

Chip Notes

BALTIMORE BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER



WINTER 2017 No. 402

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Scotts Level Branch Restoration Revisited.....	1, 3
Welcome New Members	1
President's Corner	
BBC and MOS.....	2
Conservation Corner	
Conservation Tip	2
Bird Bits	
Cromwell Dam Jam	4
What's In A Name?	4
Holly Birds	5
Costanera Sur Ecological Reserve.....	6
Birdland and the Anthropocene	7
Taking Time to Be a Bird-Watcher.....	8, 9
Field Trip Reports	10, 11
BBC Info and Application	12



Scotts Level Branch Restoration Revisited

By Joan Cwi and Keith Costly

Background. In the Spring 2015 Chip Notes we featured the Scotts Level Branch restoration in an article titled "When It Rains, It Pours" in which we discussed how the Stormwater Remediation Fee (the so-called rain tax) was being used. Among other things, Baltimore County's Environmental Protection and Sustainability Department identified specific sites for stream restoration, shoreline enhancement, pond repairs, reforestation, and public facility environmental enhancement, including stream restoration at Scotts Level Branch off Liberty Rd. in Randallstown. The Scotts Level Branch remediation in 2014 consisted of about 1600 linear feet of stream restoration and about 8.5 acres of floodplain enhancement and wetland creation in a corridor surrounded by suburban housing. The County created a meandering stream that slows stream velocity and reduces bank erosion and filled the site with native plants that keep pesticides and fertilizers out of the stream (and ultimately out of the Chesapeake Bay), while providing wildlife habitat in the midst of expansive suburbs.

The County invited BBC and MOS to initiate wildlife surveys there beginning in July, 2014. Our members Kurt Schwarz and Keith Costley made an initial foray in December 2014 and observed 70 bird, five butterfly, five dragonfly/damselfly, several mammal, and one unknown frog species on the site. Of particular note was the observation there of Vesper and Savannah Sparrows, Eastern Meadowlark, and Rusty Blackbirds.

What do you do during your visits to SLB? This property has restricted access rights, so I had to get permission to enter it. The first two years I surveyed the property weekly, and I still go occasionally. Altogether I've recorded 110 bird species—a fair representation of what might be expected annually. The numbers kept going up over time. The highlights include eleven sparrow species (including a Vesper Sparrow), Eastern

Continued on page 3



WELCOME!

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

Karen Gieron Baltimore
Benjamin & Carol Kowarski Baltimore
Kate Gieron Cockeysville

Marianne Konka Middle River
Joe Harber Towson

President's Corner

by Peter Lev



BBC and MOS

When one pays \$35 in dues to the Baltimore Bird Club (BBC), \$15 stays with BBC and \$20 goes to the Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS). So, what is MOS, and what does it do with that \$20?

Go back far enough and you'll discover that BBC and MOS were once the same thing. In 1945 a group of Baltimore birders joined together to form the Maryland Ornithological Society. A few years later birders in other counties were forming MOS chapters, and therefore MOS became a statewide organization with Baltimore as the founding chapter. Both BBC and MOS still use Cylburn Arboretum in Baltimore as their mailing address. See Joan Cwi's history of the BBC (http://baltimorebirdclub.org/bbc_history.pdf) for details.

MOS provides numerous benefits for members, including publications, annual conference, support for local chapters, sanctuaries, conservation, research, education, and so on. In this article I will discuss only two big items: conferences and sanctuaries.

Every year MOS puts on a conference featuring field trips, a lecture or two, and the opportunity to hang out with fellow birders. The conferences are a good way to explore avian habitats around the state, with top local birders leading trips. Last year at the Garrett County conference I visited a Nature Conservancy property called The Glades, a peat bog with wild cranberries and breeding Nashville Warblers. When you walk in a peat bog the earth trembles with every step! MOS conferences are usually in May or June, but the next conference will highlight Maryland's premier spot for winter birding, Ocean City. The dates are February 2-4, 2018.

MOS owns nine bird/wildlife sanctuaries around the state and will soon acquire a tenth, forty-five acres in Garrett County given by the estate of Chan Robbins. Owning land is difficult and expensive—ask BBC member Brent Byers, who recently stepped down as chair of the MOS Sanctuary Committee.

But maintaining sanctuaries is good for wildlife and good for birders. Western Maryland's Carey Run was the focal point for a BBC weekend trip not long ago. Some attendees stayed there, others preferred motels. But all of us enjoyed the meadows and woodlands, with Chestnut-sided Warblers singing in June. On the other side of Maryland, Irish Grove in Somerset County is an amazing place, complete with a salt marsh and a meadow and a view of the Chesapeake Bay. In summer this is prime habitat for herons, rails, and sparrows; in winter it is excellent for ducks. To visit these properties, please see instructions on the MOS website (<http://mdbirds.org/sanctuary/overnight.html>). And remember, the sanctuaries are good for birds even if you and I don't visit every year.

Conservation CORNER

Conservation Tip

Do you know of the Birding Community E-Bulletin? Are you on their monthly mailing list? Check out the E-Bulletin at:

www.refugeassociation.org/news/birding-bulletin/

The Birding Community E-Bulletin is an e-mail newsletter concerning birds, birding and bird conservation. Coedited by Paul Baicich and Wayne Petersen, the newsletter is distributed by e-mail at the start of each month and is intended to keep friends and associates abreast of important bird, birding and bird conservation news.

Past issues are archived at the National Wildlife Refuge Association website. The Newsletter is now sponsored by Carl Zeiss Sport Optics. Each issue includes timely Conservation News plus columns called Rarity Focus, Access Matters, and Tip of the Month.

Scotts Level Branch Restoration Revisited continued

Meadowlark, Short-eared Owl (a bizarre flyover winging its way south), a Northern Pintail, Rusty Blackbird, Common Loon, Acadian Flycatcher, Blue-headed Vireo, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Pine Siskin. Other species include dragonflies, butterflies, fish, snakes, amphibians, frogs—a diversity of creatures for a small area in a suburban community! I also monitor a series of eight bluebird boxes put up by Baltimore County.

How has the habitat changed? After remediation the area was mostly marsh with marsh grasses. Then other types of grass appeared, including invasives. The vernal ponds and vegetation have definitely slowed the water. The water is also much cleaner. Clearly the changes have made the area more attractive to birds and other wildlife.

What do the neighbors think about the remediation? Initially many were not very happy about it, but their attitude has changed in general. It was difficult for them to see large trees (non-natives) cut down, even with the promise of new ones. But now they are friendly and welcoming, often coming up to me to share their wildlife sightings—fox, deer, groundhogs, etc. A couple of neighbors still mow down to the stream, which they're not supposed to do, so they are probably disgruntled.

Do you like this project? Yes! It has been fun, building up the eBird location list, understanding that one's contribution makes one a Citizen Scientist. Also, directly reporting back to the agency helps them feel their work is worthwhile. It has been very rewarding for all concerned.

I contacted Eric Duce, who lead this initial effort for the County and asked what he thought of Keith's work and if the remediation effort was continuing elsewhere. Although Eric works in another division now, he informed me that Dennis Genito has taken over the Scotts Level project. Eric had nothing but positive things to say about Keith's work, which were seconded by Dennis.

"For my short tenure there, I think getting Keith and the MD Ornithological Society involved was a positive move for us and for the Society. Keith is a wonderful asset. We constantly cite his photos

and work identifying and quantifying the migratory and resident birds as well as the plethora of insects present. I have to say that the belted kingfisher is my favorite and I get a smile every time I hear him/her cackle on."

"The County is very proud of the success of this project and the species diversity present after the restoration. Unfortunately, Baltimore County Council voted to remove the Stormwater Fee and our funding comes mostly from the Capital Budget and the Department of Public Works. We also have many projects that will be under construction next year and we have a few in the design process now. We'll be busy for the foreseeable future."



BBC may be looking for other similar projects to monitor in the future to add to our arsenal of citizen science projects that help inform the environmental community about the state-of-the-birds and how the environment improves their likelihood of survival. If you think you might be interested in undertaking a similar long-term project, let Peter Lev know.

Link to eBird bar chart for the Scott's Level Branch at McDonogh:

<http://ebird.org/ebird/t?byr=1900&eyr=2017&bmo=1&emo=12&r=L3018883&personal=true>

Keith's images of the wildlife in his Flickr album:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/71571556@N04/albums/72157646657777433>



Birdbits.....

Cromwell Dam Jam

On August 27 BBC took part in the Cromwell Valley Dam Jam, celebrating the Loch Raven watershed. Most of the attendees at this event were either families with children or senior citizens. Lindsay Jacks, representing Lights Out Baltimore, talked to lots of people about avoiding bird strikes on windows; some homeowners had seen this problem firsthand. BBC's Baltimore Oriole cards were a big hit—not baseball cards, but pictures and information about our state bird. Many visitors had never seen a Baltimore Oriole, even though they breed in good numbers at Cromwell Valley Park. The biggest hit of all was made by Kathy Woods and Hugh Simmons of Phoenix Wildlife Center who brought live raptors—always a thrill for the younger generation.

Thanks to Lindsay Jacks, Kevin Graff, Debbie Terry, Peter Lev, John Robinson, Mary Shock and Shirley Garrett for helping out at the Dam Jam. BBC was well-represented.

What's in a name?

By Joan Cwi

A couple of months ago my husband, John Fleishman, was hospitalized, and subsequently passed away at Johns Hopkins Hospital following a long illness. But even in times of grief there can be some beautiful moments, and I want to share one with you.

One of the night shift nurses' aids was named Ugomma. I asked her where the name came from, and she said it was Nigerian and meant "beautiful eagle." Wow, I said, what a beautiful name. I asked if she had ever seen an eagle, and she said never in the wild and it was one of her most fervent wishes to see one in the wild. So I told her about Conowingo Dam in the cold winter months. She got very excited and wrote down all my instructions.

Thereafter whenever she visited the room, to her delight we called her Beautiful Eagle.

My husband passed at 5:22 am. Before leaving her shift, Beautiful Eagle came into the room, gave me a big bear hug and sobbed on my shoulder. I said that she should be used to death given we were on the Progressive Heart Disease floor, but she said no, this was her first... and she was going to see the Conowingo eagles this winter and think of John's soul soaring among them! Now it was my turn to sob...



Holly Birds

By Sam Eisenstein*

I know that bird inside the holly,
as each spring it swoops down,
warning my companion and me

Not to try any funny business,
its new mate and he are occupied
protecting the future of all avians,

Inside the satisfactory camouflage
of the very prickly home he's picked,
which never fails to convince the girls.

It didn't come without fierce fights
for occupancy of its many rooms,
feathers of the defeated litter them.

As he circled over my companion,
the more dangerous of the two,
he couldn't resist rare maneuvers,

Because his mate was surely watching,
proud and anxious for egg and dad,
my companion busy sniffing his world

Couldn't be bothered or aware
of another creature's concerns,
involved in his focused excitements.

Now that I walk without him
no creatures show any interest,
I am too slow, predictable,

I give off the smell of soap, not fur,
instinct sets off no alarms,
I am sadly ignored by the real world.



Mockingbird Photo by Bill Hubick

**Sam is a published poet and ardent dog lover.
In his poems he gives rare insight into creatures.*

Costanera Sur Ecological Reserve

By Mary E. Chetelat

The Costanera Sur Ecological Reserve is an approximately 900-acre area just east of downtown Buenos Aires, Argentina. It is comprised of marshes, meadows, lagoons and wooded areas and has become a haven for wildlife (the Costanera Sur bird checklist contains over 300 species) and a wonderful asset for citizens of and visitors to the city.

It has been designated as an Important Birding Area. And to my pleasant surprise, I found myself staying within a few blocks of this amazing place on a recent visit to Buenos Aires.

The Costanera Sur (or “South Promenade”) has a history reminiscent of our own Black Marsh Wildlands/North Point State Park. Used by city



Green-barred Woodpecker

dwellers early in the 1900's for recreation, it gradually fell into disuse, went through several proposals for redevelopment, and as feet dragged in the development process the area became overtaken by plants and wildlife. It was finally recognized as the ecological and open-space treasure that it has become in the 1980's. And I got to spend three GREAT mornings there. The first two were on my own and the third was with a wonderful guide whom the hotel concierge found for me.

Using my Iphone, camera and checklist, I managed to ID a couple dozen life birds on those first two days. But the real joy came when I met with Laura Dody (www.lauraves.com) and a companion who was learning the ropes of being a bird guide and was a great spotter. I had four



Rufous Horneros building nest

of the most pleasant hours I have ever spent birding with Laura and Paolo. Life birds galore! Southern Screamers, Rufescent

Tiger Herons, Southern Lapwing, Wattled Jacanas (gorgeous in flight), Silver Teal, Masked Duck, Rosy-billed Pochard, Coscoroba Swan, Southern Crested Caracara, Chimanga Caracara, Green-bared and Checkered Woodpeckers, Picazuro Pigeon, Rufous Hornero (the national bird of Argentina) and its unusual clay nest, Red-crested Cardinal, Golden-billed Saltator—and I could go on. Sixty-five species in all, most of which were lifers! The overall Buenos Aires experience was unique culturally and the birding was spectacular.



Costanera Sur (Ph. Marcelo Gavensky)

Birdland and the Anthropocene

By the time you are reading this, this amazing exhibit at the Peale Museum in downtown Baltimore will be closed. It ran from October 6th to October 29th. The show was curated by BBC member, Lynne Parks, who is also an artist and bird conservationist. The show was funded by an Indiegogo campaign, a Green Grant from BGE, and a \$3,500 grant (40 percent of the budget) from the BBC Memorial Fund.

So, what was it about? Anthropocene refers to the current geological period in which bird species are rapidly disappearing due to human intervention. Lynne brought together 30 plus artists and performers to examine how we are failing birds. The Peale Museum, dedicated to art and natural history, was the perfect location. Now called the Peale Center for Baltimore History and Architecture, it has undergone major renovation and this was the perfect show to reintroduce it. Lynne's show got plenty of publicity—see links and photos taken from some of those write-ups.

Websites about the show and the Peale renovation:

<http://www.thepealecenter.org/birdland-and-the-anthropocene/>

<http://darkroom.baltimoresun.com/2017/10/birdland-and-the-anthropocene-at-the-peale-center/>

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-kelly-column-peale-20171019-story.html>

<http://www.bmoreart.com/2017/10/hope-is-the-thing-with-feathers.html>



Lynne Parks, curator of Birdland and the Anthropocene, stands in front of her art installation "Missing Birds."



Artist Cathy C. Cook, center, and Peale Center visitors Mary Ellen and Carl Bowser of York, Pa., interact with Cook's art installation, "Mimicking Whooper," to appreciate the ways cranes communicate by gesture and vocalization.

Taking Time to Be a Bird-Watcher

By Claire Wayner

Sometimes we birders get caught up in our own universe of ornithological detail: chasing rarities, identifying subspecies, building up lists up for counties and months. I don't deny that I am one of these birders, one who will drop everything to add a check mark to my list, but recently I've realized how we as a community of nature enthusiasts so often miss our passion's potential to engage others in our love of birds. As my list has grown, my passion for

chasing rarities has waned; I'm now less invested in pure birding for myself because I want to share it with others. And what better way to do so than through a festival?

Enter the Urban Bird Fest, a concept I thought up in 2016 and introduced to a local park, Stony Run, in my neighborhood. In an age where children are more familiar with phones than phoebes, TVs than titmice, introducing our younger generation to nature is crucial to growing the overall environmental movement. Through conservation-themed crafts like



pinecone bird feeders, live bird talks with people from the Phoenix Wildlife Center, and engaging bird storytelling, the Urban Bird Fest seeks to close that gap by bringing kids out into nature to celebrate the wonders of urban bird life. This year was the festival's second year, hosted in partnership with Friends of Stony Run (the nonprofit which maintains the stream) and Patterson Park Audubon Center.

As a birder, I am a bit disappointed that I'm spending my Saturday afternoon in mid-September showing children cardinals and blue jays instead of watching

Broad-winged Hawk migration or something else more... exotic, you could say. But seeing each kid's face light up with the joy of witnessing a woodpecker for the first time, watching them grin in satisfaction after dissecting an owl pellet, or standing with them in awe of the wingspan of the Great-horned Owl has become as fulfilling to me as chasing down a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. Perhaps it's because I'm still a young birder; I remember how I got into it, and I want others to have that chance, to discover this life-altering passion for these things with feathers.



Field Trip Reports

Compiled by Kevin Graff

Bird Photos by Bill Hubick



AUG 27–NORTH POINT STATE PARK – North Point in late summer is a great place to see Little Blue Herons, in both adult and immature plumage. On this trip we saw at least 14 Little Blues. A flyby Lesser Yellowlegs passed within a few feet of us, providing great looks. A continuing Royal Tern was a nice contrast to the expected Caspian Terns. Passerines were sparse. 38 species. 9 participants. Leader: Peter Lev.



North Point State Park

SEP 10 – QUARRY LAKE – Fortunately, our group of 13 started the walk around the lake before the 14th member (leader) showed up. He didn't know he was leading a walk this morning but high-tailed it to the lake after getting a call from one of the participants. Nevertheless, most of us got identifiable views of the few migrant passerines, though they were not easy to see. Good looks at two low-flying Broad-winged Hawks was an unexpected bonus. We walked around the entire lake this morning, exploring some different wetland and wet forest habitat on its southern side. It was here that we had majority of our species. Only 5 warbler species were seen today. Other nearby birding sites also reported a slower than expected morning. Nevertheless, despite the leader's tardiness

and the quiet morning, the weather was perfect, the lake was gorgeous and the company was good. 31 species. 14 participants. Leader: John Dennehy.

SEP 12 – CROMWELL VALLEY PARK – Low activity– Lots of looks at Common Yellowthroat. 42 species. 20 participants. Leader: John Landers.

SEP 17 – GWYNNS FALLS/LEAKIN PARK – The sky was overcast, and cool enough to be pleasant for walking. Highlights included a screaming Red-tailed Hawk on

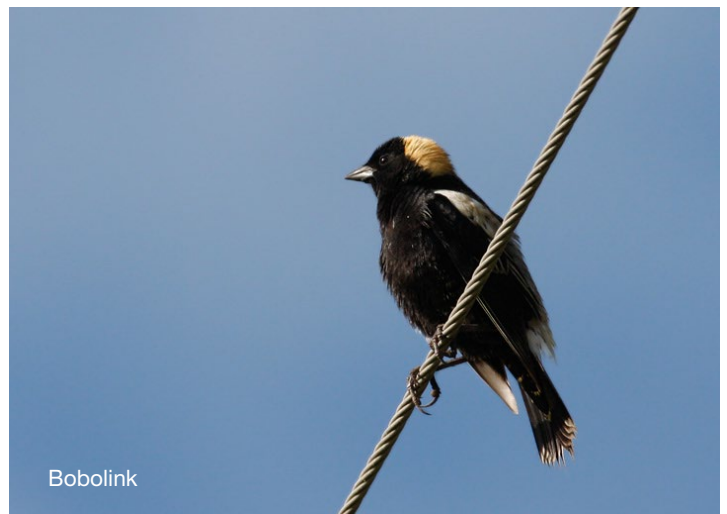
a dead snag in Winans Meadows, a migrating Osprey, a pair of close Brown Thrashers on Hutton Trail and excellent views of American



Brown Thrasher

Redstarts. Two calling Kingfishers made their way up and down the Gwynns Falls. A lone great Blue heron with the streaky breast of a juvenile was spotted by Dean Run. We also visited the bee hives at the Carrie Murray Center. Although migrant bird species were not plentiful, it was an interesting and enjoyable walk. 35 species. 10 participants. Leaders: Paul & Elise Kreiss.

SEP 19 – CROMWELL VALLEY PARK – 7 warbler species, including Tennessee. 3 hawk species, including Northern Harrier. Good look at a Bobolink near the hawkwatch. 48 species. 12 participants. Leader: Mary Chetalet.



Bobolink

SEP 26 – CROMWELL VALLEY PARK – We began uphill north of the hawkwatch finding a number of Red-eyed Vireos, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Northern Flickers, Black-and- White warbler, numerous Blue Jays and a number of other CVP residents. We then proceeded southeast toward Minebank Run encountering Indigo Buntings, White-throated Sparrows and numerous regulars. We then traveled south on Minebank Run through the woods trail to Sherwood. We claimed Palm Warbler, Song Sparrows, Common Yellowthroats, Hairy Woodpeckers, American Redstarts, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Pileated Woodpeckers, Cedar Waxwings, lots of Robins,



Ruby-crowned Kinglet



White-throated Sparrow

OCT 15 – OREGON RIDGE & FARM PARK – Cool and misty morning at Oregon Ridge and Agricultural Center, with the changing season bringing close encounters with winter species. Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Brown Thrasher, Cedar Waxwing, Savannah Sparrow, and Swamp Sparrow seen well by all group members, and these species were new for some participants. Warbler species included a male Black-throated Blue Warbler, Palm Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler and Common Yellowthroat. 9 participants. Leader: Simon Best.



Pileated Woodpecker

a Phoebe, a Hummingbird; couple more Flickers, Mockingbirds, lots of Blue Jays, a Great Blue Heron and many other regulars. It really was a very good late September outing and for small group of birders, we had a surprisingly successful field trip. 51 species. 10 participants. Leader: Ron Davis.

OCT 10 – CROMWELL VALLEY PARK – We saw 6 warbler species and both kinglets as well as a great view of a beautiful immature White-crowned Sparrow. It's been an unusually warm, dry autumn so far. 48 species. 15 participants. Leader: Mary Chetelat.



Cedar Waxwing

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

A Chapter of

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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Submit materials to
Joan Cwi – jafjsc@verizon.net

Moving or email change?
Send update to
Terry Ross at tross@ubalt.edu

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

January 24, 2018



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