

Audubon Workshop Scholarships Available

by Millie Kriemelmeyer

Southern Maryland Audubon Society raises funds to provide full scholarships to Audubon workshops for teachers, naturalists and environmental educators who work in our service area of Calvert, Charles, St. Mary's and southern Prince George's Counties.

Scholarship winners attend an Audubon camp and workshop on Hog Island, Maine, for one week during summer 2003, learning the natural history of the Maine Coast. Experienced instructors lead field exploration on the island, boat cruises, hikes, slide shows, morning bird walks, evening presentations and discussions, and much more.

Applications for scholarships will be accepted up to March 24, 2003, and should be a letter requesting the scholarship and describing how the knowledge and experience will enhance your teaching. A letter of recommendation from your principal or immediate supervisor should accompany your application letter.

The schedule for camps and workshops will be available in December at <http://www.maineaudubon.org/programs/camps/index.html>. Mail or fax your application and recommendation letter to:

Millie Kriemelmeyer, Education Chair
Southern Maryland Audubon Society
16900 Mattawoman Lane
Waldorf, MD 20601
Fax: 1-301-782-7615

For more information, contact Millie Kriemelmeyer at 301-372-8766 or milliek@radix.net.

Environmental Legislative Issue Forum

by Millie Kriemelmeyer

Mark your calendar and attend the Environmental Legislative Issue Forum on Tuesday, February 18, at the Charlotte Hall Library from 6:30 to 9:00 P.M. The Issue Forum is your opportunity to find out the environmental issues for the 2003 Maryland General Assembly. The legislative issues will be discussed by presenters from the Citizens Campaign for the Environment, which is a coalition of more than 20 environmental organizations working together during the legislative session to pass good environmental bills and stop bad ones. You will learn ways you can help in the legislative process, which includes contacting your legislators, writing letters and emails, phoning, attending hearings, and testifying.

The Maryland Department of Legislative Information Services provides the website on the General Assembly that gives

you with much of the background information you need to advocate: <http://mlis.state.md.us>.

For more information on the Issue Forum, contact; Bob Boxwell, 410-326-2042, x45, bobboxwell@hotmail.com; or Millie Kriemelmeyer, 301-372-8766, milliek@radix.net.

Board Wishes To Expand Contact With Chapter Members Through Internet

by Bruce Metzger

At its meeting on Tuesday, November 26, 2002 the Southern Maryland Audubon Society Board decided that it was time to expand contact with its membership through the use of e-mail and through the chapter's web site. The board would like to be able to post its monthly newsletter - The Osprey - on the web site rather than mail it to all members. Since the costs of printing and mailing the monthly newsletter are the chapter's biggest expense, this action would decrease considerably the chapter's expenses. Also, the board would like to be able to contact its membership more directly, especially in those cases where "rallying the troops" quickly is essential, such as for help with emergency conservation measures or with a concerted membership response to a political issue.

Unfortunately, the chapter has little information concerning its membership's e-mail addresses; also an indicator of membership access to the Internet. Without this information electronic communications with chapter members is virtually impossible. Therefore, you will note in this issue of The Osprey a form which asks for your e-mail address and your capacity to access the Internet and the chapter web site. Please fill in the requested information and mail it to the board or e-mail your responses to Bob Boxwell at bobboxwell@hotmail.com.

The chapter ensures the privacy of all information received from its members.

Please take the time to respond to these questions and add any comments of your own. The more complete information we receive about your preferences the better we can serve the membership. Your cooperation will give the chapter an important tool to accomplish its mission.

What is your e-mail address:

Would you prefer to read the newsletter on line rather than have it mailed? _____

Have you visited the SMAS web site in the last month?
_____ In the last 3 months? _____

Do you find the information posted on the web site helpful and informative? _____

SPECIES	Port Tobacco	Pax River	Point Lookout	Fort Belvoir	Total
Red-throated Loon		1	3		4
Common Loon	1	59	41		101
Pied-billed Grebe	10	4			14
Horned Grebe	2	86	49		137
Northern Gannet			9		9
Brown Pelican		2	8		10
D-crested Cormorant	86	5	4	3	98
Great Cormorant			16		16
Great Blue Heron	25	16	49	71	161
Great Egret			1	1	2
Black Vulture	100	31	49	16	196
Turkey Vulture	88	89	78	28	283
Gter White-ftd Goose				1	1
Snow Goose	1				1
Canada Goose	2315	4754	1591	3036	11696
Mute Swan	36	101	50		187
Tundra Swan	48	107	214	546	915
Wooduck	2	3			5
Gadwall	737	73	10	983	1803
American Wigeon	51	30		556	637
American Black Duck	108	34	4	254	400
Mallard	381	519	149	1672	2721
Blue-winged Teal			3		3
Northern Shoveler				50	50
Northern Pintail	40	1	38	254	333
Green-winged Teal	60	33		16	109
Canvasback			2	444	446
Redhead			21	13	34
Ring-necked Duck	1	193		178	372
Greater Scaup		4	236	15	255
Lesser Scaup	13	670	20	1379	2082
<i>scaup sp.</i>		903	205		1108
Harlequin Duck			3		3
Surf Scoter		2	218		220
White-winged Scoter			81		81
Black Scoter		2	605		607
Long-tailed Duck		347	684		1031
Bufflehead	158	1144	810	406	2518
Common Goldeneye	3	543	322	252	1120
Hooded Merganser	9	66	37	185	297
Common Merganser	36	3		575	614
Red-breasted Merganser		28	175	7	210
Ruddy Duck	484	4187	15	459	5145
Bald Eagle - adult	38	19	11	22	90
- immature			5	12	17
Northern Harrier	7	4	6		17
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	2	5	2	13
Cooper's Hawk	2		2	2	6
<i>accipiter sp.</i>			1		1
Red-shouldered Hawk	9	25	9	13	56
Red-tailed Hawk	29	27	19	13	88
Rough-legged Hawk			1		1

SPECIES	Port Tobacco	Pax River	Point Lookout	Fort Belvoir	Total
American Kestrel	8	14	15	1	38
Merlin			1		1
Peregrine Falcon		1			1
Wild Turkey	18	1			19
American Coot	25	46		564	635
Killdeer		5	55	43	103
Sanderling		11	46		57
Purple Sandpiper			1		1
Common Snipe		1	1	10	12
American Woodcock		4			4
Laughing Gull	13				13
Bonaparte's Gull		64	18	3	85
Ring-billed Gull	385	1685	840	2124	5034
Herring Gull	178	248	132	279	837
Great Black-backed Gull	4	38	37	13	92
Kelp Gull		1			1
Forster's Tern			3		3
<i>tern sp.</i>			1		1
Rock Dove		63		51	114
Mourning Dove	107	443	203	93	846
Eastern Screech Owl		4	8	5	17
Great Horned Owl	1	11	9	3	24
Barred Owl	2	2	3	1	8
Short-eared Owl		2			2
Rufous Hummingbird	1				1
Belted Kingfisher	14	34	18	12	78
Red-headed Woodpecker	2	2			4
Red-bellied Woodpecker	86	101	56	97	340
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	27	24	6	15	72
Downy Woodpecker	48	107	27	50	232
Hairy Woodpecker	11	18	6	14	49
Northern Flicker	77	77	63	63	280
Pileated Woodpecker	12	18	5	23	58
Eastern Phoebe	7	7	4	7	25
Blue Jay	192	241	86	115	634
American Crow	635	547	217	307	1706
Fish Crow			3	200	203
<i>crow, sp.</i>		31	25	10	66
Horned Lark		15	104		119
Carolina Chickadee	158	280	132	189	759
Tufted Titmouse	140	148	64	157	509
Red-breasted Nuthatch	37	1			38
White-breasted Nuthatch		16	1	53	70
Brown-headed Nuthatch			20		20
Brown Creeper	7	4	3	10	24
Carolina Wren	134	178	105	106	523
House Wren		2	1		3
Winter Wren	2	5	4	4	15
Sedge Wren			2		2
Golden-crowned Kinglet	24	21	14	10	69
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	22	18	67	12	119
Eastern Bluebird	262	287	213	83	845

SPECIES	Port Tobacco	Pax River	Point Lookout	Fort Belvoir	Total
Hermit Thrush	27	31	28	20	106
American Robin	216	1244	603	106	2169
Gray Catbird	1	6	1		8
Northern Mockingbird	89	114	68	48	319
Brown Thrasher	9	8	2	5	24
European Starling	550	6986	571	839	8946
American Pipit	3		31		34
Cedar Waxwing	792	1383	861	92	3128
Yellow-rumped Warbler	147	271	258	40	716
Pine Warbler		5	4		9
Palm Warbler		1			1
Eastern Towhee	58	27	17	9	111
American Tree Sparrow		5		5	10
Chipping Sparrow	31	20			51
Field Sparrow	32	42	56	3	133
Savannah Sparrow	7	2	27	1	37
Fox Sparrow			18	3	21
Song Sparrow	86	277	133	91	587
Swamp Sparrow	11	21	45	78	155
White-throated Sparrow	376	905	240	220	1741
White-crowned Sparrow	5	6	17		28
Dark-eyed Junco	495	1026	150	261	1932
Northern Cardinal	167	365	182	163	877
Red-winged Blackbird	806	586	362	72	1826
Eastern Meadowlark	19	27	96	10	152
Rusty Blackbird	1			1	2
Common Grackle	940	148	49	68	1205
Brown-headed Cowbird	55	41	26	6	128
<i>blackbird, sp</i>		7529		60	7589
Purple Finch	11				11
House Finch		253	57	83	393
American Goldfinch	88	144	78	99	409
House Sparrow	79	135	101	126	441
Totals:	12624	40551	12559	18700	84434

Fort Belvoir Christmas Bird Count Maryland Side
By Carol Ghebelian, Coordinator

Clear weather continued to bless SMAS counters for our 3rd 2002 Christmas Bird Count held on Dec. 29th. Twenty-four field counters and 5 feeder watchers tallied a total of 90 species on the Maryland Side of the Fort Belvoir count circle. This total matched our high of 90 in 1985. Nearly 19,000 individual birds were reported.

Record numbers of Gadwall, American Wigeon, and Northern Pintail were among the 21 species of waterfowl sighted on the Potomac and in the Piscataway, Pomonkey, Mattawoman, and Broad Creeks. Gwen Brewer spotted a Greater White-fronted Goose among the Canada Geese at Piscataway Park. It appears to be lingering in the area most recently found among the geese on the fields at National Colonial Farm. The Greater White-fronted Goose is new to this count, bringing our cumulative species total to 125. Other birds of note were Paul Nistico's Great Egret, apparently wintering at the Piscataway Wastewater

Treatment Plant; Tree Sparrows seen by Paul Nistico and George Wilmot; and Rusty Blackbirds seen by Jean Artes' party at the Mount Aventine Swamp. The Potomac River remains high in Bald Eagle wintering population. Thirty-four were sighted—22 mature, 12 immature. Winter finches were not found; Northern Bobwhite and Red-headed Woodpecker continue to be missing. No other remarkable trends were noted. Our crow population appears to be stable but it will be interesting to see how the West Nile Virus impacted crows and other species on larger census reports.

Thanks to all who made the day so successful.

Patuxent River Christmas Bird Count
by Lisa Lister

Thirty two people braved mid-morning snow flurries to help twitch the highest Pax River Count in its eight year history. One-hundred seven species (topping our previous best of 106 in 1999) and 40,547 individuals, which dwarfed our previous high of 34,085 in 2000 made for a great group effort.

Highlights of the count included count highs in just about every species seen. Canada Geese, Ruddy Duck, European Starling and blackbird sp. All tallied over 4000 individuals with blackbirds topping 7000.

All seven woodpecker species that normally occur in southern Maryland in winter were counted. One lucky group counted all seven at Calvert Cliffs State Park. Four species of owl were noted, the common three plus Short-eared. Other interesting species included a count first of Western Palm Warbler, two Brown Pelicans, a Peregrine Falcon, 19 Bald Eagles and the Kelp Gull still frequenting Sandgates.

Two disturbing trends were noted this year. The number of Mute Swans in the count area has steadily increased over the eight year count. This year was the highest with 101. Also, European Starlings are in staggeringly high numbers with just under 7000.

The group held its tally rally at Boomerangs and plans on continuing that tradition next year. Andy Brown will coordinate both counties. Next year's goal: 110 species.

Point Lookout Christmas Bird Count
by Bob Boxwell

Ten parties comprising 18 individuals participated in the Point Lookout Christmas Bird Count this year. The weather was fairly cooperative and except for a breeze over the water it was actually pleasant out. The birds weren't real

cooperative with around 12,000 individuals counted. We ended up with 104 species with 3 Harlequin Ducks and a Rough-legged Hawk being the highlights.

On a personal note, I find I enjoy things more when I can share them. And actually the counts are in the spirit of the season. You give of your knowledge and experience and you are rewarded with an enthusiasm that is sometimes lacking from *old hands*. It renews your energy and makes you remember why you started birding in the first place. And of course, birds really are cool.

Christmas Count has been a tradition for me for over ten years now. It is a reflective time and one where I miss friends who are no longer around. But it is also a time to renew friendships and make new ones. And when you get right down to it, what could be better than a day outdoors with like-minded company and some cool birds to count?

Port Tobacco Christmas Count
by George Wilmot

Nineteen brave souls showed up to perform the Port Tobacco Christmas Bird Count. One of the most interesting birds seen on the count was the Rufous Hummingbird seen by George Jett and Gwen Brewer and very well documented. Also about 31 Chipping Sparrows were seen - one by Bob Boxwell and 30 by the Sector 6 Team. This sparrow is quite uncommon in the winter. Otherwise the count results were similar to those of the 2001 Port Tobacco Xmas Count.

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. A fraction of my dues will be returned to the local chapter. **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. A fraction of my dues will be returned to the local chapter. **Make check payable to National Audubon Society.**

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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

- Chapter 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

FEBRUARY EVENTS

February 5 – Wednesday – 7:30 p.m.

Monthly Meeting

Clearwater Nature Center, Cosca Regional Park,
Prince George's County, Clinton, Maryland

Breeding Bird Atlas: An Update

WALTER ELLISON, *State Atlas Coordinator*

The MD/DC Breeding Bird Atlas project has just entered its second year. Walter Ellison and members of the State Atlas Board will discuss the results of the first year of atlasing in Maryland and D.C. They will discuss the good birds found and the extent of coverage during the first year of field work and present some early conclusions about bird range changes – both gains and losses. The Atlas is a collective effort; come and learn how much the members of the Southern Maryland Audubon Society and other organizations have been able to achieve in the first year of the project.

February 2 - Sunday - 8 a.m.

Field Trip

Indian Creek Natural Resources Management Area, Charles County

“WINTER LAND BIRDS AND WATERFOWL”

Leader: George Jett (301-843-3524). Half day trip. This NRMA contains forest, field, swamp and tidal water habitats. A wide variety of winter birds is expected. Meet in the NRMA parking lot on the south side of Rt. 231 about a mile west of the Patuxent River Bridge at Benedict.

February 17 - Monday - 9 a.m.

Field Trip

Myrtle Point, St. Mary's County

“GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT”

Leader: Bob Boxwell (410-326-2042, ext. 45). Half day trip. Join in this fun and educational event. Diverse habitat should make for an interesting morning. See January Osprey for details. Geared for middle school and older. From Calvert County, take Rt. 4 across the Thomas Johnson Bridge and turn right onto Patuxent Blvd about 2 1/4 miles west of the bridge. From St. Mary's County, take Rt. 4 towards Solomons and turn left onto Patuxent Blvd. Follow to the end and meet in the parking lot on the left where we will divide into teams.

February 26- Wednesday-7:00 p.m.

Board of Director's Meeting

SMECO Office

White Plains, MD

EDITOR: Dean Newman

44328 Ivy Stone Lane, California, MD 20619

Phone Number: (301) 757-9170

E-Mail: rdnewman@erols.com

The deadline for the Osprey is normally the 5th of each month. Please send all short articles, reports, unique sightings, conservation updates, calendar items, etc., to the above address. If time is a problem, call the number above.

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

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