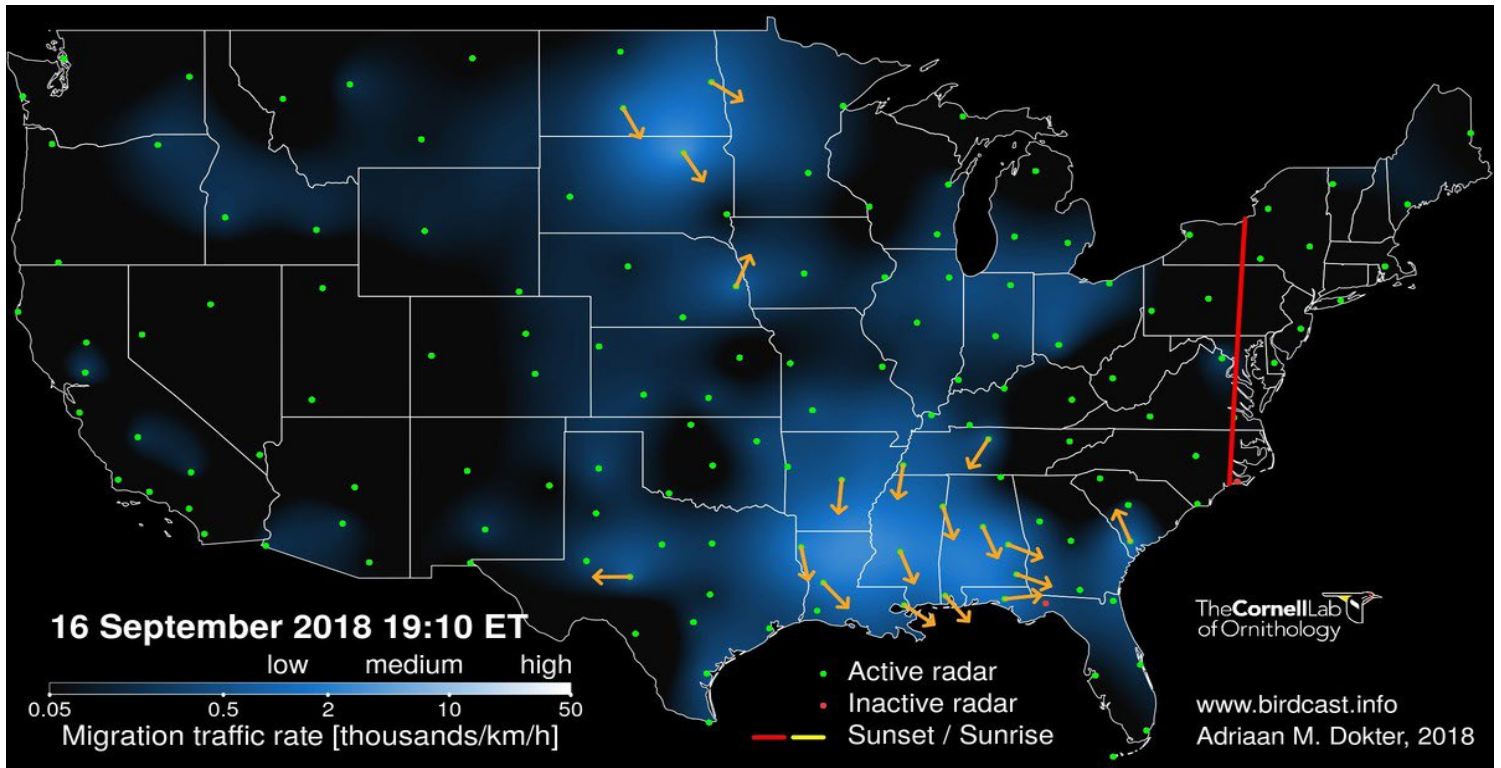
<https://www.instagram.com/lightsoutbaltimore/>

<https://twitter.com/hashtag/lightsoutbaltimore>

Chimney Swifts and Bird Migration

by Joan Cwi

CHIMNEY SWIFTS AT DUSK, September 16th. The swifts have been returning regularly to the Bookbindery Chimney in Hampden, so that is where we decided to hold the watch again this fall. As usual we (the royal “we” — Alice Nelson, Carol Schreter and I) observed the chimney a few times the week before and found over 700 swifts entering to roost. But on the night of the swift watch only 350 showed—a surprisingly low number for fall migration when we routinely see a few thousand entering this chimney. The good news is that more than *100 people* showed up to observe the show thanks to an event posting on the Greater Hampden Heritage Alliance facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/greaterhampdenalliance>)!!



BirdCast Live Migration Map

The low count was worrisome because we know the Chimney Swift population is on the decline. Afterwards, we checked Cornell Lab's BirdCast for that evening, one of the evenings when Hurricane Florence was devastating the Carolinas. See the map above for the evening of September 16th. The red line on the map represents sunset, the time when swifts would begin to descend into their evening roost chimneys. Wow—what a surprise. Instead of flying down the coastline, birds were veering westward toward Ohio around the hurricane, which probably explains our low count!

The Cornell Lab's [BirdCast](#) is the culmination of many years of research and data science. The BirdCast project has two incredible features: a 3-day migration forecast for the entire continental



Some of the 100+ people at September's Swifts at Dusk event

US and a live migration map for the same region. See the information below taken from their website.

The [migration forecasts](#) give you a quick glance at what to expect for the next three days, with predictions based on weather forecasts combined with radar data from 23 years of spring migration and are based on the culmination of many years of research and data science.

The [live migration maps](#) take data from weather radars, which can detect migrating birds, and package them up into quantified maps: one for each night of migration. Each animation packs a wealth of information, with shading showing migration traffic rates: the estimated number of birds migrating per hour across any given kilometer in the continental US. The little moving arrows can be mesmerizing, revealing not only the areas with significant migration but also the general direction of birds' movements. Running from just before sunset to about noon of the following day, each night can be played as an animation: watch how the bird migration ramps up 30-45 minutes after sunset each night! This live map is updated every 10 minutes, every night, all season long.

Field Trip Reports

Compiled by Kevin Graff

Bird Photos by Bill Hubick



SEP 1–SOLDIERS DELIGHT—A slow birding day. Wind has been mainly from the south for several weeks. We did see Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Hairy Woodpecker, Magnolia Warbler. Several in the group heard a singing Prairie Warbler. 25 species.



Yellow-billed Cuckoo

12 participants. Leader: Peter Lev.

SEP 4–CROMWELL VALLEY PARK—More than half of group got to see Golden-winged Warbler that was first found the day before. 47 species. 20 participants. Leader: John Landers.

SEP 11–CROMWELL VALLEY PARK—We were photographed for Towson Living Magazine Article on fall birding. Highlights: 2 Blackburnian Warblers, 1 Blue-winged Warbler. 41 species. 12 participants. Leader: Joe Corcoran.

SEP 18–CROMWELL VALLEY PARK—Dreary morning threatening rain. (It did rain by around 10:15am —just when we were finishing. Great timing!) Started out slow but picked up with good numbers of birds. Numerous small birds in spots made it hard to ID because of light

(poor) and distance (high up!). (And it is the time of confusing fall warblers!) 38 species. 6 participants. Leader: Mary Chetelat.

SEP 25–CROMWELL VALLEY PARK—Gray day with drizzly rain through most of the 3 1/2 hour hike. Cloud cover made it more difficult but the 6 determined birders worked together to get the job done. Special sightings included 1 Marsh Wren, 2 American Kestrels, 1 Rose-breasted Grosbeak, 1 Ruby-throated Hummingbird, 3 Redstarts. We went home pleased with our results. —Milnebank Run is in much better shape this fall than it was in spring. 44 species. 6 participants. Leader: Ron Davis.

OCT 2–CROMWELL VALLEY PARK—A slow day. Excellent, long look at Yellow-billed Cuckoo. American Kestrel on a wire. 5 warbler species including Nashville. 43 species. 16 participants. Leader: Peter Lev.



Marsh Wren

OCT 7–DAYS COVE—Hundreds of gulls, dozens of robin and blackbird flyovers at our arrival. Merlin posed for photos. Everyone got to see a flyby meadowlark over the landfill. Barred Owl calling. 49 species. 12 participants. Leader: Kevin Graff.

OCT 9–CROMWELL VALLEY PARK—Overall, seemed slow but included a high number of individuals including 5 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, 7 Northern Flickers, 44 Blue Jays, 22 Gray Catbirds, 21 Northern Cardinals, and 4 Rose-

breasted Grosbeaks. Multiple late migrants including Eastern Wood-Pewee, 2 Black-and-white Warblers, 2 American Redstarts, 1 Wilson's Warbler (thought to be a Yellow Warbler from the distance, till Gene Ricks got a photo for confirmation) and 2 Scarlet Tanagers. 4 Purple Finches were the highlight of the day. We explored a different trail, first times in years, where we ran into mixed flocks. 49 species. Narrative by Kevin Graff. 8 participants. Leaders: Debbie Terry/John Landers.

OCT 14-CYLBURN—We had a nice day despite the chilly temperature. The Savannah Sparrow ways unexpected. More typical migrants included Golden-crowned Kinglet, Magnolia Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, Palm Warbler and lots of Northern Flickers! Narrative by Peter Lev. 37 species. 5 participants. Leader: Mark Linardi.



Savannah Sparrow



BALTIMORE BIRD CLUB
http://baltimorebirdclub.org

A Chapter of

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
4915 Greenspring Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21209

Chip Notes, newsletter of the Baltimore Bird Club,
is published quarterly. Current issue: Winter 2018

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:**

January 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