

The Osprey



June 2006 VOLUME 36, ISSUE 9

www.geocities.com/smdaudubon

Newsletter of the Southern Maryland Audubon Society

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

In order to fulfill its mission, an organization needs two things: volunteer time and money. Time is the most basic need, in the form of time committed by members to carry out the business of the group and to participate in the group's activities. In the Southern Maryland Audubon Society, we see this in the work of officers, directors, committee chairs, committee members, county representatives, field trip leaders, and the general membership. Others provide refreshments at the monthly meetings and annual meeting. When you attend a field trip, monthly meeting, fundraiser, or even read this newsletter, you are taking time to support and learn about SMAS. I am sure that you will agree that this is time well spent!

Money helps us to further our efforts as a group. We spend our money according to an annual budget approved by the Board of Directors. Major expenses for the group include insurance, communication (the publication and postage for newsletters, program printing), outreach (speaker fees for monthly meetings, display board, birding brochure), education (scholarships to Audubon camps, support of Envirothon, Youth Birding Camp, school science fair awards, Audubon Adventures), and conservation (memberships in umbrella groups, conservation award, raptor nesting platforms and boxes). Where there are expenses, there has to be income! SMAS receives income from dues (Chapter-only memberships and a limited dues share from National Audubon), donations (fundraisers, adopt-an-osprey, paycheck-related), and sales (bookstore, yard sales). We have received grants in the past, and we expect to pursue grant opportunities for education and conservation activities in the near future.

How can you give your time and money to support the mission of SMAS? Terms of officers and directors begin in June. We need field trip leaders, speakers, and meeting refreshments for next year. Help is always needed on committees. Articles are needed for the newsletter, and we especially need help to get it mailed out. Your support in the form of attendance on field trips and at monthly meetings is also very important. At each monthly meeting, you can purchase items at the Bookstore, thanks to the continued dedication of Beverly and Warren Walker. They and other members also take merchandise and information to local events. Several major fundraising activities are coming up soon. The money raised in these events is necessary to carry out our education and youth outreach programs, building the future of SMAS. In September a yard sale will be held to raise money for scholarships to Audubon camps for local educators. See the article on the

Birdathon in the previous issue for information on supporting the second year of the Youth Birding Camp or other activities. Birdathon pledges are being accepted through the Annual Meeting in June. To support our raptor research and conservation, a new Adopt-a-Barn-Owl program is being inaugurated at the Annual Meeting! SMAS needs your volunteer time and money to continue to fulfill its mission and to continue to move forward as an organization. Contact me or any of the other officers or Directors with your offer to help. — Gwen Brewer, President glbrewer@comcast.net 301-843-3524

HELP CELEBRATE THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY OF SMAS AT THE ANNUAL MEETING JUNE 4!

It's been 35 years since SMAS was formed, and that is certainly reason for celebration. In honor of this accomplishment, the annual meeting this year will include special guests, cake, and a commemorative pin. Another special item will be the first Adopt a Barn Owl certificates! This is a new program, similar to Adopt an Osprey, to raise money to support conservation and research of barn owls and other raptors. Barn Owls will be available for "adoption" for \$25; foster parents will receive a certificate of adoption for a young banded barn owl, informational sheet, and a 5 X 7" photo. The bookstore and a silent auction will also be set up at the meeting, and you can pledge/pay your contribution for the SMAS Birdathon.

To commemorate our 35th year, we will have available special enameled pins, incorporating the SMAS logo in silver and black, at a very attractive price. SMAS received a provisional charter from National Audubon Society on June 2, 1971, and became the first chapter established in Maryland. There were 70 members. Since that time the chapter has continued to grow in strength and, with a membership of over 650, remains the largest citizen group in Southern Maryland involved in nature study and natural resource protection.

Please join us on Sunday June 4 at 1:30 pm at the Hard Bargain Farm in Accokeek! Bring a favorite dish to share for the potluck lunch (1:30-3 pm), then stay for a message from our host, special speakers, presentation of the Conservationist of the Year award, and a brief business meeting (3-4 pm). We will end with a bird walk from fields, to forest, to wetlands and the Potomac River (4-5 pm). Family and friends are welcome. Directions: From Rt. 210 in Accokeek, go west onto Accokeek Rd. Almost immediately on your right, take Bryan Point Road to Hard Bargain Farm on your right. The event will be held at the farm education center.

IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS DEDICATED ON EASTERN SHORE

by David Curson

Last fall Audubon Maryland-DC held ceremonies to dedicate two Important Bird Areas (IBAs), both of global significance for bird conservation on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

On October 1, Blackwater-Fishing Bay Marshes Important Bird Area was dedicated as part of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge's annual Open House celebrations. Audubon Maryland-DC presented IBA plaques to Glenn Carowan, manager of Blackwater NWR, Peter Jayne, Associate Director of Regional Operations for Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and to Marty O'Conner of the Friends of Blackwater NWR. Blackwater-Fishing Bay Marshes is the largest contiguous block of coastal marsh in the Chesapeake region and is one of the most important sites for bird conservation in Maryland. It hosts globally vulnerable Black Rails and Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows, the largest concentration of Bald Eagles on the East Coast outside Florida (up to 200 winter over), and 30,000 wintering waterfowl, including 3,000 Black Ducks, an Audubon WatchList species.

On December 10, Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge was recognized as an Important Bird Area of global significance. It hosts exceptional numbers of waterfowl, including more than 1% of the global population of Tundra Swans. More than 2,000 Tundra Swans spend the early part of winter at the refuge, feeding on submerged vegetation and clams. Up to 35,000 waterfowl of other species also winter here, including; 7,000 Canada Goose, 11,600 scaup, 3,600 Canvasback, 7,000 Ruddy Duck, 7,600 Mallard and 1,000 Black Duck. Congressman Wayne Gilchrest was on hand to present plaques to Marty Kaehny, manager of Eastern Neck NWR and Phil Cicconi of the Friends of Eastern Neck NWR, and warmly praised the refuge's bird conservation efforts.

For more information on the Important Bird Areas Program contact David Curson, Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon Maryland-DC: e-mail dcurson@audubon.org phone 410- 558-2473.

NATIONAL AUDUBON JOINS IN SUIT FOR CERULEAN WARBLER PROTECTION

Asheville, NC, March 17, 2005 – Five conservation groups representing almost one million members filed suit on February 28 against Interior Secretary Gale Norton and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for ignoring their petition to add the Cerulean Warbler to the nation's list of threatened species. The groups filed their petition more than five years ago, and repeatedly have sought to compel the agency to follow the legal requirements for responding to such citizen

petitions. In the intervening years, the rate of the bird's decline appears to have quickened, and threats to the bird's survival have worsened.

National Audubon Society, Defenders of Wildlife, Southern Appalachian Biodiversity Project, Western North Carolina Alliance and Heartwood filed suit in District Court in Washington D.C. They are among the 28 conservation groups from across the East that petitioned the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in 2000 to list the bird as threatened and designate critical habitat for its long-term survival.

The Cerulean Warbler population has dropped almost 82% throughout its U.S. range over the last 40 years, making it the fastest declining warbler in the country. In the U.S., the worst of the Cerulean's decline has been in the core of its range – 80% in the Cumberland Plateau in Tennessee, Kentucky and West Virginia, and 65% in the Ohio Hills in Ohio, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. The Cerulean would be the first warbler listed as threatened under the Act. Three other species of warbler found in the U.S. on the list – Bachman's, Kirtland's, and Golden-cheeked – are endangered.

To read the press release in its entirety, go to http://audubon.org/news/press_releases/Cerulean_Warbler_03_03_06.html.

DONATIONS WANTED FOR 2006 SMAS YARD SALE

A yard sale is scheduled for **Saturday, September 23rd from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** at Will and Julie Daniel's house located at 6622 Leonardtown Road in Bryantown, MD. A rain date is set for Saturday, September 30th. Donations are being accepted for this yard sale (everything except for clothes and books). If you have items to donate or would like to volunteer on September 23rd, please contact Julie Daniel at 301-274-5756 or by e-mail at juliemdaniel@hotmail.com. Please help SMAS raise money for our education fund by supporting the yard sale.

Directions to the Daniel house from St. Mary's county: Take Route 5 or Route 235 north to Charles County. Continue on Route 5 through Hughesville. About 3.5 miles north of Hughesville watch for their house on the north side of the road, 1/4 mile north of Ted Bowling Drive. If you get to the intersection at Oliver Shop Road you have gone too far. The house is an old white farm house with a white board fence around all of the property.

From Calvert County take Route 231 west to Charles County. Follow directions above from Hughesville.

From Charles County go through Waldorf and then take Route 5 south towards Bryantown and Hughesville. In Bryantown, one half a mile past the intersection at Oliver

Shop Road do a U-turn and go back north on Route 5, their house is 1/4 mile north of the u-turn. The house is an old white farm house with a white board fence around all of the property.

Flea Market/Yard Sale Committee

NANCY MCALLISTER SELECTED FOR 2006 CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR AWARD

Each year, SMAS honors an individual for his or her conservation activities in Southern Maryland. This year, the Board has selected Nancy McAllister, who was nominated by Dr. Robert Paul of St. Mary's College (a past recipient of this award). Nancy was cited for the leadership role that she played in protecting the St. Mary's River watershed. Owing to her passion for protecting the environment and strong interpersonal and leadership skills, the St. Mary's River Watershed Association elected her its first president. In that role, she has successfully devoted endless hours and energy to insuring that the watershed association gained non-profit status. Nancy ably guided the Association through their first fund-raising endeavors, grant proposals, Riverfest Celebration, and recently the first general Membership Meeting. She also represented the association at various local government agencies and meetings, including the St. Mary's County Commissioners, who were greatly impressed by her presentations and presence. In short, Nancy's name has become synonymous with the St. Mary's River Watershed Association.

Nancy McAllister took her Bachelor of Science degree in Biology at Grove City College, PA, and Master of Science in Sustainable Development and Conservation Biology at the University of Maryland, College Park. She is a certified teacher of biology and general science for grades 7-12 in both Pennsylvania and Maryland. Nancy has also worked as an Outreach Program Manager for the Wildlife Habitat Council, and Research Assistant for the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in Maryland. Please join the Board in congratulating Nancy for this well-deserved honor!

SUCCESSFUL SCIENCE FAIRS

Congratulations to the students whose science fair projects received awards from Southern Maryland Audubon Society. Winners receive one-year memberships in National Audubon Society with one-year subscriptions to *Audubon Magazine*, as well as one-year memberships in SMAS with one-year subscriptions to the Osprey.

Special thanks to the SMAS members who judged the science fairs: Calvert County judges Leslie Bridgett and Susan Noble; Charles County judges Art Krueger and Millie Kriemelmeyer; St. Mary's County judges Beverly and Warren Walker; Prince George's judge Millie Kriemelmeyer.

Calvert County, Seniors, Emily Brownlee, Calvert High School, project title "A Tale of Two Oysters" and Marina

Ybarra, Northern High School, project title "Sea Me, Clean Me, Heal Me—The Bay." Junior Cassidy Kenney, Plum Point Middle School, project title "Puritan Tiger Beetle" and Jack Roberts, Northern Middle School, project title "Marine Bird E.R."

Charles County Senior Jacquelyn Weavill, Westlake High School, project title "Migratory Waterfowl of the Chesapeake Watershed." Junior Jonathan Tavares, John Hanson Middle School, project title "For the Birds." Elementary (certificate and book), Ashley Cobaugh, T.C. Martin Elementary School, project title "Birds' Feeding Habits."

St. Mary's County Senior Colleen Caouette, St. Mary's Ryken High School, project title "Where to put the Windmill." Junior Elaine Taylor, St. John's School, project title "Oil Spill."

Prince George's County, no awards given.

AUDUBON CAMP SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Congratulations to Deanna Wheeler and Gina Mathias who were awarded scholarships to attend the Maine Audubon Workshop for Educators.

Deanna teaches science for Charles County Public Schools. Gina is a naturalist/educator at Hard Bargain Farm Environmental Center. Students and teachers will benefit from the knowledge and insight into the natural world that Deanna and Gina gain during their exciting week on Hog Island, Maine.

Thank you to the SMAS board of directors for funding the two scholarships. Funds were raised at the flea market, birdathon, and gift wrapping at Wild Bird Center.—Millie Kriemelmeyer, Education Chair

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Patricia Berg, Accokeek
Bert Bryner, Waldorf
Colleen Caouette, California
Horace Dacko, Brandywine
Jean Davis, Hughesville
S. Galante, Huntingtown
Fernando Garra, Oxon Hill
Charles Gustin, Prince Frederick
Sandra Irwin, Waldorf
Kassidy Kenney, Chesapeake Beach
Frank Mauro, Great Mills
Rhonda Minnick, Clinton
Kurt David Reitz, Mechanicsville
Linda Shepherd, Leonardtown
Michael Sullivan, Mount Victoria
Richter, Temple Hills
Jack Roberts, Owings
Jonathan Tavares, Brandywine
Elaine Taylor, Lexington Park
Emily Tobin, North Beach
Richard Walsh, North Beach
Jacquelyn Weavill, Waldorf
Marina Ybarra, Chesapeake Beach

SAIL AND BIRD ON BOARD THE DEE OF ST. MARY'S

Members, family, and guests are invited to a morning birding trip aboard the *Dee of St. Mary's* traditional Chesapeake Skipjack sailing vessel on Sat. June 10 from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM. We leave promptly at 8:00 AM from the Chesapeake Bay Field Lab, St. George Island, St. Mary's County. Captain Jack Russell may sail on Island Creek, St. Mary's River and Potomac River, wherever the birds are likely to be.

The cost of the two-hour trip on the skipjack is \$400, but the boat holds 35 people. If 20 people sign up, the cost will be \$20 each. If more sign up, the cost will be less. Please reserve no later than Sun. June 4. Contact the leader, Millie Kriemelmeyer, by phone or email, 301-372-8766, milliek@radix.net

Directions: Take MD 5/Point Lookout Rd south from Leonardtown about 5 miles to MD 249/Piney Point Rd at Callaway. Turn right on MD 249 and go about 10 miles. Chesapeake Bay Field Laboratory is on the right on St. George Island. You can see the mast from far away.

Bring your own drinks, snacks, bug repellent, binoculars, broad-brimmed hat.

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area March 26, by Fred Burggraf

The unseasonably cool and dry weather continued into late March and greeted nine birders for walk at Myrtle Grove on March 26, 2006. Sun and clouds alternated over a light breeze, making for delightful birding conditions.

We saw 45 species, including: Osprey, Eastern Phoebe, Brown Creeper, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Field Sparrow, and Eastern Bluebird.

The Top 10 Birds-of-the-Day were: 10. Swamp Sparrow - Observed, appropriately enough, in a swampy area near the lake. 9. Rusty Blackbird - Several birds at rest in nearby trees afforded good looks. 8. Tree Swallow - Over the lake, this species was a First-Of-Season (FOS) for many in the group. 7. Ring-necked Duck - A nice group of 20+ birds, both male & female. First observed on the lake, the group flew and was later seen in the swamps near the canal trail. 6. Hermit Thrush - A few late birds, quiet and obliging, allowing good looks through the 'scope. 5. Bald Eagle - Several full adults flying overhead. 4. Wood Duck - A pair here. Myrtle Grove was for a long time known for its Wood Duck population; the birds were not so much in evidence in recent years. New Wood Duck boxes were present all over the grove, and this pair of woodies was an early sign of success of that program. 3. Purple Martin - Another FOS bird, over the lake. 2. Winter Wren—Sulky, stealthy and

quiet, a single individual gave us brief looks in a swampy section of the canal. 1. And the bird *du jour*: Kinglets--both species in abundance, perhaps a fall-out or a migratory staging. Golden-crown males were flashing red in the crown from time to time, and Ruby-crowns were in full song. Quite a spectacle, albeit a diminutive one.

Douglas Point, April 29, by Gwen Brewer

A group of 13 birders ventured into the Douglas Point area of western Charles County. Some of this area was fairly recently acquired by the state and Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and is now called the Nanjemoy Natural Resources Management Area. We first traveled a relatively new path on the BLM property, passing the Chiles Homesite and following an old road through a mature wood. Our next stops were Purse State Park and an open wetland area just to the south of the Park along Route 224. It was quite a bird-y day, with a good showing of warblers (15 species, including Blue-winged, Black-throated Green, Yellow-throated, Hooded, and Worm-eating), both tanagers (Scarlet and Summer), Great Crested Flycatcher, and four vireo species (Blue-headed, Red-eyed, White-eyed, and Yellow-throated). Other migrants were Red-breasted Nuthatch and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Near the river at Purse State Park, an adult Bald Eagle eyed us from a nearby tree and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak gave us nice looks along the wooded trail. The open wetland on Rte. 224 had Red-headed Woodpecker, Prothonotary Warbler, Baltimore Oriole, and Northern Rough-winged Swallow. Our total was over 40 species for the morning. This is a large and very valuable forested area along the river, and I encourage you to visit!

NOMINEES FOR ELECTION AT ANNUAL MEETING

by Bob Lukinic, Chair, Nominating Committee

The nominees for officers of SMAS in 2006-2007 are: President, Gwen Brewer; Vice-President, Julie Daniel; Secretary, Matt Dement; and Treasurer, Will Daniel.

Nominees for the two opening director positions: Darryl Zoller, and Mary Sokol.

Will Daniel has accepted the nomination for Treasurer. He will replace Larry Brown, who has served for several years, but cannot accept another nomination owing to career responsibilities. Darryl Zoller and Mary Sokol are active members who accepted nomination to serve their first terms as Directors. These nominees would replace Jean Artes and Sigrid Stiles.

We thank Larry Brown, Jean Artes, and Sigrid Stiles for their work in maintaining and improving SMAS while they served on the Board.

Nominations for all positions are open from the floor of the Annual Meeting.

AUDUBON ANNOUNCES AMERICA'S TEN MOST ENDANGERED BIRDS

New York, NY, March 31, 2006 - The gravest threat facing endangered bird species in the U.S. today is proposed Congressional action to weaken the protections of the Endangered Species Act, according to a report released by the National Audubon Society. "America's Top Ten Most Endangered Birds" notes that development pressures, invasive species, and global warming are threatening these bird species with extinction. The Endangered Species Act is the strongest federal safeguard against the extinction of bird species in the U.S.

The birds named in the report are: Ivory-billed Woodpecker; California Condor; Whooping Crane; Gunnison Sage-Grouse; Kirtland's Warbler; Piping Plover; Florida Scrub-Jay; Ashy Storm-Petrel; Golden-cheeked Warbler; Kittlitz's Murrelet; and ten island birds of Hawaii. Their habitats span the entire East Coast and are dotted across the nation, in Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, and Wisconsin.

Audubon released the report as the Senate actively considers legislation that, if passed, would undermine the vital protections provided to endangered birds by the

Endangered Species Act. In September 2005, the House passed HR 3824, sponsored by Congressman Richard Pombo (R-CA). This bill, euphemistically called "The Threatened and Endangered Species Recovery Act," eliminates protection for critical habitat; creates loopholes allowing projects to proceed regardless of impacts on endangered birds and wildlife; provides highly controversial payments to landowners as compensation for complying with the law; and includes special exemptions for pesticide manufacturers.

To read the press release in its entirety, go to http://www.audubon.org/news/press_releases/index.html.

BOOKSTORE END OF YEAR SALE

The SMAS Bookstore will be holding its annual year-end sale of all merchandise at the Annual Meeting June 4. The entire inventory will be sold at discounted prices, and free gifts will be offered with every purchase. Now is the time to stock up on field guides and other bird and wildlife-oriented reading material for your summer enjoyment. T-shirts, jewelry, and nest boxes will also be on sale. Bring your checkbook!

NEW OR RENEWAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

- Please enroll me as a member of the Audubon Family and the Southern Maryland Audubon Society. I will receive the chapter newsletter, *The Osprey*, and all my dues will support environmental efforts in Southern Maryland.
- Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society at the Introductory Offer. My membership will also include membership in the Southern Maryland Audubon Society. I will receive National's *Audubon* magazine, the chapter newsletter, *The Osprey*, and support National and local environmental causes. A fraction of my dues will be returned to the local chapter.
- Please **renew** my membership in the National Audubon Society and the local chapter, the Southern Maryland Audubon Society. A fraction of my dues will be returned to the local chapter.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail to: Southern Maryland Audubon Society
Attn: Membership
P.O.Box 181
Bryans Road, MD 20616

Chapter-Only Dues (new/renewal)
Make check payable to
Southern Maryland Audubon Society

- Individual/Family __1yr \$20 __2yr \$38 __3yr \$56
- Senior/Student __1yr \$15 __2yr \$28 __3yr \$42
- Optional Donation \$_____

National Dues, Make check payable to
National Audubon Society

- Introductory Offer - 1 year \$20
- Introductory Offer - 2 year \$30
- Senior/Student \$15
- Renewal Rate \$35

JUNE - JULY EVENTS

June 4—Sunday—1:30 p.m. **Annual Meeting**

Hard Bargain Farm, Alice Ferguson Foundation, Accokeek, Prince George's County.

Potluck Lunch	1:30-3:00
Host's Briefing	3:00-3:30
Election and Business Meeting	3:30-4:00
Bird Walk	4:00-5:30

Bring family, friends, and a favorite dish, and join us at the farm education center for our traditional potluck lunch. After some information on the farm from our host, and a business meeting, a bird walk will take us through the fields to the shore of the Potomac River and along a boardwalk. Directions: From Rte. 210 in Accokeek, go west onto Accokeek Road, take Bryan Point Road to hard Bargain Farm on your right.

June 10—Saturday—8 a.m. **Field Trip**

Chesapeake Bay Field Laboratory, St. George's Island, St. Mary's County. **Birding On Board the Skipjack Dee of St. Mary's.** Leader: Millie Kriemelmeyer (301-372-8766, milliek@radix.net). Facilities and \$20 fee. Reservations required. Limit 30 persons. Children welcome for a three-hour sail around Island Creek, St. George's Creek, and the St. Mary's River with Captain Jack Russell. Bring food and drink. Take MD Rte.5

south through Leonardtown to Callaway. Turn right on MD Rte. 249, Piney Point Road, and go 11 miles. Cross causeway onto St. George's Island, and continue straight on to the Laboratory on the right.

July 22—Saturday—11 a.m. to 3 p.m.—**Field Trip**

Jefferson Patterson Park, Calvert County. **Butterfly Search.** Leader: Arlene Ripley (301-855-2848, arleneripley@comcast.net). Our first July butterfly trip led by a Southern Maryland field naturalist. Take the opportunity to join Arlene and learn about one of the other groups of animals that fly. Meet leader at the parking lot across from the Visitor Center. Facilities but no fee. Suggested field guide: *Butterflies Through Binoculars* by Jeffrey Glassberg. Bring your hat, water, and insect repellent. If rain, trip cancelled.

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The deadline for the Osprey is the fifth of each month. Please send all short articles, reports, unique sightings, conservation updates, calendar items, etc. to the above address.

Southern Maryland Audubon Society
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