



Message from the President

Well, I must admit that this issue of the Patuxent Bird Club newsletter has been a challenge to produce. We usually have a set list of items to include, starting with our upcoming speakers and field trips and moving on to community events and conservation issues. In the wink of an eye, all that is gone, and like all organizations, we are faced with an unprecedented set of circumstances.

On a personal level, I find that my feelings at this time are eerily reminiscent of when I was facing serious health challenges in the past: health anxiety, fears about the future, frustration at not being able to get out and enjoy birding and hiking, and – hanging over everything – a feeling of utter sadness. In this case, the sadness is for the many lives we are losing in our community and for the way of life that we have lost. Something that helped me get through chemo was taking things one day at a time, and that’s the approach that my husband Gene and I have adopted now.



We also look for little joys: listening to music, watching Outdoors Maryland and music specials on TV, eating home-made food. And a constant joy is looking out at the burgeoning green of spring and hearing the songs of returning warblers and thrushes and flycatchers. The Wood Thrushes, in particular, bring a smile to my face (though you can’t see my smile when I wear my face covering).

Now that it’s clear that it is going to take a long time to get back to something that resembles normalcy, the officers and directors of the Patuxent Bird Club and Prince George’s Audubon Society are turning our attention to ways that we can keep our clubs going. The next article in this issue summarizes the status of our various club activities and our thinking about the future.

Meanwhile, please stay healthy and safe and enjoy the birds in your backyard.

Marcia

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Bird Club Activities

As everyone is aware, we are in the midst of an ever-evolving situation. The Officers and Directors of Patuxent Bird Club and Prince George's Audubon Society are staying informed and staying flexible. We all agree that everyone's health and safety comes first. We are also mindful that we need to take steps to sustain our club and our members through this crisis.

Here is a summary of the status of club activities:

- The **Spring Migration Bird Count** originally scheduled for Saturday May 9 is being replaced with a different kind of bird count, to be held on both **Saturday May 9 and Sunday May 10**. See details in the article on page 3 in this issue.
- **Breeding Bird Atlas** activities are continuing on an individual basis (no group field trips). See the article on page 6 in this issue.
- All club **field trips and bird walks** scheduled through June 15, 2020 are cancelled. No decision has yet been made for field trips and bird walks for the remainder of June or July and August.
- The in-person **bird club meeting scheduled for June 9** is cancelled. But see the next item.
- We are considering holding **informal meetings for members via teleconference or videoconference** so that people can share bird sightings, Atlas news, and other items. Watch for an email with more information.
- The Boards have agreed that it is **probably not feasible to replace our normal monthly meetings with online sessions featuring formal presentations by invited speakers**, at least not initially. However, in the longer term, we are open to the possibility of hosting such meetings in the event that we are facing a prolonged ban on gatherings.
- We have not yet decided how to handle the **officer elections** that Patuxent Bird Club had scheduled for May/June. Stay tuned for more information to be shared by email.
- The Boards of the Patuxent Bird Club and Prince George's Audubon typically meet in early summer to begin **planning for speakers and field trips for the coming year**. The boards have agreed to hold this meeting via videoconference at a date to be established.
 - Ken Cohen and Marcia Watson held a test meeting using **Zoom videoconference software** and determined that it will be feasible to use that for the board planning meeting. Zoom allows meeting participants to see and hear each other and to share documents. Those who don't have a computer or internet will be able to phone in to participate by voice.
 - In anticipation of being able to again hold in-person meetings at some point, the **Boards will brainstorm on possible speakers for next fall-winter-spring** so that we are ready once the ban on gatherings is lifted.

And we'd like to hear from you. Please let us know if you have any particular ideas or wishes for things that our club can do to serve our members. Three suggestions that have been made are:

1. A new Facebook page for the Patuxent Bird Club, to enable members to share bird sightings, photos, and anecdotes.
2. A members-only email listserv that would allow club members to share emails for discussion with other members, as a group (similar to the MDBirding Google group).
3. A members-only chat group that would use an app such as WhatsApp to allow club members to share brief chat notes, similar to text messages. WhatsApp also permits sharing of photos and documents through its chat groups.

All of these would of course, be optional for our members. But if you think one or more would be a good way to keep our members in contact with one another, please send an email to Marcia Watson (marshwren50@comcast.net) with your thoughts. We need your input to know what will be feasible – and enjoyable – for our members.

Spring Bird Count

Patuxent Bird Club members should have received an email on April 17th from MOS President Robin Todd regarding the spring bird count, stating, in part:

The [MOS] Executive Council has decided to cancel this year's May Count, and to hold an alternative event in its place. In view of the continuing threat of COVID-19 and following the Governor's stay-at-home order, we have decided to hold a **home-based, carbon-free state-wide count, a weekend of birding in our neighborhoods and participating in Cornell's Global Big Day**. Counters will be urged to **limit their travel to walking or cycling** and to observe the social distancing guidelines. To maximize the chance of good weather, the count will include both **Saturday, May 9th and Sunday, May 10th**. This event will not produce the observational data that a normal May Count provides, but the **main objective will be to get outside and enjoy some birding with a purpose. And to do some Atlasing!** [Emphasis added]

As Robin's message says, the intent is NOT to reproduce the traditional May migratory bird count, given the stay-at-home order and the closure of many areas across the state. Instead, the emphasis is on getting outside in your neighborhood, and on using this event as an opportunity to Atlas.

All of the data will be compiled using eBird, and all **birders are encouraged to enter their bird counts on eBird**. MOS will provide a group eBird account to which you can share your checklist through the eBird sharing process; details will be forthcoming.

If you don't want to use eBird, you can still use a traditional printed checklist in the field, and we have provided a **printable checklist on the last pages of this newsletter**. However – and **this is important – no checklists can be submitted on paper**. The ban on paper is to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus through the mail. If you collect your bird counts on a paper list and don't want to enter your numbers in eBird, you may **snap a photo of your checklist and email it to MOS, or you may call a special phone number and leave a voice mail message with your**

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Patuxent Bird Club Officers and Directors		
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Bowie Christmas Bird Count	David Mozurkewich	mozurk@bellatlantic.net
Jug Bay Christmas Bird Count	Marcia Watson	marshwren50@comcast.net
Visit us on the web at www.patuxentbirdclub.org		

Spring Bird Count, continued

counts. MOS volunteers will then enter your bird numbers into eBird based on your snapshots of your checklist or your recorded voice mail message. The email address and the phone number for submitting your counts to MOS will be announced shortly, so **please watch your email for that information.**

For more information about Cornell Lab's Global Big Day, see <https://ebird.org/news/global-big-day-9-may-2020>. Remember that in Maryland, we will be counting birds on both Saturday, May 9 and Sunday May 10, while the Cornell event is on May 9 only.

Let's try for a good turnout of birders from PBC and PGAS on May 9th and 10th, as a symbolic way for us as a group to welcome spring the way birders usually do.

**News in Brief from MOS**

Provided by Robin Todd, MOS President and Maryanne Dolan, MOS Secretary

Election of MOS Officers

Because of the coronavirus, there will be no annual MOS meeting this year with an election of officers. Fortunately, the by-laws were changed to allow for the on-line election of officers, and this year we will be holding the first ever on-line election in MOS history.

The Nominating Committee has put forward the election slate:

- John McKitterick (Howard) for President
- Bonnie Borsa (Frederick) for Vice President
- Maryanne Dolan (Cecil) for Secretary
- Carol Daugherty (Montgomery) for Treasurer

Voting will take place from May 15th to May 22nd via a link to a page on our MOS website, www.mdbirds.org.

In addition to being able to vote for the slate as a whole, you may vote for individual candidates as well as for write-in candidates. If a write-in vote is submitted, the concurrence of the person being voted for must have been obtained in writing.

While the **ballot and instructions on using it will be provided [via email] on May 15th**, you might want to visit the webpage to familiarize yourself with login procedures. Go to www.mdbirds.org. Click on 'log in' located on the red ribbon near the top of the page. Username is your email address. If you haven't logged on before, or if you've forgotten your password, just click 'forgot password' and follow the prompts.

Look for a follow-up email directly from MOS on May 15 with the link to the voting site, and remember to vote! We must get at least 150 votes for a valid election!

MOS Convention Postponed

Owing to the pandemic, we reluctantly postponed the MOS convention until next May. It will be held at the same venue (the Cumberland Ramada). Please mark your calendar for this event: May 15th to 17th, 2021.

Lobbying for Bird Conservation – Help Still Needed

Although in-person visits to our legislators will almost certainly not be possible for at least the next few weeks, the Conservation Committee can still use help in drafting and editing letters to our decision-makers. Please let Conservation Committee Chair Kurt Schwarz (krschwa1@verizon.net) know if you would like to be on his mailing list that organizes such efforts.

June Board Meeting

The MOS Board of Directors meets quarterly at different locations around the state. The June 6th meeting will be held online through Google Meet. This will allow board members to join from the comfort of their homes without needing to travel. Those who join online will be able to see and hear each other, and it will also be possible to dial in by telephone to join with audio only.

Maryland Yellowthroat

Orietta Estrada, *Yellowthroat* Editor, has advised that, due to complications arising from the pandemic, the next edition of the *Yellowthroat* will appear two weeks late and only in its electronic form. No printed copies will be mailed. The new deadline for articles is April 30th.

Status of Parks and Other Birding Sites

The trails at most parks and other birding sites in our county remain open, but birders have reported that at **Lake Artemesia**, the path around the lake is now marked one-way. Please heed the signs. The trails at **Patuxent River Park – Jug Bay Natural Area** are open, but the **entrance drive is gated closed** at Croom Airport Road. That means you would have to **park at Croom Airport or Selby's Landing or St. Thomas Church Road** and walk in from there. Also note that pavilions, restrooms, visitor centers, and other indoor facilities are closed at all parks.

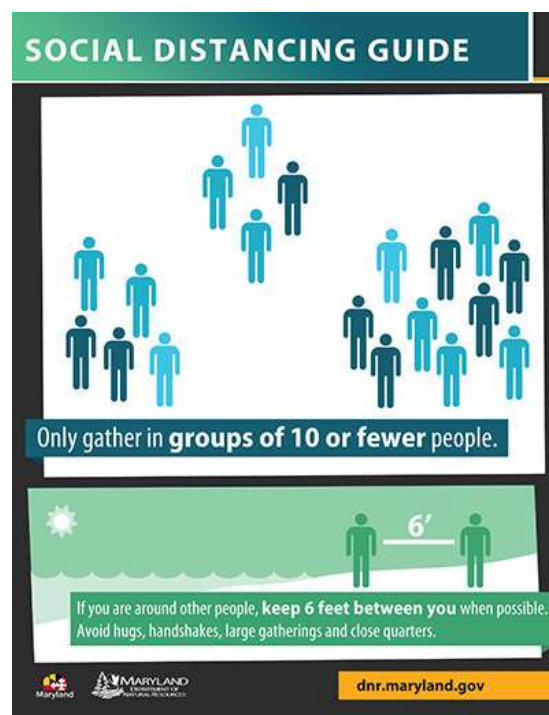
Since there are changes in operating status from day to day, we cannot list every park in terms of its status. If you plan to drive to a park, it is best to check the status before you go by **checking the park's website or calling the park**. Also **remember that you must wear a face covering when in public and must maintain social distancing on the trails and in the parking areas**. If a place is too crowded, the park management may close all or part of the parking area or take other steps to reduce the number of visitors.

When considering where you might go birding, please keep in mind that the Governor's stay-at-home order allows us to leave the house only for essential activities, including exercise. The state has not issued a specific time or distance limitation regarding how far you can drive from home to visit a park for exercise. However, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources sought legal advice on how to interpret the Governor's order, and the following two paragraphs are taken from DNR's guidance statement (emphasis added):

We have consulted with the state's legal experts on how to interpret the governor's executive order and the intent is simple: **stay home unless you absolutely must leave**. This is a serious global health crisis and the number of confirmed cases and deaths in Maryland rises every day. Risking unnecessary exposure is not just a hazard for you — it puts law enforcement, emergency responders, seniors and vulnerable populations in danger. We will save lives by doing the right thing and simply staying home.

Can I go to a state park?

Hiking, biking, and walking are allowed under the executive order but social distancing guidelines and the prohibition on social gatherings must be strictly followed. Most state parks are open but some have been closed or have restricted areas. **Please choose a park nearest your home to limit travel** and be sure to check our website before you leave for the park and read our guidelines for social distancing in state parks. Natural Resources Police and Maryland Park Service rangers are authorized to enforce the governor's executive order and will close areas and disperse crowds as necessary.



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Status of Parks and Other Birding Sites, continued

For the full statement from DNR as well as answers to other frequently asked questions, see <https://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2020/03/31/frequently-asked-questions-about-governor-hogans-stay-at-home-order/>.

It will be up to each person to make a personal decision regarding a park “nearest to home.” Many of us are choosing to stay within walking distance of home or to drive no more than 15 minutes. I think we would all agree that this is certainly not the time to go explore far-flung areas of the state. Also note that many counties and cities, including Garrett County and Ocean City, have ordered closure of vacation rentals and are asking tourists to stay home.

Other specific information on the status of birding sites in our area can be found through the following websites; you should follow links to a specific park to check that park’s status:

- National Park Service, list of parks in Maryland: <https://www.nps.gov/state/md/index.htm>
- National Park Service, list of parks in DC: <https://www.nps.gov/state/dc/index.htm>
- Maryland State Parks: <https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/COVID-19-Virus-Alert.aspx>
- Maryland State Forests: <https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/default.aspx>
- Maryland State Hunting Areas and NRMAs: no specific updates have been posted to date but check <https://dnr.maryland.gov/Pages/COVID-19-DNR.aspx>
- Prince George’s County Parks: <https://www.mncppc.org/4823/Coronavirus-Updates> and <http://pgparks.com/4826/COVID-19-Information> and <http://www.pgplanning.org/4828/COVID-19-Information>
Also see individual parks listed at <http://pgparks.com/187/Parks-Facilities>
- City and neighborhood parks: consult the website for the particular city or neighborhood. A lists of incorporated towns in Prince George’s County, with links to their websites, is at <https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/594/Incorporated-Municipalities>.

Get Involved: Third Breeding Bird Atlas for Maryland & DC



Breeding Bird Atlas activities are providing a bright spot for many in the midst of the virus crisis, with Atlasers working solo or as a family.

Given the stay-at-home orders, many birders are choosing to concentrate on the Atlas blocks where they live. If you have not already adopted the Breeding Bird Atlas block in which your home is located, why not adopt that block now and get out on foot to bird in your neighborhood (keeping a distance from other folks, of course).

To see an interactive map that will help you find the atlas block where you live, go to

<https://maryland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=06c20b266d2d4fed9a0b4dd69ef9990d> and zoom in. Blocks that have already been adopted are shaded gray and unadopted blocks are unshaded.

“Ask Anything” Atlas Webinar

On Monday, April 27, from 7 to 8 PM, Gabe Foley, statewide Atlas coordinator, is hosting an online event where atlasers can ask anything they like. Folks can join by phone or by video.

Details can be found here:
<https://bit.ly/20427AtlasAMA>

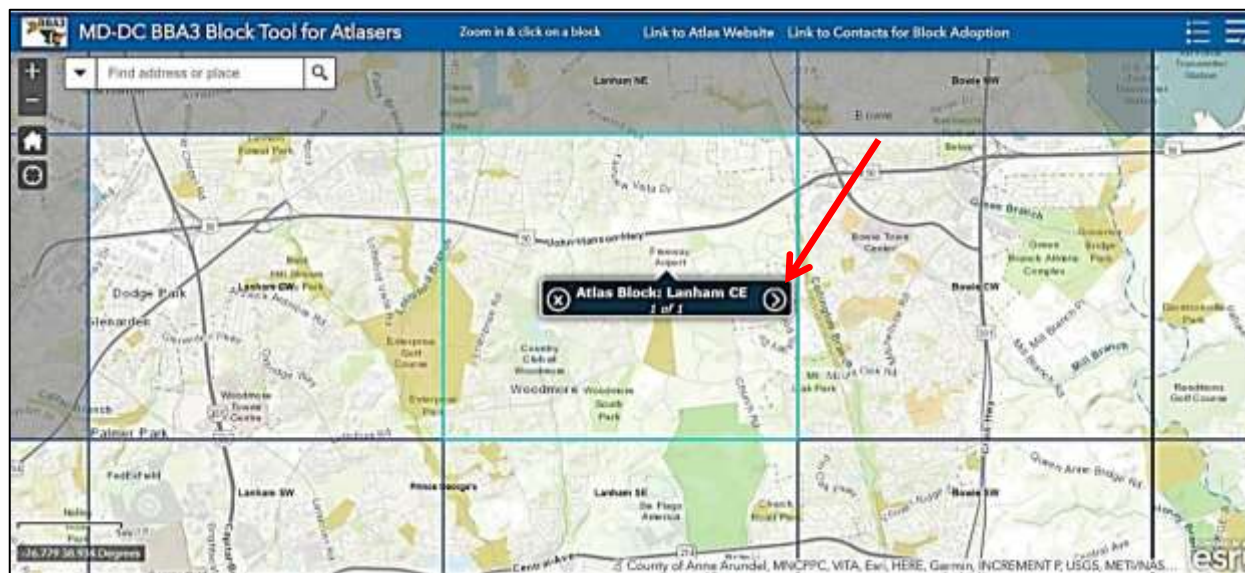
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Breeding Bird Atlas, continued

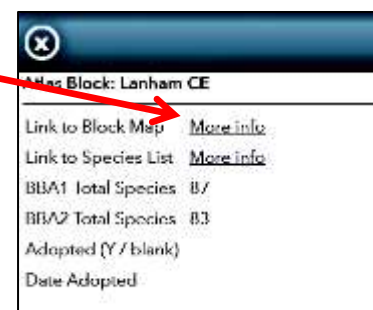
If your block has not already been adopted, the next step would be to contact our county Atlas co-coordinators, Ross Geredien and Dave Mozurkewich to let them know you want to adopt a block. You can reach them both at princegeorges@mdbirds.org.

As of this writing, 22 blocks in Prince George's County have already been adopted and there are still 32 blocks that have not been adopted. That's 59% of the blocks in the county, so there's plenty of opportunity for close-to-home birding.

For reference in the field, you can print a topo map of an Atlas block by going to the interactive map (link given above) and clicking on the block you're interested in. When you click on the block, the outline of the block will be highlighted in blue and a little black popup box will appear, like this:



If you click on the arrow > at the right side of that black box, a screen will open that looks like the box at right. Where it says "Link to Block Map," click on the "More Info" link, and it will open a new screen with a printable topo map of the block in PDF format. And if you click on the next line, "Link to Species List," you'll get a PDF with the species list for that block in the two previous atlases.



Even if the block where you live has already been adopted by someone else, you can still contribute to atlas data for that block by submitting your data through the eBird Atlas portal at <https://ebird.org/atlasmdcc/submits>.

The easiest way to submit data for the Atlas is by using eBird Mobile while out birding, or but if you don't want to or can't do that, you can still use a **paper data form** to record your bird counts while out atlasing. You can download a printable form from https://s3.amazonaws.com/is-ebird-wordpress-prod-s3/wp-content/uploads/sites/80/2019/12/FORM_BlockDatasheet_V1.pdf.

When Atlasing, you should be aware of **safe dates**, which are defined as the dates when you can be relatively sure that migrants are not passing through and that birds that are showing breeding behaviors are actually nesting locally. Each species has its own range of dates when it is "safe" to use a "possible" breeding code such as "in suitable habitat" (H), or "singing male" (S). Outside of these dates, you should only use "probable" or "confirmed" breeding codes.

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Breeding Bird Atlas, continued

For your reference, we've included a "print and save" chart of safe dates at the back of this newsletter. The chart lists the safe dates in the chronological order of the starting dates, so that on any given day, you can tell at a glance which birds are within safe dates. If you would rather see safe dates listed in taxonomic order of species, or by the ending dates for the safe date periods, see the downloadable charts at <https://ebird.org/atlasmdc/about/safe-dates>. For more information about safe dates, see the "Tips and Tricks" article in the *March issue of What's Hatching*, the Atlas newsletter, or see the Atlas website at <https://ebird.org/atlasmdc/about/safe-dates>.

Once you have determined that a particular bird is within its **safe dates**, your eBird checklist should include an appropriate **breeding code** that indicates what you observed. The breeding code is what tags a bird for inclusion in the Atlas. We can't go into detail on breeding codes here, but the graphic at right, taken from the [April issue of the *What's Hatching* Atlas newsletter](#), summarizes the most frequently used codes. You can read more about breeding codes on the Atlas website at <https://ebird.org/atlasmdc/about/breeding-codes>.

Remember, the data collected for the Breeding Bird Atlas is used, among other things, by state and county planning agencies to determine priorities for zoning decisions and habitat preservation. So it's important that we achieve good coverage of our county.

See Atlas Training, Tips, & Links at

<https://ebird.org/atlasmdc/about/tips-links>

There are 22 breeding codes in total; some of these you will use on a daily basis (like code S, singing), while others you might never use (like code PE, physiological evidence).

A list of the 'Top Five' breeding codes could include just about any combination, but we picked these because if you spend much time atlasing, you'll almost certainly use each of these.

- Code H (habitat) and code S are used frequently, but aren't strong evidence of breeding. Try to upgrade these.

- Code P (pair) can be a bit subjective, so only use this code when you are confident you have a male-female pair that is intending to breed.

- Code FL (fledged young) is a great code for young birds, and one of the best ways to Confirm cowbirds.

- And finally, look for birds carrying food (code CF). There are a few exceptions, but most birds carrying food are taking it to their chicks.

Maryland & DC Breeding Bird Atlas 3

TOP 5 BREEDING BIRD BEHAVIOR CODES

While other codes exist, these are some of the most frequent you will use.

H - In Suitable Habitat
Adult bird in suitable nesting habitat during its breeding season.

S - Singing Male
Singing male bird present in suitable nesting habitat during its breeding season.

P - A Male-Female Pair in Suitable Habitat
Male-female pair observed in suitable nesting habitat during their breeding season.

FL - Recently Fledged Young
Recently fledged or downy young birds observed while still dependent on adults.

CF - Carrying Food
Adult carrying food for young. For most birds, the only time they will transport food is to young at a nest. Otherwise they will consume it on the spot.
Does not apply to corvids, raptors, terns and other species that may move many miles from nest site.

For more information: ebird.org/atlasmdc/about

And follow along on social media: [@MDCBBA3](#) [#MDCBBA3](#)

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 a rough idea, please allow more time to develop the text and to seek illustrations, if appropriate.

Member Spotlight: Debi Talbott

Patuxent Bird Club member **Debi Talbott** is a zookeeper in the [Birdhouse](#) at the [Smithsonian's National Zoo](#) and has worked there for 30 years. She cares for Stanley Cranes and Whooping Cranes, Scarlet and Waldrapp Ibis, several species of ducks, seriemas, King Vultures, Blue-billed Curassows, flamingos, and a couple of Greater Rheas.

Debi's work with one of her charges, a Stanley Crane named Alice, is featured in an article that Debi wrote for the National Zoo's member newsletter. The article tells of the efforts to keep Alice comfortable after surgery on her leg. Did you know that cranes will watch videos? The article, with lively photographs, is also on the Zoo's website – see <https://nationalzoo.si.edu/animals/news/featured-creature-alice-stanley-crane>.

Before coming to the National Zoo, Debi was a keeper at Busch Gardens in Tampa, Florida, where she cared for everything from rhinos, giraffes, and zebras to all different species of antelope and gazelles, lions and tigers, primates, and, of course, birds.

Debi, who now lives in College Park, is also a retired member of the Air Force Reserves.

Once the virus crisis is over, let's all look forward to joining Debi in birding at the North Tract of Patuxent Research Refuge, one of her favorite birding spots in the area.



Debi is pictured with a Whooping Crane chick at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, where she previously volunteered in the Whooping Crane recovery program.

Maryland State Parks Plant 10,000 Trees for Earth Day 50th Anniversary

MD DNR Press Release, April 22, 2020

The [Maryland Park Service](#) is planting more than 10,000 trees in honor of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, April 22, 2020. From the shores of Assateague Island to the mountains of Western Maryland, rangers will plant native trees on public lands to mark the occasion.

A special Wye Oak seedling — a descendant of a white oak that lived for centuries in Talbot County — was planted at Sandy Point State Park near Annapolis by Maryland Park Service Superintendent Nita Settina.

"Once this white oak tree matures, it will support more than 500 species of insects essential to feeding young birds every spring," said Superintendent Settina. The white oak — *Quercus alba* — is Maryland's state tree, and is found in every county and Baltimore City.

The [Maryland Department of Natural Resources](#) stresses the importance of planting native trees and other plants, which support Maryland's butterfly, moth, and bird populations.

According to the [Maryland Forest Service](#), trees also provide cost-effective stormwater management, reduce flooding by absorbing and slowing rainfall, limit stream bank erosion, filter pollutants, improve water quality in streams and rivers, improve air quality, reduce energy costs by shading and insulating buildings, and much more. Through various initiatives, the Maryland Forest Service plants millions of trees and seedlings each year.



Photo of ranger planting seedling at Sandy Point State Park, courtesy MD DNR

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State Parks Plant Trees, continued

"Planting native trees on our public lands is a perfect way to mark this special Earth Day," Maryland Secretary of Natural Resources Secretary Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio said. "The most important lesson of the past 50 years is that everyone can make a difference and every contribution, no matter how big or small, is vital to our overall success. Special thanks to our staff and citizens across this state for commemorating Earth Day by enhancing our natural resources and our watersheds!"

The first Earth Day in 1970 marked the beginning of the modern environmental movement in the United States, sparking the establishment of federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency, and the creation of bedrock environmental protection laws that provided the foundation for preserving Maryland's natural areas, waterways and wildlife, as well as, the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay.

Throughout the spring, Maryland Park Service Rangers are conducting plantings that are documented in an [online photo album](#) and [video](#). The Park Service had planned many of this year's tree planting events to be public, but had to change plans due to safety requirements of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Plantings scheduled or already conducted include:

- Assateague State Park, Worcester County – 150 loblolly seedlings were planted and more were also handed out to area students with their lunch pickups.
- Bohemia River State Park, Cecil County – 2,450 native hardwood seedlings planted in partnership with Cecil County Land Use and Development Services to re-establish riparian forest along Great Bohemia Creek.
- Deep Creek Lake State Park, Garrett County – 50 trees are being planted.
- Gambrill State Park, Frederick County – 10 trees being planted.
- Janes Island State Park, Somerset County – 200 seedlings planted.
- Martinak State Park, Caroline County – 300 trees planted.
- New Germany State Park, Garrett County – 500 red spruce trees being planted.
- Pocomoke River State Park -Worcester County – 200 seedlings planted.
- Point Lookout State Park Complex, St. Mary's County – 500 trees planted
- Rocky Gap State Park, Allegany County – planting 30 trees from the local high school.
- Sassafras Natural Resources Management Area, Kent County – 75 trees planted.
- St. Mary's River State Park, St. Mary's County – 6,000 trees planted in combined effort with DNR Chesapeake and Coastal Service and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay.
- Tuckahoe State Park, Caroline County – 2,625 trees were planted.
- Washington Monument State Park, Washington County – 69 trees planted for reforestation of the park entrance.
- Wolf Den Run State Park, Garrett County – 193 seedlings and larger stock trees were planted.

Permalink: <https://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2020/04/22/maryland-state-parks-plant-10000-trees-for-earth-day-50th-anniversary/>

Looking for Something to Do at Home?

Outdoors Maryland Television Episodes

Many of us have been enjoying the series of Outdoors Maryland programs offered through Maryland Public Television for its [Chesapeake Bay Week](#) celebration, April 19th-25th. But did you know that much of this programming can be found **online for free viewing whenever you like**? See the index of online programs at <https://www.mpt.org/programs/odm-episodes/>. Most Outdoors Maryland episodes are just 30 minutes long – you can watch while eating lunch or having a cup of coffee or a glass of wine. These high-quality programs provide a great way to revisit your favorite parks and to learn about some new ones to visit in person when the travel restrictions are lifted.

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*Something to Do at Home, continued***Webcams**

Webcams can be a fun way to while away your time and get up-close and personal views of nesting species. Here's a list of several outstanding webcams positioned in our area, in no particular order:

- [Osprey Cam at Patuxent River Park – Jug Bay Natural Area](#). The Osprey nest at this webcam is reported to be active this year, but the camera is currently offline. It may be back soon, so stay tuned.
- [Bald Eagles at the National Arboretum](#). This famous pair of Bald Eagles, dubbed Mr. President and First Lady, can be seen in a pair of webcams that provide two different views of the nest at the Arboretum on New York Avenue NE in DC. Although the eagles have been visiting the nest this season, there are currently no eggs or young.
- [Port Tobacco Eagle Cam](#). This webcam is located in Port Tobacco River Park in Charles County and is focused on an active Bald Eagle nest where two young hatched in March.
- [Ospreys in Severna Park](#). This camera is focused on an active nest on a pole above a highway in Severna Park in Anne Arundel County.
- [Ospreys on Kent Island](#). This webcam, brought to us by the Chesapeake Conservancy, is trained on an Osprey platform on Kent Island.
- [HarborCam at Solomons Island](#). This webcam provided by the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory (part of the University of Maryland's Center for Environmental Studies), is focused on the harbor at Solomons Island. The cam provides controls to let the viewer zoom in and out or to pan the camera left and right and up and down, so you can move the camera to look for birds. Expect gulls and waterfowl in winter and terns in the summer.
- Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge has three webcams, provided by the Friends of Blackwater: a [Waterfowl Cam](#), best viewed during winter and early spring, but sometimes you can be lucky and find shorebirds in the view in spring, summer, or fall; an [Osprey Cam](#), and although there is no active Osprey nest at this time, occasionally other birds use the platform; and a [Bald Eagle Cam](#), but the Bald Eagle nest is also unoccupied at this time.
- [Peregrine Falcons in Baltimore](#). As of this writing, Peregrines nesting on an office tower in downtown Baltimore are raising recently hatched young. This cam is provided by the Chesapeake Conservancy.
- [Great Blue Heron Nest on the Eastern Shore](#). This webcam is another operated by the Chesapeake Conservancy, and is located on private land in an undesignated Eastern Shore location. Currently the nest is occupied and the pair is raising downy young. The angle of the camera provides great viewing.
- And just for fun, check out this crazy Osprey nest filled with stuffed animals brought by the male bird: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9KwZTJuGTZM&feature=youtu.be>. This is a video recorded in 2019, not a live view. The webcam is located in Dahlgren, Virginia, just south of the Harry Nice Bridge that carries US Route 301 over the Potomac River from Charles County. For a live view of a nest in Dahlgren, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNaJ90vP2bY>.

Bird Academy from Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology

If you'd like to spend your time learning about birds and improving your birding skills, you could consider an online course from the extensive selection offered by Cornell's Bird Academy. One of the courses, "eBird Essentials," is free, but the others have a registration fee varying from \$19.99 for the "Joy of Birdwatching" to "Ornithology: Comprehensive Bird Biology" at \$239.95. The popular "Be a Better Birder: How to Identify Bird Songs" is currently on sale for \$48. These courses from Cornell have been around for a few years now and are universally praised for their high quality. See the course catalog at <https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/course-list/>.

In addition to the courses, Bird Academy offers many other learning activities, including free videos (<https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/media-library/>), learning games for all ages (<https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/learning-games/>) and archived lectures (<https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/live-events/>). Check it out!

Notable Bird Sightings in Prince George's County

March and April, 2020

While we've been cooped up inside, spring has arrived in full swing. Because of the stay-at-home order, the number of eBird Rare Bird Alerts has been lower than normal in recent weeks, and that's as it should be since we all want to be good citizens. Many of the reports coming through on the Rare Bird Alerts include birds that are not rare birds per se, but **birds showing up in our area at an earlier than expected date**. These **early arrivals** have included Green Heron, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Barn Swallow, Chimney Swift, House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Swainson's Thrush, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Palm Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, and Scarlet Tanager.

Other **recent arrivals** (not particularly early) have included Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Great Egret, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper, Osprey, Broad-winged Hawk, Purple Martin, Cliff Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Bank Swallow, Tree Swallow, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Brown Thrasher, Gray Catbird, Blue-headed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Wood Thrush, Ovenbird, Pine Warbler, American Redstart, Northern Parula, Louisiana Waterthrush, Northern Waterthrush, Black-and-white Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Orchard Oriole, and Baltimore Oriole. Look for these while you're out and about in your neighborhood.

A few birders are blessed with good habitat at or near their homes or workplaces, and reports of true rarities have been trickling in from them.

The **Trumpeter Swans** that had been reported at North Tract and Central Tract of Patuxent Research Refuge during the winter were still showing up there in March, as reported by several birders. Debi Talbott was lucky to catch them dropping in at the South Tract on March 10. A single **Trumpeter** was at Konterra Fields near Laurel on March 22 (Jay Sheppard and Marcy Stutzman).

A group from YMOS (the MOS Youth branch) was at Lake Artemesia on March 22, and so were two **Cackling Geese**.



Marisa Rositol got some photos of a **Long-tailed Duck** at Fort Washington Park on March 17 (photo left, Macaulay Library ML216152371). Even more remarkable, also while at Fort Washington Park, Marisa got a photo of a flock of twelve American White Pelicans flying over the park (photo right, Macaulay Library ML216107141)



Andy McGann found a **Little Blue Heron** at Colmar Manor Park on April 3 (photo below left, Macaulay Library ML220421831). And lightning struck **two more** times when Andy was birding with his family at Lake Artemesia on April 22, and was lucky enough to get photos of two rarities: a **Common Gallinule** (photo below center, Macaulay Library ML226362071) and an **American Bittern** (photo below right, Macaulay Library ML226361631). As an added treat, you can view Andy's video of the Bittern at Macaulay Library ML226366111.



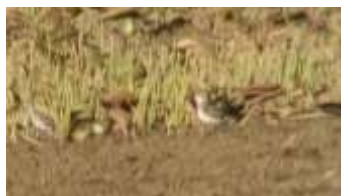
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Notable Birds, continued

Two flyover **Glossy Ibis** were reported from Lake Artemesia by Marisa Rositol on April 25.

Christina Yuan reported a vocalizing **King Rail** at South Tract on April 24.

Mary Maxey, who works at Patuxent Research Wildlife Center, was lucky to spot a **White Ibis** at Central Tract on March 23 & 24. This very rare visitor to our county was spotted once previously at the Refuge, at South Tract in 1980. (Photo right, Macaulay Library ML217742731, March 24, 2020).



On April 18, Jeff Shenot, who lives on the Patuxent River near Mt. Calvert, saw what he thought might be an **American Golden-Plover** flying upriver on April 18. He moved to a location where he could scope the marsh at Billingsley Point and managed to get a distant photo of the bird in the marsh. (Photo left, Macaulay Library ML225044991; the bird at left in the photo is a Lesser Yellowlegs.)

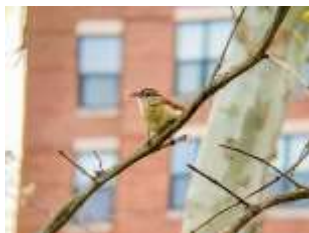
Bill Townsend reported a calling **Eastern Whip-poor-will** at his home in the Piscataway area on March 31. This put a new bird on Bill's already burgeoning yard list.

The period from late March through mid-April was marked by an unusual smattering of **Vesper Sparrow** reports from several locations in the county: two at Merkle NRMA on March 26 (Marisa Rositol, photo below left, Macaulay Library ML218303071); also on March 26, one at Aquasco Farm (Jim Stasz); one at the Piscataway Park Boardwalk on March 27 (Marisa Rositol, photo below center, Macaulay Library ML218571931); one along the Anacostia River Trail in Bladensburg on March 28 (Cory Kampf); one at Selby's Landing on April 11 (Marisa Rositol, photo below right, Macaulay Library ML222721601); what was likely the same bird was found at the adjoining Croom Airport on April 12 (Jeff Shenot); and one at Beltsville Agricultural Research Center in April 18 (Michel Cavigelli).



Recent Atlas Confirmations with Photos

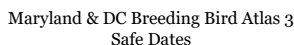

Eastern Bluebird carrying food
April 25, 2020, South Tract of Patuxent
Research Refuge, Photo by Ray Peters,
Macaulay Library ML227455771

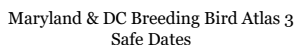


Carolina Wren carrying nesting material
April 23, 2020, Paint Branch Trail
Photo by Caleb Harada,
Macaulay Library ML226431091



Tree Swallow visiting probable nest site
April 19, 2020, Lake Artemesia
Photo by Ray Miskowski
Macaulay Library ML225098051

January 2020

January 2020



Maryland & DC Breeding Bird Atlas 3
Safe Dates

Species	Abundance	Preferred Breeding Habitat	Jan	Feb	Mar	4-1	4-5	4-10	4-15	4-20	4-25	5-1	5-5	5-10	5-15	5-20	5-25	6-1	6-5	6-10	6-15	6-20	6-25	7-1	7-5	7-10	7-15	7-20	7-25	8-1	8-5	8-10	8-15	8-20	8-25	9-1	9-5	9-10	9-15	9-20	Oct	Nov	Dec		
Black-throated Blue Warbler	Local	mixed woods with heavy understorey																	6-5												8-5														
Summer Tanager	Local	mixed dry upland woods																	6-5													8-10													
Blue Grosbeak	Uncommon	thickets, hedgerows & edges																	6-5													8-10													
Dickcissel	Uncommon	open country, especially alfalfa																	6-5													8-10													
Ruddy Duck	Rare	dense marshes with open water																			6-10																								
American Coot	Rare	marshes with open water																		6-10																									
Spotted Sandpiper	Local	beaches or rocky streams																		6-10					6-30																				
Willet	Local	salt marshes																		6-10					7-1																				
Double-crested Cormorant	Local	treed islands																		6-10					6-30																				
Mississippi Kite	Rare	riparian forests with nearby open areas																		6-10											7-31														
Alder Flycatcher	Local	wet brushy areas, prefers alders																		6-10									7-20																
Willow Flycatcher	Common	wet to fairly dry brushy areas																		6-10									7-20																
Sedge Wren	Rare	wet meadows, marshes																		6-10																									
Veery	Uncommon	moist mixed woods																		6-10																									
White-throated Sparrow	Rare	brushy openings																		6-10																									
American Redstart	Uncommon	moist, deciduous forest																		6-10									7-20																
Magnolia Warbler	Uncommon	northern coniferous forests																		6-10													8-5												
Blackburnian Warbler	Uncommon	northern coniferous or mixed woods																		6-10																									
Black-throated Green Warbler	Local	northern coniferous or mixed woods																		6-10																									
Canada Warbler	Uncommon	thick, moist forest undergrowth																		6-10																									
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Common	variety of forest habitats, edges																										7-15																	
Broad-winged Hawk	Uncommon	hilly woodlands																			6-15																								
Cedar Waxwing	Uncommon	open woodland, shade trees, streams																			6-15																								
American Goldfinch	Common	brushy fields, edges, hedgerows																			6-15																								
Mourning Warbler	Rare	brushy areas in woodlands or edges																			6-15																								
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	Local	edges of moist deciduous woods																			6-15																								
Black-billed Cuckoo	Rare	variety of forest habitats, edges																					6-20					7-20																	
Purple Gallinule	Rare	shrubby swamps																				6-20																							

MOS Spring Count 2020 Checklist

2020 AOU Order

Brant		Chimney Swift		Bonaparte's Gull		Red-shouldered Hawk		Tree Swallow	
Canada Goose		Ruby-throated Hummingbird		Laughing Gull*		Broad-winged Hawk		N. Rough-winged Swallow	
Mute Swan		Black Rail*		Ring-billed Gull		Red-tailed Hawk		Purple Martin	
Tundra Swan		Clapper Rail*		Herring Gull		Barn Owl		Barn Swallow	
Wood Duck		King Rail		Iceland Gull*		Eastern Screech-Owl		Cliff Swallow	
Blue-winged Teal		Virginia Rail		Lesser Black-backed Gull*		Great Horned Owl		Carolina Chickadee*	
Northern Shoveler		Sora		Glaucous Gull*		Barred Owl		Black-capped Chickadee	
Gadwall		Common Gallinule		Great Black-backed Gull*		Short-eared Owl		Tufted Titmouse	
American Wigeon		American Coot		Least Tern*		Northern Saw-whet Owl		Red-breasted Nuthatch	
Mallard		Sandhill Crane		Caspian Tern		Belted Kingfisher		White-breasted Nuthatch	
American Black Duck		Black-necked Stilt*		Black Tern*		Red-headed Woodpecker		Brown-headed Nuthatch*	
Northern Pintail		American Avocet		Common Tern		Red-bellied Woodpecker		Brown Creeper	
Green-winged Teal		American Oystercatcher*		Forster's Tern		Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		House Wren	
Canvasback		Black-bellied Plover		Royal Tern*		Downy Woodpecker		Winter Wren	
Redhead		Killdeer		Black Skimmer*		Hairy Woodpecker		Sedge Wren	
Ring-necked Duck		Semipalmated Plover		Red-throated Loon		Northern Flicker		Marsh Wren	
Greater Scaup		Piping Plover*		Common Loon		Pileated Woodpecker		Carolina Wren	
Lesser Scaup		Upland Sandpiper		Northern Gannet*		American Kestrel		Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	
Surf Scoter		Whimbrel*		Double-crested Cormorant		Merlin		Golden-crowned Kinglet	
White-winged Scoter		Marbled Godwit*		Great Cormorant*		Peregrine Falcon		Ruby-crowned Kinglet	
Black Scoter		Ruddy Turnstone		American White Pelican		Great Crested Flycatcher		Eastern Bluebird	
Long-tailed Duck		Red Knot		Brown Pelican*		Eastern Kingbird		Veery	
Bufflehead		Stilt Sandpiper		American Bittern		Olive-sided Flycatcher		Gray-cheeked Thrush	
Common Goldeneye		Sanderling		Least Bittern		Eastern Wood-Pewee		Bicknell's Thrush*	
Hooded Merganser		Dunlin		Great Blue Heron		Yellow-bellied Flycatcher		Swainson's Thrush	
Common Merganser		Purple Sandpiper*		Great Egret		Acadian Flycatcher		Hermit Thrush	
Red-breasted Merganser		Least Sandpiper		Snowy Egret		Alder Flycatcher		Wood Thrush	
Ruddy Duck		White-rumped Sandpiper		Little Blue Heron		Willow Flycatcher		American Robin	
Northern Bobwhite		Pectoral Sandpiper		Tricolored Heron*		Least Flycatcher		Gray Catbird	
Ring-necked Pheasant		Semipalmated Sandpiper		Cattle Egret		Eastern Phoebe		Brown Thrasher	
Ruffed Grouse		Western Sandpiper		Green Heron		Loggerhead Shrike**		Northern Mockingbird	
Wild Turkey		Short-billed Dowitcher		Black-crowned Night-Heron		White-eyed Vireo		European Starling	
Pied-billed Grebe		Long-billed Dowitcher		Yellow-crowned Night-Heron		Yellow-throated Vireo		Cedar Waxwing	
Horned Grebe		American Woodcock		Glossy Ibis		Blue-headed Vireo		House Sparrow	
Red-necked Grebe		Wilson's Snipe		Black Vulture		Philadelphia Vireo		American Pipit	
Rock Pigeon		Spotted Sandpiper		Turkey Vulture		Warbling Vireo		House Finch	
Eurasian Collared-Dove**		Solitary Sandpiper		Osprey		Red-eyed Vireo		Purple Finch	
Mourning Dove		Lesser Yellowlegs		Golden Eagle		Blue Jay		Pine Siskin	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo		Willet		Northern Harrier		American Crow		American Goldfinch	
Black-billed Cuckoo		Greater Yellowlegs		Sharp-shinned Hawk		Fish Crow		Grasshopper Sparrow	
Common Nighthawk		Wilson's Phalarope		Cooper's Hawk		Common Raven		Chipping Sparrow	
Chuck-will's-widow		Red-necked Phalarope		Bald Eagle		Horned Lark		Field Sparrow	
Eastern Whip-poor-will		Red Phalarope*		Mississippi Kite		Bank Swallow		Fox Sparrow	

MOS Spring Count 2020 Checklist

2020 AOU Order

Dark-eyed Junco		Bay-breasted Warbler		ADDITIONAL SPECIES (please provide details of sighting on separate sheet)	Observers : (name and contact info)	Weather Data (describe briefly)
White-crowned Sparrow		Blackburnian Warbler				
White-throated Sparrow		Yellow Warbler				
Vesper Sparrow		Chestnut-sided Warbler				
Seaside Sparrow*		Blackpoll Warbler				Cloud cover
Nelson's Sparrow		Black-throated Blue Warbler				
Saltmarsh Sparrow*		Palm Warbler				Precipitation
Henslow's Sparrow*		Pine Warbler				
Savannah Sparrow		Yellow-rumped Warbler				Wind speed and direction
Song Sparrow		Yellow-throated Warbler				
Lincoln's Sparrow		Prairie Warbler				
Swamp Sparrow		Black-throated Green Warbler				EFFORT
Eastern Towhee		Canada Warbler		Total Species		# of Parties
Yellow-breasted Chat		Wilson's Warbler		Total Individuals		# of observers
Bobolink		Summer Tanager				
Eastern Meadowlark		Scarlet Tanager				Start Time
Orchard Oriole		Northern Cardinal				Stop Time
Baltimore Oriole		Rose-breasted Grosbeak				
Red-winged Blackbird		Blue Grosbeak				Driving
Brown-headed Cowbird		Indigo Bunting				hours
Rusty Blackbird		Dickcissel				miles
Common Grackle						
Boat-tailed Grackle*		Scaup sp.				Walking
Ovenbird		Gull sp.				hours
Worm-eating Warbler		Tern sp.				miles
Louisiana Waterthrush		Crow sp.				
Northern Waterthrush		Blackbird sp.				Other (specify)
Golden-winged Warbler						hours
Blue-winged Warbler						miles
Black-and-white Warbler						
Prothonotary Warbler						Owling
Tennessee Warbler						hours
Orange-crowned Warbler						miles
Nashville Warbler						
Mourning Warbler						Stationary
Kentucky Warbler						hours
Common Yellowthroat						
Hooded Warbler						
American Redstart						
Cape May Warbler						
Cerulean Warbler						
Northern Parula						
Magnolia Warbler						

* Must be accepted by MD/DC Records Committee
if this species is outside its accepted range

** MUST be accepted by MD/DC Records Committee
if this species is to be included in final count