

# The Osprey

Newsletter of the Southern Maryland Audubon Society

## President's Perch



Cedar Waxwing  
Photo by: Bill Hubick

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www.billhubick.com/  
images/201203/  
cedar\\_waxwing\\_ta\\_](http://www.billhubick.com/images/201203/cedar_waxwing_ta_)



<http://somdaudubon.org/>

With Halloween around the corner it made me think about being scared and that reminded me of beginner birders. Many new birders are afraid to attend our field trips. Walking around with people who are pointing out or hearing birds you have no clue about is scary! SMAS wants to help you not be scared. We would like to start scheduling special training sessions to help you get over your fears and help us get more birders involved in the Christmas Bird Count and the May Count.

Learning to identify birds is not easy. It takes time and effort. When I first got involved with SMAS I was amazed at all the birds I did not know (and still don't). When winter would roll around I would participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count from my home. Being able to go online and report 28 species to me was pretty awesome. Once I got involved with SMAS and met REAL birders I came to realize that the potential was much greater.

In Charles County we have the Port Tobacco Christmas Bird Count (CBC). This year it will be held December 18. The number of species on a low count year could be a total of 79; a good year 96. Boy, did I have a lot to see and learn!! Other southern Maryland CBCs also occur at Point Lookout in St. Mary's County, the Patuxent River area in Calvert and St. Mary's Counties, and the Ft. Belvoir - MD sector along the Maryland shoreline of the Potomac River from Ft. Washington to Indian Head in Charles County. Our 2016 Fall Field Trips and Programs flyer is posted on our website and lists coordinators and dates for each of these count circles.

For those of you that are scared, but interested, please join us for this new program "Birds Count Training". Let SMAS know you are interested in improving your bird identification skills, and willing to participate in upcoming counts. We will possibly schedule two 2-3 hour sessions for your county and count. The sessions will review the CBC field card used for recording, expected species list and specific hard to identify birds for your circle. Depending on the interest we will offer training for CBCs soon and then "Spring Training" for the Maryland Ornithological Society's May Count in March/April.

Once you jump in to help with a count that is how you improve your skills. There simply is no other way to improve your avian identification ability unless you walk the walk. Your first couple of counts will probably have you being more of the scribe for the typical two person team. Having someone to record species and numbers while driving or walking is a huge help. The extra set of eyes and ears are a big asset too. It is a wonderful day from sunup to sunset with all of nature's beauty and birds. Many of your "first" birds will come from doing bird counts. When you work the May Count, since our friends are so vocal, that night when your head hits the pillow various species songs will still be with you - especially the Indigo Bunting! Hopefully a more comfortable and focused learning environment vs. attending one of our many field trips you will enable you to jump on board. To enroll send SMAS an email at: [somdaudubon@yahoo.com](mailto:somdaudubon@yahoo.com) Subject Line: Birds Count Training. Include your name, address, preferred contact information and the county you would like to assist. If you need inspiration, check this out:

<http://www.audubon.org/conservation/history-christmas-bird-count>

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Enjoy the video from Patuxent, MD and a wonderful interview with Chan Robbins.

Don't forget, BIRDS COUNT!!  
Lynne Wheeler, President



### **Pax NAS Grasspipers Field Trip** by Kyle Rambo

Seven SMAS members joined leader me on Sunday, September 11 for a field trip aboard the Patuxent River Naval Air Station in search of “grasspipers” -- those shorebird species with an affinity for grasslands rather than sandy beaches or mudflats. It took less than 30 minutes for the group to find its first target species -- American Golden-plover. We saw two of these beautiful, long distance migrants -- a juvenile and an adult that was molting out of its breeding plumage. It took less than an hour until we found our other target species, and the bird of the day -- Buff-breasted Sandpiper! We enjoyed spectacular, close range views of a very cooperative flock of six individual birds that were actively feeding in the helicopter operating area. These birds pass through Maryland for a very brief period each fall, and the Naval Air Station may be one of the best places in the entire mid-Atlantic region to observe them. Upland Sandpipers had likely already migrated through, so they failed to produce the grasspiper trifecta!

The group heard a discussion of the installation's bird/ aircraft strike hazard (BASH) reduction efforts, as well as information on the overall natural resources management program, while touring the airfield and observing some of the other common airport birds such as Killdeer, Horned Larks, and American Kestrel, before wrapping up with a few waterfront stops along the Base's many miles of Patuxent River and Chesapeake Bay shoreline. Notable observations included over 200 Common Terns and several hundred Brown Pelicans and Double-crested Cormorants roosting on the piers and seawalls. A total of 37 species were recorded -- not a bad total for a hot, dry day spent mostly in and around grassland areas.

### **Cove Point Marsh Field Trip** by Bob Boxwell

Sunday morning, October 2, was overcast, cool, and a little breezy. Better than the rest of the week and hopefully a good sign. Everybody arrived on time and seven of us hit the beach a little after 8 a.m. I'd checked the tides and we had an open beach to hike.

Our only shorebirds were a pair of Sanderlings one of which had been injured and was hopping on one foot. The bird had showed some blood but seemed able to get about. We had the usual suspects for gulls at Cove Point with the refreshing additions of Forster's, Royal, and Caspian Terns. We only found Double-crested Cormorants. It was too early in the season to see its cousin. A lone Pied-billed Grebe was in the marsh along with a few geese and up to thirteen swans. Unfortunately this remnant population of Mute Swans is increasing here at the marsh.

The beach has two nice sections of reclaimed salt-marsh adjacent to the Bay. This is the place to look for your sparrow species. We had seen some Savannahs on the marsh side in the taller grass and Phragmites. But the good stuff sticks primarily to the shorter native grasses. We were fortunate to see several Seaside Sparrows and after a lot of diligent searching a single Nelson's Sparrow popped up and stayed perched in the tall grass for several minutes.

Other fun finds in the grass included a Palm Warbler landing on the boardwalk and several Marsh Wrens. We heard several other ones on the marsh side as well as these. Very few warblers were seen. We may have had a Blackpoll Warbler fly over, and a yellow feathered American Redstart. Several Common Yellowthroats rounded out the group. We did sweep the mimics. And the Red-breasted Nuthatches have arrived. We didn't see the winter sparrows or kinglets yet. Yellow-rumped Warbler is another winter bird that has not shown up yet.

The seasonal change of predators was in effect. We saw at least five Bald Eagles and two Osprey during the trip. A Cooper's Hawk cruised by and both vultures species we seen high over the marsh and woods. A single Great Blue Heron and a few Great Egrets were hanging around the marsh. At the end of the trip we had a flyby Green Heron.

The weather improved with the day and we actually had some sunshine by trip's end. We tallied 49 species and found our target bird. The landscape at Cove Point is ever changing. With the dynamic actions of wind, wave, rain, and tide that is to be expected. Beach grasses have established themselves along most of the beach. There is exposed beach and elevation changes along the shore. This is a Living Shoreline project now in its fifth year and seems to be doing well. I want to thank the staff at Cove Point for their willingness to allow us this annual trip and the ease of our check in.

## SMAS Sotterley Plantation Trip

by David Moulton

Our fall walk, on September 18, at the historic Sotterley Plantation proved once again to be both birdy and beautiful, where the setting overlooking the Patuxent River attracts a wide variety of birdlife and the flower gardens, hayfield vistas and educational displays attract visitors from beyond Southern Maryland. Our group of five worked our way down the old Wharf Road to the river shore, and then back past the eagle's nest, the restored slave cabin and plantation house, ending among the zinnias and cosmos. 42 species of birds were present, including six species of fall warblers – Black&White Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, American Redstart, Northern Parula and a skulking Northern Waterthrush. Bald Eagles of all ages were perched and soaring. A Green Heron was picking through the shoreline detritus. White-eyed Vireos still sang their spring song, while the Red-eyed Vireos were practicing their off-season "tchway" call.

Extensive recent hay harvesting temporarily reduced field-bird habitat, so we missed the normally regular Eastern Meadowlarks, but otherwise it was another pleasant day at one of the hidden treasures of St. Mary's County.

The full eBird checklist can be seen here:

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S31639123>

*In Memory of our Feathered  
Friend Jane Klemer*

The old mockingbird  
Still imitates his whistle –  
How many summers?



## Smith Island "Cake Walk" Field Trip

by Millie Kriemelmeyer

On Sunday, September 18, 14 birders sailed from Point Lookout State Park, Scotland, MD, aboard Captain Tyler's Smith Island Cruises "Twister" bound for a birding adventure on Smith Island 20 miles away in the Chesapeake Bay. The group had a member of Central Maryland Audubon, two members of Chesapeake Audubon, two members of Maryland Conservation Council, and nine members of SMAS.

Upon arrival at Ewell on the island, some left for birding while others enjoyed a delicious family style group meal with Smith Island Cake for dessert at Bayside Restaurant. The Captain, Jackie Russell and his wife Vicki, joined our group for lunch. They are interested in setting up programs/trips on St. George's Island in St. Mary's County. When they operated the Bay Lab Environmental Program, SMAS had a morning "Birding by Skipjack" program aboard the "Dee of St. Mary's" skipjack, which was owned and captained by Jackie Russell.

After lunch, serious birders headed out the road along the marsh and found many species, including the migrating Palm Warbler. Less serious birders, trip leaders Harry and me, settled into rocking chairs on the porch of the Smith Island Cultural Center and Museum, petted the cat, and enjoyed the beautiful weather.

The 22 species spotted were mainly residents not bothered by warm southeast winds.

A good adventure ended aboard the Cheryl Lane Tyler, the school bus catamaran that takes high school students to Crisfield from Smith Island on school days.

### WHEN DOES MY MEMBERSHIP EXPIRE?

Wonder what the exact expiration date is regarding your National Audubon Society membership or your local SMAS chapter membership is? Send us an email to:

**[somdaudubon@yahoo.com](mailto:somdaudubon@yahoo.com)**

Include your full name and mailing address.  
We will gladly look it up for you.



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## New Research Shows How Songbirds Island-hopped Out of Australia

LAWRENCE, KAN. — While it is widely accepted that songbirds originated from the Australian continent, how and when they diversified and colonized the rest of the globe has remained a mystery.

Researchers from the University of Kansas, Louisiana State University and three other institutions reconstructed the evolutionary history of songbirds using thousands of DNA sequences from majority songbird lineages and information from the fossil record to provide answers to these questions. They found that songbirds began diversifying about 33 million years ago and underwent extensive diversification in Australia. Furthermore, the researchers also found that songbirds first dispersed out of Australia about 23 million years ago through early islands in the Indonesian archipelago into Asia and subsequently the entire globe.

The new research was published in Nature Communications Aug. 30.

“One of the challenges with deciphering songbird evolutionary history is that they diversified so rapidly that previous studies had a difficult time estimating the branching pattern of the songbird family tree,” said lead author Rob Moyle, KU professor of ecology and evolutionary biology and curator of ornithology at the KU Biodiversity Institute. “With advances in DNA sequencing technology, we were able to collect an unprecedented amount of DNA sequence data that helped clarify songbird relationships.”

Songbirds comprise the largest group of birds, with about 5,000 species, accounting for nearly half of avian diversity. They are found on almost all corners of the globe, with the exception of Antarctica, and include the familiar crows and sparrows, as well as elaborate singers like mockingbirds and lyrebirds.

With a better understanding of the songbird family tree, Moyle and his colleagues were able to infer the colonization history undertaken by songbird ancestors.

The dispersal of songbirds from Australia through Indonesia, Moyle said, seems like an obvious explanation to anyone who knows world geography; but one has to bear in mind that tens of millions of years ago, world geography looked a lot different because of the Earth’s constant process of plate tectonic movements.

“Thirty-three million years ago, Australia was thousands of kilometers away from any continent, and New Guinea barely existed,” Moyle said.

Another issue confounding our understanding of songbird evolution is the estimated age of the group, said co-lead author Carl Oliveros, a postdoctoral researcher at Louisiana State University.

“Our estimate for the age of songbirds is about half of most previous estimates, placing songbird evolution in a very different geological landscape than previously thought,” said Oliveros, who earned his doctorate in ecology and evolutionary biology at KU.

“Thus the previous hypothesis of long-distance dispersal by songbirds from Australia to Africa via Indian Ocean landmasses are put into question because these Indian Ocean islands were submerged by the time we think songbirds diversified.”

Oliveros’ and his colleagues’ work also provides an alternative explanation to the high diversity of songbirds that are presently found only in New Guinea. Previous research suggested that songbirds diversified extensively in proto-islands of New Guinea before colonizing adjacent areas.

However, Oliveros and his colleagues believe that songbirds underwent extensive diversification in Australia and subsequently colonized New Guinea after the formation of the New Guinea landmass. They suggest that the aridification of Australia caused the extinction of forest-adapted songbird lineages in the continent, which left relicts of the first colonizers as sole surviving lineages in New Guinea. According to the researchers, this idea is supported by the presence of fossils in Australia of plants and mammals that are currently only found in New Guinea.

The study used tissue samples of birds deposited at the KU Biodiversity Institute collected from expeditions to 25 countries within the past 25 years. This research is supported by funds from the National Science Foundation, KU and Louisiana State.

-KU News Service [kunews@ku.edu](mailto:kunews@ku.edu)



This Yellow-breasted Satinbird (*Loboparadisea sericea*) is among the songbirds research shows first dispersed out of Australia about 23 million years ago through early islands in the Indonesian archipelago into Asia and subsequently the entire globe. Image credit: Brett Benz, American Museum of Natural History

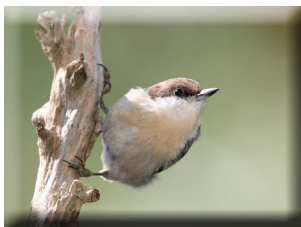
## WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Joseph Adams, Ridge  
 Justin Baker, Lexington Park  
 Carolyn T Berger, Leonardtown  
 David Bouchard, Waldorf  
 Elda Branham, Saint Mary's City  
 Stewart Buckler, Prince Frederick  
 Gayle Bylan, Owings  
 Nancy Cain, Waldorf  
 Roslyn Capps, Mechanicsville  
 Ruth Crewe, California  
 Herman L Edwards, Mechanicsville  
 Millie Font, Waldorf  
 Janis Hurst, Huntingtown  
 W. J. Kerwin, Leonardtown  
 A E Leitch, Aquasco  
 Robert Linnemann, Waldorf  
 Jeanette McDaniel, Accokeek  
 Mescal McKittrick, Oxon Hill  
 Lois Mills, Hollywood  
 Trueman and Tammy Montfort, Bushwood  
 Michael Murray, Owings  
 Mrs. Janet O'Brien, Solomons  
 Diane J Osterhus, Dunkirk  
 Sally Ray, Lusby  
 Mrs. Sally Sexton, La Plata  
 Suzanne Shelden, Prince Frederick  
 Julie Simpson, Marbury  
 Mark S Stachnik, Prince Frederick  
 Jennifer Teeter, La Plata  
 Maureen Tores, North Beach  
 James Wakenight, Owings  
 David L Ward, Oxon Hill  
 Bonnie Witlam, Lusby  
 Thomas Wrublewski, Dunkirk

### In Memoriam

**August 27, 1943 - October 2, 2016**

Martin J. Cribb, or Marty as most of us knew him, passed away on October 2 in Leonardtown. Marty was a fixture of birding in the far southern end of St. Mary's County. He lived in Scotland in various locations, including a stint as camp host at Pt. Lookout State Park, where Brown-headed Nuthatches would eat from his hand. He will be sorely missed.



**Brown-headed Nuthatch**  
 Photo by Bill Hubick

## Southern Maryland Audubon Society **ADOPT-A-RAPTOR**

Foster Parents Needed!!



The Southern Maryland Audubon Society supports raptor conservation and research projects in the Southern Maryland area through the "Adopt-A-Raptor" Program. The program currently includes four species: **Osprey, Barn Owl, American Kestrel and Northern Saw-whet Owl.** Each bird is banded by a licensed bird bander with a serially numbered metal band, in cooperation with the U.S. Bird Banding Laboratory. A limited number of birds are available for adoption each year!

**"Adopt-A-Nest" now available for Osprey, Barn Owl & Kestrels!**

### Adoptive "parents" will receive:

A certificate of adoption with the bird's band number, and location and date of banding.

Information on the ecology and migration patterns of the species

Any other pertinent information that may become available

### Your support helps provide:

- Barn Owl Nest Boxes
- Osprey Nesting Platforms
- Kestrel Nest Boxes
- Mist Nets or Banding Supplies

Complete the form below to "Adopt-A-Raptor" with the Southern Maryland Audubon Society

Mail completed form to: *Carole Schnitzler, Adopt-a-Raptor, 3595 Silk Tree Court, Waldorf, MD 20602*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 as it should appear on Adoption Certificate

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to adopt:

- \_\_\_\_\_ (# of) Osprey, \$10 each / \$25 per nest  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (# of) Barn Owl, \$25 each / \$50 per nest  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (# of) Northern Saw-whet Owl, \$30 each  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (# of) American Kestrel, \$35 each / \$75 per nest

Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

*Make checks payable to: Southern Maryland Audubon Society*

# 2016 Fall Field Trips and Programs

October 15 – SATURDAY – 8:00 a.m. – 12 Noon

## FIELD TRIP

**Elms Environmental Education Center, St. Mary's County**

49300 St. James Road, Dameron, MD 20628

**"BIRDING 101"** - Youths Welcome!

Leader(s): Bob Boxwell and Margarita Rochow

Calling on all wannabe birders!! Are you tired of saying "What bird is that?" Do you want to get better knowing what birds you are seeing? Birding 101 is the field trip for you! The more you walk the walk, the better you become! The location at the Elms Environmental Education Center offers a great habitat for birds. Bob and Margarita will point out helpful identification points such as: bird bill and facial markings, plumage details, field marks, flight patterns, sound, behavior, and habitat and seasonal expectation. Learn about birding apps too. Directions: 49300 St. James Road, Dameron, MD 20628. Take Rt 235 south, then left onto St. James Church road (opposite Mattapany Road). You will see the sign for the Elms Environmental Education Center. Meet at the "hunter's parking lot" on the right, 100 yards before the gate. RSVP to Bob Boxwell at 410-610-5124 or [Bobboxwell@hotmail.com](mailto:Bobboxwell@hotmail.com)

October 23 – SUNDAY – 8 am – 12 noon

## FIELD TRIP

**Newtowne Neck State Park, St. Mary's County**

MD 243, Compton, MD 20627

**"BIRDING NEWTOWNE'S FIELDS, FORESTS AND BAYS"**

Leader: David Moulton

A peninsula defined by Breton Bay, the Potomac River and St. Clements Bay, this 776-acre property of woodlands, wetlands and agricultural fields offers a wide variety of birding habitats. Newtowne was the first settlement in the Maryland province after St. Mary's City. Owned for nearly 3 centuries by the Jesuits, the land was reclaimed as a state park in 2009 to protect it from development. Take Rte. west from Leonardtown. Turn left (south) on Rte. 243 (Newtowne Neck Road) for 4.5 miles to parking lot just beyond St. Francis Xavier's Church. RSVP to David Moulton at 240-278-4473 or [moulton.davidh@gmail.com](mailto:moulton.davidh@gmail.com).

October 29 – SATURDAY – 12:00-3:00 p.m.

## FIELD TRIP

**Mallows Bay Park, Charles County**

1440 Wilson Landing Road, Nanjemoy, MD 20662

**"BOO!! THE GHOSTS OF MALLOW'S BAY"**

Youths Welcome

Leader: Lynne Wheeler

What better way to enjoy Halloween than to visit the "Ghost Fleet" of Mallows Bay and scare up some birds! Walk with the Southern Maryland Audubon Society at Mallows Bay Park and learn about shipwrecks, archaeological sites, and wildlife all situated in a unique wetland, woodland and aquatic habitat which includes an evolving ecosystem. Come and enjoy the numerous Osprey and Bald Eagles soaring above along with a discussion of the history of the fleet. The trip will include a bird walk on the parks one-mile trail where we will look for migrants, snatch final peeks at our summer friends, and welcome in our winter residents. RSVP to Lynne up to 10:00 a.m. Saturday [comstockel@aol.com](mailto:comstockel@aol.com) or 301-751-8097.

November 2 – WEDNESDAY – 7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

## MONTHLY MEETING PROGRAM

**Historic Port Tobacco Courthouse, Charles County, MD**

8430 Commerce Street, Port Tobacco, MD 20677

**"NATIVE GRASSLAND RESTORATION, MANAGEMENT AND AVIAN STUDIES AT THE CHESTER RIVER RESEARCH STATION"**

DAN SMALL, Field Ecologist, Center of Environment and Society, Washington College

This program is being hosted by the Port Tobacco River Conservancy. Dan Small is a field ecologist for the Center of Environment and Society at Washington College located on the eastern shore of Maryland. The land-based research arm of CES, the Chester River Field Research Station conducts research on breeding bird response to a long term grassland restoration project and also operates a migration banding station. During the summer months, he can be found out in the native

*continued on page 7*

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please enroll me as a member of the **Southern Maryland Audubon Society**. All of my membership dollars will help support local conservation initiatives and enable us to provide southern Maryland teacher education scholarships to attend Hog Island, Audubon Camp in Maine.

Individual/Family: \_\_\_1year \$20 \_\_\_2year \$35 \_\_\_3year \$45

Lifetime Membership: \_\_\_\$500

Donation: \_\_\_\_\_

Please enroll me as a first time member of the **National Audubon Society**. You will automatically become a member of the Southern Maryland Audubon Society. You will receive six issues of National's award winning *Audubon Magazine*. A fraction of my dues will be received to our chapter. Your renewal information will come directly from the National Audubon Society.

Introductory Offer: \_\_\_1 year \$20

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Please enroll me for electronic delivery of our monthly newsletter *The Osprey*: \_\_\_ Email me a link to download the pdf, \_\_\_ Email me a notice it is available on the website. My email address is: \_\_\_\_\_ No thank you, please mail me a paper copy.

Please make your check payable to Southern Maryland Audubon Society or National Audubon Society.

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

**GREAT NEWS!!** You can now go online and join SMAS via **PayPal**. Go to our website at [somdaudubon.org](http://somdaudubon.org) for this new option.

warm season grassland leading undergraduate interns through the fields studying breeding grassland birds. He is a NABC certified trainer and has been banding and birding for around 15 years. Dan will also inform us of his latest efforts in working with landowners to add habitat to their land that will be beneficial for grassland birds as well as helping to improve water quality.

**November 19 – SATURDAY - 8:00 a.m. - 12 Noon**

**FIELD TRIP**

**Mattawoman Wildlands, Marbury, Charles County**

Meeting location Lackey High School parking lot, Indian Head, MD 20640

**“EARLY WATERFOWL AND LATE MIGRANTS ON THE GEORGE WILMOT TRAIL”**

Leader(s): Lynne Wheeler and Bob Lukinic

This is a joint trip with the Audubon Naturalist Society and the Southern MD Audubon Society. We usually expect large concentrations of waterfowl on the Mattawoman Creek, along with songbirds, woodpeckers (some red-headed), and raptors. Meet at Lackey High School parking lot, 3000 Chicamuxen Road, Indian Head, MD 20640 at 7:45 a.m. Bring waterproof shoes or low boots, and dress for possible wind. Be prepared for a one-mile walk to and from the head of the trail, and then a half-mile walk on uneven forest trail. Make reservation with Lynne at 301-751-8097 or [comstockel@aol.com](mailto:comstockel@aol.com).

**December 2 - FRIDAY – 8:00 - 9:00 p.m.**

**FIELD TRIP**

**Myrtle Point Park, St. Mary's County**

24050 Patuxent Blvd, California, MD 20619

**“WINTER OWL PROWL ON MYRTLE POINT”** – Youths Welcome!

Leader: Bob Boxwell

This trip is co-sponsored with the Friends of Myrtle Point Park and is an annual event which attempts to “call out” the resident owls of the park. Owls are nocturnal, and therefore, not easy to spot. We will meet in front of the park gates and attempt to attract owls by having them respond to recorded calls. Please dress for the weather, but avoid “noisy” clothing (please no snowsuits!). This event is weather dependent. Rain or high winds will result in cancellation, so please RSVP with good phone/email address. To find Myrtle Point Park, take Rt. 4 in St. Mary's County to Patuxent Boulevard, and follow to the end. RSVP to Bob Boxwell at 410-610-5124 or [Bobboxwell@hotmail.com](mailto:Bobboxwell@hotmail.com)

**December 7 – WEDNESDAY – 7:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.**

**MONTHLY MEETING PROGRAM**

**St. Francis de Sales Community Building, Charles County, MD**

7185 Benedict Avenue, Benedict, MD 20612 (church address, community building is past the church)

**“Ospreys on the Patuxent”**

GREG KEARNS, Park Naturalist II, Patuxent River Park, MD-National Capital Park and Planning

Join us to learn about Ospreys, the often-seen “fish hawk” of local rivers and the Chesapeake Bay, with photos by Greg Kearns. His program will cover Osprey biology on the Patuxent River, the provision of nesting platforms, efforts to increase their numbers, his banding program with the public, re-introduction efforts, satellite tracking of migration and other interesting facts. He promises that, “You will be on the edge of your seat as you learn more about this unique species of raptor.” SMAS will be offering a variety of Osprey oriented holiday gifts for purchase.

**December 9 - FRIDAY – 8:00 - 9:00 p.m.**

**FIELD TRIP**

**The Elms Environmental Education Center, St. Mary's County**

49300 St. James Road, Dameron, MD 20628

**“WINTER OWL PROWL AT THE ELMS ENVIRONMENTAL ED CENTER”**

Leaders: Bob Boxwell and Margarita Rochow

Come “call out” the owls!! Youths especially welcome. Owls are nocturnal, and therefore not easy to spot. A great Friday night family outing at The Elms Center. Dress appropriately for the weather, and avoid noisy clothing. This event is weather dependent. Rain or high winds will result in cancellation, so please RSVP with good phone/email address. Directions: 49300 St. James Road, Dameron, MD 20628. Take Rt 235 south, then left onto St. James Church road (opposite Mattapany Road). You will see the sign for the Elms Environmental Education Center. We will meet in the “hunter's parking lot” on the right about 100 yards before the gate. RSVP to Bob Boxwell at 410-610-5124 or [Bobboxwell@hotmail.com](mailto:Bobboxwell@hotmail.com).

**CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS 2016-2017**

Please join us and help count birds for the 117th Christmas Bird Count. Come and participate in one of the largest and oldest citizen science programs. Beginner birders welcome. Contact coordinator below.

**December 18 Port Tobacco CBC**

(Gwen Brewer, [3wigeons@verizon.net](mailto:3wigeons@verizon.net))

**December 18 Point Lookout CBC**

(Bob Boxwell, [Bobboxwell@hotmail.com](mailto:Bobboxwell@hotmail.com))

**January 1 Patuxent River CBC**

(Andy Brown, [brownaj@co.cal.md.us](mailto:brownaj@co.cal.md.us))

**January 2 FT. Belvoir/ MD shoreline CBC**

(Lynne Wheeler, [comstockel@aol.com](mailto:comstockel@aol.com))

**EDITOR: Tyler Bell E-mail: [jtylerbell@yahoo.com](mailto:jtylerbell@yahoo.com)**

**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.**

**2016-2017 Officers**

**President, Lynne Wheeler - 301.743.3236; 301.751.8097**

**Vice-President, Bob Lukinic - 301.283.6317**

**Treasurer, Will Daniel - 571.237.1122**

**Secretary, Julie Daniel - 240.346.1931**