



Patuxent Bird Club

News from the 'Hood

www.patuxentbirdclub.org

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**A Chapter of the Maryland
Ornithological Society**

www.mdbirds.org

Message from the President

Greetings to all new and continuing members of the Patuxent Bird Club. I'm very pleased that you'll be with us for the coming year of activities. As in the past, we have partnered with our friends in the Prince George's County Audubon Society to plan for an interesting program of speakers for our monthly meetings, and for a full calendar of field trips.

First up at our September 12 meeting will be our own Marcia Watson, speaking about the MOS Sanctuaries. As you'll learn, the Sanctuaries were a priority item for MOS back in the 1970s, but over time, the properties received less attention and visitation has fallen off. MOS hopes to reverse that trend, and Marcia's presentation will be shared with all the MOS chapters as one way of spreading the word about the Sanctuaries.

The October speaker will be Nancy McAllister, a biologist in the Bird Banding Laboratory at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. In 2016, she took on a Big Year of birding, a demanding undertaking for a working mom already combining raising a family. Nancy will tell us about her country-wide birding exploits and the personal challenges that she faced in "Mom's Big Year".

Our field trip schedule (see listings in this newsletter) is built on our three regularly recurring walks at Lake Artemesia, Governor Bridge, and Fran Uhler Natural Area. The coming months also feature one of a series of seasonal walks at the South Tract of Patuxent Research Refuge, led by Marcia Watson, and a trip to Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, led by Barbara Ricciardi. Our annual Pontoon boat outing on the Patuxent River is on *Thursday* Sep 14, embarking at 4 pm, led by Greg Kearns. All spaces have just been reserved but you may send me an email at fwoffallon@YMAIL.COM if you want to get on the waiting list. See the Field Trip listing for more details.

We need your participation in the annual Fall Bird Count, being held on Sunday September 17. The idea is to conduct a county-wide census of all birds, both migrants and lingering residents. You can count in your own backyard, or you can choose one of the many productive birding

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Message from the President, Continued

hotspots in Prince George's County has to offer. Your start and stop times are up to you. Contact compiler Dave Mozurkewich at mozurk@verizon.net to confirm the location where you would like to count, and to submit your numbers at the end of the day.

As you have no doubt noticed, the newsletter has a new look, courtesy of Marcia Watson, who is taking over editorial duties so that I can concentrate on my role as planner for the annual MOS Convention. Speaking of the Convention, mark your calendars now: the next Convention will be held in Ocean City on February 2-4, 2018. This date, at the height of the winter season, will allow us to take advantage of the exciting winter birds present in Ocean City: gannets, loons, eiders, Long-tailed Ducks, scoters, rare gulls, perhaps an alcid or two, sparrows . . . the list of possibilities goes on and on.

It's also time to renew your membership for the coming year, so please get out your checkbook and mail with the form on the last page of the newsletter to our hardworking Treasurer, Jane Fallon. The mailing address is on the form. Alternatively you can give your check to Jane in person at the September meeting. I look forward to seeing you there, as well as on our field trips.

Best wishes and good birding,
Fred Fallon
 President

Recent Local Photos from eBird/Macaulay Library



Wood Duck, Lake Artmesia, Aug. 24, 2017; Photo by Mark Rositol; Macaulay Library, ML66888221



Spotted Sandpiper, National Colonial Farm, August 24, 2017; Photo by Christel Poelman; Macaulay Library, ML66918021



White-breasted Nuthatch, Buddy Attick Lake Park, August 17, 2017; Photo by Ellen Billiter; Macaulay Library, ML66287231



Upcoming Meetings and Speaker Programs

Tuesday, September 12, 7:30 pm, doors open at 7 pm

College Park Airport Operations Building, 2nd Floor
1909 Corporal Frank Scott Dr
College Park, MD 20740

From Mountains to Saltmarsh: Rediscovering the MOS Sanctuaries

Presented by Marcia Watson



The Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) owns nine sanctuaries, totaling over 2,100 acres, spanning the state from Garrett County in the western part of the state, to Somerset County on the lower Eastern Shore. All of the sanctuaries are open to the public every day of the year, at no charge, and represent a microcosm of the habitats for birds in Maryland. Many people are aware of the Carey Run and Irish Grove Sanctuaries, where work-days are held each year, but the other sanctuaries are seldom visited. Drawing on the files of the MOS Sanctuary Committee, historic accounts in *Maryland Birdlife*, and photos and materials provided by MOS members across the state, Marcia will review the history of the MOS Sanctuary Program, provide profiles and show maps and photos of all the sanctuaries, discuss the birds and habitats found there, and will cover some of the challenges that MOS faces in managing the properties. Marcia will conclude with suggestions on how interested individuals can become involved with the sanctuaries.

About the Presenter. Marcia Watson is a long-time member of the Maryland Ornithological Society. She was a founding member of the Cecil Bird Club, and served that chapter as president and webmaster. She now lives in Bowie and is Vice-President of the Patuxent Bird Club. Marcia recently joined the MOS Sanctuary Committee and is working to foster awareness of the sanctuaries among MOS members and the public. Interested in biology and the outdoors from the time she was a little girl, Marcia holds a doctoral degree in Biological Sciences, and for over 20 years specialized in research dealing with the environmental signals that animals use to coordinate their life cycles with seasonal changes such as daylength and temperature. Marcia is now retired and is concentrating on getting to know the great birding sites that Prince George's County has to offer.

Tuesday, October 10, 7:30 pm, doors open at 7 pm

College Park Airport Operations Building, 2nd Floor
1909 Corporal Frank Scott Dr
College Park, MD 20740

Mom's Big Year

Presented by Nancy McAllister



Join Nancy McAllister on her journey through a 'Mom's Big Year' of birding the U.S. Nancy traveled to hotspots from coast-to-coast to see as many birds as possible throughout 2016. She encountered beautiful birds and fascinating people along the way. A Big Year is no

small feat for a mom managing all the duties that go along with three young children, a husband and two unexpected new jobs! Returning to her life-long passion for nature and travel proved to be both exhausting and exhilarating. Nancy used the Big Year to begin her journey of healing after a family tragedy and has many wonderful and heartwarming stories to share from her Big Year adventures. Hear more about how Nancy juggled life, work, and family, and used her birding adventures to heal, renew, and rediscover herself. Nancy's adventures are sure to inspire! Come and hear about how fueling *your* passion for nature can change your life too! www.momsbigyear.com

About the presenter: Nancy McAllister is a biologist at the North American Bird Banding Laboratory and an adjunct professor of environmental science at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. She loves combining a career in field work, research and education. Nancy became an avid birder in the mid-1980s in her home state of New Jersey. Since then she's worked for The Nature Conservancy and the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, and she started a non-profit watershed association. Recently, Nancy has been working with Wildside Nature Tours and did her own 2016 Big Year of birding, a Mom's Big Year (www.momsbigyear.com). In February 2017, she was appointed by her County Executive to Howard County's Environmental Sustainability Board. Nancy holds an M.S. in Conservation Biology and Sustainable Development and lives in Ellicott City, Maryland with her husband, Paul, and their three children.



Upcoming Field Trips

Saturday, September 2, 7:30 am

Bird Walk - **Fran Uhler Natural Area**. Meet at 7:30 am at east end of Lemon's Bridge Road, off Route 197 just north of Bowie State University. No reservations needed. Contact Bill Sefton (kiwisuits@msn.com).

Thursday, September 7, 3 pm (Note start time is 3 pm September-March)

Bird Walk - **Lake Artemesia Natural Area**. Meet at 3 pm at parking lot, at intersection of Berwyn Rd. and Ballew Ave. in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Contact David Mozurkewich (mozurk@bellAtlantic.net) for more information.

Thursday, September 14, 3:45 pm

Jug Bay Pontoon Boat Trip. Sunset pontoon boat trip on the Patuxent River at Jug Bay to observe Sora and other rails, Least Bittern, and other specialties of this freshwater wild rice marsh. Arrive no later than 3:45 pm; the boat will depart the dock promptly at 4:00 PM. Meet at the boat launch area of Jackson's Landing at Patuxent River Park (PG side). Trip will be led by Greg

Kearns of the Patuxent River Park. Boat fee of \$5 for residents of Prince George's or Montgomery Counties; all others \$7. Come earlier for bathroom stop, and have a crisp \$5 (or \$7) ready in your hand. Limited to 18 participants; preference will be given to Patuxent Bird Club and Prince George's County Audubon Society members. For reservations (required) contact Fred Fallon (fwfallon@ymail.com).

Saturday, September 16, 7:30 am

Bird Walk - **Governor Bridge Natural Area**. Meet at the Natural Area parking lot on the south side of Governor Bridge Rd., 1 mile east of Route 301. No reservations needed. For more information contact Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com.

Sunday, September 17

Fall Bird Count. Annual county-wide census of resident and migrating birds. Pick your own start and stop times. Contact the county compiler David Mozurkewich (mozurk@bellAtlantic.net) to receive an assigned area and for more information.

Tuesday, September 19, 9 am

Bird Walk - **Seasons at South Tract**. One of a series of quarterly bird walks at the South Tract of the Patuxent Research Refuge. We will walk some of the trails and will stop at the Pollinator Garden bird feeding area by the Visitor Center. Be prepared to walk up to 2 miles. Wear sturdy shoes and bring a water bottle. Target species include migrating warblers, flycatchers, vireos, sparrows.



Additional walks will be held on the first Wednesday of December, March, and June, to explore the seasonal variation in bird use of the South Tract habitats. Meet at 9:00 am in the parking lot of the National Wildlife Visitor Center; bear left on entering the parking area and go all the way to the last section of the lot past the covered solar recharging station for electric vehicles. For directions, see <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Patuxent/visit/directions.html>. For further information, contact the leader, Marcia Watson at marshwren50@comcast.net.

Thursday, September 21, 3 pm (Note start time is 3 pm September-March)

Bird Walk - **Lake Artemesia Natural Area**. Meet at 3 pm at parking lot, at intersection of Berwyn Rd. and Ballew Ave. in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Contact David Mozurkewich (mozurk@bellAtlantic.net) for more information.

Saturday, September 23, 9 am to 1 pm

PGAS Birding Festival - Lake Artemesia. Sponsored by Prince George's Audubon Society. 4th annual migration-themed birding festival with live raptors and 11:00 am raptor talk; artist-led field sketching demo/workshop; 7:30 am bird walk for all skill levels; 10:00 am family nature walk; children's games, crafts, coloring pages, bilingual Spanish/English activity pages; spotting scope set up; Monarch butterfly life cycle display. For more information, contact Lynette Fullerton at birdzenbeads@yahoo.com.

Thursday, October 5, 3 pm

Bird Walk - **Lake Artemesia Natural Area**. Meet at 3 pm at parking lot, at intersection of Berwyn Rd. and Ballew Ave. in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Contact David Mozurkewich (mozurk@bellAtlantic.net) for more information.

Saturday, October 7, 7:30 am

Bird Walk - **Fran Uhler Natural Area**. Meet at 7:30 am at east end of Lemon's Bridge Road, off Route 197 just north of Bowie State University. No reservations needed. Contact Bill Sefton (kiwisuits@msn.com).

Thursday, October 19, 3 pm

Bird Walk - **Lake Artemesia Natural Area**. Meet at 3 pm at parking lot, at intersection of Berwyn Rd. and Ballew Ave. in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Contact David Mozurkewich (mozurk@bellAtlantic.net) for more information.

Saturday, October 21, 7:30 am

Bird Walk - **Governor Bridge Natural Area**. Meet at the Natural Area parking lot on the south side of Governor Bridge Rd., 1 mile east of Route 301. No reservations needed. For more information contact Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com.

Thursday, November 2, 3 pm

Bird Walk - **Lake Artemesia Natural Area**. Meet at 3 pm at parking lot, at intersection of Berwyn Rd. and Ballew Ave. in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Contact David Mozurkewich (mozurk@bellAtlantic.net) for more information.

Saturday, November 4, 7:30 am

Bird Walk - **Fran Uhler Natural Area**. Meet at 7:30 am at east end of Lemon's Bridge Road, off Route 197 just north of Bowie State University. No reservations needed. Contact Bill Sefton (kiwisuits@msn.com).



Wednesday, November 15, 9 am
Field Trip - **Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge**. Meet at the Bowie Park and Ride to

carpool to Blackwater for wintering waterfowl, eagles and other raptors, lingering shorebirds and songbirds. Reservations required; limited to 10 participants. Must contact the leader, Barbara Ricciardi (barbararicciardi27@gmail.com), in advance for reservations.

Thursday, November 16, 3 pm

Bird Walk - **Lake Artemesia Natural Area**. Meet at 3 pm at parking lot, at intersection of Berwyn Rd. and Ballew Ave. in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed. Contact David Mozurkewich (mozurk@bellAtlantic.net) for more information.

Field Trip Report

Seasons at South Tract - June 6, 2017

Leader: Marcia Watson



Ten birders, including several visitors from the Howard Bird Club, came out on a warm and sunny Tuesday morning to walk the trails in search of breeding birds at the South Tract of the Patuxent Research Refuge. We had great views of an Eastern Wood-Pewee singing from a perch high atop a tree out in the open, as well as Cedar Waxwings, Baltimore Orioles, Orchard Orioles, Great Blue Herons, a group of 16 Wood Ducks, and a Spotted Sandpiper that flushed and flew across the marshy end of Cash Lake.

In the skies over the lake, we spotted Turkey and Black Vultures, Ospreys, and a Red-tailed Hawk. Crossing the Dam at the east end of Cash Lake, we stopped to enjoy butterflies and bees nectaring at the native plant garden. In the woods on the north side of the lake, we were treated to songs of Acadian Flycatchers, Pewees, Wood Thrush, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Ovenbird, Pine Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, and Scarlet Tanagers. Ending up back at the Visitor Center, we walked through the native plant garden, where Chipping Sparrows and American Goldfinches were patrolling the feeders. In total, we covered 2.8 miles in about three-and-a-half hours, with 52 bird species seen and/or heard. The complete eBird checklist is at right.

The next field trip to South Tract will be Tuesday, September 19, 2017, meeting in the Visitor Center parking lot for a 9:00 am start.

eBird Checklist Patuxent Research Refuge--South Tract, Jun 6, 2017 7:32 AM - 11:39 AM

Protocol: Traveling
2.8 mile(s)
52 species,
10 participants

Canada Goose 20
Wood Duck 16
Great Blue Heron 4
Black Vulture 1
Turkey Vulture 3
Osprey 2
Red-tailed Hawk 1
Spotted Sandpiper 1
Mourning Dove 2
Yellow-billed Cuckoo 2
Chimney Swift 1
Red-bellied
Woodpecker 1
Northern Flicker 1
Pileated Woodpecker 1
Eastern Wood-Pewee 4
Carolina Wren 1
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 1
Eastern Bluebird 2
Wood Thrush 4
American Robin 5
Northern Mockingbird 2
Acadian Flycatcher 3
Eastern Phoebe 3

Great Crested
Flycatcher 1
Eastern Kingbird 2
Yellow-throated Vireo 3
Red-eyed Vireo 5
Blue Jay 2
American Crow 4
Fish Crow 2
Tree Swallow 20
Barn Swallow 14
Carolina Chickadee 1
Tufted Titmouse 4
White-breasted
Nuthatch 1
Cedar Waxwing 4
Ovenbird 4
Black-and-white
Warbler 1
Common Yellowthroat 3
Pine Warbler 1
Chipping Sparrow 7
Song Sparrow 2
Eastern Towhee 4
Scarlet Tanager 4
Northern Cardinal 3
Blue Grosbeak 2
Indigo Bunting 3
Red-winged
Blackbird 20
Common Grackle 3
Orchard Oriole 5
Baltimore Oriole 3
American Goldfinch 3



Conservation Alert

THREAT TO SANTA ANA NWR



Photo of Santa Ana NWR courtesy of US Fish & Wildlife Service

Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) of Texas is currently under an immediate threat from the Trump Administration's border-wall plans. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its subcontractors have recently been taking soil samples and making other preparations to build a huge and intrusive 18-foot border-wall through the north end of the refuge. These preliminary activities have been occurring at the refuge for months, but nothing was officially announced until information was leaked last month.

Santa Ana NWR represents 2,088 acres of vital borderland habitat along the banks of the Rio Grande. The refuge was originally created in 1943 to protect migratory birds, and almost 95% of the property was acquired through Duck-Stamp/MBFC dollars.

Some 400 bird species have been recorded in the refuge, including migratory waterfowl, raptors, warblers, and a suite of "South Texas specialties" that are Mexican in character and barely range into Texas. Moreover, Santa Ana NWR is an essential part of that intricate network of natural hotspots in the four-county LRGV that draws an economic income of over \$465 million per year from eco-tourists and birders.

Santa Ana NWR is an American Bird Conservancy-designated Important Bird Area (IBA) in the Tamaulipan Brushlands of south Texas and is among the ABC's 500 most important IBAs in the United States. Santa Ana NWR is an IBA that clearly deserves special consideration.

By initiating the border-wall on federal property at Santa Ana NWR, the Trump Administration can avoid the logistical and political nightmare of dealing with private landowners in building a wall through their

backyards. Presently the plan is to build the wall on the levee that goes through and beyond the north end of the refuge.

In late July, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a \$788 billion defense spending bill which included \$1.6 billion of funding for a U.S.-Mexico border wall. The wall funding is intended to be mostly for Arizona and the LRGV, and it currently meets the Administration's down-payment budget request. It is likely that plans for the border-wall will get bogged down in the Senate, but there is already enough current funding in the pipeline to start the project somewhere on the levee.

If building the border wall through Santa Ana NWR becomes a reality, nearby properties upriver and downriver will also be at risk. These would include sections of the associated Lower Rio Grande NWR, and Texas state properties such as wildlife management areas and the birder-friendly Bentsen-Rio Grande State Park, county lands, and even private properties along this important wildlife corridor.

If you wish to express concern about this issue to Congress, you can access a template letter from the National Wildlife Refuge Association which you can edit at:

<http://refugeassociation.org/action/#/87>

You can also obtain more details from the Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp at:

<http://www.friendsofthestamp.org/santa-ana-nwr-in-jeopardy/>

For additional information about worldwide IBA programs, including those in the U.S., check the National Audubon Society's Important Bird Area program web site at:

www.audubon.org/bird/iba/

Article reprinted from the *Birding Community E-Bulletin*, August, 2017; Paul J. Baicich and Wayne R. Petersen, editors. Archives available at <http://refugeassociation.org/news/birding-bulletin/>



World Shorebirds Day September 6, 2017 is



World Shorebirds Day is a celebration of shorebirds and those who protect them.

The Global Shorebird Count, held every year on the weekend nearest September 6, is one of the key events of World Shorebirds Day. The Count is intended to raise awareness of the importance of regular monitoring to protect bird populations and conserve their habitats. This year the Global Shorebird Count will take place **between September 1 and 7**.

Why count shorebirds?

Regular counts, carried out by thousands of volunteers and professionals worldwide, reveal population trends, fundamental to the assessment of the status of any species.

The annual Global Shorebird Count demonstrates the importance of fieldwork, increases the number of birders and scientists monitoring shorebirds worldwide; and gives observers the opportunity to improve their counting skills, while providing valuable population data.

How can you take part?

1. Think about where you will be during the Global Shorebird Count dates of September 1-7. Shorebird Day is a good excuse to plan a trip to a mudflat or wetland near you.
2. Register to participate by filling out the form at <https://goo.gl/9Q9ZSN>;
3. Count shorebirds any time between September 1st and 7th.
4. Submit your data to eBird (the preferred method; details at <https://worldshorebirdsday.wordpress.com/2015/08/28/shorebird-counting-data-submissions/>) or send your results directly to the World Shorebirds Program at shorebirdsday@gmail.com.
5. Data must be submitted by September 20, 2017.

See a map of counting sites at
<https://worldshorebirdsday.wordpress.com/2017/07/24/world-shorebirds-day-2017-is-approaching/>

View past results at
<https://worldshorebirdsday.wordpress.com/globalshorebirdcounting/global-shorebird-counting-database/>

Make Your Birding Count: Fall Bird Count



The annual Prince George's County Fall Bird Count will be held Sunday, September 17. The goal is to census all the birds in Prince George's County on that day. You can count wherever you like and as long as you like. It might be as little as a half-hour watching your bird feeders while you have your morning coffee. For the truly hardy, make a Big Day of it and count from midnight to midnight, covering your favorite county birding sites. Or pick your favorite park or wildlife area and count there.

To confirm your participation and where you would like to count, please send an email to county compiler Dave Mozurkewich, who will coordinate the counting locations in an effort to ensure that we have broad coverage of the county.

After you are done counting, please submit your results to Dave. Results from all the participating counties across the state will be published in *Maryland Birdlife*, the semi-annual journal of the Maryland Ornithological Society.

Your Submissions Invited

Do you have an idea for an article you would like to see published in a future issue of *News from the Hood*? Send a note with your suggestion or, better yet, a draft article to the editor, Marcia Watson at marshwren50comcast.net. Worried that you're not a good writer? No worries – Marcia will happily help with your article. Deadline for submission of completed articles is the 20th of even-numbered months (August, October, December, February, and April). If your article is just an idea, please allow more time to develop the text and to seek illustrations, if appropriate.



Time to Renew Your Club Membership!

Patuxent Bird Club membership dues are now payable for the coming year. To renew your membership, please print and complete the form on the last page of this newsletter and send with your check to Treasurer Jane Fallon. The mailing address is on the form. Or, you can simply hand your check to Jane at the September meeting.

While you have your checkbook out, please consider adding a bit to the total amount as a donation to the Patuxent Bird Club. Remember that the Club is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, and so your donation is tax deductible. Your donation will help us continue to provide quality speaker programs - our main expenses are the honoraria for speakers.



MOS/Patuxent Bird Club Membership Application



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."