

# Chip Notes

BALTIMORE BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER



No. 389

Fall 2014

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## The BBC Information Person, a Community Service

by Carol Schreter

An e-mail message says: "What is the bird nesting on my windowsill in Canton? Here's a photo."

Next: "I'm a birdwatcher from British Columbia, from Canada, working in Baltimore for two months. I don't have a car. How can I spend some time birdwatching, while here?"

My name is listed on the BBC website for general information. I get nearly one query a week, by phone or e-mail. Mostly people want information.

I answer the question and try to point them to useful long-term resources elsewhere. Sometimes they provide information.

Upon receiving a Mourning Dove photo, and a request for an ID, I'll say: Congratulations. You are host to a nesting Mourning Dove. For more information about this bird, go to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology website [www.AllAboutBirds.com](http://www.AllAboutBirds.com).

I often refer requests to other BBC members. For instance, John Landers, who is also listed at [www.birdingpal.com](http://www.birdingpal.com), has taken Baltimore visitors out birding.

Injured birds need immediate attention. For help with injured birds, the Phoenix Wildlife Center is now identified, with contact information, on page 1 of the BBC website.

One call was very sad. Someone had died, leaving behind a pet parrot, owned for 20 years. I referred the deceased's elderly parents to the Baltimore Bird Fanciers. Their website links to a nationwide place to post exotic birds for adoption.

A Chesapeake Bay Journal writer wanted background information about the Yellow-crowned Night Herons nesting along the Jones Falls at the Steiff Silver bridge.

Some queries are more complicated. For their centennial celebration in 2013, Guilford Community Association wanted to have a bird list specific to their neighborhood. Kevin Graff, Joan Cwi and Debbie



TIME TO PAY  
YOUR ANNUAL BBC  
MEMBERSHIP DUES—  
payment envelopes are  
in the mail!

PLEASE RETURN AS SOON  
AS POSSIBLE.

*Continued on page 3*

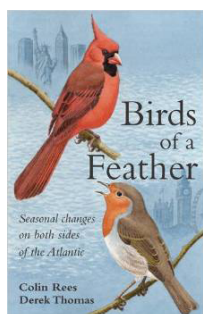
## President's Corner

by Joan Cwi



There is a published author in our midst—Colin Rees from the Anne Arundel bird club. Just released—*Birds of a Feather: Seasonal Changes on Both Sides of the Atlantic*—which he co-

authored with his friend of 40 years, Derek Thomas, is available online at Amazon. All profits go to wildlife conservation in the USA and the UK.



In this one year diary about avian-centric observations, written by two talented and sensitive men, you get to know

their thoughts, countries, families, and even their dogs. The book is written over the course of a year in point-counterpoint style. It starts in January 2010 and ends in December. Each author writes a commentary or two per week. Often the observations are similar, sometimes polar opposites. So the reader gets to “feel” the natural world evolve in parallel on each side of the Atlantic.

Both men are British by birth, but Colin has lived stateside for much of his life. Both are avid bird watchers and conservationists. And both are poignant observers of the natural world. You can feel the rhythms and pulses of nature—like seasons, migrations, nesting, molts or Iceland’s cataclysmic volcanic eruption of 2010 and the Gulf Oil disaster. The descriptions of their sensory experiences—the cry of the osprey, the smell of the bog, the ocean breeze, the colors of the landscape—are so vivid as to be almost palpable for the reader.

Colin lives in the Chesapeake Bay area, so his writing brought back memories of many events,

*Continued on page 3*

## Conservation CORNER

### More on Birds and Bees and Pesticides

by Dixie Mullineaux

A new Dutch study makes a definitive connection between the use of a group of pesticides called neonicotinoids and declines in bug-eating bird populations.

The Dutch Center for Field Ornithology found that the higher the concentration of Imidacloprid, the most commonly used neonic, the greater the downturn in bird numbers over time. Researchers could find no link in the decreasing numbers of birds and other factors, or drops in numbers before neonics were put into use.

"The effects could be more widespread in the ecosystem than we thought" says ornithologist Ruud Foppen. Foppen and his colleagues analyzed data on water pollution, as neonicotinoids travel to waterways in farm runoff. The scientist speculates that when high levels of the pesticide spread beyond farms, they kill off many insects, cutting into the food supply of birds. The researchers also acknowledge that the pesticides could be killing the birds directly.

And in a quiet, but strong statement, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, on July 14, announced a gradual phasing out of neonicotinoid pesticide use on its land in the Pacific region (Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon and Washington.) "Potential broad-spectrum adverse effects to non-target species" was mentioned as the reason for the decision.

### Duck Stamps

by Kurt Schwarz

Many of you are familiar with the Duck Stamp, issued by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Purchase of a stamp will provide free admission to any National Wildlife Refuge charging

*Continued on page 3*

*BBC Information Person, cont'd*

Terry created this list, that was published on their website during the centennial celebration.

School teachers ask for birders to provide bird talks or bird walks. These requests go to our BBC Youth Activities Chairperson, now John Robinson.

Sometimes people want to protect their neighborhoods. Someone in SE Baltimore County saw illegal dumping at a protected wetland. He got the name and license plate number of the perpetrator. I suggested contacting the Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection for help.

A caller from Rockville, MD, learned of plans to pave a road within a protected forest conservation area. I referred this matter to the MOS Conservation Committee, who got the Montgomery County birdwatchers involved.

Sometimes strangers provide BBC resources. One tech-savvy stranger created a learning tool for our BBC website. Our Checklist of Baltimore Birds now has clickable links to species' descriptions on Wikipedia and All About Birds. See [www.baltimorebirclub.org/baltreg.html](http://www.baltimorebirclub.org/baltreg.html).

I can't answer every question, but I do my best, with the help of lots of other BBC members. I now think of the BBC General Information Person as a community service.

## President's Corner cont'd



places, issues and birds with which I'm familiar. Derek lives in South Wales and I found myself googling places, birds and plants to see how they looked or sounded. I mean, who would have thought a chough (rhymes with cuff) was a crow! An informality I really like is that bird names are not capitalized (unless proper) making the read flow effortlessly and naturally. A simple device perhaps, but I think taxonomic capitalization would have ruined the meditative quality of the book.

Another pleasure is the black-and-white sketches of birds, drawn by Colin's son Ian, that change each month—one bird for Wales and a different one for the Chesapeake—so readers can recognize which author is speaking. They are beautifully drawn and also reflect the changing seasons in each country. While ripe with avian knowledge and conservation issues, the real richness of the book is in sharing these observations with the authors. I found myself taking the book out to the deck at the end of the day to read a few commentaries. It is a book to be savored, along with a nice glass of wine...

## Conservation CORNER

*Duck Stamps cont'd*

admission, such as Blackwater or Bombay Hook. Funds from Duck Stamps buy habitat, 98 cents on the dollar go to habitat. The Duck Stamp is available at some Post Offices, and can be purchased at National Wildlife Refuges or via the internet.



The American Birding Association is carrying the Duck Stamp, and if you purchase through them, they can quantify the number

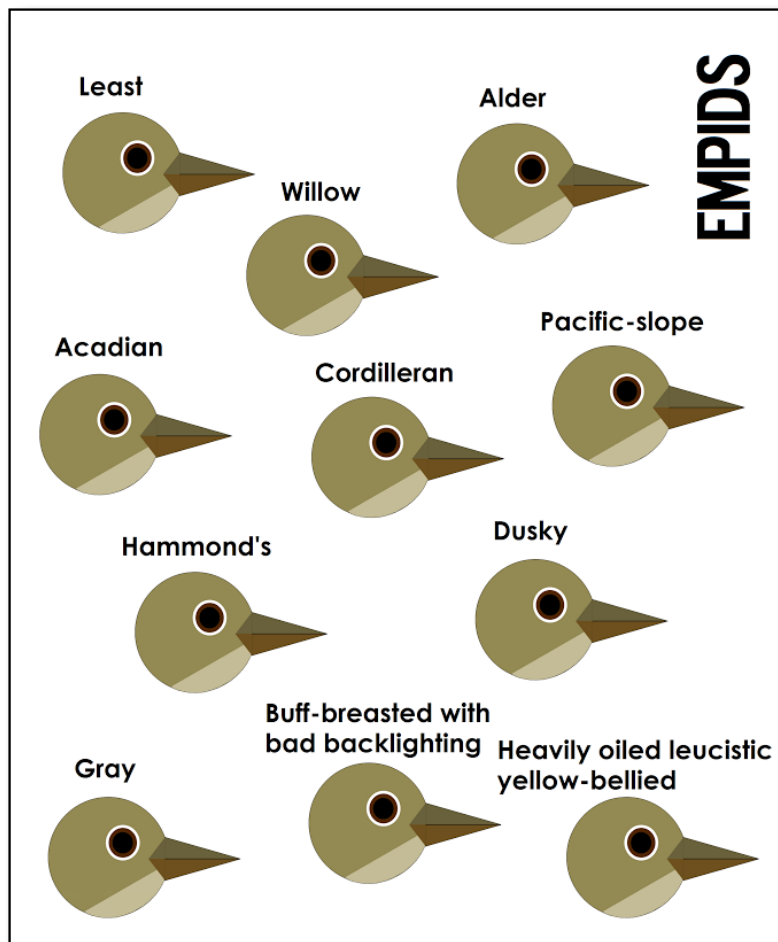
of birders buying the stamp, which will only add to our voice when it comes time to comment on usage issues. So you can buy habitat and increase our voice in managing NWRs at the same time. See <http://shop.aba.org/index.php/federal-duck-stamp/duck-stamp-2014-2015.html>

## Empids

by Paul Dennehy

A useful (or not) tool for flycatcher lovers (haters)! This comedic Empid graphic was first posted in the Bird Phrenology Program Newsletter. It was created by Paul Dennehy

(inspired by Richard Edden's bird graphics and app, BirdFace), and Paul generously is allowing others to use it for their purposes.



### Welcome!

A warm Baltimore Bird Club welcome goes out to the following members who have joined us since the Summer Chip Notes was published. Thank you for joining and we look forward to seeing you out there on our birding trips and at our meetings!

Nancy Berger, Cockeysville  
 Neil Dampier, Baltimore  
 Nikki DeBraccio, Timonium  
 Judy Jacobson, Baltimore  
 Melvin Jagielski, Towson

Martha Johnston, Baltimore  
 Lynn & Terral Jordan, Cockeysville  
 Jill Kessler, Pikesville  
 Alison Kruk, Towson

Carolyn L. Marlow, Essex  
 Bob & Suzy Meny, Towson  
 Holly Merker, Downingtown  
 Elena Messina, Baltimore  
 Kirk J. ,Meyer Baltimore



## BBCers in Costa Rica!

By Joan Cwi

This year, from April 16-24, eight BBC members, along with five members of other MOS chapters, spent nine days in southern central Costa Rica. The trip was led by local guide Mario Cordoba, owner of Crescentia Expeditions ([www.crescentiaexpeditions.com](http://www.crescentiaexpeditions.com))



and organized stateside by BBC member Bob Ringler. Locations included the Arenal Volcano, Carara Reserve and the Tarcoles River on the Pacific coast, and Savengre Lodge and Cerro de la Muerte in the highlands. The timing was at the juncture of the dry-rainy season so we enjoyed a little rain and a lot of sunshine.

Wow! In total we saw 357 species, many or most life birds for our crew. Even Bob, on his 12th trip to Costa Rica, saw 9 lifers! There were too many exotic birds to list them all, but some real highlights included the Crested Curassow and a Sunbittern. In terms of species, we saw 32 of hummingbirds—most right in front of us, 4 species of swifts, 5 species of trogons—including the Resplendant Quetzal, a White-whiskered Puffbird, 11 species of parrots including the Scarlet Macaw, 4 species of manakins, 11 species of parrots, 16 species of Torrent Flycatchers, etc., etc., etc.!

In April 2015, once again Mario and Bob are teaming to provide BBC members another great birding tour of the northern part Costa Rica. Some birds will be the same, but many will be different due to change of habitat. Our trip in 2014 was incredible in every way—birds, lodging, van, food, leadership and camaraderie. Plus, it cost about half what a similar tour would cost from one of the larger tour companies, although we stayed in the same places. So if you are interested, let Bob know—it is sure to fill up quickly. (ringler1@comcast.net or 410-303-2792)

To learn more about this trip, join us at the October 7th lecture titled “BBC Members 2014 Trip to Costa Rica: The Real Story” where we will present more tales about our adventures and lots of gorgeous pictures of this tour to Costa Rica.

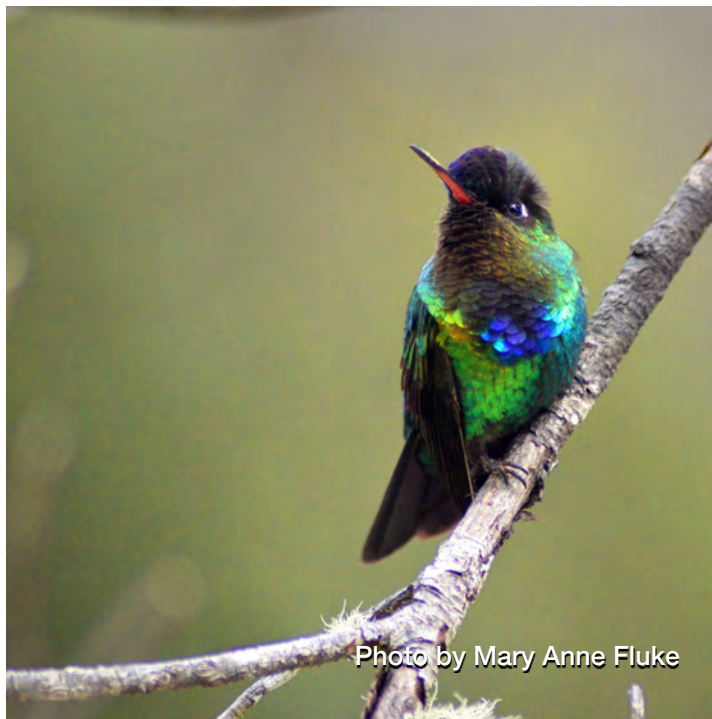


Photo by Mary Anne Fluke



## Birdbits.....

### **Cromwell Valley Park — Hawk Fest**

Weekend September 13-14, 10 AM – 3PM!

CVP is hosting the 10th anniversary of its Hawk Watch Program at the height of migration season to bring attention to the Hawk Watch program and birds of prey in general. Live birds of prey, bird walks, hawk counting, music, children's games and crafts will be available.

Come join us at CVP for this fun weekend of nature and birds. BBC's resident hawk expert, Jim Meyers, will provide an early morning walk (8:00 am Saturday), and a morning of hawk watching. We will also have BBC and LOB exhibits at the festival.

### **More Lights Out Baltimore Happenings!**

On August 7th, GBAAZK & La Cakerie held a fundraiser in the bakery's Towson store. For a \$5 donation, attendees got to enjoy light refreshments, raffle, door prizes and socializing while contributing to a good cause!

And the August edition of Baltimore Magazine had an article about LOB titled *For the Birds*. Accompanying our LOB team of Lindsay Jacks, Lynne Parks, and Aaron Heinsman around the pre-dawn downtown, the author, Brennen Jensen, did a great job describing the essence of the walks and the importance of the task. Starts on page 142, in case you can find a copy.

### **Large Chimney Swift Roosts in June?**

On June 16th, while eating outside at the Ambassador restaurant (near Charles and University) Joan Cwi saw about 150 swifts enter the Scottish Rite Temple chimney as the light faded!! She couldn't believe the number for early summer...we've had migration watches with fewer swifts. Also, the waiter told her that the swifts kept the bugs down so people were comfortable eating outside. Good to hear the birds and bugs message is getting around.

### **Good News!**

Edwin Cruz, winner of this year's Youth Backpack Award, was invited to a one-month internship with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology! He will spend the month of August there.

### **Friends School Goes Native!**

Native plants and birds go hand-in-hand, and after the Conservation Committee learned about Friends School's program to introduce native plant gardens across the campus, we inquired about the effort. Kay McConnell, at the forefront of the effort, agreed to give some BBC members a tour of the school grounds, showing us the native plant gardens and explaining the rationale for her plant and tree choices. Compliments to the school in collaboration with the Guilford Garden Club for endorsing this conservation effort. Most impressive, from our viewpoint were the choices of plants, dealing with water problems and youth education. Add to that the remarkable cooperation of so many organizations. A stunning achievement.

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**APR 22 - ROBERT E LEE PARK** - The day broke sunny and mild with promise of good migrants; as the morning progressed, it warmed noticeably and became a bit sticky. Thankfully, no rain, like the previous Tuesday. Warbler activity was minimal. Only the Parula, Yellow-rumped and Palm were seen. A lone Warbling Vireo was welcome. Other notable sightings: Wood Duck, Double Crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Green Heron, Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, Chimney Swift, Pileated Woodpecker, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and bluebird. For the second week, no Night Herons were seen. A lively group of birders, some newcomers, enjoyed a leisurely walk, also noting the spring wildflowers and budding trees. The latter provided a morning knosh for a gray squirrel. John Landers pointed out the nest of a pair of Gnatcatchers, always a challenge. 50 species. 17 participants. Leader: Paul Noell.

**APR 26 - SOLDIER DELIGHTS** - Despite a low turnout of migrant birds (everything is about a week late due to the unusually late, icy winter), we had a few highlights - Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Field Sparrows singing everywhere, beautiful looks at a couple of bright yellow Palm Warblers, a singing Blue-headed Vireo seen reasonably well, Hermit Thrushes, a late Brown Creeper, a singing Louisiana Waterthrush (singing nearby but not actually seen). 42 species. 8 participants. Leader: Pete Webb.

**APR 29 - ROBERT E LEE PARK** - We set out despite the rainy forecast and managed to see 43 species including Black-crowned Night Heron, Spotted Sandpipers, and Pileated Woodpecker. The trip ended at 10am

as the rain became steady. 43 species. 11 participants. Leader: Peter Lev.

### **MAY 3 - SUSQUEHANNA STATE PARK**

- Excellent views of two Louisiana Waterthrushes, rocks out on the river covered with cormorants, Bald Eagle flying up the river, Ospreys and Caspian Terns out there too. Most observers got brief but good views of Cerulean, Prothonotary and Kentucky Warblers as well as Black-throated Blue Warblers, American Redstart, Great Crested Flycatcher, White-eyed, Yellow-throated, Warbling, Blue-headed and Red-eyed Vireos, Orchard and Baltimore Orioles. Some of us continued with an optional extension to Swan Harbor Farm and got really good views of Virginia Rails and Soras, plus a distant, poor glimpse of a King Rail, Marsh Wren, Purple Martin, a "singing", Pied-billed Grebe, and an adult Little Blue Heron. 19 warbler species. 82 species. 17 participants. Leader: Tim Houghton

**MAY 13 - ROBERT E LEE PARK** - Plenty of birds heard, but they were hard to find in the leafy trees! Highlights – Yellow-throated Vireos; 3 sandpiper species; 9 warbler species. And thanks for the goodies, Chris! 68 species. 22 participants. Leader: Mary Chetelat.



**MAY 17 - MILFORD MILL** - Hooded Warbler seen singing, Veery seen and later heard singing, Scarlet Tanager seen singing and eating a bug. 9 warbler species. 41 species. 10 participants. Leader: Pete Webb.

**MAY 18 - GLEN ARTNEY AREA** - Spent several hours birding the Glen Artney and Orange Grove Areas of Patapsco Valley



State Park. The birds around Lost Pond were several species of swallows, Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos, both Orioles, Redstarts and multiple views of Canada Warblers. Birding by the suspension bridge, we spotted several sandpipers on the shore. We also spotted a nesting Ruby-throated Hummingbird. 46 species. 4 participants. Leader: Mary Anne Fluke.

**MAY 20 - ROBERT E LEE PARK** - A glorious day at Robert E Lee... sunny and temperatures in the upper 60's. 10 species of warbler (great looks at several Canadas) and a compatible group who worked hard to find the birds. 64 species. 19 participants. Leader: Debbie Terry.

**MAY 24 - BOMBAY HOOK** - Black-crowned Night-herons hiding in the trees at their usual spot in Bombay Hook at Bear Swamp Pool. One Peregrine Falcon caught - something - and flew off with it, at the Dupont Nature Center while we watched. 15 species of plovers and sandpipers. Black-necked Stilts, one breeding-plumage American Avocet, over 1,000 Red Knots at the Dupont Nature Center and a few more at Port Mahon Road. Black Skimmers, always a treat to see them. A young (immature plumage) Great Horned Owl peering at us from a tree at Ted Harvey W.M.A. Three Horned Larks on Whitehall Neck Road (entrance road to Bombay Hook N.W.R.). Purple Martins flying around the gourds where they nest. Good looks at a couple of adult male Orchard Orioles. 85 species. 12 participants. Leader: Pete Webb.

**MAY 25 - QUARRY LAKE** - Late May and June are good times to see breeding birds at Quarry Lake. Highlights of today's walk included seeing Baltimore Oriole, Orchard Oriole and Eastern Kingbird on nests. Willow Flycatchers and Yellow Warblers were numerous around the lake, providing good opportunities to study their songs. We had a few good migrants including a Common Loon and four Least Sandpipers. A lone female Bobolink was new species #129 for the lake. 45 species. 15 participants. Leader: John Dennehy.

**MAY 27 - ROBERT E LEE PARK** - This is the BBC's last Lake Roland spring 2014 trip-- but with enthusiasm was building among our birders! In case you haven't noticed, park rangers now post our findings for all park visitors to see. Because of the large crowd, advanced birders moved ahead on their own as the less experienced concentrated on identifying all species clearly heard and SEEN. Breeding pairs such as Red-shouldered Hawk and birds on the nest like robins and pewees were noted. There were Tree Swallows and one bluebird in the park's bird houses. And Cedar Waxwings were seen at 4-5 different locations. Common Grackles were observed in smaller numbers than during early spring migration. Common birds were seen throughout the walk, but other migrants were heard or seen only once. Warblers included Common Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler and Northern Parula. 48 species. 25 participants. Leaders: Chris Davidson & Joan Cwi.

**JUN 7- NORTHERN BALTIMORE COUNTY BREEDERS** - Highlights: Three words: RED-HEADED WOODPECKER. Also - Cliff Swallows, waxwings, rare (breeding?) Broad-winged Hawk returning for second year, Indigo Bunting, Hooded Warbler, Vesper Sparrow on wire. 63 species. 10 participants. Leaders: Pete Webb & Kevin Graff.



Photo by Bill Hubick

BALTIMORE BIRD CLUB  
<http://baltimorebirdclub.org>

A Chapter of

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**David Nelson**, Design

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**Moving or email change?**  
Send update to  
Roberta Ross at [robertaross@aol.com](mailto:robertaross@aol.com)

**Deadlines for submitting articles  
for upcoming issues:**

**October 2014**



## Baltimore Bird Club APPLICATION

*Membership year is September 1–August 31. New members only  
joining after March 1 may pay half-year rate. A full year's dues received  
after April 30 will be applied to the next membership year.*

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

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Benefits include membership in the BBC and Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS), free field trips, quarterly BBC and MOS newsletters sent electronically, lectures and other events.

### Check dues category and circle amount sent.

Category	1-YR	½ YR	Chapter Only+
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$35.00	\$17.00	\$15.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Household	\$45.00	\$22.50	\$20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$100.00		
<input type="checkbox"/> Junior*	\$10.00	\$5.00	\$5.00

\* Through 17: record age here \_\_\_\_

+Chapter Only membership is available to MOS members who are already members of another MOS chapter or who are MOS life members.

Mail completed application with check payable to:  
Baltimore Bird Club, Attn: Membership Chairman,  
4915 Greenspring Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21209