

Chip Notes



BALTIMORE BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER

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Welcome!

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

Jane Aughebaugh of Reisterstown

Lynda Baldata of Parkville

John C. Bourassa of Baltimore

Richard DiBlasi of Pikesville

David Greenspoon of Pikesville

Jonathan Pac of Timonium

Bob Schmidt of Lutherville

Jud Anderson Seal of Towson

Mysterious Bird Sanctuary Discovered in Baltimore

Article and Photos by Joan Cwi

As BBC president, inquiries often come to me for answers, actions or resolutions. A recent query really caught my attention. It came from Shirl Bryon of the Loch Raven Improvement Association. She wanted to know if we knew anything about a bird sanctuary monument located near Mt. Pleasant golf course. My curiosity was piqued, so I agreed to meet her there to see for myself.

Shirl met me near the Yorkwood Elementary School and we walked to Hillen Road and turned left along the new chain link fence separating the sidewalk from the woods to the west. The woods were dense, vine covered, and full of fallen limbs and trees. A few young boys could be heard playing further down the street. And there it was, behind the fence, close to the sidewalk across the stream, partially hidden from view. It is a large, rough-hewn rock bearing an aged bronze plaque with curling oak leaves and a perched bird that reads:

*THIS
 BIRD SANCTUARY
 IS DEDICATED TO
 THE MEMORY OF
 AUGUSTINE J. RYAN
 PARK COMMISSIONER
 DIED JUNE 28,
 1927
 AS A MAN HE SERVED HIS GOD
 FAITHFULLY, LOVED NATURE IN
 HER MANIFOLD EXPRESSIONS,
 AND CHERISHED HIS FRIENDS
 WITH UNDYING DEVOTION
 ERECTED BY THE BOARD
 OF PARK COMMISSIONERS*



President's Corner

by Joan Cwi



Conservation CORNER

Our Reservoir Watch: Next Steps

By Carol Schreter, Chairperson BBC Conservation Committee

Smalltimore Story

Baltimore Green Space (BGS) is embarking on a new project to protect "forest patches" in Baltimore City. BGS is a non-profit land trust that partners with communities to preserve and support community open spaces. Forest patches are areas of canopy at least 10,000 square feet in size. Most of Baltimore's forest patches are located outside of our parks. They are an important part of the ecosystem that help clean stormwater and air, as well as providing food and habitat to wildlife and migratory birds.

Unfortunately, most of these patches are fragmented and difficult to preserve because of their small size, ownership issues, and vulnerability to development. BGS has identified these patches throughout the city and developed a plan for their preservation. A position paper, titled *Baltimore's Forest Patches: Emerald Assets for Ecosystem Services* is available at:

<http://baltimoregreenspace.org/downloads/ForestPatchesWeb.pdf>

So why a "Smalltimore" story? I was notified about this effort by an email sent from Board member Denise Duvall. In my return email expressing interest in the project, I attached the A.J. Ryan Bird Sanctuary story as an item of interest and potentially eligible patch of forest. Denise wrote back immediately expressing amazement about the story because she felt Baltimore Green Space should get involved with preserving the sanctuary (possibly in coordination with BBC). And perhaps more small-world, it turns out that Shirl Bryon is a good friend of Denise's!!

Over the past 3 years, 35 people from 17 organizations joined the Baltimore Bird Club (BBC) on forest habitat walks into Prettyboy and Liberty reservoirs. During twice yearly walks, spring and fall, a cross-disciplinary group looked for signs of forest regeneration on 21 acres thinned or cleared in August of 2010.

This Reservoir Forest Management Study Group was led by myself, Dwight Johnson of the Maryland Native Plant Society and Eugene Meyer, retired Biology faculty from Loyola University. The group found that few or no tree saplings had escaped death from deer browsing outside of the deer enclosure fences. Exotic, invasive plants grew densely in areas getting more sunlight.

At a follow-up BBC lecture entitled "Our Reservoir Watch" on Oct 1, 2013, Eugene Meyer talked about how to recognize woods that are recovering from deer damage. Photographer Michael DeFilippi of Loch Raven Legacy showed the impacts of logging at the City reservoirs in 1990.

The City's Reservoir Manager Clark Howells and the County's Forest Sustainability officer Don Outen joined several of the Reservoir Forest Management Study Group walks. When the Prettyboy study site showed almost no regeneration outside of deer enclosures, Baltimore County planted more than 225 hardwood saplings, protecting each from deer with a plastic mesh.

This 3-year study resulted in "lessons learned" according to Clark Howells, the Reservoir Manager. The City promises to be transparent, to present for citizen review the upcoming forest regeneration study results and the City's proposed logging plans.

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Birdbits.....

Save the Date!

Time Again for January's Covered Dish Dinner and Lecture

BBC will once again have our Covered Dish Dinner and Lecture, open to all members, on the evening of Sunday January 12th, 2014 beginning at 4:30 pm. Once again it will be held at Cylburn's Visitor Center. We look forward to this opportunity to socialize, meet our new Youth Backpack Award winner, and hear a fantastic lecture by Ron Cutberlet.

During a Lower 48 "Big Year" in 2005, Ron visited all 48 of those states, drove about 70,000 miles, hiked over 100 miles, took six trips by plane (three specifically for birding, and spent nine days at sea. He met boat captains, truck drivers, a mid-wife, backpackers, sheriff's deputies, state troopers, border patrol agents, car mechanics, vacationing families, park rangers, mountain bike chicks, whale watchers, a naturalist surfer girl, hobos, and the poet laureate of Boise City, Oklahoma. And, of course, he met birders. It was quite a year and Ron looks forward to sharing a bit of it.

Be sure to contact Kevin Graff (keyweststyle2001@gmail.com) or by texting him at 410-967-5896 to let him know you are coming and what you plan to bring. If you prefer the telephone, call Joan Cwi at 410-467-5352. Hope to see you there!



A Warbling Fall(out) at Cromwell Valley Park

If you didn't bird at CVP this fall, you missed the excitement! Week after week birders were posting sightings, often as many as 16 warbler species a day, along with other exciting finds. Was this fall special? No one is quite sure, but the consensus was it seemed to be. There was often a traffic jam between bluebird boxes 10 and 11 on the Minebank run trail as birders sought some of the more allusive species, such as the Connecticut and Mourning Warblers. Thank you Neil Rothschild for allowing us to use your wonderful photo!

Chimney Swifts Fall 2013

This past fall was rich with swifts! Large numbers were reported entering several chimneys in the Baltimore area from late August thru early October. We hosted BBC's Swift Night Out the evening of September 22nd at two places in central and eastern Baltimore—Roland Park Country School and St. Michael's Archangel Church School. Swift counts that night were 502 and 2610 respectively. Other places swifts were seen in abundance were Kernan Hospital; Druid Hill Conservatory; at the Crittenton Place in Hampden; and in Charles Village at Homewood Friends at 31st and Charles Streets and Maryland Geological Survey building at 23rd and St. Paul Street.



Summer Birding in Maine

Article and photos by Karen Morley

I never fully appreciated the phrase “crazy as a loon” until I moved to Maine for summers a couple of years ago. I had three reasons for the move – to be closer to my 3 grandchildren who live in Bangor, to escape the hot humid summer in Maryland, and to have a new birding challenge. The move has been a great success for all three. I spent several years searching for a “camp.” In Maine camp is the place you go to get away from the world...here in Maryland we go “downy ayshin” while in Maine we go “upta cahmp.” It can be a tiny piece of land in the woods with a tent on it, a mega mansion overlooking the sea, or anything in between. Because of the grandkids there were several requirements – enough sleeping space for the extended family on weekends, close enough to Bangor to make visiting easy, inside plumbing, a lake, cheap and birds. My daughter and I became pond/lake snobs. I searched Maine websites about water quality, kinds of fish, birds, invasives, access, etc. One camp I liked my daughter nixed because her colleagues warned her that the other lake residents were “red necks”. A lake she liked had no affordable or accessible camps. Over the years of seaching my expectations grew lower and lower. Who needs a well...we’ll just pump the water out of the lake. Internet? Cable? Phone? Finally one September, after everyone had closed their camp down for winter, we found it. My daughter announced that the lake was perfect for me...it was known to be the home of hippies and environmentalists. However, the deciding point for me was I could hear a loon wailing out on the lake, lots of bird song in the trees and then a Bald Eagle flew over. I was hooked.

But I digress.....back to those crazy loons. Loons are beautiful creatures. In breeding plumage they are sleek and elegant – rather as though they are always wearing a tuxedo. And they are really big birds with broad backs to carry their chicks. The Common Loon in North America is iconic for its “haunted” wail that carries far over the water and woods. Well, most of that wailing is done at night. And when the loon is only a few hundred yards from your bedroom window you really get to appreciate it. And not only do they wail, they yodel and make other loud vocalizations that really are crazy sounding. And they love to communicate with each other over miles of lake with these crazy calls. I’ve had guests who wondered whether a fox was killing something nearby when it was just a loon vocalizing a couple of miles away.

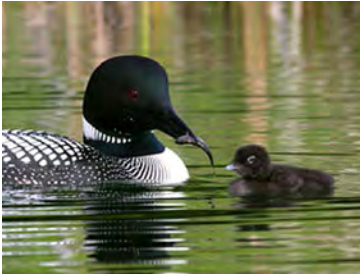
I’ve been fortunate to have a pair of loons who spend a lot of time in my cove. There’s good fishing there for loons, osprey, kingfishers and people. I find the loons are curious and will follow a canoe or boat – probably to check on whether someone is going to toss a fish back in the lake.



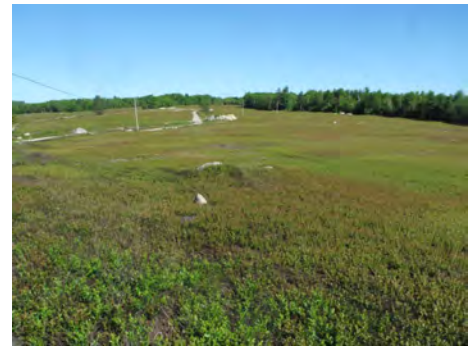
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Birding in Maine (Continued from page 4)

They seem to have little fear of us unless we get too close but that just gives them a chance to show off their fantastic diving skills. Last summer we hosted a loon chick from brown puff ball stage to full juvenile plumage. It was a daily pleasure to watch Mom and Dad feed the baby, teach it to dive and to feed itself. At first Mom would dive and bring up a small fish to feed the chick; later she would bring up the fish but would drop it back into the water just a few inches in front of the chick who then had to dive to recatch the fish. There was no chick this past summer.....neighbors tell me that there was one but the Bald Eagle probably took it. Sad. The eagles nest on a small island in the lake so they are feeding their young as well. Or it could have fallen prey to an Osprey...they like to sit on the rocks that protrude out of the water and watch for victims. The state has a loon count each summer.....I hope our nine mile long lake scored at least one chick somewhere.



Each year when I get to camp in late May or early June, it's still pretty quiet people-wise. Maine kids don't get out of school until mid-June so I have time to enjoy my returning bird migrants before the human migrants, kayaks and fishing poles show up. After years of watching migration through Maryland, it's exciting to be at a breeding destination. To get to my camp you pass through three types of habitat which make for great and varied birding. First, you drive through fields of wild Maine blueberries. They only grow about a foot tall and have been cultivated and harvested on the granite outcrops for hundreds of years. Several sparrow species live there.....Savannah and Vesper being the most numerous—if there's a rock in the field, you can bet there's a Vesper standing on it. There are also Song and White-throats but there is more habitat for them a little further along the road. There are also a lot of Turkeys lurking about in the blueberry fields and Ravens strut through the plants probably looking for sparrow nests. Last year there was a Merlin in the area too. And Robins, Eastern Bluebirds, Cedar Waxwings, Barn Swallows, Eastern Kingbirds, Flickers and (yuck) Starlings. In the fall, migrating Kestrels hang around for a few weeks trying to tame the grasshopper population.



Just past the blueberry fields, there is a large recently (8 years ago) logged area that is rebounding quickly. There are lots of blackberries along with the regrowth of maples, alder, oak, birch, pine and spruce. This is where the deer and bear hang out..... although the bear goes anywhere he wants. I haven't seen him although he did knock over a feeder at camp. This habitat is full of White-throated Sparrows, Song Sparrows, Chipping Sparrows and more Robins. There are also nesting Yellowthroats, Yellow and Chestnut-sided Warblers. A Ruffed Grouse family once crossed the road in front of me. I'm sure there are a lot more birds in there but I am not a very good ear birder and I'm focusing my efforts to learn the songs of the birds nesting down



by the lake at camp.

Down at camp along the lake the habitat is a northern spruce/pine forest with a lot of mixed hardwoods. The trees are probably about 60 years old as this area was all farmland until after WW2.

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Advice on Choosing Birding Optics

By Pete Webb, BBC Program Chairman and former BBC President

Please check the BBC website for Pete's full article on birding optics.

Two of the most essential tools for most bird watchers are their binoculars and a good field guide to identify the birds they see with them. After they become skillful, serious "Birders" they often leave the field guides at home, but not their binoculars. Instead, the second essential tool will be a spotting telescope for viewing more distant birds, mainly waterfowl and sandpipers, and the occasional rare sparrow perched across a field.

Binoculars. Binoculars mainly come in two flavors: porro prism, with the big objective lenses further apart than the eye pieces, with a smaller variant having objective lenses closer, and the straight-through roof prism binoculars. Porro prism binoculars offer more optical quality for the money but are more prone to getting knocked out of alignment and usually aren't waterproof, allowing salt water spray, insect repellent and sun lotion spray and dust to get into the interior, making it harder to see through them. The roof prism binoculars, are easier to waterproof and are generally more durable.



"7x35" means magnification of 7, with 35mm objective lens size. Most of the higher-priced binoculars are either 8x42 or 10x42, 8x or 10x magnification with 42mm size objective lens. With the higher magnification, the field of view - how much of the world you can see through them - shrinks down because you're filling your field of view with a larger image of a smaller piece of the world.

Binoculars seem to come in four general classes with successively better optics and higher prices:

- (1) **cheap miniature roof prism** (under \$100) (without the fixes to make roof prisms work better probably have single-element lenses and one achromat 2-element objective lens,
- (2) **economy porro prism** (both miniature and "normal" size, under \$100, better than above) probably have single-element lenses and one achromat 2-element objective lens.

Two standouts in this group for about \$30:

Bushnell Falcon 7x35, field of view 420 \$28.18 at Amazon

Tasco Essentials Zip 7x35, field of view 500(!) \$30.42 at Amazon

These two porro prism binoculars are not waterproof, but with care in handling can outperform many binoculars costing a lot more, and are the best for casual or occasional users or for visitor "loaner" binoculars. They have far more field of view, making easier to find the bird you want to see in the image.

- (3) **mid-grade roof prism** (\$100 - \$500), with metallic mirror and phase correction coatings and BaK-4 glass in the roof prisms, and all lenses 2-element achromats. The two cheapest entries are known to be of good quality and are available through Eagle Optics. They are the **Eagle Optics**

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Advice on Choosing Birding Optics

(Continued from page 6)

Shrike, \$100, and the **Atlas Optics Radian**, \$130. In the middle of the price range, **Nikon Monarchs**, \$250, have a very good reputation. A “higher” sub-group has ED glass in the lenses for lower color dispersion and a brighter, clearer image. Three such ED models now sell for about \$300 - \$400. Eagle Optics carries them: **Vanguard Endeavor ED**, **Atlas Intrepid ED**, and **Zeiss Terra ED**. They come in 8x42 and 10x42.

- (4) **Premium roof prism** (\$1,000 to \$4,000) with dielectric mirror coating in the prisms instead of metal, achromat lenses and a 3-element Achromat objective lens with special “aspheric” shape. Sub-divided into two groups: with (more money) FL glass (brightest, clearest, sharpest image), and without FL glass.

At the elite premium top sit entries by **Leica**, **Zeiss**, and the best-selling **Swarovski Swarovision** models (8x5.42 and 10x42) with closer focus than the others. The Swarovskis sell for about \$2500. But the new Zeiss HT line offers even brighter viewing with the special “HT” formula of FL glass, even more transparent than “regular” FL glass. They go for about \$2200.

With a step up from one major class to another, the image will get clearer, sharper (more detailed), and brighter, with less eye strain for the observer over long periods of viewing.

Scopes. Spotting ‘scopes aren’t as easily identified into classes. I do recommend finding one with waterproofing, same with binoculars. None of my earlier, non-waterproof telescopes or premium binoculars work any more. Both of my current binoculars are waterproof, as is my telescope, and I will no longer buy any that isn’t. Fortunately, most of the mid-grade and premium-grade binoculars and spotting telescopes sold today are sealed and waterproof, protecting the investment in the expensive optics. The basic design features, including coatings and fancier lenses, influence price and optical performance the same way they do with binoculars. The prices are higher than with the binoculars, but not by a huge amount. A cheap telescope will be similar to a cheap pair of binoculars, only much worse – with the higher magnification, the optical flaws stand out more clearly and it’s harder to make out the finer details on more distant birds; you won’t be able to see much through them. It gets more important to invest in a costlier ‘scope which will reveal more details on distant birds, since that’s what the ‘scope is for. My **Alpen 788** ‘scope costs \$323 at Amazon. The best-selling elite-premium ‘scopes run anywhere from \$2,500 to \$4,000 (or \$6,000 with image stabilization), made by **Kowa**, **Swarovski**, **Zeiss** and **Leica**.

Only limited information on the overall optical quality within each class is available. I’ve searched Google and Bing for “binoculars comparison” and found studies by Bird Watcher’s Digest and Birding World magazines, and by Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Additional articles by other sources probably are less reliable and have a sparser selection of models tested. I also found “customer ratings” (1 to 5 out of 5 stars) at both Eagle Optics and at Amazon; sparse information but possibly better than nothing. The vast majority of low and mid-priced models aren’t rated in the comparison study articles, but that’s about all the information I’ve been able to find.

I recommend the article that came out in Bird Watchers Digest in their January-February 2012 issue for the best currently available ratings information on binoculars (not including the important 7x35 binoculars I’ve mentioned – **Bushnell Falcon** and **Tasco Essentials 7x35**’s available from Amazon for about \$30). This one covers mid-priced and premium binoculars. A new review is coming out later this fall from Cornell, which will probably change some of my current specific recommendations in the longer article I’m posting on our bird club web page.

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SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE!!

TEACHER/NATURALIST WORKSHOPS IN ECOLOGY AND ORNITHOLOGY

Sponsored by Maryland Ornithological Society

Many of Maryland's finest teachers and naturalists have expanded their ecology and birding knowledge through these workshops. Join educators from around the country for a hands-on wildlife or ornithology camp. The Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) is accepting applications from Maryland teachers, youth leaders, park rangers and nature center staff for scholarships to attend weeklong ecology and ornithology workshops on Audubon's beautiful Hog Island in Maine or on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Each award covers the cost of tuition, room and board for an intensive course of field study and instruction covering ornithology, ecology, conservation and natural history.

Scholarship Information: MOS will award multiple scholarships each summer. Travel expenses are the responsibility of the recipient. For additional information check the MOS website links (below) or contact the Scholarship Chairs.

Five Maine and one Maryland workshops are offered for 2014:

- June 1-6 Maine Seabird & Biology & Conservation, ME
- June 8-13 Joy of Birding, ME
- June 15-20 Field Ornithology, ME
- June 22-27 Arts of Birding, ME
- July 21-26 Sharing Nature: An Educators' Week, ME
- June 22-27 Maryland Birds & Habitats, Washington College, MD



Application Deadline is March 1, 2014: Maryland workshop applicants should go to the YMOS website listed below for application instructions. For more information and application process, please refer to: <http://mdbirds.org/education/scholarships/scholarship.html>

Advice on Choosing Birding Optics

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For spotting 'scopes, I've found three studies dated 2007, 2009 and 2010, with almost no overlap for models of mid-priced 'scopes covered. I found the Bird Watchers Digest article from 2009 to be most helpful, and used it to choose the 'scope I'm currently using.

The internet sources I've found with best availability and price, subject to comparison, are Amazon, Adorama, and Eagle Optics. There also are local stores in our area with a few good models: Wild Birds Unlimited and Wild Bird Center. But no local store has a full sample of all of the good models out there. Also note that if you buy optics from Eagle Optics through the Maryland Ornithological Society website, MOS gets a donation of 5% of the cost of the purchase.

I'm putting a longer version of this article up at our club website <http://baltimorebirdclub.org/>, with a more complete explanation of roof prisms, porro prisms, coatings, aspheric correction, and multiple element lenses, field-of-view, magnification, exit pupil, weight vs jumpy moving image, and also a more complete listing of models of binoculars and telescopes I consider worthy of consideration based on the reviews I've read. But don't go exclusively by reading; if you get a chance, try out several binoculars and telescopes any way you can, especially at our club field trips where various members will have a variety to check out, and form your own preferences before you buy anything.

Conservation CORNER

(Continued from page 2)

The stimulus for this forest study? The City is concerned that the 17,500 acres of forest buffer around three City reservoirs is filled with aging pine plantations. Pines planted in rows at Prettyboy in the 1930s, and Liberty Reservoir in the 1950s, may now be reaching the end of their life span, vulnerable to damage by high winds. And because of deer damage, there are few or no saplings to replace the older pines. This is a concern, because a healthy forest buffer is needed to prevent soil erosion and protect our water supply.

Birdwatchers are watching the City's 3-year forest study because both Prettyboy and Liberty reservoir are considered IBAs, Important Bird Areas, hosting nesting birds "of conservation concern" such as the Wood Thrush, Worm-eating Warbler and Kentucky Warbler.

What's next?

The October 1 follow-up lecture included discussion about suitable next steps for the Study Group organizations.

1. Get involved in deer control.

This was a passionate discussion, showing that it is time for a paradigm change -- in order to protect the forests state-wide. Involve farmers and gun clubs in managed deer control. Move toward managed and regulated commercial deer hunting, with the chance to sell venison.

2. Monitor City actions. Disseminate information.

When available, share the City's forest regeneration data analysis and reservoir logging plans widely within our member organizations. Share with others, depending on the content.

3. Seek one or more seats on a proposed "Stakeholders" group which the Reservoir Manager and the Baltimore City Department of Public Works (DPW) plan to establish.

4. Continue joint cross-disciplinary walks into the Reservoir forest buffer with Dwight Johnson and Gene Meyer, to watch for forest regeneration. Of the 28 people attending this lecture, half said they would attend an annual (1 x year) walk to look for forest regeneration.

At this point, the cross-disciplinary and multi-organizational Reservoir Forest Management Study Group is asking the City Reservoir Manager: How can we help?

For background see City of Baltimore Reservoir Forest Study ... **Power Point presentation** at:

http://www.baltimorecity.gov/Portals/0/agencies/public%20works/public%20downloads/Baltimore_City_Forest_Study.pdf

About managed deer hunting around the Washington D.C. reservoirs, see "Patuxent Reservoirs Watershed Deer Management Program," Byron J. Benton, WSSC, 2011. **Power Point presentation** at:

<http://www.naturalresources.umd.edu/Documents/Workshops/20110526/9Benton.pdf>

Mysterious Bird Sanctuary

(Continued from page 1)

I'm a historian by training, and my latent investigatory skill sets tingled. First step, I went online expecting nothing for someone who died 86 years ago. But I was wrong. There, on eBay, was Augustine J. Ryan's a photograph for sale as part of The Sun's obituary collection. Both his name and date of death were written on the back. I checked Ancestry.com and found the 1920 census where he was listed as living on Baltimore Street with his parents (Irish immigrants) and brothers. Although all were in their fifties at that time, none of the brothers were married.

Then I tried the wonderful online service offered by Enoch Pratt where you can query Sun articles since 1837 and found a gold mine of information. The first was his obituary, dated June 29, 1927 titled "A.J. Ryan Dies Suddenly of Heart Disease." Obituaries were evidently very chatty back then, as this long article describes how he went to work feeling fine, then got sick, went home, and died that evening. It also speculates that an earlier tooth infection might be the cause! Gus, as he was called, made his money in coal and was a philanthropist, donating time and money to politics



and various causes including the arts. At the time of his death he was Baltimore Park Commissioner, a job he did pro bono. But this obituary did not explain the reference to a bird sanctuary in his name.



A second article a few days later was titled "Plans Bird Reserve as Ryan Memorial." It describes that the Park Board decided to establish a bird sanctuary as a memorial to the deceased to be known as the Augustine J. Ryan Bird Sanctuary. At that time it was debated whether it would be located in Herring Run Park or in another park in Northeast Baltimore. The sanctuary would consist of "...ten or fifteen acres enclosed by a fence which neither cats, rats nor other animals would be able to scale. Inside the enclosure...there will be thickly matted honeysuckle and underbrush as a hiding place for birds"—an apt description of what can be seen today, including a chain link fence with

no visible entrance that surrounds the park. The article goes on to quote William I Norris, president of the 1927 Park Board, as saying "I never knew a man who was more deeply interested in birds than was Mr. Ryan. From the time he became a member of the Park Board he was anxious that something be done for the birds. He was the prime mover in the erection of bird boxes in Druid Hill Park and in the contest among school children for the making of the boxes."

Finally, in June 1932, twelve acres of wired-in woodland at Mount Pleasant Park on Hillen Road, were dedicated as a bird sanctuary in memory of Mr. Ryan. And thanks to Shirl Bryon, once more we get to honor this noble gentleman for his part in Baltimore's birding history and conservation.

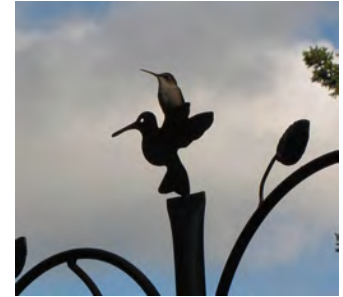


Birding in Maine (Continued from page 5)



On my little 1/3 acre I have pine, spruce, balsam fir, hemlock, white and yellow birch, red and striped maple and lots of northern cedar. Many of the trees are covered with lichen (geez, I had no idea there were so many lichen and mosses until I moved there – it would take another lifetime to catalog them all) which provides nesting material for one of the migrants who arrives about the same time I do, the Northern Parula. In late May the air is also filled with the songs of Hermit Thrush (can't figure out why there are no Swainson's around), Ovenbird, Redstarts, Black-throated Green, Black and White, Blackburnian, Yellow-rumped and Nashville Warblers. The Blue-headed Vireo is even more common than the

Red-eyed one. There are Phoebes, Pewees, Alder Flycatchers, Belted Kingfishers, Osprey, and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds...so many hummers that it feels like I am back in the west. They get to camp around Mother's Day and are waiting for me to get the feeders up fast. There is a very shy Song Sparrow who lives in the willow down by the water, a noisy Winter Wren and LOTS of Purple Finches. And a very odd little brown bird that showed up under the feeders.....couldn't figure out what it was



until it finally dawned on me they were juvenile Dark-eyed Juncos. I'd never seen a juvvie and boy, they are not the sleek snow bird we are used to seeing in the winter. All summer long it's fun to watch the juveniles of all species show up in the yard and at feeders.....Red-breasted Nuthatches, White-breasted Nuthatches, Black-capped Chickadees and Goldfinches galore. And more Robins and Blue Jays. The woodpecker family is well represented with Hairy, Downy, Northern Flicker and Piliated. At night I can hear Barred Owls - and Loons. I'm hoping for a Saw-whet Owl and have put up a Saw-whet nesting box although I have a feeling it will just provide additional housing for the local resident Red Squirrels.

I would be negligent if I didn't quickly mention that there are great pelagic trips out of several ports in the area. Puffins, Mures, Black Guillemots and Razorbills are easily seen. One island had nesting Roseate Terns as well. A trip sponsored by Maine Audubon that I went on last fall had thousands of Great and Sooty Shearwaters along with Fin and Minke Whales. There were also Jaegers. This year that trip had Northern Fulmar and both Great and South Polar Skuas. The great thing is that most of these pelagic trips go out on tourist oriented whale watching boats with good facilities and excellent spotters. Almost any whale watching trip out of Bar Harbor will have great birding opportunities.

I am finding my new Maine adventure fascinating. Each summer I take a bunch of books to camp



to read but I have found that I never get them read. I'll take a book out by the lake but end up watching the wildlife all around me instead. I end up spending hours just watching, listening and learning. I don't pretend to be an expert birder – I'm just a person who loves the entrancing world of birds. And I'm getting to be pretty good at identifying the bird song around me. So far my efforts have been focused on the habitat around camp.....but next year I'm planning to do some "boreal" birding to see if I can find some of the Maine's target boreal species. And butterflies and moths. And lichen and moss. And turtles and frogs.



AUG 27 - CROMWELL VALLEY PARK – Although warblers had been seen at CVP earlier this week, there weren't many this day—only a Chestnut-sided, Common Yellowthroat, Worm-eating and American Redstart. Not many other species either. But the group was jovial despite the late summer heat. The highlight was a Cooper's Hawk chasing away a Broad-winged Hawk. 46 species. 12 participants. Leader: Joan Cwi.

SEP 1 – CYLBURN ARBORETUM – On this sunny day, there were good views of Common Yellowthroats and a Great Crested Flycatcher. 2 participants. Leader: Joe Lewandowski.

SEP 3 - CROMWELL VALLEY PARK - What started as a slow birding day became exciting as we were on our way back. One tree in particular was full of warblers. We had a total of 9. As Paul called out, "Blue-winged Warblers", Kevin said "Golden-winged Warbler", We also had Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided and a Prairie, not seen by everyone. Another treat were male and female Baltimore Orioles. 50 species. 11 participants. Leader: Ruth Culbertson.

SEP 7 - NORTH POINT STATE PARK - Twelve birders of all ages enjoyed a beautiful and birdy day. The best bird was Tricolored Heron - a lifer for at least a few of those present. Eighteen Little Blue Herons were another notable sight. Our list includes ten warbler species, but some of these were seen by only part of the group. 71 species. 12 participants. Leader: Peter Lev.

SEP 10 - CROMWELL VALLEY PARK - This morning our group was treated to close, long views of a Yellow-billed Cuckoo. In addition to 7 species of warblers, we saw a Wilson's with a slight black cap flitting and hopping in the hedgerow along the Minebank. A very enjoyable walk. 42 species. 15 participants Leader: Debbie Terry.

SEP 15 - CROMWELL VALLEY PARK - The group took Sherwood Farm Trail out to the bridge and back, then came upon small groups of birds. We had a total of 12 warblers. Saw Swainson's Thrush and Grey-cheeked Thrush. Could hear the Yellow-billed Cuckoo calling. Watched 5 Broad-winged Hawks rise from the trees in the field and circle several times overhead. 42 species. 12 participants. Leader: Maryanne Fluke.

SEP 17 - CROMWELL VALLEY PARK - Beautiful day! Sunny, mild. Highlights included the flyover red-headed Woodpecker, numerous hawks overhead and 13 warbler species! Great view of Brown Thrashers. A really fun morning! 70 species. 13 participants. Leader: Mary Chetelat.

SEP 22 – SWIFT NIGHT OUT - The watch was held in two places this year—Roland Park Country School (RPCS) and St. Michael's the Archangel Church in Overlea. It was a beautiful evening, and the swifts did not disappoint, although the show at St. Michael's was by far the most spectacular with more than 2600 swifts entering the chimney in about 20 minutes! RPCS had 500 swifts entering during the same time period, as well as a solitary Common Nighthawk passing over. 45 participants at RPCS, 21 participants at St. Michael's. Leaders: Joan Cwi and Alice Nelson at RPCS, Carol Schreter at St. Michael's.

Field Trip Reports

(Continued from page 12)

SEP 24 - CROMWELL VALLEY PARK - A cool, crisp, somewhat foggy morning gave way to an invigorating, sunny day as the walk progressed. A Double-crested Cormorant, flying high overhead, punctuated a nice assortment of raptors, including both vultures and Bald Eagle; also Cooper's, Broad-winged, Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks. A few Chimney Swifts were seen, and a brief glimpse of a Ruby-throated Hummingbird. The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was a welcome addition, as were the Eastern Phoebe and White-eyed Vireo. Newer additions were the Ruby-crowned Kinglet and the Veery. Eleven warblers were spotted, most notably Nashville, Parula, Black-throated Green, Palm (w), Ovenbird and Wilson's. Also seen: Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Black-and-white, Redstart and Yellowthroat. A towhee and several Red-breasted Grosbeaks were nice sightings. Most numerous were Blue Jay, Carolina Wren, Bluebird, Catbird, Yellowthroat, Magnolia, Chipping Sparrow and Cardinal. 60 species. 16 participants. Leader: Paul Noell.

OCT 1 - CROMWELL VALLEY PARK - Single flock of 16 cormorants flyover, Philadelphia Vireo, both kinglets, 9 warbler species including Tennessee, Nashville, Yellowthroat, Redstart, Parula, Magnolia, Palm, Black-throated Blue and Black-throated Green Warblers. 54 species. 11 participants. Leader: John Landers.

OCT 8 - CROMWELL VALLEY PARK - North winds pushed several birds south including flocks of geese, cormorants, jays and robins. 10 warbler species including Black-and-white, Nashville, Connecticut, Yellowthroat, Redstart, Magnolia, Blackpoll, Palm, Yellow-rumped and Black-throated Green. 52 species. 11 participants. Leader: Ron Davis.

OCT 19 - CAPE MAY HAWKWATCH - Mostly cloudy, low 60's, breeze out of the east. Trip broke up 1:15 when rain showers arrived and looked like they were there to stay. Rain stopped an hour later on our drive home. We saw an adult Bald Eagle carrying a fish or eel on our way down, near Cape May, and parked in the lot near the wooden hawk watch platform. From there, we saw that the winds were unfavorable, out of the east rather than northwest, and decided to walk the trails nearby. There we saw tons of Yellow-rumped, "Myrtle" Warblers, showing us how they got the "Myrtle Warbler" name, feeding on the abundant berries in the equally abundant Wax Myrtle bushes next to the salt marshes. We also found both Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets, a couple of peek-a-boo Winter Wrens, a Blue-headed Vireo, Brown Thrashers, Chipping, Field and White-throated Sparrows, a House Wren, and overhead flying Tree Swallows with some Purple Martins and many Sharp-shinned Hawks, some hunting, a Cooper's Hawk, and Red-tailed Hawks. Back at the platform, we practiced scanning passing flights of scoters, trying to pick out the Surf Scoters intermingled among the more abundant Black Scoters. We also saw a young female Northern Harrier and an Osprey. We also found 14 species of geese and ducks plus Pied-billed Grebes, flyby Double-crested Cormorants, Great Egrets, and more. On the way out, we stopped at Lake Lily, and picked up Swamp, White-crowned, Savannah and Field Sparrows along with the more numerous Song and White-throated Sparrows, for 8 sparrow species for the day. A Caspian Tern and a Great Blue Heron were also there. A good time was had by all. Well worth the long drive. 83 species. 8 participants. Leaders: Pete Webb & Kevin Graff.

OCT 20 - IRVINE NATURE CENTER - Several raptors including Northern Harriers and Sharp-shinned Hawks put on a nice show. 10 sparrow species including a nice look at two immature White-crowned Sparrows. Several birds continuing to linger including Blue-headed Vireo, House Wren and Black-throated Blue Warbler. 54 species. 7 participants. Leader: Kye Jenkins

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