

The Osprey



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<http://somdaudubon.org/>

Newsletter of the Southern Maryland Audubon Society

REPTILE AND AMPHIBIAN ATLAS PROJECT

by George Jett

The Natural History Society of Maryland (NHSM) and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) are conducting a five-year atlas of the amphibians and reptiles of Maryland starting in January 2010 and ending in 2014. (We have already started.) The project will map the distribution of all amphibians and reptiles within the state, using mostly volunteer help, of the roughly 95 species found in the state. Amphibians and reptiles, collectively known as “herpetofauna” or “herps,” have roamed the earth for over 300 million years. Herps to you and me are turtles, lizards, snakes, frogs and toads, and salamanders.

photos by George Jett



While today’s collection of herpetofauna pales in comparison to the diversity and abundance of these creatures during their heyday, their persistence to the present day is a testament to their overall success. However, the increasing challenges that amphibians and reptiles face – in no small part resulting from human-induced

causes such as habitat loss, introduced species, over-harvesting or collecting, and environmental pollution – raises concerns for their continued success and even survival. Worldwide declines in amphibian and reptile populations have been occurring at an accelerated rate over the past twenty years, threatening many species with extinction.

The goal is to survey (atlas) the entire state of Maryland. Maryland has twenty-three counties, and each county has a county coordinator. The Southern Maryland Audubon Society (SMAS) membership covers four of Maryland counties. All four counties covered by SMAS membership are taking part in the study. The county coordinators can be contacted at their emails:

Calvert: Andy Brown: brownaj@co.cal.md.us
Charles: George Jett: gmjett@comcast.net
Prince George's: George Middendorf:
gmiddendorf@howard.edu
St. Mary's: Kyle Rambo: kyle.rambo@navy.mil

Each county is divided up in quadrants, and each quad is divided into six blocks. As a SMAS member you likely live in one of these blocks, so herps around your house count. At the least you could email your county coordinator about any turtles, lizards, snakes, frogs and toads, and salamanders you see or hear on your property. Frogs and toads are easier to find by the songs which they are now singing. If you are really interested, the way you can get involved is to contact the county coordinator in which you live. To pique your interest see the attached image. It is an example of amplexus - that is what they call when frogs mate. Since this is a family newsletter, I will leave it there.

Your help is greatly needed. If interested in the study, either as a volunteer or just curious, take a look at the Maryland Amphibian and Reptile Atlas (MARA) handbook. The purpose of this document is to provide instruction and written standard operating procedures for data collection as part of the study. The handbook is located at:
<http://www.marylandnature.org/mara/>

As one who loves nature, this is going to be an exciting and educational study.

George Jett, Charles County Coordinator
gmjett@comcast.net www.georgejett.net

ADMINISTRATION DRILLING PLAN SENDS WRONG MESSAGES ON ENERGY PRIORITIES

New York, NY, March 31, 2010 - Comments of Mike Daulton, Audubon Policy Director on Administration lifting of offshore drilling restrictions.

"We are very disappointed with the administration's plan to expand dangerous offshore drilling that threatens our beaches and coastal economies."

"The Obama administration's plans for expanded drilling in many offshore areas perpetuates the fiction that we can drill our way to energy independence. The real solution will come from expansion of clean sources of energy like properly-sited solar and wind power and expanded efficiency measures and energy conservation. The administration deserves credit for making progress promoting clean energy, but this dirty energy approach is a step backward. To the extent that drilling may be needed to meet some short term energy needs, those needs can be met with energy production in areas that are already available rather than risk oil spills in pristine coastal areas.

"The administration's selective approach to identifying areas for drilling attempts to reflect the reality that some places are simply too fragile to risk. Though it properly emphasizes the role of sound science in making long-term energy decisions, it fails to protect many highly sensitive areas. For example, it leaves in place Lease Sale 193 in the Chukchi Sea despite widely acknowledged scientific gaps and serious environmental risks.

"We urge the Obama administration to focus on clean energy priorities and to protect America's special places from the risks of oil drilling."

Background: President Obama to Open Offshore Areas to Oil Drilling

The Obama administration proposes to open vast expanses of ocean water along the Atlantic coastline, the eastern Gulf of Mexico and the north coast of Alaska to oil and natural gas drilling for the first time. The plan would end a longstanding moratorium on oil exploration along the East Coast, including Florida and Virginia. Large tracts in the Chukchi Sea and Beaufort Sea in the Arctic Ocean north of Alaska — nearly 130 million acres — would be eligible for exploration and drilling after extensive studies.

Action people can take to help birds and stem Climate Change

Audubon Action Center
www.audubon.org/globalWarming

Garrison Frost
510-601-1866 x225
gfrust@audubon.org

Delta Willis
212-979-3197
Senior Communications Manager
dwillis@audubon.org

NEW ONLINE BROCHURE: HOW TO PREVENT BIRDS FROM COLLIDING WITH HOME WINDOWS/DOORS



You Can Save Birds From Flying Into Windows. Photo: © ABC

(Washington, D.C., March 25, 2010) American Bird Conservancy (ABC) has just published a new, downloadable brochure (www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/collisions_flyer.pdf) that offers a variety of tips on how to reduce the chances of birds flying into home windows and glass doors. Scientists estimate that 300 million to one billion birds die each year from collisions with glass, the majority of which is on homes.

"A bird may survive flying thousands of miles on migration, only to die when it tries to fly to a tree, or sky reflected in your window. That's tragic. It's also preventable. This publication emphasizes quick, cost effective ways to reduce the chances of that happening, while minimizing obstruction of your view," said Dr. Christine Sheppard, Manager of ABC's Collisions Program.

"Every year, people bump into glass doors. This happens enough that you'll often see frosted areas at eye level, especially in public buildings." she said. "The same thing happens to birds, only most collisions are lethal."

The publication describes techniques homeowners can use to help birds see windows, and includes links to suppliers of suggested materials.

ABC is the only national organization with a program dedicated to reducing bird deaths from collisions. ABC promotes bird-friendly construction and has helped develop legislation recently introduced by Congressman Mike Quigley, (D-Ill.) that would require bird-safe construction for new federal buildings. ABC is also conducting research to identify the most effective ways to deter bird collisions and how to rate effectiveness of different materials. Dr. Sheppard said much of the work in the collisions program is made possible through a generous grant by the Leon Levy Foundation.

HUMMINGBIRDS!

by Tyler Bell

Here's a little how-to for hummingbird feeding. Please feel free to share this with friends, neighbors or your neighborhood newsletter. I'd be happy to send you the file via email.

Our one cup Pyrex measuring cup has metric on one side, which makes life a lot simpler. Microwave 200 mLs of water for about 1.5 minutes or until boiling. Float a toothpick in the water for safety. Microwaves superheat water and when you add sugar, it can cause the water to explode upward. If you'd like a chemistry lesson on this, I'd be happy to oblige.

Add 50 mLs of sugar and stir until dissolved. The first batch of the season you may want to add a bit more sugar as the birds arriving will be quite hungry. Allow to cool before hanging the feeder out.

Most hummingbird feeders have either a red base or a red reservoir so adding red food coloring is not necessary. There are unsubstantiated rumors that red food dye causes kidney damage to hummingbirds. If you do add it, you will not need to continue after early May as the migrants will be gone leaving only the residents.

Clean out the feeder once the nectar shows any hint of cloudiness. Scrub out the feeder in a mild soapy solution and rinse with copious quantities of water. You may need to remove the fake yellow flowers that some feeder have as gunk tends to accumulate around them and on the inside of the base behind them. A periodic rinse in a weak bleach solution may be necessary if you can't remove the black crud with soap alone. Again, rinse with lots of water.

Don't believe the urban legend that keeping your feeders up in the fall will prevent the hummers from migrating. The change in the day length will tell them when to leave. Our hummers usually leave around Labor Day though migrants continue to move through the area until late September. If you choose to leave your feeders up after September, you may need to sweeten the mixture to 1/4 sugar to 3/4 water. This will keep the nectar from freezing to temps into the mid to upper 20s.

The reason for leaving feeders up until Thanksgiving, or later, is that there are occasional stray hummingbirds from west of the Mississippi. Typically, these are Rufous Hummingbirds but there are records of Black-chinned Hummingbirds from DC and NJ (WAY overdue in MD), Anna's, Allen's Hummingbird and Calliope Hummingbirds from MD. Sometimes something truly extraordinary shows up. There was a Green Violet-ear about 1/2 mile west of the MD border in WV and a Green-breasted Mango that showed up around Thanksgiving in NC. Once it gets cold, the nectar won't spoil for quite a long time. If you do leave

your feeders up and you have a late visitor, please email either me or George Jett. With your permission, we can notify someone who can capture and band stray hummingbirds. Plus, we'd like to see it!

If you have any questions, feel free to email either of us.

Tyler Bell jtylerbell@yahoo.com

George Jett gmjett@comcast.net



photo by George Jett

MD-SMAS LISTSERVE INFO

I'd like to introduce any of you who are not familiar with our listserv. Welcome to MD-SMAS, the email discussion list for Audubon in Southern Maryland, where you can:

- * share timely information about Southern Maryland environmental issues
- * compare notes about Southern Maryland Audubon chapter activities,
- * discuss birds and birding in Southern Maryland, and
- * stay in touch with the Southern Maryland Audubon Society Board of Directors

The discussions are meant to be free-ranging but should generally center around local, state and national issues that affect the Southern Maryland environment. Through sharing information, we all become more effective in our Audubon efforts!

The MD-SMAS mailing list will function as a large e-mail distribution list, linking the people of Southern Maryland Audubon.

List Owner: Tyler Bell
E-mail: jtylerbell@yahoo.com
Southern Maryland Audubon Society

Group Email Addresses

Post message:
md-smas@yahoogroups.com
Subscribe:
md-smas-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
Unsubscribe:
md-smas-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com
List owner:
md-smas-owner@yahoogroups.com

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Kevin Beyer, Port Republic
Eleanor Bowen, Prince Frederick
Joseph Bowes, Compton
Tom & Linda Conroy, Solomons
John Covington, Temple Hills
Charles Ekis, Saint Leonard
Charles & Madeleine Follett, Solomons
Marianne Frankhauser, Chesapeake Beach
Mary Gaskins, Waldorf
Marianne Goller, Owings
Kendall Harris, Oxon Hill
Donna Heston, Brandywine
C.A. Holley, Leonardtown
Evelyn Holt, Indian Head
Joyce Judd, California
Edward Krupa, La Plata
M.G. Marlay, St. Mary's City
Elizabeth O'Brien, Newburg
William Omara II, Chesapeake Beach
G. Orme, Owings
Patricia Van Ryswick, Leonardtown
Kenneth Sebra, Dameron
Colin Shisler, Saint Leonard
Raymond Talley, California
Doreen Thompson, Lexington Park
Robert Wallace, Compton
Jo White, Hughesville
Ronald Wright, Temple Hills

FOSTER PARENTS NEEDED



Southern Maryland Audubon Society sponsors the banding of nestling birds of prey, or raptors, with serially numbered aluminum bands in cooperation with the Bird Banding Laboratory of the U. S. Department of the Interior, as part of our bird research and conservation activities in Southern Maryland. Limited numbers of Osprey and Barn Owl nestlings become available each year for adoption. The gift of \$10 for an Osprey adoption, or of \$25 for a Barn Owl adoption, contributes to a special fund for the support of raptor research and raptor conservation projects. The foster parent receives:

- A certificate of adoption with the number of the U. S. Department of the Interior band, and the location and date of the banding.
- Information on the ecology and migration patterns of the species, photo of a fledgling, and any other information on whereabouts or fate of the bird that may be available.

Interested? Here's how to become a foster parent of an Osprey or a Barn Owl. Send \$10.00 for each Osprey, or \$25 for each Barn Owl to:

Southern Maryland Audubon Society
ATTN: Adoption Program
c/o Heather Burk
11885 Provident Drive
La Plata, MD 20646-5416



SMAS MEMBERS:

Our organization is now accepting nominations for the Board of Directors. Our current officers have agreed to be nominated for the positions they now hold. There are openings for directors. Of course, any of these positions can have other nominees for them. We are looking for those interested in managing SMAS.

We find that new people coming on to the Board have new ideas and perspectives. This has helped SMAS to continue to provide the best we can for our members and the surrounding community.

Anyone interested please call me at 301-283-6317 or email at rlukinic@peoplepc.com. The positions will be voted on at our annual meeting on June 6th.

Happy birding. Bob Lukinic, President

ADOPT A RAPTOR

Name: _____

Address: _____

I wish to adopt (check one):

____ (number of) Osprey, \$10.00 each

____ (number of) Barn Owl, \$25.00 each

Amount Enclosed: _____

(Make checks payable to:
Southern Maryland Audubon Society)

MAY EVENTS

NEW!

For Beginners Only. Custom one-on-one (or two) trips in PG, Charles and St. Mary's Counties. If you feel that you would benefit from some individual attention to ease you up the learning curve of bird identification, we have three leaders who will help you. Contact leaders to make arrangements:

Charles - Jean Artes (301-743-2288, pojartes@aol.com).
Southern PG and Northern Charles - Chris Ordiway (301-203-8014, BirdRamble@strixvaria.org (email use preferred)).
St. Mary's - Patty Craig (eyrie@hughes.net (email only)).

April 24 - Saturday - 8 AM - noon

Myrtle Point Park, St. Mary's County. Field Trip
"SPRING ALONG THE PATUXENT"

Leader: Mary Piotrowski (301-472-4091, blackbearmary@hotmail.com).
From Rts. 4 & 235, go north on Rt. 4. Turn left onto Patuxent Blvd. and drive to the end where the road enters Myrtle Point. Park in the first parking lot on the left. We will be looking for early spring migrants and enjoying lovely views of the river. No facilities, no fee. RSVP required.

May 1 - Saturday - 8 AM - noon

Smallwood State Park, Charles County. Field Trip
"EARLY MIGRANTS"

Leader: Lynn Wheeler (301-743-3236, fidsruschic@aol.com). One of our favorite parks. Especially good for forest interior birds but also Red-headed Woodpecker, late waterfowl, shorebirds, nesting, and late

neotropical migrants. Previous years have produced Least and Olive-sided Flycatchers. From Rt. 225 at Mason Springs, go south on Rt. 224 (Chicamuxen Rd) about 4 miles to park entrance on right. Facilities but may be a fee. *Youths especially welcome!* RSVP required.

MAY 5 - WEDNESDAY - 7:30 p.m.

Leonardtown Library, St. Mary's County
23250 Hollywood Road (Rt. 245), Leonardtown, MD

"Ice to Birds: Two Expeditions in the Bering Sea"

DEANNA WHEELER and TOM HARTEN, local science teachers

Follow the expeditions of two PolarTREC teachers as they share the changing world of the Bering Sea: Deanna aboard the icebreaker USCGC Healy March 2009, and Tom in the Pribilofs last summer. Both were selected through a rigorous application screening process. We are fortunate to have these members of our Audubon Family share their trips with SMAS and to add these real life experiences to their teaching skills.

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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.

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Leonardtown
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