

News from the 'Hood

Newsletter of the Patuxent Bird Club

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From Schoolhouse Pond....

It has been another fun summer of birding at Schoolhouse Pond. Each season is different, complete with its own surprises and rarities. Spring and summer 2011 was no exception, with its share of returning "regulars" at the pond, as well as a few unusual or rare birds. Early in the season, a Glossy Ibis was found at the rear of the pond on April 7 (see photo below). This bird remained at the pond and was seen consistently for the next week, sometimes in flight or in the open, but usually tucked in the thick vegetation along the back of the pond. One of the highlights of the breeding season was a pair of Yellow-throated Warblers that took up residence

along the back side of the pond near the utility cut. A singing male was first noted on April 20 as it fed in the low to mid-story of the woods along the trail. The following day, the male Yellow-throated Warbler was viewed mating with a female low in a willow near the boardwalk! The birds continued to be seen and heard along the backside of the pond throughout the rest of the spring and early summer, a very welcome and unexpected addition to the summer birdlife at the pond. Other neat birds included a small group of Black-crowned Night Herons that roosted in the tree along the short boardwalk from the pond to the office



townhouses. These birds were seen regularly from mid-June through early September. Sometimes only a single bird was present, but on other days up to four birds were seen. On June 7 during my regular walk around the pond, two Least Terns were seen flying back and forth over the pond. Also adding variety to the summer birdlife of the pond was a pair of Baltimore Orioles, as well as several brilliantly colored Indigo Buntings. Flyover gulls were seen with increasing regularity as August wore on, giving hope to a big fall/winter gull season. September 2 was highlighted by a Philadelphia Vireo, which foraged in the mid-levels of the woods along the trail. This attractive bird was also relocated on September 4. *Fred Shaffer, PBC.*

Monthly Programs

The Patuxent Bird Club meets jointly with the Prince George's Audubon Society on the 2nd Tuesday of every month (excluding July and August) at 7:30 PM at the College Park Airport Annex. Monthly meetings include time to share rare bird sightings, discuss recent field trips or upcoming events, and feature a speaker on a wide range of natural history topics. The only monthly meeting not held at the airport annex is the annual Holiday Party in December, which is held at Watkins Park (see details below).

Directions to the meeting location can be found at: <http://www.pgaudubon.org/CPMuseum.html>

Tuesday, September 13, 2011, 7:30 pm

College Park Aviation Museum, College Park, MD

River of Raptors, Veracruz, Mexico

presented by **Matthew Jeffery**

The "River of Raptors" is one of the great migration events of the world. More than 4.5 million hawks, kites, vulture, and falcons pass through Veracruz, Mexico, each fall as they fly south to their wintering grounds in Central and South America, including more than 90% of the Broad-winged Hawks that breed in the eastern US and the majority of Swainson's Hawks that breed in the west, as well as twenty other raptor species.

This critical migration bottleneck of Central Veracruz is the third most biologically diverse region in all of Mexico. This once forested habitat is witnessing dramatic changes to the landscape that are reducing the available habitat that raptors and other species need to survive. More than 92% of Veracruz's native vegetation has been converted to sugar cane, cattle pasture, or other purposes that cannot sustain wildlife. Forest fragments that remain are also the last stand for many animal and plant species found only in this region.

The International Alliances Program (www.iap.audubon.org) and Pronatura Veracruz have been working together in one critical municipality to change the trend and conserve and enhance these remaining forests. Through their work, more than 3,000 acres of forested lands have been put into legally recognized private protected areas.

Matt is Senior Program Manager for the National Audubon Society's International Alliances Program (IAP).

Directions to the [College Park Aviation Museum](#)

Tuesday, October 11, 2011, 7:30 pm

College Park Aviation Museum, **College Park, MD**

Stable-isotope Ecology and its Use in Ornithology

presented by **Marilyn Fogel**

Stable-isotope ecology is the new science of measuring the ratios of different isotopes of the same element in plant and animal tissue. Isotopes of an element are chemically the same but have slightly different weights. The relative amounts of 2 isotopes vary from place to place in the air and water, and as they work their way up the food chain and become deposited in animal tissue they track where the organism has been and what kind of plants it has eaten. And when preserved bird tissue can be recovered, it can tell us how the climate and vegetation have changed, and about the spread and evolution of birds (and people) over time, in the even newer discipline of paleo-archeology.

Dr. Fogel is a Senior Scientist at the prestigious Carnegie Institute of Washington and a pioneer in this field.

Directions to the College Park Aviation Museum

Tuesday, November 8, 2011, 7:30 pm
College Park Airport Annex, College Park, MD

The Surprising History of Bird Feeding

presented by **Paul Baicich and Margaret Barker**

For many of us, cold weather means it's time to feed our backyard birds. But this popular hobby is much more than 21st century squirrel-proof feeders and sunflower seeds. Local writers and educators Baicich and Barker share the conservation beginnings of today's billion-dollar bird feeding business. Along with Carrol Henderson, these two Marylanders have been researching and writing a book on bird feeding's history the past several years.

Paul J. Baicich writes regularly for a number of birding magazines and is also co-editor of the popular monthly Birding Community E-bulletin.

Margaret A. Barker writes and teaches about birds and school gardening from her home near the Chesapeake Bay.

Directions to the College Park Aviation Museum

Tuesday, December 13, 2010, 6:00 pm
Watkins Nature Center, Upper Marlboro, MD

Annual Holiday Party and Photo-Share

Colorful lighted holiday/winter scenes displayed throughout the park, great food, warm fellowship, door prizes and people's favorite photos on natural history, the birds and bees, trips and more – what's not to love about our annual holiday party with members from PGAS, BUMBA (the Bowie-Upper Marlboro Beekeepers Association), and the Patuxent Bird Club? Doors open at 6 pm for this informal evening, so come early to peruse the nature center's exhibits and animals and set up for our 6:30 pm potluck supper. Please bring a dish generous

enough to serve yourselves and about six others - a favorite casserole, stew, appetizer, snack, vegetable dish, salad, dessert, etc. Beverages, utensils, and paper goods will be provided.

Clubs will have tables of items on sale from honey to chapter pins and patches and handmade jewelry. You are encouraged to donate an item towards the popular and fun door prize tradition; it will be appreciated. After dinner will be photo-sharing time. Do you have one special picture you want to share, multiple photos on a nature-oriented theme, or from a special trip? Bring them! A laptop and digital projector will be available, and the nature center has a slide projector on hand, too. Please let me know ahead of time if you will be bringing digital or slide photos, so we can be prepared.

Remember: Watkins Regional Park draws many visitors to its annual Festival of Lights at this time of year, so allow yourself extra time for the slow drive to the nature center enjoying the light display along the way. Festival visitors are encouraged to donate needed canned goods for local food pantries. If you choose to waive the Festival's entrance fee (\$5/cars & vans; \$10/multi-visit pass/cars & vans), just tell them you are attending the Audubon meeting at the nature center. For more information, call Maureen Blades at 301-262-5148.



Grasshopper Sparrow, Aquasco Farms; summer 2011.

Fall 2011
Field Trips, Bird Walks, & Bird Counts

- All trips are free unless otherwise noted
- Trips are open to members and non-members and to birders from amateur to expert
- All trips require **reservations** with the trip leaders or other contact person as indicated, except regular Fran Uhler, Governor Bridge, and Luther Goldman Trail bird walks
- The times listed are departure times, so please arrive a little earlier
- Carpools can be arranged at the meeting areas

Luther Goldman Birding Trail at Lake Artemesia Natural Area Park

The Prince George's Audubon Society, with members of the Patuxent Bird Club, will host mid-week bird walks every 1st and 3rd Thursday at the newly-dedicated Luther Goldman Birding Trail. In the fall and winter months (September through March) walks will begin at 3:00 PM, and in the spring and summer months (April through August) they will start at 6:00 PM. Meet at the parking lot at Berwyn Road and Ballew Avenue in Berwyn Heights (see [map and directions](#)). For beginners and experts. Bird checklist available. No reservations needed. Call 301-459-3375 for more information.

PGAS-sponsored Saturday morning bird walks to two areas of Patuxent River Park co-managed by PGAS and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Meet at park entrance at 7:30 am. No reservations needed. For maps, directions, and trip reports from our monthly bird walks, click on [Fran Uhler](#) or [Governor Bridge](#). If you have questions, contact trip leader Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com

Fran Uhler Natural Area

These walks are held on the first Saturday of every month. This park mature woodlands and open water wetland that can feature migrant warblers, Barred Owls, and the occasional Yellow-crowned Night Heron. Upcoming dates include:

October 1	January 7	April 7
November 5	February 4	May 5
December 3	March 3	June 2

Governor Bridge Natural Area

These walks are held the third Saturday of every month. This park offers a wide variety of habitats -- mature riparian woodlands, second growth scrub, open grassy fields, and small ponds and creeks.

October 15	January 21	April 21
November 19	February 18	May 19
December 17	March 17	June 16

Saturday Sept 10 – Jug Bay boat trip and picnic

Sunday Sept 18 -- fall count. An all day count to see how many species (and number of individual) birds we can find the county. Go out on your own or with a group and have fun. Contact the compiler, David Mozurkewich, (301) 459-3375, mozurk@bellatlantic.net.

Schoolhouse Pond Big Sit – Sunday, October 9, 2011. Join the Upper Marlboro Flaming County Seaters at the observation platform at the rear of Schoolhouse Pond for this 6th annual dawn to dusk event. Come for the entire day or just for an hour or two and see what shows up at the pond. No reservations required. Contact Fred Shaffer at 410-721-1744 or GlaucousGull@verizon.net for additional information.

Saturday October 22, 2011 -- Merkle south to Milltown landing for sparrows and other late migrants. Meet at 7:30 AM at the Bowie Park and Ride. Contact David Mozurkewich, (301)459-3375

Sunday, November 27, 2011 -- Piscataway Creek and the Potomac River in search of migrating waterfowl and other early winter birds. Contact David Mozurkewich at 301-459-3375 for additional information. Meet at the Greenway Plaza at 7:30 AM (carpool) or Wharf Road at 8:00AM.

Southern Prince George's County Pond Tour – Saturday, December 3, 2011. This half-day trip will include stops at several local ponds and wetlands in southern and central Prince George's County in an attempt to find returning waterfowl and rare gulls. Stops will include Schoolhouse Pond, Depot Pond, the Recycling Center Pond, the "Marlborough" wetlands, and possibly some Bowie or Greenbelt area ponds. Come prepared for cold weather, lots of birds, and hopefully a few rarities as we visit local ponds in southern Prince George's County. Contact Fred Shaffer at 410-721-1744 or GlaucousGull@verizon.net for additional information. Meet at the Bowie Park and Ride off Northview Drive at 7:30 AM to carpool.

Sunday, December 18, 2011, Jug Bay Christmas Bird Count. Contact the compiler, Sam Droege, at 301-497-5840 (w), 301-390-7759 (h) or sdroege@USGS.GOV.

Monday, January 2, 2012 -- Bowie Christmas Bird Count. Contact the compiler, David Mozurkewich at (301)459-3375 or mozurk@bellAtlantic.net

Ocean City to Indian River Inlet – Saturday, January 28, 2012. This mid-winter trip will visit the lower eastern shore and various inlets and bays along the coast in search of waterfowl, gulls, and other winter birds. Stops may include the Cambridge waterfront, Naylor Mill Road (viewing of gulls from the Salisbury landfill), Ocean City inlet, and Indian River inlet. Meet at the Bowie Park and Ride off Northview Drive at 7:30 AM to carpool. Contact Fred Shaffer at 410-721-1744 or GlaucousGull@verizon.net for additional information.

Birding Hotspots along the Patuxent River – Saturday, April 21, 2012. This mid-spring trip will visit several parks along the Patuxent River in southern Prince George's County in search of migrant sparrows and waterfowl, as well as other birds in the fields and forests lining the Patuxent River. Possible stops include Jug Bay, Milltown Landing, and Aquasco Farms. Meet

at Mt. Calvert Park at 8:10 AM to begin the trip. Contact Fred Shaffer at 410-721-1744 or GlaucousGull@verizon.net for additional information.

Saturday, May 12, 2011 -- Spring Bird Count. All day. Contact the compiler, Fred Fallon, (410)286-8152 fwfallon@earthlink.net for more information.

Sunday, May 27, 2012 -- All day trip to the Delaware Bay to experience the great concentrations of shorebirds feeding horseshoe crab eggs. Meet at 7:00 at the Bowie Park and Ride. *More details to come.*

Saturday, August 4, 2012 -- All day trip to the Bird refuges along the Delaware Bay in search of early fall migrant shorebirds. This early in the season, there are fewer migrants but the birds that are present are predominantly adults making identification easier. And early in the season is a good time for rare strays. Leave from the Bowie Park and Ride at 7:00 AM. Carpooling is strongly encouraged. *More details to come.*



Gray-hooded Gull, Coney Island, New York; August 2, 2011.

Renewal reminder: Now is the time to renew your membership for the 2011/12 year. Either mail your dues and renewal form to the address below or you can pay at any monthly meeting by speaking to any board member.

**MOS/PBC Membership Application
2011/12**

Name:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip code:

Phone:

E-Mail:

Dues include Chapter and MOS State membership, and subscriptions to Maryland Yellowthroat and Maryland Birdlife.

Chapter and State combined: Household \$33, Individual \$26, Junior \$6

Chapter membership only: Household \$8, Individual \$6, Junior \$1

Please send application and payment to:

Jane Fallon, Treasurer
6711 Venus Drive
Huntingtown, MD 20639

Photo Gallery: Jug Bay



Least Bittern, Jug Bay; June 11, 2011.



Osprey, Jug Bay; June 2011.