

“News from the ‘Hood”

Newsletter of the Patuxent Bird Club
of the Maryland Ornithological Society



Mar – Apr 2017

Editor: Fred Fallon, fwfallon@ymail.com

Programs

Starting this season our meetings will be held at the College Park Airport *Operations Building* off Paint Branch Parkway (some road signs erroneously read “Campus Dr”), every 2nd Tuesday Sep thru June. From Paint Branch Parkway turn onto Cpl Scott Dr at the light; after 3 blocks turn right on College Ave, which ends at the parking lot on left by the Museum. Walk leftward past the museum to the entrance to the adjoined new Operations Bldg and inside, bear left. Our meeting room is up the stairway (or elevator) to the 2nd floor. Doors open at 7 pm for refreshments and informal discussion; formal program with guest speaker starts at 7:30 pm and ends by 9:15; doors close at 9:30 pm. Our meetings are held jointly with the Prince Georges Audubon Society (PGAS).

March Program

Tuesday, March 14, 7:30 p.m.

“The Pantanal: Endemics and Island Beauty”

Presentation by Greg Kearns

Doors open 7:00 p.m.

Greg, long-time naturalist, rail and osprey bander/researcher and photographer at Patuxent River Park for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, spent time in Brazil on an exchange program invitation through Partners of the Americas to consult on parks and environmental issues. Greg will share these experiences through his always fascinating stories and pictures as he explores Rio de Janeiro, Iguazu Falls (one of the largest waterfalls in the world), and the Pantanal. The Pantanal is a wetland the size of England and one of the greatest places on earth to view wildlife. The word ‘Pantanal’ originated from Portuguese word ‘pantano’ meaning marshland. The Pantanal is 76,000 sq mi in area and its major portion is located in Brazil (in Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul Provinces) with additional portions in Bolivia and Paraguay. During rainy seasons, 80% of its area gets submerged underwater forming a miniature inland sea.

Learn about the natural history of the region and see photographs of creatures such as endangered golden lion tamarins, coatimundis, capybaras, marsh deer, caiman, and a great diversity of birds, including the Hyacinth Macaw, Red-legged Seriema, Black-collared Hawk, Guira Cuckoo, and Jabiru, to name a few. For those who are interested in watching wildlife in natural settings, no place offers more. It is believed that about 10 million crocodiles live here comfortably. The biodiversity of this area is astonishing: 3500 species of plants, 650 species of birds, 400 species of fish, 100 species of mammals, 80 species of reptiles are just some of the inhabitants of this wonderful land.

April Program
Tuesday, April 11, 7:30 p.m.
“Native Bees of Maryland”
Presentation: Gene Scarpulla
Doors open 7:00 p.m.

In 2009, Gene Scarpulla conducted a year-long survey of the bees on Hart-Miller Island in Chesapeake Bay off North Point. (He also initiated birding field trips to this dredge-spoil island; see below under Field Trips for an up-coming such trip). Gene will give a brief overview of the history of Hart-Miller Island, describe his survey, discuss bee biology and identification (bees vs wasps vs bee-mimic flies), and show the amazing diversity of the region’s bees.

Gene is an Associate at the Bee Inventory and Monitoring Laboratory at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center where he surveys and identifies native bees and wasps – many of which are in deep trouble.

Field Trip Report – Ocean City, Feb 11-12

On Feb 11 and 12 some dozen Patuxent Bird Club members journeyed to Ocean City for a field trip led by Marcia Watson and Gene Scarpulla. Convening first on Sat afternoon at the jetty, we braved cold and wind to scan the channel and ocean. Some of the birds found were both loon species, Common Eider females hauled up on the rocks for good views, Long-tail Ducks frolicking in heavy seas, Purple sandpipers and Ruddy Turnstones close by scraping edibles from the jetty rocks. As darkness closed in we returned to our hotel rooms and reconvened for a joint dinner, where the group traded stories and digital photos.

Early next morning we met again at the jetty – now a warmer, sunny day but very windy. Here we added Red-br Mergansers and Brant to our list. Then an odd-looking, small bird was spotted intermittently as it bobbed and dived in the deep troughs of the turbulent waves. It took a while to reach a consensus on ID, but the small round shape and tiny bill left no choice but Dovekie (!) – rare to find so near shore and a life bird for several of us. We then visited the West O.C. pond, where we found at least 20 species of waterfowl. The group had fun out-doing each other in coming up with new species lurking among the emergent coastal shrubs or among the commoner species already counted.

We then visited the recently opened and humorously-named “Berlin Falls” park, based on the former county waste-water treatment plant in Berlin, where we added a few more duck species. Pre-trip scouting by early arrivals saved us long drive-times to unproductive sites, so we drove north to Indian River Inlet with its surging counter-currents. Viewing was difficult in the high wind, but good views were seen of Great Cormorants (lifer for many) and all 3 scoters. Best of all were 2 Razorbills, another alcid species sometimes seen near shore but not often.

From thence the group turned homeward while still reasonably early, very satisfied with our outing. A combined total of some 70 species was tallied, and even if not all were seen by any one person, it was an impressive count for a winter day.



Friendly Patuxent birders make a hit

Members on the Ocean City field trip while stationed at the jetty responded to inquiries from passers-by and shared scope views with those interested – as so often. Later we received this unsolicited letter:

“Hello to the Patuxent Bird Club.

It was so exciting to see the Dovekie floating in the waves off of the jetty area on Sunday, Feb at 8:15 am.

Guess what? You won't believe this, but a little while after we all left the inlet, we returned. A young man was there with a scope and he said he had just seen a Dovekie flying over the ocean way out past the beach right in the spot where we were standing!

It was fun to enjoy your enthusiasm for birding. Thank you to all for your assistance in identifying the birds. We appreciated the fact that so many in the Patuxent Club shared their scopes.”

Elda Banks
SilverSpring



Field Trips, Mar – Apr (+ May pars)

Contacts for regularly scheduled walks at Fran Uhler Nat Area and Governor's Bridge Park: Bill Sefton, kiwisuits@msn.com. At Lake Artemesia: David Mozurkewich (mozurk@bellAtlantic.net)

Saturday, March 4: Bird Walk at the Fran Uhler Natural Area. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the end of Lemon's Bridge Road, off Route 197 just north of Bowie State University. No reservations needed. Contact Bill Sefton for more information

Thu Mar 16 - Walk at Lake Artemesia, jointly with PG Audubon. Meet at 3 pm at parking lot, at end of Berwyn Rd in Berwyn Hts. No reservations needed. Contact David Mozurkewich for more info.

Saturday, Mar 18, 7:30 am. Regularly scheduled walk at Gov Br Park in conjunction with Prince Georges Audubon Society. Meet inside the gate at Gov Br Park on Gov Br Rd, 1 mile from Rt 301. No reservations needed. For more info, contact Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com.

Sat April 1 - Bird Walk at the Fran Uhler Natural Area. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the end of Lemon's Bridge Road, off Route 197 just north of Bowie State University. No reservations needed. Contact Bill Sefton for more information.

Thu April 6 - Walk at Lake Artemesia, jointly with PG Audubon. Meet at 3 pm at parking lot, at end of Berwyn Rd in Berwyn Hts. No reservations needed. Contact David Mozurkewich for more info.

Sat April 15 - Walk at the Gov Bridge Park jointly with PG Audubon. Meet at 7:30 am at the parking lot off Gov Br Rd, ~ 1 mile from Rt 301. Contact Bill Sefton for more info.

Thu April 20 - Walk at Lake Artemesia, jointly with PG Audubon. Meet at 3 pm at parking lot, at end of Berwyn Rd in Berwyn Hts. No reservations needed. Contact David Mozurkewich for more info.

Sun April 30 – Piscataway Park. **Meet at end of Wharf Rd** in Piscataway at 7:30 AM. Leader, David Mozurkewich (@bellAtlantic.net).

Fri – Sun May 19-21 - MOS Convention at WISP resort, McHenry MD. See details in the MD *Yellowthroat*, and MOS website, www.MDBirds.org. MOS members will receive a sign-up brochure both by e-mail and in the mail. There will be seminars on moth ID, field sketching, and J J Audubon's life history. There will be an excellent line-up of field trips to both traditional and new sites. A new innovation will be an optional extension thru Sunday pm and informal field trips Monday am. So, if far-western MD is new to you, this will be an excellent introduction to the area and its birds.

Tuesday May 23 (rain date Wednesday May 24, 2017). Hart-Miller Birding Bus Trip. Join the Patuxent Bird Club, Prince George's Audubon Society, and Anne Arundel Bird Club for a rare birding BUS trip on Hart-Miller Island, courtesy of Maryland Environmental Service (MES). No seven-mile hike required! The bus will stop frequently to allow us to get out to look

for birds. Hart-Miller is a dredged material containment facility, similar to Poplar Island. The 1100-acre island is located south of Baltimore, just off the mouth of Back River, and has a history of hosting a spectacular assortment of migrating and resident birds, including many that are rare for Maryland. As of July 2016, the species count for Hart-Miller stood at 282. During a lunch break in the administration building, an MES representative will give a presentation on the development of Hart-Miller as a managed habitat for the benefit of wildlife. Space is strictly limited because of the capacity of the boat and bus, and reservations are necessary. To reserve your spot, send an email to Marcia Watson at marshwren50@comcast.net no later than May 1. Marcia will provide you with details on meeting place and time, and what to bring.

Sat, May 27 – Trip to Eastern Shore sites for spring shorebird migration. Meet at Bowie P&R at the ungodly hour of 7am (dictated by tides). Make reservations with trip leader Fred Fallon, fwfallon@ymail.com, 410-286-8152.

Chan Robbins update

Note : Chan Robbins was the founder of the MOS in 1945

From Maureen Blades for the Prince George's Audubon Society:

“Terry Watson alerted me that Chan Robbins is now in a nursing home, and she thought others would like to know. Chan is a beloved and renowned pioneer in most anything birding. He's been at the forefront of bird banding, research, area Christmas Bird Counts, birding atlases, and, one of the authors of the Golden Guide to Birds of North America. Many of us have also known him and his work as a frequent and willing speaker over the years on what he's learned via his research work at our program meetings. Others have had the unique pleasure of working with him as a volunteer or staff at the Patuxent Research Center. She talked with his son Stu the other day and share here my conversation with him about his dad.

“As you may know, Chan's been in and out of the hospital the last year, most recently with pneumonia. Because he now needs a machine to help him breathe, he can no longer be cared for in a home setting. He had been living with his daughter Jane, but is now in the nursing home listed below. It was necessary to insert a breathing tube with hopes being that it could be a small one, so that a voice box could also be inserted, but, alas, he needed a larger tube with no room for a voice box, so he is unable to speak. He has had visitors, but Stu said conversations are one-way - yet Stu recounted that his dad heard Jane on the phone talking to him and waved his hand, so Stu told her, "Dad just said 'Hi'."

“The family recently celebrated a happy 98-1/2th birthday complete with balloons and fanfare. Stu credited his father's life's work for keeping him healthy - and strong - for such a lonnnnng time. You can imagine the walking/hiking/climbing, bending, hauling, and reaching in all extremes of temperature that were second nature to him, always active in his commitment to devise ways to learn more about birds and share it for their betterment, and ours.

Chan is surrounded by many Audubon stuffed birds - and they still have their voice boxes. He has been receiving many cards and letters.

Dr. Chandler Robbins
Lorien Columbia Nursing Home,
334 Cedar Lane, Room 193, Columbia, MD 21044

Eagle Nest Monitoring Opportunity

Maryland DNR is looking for volunteers to monitor some of the Bald Eagle nests in the state – now that eagles have recovered so well after the ban on DDT, monitoring their nests is stretching their man-power. Most of those needing volunteers are on the Eastern Shore, but some are close enough for our members to take on w/o too much trouble. The plan calls for 3 visits during the eagles nesting season. To sign on, visit this web site:

<https://marylandbirds.org/bald-eagle-nest-monitoring/>

New App for identifying your birds in your photos

The American Birding Association (ABA) now hosts a Facebook group “What’s This Bird?”, where you can submit a photo and get expert opinions on its identification. How it works – you must first have a face-book account. Go to <facebook.com/groups/whatsthisbird> and follow the directions to sign on. Then when you sign on to your own Facebook account, “Whatsthisbird” will appear among your Groups. Clicking on that will bring you back to the ABA’s “What’s This Bird?” page, where now you can submit photos, or if you wish a verbal description. ABA staffers will answer these inquiries, but anyone else on the group can chime in as well, and you yourself can respond to the inquiries of others.



**M OS/Patuxent Bird Club
Membership Application/Renewal
2016/2017**



• **Name:** _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip code:** _____

Phone(s): _____

E-Mail: _____

Full dues include Chapter and MOS State membership, and subscriptions to *Maryland Yellowthroat*, *Maryland Birdlife*, and the Patuxent Bird Club Newsletter. (The newsletter will be sent by email unless US mail requested). Dues are tax-deductible; see note below.

Choose Membership category:

Chapter and State combined membership:

or

Chapter membership only:

(must be a full-paying member of another MOS chapter - indicate primary MOS chapter: _____)

- Household \$33
- Individual \$26
- Junior (Age < 18) \$6

- Household \$8
- Individual \$6
- Junior \$1

In addition, I have enclosed a tax-deductible contribution

to Patuxent Bird Club in the amount of _____

to Maryland Ornithological Society in the amount of _____

Make check payable to **Patuxent Bird Club** with this application to:

Jane Fallon, Treasurer PBC
6711 Venus Dr
Huntingtown, MD 20639

“The benefits received from Maryland Ornithological Society membership dues are not considered to be substantial, as determined by criteria in IRS Publication 526. Therefore, members can claim a tax deductible charitable contribution for the full amount of their membership dues.”