



Wrenderings



The Newsletter of the Harford Bird Club

Volume 26 Number 2

October, 2012

President's Perch

I sit down to write this message after experiencing one of the most beautiful early fall weeks imaginable. Seventy degree temperatures and clear skies for the past eight days; perfect conditions for taking in the flip side of migration! Even though the "official" start of fall is not for another five days, most birders agree that when the warblers are on the move, it's definitely fall.

Over the next few months the birding line-up undergoes a 90% turnover. Most of our summer nesters are really just visitors to our region, spending the majority of the year moving between Harford County and points further south where they enjoy a tropical respite. For about six weeks, more northerly nesters use our woods and fields as they too pass on to warmer spots. With just a slight bit of overlap, we then get to greet the many familiar friends that feast at our feeders and glean the leftover fruit, nuts, and bugs that linger in our woods and yards until most everybody changes places again come spring. The best part is that we never can be sure what the complete roster will include.

There are already some teasing signs that this winter could be what birders long for – an INVASION YEAR! About every 3-10 years, conditions in the north necessitate a major movement of select species that usually stick it out in the cold north. Even though we tend to generalize and say that it must be a prediction of a harsh winter, the reality is closer to a banner reproductive summer and a less than stellar reproductive year for the tree and weed seeds that would normally sustain an enlarged population.

Bird species such as Red-breasted Nuthatches, Common Redpolls, Pine Siskins, and Red and White-winged Crossbills are particularly susceptible to meager crop productive and can show up at latitudes far from their usual haunts. Fortunately they don't hesitate to frequent feeders, giving us the thrill of something different to look at besides Juncos and White-throated Sparrows. We are long overdue for some really rare northern visitors like Evening Grosbeaks or maybe even a Hoary Redpoll. Could this be the year that Harford finds its first Harris's Sparrow or Northern Shrike?

If you are the lucky one to win the bird-feeder lottery and have one or more of these rare winter visitors, take a picture if possible and then share the good fortune with club members. Sometimes it is a one-day wonder and other times, like our Rufous Hummingbird from last winter, it will stay for weeks or months. There is no specific action or food that will increase your chances and no order form to fill out with your requests. So go about your business as usual and hope for a nice surprise! After all, the uncertainty of what one might find on any birding

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Plan Ahead!

- Mon. 22 Oct. - Field Trip Committee Meeting at Tom Gibson's house at 7 PM.
- Sat. 1 Dec. MOS Board Meeting at the Conowingo Visitors Center at 10 AM.
- 24-26 May 2013, MOS annual conference at Edgewood, hosted by Harford Bird Club.

Harford Bird Club

Executive Board

President

Dennis Kirkwood

410-692-5905; newarkfarms@gmail.com

Vice President

Matt Hafner

410-971-3203; hafner.matt@gmail.com

Recording Secretary

Jane Scocca

410-272-8870; jane@scocca.org

Corresponding Secretary

Madeline Lovera

410-879-6098; mlovera30@aol.com

Treasurer

Marjie Heagy

410-557-9485; msheagy@zoominternet.net

Past President

Dave Webb

410-939-3537; porzana@comcast.net

Field Trip Chairperson

Tom Gibson

410-734-4135; gibsonlld@aol.com

Bird Count Coordinator

Rick Cheicante

410-803-2712; rickcheicante@cs.com

Dinner Reservations

Eileen Nack;

410-272-7017; jinnack@comcast.net

Public Relations

Donna Yorkston

143-562-8501; donnayorkston@hotmail.com

Education Chairperson

Madeline Lovera

410-879-6098; mlovera30@aol.com

Conservation Chair

Deborah Bowers

410-692-2708; bowerspub@hotmail.com

State Board Members

Tom Congersky

410-658-4137; inicon@zoominternet.net

Randy Robertson

410-273-9029; r.christian.robertson@gmail.com

Webmaster & Wrenderings Editor

Les Eastman

410-734-6969; les@birdtreks.com

venture is part of the excitement of birding. Enjoy the remainder of migration and let's hope the invasion of the northern feeder birds brings something interesting to your house and yard.~ *Dennis Kirkwood*

November Dinner Meeting

Our next club meeting will be on Friday, November 2 beginning at 6:15 pm with a delicious Turkey dinner prepared by the members of the Churchville Presbyterian church. This is a great event to invite friends and family to as we share in the bounty of the harvest season. A business meeting will follow at 7:00 along with our traditional raffle. If you can't make the dinner, please come for the meeting and program. At 8:00, we will have an exploration of Maryland Biodiversity through Jim Brighton and Bill Hubick's website "The Maryland Biodiversity Project." Jim will explain how the web project works and the goals that he and Bill have for the site along with some of the exceptional photos taken by local photographers of Maryland's diverse plant and animal life that are features on the website. Jim would like to have feedback about the website which can be viewed at www.marylandbiodiversity.com

The Reservation Form is on Page 9.

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!

Donald Vetter of White Marsh. MD

Ron & Arlene Weber of Fallston MD

The club sends best wishes to Spike Updegrave, past president, for continued recovery from his recent surgery.

Membership Dues Are Due

Annual membership dues are now overdue for the Harford Bird Club year from September 1, 2012 through August 31, 2013. If you have not yet renewed, the membership form was included in the August issue of Wrenderings or you can print it off the web site at <http://www.harfordbirdclub.org/harfjoin.html>. Please contact Marjie Heagy at msheagy@zoominternet.net or (410)557-9485 if you have any questions about your renewal. Please fill out the form, enclose your check made payable to HARFORD MOS and mail it to Marjie. We would like to have all dues paid by December 31, 2012.

2012 Rock Run Christmas Bird Count

The 41st annual Rock Run Christmas Bird Count will take place on Saturday, December 29th, 2012. This event is centered around Susquehanna



State Park and covers a 15-mile circle spreading inland around the lower Susquehanna River and upper bay in both Harford and Cecil Counties. Sponsored by the National Audubon Society, information about the count, it's history, previous years' results and a photo gallery can be found at <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>. The Rock Run CBC is an excellent opportunity for Harford Bird Club members to have fun and build friendships while contributing to one of the largest scientific databases concerning bird populations. At the end of the afternoon, count participants may gather to warm up with good food and tales of the day's adventures. Whether you are veteran participant or a first-timer, become a citizen scientist and participate in this year's Rock Run CBC. The National Audubon Society has announced there will be NO fee for participation this year (donations will be accepted). Register today by e-mailing the HBC Count Coordinator Rick Cheicante at rickcheicante@cs.com.

Irish Grove Workday

Dotty Mumford has scheduled the Irish Grove Fall Workday for Saturday, November 3, 2012. Irish Grove is a sanctuary of the Maryland Ornithological Society and is located near Crisfield in Somerset County, MD. Workdays are scheduled twice a year, with reliance on volunteers to help keep the sanctuary in shape. The workday is a wonderful opportunity not only to help with upkeep on this MOS property, but also to bird in a wonderful marshland setting. Canoeing (bring your own) is also possible as well as a foray to Chincoteague. The sanctuary has overnight facilities and several trails. A major project this workday will be to make repairs to the tower overlook on Round Pond Trail. Saturday lunch and dinner will be provided. Dotty will be arriving on Friday and leaving on Monday. More information and directions can be found at: <http://www.mdbirds.org/sanctuary/igrove.html>. Please contact Dotty if you can attend: 410-849-8336, dotty-mum@comcast.net

Vacation Report

S'Albufera de Mallorca, Bóquer Valley and Son Real

By Dave Larkin

This summer while in the UK I took a trip, with my brother, also a birder, to Mallorca. Mallorca is a large island in the western Mediterranean; 100 miles from the Spanish coast; it is an autonomous region of Spain. The island's climate and terrain are reminiscent of some parts of the American southwest. S'Albufera is a large nature reserve in the island's northwest corner; the Bóquer valley and Son Real are nearby reserves. The S'Alberfera reserve is one of the lesser known large European reserves but has a great, and deservedly so, reputation among birders. The reserve covers an area of about 10 miles² and consists of areas of open water, wooded hammocks dispersed amongst huge reed beds; hides and observation platforms are numerous; hiking/cycle trails crisscross the reserve; entrance is free.

For those interested in accumulating a large species list visit during migration, April/May, September/October. I visited in early June as I wanted to see Eleonora's Falcon a rare bird in the true sense of the word; only a few thousand individuals are estimated to exist. Eleonora's Falcon winter in Madagascar; migrate North in early summer; nest along rocky cliffs on a few Mediterranean Islands; Mallorca is one of the easiest/best places to see the birds. Our timing was perfect; every evening we had 20-50 Eleonora's Falcons hawking for insects over our Hotel. S'Albufera is a Mecca for water birds; Squacco and Purple Herons are common; rare Marbled Duck and Red-knobbed Coot are easy to find. Iconic birds; Hoopoe are common but can be elusive; Bee-eater common locally. Gulls species are Black-headed, Yellow-legged and Audouin's all are widely scattered in small numbers. Between two mountain ridges lies the Bóquer valley reserve; known for eagles and vultures; we saw Booted Eagle and also spotted the shy Blue Rock Thrush high on rocky outcrops. Son Real reserve, on the coast, is known for Marmora's Warbler, an endemic, it proved elusive but Thekla Lark and Tawny Pipit were good finds. Zitting Cisticola, a small Warbler, gave me endless amusement because of its incongruous name and habit of flying vertically from the top of a bush or reed calling Zit, Zit, Zit. In a week I saw 75 species, 23 of which were life birds. For those interested in getting an introduction to Southern European birds I would highly recommend this area of Mallorca.



Harford Birdlife

by Monroe Harden

We had good number of Red-headed Woodpeckers and Red-breasted Nuthatches during this period, July 28th through September 28th, 2012.

Gamebirds, Herons, Hawks, Falcons

MH and KH found 3 **Ring-necked Pheasants** along Rt 23 near Phillips Mill Rd on Sep 11th. These may not be wild birds, but are an interesting find anyway. RB saw a group of 2 adult and 2 young **Great Egrets** at Harford Glen on Jul 29th. MoH saw 4 at Swan Harbor on Aug 4th along with a **Glossy Ibis**. MH, JH, and JG counted 24 **Great Egrets** from Tydings Park in Havre de Grace on Aug 5th. MH saw 2 **Little Blue Herons** at Harford Glen that day.

SH saw a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** chasing a **Magnolia Warbler** near the Ma and Pa Trail on Sep 22nd. She also saw a **Red-shouldered Hawk**. RB found a dead **Red-shouldered Hawk** at Harford Glen on Jul 31st. RK counted 10 **Broad-winged Hawks** from Darlington on Sep 16th. PP saw 6 from Otter Point that same day. CS had a **Peregrine Falcon** and a **Red-tailed Hawk** at Swan Harbor on Sep 28th.

Sandpipers, Owls, Hummingbirds, Woodpeckers

CS saw 2 **Upland Sandpipers** on the Edgewood area of APG on Aug 18th. He saw 1 there on Aug 3th. He also saw a **Marbled Godwit** on Spesutie Island on APG on Aug 23rd. MH found a **Pectoral Sandpiper** and other more common shorebirds near Tydings Park on Aug 6th. RC had an **Eastern Screech Owl** and 2 **Great Horned Owls** at his yard in Creswell on Sep 9th. TH had a **Barred Owl** at Susquehanna State Park on Sep 2nd. MoH reported a **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** at his feeder in Havre de Grace on Sep 26th.



KP found at least 3 **Red-headed Woodpeckers** near her home in Pylesville. She saw them daily throughout most of the reporting period. CS saw one on the Edgewood area of APG on Aug 18th and one at Swan Harbor on Sep 28th. DK had an adult and 2 juveniles in the Bradenbaugh area on Sep 15th. KR also saw one near Hollingsworth Rd on Sep 17th.

Flycatchers, Nuthatches, Thrushes

MH saw an **Olive-sided Flycatcher** at his Forest Hill home on Sep 13th. He also saw a **Yellow-bellied**

Flycatcher there on Sep 12th. TH saw one on the Ma and Pa Trail on Sep 17th. PV found a **Great Crested Flycatcher** at Swan Harbor on Aug 20th. MH had 2 **Red-breasted Nuthatches** at his Forest Hill home on Aug 29th. EH saw 2 at Susquehanna State Park on Sep 2nd. RC had one in Creswell on Sep 9th, while RK saw several in Darlington on Sep 16th. TH and RB reported a **White-breasted Nuthatch at Eden Mill** on Aug 30th.

MH heard several **Veerys** and **Swainson's Thrushes** from Forest Hill at night on Sep 11th. He heard more **Swainson's Thrushes** from the Bel Air parking garage early in the morning on Sep 16th.

Warblers, Sparrows, Finches

RC saw **Nashville, Cape May, and Black-throated Green Warblers** in his Creswell yard on Sep 9th. TH and RB reported a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** at Eden Mill on Aug 30th. TH saw another at Susquehanna State Park on Sep 2nd and 4 on the Ma and Pa Trail on Sep 22nd. He had a **Yellow-throated** and a **Prothonotary Warbler** at Susquehanna State Park on Aug 29th. MoH saw a **Worm-eating Warbler** there on Aug 11th. He found a **Kentucky Warbler** there on Aug 19th. DK had a **Wilson's Warbler** at Newark Farm on Sep 25th.

JM reported a **Clay-colored Sparrow** at Swan Harbor on Sep 22nd. CS counted 14 **Grasshopper Sparrows** on the Edgewood area of APG on Aug 18th. MJ saw an early **Dark-eyed Junco** at Susquehanna State Park on Sep 20th.

DL saw a **Blue Grosbeak** at Lakeside on Aug 18th. MH heard several **Dickcissel** calls in Churchville on Aug 26th. TH saw 2 **Purple Finches** on the Ma and Pa Trail on Sep 14th. SH saw one there on Sep 20th.

Contributors

CS- Chris Starling, DK- Dennis Kirkwood, DL- Dave Larkin, EH- Elaine Hendricks, JG- Jim Green, JH- John Hubbell, JM- Jim Moore, KH- Kim Hafner, KP- Karen Phillips, KR- Kathy Rohe, MH- Matt Hafner, MoH- Monroe Harden, PP- Phil Powers, PV- Pat Valdata, RB- Ruth Bergstrom, RC- Rick Cheicante, RK- Russ Kovach, SH- Susan Hood, TH- Tim Houghton

Field Trip Reports

Harford Shorebird Roundup August 25

There were plenty of shorebirds on the Harford Shorebird Roundup. Unfortunately most of them were **Killdeer**, including nearly 60 of them scattered about the Aldino sod farm. We actually began at Conowingo, where we found several **Black-crowned Night-Herons** but no shorebirds. For several attendees the **Peregrine Falcon** perched on a Rowland Island transmission tower was a life bird. We wrapped up the trip at Swan Harbor, whose south impoundments harbored a few **Lesser Yellowlegs**, **Solitary Sandpipers**, **Least Sandpipers** and one early **Wilson's Snipe**. We also had nice looks at **Blue Grosbeak**, a few dozen **Bobolinks**, and a small flock of **Blue-winged Teal**. In all, eight attendees (half from outside of Harford County) found 36 species. ~ *Dave Webb*

Fallston Ma and Pa Trail September 3

On Labor Day, , 21 people [including many visitors as well as long-term members] gathered on a muggy, cloudy day to stroll this popular trail from Annie's Playground to Tollgate Road and back. The birds seemed to be sleeping in on the holiday, but the rain held off and we tallied 50 species over the four hour period. Though most were quiet, we saw several **Magnolia Warblers** and **Common Yellowthroats**, and a couple **Warbling Vireos** were singing, as well as the ubiquitous **Gray Catbirds** calling. A sandpiper created much discussion on its ID [**Solitary**] till we got a closer look, but the most popular bird seemed to be a **Great Crested Flycatcher**. The participants agreed that this trail provides a great variety of habitats in such a suburban area. ~ *Susan Hood*

Perryville Community Park & the park near NorthEast. September 9

Raven, raven, raven and none of the three birds were wearing purple. They were seen at Elk River Park circling overhead with a few **Turkey Vultures**. Yes, we did have to look twice to be sure. This is a new park opening less than three years ago. There is a great view of a large marsh which was patrolled by a **Northern Harrier**. Other highlights of the day were **Black Tern** and immature **Red-headed Woodpecker**, both at Perryville Community Park. A total of nine birders enjoyed beautiful walks at both parks with a total of 58 species identified. We were also pleased to see close up a large number of butterflies and dragonflies at Elk River Park. ~ *Phil Powers*

Susquehanna State Park September 16

Fourteen people showed up on an early Sunday morning to see what the fall migration offered. Highlights of the day were a **Philadelphia Vireo** at the mill and several **Red-breasted Nuthatches** in the pines along the entrance road to the picnic area. Seven species of warbler were seen including **Chestnut-sided** and **Black-throated Blue**. A total of 48 species were seen. ~ *Les Eastman*



Falling Branch Road September 26

Seven participants turned out on a cloudy Wednesday morning for a 2 mile hike along Falling Branch Road to enjoy fall migration in Northern Harford County. Three individuals were new to club field trips and one participant was visiting from Howard County Bird Club. The parking lot at Eden Mill, our starting point, yielded **Red-breasted Nuthatches** and several warbler species, including **Bay-breasted Warbler**. Several woodpecker species were seen in the short stretch of Red Bridge Road. As we turned onto Falling Branch Road, a large flock of **American Goldfinch** was active in the roadway. At Kilgore Falls, we found **Swainson's Thrush**, **Black-throated Blue Warbler** and **Tennessee Warbler**. The beautiful sight of Maryland's second highest waterfall was a pleasant ending to a great morning. The trip total reached 50 species including 9 warblers. ~ *Dennis Kirkwood*



Harford Glen September 29

It was a perfect morning to bird at the Glen. **Eastern Bluebirds** surrounded and serenaded us during the first half hour of our walk. With fall migration underway, the number of warbler species was impressive and included **Tennessee**, **Common Yellowthroat**, **Bay-breasted**, **Ovenbird**, **Yellow-rumped** and **Black-throated Green**. A **Solitary Sandpiper** fed on a nearby mudflat and everyone was able to get a good view. The **Blue-headed Vireo** was a treat, as well as several **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** and **Purple Finches**, and two **Scarlet Tanagers**. Total number of species found was 55. ~ *Ruth Bergstrom*

Harford Bird Club Field Trips

Field trip schedule compiled by Tom Gibson and Lynn Davis

October 20 (Sat) – Rocks State Park. Spend the morning on the trails of this Deer Creek woodland to enjoy the late fall avian spectacle. Gather at the ranger station parking area on Rocks Chrome Hill Rd. at 7:00 AM. Co-leaders are Mark Magnani (410-838-1778; mmagnani@peoplepc.com) and Sue Procell (410-676-6602; procell1@comcast.net).

October 27 (Sat.) Swan Harbor Farm Park. This preserved area near the upper bay provides prime habitat for waterfowl, song birds, and marsh and field birds. The field trip begins at 7:30AM at the parking lot at the end of the driveway. Co-leaders are Tom Gibson (410-734-4135; gibsonld@aol.com) and John Gallo.

November 3 (Sat.) – Eden Mill Park. Walk the trails here to enjoy northern Harford County's bird life along Deer Creek. Enjoy scenic woodlands and fields. Meet leader Susan Hood (410-877-0574 or susanhood@comcast.net) at the Mill at 8:00 AM.

October 27 (Sat.) Swan Harbor Farm Park. This preserved area near the upper bay provides prime habitat for waterfowl, song birds, and marsh and field birds. The field trip begins at 7:30AM at the parking lot at the end of the drive-way. Co-leaders are Tom Gibson (410-734-4135; gibsonld@aol.com) and John Gallo.

November 3 (Sat.) – Eden Mill Park. Walk the trails here to enjoy northern Harford County's bird life along Deer Creek. Enjoy scenic woodlands and fields. Meet leader Susan Hood (410-877-0574 or susanhood@comcast.net) at the Mill at 8:00 AM.

November 10 (Sat.) - Perryman Area. Phil Powers (410-679-4116 or birdsindmd@verizon.net) will lead an expedition driving to various locations in the Perryman area known to harbor interesting bird life from Horned Larks and Pipits to waterfowl and shorebirds. Depart from the Aberdeen WalMart (Rt. 40) at 7:30 AM.

November 17 (Sat)– Wild Card Birding Excursion November is Matt Hafner's favorite birding time. This is one of the best times to spot rarities passing through Harford county. Matt, an accomplished birder, will search the county prior to the trip to find the hottest birding spots with the best chance of seeing the most interesting birds. With a little luck, this trip should provide a good time for all from beginner to expert.

Contact Matt Hafner to get on the update list for time, meeting location and other details for this exciting birding opportunity. (410-971-3203; hafner.matt@gmail.com).

November 24 (Sat.) Conowingo Eagle Watch. – Meet at 8:30 AM at Fisherman's Park below the dam. Expect more than 100 Bald Eagles and possibly Golden Eagle. There will be Waterfowl and early winter songbirds. Contact leader Les Eastman (410-734-6969; les@birdtreks.com) for more information.

December 8 (Sat.) Delaware Coast. Meet at the 155/I-95 Park and Ride at 6:30 AM. This trip will visit several hotspots along the Delaware Bay for wintering specialties. Contact leader Russ Kovach for further details (443-386-4787 or russell.kovach@gmail.com).

December 15 (Sat.) Waterfowl at the mouth of the Susquehanna. Tour both sides of the river beginning in Havre de Grace and ending in Perryville to take in the many varieties of waterfowl that frequent those waters. Co-leaders are Tom Congersky (410-658-4137; jnitcon@zoominternet.net) and Randy Robertson. Meet at Tydings Park in Havre de Grace at 8:00 AM.

December 29 (Sat.) Christmas Bird Count. Contact Rick Cheicante (410-803-2712; rickcheicante@cs.com).

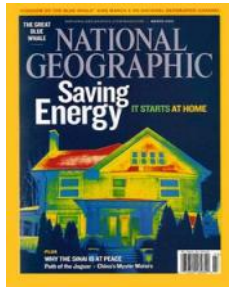
January 1, 2013 (Sun.) Perryman Area. Celebrate the new year/recover from New Year's Eve by birding the always productive Perryman Area with leader Phil Powers (410-679-4116 or birdsindmd@verizon.net). Meet at the Wal-Mart parking lot at 8:30 AM.

January 12 (Sat.) 2013 – Feeder Tour. Join our annual feeder tour to visit the private homes of a few of our members in the Darlington/Conowingo area to survey avian visitors to their bird feeders (Plus maybe a black bear?). Contact leader Russ Kovach (443-386-4787 or russell.kovach@gmail.com) for details and directions.



WANTED

Magazines



Students today do not have as much access to hard copy magazines as we did growing up. Many of their magazines are e-magazines or they are researching and reading articles online. In an effort to place more hard copy magazines in the hands of kids, I'm collecting all magazines with a 'nature' or 'science' theme. If you normally recycle magazines after reading them, please consider saving and donating them to Harford Glen.

If you have questions or donations, please email me at Amanda.Koss@hcps.org.

Many Thanks,
Amanda Koss
Outdoor Educator



How Many Humans Does it Take to Rescue an Osprey?

By Colleen Webster

I had just stepped out of a cool shower after a day on the water and some time sweating on the trails in Susquehanna; it was July, a time when early evening begs for a glass of wine while relaxing on a balcony, enjoying the twitter of Chimney Swifts as dusk falls. But on this particular Thursday my plans were changed by one phone call from my girlfriend. Mary Beth started the conversation by saying "I really don't want to tell you this because there probably isn't anything you can do, but..." She had just received a text from Mary Dougherty who was paddling her kayak on the river when she discovered a large bird hanging by its foot from one of the railroad bridges. She knew I cared about birds and so alerted Mary Beth. I grabbed binoculars and hopped on my bike, heading for the Amtrak bridge.

I was scanning for the bird when Mary and her daughter pulled up to the landing below me. "No," she called, "it's the other one," pointing to the CSX bridge farther north. "It was so bad, Colleen, just flapping and screaming. If I had a gun, I would have shot it just to put it out of its misery." I waved my thanks and headed home to grab my scope, then to a construction lot across from Price's Seafood. The gates were open despite it being just after six. I rolled right up to the bank closest the bridge and set up my scope. There was the bird, wings alternately hanging and then flapping, dangling just a foot and a half below its nest. Another Osprey sat on the cross bar just above. My eye glued to the scope, I did not see the man who approached and stood at my side.

"Can I help you," he asked.

I swung my gaze around to meet his. "Yes," I replied, "you have cranes over there on barges so you can rescue this bird that is hanging from its nest by one foot." He stepped up to the scope, took a quick look and made what seemed like an even quicker decision.

"I can't help you now. Everyone is gone for the day, but if you come back at 6:30 tomorrow morning and that bird is alive, I will take you out there." I got his name, told him mine and left so he could lock the gates. Then I began to plan. I didn't know if that bird could survive the night, didn't know how long it had already hung there. I called Dave Webb who set about calling DNR, CSX and other important groups known by initials. I estimated the possibility of kayaking out to the Garrett Island, bringing a towel and scissors, and climbing the bridge to reach the bird and free it. Crazy I know, but it seemed a much more possible option when I was watching this Osprey struggle. Luckily I headed to a local fire station whose chief is a kind acquaintance. Fire Chief Steve called the city police for advice after telling me his rescue boats were on loan to APG, but would not have reached as high as necessary anyway. I called Kathy Woods of Phoenix Wildlife, leaving a

message warning her that I might be there the next morning with an Osprey. After half an hour of phone calls, Steve had nothing that could reach the bird sooner than the next morning. I headed home grateful but worried. Who can hope that a bird lives that long with its body weight suspended from a leg? But I tried to hope against reason, calling Tom Leckey, one of my bird gods; Leck has worked on Hawk Mountain, on the California Condor project and served as head naturalist on Hog Island, Maine for Audubon. He not only knew his birds; despite living an hour and a half away, I knew Leck would sacrifice time, energy and gas to rescue any bird. Still, with everything in place, I could barely sleep; while I knew rescue was possible, that bird only knew the swinging of his or her own body in the night winds. Finally, morning came. Leck and Regan, a new birder, joined me for coffee at 6 am and we gathered my big sewing scissors, a large towel, binoculars and scope. Optimistic, we took my Jeep so we could immediately transport our rescued patient. Crunching gravel announced our arrival as we pulled up outside the construction fences, but what brought attention was our strolling, hardhat-less across the site. "Hey," someone yelled, "Can I help you?"

"Yes," I tossed back, "we're here to check on a bird. Jay said if it is alive, he will help us save it."

"Oh," came the reply. "Jay is the site manager, guess you can stay."

Point number one in our favor. We set up the scope, hopping for point two, a live bird. What we first gazed at in the round frame was a limp Osprey, wings draped and still. Another Osprey still sat on the nearest cross bar, a third flew in circles carrying a fish. By now, Bob, the inquiring voice of the morning, had walked over. He was the safety officer of the site and so his concern at our presence made sense. Now he had to consider the safety issues of a rescue, if one was still necessary. We still had seen no movement. Bob took a look through the scope. "That bird moved," he said, straightening up and striding away. "We will have to get the men to their work stations. Then we can get you out there." I am pretty sure that in that moment I took the first deep breath in over 12 hours. The Osprey was alive. Point number two in our favor. We were going to save it.

When Jay arrived he joined us at the scope while lines of men in hardhats filed onto boats. He stuck some chew into his mouth, shaking his head. "You know," he admitted, "I didn't really think you'd come back." I hugged the towel and scissors and glanced at Leck. Regan smiled at me. I am sure she held back from telling Mike of my plan to kayak out and climb the bridge. Of course I would come back. I am in love with these Batman-mask-wearing sky gods who return to our waters each year around St. Patrick's Day. I await their arrival each year as five-year-olds wait for Christmas morning.

(continued on page 9)

And then finally we were on a boat, our captain, Jim, keeping us in the cabin, Bob making certain our life jackets were securely wrapped around us. We were moving ever-closer to our bird, the barge with the crane, the tug that would push the barge from the Route 40 bridge construction site, to the CSX Osprey nest. I had thought we would be lifted up to free the bird, but Bob made it clear we were already a safety risk enough. "Nope," he explained, "it'll be me but I have some experience, having gotten a Red-tail Hawk out of my sister's kitchen." I never even got that story, engrossed so in the one we were living. Leck explained about wrapping the towel over the head and bringing in the wings, holding the talons together. He said Osprey are not aggressive to people and reassured Bob, and his partner on the lift, that the other birds would not attack.

And then it all happened. We floated below the bridge in Jim's boat as he videotaped the rescue on his iPhone (that's his enthusiastic voice on the YouTube video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZYbxUfA3oc>). The crane reached two men up, Bob draped the towel around

the great bird, brought the free leg to meet the trapped foot, and the second man clipped my sewing scissors through what turned out to be fish netting. Bob cradled the swaddled Osprey and the crane folded them back to the barge. As the bird was handed over to Leck, we could see the netting had been swallowed into her flesh. She had grown into it in the nest. On her first attempt at flight, she had plummeted to dangle. Off to the rehabber she would go.

And so the story of Lucky 13, rescued on Friday the 13th of July, continued. From this point, she took a brief boat ride to shore, an open Jeep ride wrapped in the towel, an open Jeep ride in a box to Phoenix Wildlife where the netting was clipped off. She could not stand on the foot. She refused to eat as is typical of her species; they are known for their resistance to rehabilitation. But Kathy Woods prevailed in forcing food until she delivered Lucky 13 to Tri-State Rehabbers who re-nested her with a pair of Osprey who had lost a fledgling.

We, all of us in that chain of determination, can only hope that Lucky 13 continued her rehabilitation, learning to fly, to land, to fish, and eventually migrate to Brazil. I will be looking for her return in a year and a half, knowing each of us did what we could. How many people did it take? The number is less important than the sense of responsibility and fulfillment each of us had for one magnificent Osprey. We may not have changed the fate of all creatures, but what we did mattered to a bird who is no longer swinging beneath a bridge, far above the Susquehanna River.

Donations gratefully accepted at Phoenix Wildlife; see their website or friend them on FaceBook. Wild love and appreciation to Maclean Construction Company and all humans who worked on behalf of this one bird, entangled literally in the lines and lives of humans.



The Harford Bird Club Dinner Reservation Form

Please cut and mail the bottom portion of this page to Eileen Nack, 8 Crestmont Drive, Aberdeen MD 21001 by Friday, October 26th, 2012 if you plan on attending.

_____ Number of adults (at \$13.00 each)

_____ Number of children 16 and under (at \$5.00 each)

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 November Dinner Meeting

"The Maryland Biodiversity Project."

by

Jim Brighton

and

Bill Hubick

Friday, November 2nd

Dinner - 6:15pm - General Meeting time 7:15pm

Location: Churchville Presbyterian Church

2844 Churchville Road

Churchville, MD 21028



Mail To:

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

