



Wrenderings



The Newsletter of the Harford Bird Club

Volume 25 Number 6

July, 2012

President's Perch

One of my favorite parts of our bi-monthly meetings is when attendees are asked to share their interesting sightings. After all, that is the one thing we share as a group - the interest and desire to watch birds. Of course the rare and unusual species are of interest, but interesting sightings cover a very wide spectrum. I hope everyone treasures those moments that are special for them in terms of what you see and maybe even where and with whom you see them.

For instance, because they are so common, most of us have watched the American Robin go through its mating and nesting cycle at or near our homes. We still consider it a welcome sign of the spring season when they start hopping around the yard and quickly get into the reproductive mode. It generally is not too hard to discover their nests and watch as the young birds grow and soon fledge into demanding juveniles begging for food. I enjoy **waking up to the Robin's song as they are often the very first to start singing each morning as early as 4:30 a.m.** I remember one morning in mid-summer when I realized the young Robins were practicing their song and were having trouble getting it right. It was most amusing to hear all the mistakes and yet they kept practicing. It reminded me of a new piano student trying to play a familiar tune with limited success.

The sheer beauty of some of our more common species is often underrated as they are **sometimes ignored because of their abundance. Shame on us if we don't marvel at the brilliant red of our Northern Cardinal, the intense yellow of an American Goldfinch, or the scintillating blue of an Eastern Bluebird.** Our ubiquitous and very common Mallard male duck is a gorgeous **specimen in bright light and never gets its full credit.** It's nice to experience these birds with a brand new birder and see how excited they get just seeing a bright and beautiful bird even though it is as common as dirt.

We also forget how interesting bird behavior can be. During the breeding cycle, male-female relations and parent-fledgling activity is extremely captivating to watch. The popularity of on-line cameras that show us eagles and owls and falcons raising their young 24/7 is a fascinating by-product of modern technology. The same drama unfolds in our own yard and neighborhood on a smaller scale. Eastern Kingbirds always provide great action as they defend their territories, sometimes against the largest of intruders. I had read about them landing on a Red-tailed Hawk in flight and pecking them about the head and got to witness it once on my farm. No wonder *Tyrannus tyrannus* (King of the Kings) is a bird that enjoys a pugnacious reputation. No one has yet figured out the apparent symbiotic relationship with Kingbirds and Orchard Orioles. They are known to associate with each other during the nesting season, often nesting in the same tree. Who benefits? How do they benefit and why?

I hope I have given you some new (and old) reasons to enjoy watching the birds most familiar and most close to our homes. At our next meeting, please share what is interesting to you about your bird watching because it very likely will be interesting to others as well. We can **all learn and enjoy in many ways which is why birders tend to "flock together."** Common birds, rare birds, pretty birds, bird antics, and baby birds all make for a great reason to be outside and active in the pursuit of our hobby. ~ Dennis Kirkwood

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Plan Ahead!

- Summer Social at Anita Leight Estuary Center. Friday, July 13
- Summer Cruise, Aug 5, 5-7 PM
- Fall Picnic Sep 1, 1 PM.
- Just announced! 24-26 May 2013, MOS annual conference at Edgewood, hosted by Harford Bird Club.

Harford Bird Club

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Summer Social Meeting July 13

Head on over to the Anita C. Leight Estuary Center in Abingdon for the club's perennially popular Summer Social on Friday, July 13. The doors open at 6:15 for this opportunity to chat with friends old and new about the latest happenings, while sampling a fine selection of wine and cheeses. There will be plenty of other munchies to enjoy from our bountiful vegetable and fruit trays, plus snacks, desserts, and sodas. Following the social, we will migrate downstairs for our bi-monthly meeting and the always-exciting raffle, featuring prizes donated by local merchants.

Capping off the evening will be a presentation by our own Dave Webb and APG wildlife biologist Deidre Deroia. Their presentation will be about the United States Nightjar Survey Network which is a nationwide volunteer program to monitor the population of birds in the family Caprimulgidae, which in the eastern U.S. includes Eastern Whip-poor-will (**familiarly known as "whips"**), **Chuck-will's-widow** and Common Nighthawk. Two of the most productive survey routes for whips are located right here in Harford County at Aberdeen Proving Ground. In this presentation, **we'll describe the survey protocol and show the results of counts taken in recent years. We'll also discuss the life history of these enigmatic nocturnal birds.**

Bird Droppings

Club News?

Have news the club should know about? Births, deaths, marriages, or any other notable events that belong in the newsletter? Please contact Corresponding Secretary Madeline Lovera at 410-879-6098 or email to mlovera30@aol.com.

Welcome!

A warm Harford Bird Club welcome goes out to the following new members. Thank you for joining... we look forward to seeing you out there on our birding trips and at our meetings!

Michael Brown of Westminster, MD

Yvonne Wagner of Abingdon, MD

Club secretary Jane Scocca's husband, Dr. John Scocca, passed away May 10 after a long illness. Please keep Jane and her family in your thoughts and prayers.

May Meeting Trivia Question

Trivia from May meeting: What bird species is designated a "State Bird" more often than any other?



On May 4, 2012, the Harford Bird Club held its meeting at the Harford Glen Environmental Education Center. The program was presented by students and faculty of Prospect Mill Elementary School who have been studying birds and their ecology in a co-curricular club named "Bird Connection." Teachers Mary Murray and Barbara Gasper and seventeen students shared their projects with club members and presented a slide show of their activities during the past school year. Bird club members have visited the school to lead morning bird walks and give a demonstration of bird banding. The idea for the bird club program was initiated by Mr. Kermit "Spike" Updegrove, former Harford County science teacher and former Harford Bird Club President. The participating students and teachers include: First row, sitting, l to r: Joshua Bishop, Maurice Brown, Kevin Morris, Kristen Rainwater, Nick Spigler, Maya Watts. Second row, kneeling, l to r: Julianna Smith, Lauren Flaherty, Leadora Lehmann, Jocelyn Connelly, Sara Baldino. **Back row, standing, l to r: Kermit "Spike" Updegrove, Mary Murray, Barbara Gasper, Molly Re, Christiana Wozniak, Rocco Polesovsky, Isabelle Wilson, Riya Dhar, and Kevin Kilchenstein.**

Summer Cruise

This year's summer agenda has a special treat; it's a riverboat cruise! On Sunday, August 5 from 5 to 7 PM, enjoy chatting with fellow birders and spotting for local birds while cruising the Susquehanna River and the Upper Chesapeake Bay on the Lantern Queen. This Mississippi style riverboat, propelled by two paddlewheels, offers great views both from their enclosed main deck and their open air upper deck. At a cost of \$45/person your buffet will include Baked Ziti with meat sauce, garden salad, Caesar salad, a seasonal vegetable, rolls and dessert along with alcohol free beverages. Children 3 - 10 yrs of age are half price and children under 3 are free. The Lantern Queen holds a maximum of 60 people, so sign up soon to ensure your spot. There will be a cash bar: beer - \$3, wine - \$4, mixed drinks \$5 for those who wish to spice up the night. Our evening's entertainment will be the cruise itself and any exciting bird sightings that we happen upon, so please bring your binoculars and any tall "feathered" tales that you have and are willing to share. To sign up, send your check with name and address to Eileen Nack at 8 Crestmont Drive, Aberdeen, MD 21001. Make sure to designate it for the Cruise. As always, guests are welcome to attend. The Lantern Queen sails from Frank J. Hutchins Memorial Park at the foot of Congress Avenue in Havre de Grace.



Harford Birdlife

by Monroe Harden

We had our usual rich spring migration this year. Many sightings were from Susquehanna State Park and Swan Harbor Farms. I will abbreviate these locations as SSP and SH to save space. This report covers the period from March 31st through June 1st 2012.

Swans, Ducks, Loons, Herons, Ibis

DW saw a late Tundra Swan near Bar Harbor landing on Apr 29th. DL and LJ reported Northern Shovelers at SH on Apr 15th. MB saw them there on Apr 16th. DL also saw 2 Gadwall there on the 15th. TH noted a late pair of Common Mergansers on the river from SSP on Apr 13th. These were seen repeatedly throughout early May. PN saw a Common Loon flying north over SSP on Apr 7th. **CS saw 4 on the water near Poole's Island on Apr 16th. MH and KH heard 3 "pumping" American Bitterns at SH on Apr 2nd. These were heard and seen repeatedly by several observers through Apr 29th. LJ heard a Least Bittern there on Apr 15th. She saw 2 in flight there on May 16th. LS had a low flyby of 2 Glossy Ibis at SH on Apr 16th.**

Hawks, Rails

LE counted at least mostly adult 147 Bald Eagles at Conowingo Dam on Apr 26th. MJ saw, photographed, and was dive-bombed by a possible hybrid Red-tailed x Red-shouldered Hawk at SSP on Apr 28th. It was at a nest with another adult bird and several chicks. AU saw a Broad-winged Hawk there on May 12th.

DL heard a King Rail at SH on Apr 2nd. Several observers heard it through Apr 29th. TH saw 2 Virginia Rails there on Apr 29th. LJ had a Sora in the same impoundment on Apr 28th. BM saw 2 on May 1st.

Plovers, Sandpipers, Gulls, Terns

The first Greater Yellowlegs were reported by TH on Apr 7th at Harford Glen. CS saw 2 Pectoral Sandpipers at SH on May 6th. He also saw 3 Least Sandpipers and 2 Semipalmated Plovers.

DL saw a Laughing Gull at SH on Apr 29th. JG counted 275 **Bonaparte's Gulls** from Tydings Marina on Apr 18th. LJ saw 2 Caspian Terns at SSP on Apr 15th. CS had 2 **Forster's Terns** on the Gunpowder River on Apr 19th. RB saw her first Least Tern of the season at Harford Glen on Apr 26th.

Hummingbirds, Vireos, Larks

The Kellar's reported that the Rufous Hummingbird was last seen at their Darlington feeder on Apr 5th. LE

saw his first Ruby-throated Hummingbird of the season at his Havre de Grace home on Apr 21st. CS saw 3 Red-headed Woodpeckers on the Edgewood area of APG on Apr 19th. DK reported 2 continuing throughout the period near Harford Creamery Rd. LJ saw her first White-eyed Vireo of the season at SSP on Apr 8th. TH found a Yellow-throated Vireo there on Apr 20th. LJ saw a Blue-headed Vireo there on Apr 17th. DW saw a Horned Lark flying northwest over his yard in Webster Village.

Warblers

TH saw a Northern Parula at SSP on Apr 6th. The massive warbler migration through the park continued throughout the period, much to the delight of many birders. Highlights include a singing Tennessee Warbler seen by TH on May 7th, a Nashville Warbler seen by BM on May 1st, a Blackburnian seen by TH on May 9th, **LJ's male Bay-breasted Warbler** on May 13th, and Cerulean Warblers seen by several people between Apr 25th and May 9th. MH found a Mourning Warbler at Eden Mill on May 18th. It was seen and heard through May 25th. LJ and TH saw a **Wilson's Warbler** at SSP on May 4th.

Sparrows, Grosbeaks

MH heard a **Henslow's Sparrow** near his home in Forest Hill on Apr 19th. He later found a second bird in the same general area. These were seen and heard through May 17th. He also had a Grasshopper Sparrow there on May 19th. BM reported a Seaside Sparrow at SH on May 1st. MH also had a **Lincoln's Sparrow** near his home on May 6th. SD saw and photographed a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak at his Bel Air feeder on Apr 27th. RC had 2 males at his Creswell feeders on May 3rd.

Contributors

AU- Anna Urciolo, BM- Brian Moyer, CS- Chris Starling, DK- Dennis Kirkwood, DL- Dave Larkin, DW- Dave Webb, JG- Jim Green, KH- Kim Hafner, LE- Les Eastman, LJ- Lin Just, MB- Mike Burchett, MH- Matt Hafner, MJ- Mark Johnson, PN- Paul Noell, RB- Ruth Bergstrom, RC, Rick Cheicante, SD- Scott Davis

Harford Bird Club Field Trips

Field trip schedule compiled by Tom Gibson and Lynn Davis

July 22 (Sun.) – Bombay Hook. Migration for shorebirds should be underway and something rare may show up. Meet at 7:00 AM at the 155/95 Park and Ride. Leader is Dave Larkin (410-569-8319; larkin3001@comcast.net)

July 28 (Sat.) - Hummingbird Banding. See our smallest birds up close as host Les Eastman and bander Bruce Peterjohn trap and band Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. Meet at 8:30 AM at the Eastman residence. Call Les for directions (410-734-6969; les@birdtreks.com).

August 11 (Sat.) – Hummingbird Happy Hour. Bring your favorite snack and beverage to enjoy and share while watching swarms of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. Meet at the Eastman home at 5:00 PM. Call Les for directions and info. (410)-734-6969; les@birdtreks.com.)

August 25 (Sat.) Harford Shorebird Roundup. Explore several Harford County shorelines to see a variety of Shorebirds and waterfowl. Beginners interested in learning the basics of shorebird identification and experienced watchers searching for rarities will enjoy **this morning trip. Meet at the south end of Fisherman's Park below Conowingo Dam at 7:00 AM.** Other possible shorebird hotspots we may visit include Aldino, Perryman Park, Swan Harbor Farm, and the marina at Tydings Park. The leaders are experienced shorebirders Dave Webb (410-939-3537 or porzana@comcast.net) and John Gallo.

September 3 (Mon.- Labor Day) – Ma and Pa Trail. We return to this newest segment of Harford County's iconic rails-to-trails Ma & Pa conversion project. We'll **start at Annie's Playground at the west end and stroll east to the Equestrian Center at Tollgate Road.** Diverse habitat along the way promises a variety of birds. Meet **at Annie's playground on Smith Lane off Connolly Road** in Fallston at 7:30 AM. The leader is Susan Hood (410-877-0574; susanjhood@comcast.net).

September 9 (Sun.)– Perryville Community Park & the park near NorthEast. These two parks have become attractive places to find interesting and elusive species – especially passerines and waterfowl. Take advantage of the two hot spots and meet leaders Dave Larkin (410-569-8319; larkin3001@comcast.net) and Phil

Powers (410-679-4116 or birdsinmd@verizon.net) at 7:00 AM at the Park & Ride at Md Rt. 155 and I-95.

September 16 (Sun) - Susquehanna State Park - Enjoy the Fall migration at a premier birding location. Led by Les Eastman (410-734-6969; les@birdtreks.com). Meet at the Rock Run Mill on Stafford Road at 7:00 AM.

Field Trip Reports

Rocks State Park

April 28

Nine club members gathered at the Rocks State Park headquarters to see what early migration would bring. The morning was crisp but clear. We had Parulas and Louisiana Waterthrushes singing from the parking lot as well as a fly-over Pileated Woodpecker. As we hiked up to the Rock Ridge, Ovenbirds were all defending territory and first-of-the-year Wood Thrushes and Scarlet Tanagers were heard. From the King and Queen's seat bluff we watched Broad-winged, Red tailed, and Sharp-shinned Hawks and one surprise Common Loon heading north. Proceeding on to Hill's Grove, we heard a Yellow-throated Vireo and watched an Osprey patrol Deer Creek. The group decided to take advantage of Matt Hafner's great find of a Henslow's Sparrow across from his house and we weren't disappointed as two birds sang in competition. This may be a first sighting for a Harford club trip and was a life bird for several in the group! The morning's total was 40 species. ~ *Dennis Kirkwood*

2012 Fourth Annual Epic Birding Challenge

May 5

Four enthusiastic teams scoured the forests, stream valleys, river front and ridges of Susquehanna State Park to test and sharpen their birding skills. Early morning mist provided the first challenge, although the overall weather was good. The tree canopy was alive with a great variety of warblers and other migratory species. The teams proved to be well balanced and the competition was lively but friendly. All teams identified lots of birds. The first place team found 64 species. Two teams tied at 63 and one team found 57 species. You cannot get any closer than that! A total of 20

Continued on the next page.

species of warblers were seen with a number of **additional “neck wrenchers” heard (rules require that the birds be seen to be counted)**. All teams combined saw 93 different bird species for the day. After regrouping to tally sightings, we retreated to the Tidewater Grille on the water in Havre de Grace for a **delicious lunch and a somewhat “tongue in cheek” awards ceremony**. To keep the focus on camaraderie and to protect the innocent, we will not publish the names of the contestants. However, the first place trophy (a fine example of local duck carving) will spend the next year among swarms of hummingbirds. The rubber chicken, the replacement of the now retired cow birdhouse, will join the portly Holstein until next **year’s Epic Birding Challenge. The consensus was that all had a good time and look forward to next year’s event for more fun with good friends.** ~ *Tom Gibson*

Cromwell Valley Park.

May 19

There was an Oriole festival at the valley upon our arrival. It was no mistake as they were everywhere. We had great views of both Baltimore and Orchard throughout the valley. Eighteen birders made the walk with a final count of fifty-one species. The highlight of the day was watching a female hummingbird returning several times to sit on her nest. ~ *Phil Powers*

Upper Deer Creek and the World Famous

Bradenbaugh Flats

May 28,

A beautiful Memorial Day morning greeted 16 participants who met at Hidden Valley along Deer Creek for a morning bird walk. Baltimore Oriole, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Scarlet Tanager, and Eastern Phoebe provided good looks while Northern Parula, Worm-eating Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, and Red-eyed Vireo sang but stayed hidden. As we walked along Deer Creek via Telegraph Road we saw Northern Rough-winged Swallows, Acadian Flycatcher, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and a Louisiana Waterthrush. We left the valley and went to the former Madonna landfill and had quick but decent looks at both Blue-winged Warbler and Prairie Warbler. Our next stop was along Carico Lane and a Blue Grosbeak and Willow Flycatcher were in the same scope view. A cooperative Grasshopper Sparrow also sat on the wire. We proceeded to the WFBF area and walked to the Red-headed Woodpecker woods and were not disappointed. Everyone got great looks at this beautiful

and rare (for Harford) bird, for some a life bird. Baltimore and Orchard Orioles and Eastern Kingbird entertained us as we returned to the cars. In the open fields, a pair of Horned Larks ran among the corn rows and a Red-tailed Hawk circled above. Along Little Deer Creek on Harford Creamery Road we had a singing and flyover Warbling Vireo and Yellow Warbler. Our total species for the morning was 65. ~ *Dennis Kirkwood*

Jerusalem Mill

June 7

A little nip in the air greeted eight birders at the mill. The Chimney Swift said hello early and the walk up the end of the forest produce both orioles, Indigo Bunting, and bluebirds. The deep woods was talking to us with the sounds of the birds but few showed their faces. We enjoyed nice birds, walk and good friends. The species count was thirty-nine. Hope to see you soon here on the next walk. ~ *Phil Powers*

Bird conservation as simple as capping PVC pipes used as stakes

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S.D.A. Forest Service have begun identifying and implementing solutions to solve a widespread and potentially enormous bird mortality threat that is associated with 3.4 million mining claims on public lands, mainly in the West; these claims are marked with hollow, open-end PVC pipes instead of traditional metal stakes.

Small birds apparently see the opening of the plastic pipes as a hollow suitable for roosting or nesting or possibly gathering to pool body heat during migration. The birds may enter the holes, only to become trapped because the inside of the pipes are too smooth to allow them to push-pull their way up the sides and too narrow for the birds to extend their wings to lift and fly out. Death from dehydration or starvation follows.

While most birds recovered from markers are cavity nesters – the Ash-throated Flycatcher and the Mountain Bluebird are the most frequent victims, and others discovered trapped included woodpeckers, sparrows, shrikes, kestrels, and owls – there is strong evidence that indicates that a variety of other species will naturally rest in a group in a natural cavity during migration. The difference is that the insides of natural cavities have a rough surface, enabling the birds to climb out and continue their migration.

Continued on the next page.

Support Our Sponsors

The following businesses generously donated prizes for the raffle at the last meeting. Please patronize them and thank them for their support of the club.



Kefauver True Value Lumber
1333 W. Jarrettsville Rd.
Forest Hill, MD 21050-1103
410-836-6770

In addition, Mark Magnani has been donating a very nice new book at each meeting.

Answer to Trivia Question
Seven States have selected the Northern Cardinal (VA, KY, IL, IN, NC, OH, WV)

According to the BLM publication *Public Land Statistics*, in 2010 there were 3,388,400 mining claims on record on BLM-managed lands in 12 western states. Each claim has a minimum of four corner markers, though some sites also have boundaries staked with a dozen or more markers. It is not clear exactly how many of those markers have open tops and are deadly bird traps, but there is little dispute that the percentage is high, meaning millions of birds are likely being killed. Pipe pulling efforts in the Nevada Desert are showing an average of one bird death per pipe, with the highest fatality at a single pipe being 26 birds.

Replacing or capping these PVC pipe markers cannot happen too soon! --Debbie Bowers, with excerpts and photos from American Bird Conservancy.



The Harford Bird Club Summer Social Reservation Form

Please cut and mail the bottom portion of this page to Eileen Nack, 8 Crestmont Drive, Aberdeen MD 21001 by Friday, July 6, 2012 if you plan on attending.

_____ Number of adults (at \$6.00 each)
_____ Number of children 16 and under (free!)



Please make checks payable to Harford County MOS.

Print your name(s) above as you would like it to appear on your name tag!

Include address and phone number if you would like transportation to the meeting.

TEL: _____ Address: _____



Harford Bird Club July Summer Social

Nightjar Surveys at APG"

Presented by:

Deidre Deroia and Dave Webb.

Friday, July 13th, 2012

Meeting Time: 6:15 PM

Location: Anita C. Leight Estuary Center
700 Otter Point Road, Abingdon, MD 21009
(Reservation Form is on Page 7.)



Mail To:

If unable to deliver, please return to:
Madeline Lovera
2068 Brandy Drive
Forest Hill, MD 21050

