



# CHIP NOTES

FALL 2021 • NO. 417



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## President's Corner

By Joe Corcoran

My mind is now awirl with birding, bird club activities and events and, of course, birds. And more, I'm brain fatigued by the acronyms! WOST, STKI, BBS, MOS, B.Ur.B, BIRD, LOB, NHSM, HMI, SKM, NPSP, CBC, YMOS, CVP, SWAP, ROSP, CBEC, FOY, COC, CCC, LGBTQ+, MODO, NFWF, etc., etc. I can't keep up with all the birding acronyms! (see how many of these you know, then check your guesses on page 5 to see what they stand for). What a year! My first term as the Baltimore Bird Club President has taught me so much. I knew didly-squat about all these things at the beginning of summer last year. Zilch; nada; nothing. Very Little at best! I had never even been to a Board Meeting!

I'm in the midst of being president right now: Program Books, Membership Directories, Renewal Notices, Chip Notes, Youth Programs, Facebook Site, Elections, Board Members, Lecture Planning, Cylburn Interface, eBird Listing - Baltimore List, Maryland List, World List (huh, maybe I should start working on my Yard list).

Well, I made it. Frazzled to be sure, but my position is secure and I'm not letting up anytime soon! Of course there's no way I would have been able to get through this past year without the people who advised me - Lindsay, Libby, Carol, Lynne, Nancy (should-have-been-president, Nancy), Senior Advisor Alina, the previous presidents Joan, Terry, Mark and Peter - and the rest of the board and membership. The Advisors ran the club essentially.



One of my newer and better photos -  
Henslow's Sparrow.

-Joe Corcoran

Looking back, it appears we accomplished a lot. The club did well, I think.

So, some of the accomplishments:

- Starting the BIRD Baltimore Diversity Group
- Having the first meetings
- Developing goals and action plans
- Conducting scheduled birding walks

*continued on page 2*

## WELCOME

Welcome new members to the Baltimore Bird Club! Thank you for joining and we look forward to seeing you on our walks this fall and onwards.

Eugenia Argires - Baltimore  
Joseph Burba - Baltimore  
Michael DiJulia - Baltimore  
Joseph Gohlinghorst - Baltimore  
John Hals - Baltimore  
Alexandra Laham - Baltimore  
Sandra Mason - Baltimore  
Janina O'Brien - Baltimore  
Jeannine Senflug - Baltimore  
Beth Hamilton - Baltimore

Joseph Shatus - Baltimore  
Laura Van Faasen - Baltimore  
Pamela Foxcroft Villanyi - Ellicott City  
Rachael Mady - Ellicott City  
Kaleigh Keesee - Mount Airy  
Charisma Burrows - Nottingham  
Paula Espinosa - Parkville  
James Gossweiler - Pikesville  
Robin Chandlee - Towson

- Starting the Community Science Committee with Libby as the Chair
  - Completion of Loch Raven and Middle River Audubon Christmas counts
  - Successful May count
  - Gratefully accepting positions on Hart-Miller Island Citizens Advisory Committee and Friends of Hart-Miller Island (Nico Sarbanes)
- Improving Lights Out Baltimore (LOB) and making it stronger
  - \$49,000 grant to promote and accomplish bird safe buildings
  - Making Irvine Nature Center building bird safe
  - Getting front page newspaper article about LOB
- Improved Trip and Lecture Committee Leadership (Nancy O'Hara)
  - 10% more trips than ever
  - Wonderful array of speakers
- Very successful online lectures
  - Many more people viewing lectures than any previous live event (Thanks, Terry Ross!)
  - Converting lectures to YouTube for more views (Terry Ross)
- Increasing membership to over 320 members
  - Gaining MOS board seat (Mark Linardi)
  - Gaining BBC board seat (new member, Neville Fernandes)
- Reactivated BBC Youth Group
  - Monthly youth events and walks (Daisy Sudano)
- Continuing strong Conservation Committee
  - Keeping us up to date on local and national conservation efforts (Carol Schreter et al)
  - Arranging habitat walks
- Continuing solid financial management (Dick Krejci)
  - Managing LOB grant money
  - Keeping us financially very healthy

And I personally have grown immensely as a local Baltimore birder. Let's face it; I was kind of raw with a lack of newer birding skills and lack of birding knowledge in the Baltimore area. I was more of a casual local birder with emphasis on Life Birds only.

So, thanks to the influence of my Senior and other "advisors", and expert birders like Tim Carney, here's what's changed:

- I enjoy local Birding again
  - Once the emphasis was off of Life Birds and on our local birds I'm



Lights Out Baltimore volunteer Aaron Heinsman shows the collection of dead migratory birds taking up space in his freezer. JERRY JACKSON/BALTIMORE SUN PHOTOS

## MIGRATION MITIGATION

Freezers full of dead birds a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic for these Baltimore activists

BY CHRISTINE CONDON

The Ziploc bags are tucked into a shoebox in Aaron Heinsman's freezer, near pouches of frozen vegetables and a cauliflower pizza crust.

Inside are birds. Hundreds of them. Common yellowthroats and American woodcocks and ovenbirds, avian ice cubes tightly sealed in plastic.

Each met a devastating end in Baltimore City during this year's migration season, at the hands of glass buildings they didn't see coming. The

birds are collected by Lights Out Baltimore — a group that advocates for making buildings "bird-safe," and collects data on bird collisions along the way.

And frozen those carcasses will remain — at least for the time being. Normally, the frosty songbirds would be bound for a museum collection or a laboratory. But because of the coronavirus pandemic, Heinsman and the group's other bird-gathering volunteers have nowhere to take them.

See **BIRDS**, page 12



Baltimore Bird Club president Joe Corcoran takes a photo of an American woodcock that was found dead in an alley off Baltimore Street.

Lights Out Baltimore was recognized on the front page of the *Baltimore Sun*.

really enjoying being out in our local habitats and meeting so many wonderful and engaging birders of all levels

- I use eBird NOW!
  - I've finally gotten my life list in to eBird!
  - But also a MD and Baltimore list
  - And I know most of the tools like Alerts and Target Species
- There's a nice high quality scope that I use — and it makes a difference compared to my old one
  - No more 30 year old inexpensive low image quality scope (I'm still fond of it though)
- I know where North Point State Park is!

- I've learned so so many new birding locations in the Baltimore area this past year
- I'm able to photograph birds and record their sounds much better (still a long ways to go to catch up to most of our more serious birders)
- Repairing mostly minor (but sometimes major) scope and binocular damage has become a bit of a hobby

So, again, what a year! I'm looking forward to this new one now that I half know what I'm doing. And while I'm out and about and you see me, please talk to me about the club. What do you like? What would you like to see improved? This is YOUR club!



## President's Corner

*continued from page 2*



Hart-Miller Island Citizens Oversight Committee with local residents and State Senator Johnny Ray Salling.



Daisy Sudano leading Youth Group bird walk.



## President's Corner

*continued from page 3*



Lynne Parks on BIRD walk with teens with disabilities.

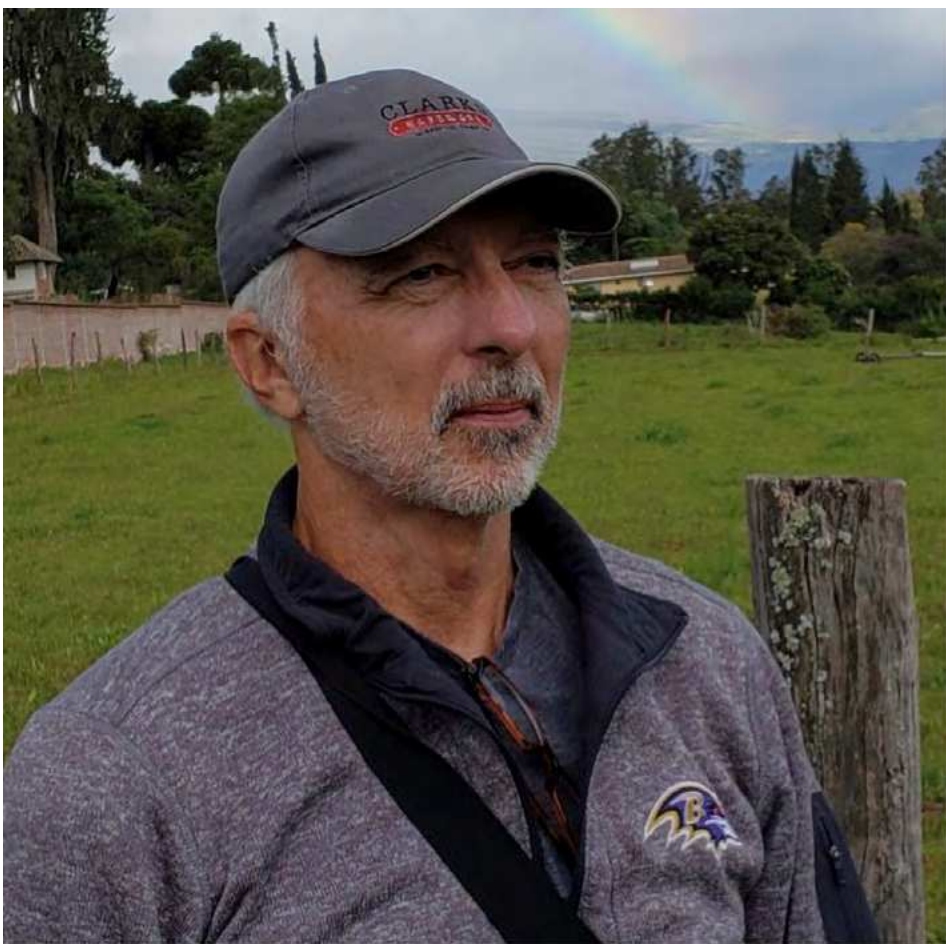


# President's Corner

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Libby Errickson surveying shorebirds at Hart-Miller Island.



Looking ahead as an experienced Baltimore Bird Club President.

## Acronyms:

- **WOST:** Wood Stork
- **STKI:** Swallow-tailed Kite
- **MOS:** Maryland Ornithological Society
- **B.Ur.B:** Birds of Urban Baltimore
- **BIRD:** Birders for Inclusivity, Representation, and Diversity
- **LOB:** Lights Out Baltimore
- **NHSM:** Natural History Society of Maryland
- **HMI:** Hart-Miller Island
- **NPSP:** North Point State Park
- **CBC:** Christmas Bird Count
- **YMOS:** Youth of Maryland Ornithological Society
- **CVP:** Cromwell Valley Park
- **BBS:** Breeding Bird Survey
- **SWAP:** Southwest Area Park
- **ROSP:** Roseate Spoonbill
- **CBEC:** Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center
- **FOY:** First of Year
- **COC:** Citizens Oversight Committee
- **CCC:** Civilian Conservation Corp
- **LGBTQ+:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning. The + represents all other gender identities and sexual orientations not represented by the five preceding letters.
- **MODO:** Mourning Dove
- **NFWF:** National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

## Conservation Corner:

### *The Proposed High-Speed Maglev Train and Its Threats to the Environment*

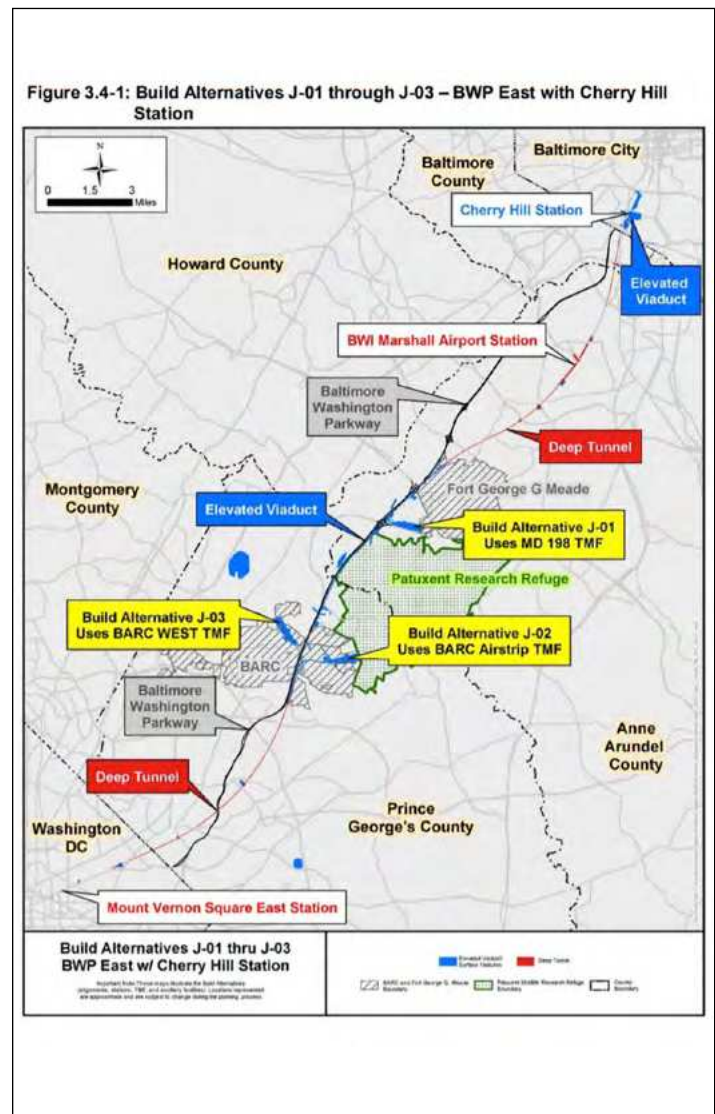
By Libby Errickson

A new high-speed train has been proposed between Baltimore and Washington, D.C. On the surface, the idea of being able to get to D.C. and back more quickly and easily is appealing for many of us (especially if there are rare birds down there to be chased). The superconducting magnetic levitation train, called Maglev for short, will allegedly be able to transport passengers between Baltimore and D.C. in a mere 15 minutes. Unfortunately, the cost of convenience is high, and not just in ticket fares (which are estimated to be around \$60 one-way, for the record). The project will cost an estimated \$12 billion to build, a figure that does not include the environmental impacts and loss of environmental economic benefit that will be considered unavoidable collateral damage of Maglev's construction. The majority of the 40-mile train track will be installed in deep tunnels underground, with the remaining 25% built on aboveground viaducts. Over 1,000 acres of land between Washington and Baltimore will be transformed into access roads, fences, power substations, maintenance facilities, a trainyard that will house hazardous chemicals, emergency egress structures, not to mention the train track itself. The train and its associated infrastructure is proposed to pass through Patuxent Research Refuge, Beltsville Agricultural Research Facility, NASA Goddard Flight Center, and Fort Meade, resulting in 328 acres of impact to federal property, 89 of which are owned by the National Park Service. Additionally, an estimated 451 acres of forest, 51 acres of wetlands, 76 acres of floodplain, 124 acres of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area, 12,896 linear feet of waterways, and 140 acres of recreational facilities and parklands are in danger of being negatively affected by construction of the Maglev train, with much of the proposed impact likely to be permanent. On top of that, Maglev is expected to be 37% less fuel efficient than existing passenger rail, increasing net carbon dioxide emissions by an extra 49 million kilograms per year.

Maglev will also come with a suite of environmental justice issues. The communities through which the high-speed train will be built will experience poorer air quality, increased noise and light pollution, and decreased property values. It probably does not come as a surprise to many readers that the majority of the potentially affected neighborhoods are in lower income communities of color. In fact, 80% of the land parcels that would be impacted by land use conversion, rezoning, and property acquisitions are located in underserved communities. The train is proposed to only stop in Baltimore, Washington, and at the Baltimore-Washington International Airport, meaning that the communities in between that will be most impacted by Maglev's construction will not be the people benefiting from it, even if ticket prices were affordable. The \$12 billion price tag will divert funds from maintaining and upgrading existing public transportation systems that these populations will continue to rely on even after the Maglev train is built.

If operating on an express schedule, it is possible for the existing Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) train to transport passengers between Baltimore and Washington in 29 minutes for less than \$10/ticket, only 14 minutes slower than Maglev's alleged 15-minute travel time and about \$50 cheaper one-way. Twelve billion dollars and astronomical environmental and socioeconomic impact is the price to save 14 minutes of commute time, at least for commuters who can afford a daily \$120 round trip train ticket.

The negative impacts to birds and bird habitat that would result from Maglev are almost impossible to fully assess. In addition to direct habitat destruction, both migrating and resident bird populations are likely to be impacted by increased light and noise pollution and poorer air quality. In May 2021, the Baltimore Bird



Club board voted to be included among the chapters of the Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) and other organizations that actively oppose construction of the Maglev train. Our name was added to a letter of opposition addressed to the Maryland Transit Administration, which was ultimately signed by 51 environmental organizations, including 8 MOS chapters. On June 24, 2021, the Baltimore Sun reported that the City of Baltimore has taken an official stance in opposition to the Maglev project. The City's planning and transportation chiefs Chris Ryer and Steve Sharkey recommended the "No Build Alternative" for the project in a May 14th letter to the Federal Railroad Administration, citing concerns related to equity, environmental justice, and community impacts, along with inconsistency with City efforts to upgrade existing rail infrastructure already underway. Despite the opposition, the Maglev project so far continues to move through the process toward potential approval, with construction potentially beginning as early as 2022.

For more information on the Maglev project, next steps, and what you can do to prevent it from coming to fruition, please visit the National Parks Conservation Association's webpage at <https://www.npca.org/advocacy/98-maglev-train-is-more-harm-than-good> and the Maryland Coalition for Responsible Transit at [stopthistrain.org](http://stopthistrain.org).



# Peregrine Falcons:

## *Roland Water Tower Update*

*By Terry Ross*

“Are they back?” A voice comes from a car as I am looking up at the Roland Water Tower: I don’t recognize the speaker, but the question is a common one: have the Peregrine Falcons returned? In recent years, the best place to find Peregrine Falcons in Baltimore had been the Roland Water Tower. They could be seen on the tower almost every day, and for a month or so after that year’s fledglings appeared, they were unmissable. The tower itself, however, was greatly in need of repair – tiles had fallen off the roof; there were holes in the eaves; a fence had been placed around the tower so that nobody would be injured by falling debris; at some point, the tower would have to be either repaired or taken down. tRepairs began last fall.

The last day it was easy to see a Peregrine Falcon on the tower was October 20. The scaffolding around the tower was about two-thirds of the way up, but the workmen were still far enough away from the top of the tower that peregrines were comfortable perching. By the next day that was no longer true. Peregrines would occasionally be seen in the neighborhood, but the tower was no place for them. Through the winter and spring, work on the tower continued. Tiles were replaced, masonry was cleaned and repaired, the holes in the roof were sealed, but there was one important addition to the tower: the northeast side of the tower now included a Peregrine Falcon nesting box, designed and installed by Craig Koppie of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

The scaffolding came down in early June, and it was not long before peregrines took advantage. On June 19 there was a neighborhood gathering designed, according to the invitation, “to celebrate the completion of the restoration and the imminent return of our resident falcon neighbors.” The highlight of the event was a

Peregrine Falcon, who flew in from the east, circled the tower, and then perched on the roof, to the delight of the people below.

Since then, peregrines have been seen at the tower several times, but I was looking for something more than just a fly-by, or a peregrine using the tower as a suitable high perch – I wanted to see one that looked at home there, and at the end of July I got my wish. While the roof is the highest part of the tower, it is exposed to the elements, and when adult peregrines lived on the tower they more typically would perch just under the eave, atop one of the pilasters that are found on the top story. It’s not an easy perch for a newcomer, but after peregrine becomes used to the tower, this becomes the most comfortable spot. This coming fall and winter we should, with luck, find the tower hosting a pair of falcons, and (let us hope) next spring there will be new and noisy youngsters in the neighborhood.



The Roland Water Tower now has a nesting box for Peregrine Falcons.



# Filming Local Birds:

## Marty Brazeau's YouTube Channel

By Marty Brazeau

March 2020, as Covid was increasing and we were more shut in, I decided to begin filming birds in Maryland. I have filmed parrots and toucans and other exotic birds in Costa Rica and Australia. Why not birds here? As a Community College of Baltimore County birding instructor, I decided to make a birding quiz in the form of a YouTube video. The first quiz showed video clips of eleven local birds, and three Australian birds, with five seconds to identify the bird before the bird is identified with a label. The video was emailed to my soon to be Covid cancelled Spring CCBC birding class and received positive feedback.

As the education and outreach board member for the bird club, I decided why not create a YouTube channel? I soon was going out almost every morning until about 1 PM with my Canon XA11 high-definition video camera and tripod to local birding locales and branching out to Bombay Hook and the Eastern Shore.

The channel is updated with new quiz videos as more birds are filmed. Currently, I have four quiz videos that include a total of 174 local birds. My video, created a year ago, has 84 birds shown has almost 20,000 views! I am happy to have over 700 channel subscribers. Lately I have been branching out and creating bird ecology and birding location videos. A video showing birds I filmed in Tucson, Arizona was recently uploaded. I also have encouraged my CCBC bird class students to watch the videos to learn about birds. You can also visit the channel. I find the videos are relaxing to watch on a big screen TV! My YouTube channel can be found by typing the keywords: Bird Identification Marty. Contact me at [tropicbirder56@gmail.com](mailto:tropicbirder56@gmail.com)



I like to film birds in action, such as this yellow-billed cuckoo feeding on a praying mantis or a grasshopper sparrow singing.



"Watching Birds Through Migration" CCBC class members now appear in my videos.



# Filming Local Birds:

Marty Brazeau's YouTube Channel

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## Birds at Forest Levels

**Canopy:** Treetop birds, farthest from ground predators, tend to be colorful. Though rewarding, viewing bright red scarlet tanagers can give you neck-aches!



*Baltimore Oriole*



*Northern Parula*



*Scarlet Tanager*



*American Redstart*

### Tree trunk:

Woodpeckers and nuthatches at all levels cling to the bark as they feed on ants and insect larvae. Woodpeckers excavate nest cavities, which, when abandoned, are used by other birds.



*Pileated Woodpecker*

**Understory:** Below the canopy, you will see leaf-colored, well-camouflaged flycatchers snatching insects in mid-air and olive-colored vireos struggling to swallow squirming caterpillars.



*Red-eyed Vireo*



*Eastern Wood-Pewee*



*Yellow-billed Cuckoo*



*Acadian Flycatcher*



*White-breasted Nuthatch*

### Forest Floor and Shrubs:

Birds occupying the ground and shrubs tend to be brownish and often spotted to blend in with the leaves and soil.



*Eastern Towhee*



*Ovenbird*



*Carolina Wren*



*Wood Thrush*

Created by Marty Brazeau: Bird images video derived from his "Bird Ecology and Identification Videos" YouTube channel.



Blue-gray catcher nesting activity filmed while participating in the breeding bird atlas.



# Field Trip Report

Compiled by Nancy O'Hara

**May 22, 2021**

## **Bombay Hook and the Dupont Nature Center, Delaware**

**Leader: Joe Corcoran**

This was an awesome shorebirds trip where we experienced many hundreds of shorebirds. Semipalmated Plovers and Semipalmated Sandpipers, Red Knots, Black-bellied Plovers, Short-billed Dowitchers, and Dunlin were in abundance. Some highlights were White-rumped Sandpipers, American Oystercatchers, Black-necked Stilts, and Clapper Rails, especially at Dupont. The seven of us saw over 30 species at the Dupont Center and 60 species at Bombay Hook.



Red Knots and More.



Black-bellied Plover.



Two photos of Short-billed Dowitchers.



Black-necked Stilt.



Clapper Rails.



# Field Trip Report

*continued from page 10*

**May 25, 2021**

**Lake Roland**

**Leader: Joe Corcoran**

Sixty species were experienced by the eight of us on this late spring bird walk. Highlights included Bank Swallows and Canada Warblers. Of special note, many of us witnessed a Bald Eagle continuously harassing an Osprey to relinquish hold of its fish. When it did the Eagle dove for the fish and caught it in midair. The spectacle lasted for what seemed like a few minutes. Now I understand why Eagles and Ospreys don't get along very well.

**May 27, 2021**

**Masemore Water Trail and  
Pretty Boy Reservoir Spooks  
Hill Boat Ramp**

**Leader: Joe Corcoran**

At these locations eight of us enjoyed some early post spring migration birding on a gorgeous day in Northern Baltimore County woodlands. Highlights were Cliff Swallows near Spooks Hill and breeding Worm-eating Warblers at Masemore.



Canada Warbler  
*Photo Credit: Bill Hubick*



Cliff Swallow  
*Photo Credit: Bill Hubick*



Bank Swallow  
*Photo Credit: Bill Hubick*



Worm-eating Warbler  
*Photo Credit: Bill Hubick*



## Baltimore Bird Club

<http://baltimorebirdclub.org>

A Chapter of

Maryland Ornithological Society

4915 Greenspring Avenue

Baltimore, MD 21209

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**Chip Notes**, newsletter of the Baltimore Bird Club,  
is published quarterly. Current issue: Fall 2021

**Alina Martin**, Editor

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**Alina Martin** – [alinacmartin@gmail.com](mailto:alinacmartin@gmail.com)

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**Moving or email change?**

Send update to

**Terry Ross** – [trosstva@gmail.com](mailto:trosstva@gmail.com)

**Deadline for submitting articles  
for upcoming issue:**

**October 24, 2021**



### Application

*The membership year is September 1-August 31. New members only joining after March 1 will be members for the upcoming year as well as the remainder of the year that they enroll.*

The most convenient way to join is at the Maryland Ornithological Society website using this address: <https://mdbirds.org/join/chapters/baltimore-bird-club/#toggle-id-3> where you may pay your dues using PayPal.

OR, you may join by mail.

**Make check payable to “MOS” and mail with completed application to:**

Carol S Daugherty  
MOS Treasurer  
11925 Oden Court  
Rockville, MD 20852