

The Osprey



SEPTEMBER 2003 VOLUME 34, ISSUE 1

www.geocities.com/smdaudubon

Newsletter of the Southern Maryland Audubon Society

LAURA ETTER WINS LOGO CONTEST

The new logo for the Southern Maryland Audubon Society that appears above for the first time in *The Osprey* was designed by Laura J. Etter of Hampstead, Maryland. The Board of Directors received 19 design entries, some from as far south as Florida, and as far west as Texas. Several of the entries were very fine designs, which made judging difficult. Congratulations to Laura Etter, and thanks to the other participants for their excellent work.

SOMEBODY GRAB MY FEET AND HAUL ME DOWN

By Jack Lewnes

(Editor's note: Jack Lewnes is one of the two recipients of our Audubon Ecology Camp Scholarships in 2003.)

Imagine for a moment that you were invited to lunch with Ken Kaufman and Scott Weidensaul. I bet you'd be a little up for that, right? Well, how about breakfast, lunch, and dinner for a week? And between those meals they are going to take you birding in the breathtakingly beautiful environs of Muskongus Bay, Maine!

Sounds like every birder's "impossible dream," doesn't it?

With a great deal of gratitude to SMAS and a prefatory apology for the gushing superlatives, I'd like to tell you about this dream-come-true.

Before I left for Hog Island, I compiled a list of birds I was likely to see that were life birds for me. There were seventeen. I saw seven the first hour of the first day. And it kept getting better. In fact, after each half-day trip, I said something like, "Well, they sure can't top that!" But they did. Over and over again.

Ken Kaufman is a very quiet guy. Shy, almost. But what a sense of humor! We traveled one day to a blueberry field. There were upland Sandpipers there, one with a chick. And there were 1500 imported bee hives, at least. Ken was driving and as we approached the monstrous stack of bee hives, he said, under his breath, "Can someone give us a chorus of 'The Hills are a Hive?'"

Scott Weidensaul and I sort of "bonded." We became buddies. One day, when we visited a Great Blue Heron rookery, I helped land the dory and had inadvertently left my binoculars on the big boat, the Puffin IV. We had been instructed to be perfectly silent on the island and Scott, in sign language, tried to give me his binoculars. They looked like they carried a price tag in the \$1500 range, and the terrain was rock-strewn and slippery. In sign language, I declined.

And that brings me to Dr. Sara Morris. Sara has been working on the Puffin restoration project on Egg Island for 14 summers. The restoration project started with just 17 individual birds. Today there are 120. I saw each and every one of them. Sara is 110 lbs of naturalist fireball, and (I realize that I'm treading on marshy ground when I say this) a total, complete "hottie." Her enthusiasm and excitement washed over all of us every day. Sara's favorite bird is the Black Guillemot. (This bird, by the way, is much more attractive than Peterson depicts it.) I can still hear Sara hollering, "Look at the vermilion feet! Isn't he so cute?"

One day Sara came in to give one of her many wonderful presentations wearing a 25th anniversary Puffin Project T-shirt. It was strikingly beautiful. Since we just passed the 30th anniversary, I had little hope of getting one. Sara told me that they were no longer available. Then she shouted, "Hey, Jack! Wait a minute! I know where there might be one." Sara had apparently been pregnant five years ago and had purchased a "Large" one and had just traded it in for a "Small." On the next trip to the mainland, I got the shirt. There are eight birds in full color on the shirt—Puffin; Arctic, Common, and Roseate Terns; Black Guillemot, Leach's Storm Petrel, Laughing Gull, and Common Eider. And there is a little inscription next to the Black Guillemot: "Jack—May you always have fond memories of Hog Island, the bay, and little black birds with vermilion feet. Sara Morris, 06/03."

During the week at the Audubon Camp on Hog Island we traveled each day to one of the many islands in Muskongus Bay. It would seem improbable to us, Chesapeake devotees that we are, that there are more than five thousands islands in Muskongus Bay. Many of the islands are privately owned and several of the owners are happy to let Maine Audubon explore them.

On one such trip, ferried by Captain Chris on the Puffin IV and shuttled by dory to the rocky coast, we split into two groups. One group headed to a meadow, led by Dr. Sara Morris, the other led by Scott Weidensaul set out around the perimeter of the island. I chose Scott's group. As we climbed and jumped, and sometimes crawled, along the rocky shore we found ourselves overlooking a deep ravine where the Bay surged toward the interior of the island. There, below, I noticed a female Common Eider with three or four ducklings swimming in formation behind her. They have Great Black-backed Gulls. That is one impressive bird with a six foot wing-span. They are serious predators of the eggs and the young of other birds, being the largest gull in North America and perhaps the world. As I walked along the rocks, looking at the eider and her ducklings, a Great Black-backed Gull swooped down, screamed, and grabbed the last duckling in the formation in its beak. I had just enough time to holler to the group. We all had time to see the gull seize the duckling in a "splash and climb" attack.

Big gull wings and tiny eider wings—food for one, death for the other—gull with huge, slow, powerful sweeps and the duckling with frantic, tiny, seemingly useless attempts.

Then, when the gull had climbed 30 or 40 feet, the tiny duckling somehow won the battle and dropped back onto the choppy inlet. We could hear the sound of the duckling hitting the water and can still see it swimming with both feet and wings until it got back where it belonged—behind the mother eider with its siblings! Victory for the underdog—or underbird! And the gull flew off in search of easier prey, perhaps, and the eider procession continued, in search of new adventures.

There are many more wonderful happenings to relate. Harbor Seals and dolphins, a mink in the woods, very special new friends, Captain Chris and the Puffin IV, Yanni, the chef, to name but a few.

I walked the circumference of Hog Island twice. The two or three hour hike is an easy one, cool and dark under the spruces, bright and breezy on the edges. It became important to me, as the week unfolded, to soak up the beauty and richness of the island.

The last words on the last evening were from Scott: “Each of you will find, as I have, that your visit to Hog Island has been a life altering experience. As each of you steps off the island, you will realize that you are not the same person that stepped onto it a week ago.” So very, very well said.

Thanks to each of you, and thanks to SMAS, as a group, for affording me this priceless experience. I will be forever grateful.

2003 MAY COUNT IN ST. MARY’S COUNTY

by Ernie Willoughby

The second Saturday of May is always reserved for the annual Maryland Ornithological Society May Count. Members of SMAS lend support to MOS by coordinating the counts for Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary’s Counties. This year I again coordinated the count in St. Mary’s County, May 10. Weather was cloudy, misty and rainy all day long. Nevertheless, 17 stalwart observers in 10 parties spent all or part of the day counting birds from midnight until 9:30 p.m. They found 167 species and counted 9226 individual birds.

Despite the dreary, damp weather that kept visibility poor and made viewing unpleasant, our observers persevered, so these numbers compare favorably with those of previous years. Except for last year’s exceptionally high species count of 265, this year’s number of 167 is the average for the past five years. The total number of birds this year was the average for all of the past five years.

Some noteworthy observations include the tally of 260 Canada Geese, which was the highest count for St. Mary’s County in my records going back through 1995. These counts show a steady increase in the numbers of this species, which has established breeding populations in Southern Maryland since the early 1980s, when we rarely saw any Canada Geese during late spring and summer. The expert party of Patty Craig, Anne Bishop, and Jim Boxwell, covering the area around Scotland and Point Lookout, tallied 24 Black-crowned Night heron, 37 Brown Pelican, 2 Merlin, and 6 Black-bellied Plover. They also got the only Wilson’s Warbler on the count. Tyler Bell reported two Peregrines from the St. Mary’s County side of the Governor Thomas Johnson Bridge, as well as the only American Woodcock and Warbling Vireo for the list. Well done, everyone, and thank you!

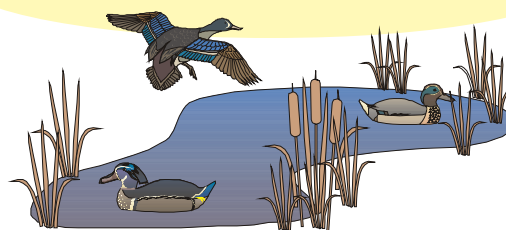
ANNUAL MEETING HELD AT GREENWELL STATE PARK

Thirty-three members enjoyed pleasant, sunny weather at the Annual Meeting on June 1. This year we met at the new pavilion near the canoe and kayak launch at Greenwell State Park. Everyone greatly enjoyed the tasty and varied dishes provided by the members in comfortable surroundings.

Both the co-recipients of the Conservationist of the Year Award, Robert Paul and Christopher Tanner, were present to accept awards for their outstanding work on the St. Mary’s River Project. This project is essential for the preservation of the resource values of the St. Mary’s River and lower Potomac River in an area of rapid economic growth. The award to each recipient included a framed print by artist Richard Sloan of ducks common on the St. Mary’s River.

Members elected these officers: President, Ann Wearmouth; Vice President, Gwen Brewer; Secretary, Sue Hamilton; Treasurer, Larry Brown. Directors elected: Julie Daniel, Matt Dement, Mary Helen Yarborough. Congratulations to all!

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FLEA MARKET, SEPT. 27

Our annual fundraiser flea market will be held on Saturday, Sept. 27, at the Farmers' Market, Charlotte Hall, from 8:00-3:00. Look for us in one of the last pavilion on the west side of the market. We always need help, especially at unloading time (7 a.m.) and at pack up. Sales help is needed throughout the day, and of course, buyers! Proceeds as usual go towards our Audubon Ecology Camp scholarships for Southern Maryland educators. We have our usual array of interesting donated treasures from SMAS members and friends, but can always use more things brought the day of the sale. Hope to see you there. For more information, call Shirley Wood (301-884-0594) or Carol Gheblian (301-753-6754)

OPEN HOUSE AT CHAPMAN STATE PARK, SEPT. 14

Some SMAS members and others have banded together to form the Chapman State Park Volunteers. Due to shortage of staffing at DNR, the park and Mount Aventine are open to the public only on a walk-in basis, so the volunteers have received permission to hold monthly public open house events on the second Sunday of the month. The next event will be September 14, noon-5 p.m.

At 1:30 there will be talks on the history of the Chapman family and various aspects of the 1840's house, on the uses of the properties and on inhabitants throughout the years, and about the historical significance of the preserved site. There will be bird walks and nature walks on interesting woodland paths at 2:15 and at 3:30. Manor house tours, a commentary on the magnificent Potomac River view seen from the house, and walks to the river and family cemetery are ongoing throughout the afternoon.

The past events, begun in June, were well attended and enthusiastically received. Everyone has left with a better appreciation for the natural and historical assets of the site, and for the reasons it was preserved. More volunteers are always needed to conduct bird, butterfly walks, etc. and provide other assistance at our events.

We invite you to come and enjoy our latest preserved Southern Maryland site. The park is located on Chapman's Landing Road, off Rt. 210 between Bryans Road and Indian Head in western Charles County. Turn at the entrance to Mount Aventine. For more information or to become a volunteer, contact Carol Gheblian, Chapman State Park Volunteer Coordinator, at 301-753-6754, gheb@bellatlantic.net

JEANNIE HADDAWAY APPOINTED TO MARYLAND LEGISLATURE

On August 5 it was announced that Governor Robert Ehrlich has appointed Jeannie Haddaway to the Maryland legislature. Jeannie, Development Officer for Audubon Maryland-DC, will fill the district 37B seat vacated by Delegate Ken Schisler upon his appointment to the Public Service Commission. Delegate Schisler was re-elected last November; Jeannie will serve for the remainder of his three-year term.

Audubon Maryland-DC is pleased that one of their staff members has received this honor. We will have another Maryland legislator who understands the importance to Maryland's future of protecting our natural resources. Jeannie puts high priority on having every Maryland student receive a well-rounded education that includes hands-on conservation experiences.

In her role as Development Officer, Jeannie has done an excellent job for Audubon Maryland-DC. It is not yet known how this new appointment will affect her job with Audubon Maryland-DC, as ethics requirements of both the Maryland legislature and National Audubon Society will limit any direct role in fundraising.

Congratulations and encouragement may be sent to Jeannie at Jhaddaway@audubon.org

Directions to River Farm at Jug Bay (see back page for field trip information)

From the north, Rte 4, Upper Marlboro: Follow Rte. 4 south for three miles from upper Marlboro. Take the Plummer Lane exit on the right. On Plummer Lane, continue straight (past Wrighton Road) where Plummer Lane changes name and becomes Pindell Road. (From Annapolis or Calvert County, when you get to the stop sign at Plummer/Pindell turn left onto Pindell Road. Travel for about 1.3 mi. The road will make a sharp left turn (large yellow sign with left-pointing arrow). Shortly after you will see a series of several newspaper and mail boxes on the right. Turn RIGHT, making a 180 deg. Hairpin turn onto the Farm Entrance Road. There is a large brown sign indicating the **River Farm**. (DO NOT turn into the "Jug Bay Farm" which is private property.) Proceed through the gate. Continue on the Farm Entrance Road, which changes from paved to dirt. Exit the woods, and park near the fenced garden opposite the red birds. **From Calvert County, Rte. 4 northbound**, turn left onto Upper Pindell Road, right onto Pindell Road, and a very quick left onto the Farm Entrance Road. Then follow the directions above.

NOTICE

CHAIR LEFT BEHIND AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

A nice folding vinyl chair remained unclaimed at the end of the Annual Meeting in June. It is in danger of going to the Flea Market if we cannot find the owner!

Contact Carol Ghebelian, 301-753-6754, gheb@bellatlantic.net.

“TAKE BACK AUDUBON” SEEKS TO RESTORE PARTNERSHIP WITH NATIONAL AUDUBON

by Darrel Whipple
Willapa Hills Audubon Society (WA/OR)

Take Back Audubon (TBA) has announced its mission and platform and has fielded eight candidates for national Audubon's Board of Directors.

The reform effort's mission is “to restore a true partnership between the independent Chapters and the national Audubon Society through a real voice in the NAS organization and in all decisions that affect chapters.”

The Southern Maryland Audubon Society Board of Directors voted to endorse the TBA mission at their monthly meeting of June 25.

TBA has developed five resolutions to be adopted at the Annual Meeting of members on December 6, 2003, in Cincinnati. The resolutions endorse a member's right to access basic information from National, the right to initiate ballot measures by petition, the requirement to have competitive elections, the guarantee of grass-roots input through regional or sub-regional Chapter congresses, and the reinstatement of a dues share.

Eight TBA candidates have declared their candidacy for directors-at-large. Stepping forward from around the country, are: Chuck Bragg, Santa Monica Bay Audubon (CA), Marsha Cannon, Madison Audubon (WI); John Gallagher, Clark County Audubon (OH); Andrew Mason, Delaware-Otsego Audubon (NY); Cary Meister, Yuma Audubon (AZ); Pat Rasmussen, Leavenworth Audubon Adopt-a-Forest (WA); Darrel Whipple, Willapa Hills (WA/OR); and Jennifer Wilson-Pines, North Shore Audubon (NY).

Biographies of the candidates, background material on the movement, and the proposed reform resolutions may be viewed on the TBA web pages at www.smbas.org/tba. Also posted at the web site are Chapters and individuals who have endorsed the mission.

TBA invites all interested Audubon members to join the discussion of reform topics on the NAS-Chapter email list. You may join the list by sending a message to nas-chapter-subscribe@yahoo.com.

FOSTER PARENTS NEEDED

The gift of an osprey adoption becomes part of a special fund for the support of osprey research and raptor conservation projects in Southern Maryland. The foster parent receives:

- 1) A certificate of adoption of an osprey fledgling banded with a numbered U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service leg band. The certificate gives the location and date the osprey was banded.
- 2) Information on osprey ecology and migration patterns, a 5"x7" photo of a fledgling and information that Steve receives on the whereabouts or fate of the bird.

Interested? Here's how to become an Osprey parent.
Send \$10.00, with the form, for each fledgling to be adopted to:

Southern Maryland Audubon Society
P.O. Box 181
Bryan's Road, Maryland 20616

ADOPT AN OSPREY

Name: _____

Address: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____



You can choose to either adopt an Osprey from

Patuxent River

Potomac River

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Caroline C. Thorpe, Waldorf
Robert W. Paul, Lexington Park
Christopher E. Tanner, Ridge
Phyllis Minik, Leonardtown
Edwin Poole, Highlands, NC
T. Andrew Gwynn, St. Leonard
Diana L. Kasic, Waldorf
Larry Gonzales, Ft Washington
Clemmer/David Montague, Ft. Washington
O. Shishkevish, Ft. Washington
F.J. Batchelder, Oxon Hill
Russell L. Anderson, California
Gene Bridgett, Prince Frederick
Stephanie Brindle, St Inigoes
John W. Freundel, Ft Washington
Gerry Hance, Port Republic
Sharon Harwood, St. Inigoes
Elaine Hurley, Mechanicsville
Paul Jahn, Clinton
Patricia M. King, Lexington Park

Wallis E. Landstreet, St Leonard
James Long/Nancy Reid, Accokeek
Lurene B. Maddux, Solomons
Calin Murphy, Mechanicsville
Eugenia Ridgely, Prince Frederick
Florence J. Strean, Port Republic
K. Tayman, Brandywine
Philip Wood, Prince Frederick
Mike Burch, Mechanicsville
Edward Flannagan, Clinton
Preston Hopkins, California
Kimberly Philips, St Leonard
David Canning, Dunkirk
Michael Cecil, Pt Republic

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. **Make check payable to Southern Maryland Audubon Society.**
- Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and the local chapter, the Southern Maryland Audubon Society, at the Introductory Offer. I will receive the *Audubon* magazine, the chapter newsletter, *The Osprey*, and support National and local environmental causes. **Make check payable to National Audubon Society.**
- Please **renew** my membership in the National Audubon Society and the local chapter, the Southern Maryland Audubon Society. **Make check payable to National Audubon Society.**

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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

Chapter-Only Dues
(new/renewal)

- Individual/Family \$20
- Senior/Student \$15

National Dues

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

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

September 3 – Wednesday – 7:30 p.m. **Monthly Meeting**

Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary, Anne Arundel County, Lothian, Maryland.

Program: Migratory Bird Project at Jug Bay, by Danny Bystrak, Jug Bay Bird Observatory.

Our speaker, the Program Director of the Jug Bay Bird Observatory, will tell us about the migratory bird projects being done at Jug Bay, including close-up photos of birds captured during these studies. Note that a follow-up field trip occurs on Saturday, September 6. See details below. **Directions to Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary:** Traveling north on Rte. 4, exit at the "Bristol-Deale" exit (Rte. 258). At stop sign, go left over Rte. 4, and continue to the stop sign at Wrighton Road (near "Park & Ride"). At the stop sign, turn onto Wrighton Road, and continue for 1.5 miles to the Sanctuary entrance on the left.

September 6 – Saturday – 6:30 a.m. **Field Trip**

Jug Bay Wetland Sanctuary, Anne Arundel County.
Migrant Banding Station

Leader: Arlene Ripley (410-257-6105). Half day trip. Join the Fall Migration Study mist-netting team as they run a series of five mist-netting rounds for fall migrants at River Farm at the Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary. The first round begins at sunrise with a short walk around the nets to collect birds, which we bring back to the station for processing. See what is involved with a mist-netting operation, and view birds up close. After the rounds, we will take a short bird walk on one of the River Farm trails. You may join us for any of the five rounds of the nets, but the early "birds" usually get to see the best birds. **See bottom of page 3 for directions to River Farm at Jug Bay.**

September 13 – Saturday – 8 a.m. **Field Trip**

Smallwood State Park, Charles County
Nesting and Late Migrant Land and Shore Birds.

Leader: Jean Artes (301-743-2288). Half-day trip. From Rte. 225 at Mason Springs, go south on Rte. 224 about 4 mi. to the Park. Turn right at the Park sign and go to the marina parking lot. Beginning birders are especially welcome. Park entrance fee applies.

September 20 – Saturday – 8 a.m. **Field Trip**

Calvert Cliffs State Park, Calvert County.
Fall Migrants.

Leader: Lisa Lister (301-994-2582). Half-day trip. We will be looking for sparrows, warblers, and other migrating songbirds. Meet in the parking lot. Entrance fee applies.

September 27 – Saturday – 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Charlotte Hall Farmer's Market and Auction, Charlotte Hall, St. Mary's County. Flea Market Fundraiser. Donations and help wanted, see details inside this issue.

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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
P.O. Box 181 Bryan's Road, MD 20616

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