

# “News from the ‘Hood”

Newsletter of the Patuxent Bird Club  
of the Maryland Ornithological Society

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**September - November 2014**

Editor: Fred Fallon, [fwoffallon@ymail.com](mailto:fwoffallon@ymail.com)



## **Meeting Place -OK for now but stay tuned!**

An imminent issue facing us and our sister organization, the Prince George’s Audubon Society, is the likely need to find a different location for our monthly meetings, since the College Park Airport will be renovating and will probably not be able to provide meeting space for us in the near future. Presidents Marcia Watson of MOS and Maureen Blades of PGAS have been working diligently over the summer to attempt to address the space issue, and we hope that we can announce a resolution soon. Meanwhile, the September meeting will be held at the airport in the same trailer room as usual.

## **Annual MOS membership dues are due!**

Membership dues are due in September. The annual fee of \$26 includes MOS dues of \$20 and \$6 Patuxent chapter dues. Please fill out the form on the last page and submit it to the treasurer at the next meeting, or mail it in to the address shown on the form.

## **A Message from the President, Marcia Watson**

I am honored that you have elected me to serve as the Patuxent Bird Club President for this year. There are still some members of the club that I haven’t met, so I’ll use this column to tell you a little about myself.

I joined the Patuxent Bird Club in 2011, after Gene Scarpulla and I moved to Bowie. But my involvement with the Maryland Ornithological Society goes farther back to 1994, when I was a founding member of the Cecil Bird Club, which is the youngest chapter of MOS. I served as the president of the Cecil chapter, and was also their webmaster and keeper of bird records for the county over a fifteen-year period. We still maintain our secondary memberships in the Baltimore and Cecil clubs.

I became involved with activities at the state level of MOS early on. I remember very distinctly being given a copy of the *Field List of the Birds of Maryland* (aka the “Yellow Book”) by another member of the Cecil chapter, and I was so impressed with the publication – chock full of information that birders could use in the field – that I decided I wanted to get involved with the organization that had produced it. I became a member of the MOS Board of Directors, representing Cecil, and have served on the MOS Scholarship Committee, the Budget Committee, and the MD DC Records Committee. I also chaired MOS’s Long Range Planning Committee and the MD Birding Trail Committee.

My involvement with the MOS and its chapters has been one of the joys of my life. The annual MOS Conference has given me an opportunity to explore birding sites in many different parts of the state (I have attended every conference but one since 1994) and has given me an opportunity to meet birders from all over the state. I feel that the Maryland birding network is like a big extended family, and moving from Elkton to Baltimore to Bowie was made all the easier because I already knew a nucleus of people in each place.

In real life, I am an academic administrator at University of Maryland University College, and I work at our headquarters in College Park as well as at our Academic Center in Largo. Before coming to UMUC, I was an administrator at the University of Delaware, and before that, was a biology professor there. I earned a PhD in Biological Sciences at Delaware, as well as a BA in Psychology.

During my faculty days I conducted research dealing with the hormonal control of seasonal reproductive cycles in mammals. Although my research was in mammals, I was part of a large research group that had strong ties to the ornithology lab of the late Dr. Donald Farner at the University of Washington in Seattle. Dr. Farner was the doctoral advisor for Dr. Milton Stetson, who was my doctoral advisor, so Dr. Farner offered me much advice to guide my research. Dr. Farner was known fondly as “Dr. Sparrow” – the prolific work of his lab in White-Crowned Sparrows and other species provides the foundation for our understanding of the interrelated nature of the annual cycles of migration, reproduction, metabolism, and molt in birds.

As to the Patuxent Bird Club, there is an issue I think we need to focus on. We, like other MOS chapters, are facing a declining membership, which leaves us with only meager resources to work with, not only in the form of membership dues but also volunteer availability. I have some ideas for attracting new members, which I will be discussing with the executive board in the coming months.

To focus on the brighter side, I have to note that we are fortunate to have great birding opportunities here in PG County. According to eBird ([www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)), Prince George’s ranks 7<sup>th</sup> among Maryland counties in terms of the total number of species seen: 316 species, or 70% of the 446 species on the official list of the birds of Maryland (see <http://ebird.org/ebird/subnational2/US-MD-033?yr=all> for PG bird list and <http://www.mdbirds.org/mddcrc/pdf/mdlist.pdf> for the official state list). Three major rivers – the Patuxent, the Potomac, and the Anacostia – provide great birding opportunities in a string of protected, publically accessible areas along their banks. Notable is the huge tract of land set aside in the Patuxent Research Refuge and adjoining Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. We have smaller sites that are amazingly productive for their size: Schoolhouse Pond, Governor Bridge Natural Area, Lake Artemesia, Fran Uhler Natural Area, even the tiny Greenbelt Lake. We are truly fortunate that these areas have been conserved in this highly developed area, right outside the nation’s capital.

I would welcome hearing from you if you have ideas on how to increase our visibility and boost our membership. Please feel free to send me an email ([marshwren50@comcast.net](mailto:marshwren50@comcast.net)). I hope also that you will step forward to help keep our club running - by leading a field trip, bringing refreshments to meetings, suggesting speakers and field trip locations for the future, or taking on other volunteer tasks (I will have some projects to suggest as the year goes on!) will close by thanking Fred Fallon, Jane Fallon, and Dave Mozurkewich, all three of whom I have known for many years through MOS, for providing insights and guidance and much basic information to help me in the transition of the presidency. And thanks to all of you for the warm welcome you have extended to me and to Gene.

Let’s go birding!

## Tom and Joy Loomis receive MOS award

At last summer's MOS Conference, Joy and Tom Loomis were recognized for their many years' service helping to operate the Silent Auction held during conferences. This involves taking in the donated items, setting the starting prices, and in general watching over things while everyone else is at the wine & cheese. (Tom was also a several-time president of our sister-club, PGAS). The Loomis' were not present at the conference, so the award was presented to them at their home later this summer.



## Young Birder's Pack available

The "Young Birders" program of MOS, "YMOS", provides each chapter with a back-pack to be awarded to a young birder, preferably 6-9<sup>th</sup> grade, who has demonstrated interest in becoming a birder – maybe for the same life-time dedication to the avocation which most of us in MOS have. The back-pack contains a pair of binoculars, a field guide, notebooks, and other useful items – and of course the pack itself to keep them in. The award also carries a one-year membership in MOS. We presented a pack at the last November meeting to 14-yr old Gerald Maravanyika.

Already another back-pack is available for award. Please consider nominating a promising youngster of your acquaintance. Contact Fred Fallon at <fwfallon@ymail.com>, or at any MOS meeting, with your suggestions. Applicants should submit a letter expressing their interest.

## **Schedule of Meetings for Year and Field Trips through November**

### **Tuesday Sep 9. MEETING. Argentina and Chile Adventure with George Jett and Dr. Gwenda Brewer, Photographers and Naturalists.**

In November 2010 George & Gwen travelled to Argentina and Chile in search of stuff to photograph and study. The focus was wildlife of the region. The three week trip produced some lovely images. Come and see images of some of the birds (Giant Petrels), mammals (sea lions), insects, etc. G & G will also show images of some of the most magnificent landscapes on our planet, and we are sure of a humorous discussion of the many experiences they enjoyed and endured. 7:30 PM, Location, College Park Airport for further info call 301-509-2212 or go to [www.pgaudubon.org/programs.html](http://www.pgaudubon.org/programs.html).

### **Saturday September 13 Boat Trip and Picnic:**

Patuxent River Park, Jug Bay. Joint Trip with PGAS. . Join Greg Kearns on a pontoon boat to search for Soras, Least Bitterns, and other marshbirds followed by land birding and a pot-luck picnic. Reservations required (\$5 charge to cover the cost of the boat). Bring cash for the boat (exact amount appreciated) and a potluck lunch dish to share. Meet at Patuxent River Park; boat will cast off at 7:30 AM. Contact Maureen Blades, [mblades@comcast.net](mailto:mblades@comcast.net) for directions and reservations.

### **Thursday September 18 Field Trip: Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail).**

Joint trip with PGAS. We will walk the paved trail around the lake as well as the trail through the woods along Indian Creek. Meet 3 PM at the parking lot at Berwyn Rd and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Call or write David Mozurkewich, 301-509-2212/ [mozurk@bellAtlantic.net](mailto:mozurk@bellAtlantic.net) for more info.

**Saturday September 20 Field Trip: Governor Bridge NA.** Joint trip with PGAS. Habitat includes mature woods along the Patuxent River, brushy fields, and a network of freshwater wetlands, ponds and small streams. Meet 7:30 AM at the parking lot for Governor Bridge NA . No reservations required. The Natural Area is located on the south side of Governor Bridge Rd, approximately 1 mile east of MD 301. If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at [kiwisuits@msn.com](mailto:kiwisuits@msn.com) or David Mozurkewich at [mozurk@bellAtlantic.net](mailto:mozurk@bellAtlantic.net).

**Sunday September 21 FALL COUNT.** Prince George's County. State-wide bird count analogous to the May Count. Compiler: Dave Mozurkewich, 301-509- 2212 or [mozurk@bellAtlantic.net](mailto:mozurk@bellAtlantic.net).

### **Thursday October 2 Field Trip: Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail).**

Joint trip with PGAS. We will walk the paved trail around the lake as well as the trail through the woods along Indian Creek. Meet 3 PM at the parking lot at Berwyn Rd and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Call or write David Mozurkewich, 301-509-2212/ [mozurk@bellAtlantic.net](mailto:mozurk@bellAtlantic.net) for more info.

**Saturday October 4 Field Trip: Fran Uhler NA.** Joint trip with PGAS. Habitat includes brushy fields, woods and hedgerows for a good mix of species. Side trip to freshwater wetland at Horsepen Branch also possible. Meet 7:30 AM at the end of Lemon Bridge Rd off MD 197, just north of Bowie State U. and the MARC line. No reservations required. If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at [kiwisuits@msn.com](mailto:kiwisuits@msn.com) or David Mozurkewich at [mozurk@bellAtlantic.net](mailto:mozurk@bellAtlantic.net) for more info.

**Saturday & Sunday October 4 & 5 Field Trip: Kiptopeake Area of Virginia.** Joint trip with PGAS. Overnight trip to the southern tip of the Delmarva Peninsula. The area has spectacular concentrations of migrant songbirds and hawks. Contact the leader, Marcia Watson, marsh-wren50@comcast.net for itinerary, reservations and more info.

**Sunday October 12 COUNT: Big Sit at Schoolhouse Pond, Upper Marlboro.** Sit will start at sunrise and go at least until mid-afternoon. Drop in for as long as you like to join the PG Snipes Big Sit Team. Team Leader TBA. Contact David Mozurkewich at mo-zurk@bellAtlantic.net for more info.

**Tuesday Oct 14 7:30 pm . MEETING. Discovering the Mysteries of Bird Migration. Gwen Brewer, Ph.D. Science Program Manager for the Natural Heritage Program, Wildlife and Heritage Service, Maryland Department of Natural Resources.**

The migration of birds has fascinated bird watchers and researchers alike for centuries. The amazing journeys of birds have been chronicled in song, poetry, and film, but how do they do it? This talk will summarize what we know about bird migration today. 7:30 PM, Location TBD. For location update call 301-509-2212 or go to [www.pgaudubon.org/programs.html](http://www.pgaudubon.org/programs.html).

**Thursday October 16 Field Trip: Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail).** Joint trip with PGAS. We will walk the paved trail around the lake as well as the trail through the woods along Indian Creek. Meet 3 PM at the parking lot at Berwyn Rd and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Call or write David Mozurkewich, 301-509-2212/ mo-zurk@bellAtlantic.net for more info.

**Saturday October 18 Field Trip: Governor Bridge NA.** Joint trip with PGAS. Habitat includes mature woods along the Patuxent River, brushy fields, and a network of freshwater wetlands, ponds and small streams. Meet 7:30 AM at the parking lot for Governor Bridge NA . No reservations required. The Natural Area is located on the south side of Governor Bridge Rd, approximately 1 mile east of MD 301. If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com or David Mozurkewich at mozurk@bellAtlantic.net.

**Saturday November 1 Field Trip: Fran Uhler NA.** Joint trip with PGAS. Habitat includes brushy fields, woods and hedgerows for a good mix of species. Side trip to freshwater wetland at Horsepen Branch also possible. Meet 7:30 AM at the end of Lemon Bridge Rd off MD 197, just north of Bowie State U. and the MARC line. No reservations required. If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com or David Mozurkewich at mo-zurk@bellAtlantic.net for more info.

**Thursday November 6 Field Trip: Lake Artemesia (Luther Goldman Birding Trail).** Joint trip with PGAS. We will walk the paved trail around the lake as well as the trail through the woods along Indian Creek. Meet 3 PM at the parking lot at Berwyn Rd and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Call or write David Mozurkewich, 301-509-2212/ mo-zurk@bellAtlantic.net for more info.

**Tuesday Nov 11, 7:30 pm MEETING. “Project SNOW”. Dave Brinker, Ecologist for the Central Region, Wildlife and Heritage Service, MD DNR.**

The winter of 2013-14 saw the biggest invasion of Snowy Owls in decades. As the magnitude of the irruption became clear, veteran owl researchers started mobilized a response, and Project SNOWstorm was born. Project SNOWstorm is an unprecedented research program to gather information about these raptors using telemetry, banding, toxicology screening, DNA analysis, and more. Maryland’s own David F. Brinker, created Project SNOWstorm in partnership with naturalist and author Scott Weidensaul, who directs the owl migration research program for the Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art in Pennsylvania, and Norman Smith of Massachusetts Audubon, who has been studying Snowy Owls for more than 30 years at Boston's Logan Airport. The researchers behind Project SNOWstorm are hopeful that this irruption will not only produce useful information about the behavior of Snowy Owls, but will ultimately better inform conservation efforts. Dave will present an overview of Project SNOWstorm and will share essential findings from the research. Location TBD. For location update call 301-509-2212 or go to [www.pgaudubon.org/programs.html](http://www.pgaudubon.org/programs.html)

**Saturday November 15 Field Trip: Governor Bridge NA.** Joint trip with PGAS. Habitat includes mature woods along the Patuxent River, brushy fields, and a network of freshwater wetlands, ponds and small streams. Meet 7:30 AM at the parking lot for Governor Bridge NA . No reservations required. The Natural Area is located on the south side of Governor Bridge Rd, approximately 1 mile east of MD 301. If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at [kiwisuits@msn.com](mailto:kiwisuits@msn.com) or David Mozurkewich at [mozurk@bellAtlantic.net](mailto:mozurk@bellAtlantic.net).

**Sunday November 23 Field Trip: Full-day trip Point Lookout SP** for water-birds and late raptor migrants. Joint trip with PGAS. Meet 7:30 AM at the Bowie P&R to carpool. Dress warm for possibly blustery conditions; bring lunch and snacks plus scope if you have one. Contact Fred Fallon at [fwoffallon@ymail.com](mailto:fwoffallon@ymail.com) for more info.

**Tuesday December 9 7:30 pm MEETING. Movie Night. “The Central Park Effect” DVD.** An amusing video about birding in NYC’s Central Park, an island of green space in the middle of the city, and how reports of rarities often lead to discovery of more rarities .

**Thursday Jan 1 All day. Bowie Christsm BirdCount (CBC)** All levels of experience welcome on this classic bird count. Contact compiler David Mozurkewich at [mozurk@bellAtlantic.net](mailto:mozurk@bellAtlantic.net) for area to cover or team to join.

**Tuesday Jan 13, 7:30 pm. Vernal Pools and Salamanders with Karen Molinas.** Location TBA.

**Tuesday Feb 10, 7:30 pm. Monarch Butterflies, with Rich Dolesh.**

**Tuesday March 10, 7:30 pm. The Chickadee Project, with Desiree Narango.**

**Tuesday April 14, 7:30 pm. Shorebird Identification, with birder extraordinaire Mikey Lutmerding of PWRC.**

**Tuesday May12, 7:30 pm. The Wonderful Whooping Cranes, with Ken Lavish**

**Tuesday Jun 9, 7:30 pm. Business meeting, elections, and Members’ Night.** Members invited to show favorite slides of birds or natural history subjects.

## **Field Trip Report Bombay Hook, Aug 23**

On this pleasantly mild morning 9 of us arrived at Bombay Hook for an exciting day of birding. Right off, at the first impoundment, we were delighted to see a Marbled Godwit. Seldom seen as that was, some other birders on the scene called it an even rarer Hudsonian Godwit. But our team stuck with our original identification, even as a second, then a third, showed up. We were treated to the thrilling performance of a Peregrine making passes at the many shorebirds and getting them up in great clouds. But a tight group of ~160 Avocets reacted very differently. With instinct honed over thousands of years of evolution, they stayed firmly together, never allowing the Peregrine to spook them. This way, a falcon is frustrated by not being able to pick out any one individual from a compact mass. The Avocets know this and maintained discipline like a cohort of elite troops, never flinching. When they wanted to move to another area to feed, they marched together as a unit. Most impressive. A Dowitcher, dodging the peregrine, thought so too because he flew into the group and hid among their legs.

Thousands of “peeps” whirled and swirled. Alas, we could not make any of them other than Semipalmated. But a Stilt Sandpiper was a nice find. The number of Semi-palm Plovers was also unusually high. Elsewhere a few non-Mallard ducks showed up – early Shovellers and Green-winged Teal, plus a pair of Blacks. Overhead a flock of 20 Glossy Ibises sailed by. From the tower we spotted a lingering Tundra Swan and Snow Goose.

At the far end of the drive we departed from the usual routine and walked past the gate and birded along the road past Allee House. Here we came on ~ 100 Bobolinks coming back from northern breeding grounds, looking quite different from their spring plumage. Also here were Orchard Orioles, Kingbirds, Field Sparrows. A pair of wrens were probably House Wrens – tho’ a pair of rare Sedge Wrens had been reported from the same area.

We also stopped at Pt Mahon, where a Black Scoter was a surprise.

Returning home through some welcome rain showers, we were back in Bowie just at night-fall.

**Short-billed  
Dowitchers,  
Bombay Hook**



## Patuxent Bird Club Chapter of MOS List of Officers and Board

President – Marcia Watson	Directors, 1st year	Directors, 2 <sup>nd</sup> year
Vice-president – Fred Fallon	David Mozurkewich	Mike Sampson
Secretary – Lynette Fullerton	Joanna Lutmerding	Terri Watson
Treasurer/membership – Jane Fallon	Jeannine Dorothy	Elwood Martin
	Field Trips – David Mozurkewich	
	Newsletter – Fred Fallon	
	State director – Fred Fallon	

(Chapter “Directors” are board members. “State Directors” are the chapters’ delegates to the MOS.)

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## MOS/Patuxent Bird Club Membership Application

2014/2015

**Name:**

**Address:**

**City:**

**State:**

**Zip code:**

**Phone:**

**E-Mail:**

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).

Chapter and State combined: Household \$33, Individual \$26, Junior (Age < 18) \$6

Chapter membership only (must be a member of another MOS chapter): Household \$8, Individual \$6, Junior \$1

Make check payable to **Patuxent Bird Club**. Please send application and check 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.”