

# Chip Notes

Summer  
2026  
No. 436



Alex (left) with Andy Brown, Farmland Raptor Program Manager (by Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership)

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## CONSERVATION CORNER

### Short-eared Owls in Maryland: Filling in the Blanks

*Alex Pellegrini, Farmland Raptor Program Coordinator*

Short-eared Owls are a difficult bird to come by in Baltimore County. You have to be lucky. Maybe as lucky as Will Kaselow, spotting one thermaling with Turkey Vultures over Patterson Park from his rooftop. Maybe lucky enough to encounter one on a Hart-Miller Island trip, or flush one from the upland trail at Masonville Cove. Whenever one turns up, birders take notice.

Part of that excitement comes from the fact that Short-eared Owls are seasonal birds. They arrive with winter and depart with spring, becoming part of the annual rhythm of birding in Maryland. Unlike a Barred Owl that can be encountered year-round, even from your backyard, opportunities to see a Short-eared Owl are fleeting. If you miss that window, another chance may be months away.

Many birders think of Short-eared Owls as one of the more readily observed owl species, and there's a real reason for that: unlike most owls, they are active at dawn and dusk and hunt in the open. We can watch them quartering low over marshes, grasslands, and agricultural fields in fading light. But that crepuscular window is only part of the picture. Short-eared Owls are

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perfectly capable of hunting throughout the night, and much of their lives unfold when our visibility is limited, and most people are asleep. The rest of the time, they are on the ground, roosting and nesting in dense grasses, effectively invisible. For a species that attracts so much attention from birders, there is still an extraordinary amount we do not know.

That lack of information presents a real conservation challenge.

Grassland birds are the most steeply and persistently declining avian group in North America. Since 1970, roughly three-quarters of grassland-dependent species have declined, with an estimated net loss of over 700 million individual birds, a reduction of around 53 percent across the group, and the steepest collapse of any terrestrial bird community on the continent (Rosenberg et al. 2019). Short-eared Owls are part of that story. Partners in Flight estimates the species has lost approximately 65 percent of its North American population since 1970 (Partners in Flight 2016), and NatureServe currently lists the species as possibly extirpated, critically imperiled, imperiled, or vulnerable across the majority of U.S. states (NatureServe 2025). The open landscapes these owls depend on continue to shrink and



↑ Short-eared Owl (by Bill Hubick)

change. Grasslands are among the most endangered ecosystems in North America, with the vast majority of the original tallgrass prairie long since converted to agriculture and development.

As those landscapes change, so too does the prey base that wintering Short-eared Owls depend upon. Yet many of the most basic questions about the species remain unanswered. Where do Maryland's wintering Short-eared Owls come from? How long do they stay? Do they return to the same wintering areas year after year? How frequently do they move between sites? Which habitats are most important to their survival?

Those questions aren't rhetorical. We genuinely don't know the answers, and the research record reflects that. Of the more than 3,200 Short-eared Owls banded across North

America since 1922, fewer than one percent were recovered more than 100 kilometers from where they were originally banded. The satellite telemetry work that has been done, including a landmark 2017 study tracking birds from Alaskan breeding areas across average migration distances of nearly 3,000 miles, has focused almost entirely on western North American populations (Johnson et al. 2017). The picture for eastern birds, including those that winter in Maryland, is largely blank.

In 2023, Andy Brown, Farmland Raptor Program Manager, and I attended the World Owl Conference in Onalaska, Wisconsin. Sitting in a room full of Short-eared Owl researchers from across the continent, what struck me most was that we were all grappling with the same empty spaces on the map. For a species with a global range spanning North and South America, Europe, Asia, and remote oceanic islands, remarkably little is known about its movements and habitat needs in eastern North America. Those conversations helped inspire the formation of the International Short-eared Owl Working Group and reinforced how much work remains to be done close to home.

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The Farmland Raptor Program was established in 2019 to address the conservation needs of four Species of Greatest Conservation Need in Maryland: American Barn Owl, American Kestrel, Northern Harrier, and Short-eared Owl. Much of our early effort went toward barn owls and kestrels, building what has become the largest coordinated nest box monitoring effort in the state while developing strong partnerships with farmers, landowners, conservation organizations, and volunteers. Short-eared Owls require a different approach entirely. They don't use nest boxes. They don't stay in one place. They challenge us to think on a larger scale.

Over the past several winters, we've been laying the groundwork for a long-term Short-eared Owl research effort in Maryland. Working alongside collaborators from across the country and internationally, we've developed capture techniques, collected biological samples and morphometrics, and contributed data toward broader continental research efforts.

Now we're ready for the next step.

We are launching Maryland's first large-scale Short-eared Owl transmitter project, deploying satellite transmitters on wintering birds to track their



Short-eared Owl (by Bill Hubick)

movements across the landscape. The questions are concrete: Where do these owls go when they leave Maryland in the spring? Are they faithful to specific wintering sites, or nomadic, following prey cycles across the region? Which habitats here are most critical to their survival? How do our birds connect to the broader North American population?

The answers matter beyond the owls themselves. Short-eared Owls share their wintering habitat with Northern Harriers, Rough-legged Hawks, American Kestrels, and a wide suite of grassland-dependent species, all under pressure from the same forces. Understanding how Short-eared Owls use Maryland's remaining open landscapes is a way into understanding what those landscapes need to survive.

I will be presenting a more detailed overview of this work for the Baltimore Bird Club on September 1, 2026 and hope you'll join us.

Those interested in supporting this research can donate through the Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership portal at [marylandbirds.org/donate](https://marylandbirds.org/donate). Please include 'SEOW BBC' in the donation notes.

## References

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Migrant Pin-tailed Duck hanging out near the Boat Lake (by Joe Corcoran)



**PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

## Thoughts on Patterson Park

I just had a lovely morning at Patterson Park, a beautiful spot for birding. Friends of Patterson Park and Audubon have created an excellent habitat for resident and migratory birds. I had fifty-seven species today, twelve of which were warblers. Impressive!

In fact, all of Patterson Park is special now. It's so clean and has the pool, top-notch athletic fields, the skating rink, tennis and basketball courts, and is a great community resource. It wasn't always this way, however.

As background, I grew up about three blocks west of the park near Wolfe Street and Eastern Avenue (North Fells Point) in the late 1950s through all of the 1960s.

The park was a wonderful place for sports and play while growing up, with all the open areas, but there were some issues. You had to watch out for broken glass and dog feces while playing and walking. There were no enforced laws to clean up dog mess, and the glass was from broken glass bottles, and was all over. There was quite a bit of litter, mostly paper, as plastics weren't around so much. And the rats! They were huge.

The park was at the center of racial tension in the mid to late 60s and early 70s. There were white supremacist rallies in the summer of 1966 led by the National States Rights Party

and their allies, the KKK, and Neo-Nazi groups, primarily supporting continued segregation and opposing open housing. Associated with these events, groups of whites roamed into black neighborhoods looking for victims to beat up. My older cousin was at one of these events and claims that the mob killed a



↑ Flag of the National States' Rights Party, based on the Confederate battle flag (by [RootOfAllLight](#), CC BY-SA 4.0)

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black boy and his dog, but I could never confirm that.

There were fights and violence associated with integrating the Patterson Park Pool where I swam sometimes in the

summer, and I vividly remember two kids drowning in an overcrowded pool. At times we were not allowed to go to the park (but we did violate that rule occasionally).

When the 1968 riots occurred after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Patterson Park was one of the camps for the Maryland National Guard

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## We're Doing Really Well, And We Could Use Some Help

Birding is exploding in popularity across the nation since the pandemic, and the Baltimore Bird Club is following suit. Birding is great for your mental health, and recently, evidence has been published that it improves your brain neurologically. You're outside in nature getting fresh air, sunshine, and exercise.

Our club conducts over 200 events a year in the Baltimore area, mostly bird walks with a few bird-related lectures. We can do more with additional volunteers to help coordinate and lead trips and run our organization.

We are a non-profit organization providing these valuable services free of charge (no membership required) to Baltimore area communities.

Moreover, many organizations are asking for our expertise to support their programs. For example, we do bird surveys in Neighbor Space areas and other community open areas to justify conservation efforts. In fact, we are at the forefront of conservation efforts to provide habitat for birds and the rest of nature, which is constantly under development.



← BBC Youth Director Daisy Sudano tabling at the Lake Roland Spring Migration Celebration

Our greatest needs right now are:

### Volunteer Coordinator

A board position that surveys and determines members' skills and recruits volunteers for the various parts of our organization, based on interaction with the overall board

### Community Liaison

A board position that interfaces with organizations and communities in all, but especially underserved economically disadvantaged areas, for local event presence and birding walks and education. For example, the Community Liaison coordinates with local libraries for bird walks and bird education.

### Teen Youth Group Leader

Teaches the joys of birding and plans events for younger budding birders

### Any Help You Can Give

Any amount of follow-up emailing, web page management, social media site management, fundraising, picking up mail, getting printing done, and more will be seriously appreciated.

If you're interested in giving back with a relevant and fun organization, please contact us at [Neville.ferns@gmail.com](mailto:Neville.ferns@gmail.com)



that was called in. I saw the troops there camping and doing drills.

In fact, I was a drummer once for marching drills for the troops stationed in Druid Hill Park. I was picked up at my house on Wolfe Street in an army jeep with four M16 carrying servicemen, and taken up Washington Street straight through a riot area. There were thrown bottles breaking on and around the jeep, rocks thrown at us, gunshots in the background, and a couple buildings burning. After drumming for morning drills, they took a different route to get me home.

The Guard troops were overwhelmingly white back then, as were Baltimore policemen and firemen. And here's an interesting fact. One of the primary reasons the Guard was called in was to prevent violent



*Red bud tree (by Joe Corcoran)*

mobs of whites attacking black neighborhoods; that is, to prevent a race war.

Around the same time, the Nazi Party established a headquarters on Eastern Avenue next to the fire station a half a block west of the park. They flew a very large Nazi flag right outside the office on busy Eastern Avenue for a couple years, and pretty much the most push back from the neighborhood was a few eggs thrown at the building. Absolutely unbelievable to see this office in a working class neighborhood with so many WW2 veterans, after what they went through to defeat the Nazis!

Later, in the mid-1970s, I rented a place with Linda on Eastern Avenue and Curley Street for eight years, directly across from the park. It was really a sweet place.

However, the crime got really bad, and we moved out to Baltimore County. My car had been broken into one too many times, my house had been broken into, a couple of times someone would go up and down Eastern Avenue slashing tires, making them unfixable, and worst of the worst, there was open prostitution along Eastern Avenue. Especially bad was child prostitution. Young boys would make good money (at least to them) servicing male pedophiles. All white crime, by the way.

And as things would go, once I moved out, Mayor Schaefer and Senator Mikulski started cleaning up downtown and Fells Point and opened up Harbor Place, and the Patterson Park area has been getting better mostly, ever since. It is wonderful now in comparison, to the point that I wouldn't mind moving back. Gentrification, with some flaws, is working somewhat.

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*Defensive cannon near the pagoda (by Joe Corcoran)*

Now I wasn't a saint. We smoked pot in Patterson Park at night. My close friends got busted there for it and were given the option of doing military service or jail, and chose the Navy to avoid combat on the ground in Viet Nam. And I myself got in trouble because I reacted aggressively to police harassment, after they stopped me on the street as a suspect for robbing a liquor store. But they kept me up against a wall for way too long after they clearly knew I nowhere near matched the description of any of the suspects. I ended up getting a Freddie Gray ride to the Eastern Police Station. They put me in handcuffs on a side bench in the paddy wagon, then drove through Canton, accelerating fast, then stopping suddenly at stop signs to see if they could

get me to fall off the bench, all the while joking about it.

I'm drifting a bit, but while we're on Patterson Park and race issues, the park was critical in the successful defense of Baltimore which led to the end of the War of 1812. After burning down Washington, the British figured that if they could take Baltimore, they could win the war. But the British Navy had to get past Fort McHenry so they could get close enough to support the troops that landed at North Point with naval cannons. These troops would have to break through the American defense line, anchored at Patterson Park, and could not do so without that naval support. Because the navy could not get past Fort McHenry, and were running out of ammunition, the troops and the navy withdrew from Baltimore.

Anyway, the Star Spangled Banner that was written then has a few stanzas, and one describes negatively the many black troops fighting for the British. In fact, they were fighting for their freedom, as they were promised it by the British if they fought for them. The British kept their promise and settled the surviving free black veterans in Canada and the Caribbean after the war. It was this stanza that Colin Kaepernick took a knee for during our national anthem at football games.

So, to wrap this all up, Patterson Park is top notch now, and groups like Friends of Patterson Park, and Audubon, and all the other community groups and the City of Baltimore should be proud of this historical and current treasure.



## EVENT

# Join the Flock: Volunteer for the Wild Goose Chase

Supporting the Blackwater  
National Wildlife Refuge

*Stephanie Helline*

As fellow birders, we know how vital the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge (BNWR) is for nesting and migratory birds. This September 26 & 27, we have a unique chance to support BNWR through the annual Wild Goose Chase (WGC). This all-women's bike ride brings together 260 female cyclists in Cambridge, MD, to raise funds for the [Friends of Blackwater](#), who champion conservation and education projects throughout the year.

## A Weekend of Education and Exploration

The WGC is a mission-driven weekend connecting cycling and nature. Saturday workshops are designed to educate and immerse participants in the beauty of the refuge.

Workshops include:

- Bird Walk
- Nature Ride on Wildlife Drive
- Nature Sketching
- Nature Photography
- Yoga for Cyclists
- Kayaking



*Photos by Stephanie Helline*

- Harriet Tubman Ride
- Bike Mechanics

The weekend culminates on Sunday with the official ride, a fully supported event offering routes of 11, 18.5, 32, and 63.5 miles.

## It Takes a Flock: Volunteer Today

The energy of this event is contagious, but it only comes alive with dedicated volunteers. No prior experience is required, and there's a role for every time commitment.

## Volunteer Opportunities Include:

- **The Planning Team:** Help with the creative vision and logistics leading up to the event.
- **The Weekend Team:** On-site roles including event set-up, flower arranging, t-shirt sorting, road sign placement, staffing rest stops with food and drinks to fuel the riders, and other jobs.

## Get Involved

The Wild Goose Chase is a fun, hands-on way for Baltimore Bird Club members to support bird and habitat protection. Join the "flock" this year!

## Learn More & Sign Up:

- [Watch the video:](#) See the beauty of BNWR and hear from riders.
- [Register to volunteer](#)
- Want to cycle the Wild Goose Chase? [Register here.](#)

We look forward to seeing you at the refuge this September!



Questions? Email: [blackwaterwgc@gmail.com](mailto:blackwaterwgc@gmail.com)



## BBC PROGRAMS

### Youth Program Event Reports

*Daisy Sudano,  
BBC Youth Director*

It's been a busy time for all and the BBC Youth Program had lots of events. For me, it started with the Cylburn Arboretum Spring Fair, March 28th—*“Celebrate the Beauty of Spring at Cylburn Arboretum. Enjoy a day of nature, discovery, and community with guided tours, hands-on demonstrations, and interactive exhibits by Cylburn’s*



*Eastern Screech-Owl being shown by “Echoes of Nature” at the NHSM Birds of Prey Event (by Daisy Sudano)*

*environmental and gardening groups. Meet experts, explore the gardens, and learn more about the incredible organizations that are connected to Cylburn.”* Joe and I had a table and all enjoyed the “What do you call a group of...birds” game that I brought. We got two new Junior members.

Then there was the Lake Roland Spring Migration Celebration, April 4th. It was a beautiful day and we got to see a thermal pocket with Vultures, Eagles and the Peregrine Falcons on top! We got one new Junior member :).

I did some birding with the Coppermine Du Burns Spring Camp. The Canton Water Front Park is across the street so we learned about some birds. We listed 12 species including Coots, and a purple headed duck. I learned something that day: that Mallard ducks can appear purple, not the typical green head. Boy was I confused. The highlight was the Osprey that put on a display of its diving and fishing skills. Two times it brought up a fish. The kids all oohed and aahed :).

I enjoyed teaching all about bird eggs at Coppermine Du Burns Enrichment Program. We created yarn nest eggs and sequin eggs.



*At the Cylburn Arboretum Spring Fair (by Daisy Sudano)*

The Natural History Society of Maryland had their first Nature Connections on “Birds of Prey”. Marcia and her husband manned the Ornithological/BBC table and I had the pleasure of running the Owl Pellet station. Amazing time getting to see the birds up close. A huge highlight was the lecture from Alex Pellegrini on his “Farmland Raptor Program”. What a great presentation!



*Making nest eggs as part of the Coppermine Du Burns Enrichment Program (by Daisy Sudano)*



## BBC PROGRAMS

# Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs)

*Mike Brent*

Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) are a tradition dating back to 1900 that generates data for tracking population trends. To ensure the usefulness of the data for research purposes, Audubon sets strict rules for how counts are conducted, including the requirement that the count occurs on a single calendar day between December 14th and January 5th and the requirement that the count is conducted within the boundaries of a 15-mile diameter “count circle.” You may also hear the term “count week,”

or the period covering three days before and after the official count date, as a slightly less strict window of time for documenting additional species found around the time of the count. While there have been some updates to our count circles over the years, our participation in CBCs dates back to 1945.

Historically, Baltimore Bird Club sponsored one or two CBCs per year. This past winter, we conducted three CBCs to identify and count as many birds as possible within count circles centered on

Middle River, Baltimore City, and Loch Raven Reservoir. In total, the 93 CBC participants volunteered 277 hours, identified 113 species, and counted 72,008 birds on the days of the counts. Some of the highlights are shown below, but the full results of all Audubon CBC counts, going back to 1900, can be accessed at [netapp.audubon.org](http://netapp.audubon.org).

Thank you to the organizers, Tim Carney and Libby Errickson, and all of the volunteers for three successful and enjoyable counts. Going forward, we will aim to conduct annual counts in these three circles to identify and track changes in bird populations. This December, consider joining one or more of our CBCs and continuing this long tradition. In addition to generating important data, there’s a good chance of making new friends and getting some lifers!

### **Middle River December 14th, 2025**

This count circle, started in 2013, is centered on Middle River but extends from just north of Fort Howard on the North Point Peninsula up to

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*Horned Lark (by Bill Hubick)*



and including the mouth of the Gunpowder River. With three inches of fresh snow overnight, we had unforgettably picturesque conditions for our first CBC of the year. However, with the temperature ranging from 22 to 31 degrees F and strong winds starting mid-afternoon, it was also a good day to layer up and use hand and body warmers. The ice and snow coverage was extensive, including all of Black Marsh, and we thought the count might be a complete bust. Thankfully it soon became clear that waterfowl and passerines remained in the area in good numbers. Some observers even remarked that the conditions may have helped in the end, with birds concentrated in small sections of open water and patches of bare ground along roads.

99 species without Hart-Miller Island\* (see note below)

21,979 birds counted without Hart-Miller Island\*

**Highlights:**

- Sandhill Crane (9)
- Wilson’s Snipe (2)
- Common Raven (13)
- Horned Lark (5—unusual around Middle River and likely related to the snow)
- American Pipit (414—high count likely related to the snow)



† American Pipit (by Bill Hubick)

- Orange-crowned Warbler (1)
- Nashville Warbler (1)
- Pine Warbler (4)
- American Tree Sparrow (1)
- Rusty Blackbird (81)

Expected but missed on count day: Horned Grebe, Greater Scaup, Canvasback, Redhead, and Green-winged Teal

*\*The conditions prevented a visit to Hart-Miller Island on count day. A census conducted by Tim two days later added 13 count week species, including most of the expected species that were missed on count day, and Virginia Rail (1), Rough-legged Hawk (1), Short-eared Owl (2), Tree Swallow (25), Snow Bunting (1), Marsh Wren (2), White-crowned Sparrow (2), and Common Yellowthroat (3). If the Hart-Miller Island visit occurred on count day, the species count would likely have exceeded the 2020–2024*

Middle River CBC average of 109 species, and the total birds counted would have been closer to the 2020–2024 average of 33,261.

**Baltimore City, December 20th, 2025**

While Baltimore City counts have been conducted in the past, this was a new count circle location, which was started last year with an unofficial trial count.

The circle covers Baltimore City, and small parts of Baltimore County, Howard County, and Anne Arundel County just to the southwest of the city. With mostly clear conditions and the temperature ranging from 28 to 44 degrees F, it was a near perfect day with participants covering over 60 miles on foot. This first official count for the circle generated impressive numbers that will serve as a benchmark.

98 species

26,806 birds counted

**Highlights:**

- Brant (1—our winter-long visitor residing at Fort McHenry)
- Common Loon (1)
- Virginia Rail (1)
- Wilson’s Snipe (3)
- Laughing Gull (1)
- Blue-headed Vireo (1—great

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find by Sam Tillman!)

- Common Raven (10)
- Horned Lark (2)
- American Pipit (19)
- Orange-crowned Warbler (4)
- Pine Warbler (2)
- Eastern Meadowlark (2)
- Rusty Blackbird (21)

Somewhat expected but missed on count day: Merlin

### Loch Raven January 4th, 2026

A Loch Raven Reservoir count circle dates all the way back to the founding of BBC! For this year's count, January 4th was partly cloudy with the temperature warming from 28 to 41 degrees F. While the coldest part of this unusually harsh winter was still more than a couple weeks away, the reservoir was already mostly frozen at the time of the count. These



↑ Orange-crowned Warbler (by Bill Hubick)



Virginia Rail (by Bill Hubick)

conditions likely impacted the count compared with recent mostly ice free years, but the species count and total birds counted this year exceeded the averages for 2020–2024. One possible explanation is that some species may have retreated to our area from colder locations more this year than typical years. For example, several participants commented on the abundance of Common Mergansers in the area, and the very high count of 2,358 may include populations driven south by even more extensive ice coverage north of our area.

89 species, exceeding the 2020–2024 average species count of 86

23,223 birds counted, exceeding the 2020–2024 average of 17,366

#### Highlights:

- Virginia Rail (2)
- Wilson's Snipe (5)
- Red-headed Woodpecker (3)
- Common Raven (18)
- Horned Lark (35)
- Orange-crowned Warbler (1)
- White-crowned Sparrow (2)
- Eastern Meadowlark (8)
- Rusty Blackbird (26)

Somewhat expected but missed on count day: Redhead, Wild Turkey



## TRIP REPORTS

### March-May 2026

#### March 1, 2026: Bauers Farm Woodcocks

*Leader: Tim Carney*

We lucked out with nearly ideal conditions for woodcock displays: clear skies, temps above freezing, and wind below 10 mph. Sunset was at 17:59 and the first woodcock flew in from behind us and fairly low at 18:17. At 18:18, we heard the first “peents” and also one of the strange cackling calls, followed by a possible flight display in the back at 18:19 and a definite flight display at 18:21. At least four woodcocks peented, cackled,

and displayed until 18:40. Non-woodcock highlights included a flock of seven Common Mergansers flying east just before sunset and a flock of 23 Northern Pintails flying north around sunset. It’s always nice when the woodcock trip coincides with visual waterfowl migration.

*18 species, 23 birders*

#### March 29: Back River Gulls

*Leader: Tim Carney*

The second official Back River gulling trip was similar to 2025’s trip in that we had a great group

of people, lots of nice “spring-time” birds, and no Little Gulls. We started at Cox’s Point Park where we tallied about 50 Bonaparte’s Gulls mostly moving upriver. From there, we could see a swarm of small gulls farther up near the Eastern Avenue bridge, so we decided to cut our visit to Cox’s short and head directly to the Essex Park & Ride adjacent to the bridge. Remember that we planned this event around a 10:00 low tide, but the water was still just too high for any kind of extensive

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Monica Gallagher is a born and raised Marylander who recently discovered that almost EVERY chirp she hears is a Carolina Wren. She is always looking for new illustration and comics projects, bird or non-bird alike, and you can find contact info along with more of her work at: [www.eatyourlipstick.com](http://www.eatyourlipstick.com).

*MOG*  
2024



↑ *Bonaparte's Gull (by Bill Hubick)*

flats. One of these years we're going to time it correctly! The gulls were loafing on the distant Diamond Point flats, and unfortunately not flying around so it was virtually impossible to pick out a Little Gull or Black-headed Gull if one was there. We also couldn't get a response from the overwintering Orange-crowned Warbler. We took a break scanning the gulls to admire some springtime arrivals like Ospreys and Caspian Terns. After nearly an hour, we returned to Cox's Point Park in case a Little Gull or Black-headed Gull decided to fly past. Still no luck, but we were treated to close views of Caspian Terns, a distant Great Egret flying downriver spotted by visiting VA birder Nicole, and a stunning "Yellow" Palm Warbler. BBC Vice President Libby Errickson gave an impromptu lecture on the Purple Martin boxes she recently helped to install in the park, and how

Purple Martins could reduce the extremely high number of midges plaguing the Back River area. Hopefully some martins move in, because the future of Libby's project is contingent on the success of these boxes. (Spoiler: Martins moved in a few weeks later! Go Libby!) Wanting more warblers, we walked up to the substation and quickly found the continuing Orange-crowned Warbler which was very satisfying after missing the park and ride bird. An adult and an immature Cooper's Hawk were flying around and making lots of noise, which isn't something you see/hear every day.

*52 species, 17 birders*

### **April 4, 2026: Eccleston Wetland Restoration Site**

*Leader: Ed Hirsch*

The walk took place on a gorgeous, crisp day in early spring at this exquisite restoration and rewilding site. More than forty species were observed, including several species of raptor, woodpecker, and sparrow. The walk began with expansive views of the site. Red-tailed Hawk, Merlin, and American Kestrel were observed on perch and Eastern Meadowlark flew overhead. The walk continued through the wetland area of the Upper Jones Falls, abundant with sparrows and Wilson's Snipe. A flushed

American Bittern, which circled over the area for nearly a minute, was the highlight of the trip, providing breathtaking views for all. In addition to Bird Club members, the walk was attended by both the site manager and four landowners, who have done tremendous work for the benefit of local wildlife and the Upper Jones Falls ecosystem.

Species highlights included American Bittern, Wilson's Snipe, American Kestrel, Eastern Meadowlark, Wood Duck, and Rusty Blackbird.

*46 species, 18 birders.*



↑ *American Bittern (by Bill Hubick)*

### **April 14: Spring Lake Roland Series**

*Leader: Laura Lechtzin*

This was the first walk of the Lake Roland Spring 2026 Migration series. It was well

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↑ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (by Bill Hubick)

attended with 21 people in total! Many old friends returned, as well as new birders, which was lovely to see. There were lots of smiling faces, embraces, and a bit of catching up after the long winter. We had sun mixed with high clouds, minimal wind, and temperatures ranging from mid 60s-low 80s. A total of 46 species were observed and heard. The arrival of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers provided the familiar “scritch-scratching” fussing they make in the canopy. Highlights included a pair of Pine Warblers, Palm Warbler, and Wood Ducks. We saw a nesting pair of Bald Eagles, a Cooper’s Hawk, and Red-shouldered Hawks in flight. Northern Rough-wing Swallows, Tree Swallows, and a Barn Swallow were showing off with their aerial dives over the water collecting insects in mid-flight. A returning Eastern Phoebe was

seen near the dam and we hope the pair will return to nest, in the portico, as they have in the past. All in all it was an enjoyable day.

### Apr 25: Lake Roland’s Blue Trail and Old Rugby Field

*Leader: Sam Tillman*

This walk to the Old Rugby Field and then a portion of Lake Roland’s Blue Trail was a wonderfully birdy morning for all participants. We tallied 53 species including many newly arrived migratory species like Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Warbling Vireo, and Baltimore Oriole. While we only found eight species of warbler, we had stunning looks at a Lawrence’s Warbler! This unusual hybrid of a Blue-winged and Golden-winged warbler expresses the recessive traits of each and is rarer than the Brewster’s Warbler which



↑ Lawrence’s Warbler (by Sam Tillman)

expresses dominant traits. It was around 1800 that William Brewster determined that Brewster’s and Lawrence’s were actually hybrids, not distinct species. Quite a unique experience for all!

### May 10: Oregon Ridge Park

*Leader: John Robinson*

About 16 people visited Oregon Ridge Park on a really beautiful morning. We started at the woods path behind the parking lot, then crossed the big bridge by the Nature Center and headed down into the field for wood-edge birds, continuing around the old pond and past the vulture nest box. Crossing the stream on the narrow footpath bridge, we headed up along the shrubby stream-side wood edge to the western corner before returning across the stream and heading to the archery trail.

While over in the far field, the sun’s heat began creating nice thermal bubbles for the larger soaring birds to enjoy, and the first big group of raptors contained a Mississippi Kite, which left us puzzled at first because it was so unexpected. Around the archery trail and back to the Nature Center completed the walk. The final tally was

*Continued, next page*



↑ Mississippi Kite (by Bill Hubick)

59 species (including 2 silent crows), with a good selection of warblers. We got good looks at some of them, and learned a number of songs and calls for future reference.

**May 17: Leakin Park**

*Leaders: Elise and Paul Kreiss*

May 17 was a great warbler day at Leakin Park, and an excellent birding morning all around. Nine

birders found thirteen species of warbler, and fifty-eight species total. There was a particularly good view of a Bay-breasted Warbler, and the group enjoyed the singing of two less well seen Tennessee Warblers. Highlights also included a Yellow-billed Cuckoo; a sighting that was topped by an unexpected Black-billed Cuckoo. The group also

*Continued, next page*

**U.S. STATE/TERRITORY BIRDS WORD SEARCH**

S M A R I A N A F R U I T D O V E N R C I E S G T  
P O Q L K M E N H R I C W Q V T K A B K W U X A G  
Y Y X F C K P R E R W D K S I E X Y X E W E Q F R  
U P N O R T H E R N C A R D I N A L H A W G W K L  
F H I R P K K S W L D J G X P I B Q V S C W O U T  
L J W S A J T W E X L D R R L X A G V T S I O L B  
W C C P P S G B L U E H E N C H I C K E N C D H K  
I Z L U I M V Z U C P H A B B R D L L R O O T A T  
L A R K B U N T I N G M L F S Z W U M N W A H M B  
L U R L B W G Q Z R K R F I D H C J I B M D R I A  
O D X P P N G S M G T X M O Y G G C B L M I U Y N  
W E S T E R N M E A D O W L A R K R S U G U S C A  
P Q O D C A R O L I N A W R E N K Q J E S K H F N  
T B R O W N T H R A S H E R M Q M I J B L Y C S A  
A A M E R I C A N R O B I N V U V L M I N G V S Q  
R H O D Z V V A N E L T O U J D Z F F R E H G J U  
M I P V N L L W D L Z I E K A B L C Q D N U A M I  
I B A L T I M O R E O R I O L E E C O R E Q O W T  
G B N G O S R B W C A L I F O R N I A Q U A I L O  
A X W J F V V A N O Z B Y K I S Y B P E E I V E B  
N Z C A C T U S W R E N Z P J H O V I S K W L U Q  
Y A N G X D L D R A S P W Y F P I X Y Z O X M U L  
L K A H Y G U A M R A I L A Q O K H K H G D B R V  
K L O B P U R P L E F I N C H I X B Z S R C S F F  
K H D R O M E G C S K O H K O Y L X B Y W U U S U

**Find these birds across, down and diagonally, (but not backwards):**

- American Robin
- Baltimore Oriole
- Bananaquit
- Blue Hen Chicken
- Brown Thrasher
- Cactus Wren
- California Quail
- Carolina Wren
- Eastern Bluebird
- Guam Rail
- Lark Bunting
- Mariana Fruit Dove
- Nene
- Northern Cardinal
- Purple Finch
- Western Meadowlark
- Willow Ptarmigan
- Wood Thrush



## NEW MEMBERS

Maureen Gold • Baltimore

Jaco Goodhill • Baltimore

Bailey Hardwick • Baltimore

Hannah & Daniel  
Hunter • Baltimore

Kim Lane &  
Chris Ryer • Baltimore

Matthew McNabney • Baltimore

Jennie Meetze • Baltimore

Julie Merrill • Baltimore

Cadence Plum • Baltimore

Evan Powers • Baltimore

Aidan Ryan • Baltimore

Edward & Paula  
Shevitz • Baltimore

John Smith &  
Krista J. Crawford • Baltimore

Jordan Tremain • Baltimore

Elizabeth & Thomas  
Varga • Baltimore

Rob Waters &  
Spike Clarkson • Catonsville

Katie Woodard • Catonsville

Felix Bellotti • Kensington

Trey Chalmers • Parkville

Leora Rattner • Pikesville

James Morris • Glen Rock, PA



↑ Common Watersnake (by Elise Kreiss)

enjoyed watching a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at the nest. Unexpected sightings included a Blue Grosbeak, which is not common in the Park, and a Common Watersnake, which can be tough to spot—particularly when you are looking for birds!

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Designer: Kristen Argenio, [Ideal Design](#)

Submit materials to: JoAnn Bochmann at [jlbochmann@gmail.com](mailto:jlbochmann@gmail.com)

The deadline for submitting articles for the next issue is **Friday, July 24**.

**Moving or email change?** Send update to Terry Ross at [trosstva@gmail.com](mailto:trosstva@gmail.com)

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The membership year is September 1—August 30. Only new members 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](#)** where you may pay your dues using PayPal.



**Or, you may join by mail.** Make check payable to “MOS” and mail with completed application, which can be found at [https://baltimorebirdclub.org/MembershipApplication\\_website.pdf](https://baltimorebirdclub.org/MembershipApplication_website.pdf)

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