

Chip Notes



BALTIMORE BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER

FALL 2017 No. 401
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This edition of Chip Notes has three stories about bird rescues. The first by Mary Anne Fluke is about the rescue of an osprey after a nest collapse, then two more entertaining stories from Jeanne Bowman about Red-tailed Hawk and Pileated Woodpecker rescues from a murder of crows

Osprey Rescue

By Mary Anne Fluke

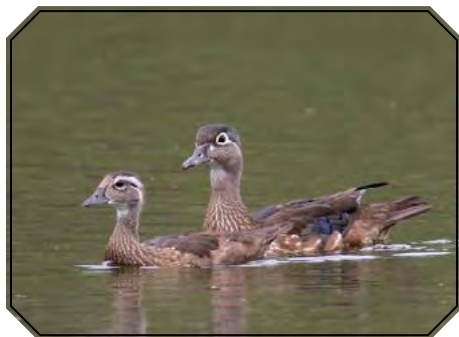
Ospreys are a favorite bird of many Marylanders. Their return is a sign to all saying Spring is not far behind. Arriving in mid to late March, the Ospreys quickly begin to build nests or repair the nests they had used the year before. Osprey are one of the easiest Maryland breeding birds to follow throughout their breeding cycle. The bird's large size and usually easily visible nests lets birders and non-birders alike equally share in the observation of their spring and summer activities.



I myself have watched for several years the Ospreys raising young in the nest located in the parking lot at Gunpowder State Park Hammermen Area. The couple are usually successful raising their 2-3 young but there have been years when the nest fails. When it fails it seems to happen suddenly. Week after week the nest would be in good shape and occupied only to find on my next visit the nest is deserted.

It wasn't until I was contacted by Kevin Graff to see if my husband Mark and I could assist with repairing a damaged Osprey nest did I realize the many hazards these birds face. The afternoon of July 14th

Continued on page 8



WELCOME!

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

Caleb Kurlantzick	Baltimore	Peter Kaestner	Cockeysville
Barry Levi	Baltimore	Carolyn Polowy	Cockeysville
Joan & Justin Woytowicz	Baltimore	Steve and Carole Taylor	Timonium

President's Corner by Peter Lev



Pete Webb, Moving West

Some months ago, Pete Webb shocked members of the BBC Field Trip Committee by announcing that he was moving to Bloomington, Indiana to be near his wife Carolyn's family. Yes, he shocked us because

Pete has been a hugely important

BLOOMINGTON

BBC volunteer for decades. He served as President of the club for eight years, which is a long time. Before, during and after his term as President he was leading and coordinating field trips.

I recently found a notebook listing field trips (date, location, leader, number of participants) that showed Pete leading his first BBC trip in 1981. From then until now he has led hundreds of trips—to Bombay Hook, Cape May, Huntley Meadows, Frederick County, Carroll County, Milford Mill, and so on. Pete is welcoming and relaxed, and he gets everyone on the birds. His particular talent is birding by ear. This past spring on the Liberty Dam Trail we had what I'd call a "ghost bird walk:" the birds were present but hiding after a recent rain, so we could only hear them. Pete helped us identify, by ear, a long list of birds: Wood Thrush, Veery, Black-and-white Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, and so on. More typical are his Milford Mill walks, where Pete hears a desired species, for example Cape May Warbler, and helps everyone find it with binoculars. If a bird is seen but not heard, no problem; his visual skills are excellent as well.

Pete is also the go-to person for BBC's annual Program Guide. Field Trip Committee members suggest and sometimes debate a series of trips, then Pete organizes and types out the schedule in near-final form (proofreading comes next). Coordinating the schedule is a big job, and it includes deadline pressure. To do it well you need to know the birding sites, the patterns of bird migration, and the BBC trip leaders.

If you know Pete you're aware that he's fun to be with, constantly spouting bad puns, mnemonics for bird song, and abbreviations. For example, on Pete's trips there is no such thing as a Magnolia Warbler; it's a "Maggie," of course.

We don't know exactly when Pete is moving, and there's a slight chance he won't move at all. But if he does decamp, I have a solution to BBC's field trip woes: all weekend trips will go to Bloomington, about twelve hours away. If we leave Baltimore on Friday evening, we can be out in the field with Pete the next morning!!



Pete and Carolyn Webb with Greg Miller (played by Jack Black) at showing of movie *The Big Year*

Conservation CORNER

Going Greener Through Local Politics

by Claire Wayner

Looking at national politics today from the perspective of a birder and an environmentalist, one cannot help getting depressed. But tangible progress toward preserving habitat and reducing pollution can be done not just on the national level. In fact, local politics, like the decisions made in Baltimore's City Hall, have a more direct impact on Baltimore's bird life than federal regulations may. So don't despair – by engaging with local politics, one can stand up for bird conservation, as the BBC's Conservation Committee does.

Over the past year, I've worked closely with the Baltimore City Council on environmental campaigns to support a statewide Styrofoam ban and to sign our city onto the Paris Climate Accords. Thanks to an internship I have in the Baltimore Office of Sustainability, I've become very familiar with the council, which has become very progressive since the 2016 election, which brought in eight new, fantastic council members. Even though Baltimore's bureaucratic sluggishness and political hierarchy still exist – for instance, the mayor and the council president still make the final call – the council feels unexpectedly united after the significant turnover. In both campaigns that I helped push, resolutions* were introduced and passed unanimously. The first resolution ([17-0011R](#)) called for Baltimore City to call on Maryland to ban Styrofoam usage in schools and food service locations (e.g., restaurants, take-out stores) due to its toxicity and contribution to long-lasting aquatic pollution. The second resolution



([17-0029R](#)) committed Baltimore to the Paris Climate Accords and laid out several strategic steps for Baltimore to be a climate-friendly city; plans are being made now to implement these steps.

Although the traditional conservationist's arguments to save the whales and preserve the forests are not applicable to an urbanized area like Baltimore, a city can still take a progressive stand on concepts like climate change and air and water pollution. It all starts with local engagement from concerned citizens...like us birders! You can participate in a rally or share your thoughts at a public hearing (access the City Council's calendar [here](#)). If you're new to the game and don't know where to start, you can always meet with your local representative about broad environmental concerns or just sit in on a public council session to get a feel for the happenings.

If you live in a neighboring county like Baltimore County, don't worry – you, too, have local politics. In fact, many of these county governments are significantly less environmentally progressive than Baltimore's City Council, even though counties tend to have more undeveloped land in need of protection. So it's especially crucial that birders are active in our counties in addition to Baltimore City.

I encourage all of you, even if you do not want to get intimately involved in a particular campaign, to at least get to know your local representative and their voting history. Try sitting in on a public hearing or council meeting! When you vote for your council representative, be sure you are choosing a candidate that supports conservation of habitat for birds and other wildlife. Even if national politics continue to be sloppy, we can always improve our local politics.

**Note the difference between a bill and a resolution. A bill will have a direct impact on Baltimore and its residents. It must go through several readers and a public hearing and must be signed into law by the mayor. A resolution is more of an expression of a sentiment on behalf of the City Council. It requires no mayoral approval and can be signed into law with or without a public hearing.*



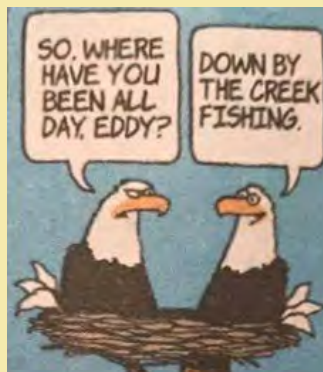
Birdbits.....

When Bird(er)s of a Feather Get Together!

BBC held a summer picnic at Irvine Nature Center on June 4th. Thirty-eight of us birders got together on this glorious day to share food and good stories. Thank you Debbie Terry for suggesting this site, and Kevin Graff for coordinating the food and drinks. The highlight of the afternoon was Joe Corcoran's surprising his wife with warm words and the cake pictured here in celebration of their 40th wedding anniversary. She was truly surprised, and we were all touched!



Bird Breeding Lampoons



Raising an Avian Orphan

There were two interesting articles this summer on birds raising a chick that is not their own. The first obvious one is about the **Cowbird**, notorious for laying eggs in another bird's nest. The second is about eagles raising a **Red-tailed Hawk** chick. A brief summary of each is described below.

Cowbird. Scientists have wondered for years about how cowbird chicks can identify with cowbirds if they were raised by other bird species.* How do they learn to sing, find food, find a mate of their own species when not raised by their own biological species? In the Audubon Newsletter, May 2017, there is an article on recent research about how cowbirds recognize other cowbirds—through the use of “passwords” that only cowbirds can understand.



Chickadee feeding cowbird fledgling

Scientists realized that cowbirds as young as five days old responded to vocalizations known as “chatter”—the sound produced by female cowbirds. Chatter is a reliable indicator of where a cowbird flock will be. Because this knowledge couldn't be learned, it had to be programmed at birth. It allows the fledgling cowbirds to find their own species and begin learning appropriate social cues and song from adults of their own species. Thus, cowbird fledglings are attracted to the sound of nearby chatter and drawn into flocks of adult cowbirds, ensuring they don't pick up non-cowbird habits!

*Article by Josh Gabbatiss, Scientists Pinpoint the Secret Password That Unlocks Cowbirds' Self-Identity, Audubon Newsletter, May 2017.

Red-tailed Hawk. Sometime in late May, a pair of Bald Eagles snatched up two Red-tailed Hawk chicks in Sidney, British Columbia and brought them back to their nest—alive! One became a meal for the three eaglets nesting there, and the other became a legend when the eagles took the hawk chick under their wings, so to speak! Scientists were stunned to see a four-and-a-half-week old Red-tailed Hawk nestled among three eagle chicks and feeding from the eagle's beak. How did it get there?



Hawklet in eagle nest

The theory that has gained the most traction is that the hawklets were taken as prey by the eagle parents.* At the nest, one chick started to beg and the eagle parents responded to the stimuli by feeding it. At one-third the weight of its companion eaglets, the hawklet has demonstrated it is a little dynamo, taking total command. On June 22nd the hawklet (now nicknamed Spunky or perhaps, more appropriately, LittleEagle) left the nest to perch nearby while the eaglets remained. That didn't keep him from returning to the nest on occasion to be fed by his adoptive parents!

So what happens next? Will Spunky imprint as an eagle? More aggressive than his eaglet nestlings, will he think he can dominate eagles and have an unfavorable run-in? Will he know what game to catch? Hawks tend to hunt mice and voles, while eagles favor fish and roadkill. If he follows his adopted parents he may find himself trying to be an eagle with the tools of a hawk. And what will sexual maturity bring? As of July 16th, Spunky continues to thrive.

*Article by Jason Bittel in Washington Post, June 29, 2017.

A Murder of Crows, Attacks Thwarted!

By Jeanne Bowman

Jeanne, a longtime BBC member, shares two short stories about some of the avian rescues she has participated in. Both stories started with a phone call asking for help.

Red-tailed Hawk. Over 20 years ago, way back in 1995, just about dawn's early light, my home phone rang. No portable back then, so I popped out of bed to see what was happening.

It was Gary, a friend of my teenage boys, who told me, "Miss Jeanne, a big hawk just fell out of an oak tree and is lying on the ground near me." I said something to the effect, what are you talking about—*hawks don't fall out of trees!* He assured me it did fall, because he saw it fall and I needed to come quick to help it. So, as the sun eased up on a very chilly morning, I grabbed a blanket in case there was a need to capture this bird and got in my VW car, heading west about three miles to the upper part of the Prettyboy watershed.

As I got closer to where Gary lived, I saw him in a field waving his jacket to get my attention. Oh my, I thought, he is a good two blocks walking distance in an ol' cornfield. What a way to the start the morn. As I got closer, sure enough, there lay a Red-tailed Hawk, looking up at me. It was very much alive but seemed exhausted, and this is when I noticed a group of crows circling the field. They probably had been chasing and harassing this hawk, as they are known to gang up to attack.



American Crow chasing Red-tailed Hawk

Over the years I had gotten to know bird rehabber Kathleen Woods, and the work she has done with rescued birds. So I decided we would wrap the hawk with the blanket and transport it to Kathleen's facility in Phoenix, MD, a distance of about 12 miles. Keep in mind that cell-phones and emails did not exist then, so we couldn't announce our coming from the middle of cornfield. I drove and Gary held the hawk. About half way there the bird seemed to start moving around. I suggested to Gary that he lightly stroke the bird to keep it calm. That worked for a while, BUT at some point humongous fly-like bugs started working their way out of the blanket and flying around in my little VW car, landing and crawling on both of us. It was really getting crowded in that little space. Our reaction to these creatures seemed to upset the hawk, and it started to move around even more. At that point Gary "very calmly" tried to tell me the hawk's claw was in my arm. I opened the car windows on my side, on this very cold morning, not thinking the hawk was going somewhere but just wanting the bugs to leave. The hawk seemed to like that and relaxed his claw.

Gary was a real hero in staying calm.

Much closer now, only two miles to go before we arrive at Kathleen's house. Upon arrival, I knocked on the door and thank the heavens she answered. Kathleen came out and very calmly took the bird, saying she would try to calm it down and check it out with a good physical. Good news. Four days later Kathleen called to say the Red-tailed Hawk had recovered and was in good health. She soon returned the bird to the wild over the same reservoir area.

Pileated Woodpecker. The second story I would like to share, took place in June 2017 in the upper regions of Prettyboy watershed in Baltimore County in the small community of Middletown. Bright and early Sunday morning my home phone rang with a very excited neighbor, Beverly, saying a big woodpecker just hit a window at her house, and I needed to come quick.

Ok, up and dressed and on the way, about a county mile. As I drove up, she and her hubby Reb were standing there with a cat cage!?!? I got out and walked over to them. They said crows were chasing this bird, and they put it in the cage so nothing could hurt it. Hmm, a big bird in a cat cage—and that bird just happened to be a male Pileated Woodpecker.

He was alive and very vocal, but sort of leaning like the Tower of Pisa. I covered the cat cage and suggested they ride along to the Phoenix Rehab Center to see Kathleen Woods. Upon arrival this bird was sitting still, but making strange noises. I was glad to see Kathleen open the door and come to the rescue. She reached in and removed the woodpecker from his cat cage, talking very softly and saying she would keep him overnight to watch for any swelling that the impact might have caused.

The next day I called Kathleen, per her instructions. The Pileated was in good health and was looking for a ride back to his territory, as Kathleen thought he possibly had a mate. She explained the male usually drilled/pecked two holes, one for the female and one for him to stand guard. Once the babies were hatched, the adults switched places, as the male guarded the babies and momma gathered food. This was a new tidbit of knowledge for me and the folks in the neighborhood.

Woody, as he was now called, was in a cardboard box with a blanket covering it. We put the box in my car and fastened the seat belt. Woody and I started the return ride home of about 12 miles.



Pileated Woodpecker chipping away!

As I drove though Hereford, Woody started to peck on the cardboard box. I talked with him and asked him to stop and he did just that for about a minute. Only eight more miles to go. Yep, Woody started pecking the box again, but with a lot more force. Pieces of cardboard were flipping though the air. I kept tapping the box and he would stop for another 30 seconds. Once on Middletown Road, we were on the countdown. Would I get to his home spot before he pecked though the cardboard box? I called ahead (there were cell phones now) to Beverly and told her to meet me outside. Her hubby picked up the box from the seat and Woody instantly flew out the bottom. We watched as he circled around and headed back into the wooded area, hopefully, to live happily with his family in the trees of Freeland.

Osprey Rescue continued

saw several strong thunderstorms move through the Baltimore area. A Facebook posting by Kathy Lambrow later that evening described how an Osprey nest had been dislodged from its platform and landed in the water near her house. The nest had been removed from the water and was now on her dock. Of the two fledglings in the nest one was able to fly to a nearby branch but the other remained in the nest. Kathy was asking for volunteers to help place the nest on a new platform.



Thinking this would be a unique experience, my husband and I headed over to Gus and Kathy Lambrow's house in Essex. Arriving there around noon on Saturday we met several others who came to help. Looking at the nest lying on the pier I was surprised at its size. This nest was approximately 4' long by 3' wide and made from small to medium sized branches arranged in a circular shape. The one Osprey fledgling continued to sit in the nest and the adults could be seen circling overhead at times.

Valerie Greenhalgh from Phoenix Wildlife Rescue was present to remove the fledgling from the nest and to oversee the situating of the new platform. While waiting for Valerie's husband Bill to arrive with a new platform and the posts, she told us about several Osprey rescues she had participated in. It seems nest failure is a fairly common occurrence. Nest destruction, whether due to natural or man-made causes and predation by other birds and animals are some of the major obstacles Osprey face.

Osprey eggs usually hatch several days apart, as in this case in which one Osprey fledgling was slightly older than the other. While the older fledgling was able to fly out of the downed nest the younger one wasn't. This left him stranded. Since the nest was at ground level the parent Ospreys were not bringing food and the fledgling had not been fed since before the storm. Valerie pointed out that while the parent Ospreys were still present and circling around there was still the possibility they would abandon the fledgling if it was not placed back into a suitable nest soon. This is why it was necessary to construct the new nest today.

Once Bill arrived with the platform materials it was decided that the platform should be completed and be ready to install before Valerie removed the fledgling. In 10-15 minutes Bill, Mark, Kevin, TJ, Gus and Konstantine had the platform ready. The new platform was 4' x 4' square with 6" sides and this was placed atop a 12' high wooden post.

Valerie planned on using a large fishing net to capture the Osprey fledgling and to then cover the bird with a pillow case. As with most things in life, all did not go according to plan. As Valerie approached the nest the fledgling hopped out onto the dock and went over the edge into the water. With small movements of its extended wings the fledgling began heading away from the shore. Valerie then had to kayak out and used the fishing net to retrieve the bird. With Valerie back on shore the new platform was moved into

place. I had the great experience of helping with the Osprey. It is rare for me to be that close to a large bird, looking at it eye to eye. It took several tries to get the pillowcase over its head, but once its wings were under control into the pillow case it went. The Osprey was then placed in a large animal carrier until the new nest was completed.

The new post and platform was attached to the end piling of the pier. This was a temporary fix only meant to last until the fledglings could successfully leave the nest on their own. Once that happened a more permanent platform could



be built. About half of the old nesting material was passed person to person up a ladder and placed into the new platform. Once everyone had moved away from the pier Valerie placed the fledgling into the new nest. We stayed for a short time to see if the adults would return and we were told it may be hours before this happened so we all left not knowing if the parents ever came back. We would all like to think this Osprey rescue was a success.



Postscript. Kathy Lambrow reports that as of August 2nd the nest rescue was a complete success! The chick that flew spent the evening on Kathy's Purple Martin housing pole and returned to the nest the next day after the temporary platform was installed by the volunteers. Both chicks are fine and being fed by the parents. They are both flying now, but return to the platform for food. We know when they're hungry because they sit on the nest and literally "scream" to be fed. Parents are teaching them all they need to learn!

The Lambrow's plan on rebuilding and reinstalling the platform so it's all ready for them next year. This is the third year they have nested here. She thanks those who responded so quickly and offered manpower to save them—Kathleen Woods group, neighbors, Kevin Graff, Nancy O'Hara, the Flukes, her family, and more.

Field Trip Reports

Compiled by Kevin Graff

Bird Photos by Bill Hubick



APR 11 - Lake Roland - Warm, sunny day at Lake Roland. Species seen included such recent arrivals as Great Egret and Rough-winged Swallow. A mammalian bonus was the River Otter, seen by a few. 48 species. 14 participants. Leader: Peter Lev.

APR 18 - Lake Roland - Two Bald Eagles chasing each other over the lake into the woods. 5 warbler species. Lots of Yellow-

rumped Warblers. A nice easy-going walk with steady accumulation of species. 49 species. 15 participants. Leader: Mary Chetelat.

APR 23 - Cylburn - Birding was very slow at the beginning of the walk. A bit later we saw a few good birds: Peregrine Falcon, Bald Eagle, Orchard Oriole. Also, Chimney Swift and Gray Catbird were first-of-season for some of the group. 32 species. 7 participants. Leader: Peter Lev.

APR 25 - Lake Roland - Drizzly, cloudy conditions. Loon flyovers, Blue-headed Vireo, 5 warbler species: Northern Parula, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Palm and Louisiana Waterthrush. 57 species. 12 participants. Leaders: Debbie & Lou Taylor.



Northern Parula

Blue-headed Vireo

Louisiana Waterthrush

Palm Warbler

APR 27 - Paper Mill & Ashland - A weekday is definitely when birders should bird the busy NCR Trail. From the parking lot on Paper Mill Road we walked north to the bridge and then south to the beginning of the trail. For most it was a morning that produced many first-of-the-year birds such as an unexpected Snowy Egret, four species of shorebirds, three species of vireos (White-eyed, Yellow-throated and Warbling) as well as seven species of warblers (Northern Parula, Yellow-rumped, Black-and-white, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush and Common Yellowthroat). Great morning. 60 species. 7 participants. Leader: Debbie Terry.

MAY 4 - Phoenix Pond - The day brought cooler temperatures and a strong breeze but we managed to hear or see nine species of warblers. Both Oriole species were seen and heard. This gave us the opportunity to learn their song and enjoy their beautiful colors. 62 species. 13 participants. Leader Debbie Terry.

MAY 6 - Susquehanna SP & Swan Harbor - Baltimore and Orchard Orioles were plentiful at the Rock Run Historical Area. A highlight at the Deer Creek Bridge was two male and one female Prothonotary Warblers at close range. Many birders got good photos. Several members had "lifers" when two Blackpoll Warblers were found at the Picnic Area. Swan harbor was slow but several types of shorebirds were present: one Sora, Least Sandpipers, and Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs. 70 species. 11 participants Leader: Mary Anne Fluke.

MAY 23 - Lake Roland - A cool, cloudy morning with the threat of showers ended our Tuesday morning spring walk at Lake Roland. The most aha moments were the great views of Pileated Woodpeckers peaking out of the nest, a Great Crested Flycatcher patiently perched on a bare tree branch, and a mother Wood Duck with 12 babies paddling in the still water below the dike path. Always a good time being with those who love the birds. 62 species. 13 participants. Leader: Debbie Terry.



Hen Wood Duck with family

BALTIMORE BIRD CLUB
http://baltimorebirdclub.org

A Chapter of

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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Joan Cwi, Editor
David Nelson, Design

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:**

October 24, 2017



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+
Individual	\$35.00	\$17.00	\$15.00
Household	\$45.00	\$22.50	\$20.00
Sustaining	\$100.00	\$5.00	\$5.00
Junior*	\$10.00		

* 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