



News from the 'Hood

Patuxent Bird Club

A Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

www.patuxentbirdclub.org

May-June 2021

Upcoming Virtual Meetings

Tuesday, May 4, 7:00 pm, sign in to Zoom starting at 6:45 pm

Part 1 of a Shorebird Doubleheader

Shorebirds 101: An Introductory Overview

Presented by Gene Scarpulla

Gene Scarpulla's presentation will concentrate on how to get started with shorebird identification and will be appropriate for new birders; for experienced birders who have never gotten around to figuring out shorebirds; and for birders of all levels who need a brush-up in preparation for the coming shorebird migration season. Gene will review the different groups and species of shorebirds found in Maryland, with tips on identification. Gene may be known primarily as a gull guru but his expertise on shorebirds is just as deep, having been honed through weekly trips to the Delaware Bayshore and Hart-Miller Island over many years' time.



About the presenter: Gene Scarpulla is retired after working for 30 years at the City of Baltimore's Reservoir Natural Resources Section, his last eight years serving as the City's Watershed Manager. He earned a B.S. and an M.S. in biology with a concentration in ecology at Towson University. Gene serves as Editor of both *Maryland Birdlife* and the *Maryland Entomologist* and lives in Bowie with his wife Marcia Watson.

This program, sponsored by Patuxent Bird Club and PGAS, will be presented via Zoom and is free and open to the public. Advance registration is required and seats are limited. Please register no later than midnight of Sunday, May 2. To register, go to the registration form at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1CaLNN2AEyvdIWGMkK8mFJI8eAFoPBODCFWRQ0SgYxk/edit?usp=sharing>. Your Zoom link will be sent by email on Monday, May 3, but only if you register before then.

Meetings continued next page

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*Upcoming Virtual Meetings, continued***Tuesday, May 11, 7:00 pm, sign in to Zoom starting at 6:45 pm****Part 2 of a Shorebird Doubleheader****The Art of Identifying Shorebirds*****Presented by Michael O'Brien***

Part 2 of our shorebird doubleheader will feature renowned shorebird expert Michael O'Brien, lead author of *The Shorebird Guide*, published by Houghton Mifflin in 2006. First, we'll screen a video, "The Art of Identifying Shorebirds," produced by Michael O'Brien for Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). The film, made available to us through the generosity of VENT, tackles some of the more challenging questions and puzzles in shorebird identification. Through the film, Michael will explore various techniques for identifying shorebirds, including both macro and micro field marks. Michael will then join us for a live Q&A and discussion session. This is your opportunity to learn from one of North America's top experts.



About the presenter: Michael O'Brien is a freelance artist, author, and environmental consultant living in Cape May, New Jersey. He has a passionate interest in bird vocalizations and field identification, and a serious addiction to migration and nocturnal birding. His travels have taken him throughout North and Central America and beyond. At home in Cape May, Michael serves as an Associate Naturalist with Cape May Bird Observatory for whom he conducts numerous workshops, and, for many years, conducted a fall songbird migration count. He is co-author of *The Shorebird Guide*, *Flight Calls of Migratory Birds*, and *America's 100 Most Wanted Birds*, and is primary author of *Larkwire*, an online and handheld application for learning bird sounds. His illustrations have been widely published in books and field guides, including the *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America* and the new Peterson field guides. Michael also has an intense interest in butterflies, leads several "Birds & Butterflies" tours with his wife, Louise Zemaitis, and is coordinator of the Cape May Butterfly Count.

This program, sponsored by Patuxent Bird Club and PGAS, will be presented via Zoom and is free and open to the public. Advance registration is required and seats are limited. Please register no later than midnight of Sunday, May 9. To register, go to the registration form at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1CaLNN2AEyjdIWGMkK8mFJI8eAFoPBODCFWRQ0SgYxk/edit?usp=sharing>. Your Zoom link will be sent by email on Monday, May 10, but only if you register before then.

Tuesday, June 8, 7:00 pm, sign in to Zoom starting at 6:45 pm**Members' Night****Last meeting until September**

Join the Patuxent Bird Club and Prince George's Audubon Society for our traditional Members' Night, as our members share their best bird and birding photos. Members who wish to share their photos must personally participate in the meeting and show their photos themselves. Plan to share up to ten photos, saying a few words about each photo. If you wish to share your photos, please send an email to Marcia Watson ([REDACTED]) no later than Monday, May 31st so that she can arrange the agenda.



This program, sponsored by Patuxent Bird Club and PGAS, will be presented via Zoom and is free and open to the public. Advance registration is required and seats are limited. Please register no later than midnight of Sunday, June 6. To register, go to the registration form at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/10i8LcRowsGRRb5h2idEF9c_2f0bUuih8meNsYWad57Q/edit?usp=sharing. Your Zoom link will be sent by email on Monday, June 7, but only if you register before then.

Message from the President

Spring is here, trees are leafed out and blooming, and migrant birds are on the move. And it seems that we may finally get the coronavirus pandemic under control. We are hopeful that we will once again be able to schedule in-person meetings and field trips as fall arrives. Stay tuned for announcements about that over the summer.

Here at our house in Bowie, Gene and I have been enjoying the nightly frog and toad chorus in the wetland behind our house. Over the years, we have identified ten amphibian species in the wetland: American Toad; Fowler's Toad; American Bullfrog; Green Frog; Pickerel Frog; Southern Leopard Frog; Wood Frog; Gray Tree Frog; Spring Peeper; and Eastern Cricket Frog. There may also be Green Treefrogs; perhaps we will be able to confirm them in the next few weeks.

We're eagerly looking forward to the coming emergence of the periodical cicadas. This will be our first cicada event at our home in Bowie, as we were both living elsewhere 17 years ago, when the 2004 emergence took place. One of my distinct memories of that year was how all the local birds binged on the feast of cicadas. In Cecil County, there was an unprecedented spate of daily sightings of Mississippi Kites, feeding on the cicadas, along with an occasional Swallow-tailed Kite. These sightings lasted from late May through mid-June, and some days as many as a dozen kites were seen, mostly near the home of Sean McCandless, a Cecil Bird Club member.

These cicada-related sightings may mean that we're going to have an especially exciting Spring Bird Count on Saturday, May 8th. Be sure to mark the date on your calendar and let our coordinator, Matt Felperin, know where you wish to count. See the article on page 4 of this newsletter for more Spring Count details. Also read on page 5 about contributing your sightings of birds eating cicadas for a new project headed by Gabriel Foley.

And be sure to sign up for our shorebird identification doubleheader with Gene Scarpulla and Michael O'Brien, so that you'll be ready to tackle those shorebirds when they start showing up. As an extra, this issue contains a brief article to get you started thinking about shorebird identification.

Good birding and stay safe,



Welcome New Members!

Lori Smith
Jeremy Castle & Christie Roberts
Nate Pettine, Gina Ciocci, & Donovan Pettine

Call for Volunteers: Spring Bird Count

The Annual Spring Bird Count (aka May Count) will be held this year on Saturday, May 8th. Our aim for that day is to census birds throughout Prince George's County. We hope you'll volunteer to participate. You can choose your own start and stop times, as well as the location where you count. You can stay home and do a backyard or feeder count, or you can select your favorite park or wildlife area. Some folks like to stay out all day, moving from spot to spot to see how many bird species they can tally within the day.

Some coordination is necessary to make sure we reduce overlap and spread birders out across the county. If you wish to participate, **please contact our county Spring Count coordinator, Matt Felperin at ([REDACTED]) no later than Saturday, May 1st.** Matt will provide you with a checklist for the count as well as instructions for submitting your numbers. There is also a checklist that you can use at the back of this newsletter.

We do ask that participants practice COVID precautions during the count, such as not sharing a car with people outside your household, unless all have been fully vaccinated. And remember that mask wearing is still required in Prince George's County whenever you leave your home, even if you are vaccinated. Follow the CDC guidelines as well as our county and state requirements. The most important thing is simply "Don't do anything stupid." And see the COVID update on page 13 of this newsletter.

Call for Volunteers: Maryland-DC Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA3)

The third MD-DC [Breeding Bird Atlas](#) is entering its second year and Prince George's County is in need of volunteers to become primary atlasers for specific atlas blocks. There are still many blocks available for adoption, mostly in central and southern Prince George's County. While anyone can atlas any block at any time, primary atlasers are responsible for ensuring their block meets its completion targets by the end of the atlas period in 2024. The BBA3 [block tool map](#) shows which blocks are currently still available. To sign up for a block, contact Ross Geredien and Dave Mozurkewich at Princegeorges@mdbirds.org.

And a reminder: now that many of our local birds are entering [Safe Dates](#), it's time to switch your eBird settings from "regular eBird" to the MD-DC Atlas portal, so that any breeding bird observations that you make during your daily birding can go straight into the Atlas database. You can find instructions about changing to the Atlas portal in Appendix C of the [Atlas Handbook](#).

Patuxent Bird Club Officers and Directors		
President	Marcia Watson	
Vice-President	Fred Fallon	
Treasurer/Memberships	Jane Fallon	
Second Year Directors (Term 2019-2021)	David Mozurkewich	
	Debi Talbott	
	Vacant	
First Year Directors (Term 2020-2022)	Ken Cohen	
	Matt Felperin	
	Ikumi Kayama	
Representatives to MOS State Board	Marcia Watson	
	Ross Geredien	
Field Trip Coordinator	David Mozurkewich	
Newsletter Editor & Webmaster	Marcia Watson	
Fall Bird Count	Fred Fallon	
Spring Bird Count	Matt Felperin	
Bowie Christmas Bird Count	David Mozurkewich	
Jug Bay Christmas Bird Count	Marcia Watson	
Visit us on the web at www.patuxentbirdclub.org		

Citizen Science: Birds Eating Cicadas

As most everyone knows, we are preparing for the big emergence of three species of Brood X periodical cicadas. Emergence could begin as early as the first week of May and could continue through the month of June. During the last emergence in 2004, 17 years ago, the feast of cicadas was accompanied by interesting sighting of birds chowing down on the nutrient-rich insects. This time around, the cicada emergence is coinciding with our data-gathering for the Breeding Bird Atlas. It is expected that the cicada phenomenon, dubbed *cicadapalooza* by Gabriel Foley, the statewide Breeding Bird Atlas Coordinator, will result in a plethora of observations related to birds eating cicadas during the breeding season.



Photo 2007-06-10 Periodical Cicadas 18, by [JanetandPhil, Flickr](#), Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

This possibility has Gabriel so excited that he has whimsically named the periodical cicada the “Bird of the Month” in the [April issue of *What’s Hatching?*](#), the official newsletter of the Maryland & DC Breeding Bird Atlas 3. And, in consultation with Gene Scarpulla, the editor of *Maryland Birding*, Gabriel has developed a project to collect birder’s observations of birds eating cicadas. Here’s Gabriel’s request for reports of birds eating cicadas:

BIRDS VS MAGICICADA

If you see birds eating periodical cicadas this spring, report them to this [form](#).

Birds may be cicada’s greatest predators, but the birds that eat them are not well documented. Under Eugene Scarpulla’s direction, I created a [short form](#) where you can report observations of birds munching cicadas. We are looking for the date, location, bird species, and whether the bird fed the cicada to chicks or not. The window for collecting these data is short, but it’s easy to watch for bird–cicada interactions while atlasing.

While atlasing, simply type “eating cicada” or “feeding cicada to chicks” in the species comment box on your eBird checklist. Once you have some spare time, you can download your observations from eBird and search the spreadsheet for “cicada”—the search will return every observation where you noted cicadas, and you can upload those to the Google form (alternatively, if you have a lot observations, you could just email me the spreadsheet). Happy searching!

The direct link to the cicada observation form is

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdaK-W7hx_Flz3tB5iveM-Egr9nhX3PZeOhqwWwIDNsaH0D5w/viewform

If you’re going to spend time looking at cicadas, you might want to take photos and upload them to the free smartphone app [Cicada Safari](#), which was developed by Dr. Gene Kritsky at Mount St. Joseph University in Cincinnati to gather data about this year’s cicada explosion. The app will allow researchers to create maps and timelines of the cicada emergence. It’s your once-every-seventeen-years opportunity to contribute to the study of this fascinating insect. The free Cicada Safari app comes in Apple and Android versions and can be downloaded by following the links at <http://www.cicadasafari.org>. The Cicada Safari website also contains a wealth of information about cicadas.

And here’s a **special challenge for you photographers** out there: A search of [Cornell’s Macaulay Library](#), which catalogues photos submitted to eBird, returns NO PHOTOS in Maryland of birds eating food or carrying food during the months of the 2004 cicada emergence. If you capture images of birds eating or carrying cicadas, please upload them to eBird to get them into the Macaulay Library.

Shorebird Identification – Size Helps!

By Marcia Watson

An earlier version of this article appeared in the newsletter of the Cecil Bird Club, circa 1998.

Identification of shorebirds – the sandpipers and their kin – can be extremely difficult. The challenges inherent in this group of birds are many – different plumages for adults and juveniles, seasonal changes in appearance, varying patterns of molt and feather wear, individual variation in birds. The fact that the basic color scheme is grey-brown does not help, especially when one is faced with a mass of thousands of shorebirds densely packed and moving around on grey-brown mud. It can be hard to tell where one bird ends and his neighbor starts! Then there may be poor viewing conditions such as heat waves that distort vision, long distances, and obscuring marsh grasses. Not to mention sweat dribbling down one's face, and swarms of flies and mosquitoes!

Why bother? To me, there is nothing as peaceful and other-worldly as the gentle peeps and soft stirrings of a few thousand shorebirds spread over a mudflat on a hot summer day. At Bombay Hook or Hart-Miller Island on a good day, I like to set up my scope at a good vantage point, settle into a lawn chair, sometimes complete with shade umbrella, and spend hours in peaceful contemplation of the flock. I'm not particularly looking for rare birds, although they are always welcome; rather, I like to drink in the whole spectacle, and focus on the whole flock.

But I do like to know what I'm looking at. So, faced with all those teeming, seeming-look-alike bodies, where do I start? I start with size. Shorebirds vary in size from the tiny little peeps – Least, Semipalmated and Western Sandpipers – at 4 to 6 inches, way on up to the gorgeous American Avocets or Marbled Godwits at around 18 inches. There's a lot of room inside that size range, and the various species are spread out all across that range. If you have a general idea of relative size, you can start to get a rough idea of what's in the flock.

Rough is the operative word. Size alone will not give you enough information to identify birds down to species, but it's a way to organize and sort through what you are looking at. Look over the flock and hone in on birds by size – the littlest ones, the biggest ones, those in the middle. Such a rough first look can give you a very good idea of the possibilities for what's in the flock. If it's all little birds, then you can forget about Godwits and Whimbrels. On the other hand, if your flock has birds in the medium-size range (8 to 12"), you can start thinking about Dowitchers and Dunlins and Pectorals and Solitaires.

Remember that to be sure of species, you'll have to look at indicators like bill and leg length and color, overall shape of the bird, and so on. The way that the bird moves is also a good clue, especially at a distance. Be especially aware that a spotting scope can foreshorten distance, making birds look closer together than they are, and thus confusing the relative size issue.

To get you started on a grasp of relative size, here's a handy reference chart of shorebirds that occur more-or-less regularly in Maryland and the Delaware bayshore, ranked by size. Sizes (bill tip to tail tip) are compiled from *The Shorebird Guide* (2006), by Michael O'Brien, Richard Crossley, and Kevin Karlson. There are a couple of non-shorebirds included (Mallard and Ibis), because they are often out there with the shorebirds and serve as useful size markers. Those in italics are less common in Maryland or on the Delaware bayshore.

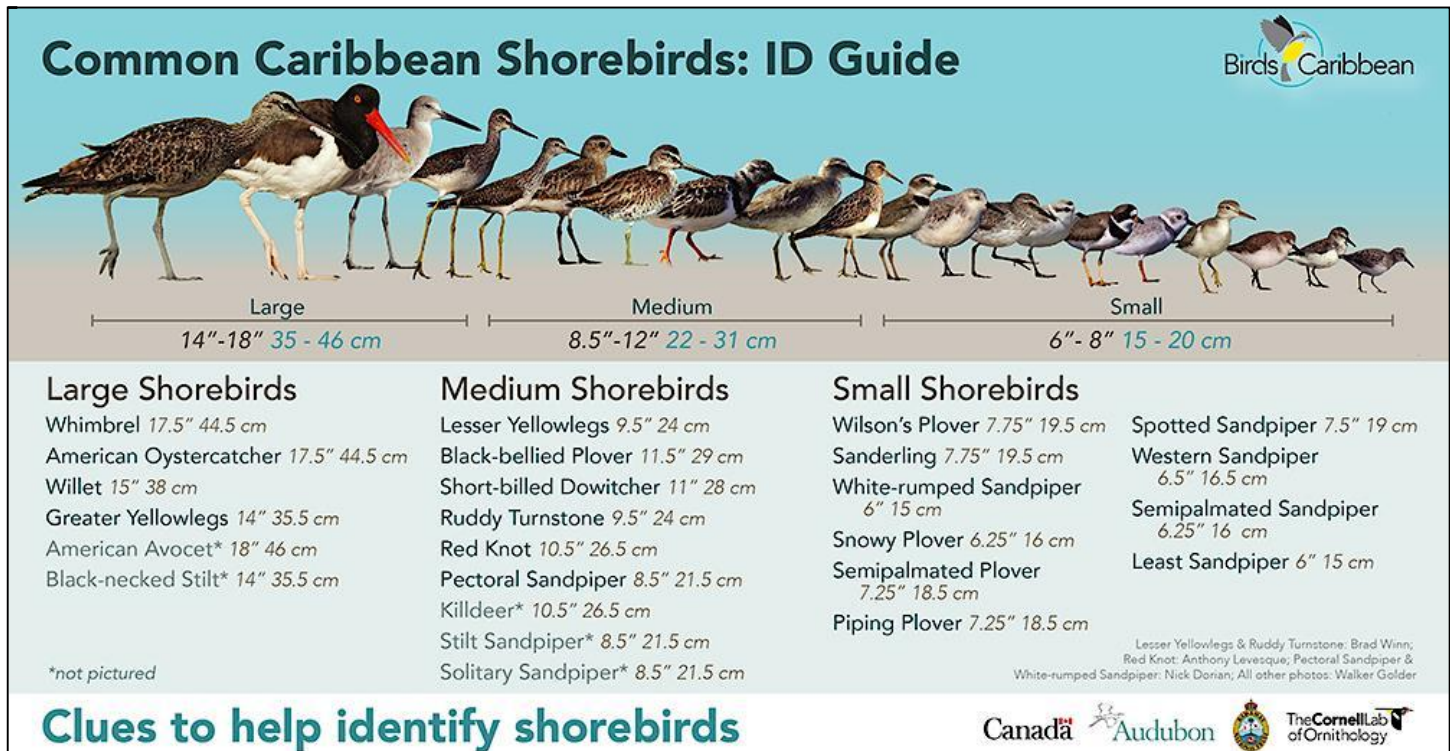
Note: The sizes shown here are the measurements from bill tip to end of the tail. These are not heights.

Glossy Ibis	23"	Wilson's Snipe	10 – 11½"	Red Phalarope	8 – 8¾"
Mallard	23"	American Golden Plover	9½ – 11¼"	Dunlin	7½ – 8¾"
Marbled Godwit	16¾ – 19¼"	Long-billed Dowitcher	9½ – 10½"	Sanderling	7½ – 8"
American Avocet	17¼ – 18¾"	Killdeer	9¼ – 10½"	Spotted Sandpiper	7¼ – 8"
American Oystercatcher	16 – 17½"	Ruddy Turnstone	8½ – 10½"	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	7¼ – 8"
Whimbrel	16 – 16¾"	Short-billed Dowitcher	9¼ – 10"	Wilson's Plover	6½ – 8"
Hudsonian Godwit	14½ – 16¾"	Lesser Yellowlegs	9¼ – 10"	Curlew Sandpiper	7¼ – 7½"
Willet (Western)	13½ – 16½"	Red Knot	9¼ – 10"	Red-necked Phalarope	7¼ – 7½"
Black-necked Stilt	14 – 15½"	Ruff females (called Reeves)	8 – 10"	Semipalmated Plover	6¾ – 7¼"
Willet (Eastern)	12½ – 14"	Wilson's Phalarope	8¾ – 9½"	Piping Plover	6¾ – 7¼"
Greater Yellowlegs	11½ – 13¼"	Stilt Sandpiper	8 – 9¼"	Baird's Sandpiper	5¾ – 7¼"
Upland Sandpiper	11¼ – 12¾"	Pectoral Sandpiper	7¾ – 9¼"	White-rumped Sandpiper	6 – 6¾"
Ruff (Males)	10½ – 12½"	Solitary Sandpiper	7½ – 9¼"	Western Sandpiper	5½ – 6¾"
American Woodcock	10 – 12½"	Purple Sandpiper	8 – 8¾"	Semipalmated Sandpiper	5¼ – 6"
Black-bellied Plover	10¾ – 12"			Least Sandpiper	4½ – 4¾"

Shorebirds by Size continued next page

Shorebirds by Size, cont'd.

As a bonus, here is an image that provides another handy size reference, courtesy of Birds Caribbean. Although the image is focused on Caribbean birds, there is good overlap with species found here in Maryland.



Konterra Short-eared Owls: Winter Season Report

By Jay Sheppard



Photo by Bill Millhouser,
3/19/21, Macaulay Library
ML319035881

On November 4, 2020, I found the first Short-eared Owl of 2020 at the fields of Konterra. The fields and sparse woodlands and four ponds at the I-95/MD Route 200 interchange comprise about 475 acres of maintained grassland owned by the Konterra Corporation. On November 20, I led a small group of nine owling friends to see if we could find the owls. Thus began my irregular tours for birders and photographers into Konterra to see the Short-eared Owls this fall, winter, and early spring.

A total of 23 groups were led into the fields with the last being on March 27, 2021. The total number of individual people is unknown, as many spouses, teens or younger kids, and friends came with the drivers. Perhaps 300-350 individuals came to see the owls at least once. The total number of observers, including many people who attended multiple times, was 562 or an average of ~20 observers per trip. Several observers went on four or five of the tours.

Numbers of owls varied from visit to visit, mostly because of the fading light, as they typically became active 10-20 minutes after sunset. Clearly, the numbers slowly built up over the winter with five or six owls being seen by late December and January and then eight irregularly in late February to March 23. When the birds started to get more active before sunset in late February, we not only had better views but better counts.

Who knows how many images were taken of the owls (and harriers, etc.) over all these trips. Certainly several thousand! Shutters were going like machine guns in full automatic! Love digital!!

Konterra Owls continued next page

Konterra Owls, Cont'd.

Prior to November last year, no owls had been seen at Konterra since March of 2018, so we cannot state they are regular winter visitors to these fields. The numbers of harriers each winter have been fairly steady at five to eight, which shows that the vole population has been relatively constant.

In early December, Jon and Dan Boone helped me pound ten small posts into the fields to hopefully attract the raptors to use. They were moderately successful, with several owls being photographed on the posts, but most nights no owls used them while we could still see them. Many other birds did use them: Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, and many many Red-winged Blackbirds! The meadowlarks were not impressed.

I do have to thank Marcy Stutzman for her assistance on nearly all of the tours. To be totally honest, having 20, 30 or more cars (max=36) in a group was much like herding cats! Everyone did get to see the owls, but it was not always easy on my nerves, as it got slowly darker and darker most evenings before we saw owls!

And needless to say, without the cooperation of the Konterra Group giving me permission to go onto their property, none of this would have taken place.

Future: I will continue to offer escorted tours to see the owls, using my current invite spreadsheet of 240 individuals, and will start sending invitations the next time the owls show up. Next November?? Who knows and the owls are not talking!

Editor's note: Jay Sheppard has permission from the property owner to escort groups to see the owls at Konterra. Jay is the **only** individual who has permission to enter the property for birding. Please do not attempt to visit on your own, as your trespassing could put Jay's permission in jeopardy. If you would like to be added to Jay's invitation list, send an email to Jay at ([REDACTED]).



Photo by Lynn Gregg, 3/15/21,
Macaulay Library ML317188131



News in Brief from MOS

Provided by John McKitterick, MOS President and Maryanne Dolan, MOS Secretary

MOS Convention Going Virtual

As previously announced, MOS will be holding its annual convention **June 11 - 13, 2021** as a virtual event, with the breeding bird atlas as a theme. You can find the latest information about the convention on the convention website, <http://www.mosconvention.org/>. This year the **convention is free of charge to all active MOS members**.

The virtual format will bring some changes from previous conventions. There will be **no formal field trips with leaders**; instead MOS will encourage self-guided trips with follow-up online discussions to share what was seen. **Keynote speakers** will be eBird's Ian Davies, who will talk about atlasing and birding in the 21st century, and Dave Brinker from Maryland DNR, who will talk about the changes in Maryland's breeding bird communities over the last 300 years. There will also be **seminars**, a **poster session**, and a **photo contest**, and even a version of the traditional **wine & cheese social**.

The Virtual Convention needs some people with low to moderate computer skills to help with the various sessions. All that will be required is to sit in on each meeting to admit the attendees as necessary, and to alert the IT pros to any real trouble. If you are interested in helping out, please email conference@mdbirds.org

We should all be thinking about what we are going to do for the "do-it-yourself" field trips in place of the usual guided group field trips. Convention attendees will be encouraged to bird on their own, or with a small number of friends, ideally all full vaccinated. Then there will be daily online sessions during which Convention participants can report on their do-it-yourself trips. Start thinking now about some places you would like to visit on your own.

MOS News continued next page

MOS News, cont'd.

New MOS Committee on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

At the March MOS Board meeting, Patuxent Bird Club member Ross Geredien volunteered to set up and lead an MOS committee on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). He has a couple of committee members already lined up, but more members would help provide more ideas and insight. If you are interested in helping guide MOS in becoming more diverse and inclusive, please send an email to Ross Geredien at ([REDACTED])

New Name for Patuxent Wildlife Research Center Announcing the USGS Eastern Ecological Science Center

The following is a press release from the U.S. Geological Survey

Release Date: MARCH 11, 2021

The U.S. Geological Survey recently announced completion of the merger between the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (PWRC) and Leetown Science Center (LSC). The combined center's name is the USGS Eastern Ecological Science Center (EESC).

The PWRC and LSC each had a rich history of contributing to the conservation and management of the nation's fish and wildlife resources dating back to the 1930s. The EESC will continue the world-class science that was conducted at the LSC and PWRC by combining expertise on fish and wildlife, population dynamics, ecological patterns and processes, animal health diagnostics, and quantitative methods and decision science into a single center.

"While the missions and names of PWRC and LSC have changed over time, their identities were based on the quality of their science and scientists," said Tom O'Connell, center director of the EESC. "This will not change under the EESC name. In fact, I know the hard work and dedication of EESC staff will continue building on the rich history of the predecessor centers."

The EESC is now the largest of USGS's 15 ecosystem science centers. The vision of the EESC is to be recognized as a world leader in fish, wildlife and associated ecosystem science through scientific excellence and responsiveness to society's needs. Through its comprehensive scientific expertise, the EESC is well-positioned to address increasingly complex ecosystem-level management challenges natural resource managers are facing to conserve, manage, and restore fish and wildlife.

The driving force behind merging the centers was to achieve scientific excellence and financial sustainability. The reorganization of the two centers into the EESC enables more funding to go toward the center's scientific research as well as partner development activities by significantly reducing management and administrative costs. Increased partner engagement is a priority of EESC to ensure the center's science investments are aligned with the highest priorities of partners responsible for the conservation and management of our nation's fish and wildlife resources for generations of today and tomorrow.

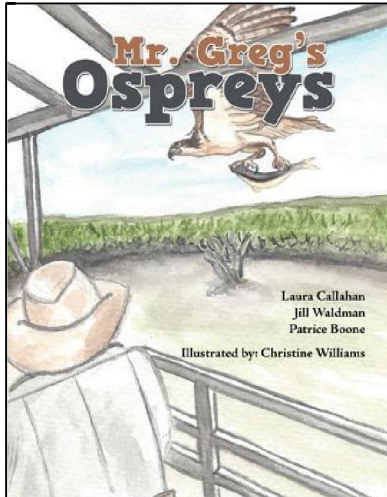
"Strong partnerships are an essential ingredient to the success of a USGS science center," said O'Connell. "Our team's commitment to understanding and being responsive to the science needs of partners will contribute to the EESC's overall financial viability and scientific excellence."

Most EESC team members are located in the Eastern U.S. at the center's three owned facilities, retaining their existing duty stations, with additional team members co-located at other partner offices or labs. Recognizing the value employees and partners placed on preserving a part of the center's history, the EESC's three site locations will be referred to as the Eastern Ecological Science Center at the Patuxent Research Refuge in Laurel, Maryland; Leetown Research Laboratory in Kearneysville, West Virginia; and S.O. Conte Research Laboratory in Turners Falls, Massachusetts.

For questions and/or additional information, please contact Tom O'Connell, Center Director, EESC at toconnell@usgs.gov or 304-620-3759, or Andrea Ostroff, Deputy Center Director at aostroff@usgs.gov or 703-338-2544.

To stay updated on USGS EESC activities and developments, please follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/USGSEESC/>. We anticipate launching a new website for EESC in the next few months and in the meantime you can find more information about the programs previously associated with PWRC and LSC at <https://www.usgs.gov/centers/pwrc> and <https://www.usgs.gov/centers/lsc>, respectively.

Greg Kearns Featured in New Children's Book



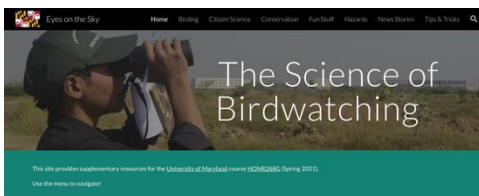
Local biologist Greg Kearns, a park naturalist at MNCPPC's Patuxent River Park, was the inspiration for a new children's book. Many of us have been fortunate to participate in Greg's guided pontoon boat tours on the river, often with a bonus of holding Sora in hand, and always accompanied by Greg's lively stories about nature on the river. It was such a boat tour that inspired Laura Callahan, Jill Waldman, and Patrice Boone to write *Mr. Greg's Ospreys*. The authors all work at the National Aquarium in Baltimore, and they enlisted artist Christine Williams to illustrate their book.

The book's website states: "Meet Mr. Greg, a conservationist who manages an osprey sanctuary on Jug Bay in Maryland. Come along on the journey as Mr. Greg cares for these beautiful majestic birds and their habitat throughout the year. The budding conservationist will be captivated as Mr. Greg steers his boat through this beautiful sanctuary to witness ospreys as they migrate, nest, raise their young and thrive despite migratory and environmental challenges. This delightful and educational story paired with picturesque illustrations will inspire young readers to become caretakers of nature!"

The book is available in soft-cover, hard-cover, or as eBook, through Amazon and other retailers. This would be a fine addition to any youngster's library.

New Resources for Local Birding from Derek Richardson

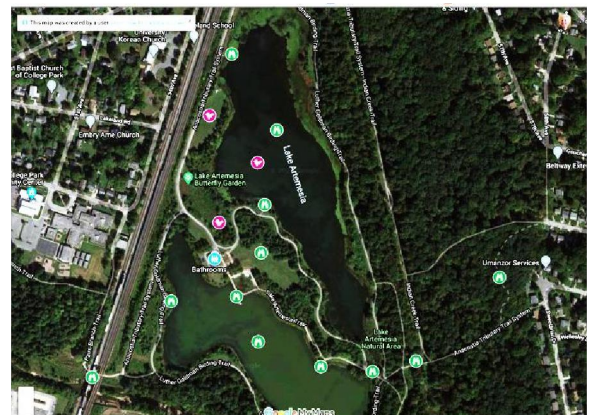
Local birder Derek Richardson, in real life, is Professor of Astronomy and Director of the Center for Theory and Computation at the University of Maryland College Park. Last year, Derek began a sideline at the University, teaching a birdwatching course for honors students. He had to pivot to a virtual teaching style to cope with the pandemic. Along the way, Derek has developed a set of resources for his birdwatching course, and is generously sharing them with us.



Derek's website "Eyes on the Sky, the Science of Birdwatching" at <https://sites.google.com/umd.edu/eyesonthesky/home?authuser=0> has sections on birding, citizen science, conservation, "fun stuff," hazards, news stories and tips and tricks. Check it out! The website is sure to provide new information for even the most experienced among us.

Another resource that Derek developed for his class is a custom Google map that shows places to go birding in our area, marked with binocular icons. Clicking on any of the icons will open a pop-up window with handy facts about the place. The map has three layers that you can toggle on and off using the checkboxes in the left-hand panel. The first layer shows birding hotspots throughout our region, and then for more detail, you can zoom in on the map and activate the other two layers, one showing birding spots on the UMD College Park campus, and one showing landmarks at Lake Artemesia. The UMD campus layer includes nice details about spots along the Paint Branch Trail that goes through campus and beyond. The Lake Artemesia layer pinpoints the locations of the landmarks that we use to describe where we're seeing birds, such as the gazebos, the docks, and the bridges. Find the map online at

https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1EQPyJ7uaGTDdNuF8v62ONqx8z6nGNSg_&ll=38.662906281443185%2C-76.20688949999997&z=9.



Many thanks to Derek for sharing his map and website with us!

A New Tool for Birders: Bird Finder

Perhaps you've wondered if it's possible to use eBird data to find out where you are most **likely** to find a certain bird near you. Technically, those data do exist within eBird, but pulling out the information in usable form requires downloading and analyzing tons of data from eBird hotspots – and then doing it all over again for a different species or for a different date. Jack Saba, a Patuxent Bird Club member, developed a series of bird finding databases using this concept several years ago, but the labor in keeping the databases updated was intensive.

Now, thanks to Michael Fogleman, a birder and software engineer in North Carolina, it's as simple as typing in your zip code on a website. Michael's Bird Finder tool at <https://www.michaelfogleman.com/birds/> will provide you with a list of birds for your area, in order of likelihood of seeing them. If you pick a species that you're interested in and click on the species name, a new page will open up that shows you the most likely eBird hotspots where that species can be found during the current month, or any other month you may choose.

Using Bird Finder to search for birds within a 5-mile radius of Bowie, MD during the month of May returned a list of 217 species, from Northern Cardinal (most likely) to Sandhill Crane (least likely), as shown in this partial screenshot:

Location		Radius (miles)	Month				
Bowie, MD, USA		5	May	Update			
Info	Species	Chart	April	May	Change	Relative	
1	Northern Cardinal		69.1%	69.9%	0.8% ↑	1.0x	
2	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher		57.8%	63.6%	5.8% ↑	1.1x	
3	Red-eyed Vireo		9.7%	61.2%	51.5% ↑	6.3x	
4	Red-winged Blackbird		62.9%	60.2%	2.6% ↓	1.0x	
5	American Goldfinch		57.9%	58.4%	0.5% ↑	1.0x	
6	Canada Goose		71.7%	55.2%	16.5% ↓	0.8x	
7	Tree Swallow		57.2%	54.8%	2.4% ↓	1.0x	

Pine Warbler comes in at #50 on this list. To find out where to see a Pine Warbler, click on the name of the species in the list of likely birds, and you'll see a screen like the one below:

So now you can pinpoint the places that you are most likely to find any bird of interest at a particular time of year, near your home or indeed, any place you choose. This tool works worldwide, so you can use it to prepare for any trip you plan to take.

Try it!

And send a little note of thanks to Michael Fogleman:

<https://www.michaelfogleman.com/about/>

Map	Location	Distance (miles)	Observed	Sampled	Frequency	Confidence
1	WB&A Trail--Patuxent Rd. to powerline	3.6	10	17	58.8%	36.0%
2	WB&A Trail--Little Patuxent River	4.4	4	7	57.1%	25.0%
3	Patuxent Ponds Park	3.8	23	67	34.3%	24.1%
4	WB&A Trail--Horsepen Branch (PG Co.)	1.9	11	29	37.9%	22.7%
5	Fran Uhler Natural Area	1.8	21	67	31.3%	21.5%
6	Patuxent Research Refuge--North Tract	4.9	126	551	22.9%	19.6%
7	Patuxent Research Refuge--South Tract (National Wildlife Visitor Center)	1.8	68	282	24.1%	19.5%
8	Piney Orchard Nature Preserve	4.5	16	71	22.5%	14.4%
9	Patuxent Research Refuge	3.9	14	63	22.2%	13.7%
10	Patuxent Research Refuge--North Tract--Wildlife Viewing Area/Merganser Pond	4.5	4	28	14.3%	5.7%
11	Patuxent Research Refuge--North Tract, Power Line section	2.7	2	12	16.7%	4.7%
12	Northway Fields Park	4.7	4	34	11.8%	4.7%

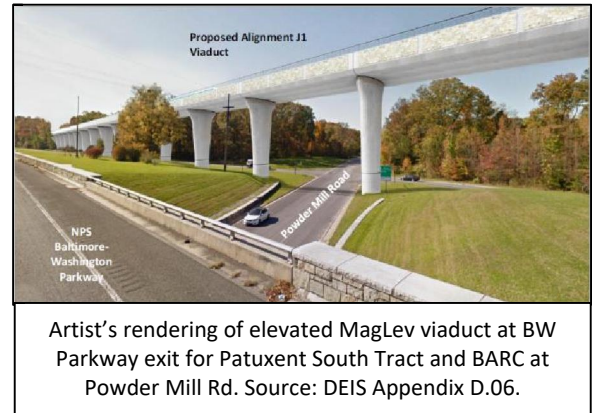
UPDATE: MagLev High Speed Train Public Comments Deadline Changed to May 24th

There are two new developments with regard to the MagLev project:

- 1) The federally-required [Draft Environmental Impact Statement \(DEIS\)](https://bwmaglev.info/project-documents/deis) is still open for public review as **the deadline for submitting your comments has been extended until May 24, 2021**. Submit comments by following the instructions at <https://bwmaglev.info/project-documents/deis>.
- 2) Also, a **new petition** is available that you may wish to sign. See <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf1FMbnRrMRDb1N1dH41da6l-NwRxYpIGcPuLqp5qZzV26Tvw/viewform>.

As reported in our newsletters for [January-February 2021](#) and [March-April 2021](#), the proposed MagLev high-speed train between Baltimore and Washington will destroy valuable habitat at Patuxent Research Refuge, Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC), the National Park Service property along the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, the Greenbelt Forest Preserve, and numerous county and local parks in the path of the train.

Two groups, the Maryland Coalition for Responsible Transit (MCRT) and the Citizens against the SCMagLev (CATS) have recruited experts who are examining and analyzing the DEIS. The DEIS team has found a large number of flaws and omissions. Based on its review, MCRT and CATS are encouraging citizens to submit comments on the DEIS and to support the **No-Build option**, that is, to advocate that the MagLev project be abandoned.



The MagLev project would require local roads to be permanently re-routed; streams and rivers to be diverted; hundreds of acres of trees and shrubs to be removed; wetlands to be destroyed; and valuable habitat to be destroyed forever. This project would permanently damage the one remaining large forested tract in our region. In addition to the **environmental concerns**, there are **human concerns** such as health impacts, train safety, damage to community resources such as local parks and historic sites, and costs. Ironically, though the project is being promoted as “green,” the DEIS itself states that it would actually use more power than it would save, with a resulting INCREASE in greenhouse gas emissions.

Please see our previous newsletters for details on the project. The MCRT and CATS websites contain many resources to help you formulate comments on the MagLev DEIS. See <https://www.stophisttrain.org/> and <https://mcrtcoalition.wixsite.com/website>.

Since Patuxent Research Refuge, BARC, and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway are federal properties, we believe that it is important for you to provide **copies of your DEIS comments to the particular Congressman who represents your district and to both our Senators who represent Maryland**.

Your comments can be as simple as “I am opposed to the MagLev project because of its environmental impacts. I support the No-Build option.”

Or, you can choose to go into detail about aspects of the project that particularly bother you. A set of White Papers at <https://www.stophisttrain.org/research-and-white-papers> and at <https://mcrtcoalition.wixsite.com/website/scmaglev-opposition> can help you formulate detailed comments.

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 ([REDACTED]). Concerned 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.

COVID Public Service Announcement

As of this writing on April 29, 2021, the guidelines and requirements for controlling the coronavirus are changing fast, and the situation has become somewhat confusing because, at the moment, the advice and requirements are different at the federal, state, and county levels:

1. The CDC on April 27 announced that "Fully vaccinated people no longer need to wear a mask outdoors, except in certain crowded settings and venues." See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html> for more guidelines and information and for updates.
2. On April 28, Governor Hogan announced that
 - a. Effective immediately, the state mask order is lifted. Mask and face coverings are no longer required outdoors – for anyone, vaccinated or not.
 - b. Masks or face coverings are still required outdoors at all large, ticketed venues.
 - c. Masks or face coverings are still required indoors at all public and private businesses, and when using public transportation.
 - d. Marylanders who have not yet been vaccinated are strongly encouraged to continue wearing masks, especially when physical distancing is not possible.
 - e. See <https://governor.maryland.gov/recovery/> for more information and further guidelines and updates.
3. The Prince George's County government has not yet decided whether to go along with the state on lifting restrictions. At this time, the PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY MASKING ORDER REMAINS IN EFFECT UNTIL SPECIFIC ACTION IS TAKEN TO LIFT IT. THE COUNTY ORDER STILL REQUIRES THAT MASKS BE WORN ANY TIME YOU LEAVE HOME. For updates and further information, check <https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/3397/Coronavirus>.

Another useful website is the City of Bowie's Coronavirus Information page: <https://www.cityofbowie.org/2490/Coronavirus>. The City updates the page frequently and the information is well organized and easy to understand.

Choosing Safer Activities			
	Unvaccinated People	Your Activity	Fully Vaccinated People
		Outdoor	
Safest		Walk, run, or bike outdoors with members of your household	
		Attend a small, outdoor gathering with fully vaccinated family and friends	
		Attend a small, outdoor gathering with fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people	
Less Safe		Dine at an outdoor restaurant with friends from multiple households	
Least Safe		Attend a crowded, outdoor event, like a live performance, parade, or sports event	

Editor's Note

Because of time constraints related to producing this issue of the newsletter in advance of the special May 4th meeting and shorebird presentation, the usual newsletter feature on Notable Birds of Prince George's County is not included, but will be issued as a supplement at a later date.



MOS/Patuxent Bird Club Membership Application



REQUEST TO ALL CURRENT AND NEW MEMBERS: If at all possible, please join or renew your membership online at the MOS website (<https://mdbirds.org/>), even if you haven't done so in the past. This will streamline our database maintenance and bookkeeping procedures, and make things easier for our volunteer workforce. At the website, you will be able to choose the Patuxent Bird Club as your local chapter for membership registration and dues payment - and also make charitable donations to the Patuxent Bird Club or to MOS. If, however, you prefer to remit your membership dues by check, please print and complete this form and mail it with your check to the address below. Thank you for your assistance!

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

Phone(s): _____

E-Mail Address(es): _____

Full dues include Chapter and MOS State membership, and subscriptions to *Maryland Yellowthroat*, *Maryland Birdlife*, and the Patuxent Bird Club Newsletter. (The Patuxent Bird Club 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: <input type="checkbox"/> Household \$33 <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$26 <input type="checkbox"/> Junior (Age < 18) \$6	or	Chapter membership only: (must be a full-paying member of another MOS chapter - indicate primary MOS chapter: _____) <input type="checkbox"/> Household \$8 <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$6 <input type="checkbox"/> Junior \$1
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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 _____

Please make check payable to **Maryland Ornithological Society** and mail with this completed application to:

Carol S. Daugherty, MOS Treasurer
11925 Oden Court
Rockville, MD 20852

"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."

THANK YOU AND HAPPY BIRDING!

2021 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		Clapper Rail*		Ring-billed Gull		Red-tailed Hawk		Purple Martin	
Tundra Swan		King Rail		Herring Gull		Barn Owl		Barn Swallow	
Wood Duck		Virginia Rail		Iceland Gull*		Eastern Screech-Owl		Cliff Swallow	
Blue-winged Teal		Sora		Lesser Black-backed Gull*		Great Horned Owl		Carolina Chickadee*	
Northern Shoveler		Common Gallinule		Glaucous Gull*		Barred Owl		Black-capped Chickadee	
Gadwall		American Coot		Great Black-backed Gull*		Short-eared Owl		Tufted Titmouse	
American Wigeon		Black Rail*		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*		Great Cormorant*		Merlin		Golden-crowned Kinglet	
White-winged Scoter		Marbled Godwit*		Double-Crested 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	
Wild Turkey		Semipalmated Sandpiper		Cattle Egret		Eastern Phoebe		Brown Thrasher	
Ruffed Grouse		Western Sandpiper		Green Heron		Loggerhead Shrike**		Northern Mockingbird	
Ring-necked Pheasant		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	

2021 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		* Must be accepted by MD/DC Records Committee if this species is outside its accepted range				
Prothonotary Warbler						Owling
Tennessee Warbler						hours
Orange-crowned Warbler		** MUST be accepted by MD/DC Records Committee if this species is to be included in final count				miles
Nashville Warbler						
Mourning Warbler						Stationary
Kentucky Warbler						hours
Common Yellowthroat						
Hooded Warbler						
American Redstart						
Cape May Warbler						
Cerulean Warbler						
Northern Parula						
Magnolia Warbler						