

# Chip Notes

Spring 2025, No. 431



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## Take Action to Stop New Power Lines from Destroying Bird Habitat

By Marcia Watson, Member,  
Conservation Committee of the Baltimore Bird Club

By now, most Baltimore Bird Club members are probably aware of the **Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP)** project that proposes to build a set of new **high voltage powerlines** across portions of Baltimore, Carroll, and Frederick counties. You may remember receiving an email alert on this topic in early December from Robin Todd, Chair of the Maryland Ornithological Society’s Conservation Committee. Read Robin’s note to MOS members by clicking [here](#).

The proposed powerline would be approximately **70-miles long**, running east to west across the northern portion of Baltimore County, then cutting to the southwest across Carroll County and Frederick County, to end at a power station near the town of Doubs, southeast of Frederick and near the Virginia state line. See the map accompanying this article on the next page.

The reason for building the powerline is to shunt power from generating stations in Pennsylvania to a growing cluster of **data centers in Northern Virginia**; these huge installations process data for the AI and cryptocurrency industries and require massive amounts of electricity. Expert analysis shows **no benefits to Maryland residents from the MPRP**, and yet Maryland residents would bear the **permanent loss of land, degradation to natural areas, higher electric rates** to pay for the project, and lost farming productivity, potentially leading to higher food costs.

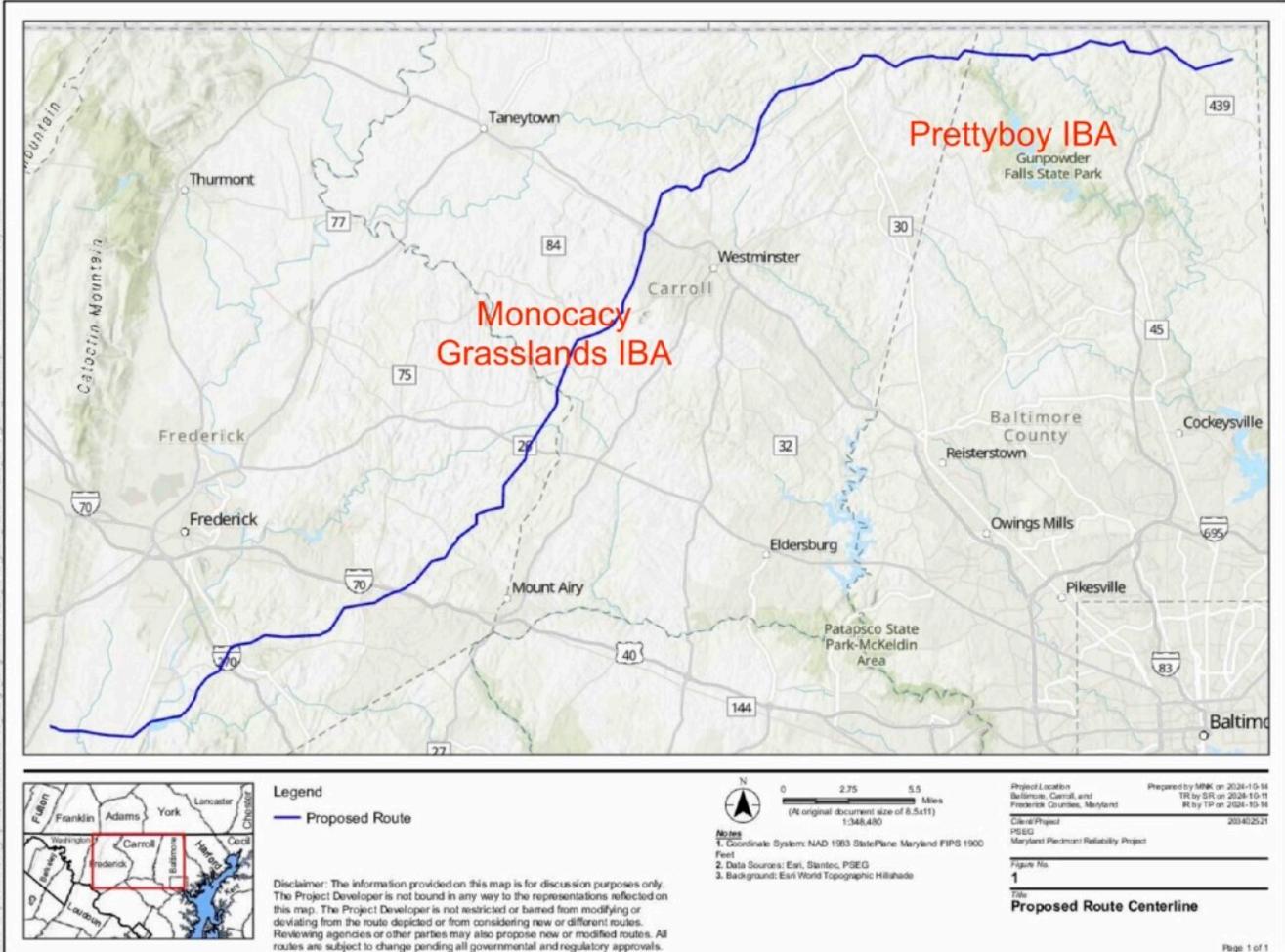
The **500,00-volt powerline** would be carried on tall **140-foot-high towers along a new 150-foot-wide right-of-way**, rather than using already existing powerline rights-of-way. This strip of land would be **clear cut**, with not a tree left standing in what are now forested areas. In agricultural areas, the powerline will cross existing farm fields and pastures for cows, horses, and sheep. Suburban developments would also be impacted. MPRP would cross **numerous private farms and protected areas that are under conservation easements or agricultural legacy programs**. Maryland law currently does not prevent the taking of easement-protected lands for powerline construction.



High voltage, long range power transmission line metal support structure.

Banner: American Kestrel by Marty Brazeau

# Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project Map (MPRP)



Red-shouldered Hawk  
Marty Brazeau

# Stop power lines from destroying bird habitat, continued

In November 2024, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) issued a [report](#) analyzing the environmental impacts of the powerline, stating that many **streams and wetlands** would be degraded by MPRP through the loss of forest cover and increased runoff into waterways. CBF stated the effects of the powerline along its length, enumerating impacts on

- **514 acres of protected areas**, including 374 acres of Maryland agricultural preservation foundation easements, plus Forest Conservation Act acreage and a portion of Gunpowder Falls State Park.
- **483 acres of high-quality watershed** that includes the cleanest water and most valuable habitats in Maryland.
- **377 acres of forest cover**, which provides habitat for breeding birds as well as ecosystem services such as removing carbon from the atmosphere, filtering runoff, and modulating stream temperatures.
- **47 acres of wetlands**, which help to reduce pollution by soaking up excess nutrients, as well as providing quality habitat.
- **125 acres of riparian buffer**, that is, vegetation surrounding and protecting streams and other water bodies.

As you can see, the environmental impacts of the project would be disastrous, and come at a time when we are already battling climate change. The MPRP raises many complex issues, too many to cover here. If you would like information about the MPRP project in depth, we recommend a report prepared by **State Senator Chris West** (Senate District 42) for his constituents; Senator West's report methodically outlines how the MPRP project came into being and explains the companies and agencies involved. He also covers legislation he intends to introduce to the state legislature to help curb the project. We've posted his report online and you can [click here to read it](#).

## Impacts on Bird Habitat

In Baltimore County, the powerline would pass just north of the Audubon-designated **Prettyboy Important Bird Area (IBA)** and would also cross the **Monocacy Grasslands IBA** in Frederick and Carroll counties. One obvious effect of clearing the powerline right-of-way would be **habitat fragmentation**; that is, dividing an unbroken block of habitat into smaller areas. As we know through the groundbreaking research of the late biologist and MOS leader Dr. Chandler Robbins, habitat fragmentation generally results in lower breeding productivity of birds.

The powerline will cut directly through the massive 185,410-acre **Monocacy Grasslands IBA**, resulting in significant habitat fragmentation and water quality impairment. The Monocacy Grasslands IBA lies in a predominantly agricultural area that holds breeding habitat for sensitive and scarce species such as American Kestrel, Red-headed Woodpecker, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Dickcissel, along with other migrating and breeding species that use field habitat, including Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Bobolink, and Eastern Meadowlark. The nomination form for the Monocacy Grasslands IBA contains more information about its birds; you can read it [here](#).

The route for the powerline will pass **north of the Prettyboy IBA** and not through it (see map on the next page), but the powerline will be **upstream** of the Prettyboy Reservoir and its surrounding IBA, meaning that the IBA will be subject to **downstream effects on water quality**, such as increased pollutants, sediment runoff, pH changes, and increased water temperatures caused by loss of forest cover. Such changes would have a detrimental effect on bird habitats.

The **Prettyboy IBA** has been designated by Audubon as an Important Bird Area of CONTINENTAL significance: that is, the birds there are already so scarce that any losses would impact populations on a continent-wide scale. The Prettyboy IBA contains some of the most valuable bird habitat remaining in Baltimore County, and is one of the few areas left in the County where scarce breeders such as Hooded Warblers and Kentucky Warblers can be found. See the Audubon site report on Prettyboy IBA [here](#).

We also know about the value of the Prettyboy IBA through the Breeding Bird Atlas. Prettyboy IBA encompasses portions of five separate atlas blocks for the third Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA3). The BBA3 website shows that between 31 and 62 bird species have been **confirmed breeding** in these five blocks, attesting to the rich habitats that we simply can't afford to lose.

# Stop power lines from destroying bird habitat, continued

<b>Atlas Block</b>	<b># of Breeding Species Possible</b>	<b># of Breeding Species Probable</b>	<b># of Breeding Species Confirmed</b>	<b>Total Possible, Probable &amp; Confirmed</b>
Lineboro CE	15	12	62	89
Lineboro SE	18	22	45	85
New Freedom SW	22	16	40	78
Hampstead NE	19	29	31	79
Hereford NW	19	17	61	97
Hereford NE	12	23	42	77

## What's Being Done to Stop MPRP

Because of the project's projected impacts to bird habitat, the **Baltimore Bird Club Conservation Committee** has been intensively tracking the issues and has already sent letters expressing our concerns to local elected officials and to the Public Service Commission; see a sample letter from BBC [here](#).

The **MOS Conservation Committee** has taken similar steps. The **Frederick and Carroll County Chapters** of MOS are also active in expressing opposition. Environmental organizations throughout Maryland are united in opposition, and the **Forever Maryland** coalition has issued a powerful letter which was co-signed by MOS; you can read that letter [here](#).

The most visible organization is a local grassroots citizens group, **Stop MPRP Inc.**, that is leading the fight against the project; Stop MPRP is a non-profit organization that was formed immediately after the MPRP project was announced in summer of 2024. Anyone can **sign up** with Stop MPRP to receive daily or weekly **email updates**, or can visit their [website](#), which holds a wealth of information about the project. Stop MPRP is actively assisting landowners whose land would be crossed by the powerline.

An almost unanimous bipartisan front of **elected officials**, including the Baltimore, Carroll, and Frederick County Councils, and numerous State Senators and Delegates, have spoken out against the project.

## Current Status

On December 31, 2024, **PSEG, a New Jersey based company** that has already received a contract to build the powerline, filed its **formal permit application** with the **Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC)**, the agency that will decide whether or not the powerline can be built. PSC is reviewing the application and will announce opportunities for public input. The PSEG application is available to read on the Public Service Commission's [website](#), which will also display information about how the public can provide input.

In response to the firestorm of concerns from their constituents, quite a few **state delegates and senators are sponsoring bills in the current legislative session** that are designed to curb the advance of the MPRP project and to protect property rights. The proposed bills are too numerous to list in full here, but as an example, Senate Bill 189 will prevent protected farmland and conservation lands from being taken by eminent domain. Another example is House Bill 81, known as the Protect Maryland Farm Lands Act, which requires that the fair market value of farmland taken through condemnation be set at 350% of the highest appraisal value.

It is important to note that the **Maryland General Assembly does not have direct decision-making authority** on whether to allow MPRP to be built, but can make the Governor have the authority to stop MPRP. The **decision to allow MPRP to be built or not rests with the Public Service Commission**. Thus we need to **express our concerns about the project on two fronts: to our state delegates and senators, and directly to the Public Service Commission**.

## How You Can Get Involved

1. Volunteer to help the BBC Conservation Committee track bills through the General Assembly and/or prepare testimony and notes on the bills. The number of bills is large and we need help wading through them.
2. Submit your own individual testimony on legislation in the General Assembly. Stop MPRP has a [toolkit](#) explaining how to do this.
3. Send an email to PSC to share your concerns at any time; send your email to [piedmontcomments.psc@maryland.gov](mailto:piedmontcomments.psc@maryland.gov).
4. Submit formal written comments to PSC; to do this, you must first register through the PSC's e-file system and then upload your detailed comments.
5. Attend and testify at public hearings to be hosted by PSC. These are not yet scheduled; see the [Public Service Commission website](#) for updates.
6. Stay informed by signing up for updates from Stop MPRP, Inc.
7. Support Stop MPRP financially by becoming a paid member or making a donation. The organization is doing good work on behalf of all of us and is prepared to go to court if necessary.

## Resources and References:

**Website for Stop MPRP Inc.**, grassroots citizens group leading the opposition to MPRP <https://stopmprp.com>  
Guide to the Maryland General Assembly from Stop MPRP <https://stopmprp.com/maryland-general-assembly>

### Maryland Public Service Commission Project Page for MPRP

<https://webpsxcb.psc.state.md.us/DMS/recentcases> - click on case #9773 filed on December 31, 2024, titled "PSEG RENEWABLE TRANSMISSION LLC 'S APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY TO CONSTRUCT A NEW 500 KV TRANSMISSION LINE IN PORTIONS OF BALTIMORE, CARROLL, AND FREDERICK COUNTIES"

### Chesapeake Bay Foundation report on impacts of MPRP

<https://www.cbf.org/news-media/newsroom/2024/maryland/new-maryland-transmission-line-would-disrupt-hundreds-of-acres-of-forests-and-wetlands-cbf-report-finds.html>

### State Senator Chris West (Senate District 42): Report to my constituents about planned 2025 Bills to address a) the proposed Piedmont Reliability Project and b) Maryland's desperate need to generate more electricity.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1c7Na19P7Usp\\_xPxruXOc15o3caIVh5MS/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1c7Na19P7Usp_xPxruXOc15o3caIVh5MS/view?usp=sharing)

### Forever Maryland coalition letter of opposition

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1514hncmq8RWu0N01VpOFNoITAETIT01Q/view?usp=sharing>

### Robin Todd email to MOS members, December 9, 2024

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RqI72YfMsqVq1WRzVPhgyolnCZ-Cc8B-/view?usp=sharing>

### Sample Baltimore Bird Club letter of opposition sent to local elected officials and to the Public Service Commission

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ni\\_n14XHJACudNBFtaHrt5ZlBu1Hd\\_W4/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ni_n14XHJACudNBFtaHrt5ZlBu1Hd_W4/view?usp=sharing)

### Prettyboy Important Bird Area Site Report (National Audubon Society)

<https://gis.audubon.org/portal/apps/dashboards/ab402cba1acc461d924783cf0f5e181c#site=3284>

### Monocacy Grasslands Important Bird Area Site Report (National Audubon Society)

<https://gis.audubon.org/portal/apps/dashboards/ab402cba1acc461d924783cf0f5e181c#site=4096>

### Monocacy Grasslands IBA Nomination Form (Audubon Maryland), 2008, provided by David Curson, Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon Mid-Atlantic

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1clzcMzSHWi-4BG4nnO-j9enwFjzuS4l-/view?usp=sharing>



## Help Save Old Growth Trees

Garrett County is proposing to fell about 2.4 acres of old growth trees in Swallow Falls State Park to make way for a new bridge over the Youghiogheny River. This is Maryland's only river that is designated as wild. Many of these trees are hundreds of years old including iconic hemlocks that predate European settlement. The area over which trees would be felled is part of an Important Bird Area (IBA) with a number of Forest Interior Dwelling (FID) species resident.

Rather than felling over 220 trees to erect a new bridge, MOS supports replacing the existing bridge. While this would cause a temporary inconvenience to road users (approximately 3 months), that inconvenience should be weighed against the preservation of trees that are hundreds of years old. Please contact Governor Wes Moore and the Maryland Board of Public Works and urge them to deny the easement which Garrett County needs in order to fell these trees.

Governor Wes Moore  
(410) 974-3901

<https://governor.maryland.gov/contact-us>

Maryland Board of Public Works  
(410) 260-7335  
email.bpw@maryland.gov  
Please write or call today.

This shows the road, bridge and trees marked for cutting should a new bridge be built.



Thank you,  
Robin Todd, Chair  
MOS Conservation Committee  
Maryanne Dolan  
Secretary, MOS

Steve Storck with one of the doomed trees at Swallow Falls



Both photos from a well known birder and journalist Dan Rodricks.  
More information from his website:  
<https://danrodricks.com/2024/10/20/save-these-trees-swallow-falls->

## Marylander Hunters and Birders Should Be Vigilant Against Avian Influenza Human risk is low, but simple practices can help prevent spread

Press Release, Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
January 14, 2025

<https://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2025/01/14/marylander-hunters-and-birders-should-be-vigilant-against-avian-influenza/>

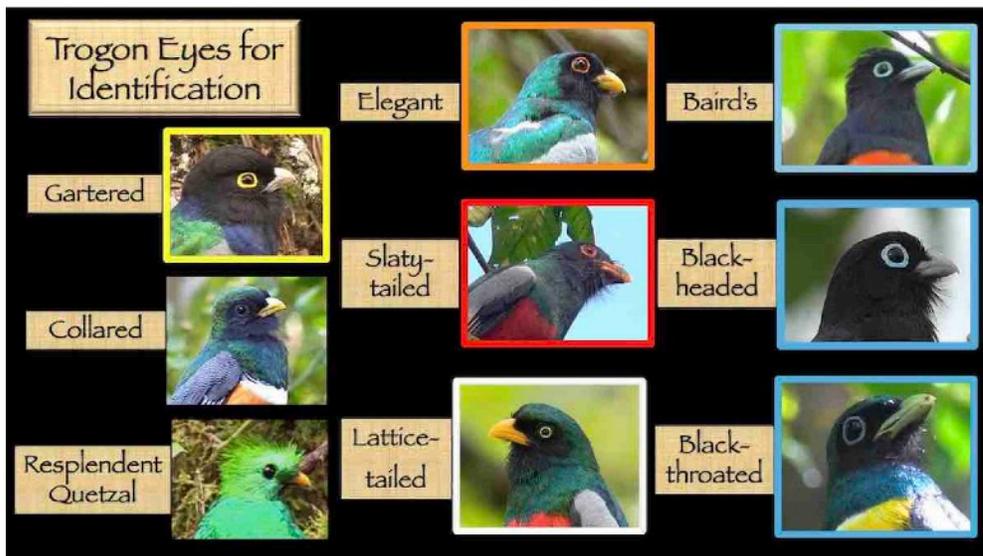
In early January, laboratory testing provided preliminary confirmation of Highly Pathogenic H5 Avian Influenza (HPAI) in [seven dead snow geese found in Worcester and Dorchester counties](#), and subsequently in a [Caroline County poultry facility](#). Avian influenza, often called “bird flu,” is an airborne respiratory virus that spreads quickly among birds, and its presence should be considered endemic throughout Maryland’s wild bird populations, especially waterfowl and raptors. Risk to human health is considered low, but people who may handle or encounter wild birds should take precautions to help limit the spread of this virus.

Hunting wild birds remains safe but some guidelines should be followed: Never harvest or handle wild birds that are obviously sick or found dead, wash your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer immediately after handling game; use disposable gloves when handling game and double-bag offal and feathers; and use dedicated clothing, boots and, tools for cleaning game that are not used around poultry or pet birds. Anyone preparing harvested waterfowl should cook it to 165 degrees to kill any viruses or bacteria.

Anyone who fills birdfeeders for the winter should feel free to do so, as songbirds carry a very low risk of getting or spreading the virus. Hiking, photography, and other outdoor activities in areas where wild birds congregate are safe, although as with hunting, precautions should be taken to avoid sick or dead birds.

Anyone who sees sick or dead birds in the wild should not handle or move them, but should report them by calling 1-877-463-6497. USDA Wildlife Services operators are available from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except on state holidays. Those with phone numbers outside of Maryland should call 410-349-8055.

More information on HPAI and how to mitigate exposure of domestic poultry to wild birds can be found on the [U.S. Department of Agriculture’s website](#).



This picture shows how you can look at eye ring color to help identify trogons of Costa Rica.

Watch my video to learn the 7 species of Trogons in Costa Rica.

Here is the link:

<https://youtu.be/9EFhszdWcMY>

At the end of the video is a fun quiz.

Enjoy,  
Marty Brazeau

# Readers respond to the Winter 2024 Chip Notes and Prize Drawing!



Five readers responded to the last Winter 2024 issue of the Chip Notes. Their responses to specific articles and the comments concerning the value of the Chip Notes in general are below.

Georg Marudas has won the prize drawing and will be sent the cool t-shirt shown here.

Did you miss reading the issue? Here is the link:

<https://baltimorebirdclub.org/cn/cn2404.pdf>

I always read Chip Notes (edited by JoAnn Bochmann, and designer and video content creator Marty Brazeau) in its entirety, ideally as soon as it comes out but if that's not possible, I put a reminder on it to read it later. It only takes me 15-20 minutes to read it. In the most recent issue, my favorites were the articles about the YMOS team and the phasing out of gas-powered leaf blowers. I also read every issue of the Maryland Yellowthroat (the MOS newsletter), as well as the newsletters of the Harford Bird Club, the Frederick Bird Club, the Howard Bird Club and occasionally the Montgomery Bird Club. Many of the smaller MOS chapters have phased out their newsletters and I miss them.

Why do I do all that reading? It's simple - I like to know what's going on. From the time when I first became involved in the newly founded Cecil Bird Club, I have really enjoyed being a part of the birding community across the state. I have liked learning about places to bird in other parts of the state and getting to know birders from all over Maryland. So now I'm going to get philosophical. With all that reading under my belt, I think there are at least three reasons that a newsletter like Chip Notes is important for a local bird club (or for MOS):

- The first and most obvious reason is to keep members informed of upcoming events, local conservation issues, club activities, and news about members.
- A related reason is to convey this information to the larger world, to inform the public about what the club does. The newsletter is a window into the club, a way to convey the personality of the club: what we as a group value and hold important, and what we like to do. In this sense, the newsletter can be an important tool for recruiting new members.
- The newsletters, if saved in an archive, also serve as a historical record of club activities and actions, and this can be valuable to later members as well as to the public. In fact, MOS has on occasion used newsletters as a way to illustrate organizational activities when providing proof of non-profit status for tax purposes.

PS: All of my comments could refer to the website and social media as well, so a shout-out to Terry Ross and the team that's revamping the website and to Cathy Czajkowski, Libby Errickson, and Sam Tillman for social media and to Neville Fernandes for the e-newsletter. It's wonderful for the club to have all their communication channels.

**Marcia Watson, Member, Conservation Committee of the Baltimore Bird Club**

Happy Holidays, Marty,  
I would like to comment on the article about Hart Miller Island. I used to Volunteer with TEAM DNR (Teaching Environmental Awareness to Marylanders). We did FREE programs for schools, special events, and festivals on "Who Polluted the Bay", "Oysters", "Horseshoe Crabs", "Streams", and "Waterman". DNR used to take us on Amazing trips as a Thank you for Volunteering. One year it was aboard a boat to tour the new plans for Hart Miller Island. Everything was so new and still in development. So to read about where it is now is ASTONISHING! I got to see it's birth from the first new dredge placed, and I look forward to seeing it all these years later with our club when we have a trip on a day I'm NOT working.

**Daisy Sudano**  
**BBC Youth & Family Birding Chair and MOS Director**

I loved Gavin's article about his experience at the World Series of Birding! It's great hearing from young birders. We need more of them. It gives me hope for the future of the planet.- **Rozanne Solomon**

Hi Marty

I was on the canoe trip today, we were talking at the end about Chip Notes. So I came home and read it and really liked it. I was thinking that the email about its availability might include some teasers about its content like Aboard a Pelagic Tour: Birds Landlubbers Will Never See or Traveling Abroad: Get a Local Birder to Show You Around... just a blurb to get folks interested in your very good content.

Best **Georg Marudas**

Hi, Marty! The latest Chip Notes looks great. Beautiful layout. I especially enjoyed reading the report from the YMOS team about their WBD experience. As usual, I read everything except the Trip Notes.

**Linda Corcoran**

**Dive into this!**

## **Maryland Waterfowl Photo Contest**



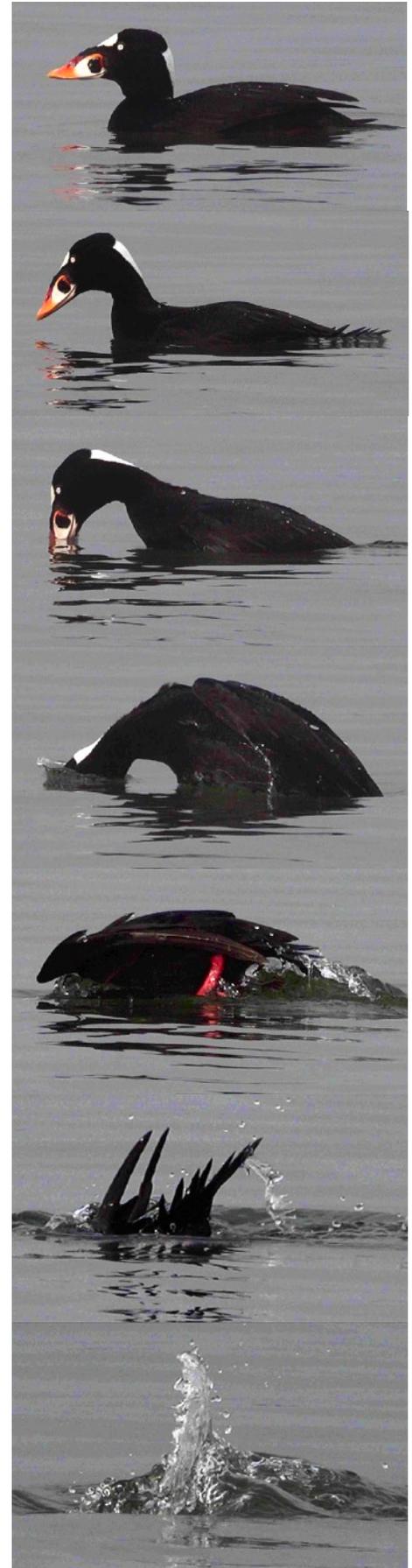
Photo by Jerry Am Ende, submitted to 2018 Maryland DNR Photo Contest; image by Maryland DNR.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) invites wildlife photographers to enter its [new waterfowl photo contest](#). The winning entry will be the featured image on new DNR hard card hunting and fishing licenses that will be available later this year. Entries for this inaugural contest will be accepted through March 31, 2025.

DNR this year will offer hard card licenses as part of a new licensing and registration portal, scheduled to be rolled out in spring 2025. These collectable hard cards—which are similar in appearance to a credit card—will be limited editions and serve as a durable hard copy of state hunting or fishing licenses. In addition, the winning photo will also be featured on DNR’s 2026 calendar and potentially win prizes in DNR’s annual photo contest later this year, including the \$700 grand prize.

The waterfowl photo contest is the successor to the Maryland Migratory Game Bird Stamp Design Contest, which ended in 2023 as the physical waterfowl stamp is no longer required or produced.

The waterfowl photo contest entry fee starts at \$10; contest rules and procedures are available [on the DNR website](#). All photos will be entered automatically into the 2025 DNR Photo Contest and be eligible for prizes in that contest. For the waterfowl photo contest only, the deadline to submit is March 31, 2025. More information about the broader 2025 DNR photo contest will be released later this year.



Surf Scoter diving sequence by Marty Brazeau

## Welcome New Members!

Join us as we look for warblers on one of our Spring bird hikes!

Jerome and Martha Acks... Baltimore  
Staci and Caton Summers... Baltimore  
Bill Denison ... Baltimore  
Sean and Paula Gallagher... Baltimore  
Damon Gibson... Baltimore  
Melissa Hoffman and Ben Banaag... Baltimore  
Kennedy Metcalf and Arianna Quintero... Baltimore  
Marla O'Neill... Baltimore  
Ellie Robison... Baltimore  
Linda Valle... Baltimore  
Mabel Zelle... Baltimore  
Charles and Renate Beers... Catonsville  
Monica Broere ... Dundalk  
Hagit Barrett ... Ellicott City  
Gretchen Cannon ... Glen Arm  
Patrick Smith and Jill Shephard ... Parkville  
Ed Coll ... Silver Spring  
Carl Simek ... Timonium  
Adam Bayer ... Towson  
Kayla Thanner ... Towson  
Regina Romeu Watson ... Towson

## New Board member, Secretary Jen Cookus.

I grew up in Calvert County in Southern Maryland, spending plenty of time outdoors—yet somehow, no one ever mentioned to me just how many birds were out there. After moving to Baltimore to attend Towson University, I earned a history degree—because what better way to prepare for a career in restaurant management? After years of wrangling kitchens and customers, I transitioned into IT support for restaurant POS solutions and recently joined Oracle to continue my tech journey. I consider myself a new birder, now entering my fourth year on eBird, though my birding career truly began with a lot of “Wait... what was that?” moments.



Jen Cookus

My interest grew gradually, but discovering eBird and Merlin gave me a much-needed head start—along with the patience and encouragement of the BBC’s welcoming community. One of the greatest joys of birdwatching is exploring the incredible landscapes of Maryland and beyond, even if half the time I’m staring into trees wondering whether that movement was a bird or just a particularly ambitious leaf. It’s a hobby I’ll cherish for life—assuming I don’t trip over too many roots while looking up. (Though I definitely will)



American Oystercatcher slurping up mussels at the Ocean City Jetty by Marty Brazeau

## New MOS Director, Rozanne Solomon

I became interested in birds and birding around 1995 when I moved to Carroll County. It was there that I began to really hear the birds and noticed songs and calls I had never heard before. I bought a backyard bird book and started learning the local birds. I put up some feeders and bird houses and bought a cheap pair of binoculars. In 2008 I began Feederwatch which then led to going out and finding birds elsewhere in Maryland and on vacations.

One day I saw in a magazine an ad for the Cape May Fall Festival and decided to go to it. I realized I liked birding with people and looked around for groups and bird walks. The BBC had some that were fairly close to home. One time a couple of the leaders asked me if I was a member and encouraged me to join. I joined BBC/MOS in 2021. Recently retired I now have time to go to the meetings and lectures and get more involved in the club.



Rozanne Solomon

## Matthew Black: New Baltimore Bird Club Lecture Chair

Matthew was born and raised in Baltimore, and enjoyed birding as a middle and high school student. He was a graduate student in sociocultural anthropology, as well as a bike messenger and nonprofit office worker in NYC from 2003 to 2021. Rediscovered birding after moving back to Baltimore and has been a BBC member since 2023.



Matthew Black

## Timothy Carney: New Baltimore Bird Club Community Science Chair

I started birding in 1992 when my fourth grade teacher taught a bird unit. Every student had to write about a particular bird. I was assigned Mourning Dove. I read that they came to feeders, put out a feeder and Mourning Doves showed up within a few days, wanted to know what the other birds were too. Parents encouraged it. Grandmom was in the BBC and took me on my first field trip - Blackwater in 1994. First time seeing eagles, harriers, snow geese, tundra swans etc.

Intermittent bird club member since then. Rejoined three years ago and have greatly increased my participation - leading field trips, joining field trip committee, community science co-chair. Also trying to get as many birders to Hart-Miller as possible.

**Top 3 favorite US birds** - Blackburnian Warbler, American Bittern, Northern Shrike

Love birding elsewhere. Favorite experiences - first international trip Trinidad & Tobago in 1997, seeing Lilac-breasted Roller in South Africa, seeing Great Potoo under a full moon in Colombia, seeing "Peter Kaestner's Antpitta" (Cundinamarca Antpitta) also in Colombia, seeing male and female Resplendent Quetzals hovering to pluck avocados in Costa Rica...

**Favorite places to bird in MD** - Hart-Miller Island year round, Baltimore parks during warbler migration, Ocean City in off-season.

**Worst birding experience** was losing Leslie Starr. Want all new bird club members to know that she was the coolest. Goal is to get a record/species list of every Baltimore Bird Club field trip (ever) in the club's eBird account.



Timothy Carney photographing a Lark Sparrow  
Photo Sam Denenberg



Enoch Pratt Library partnership walk from Roland Park Branch led by Nico Sarbanes and Libby Errickson  
photo by library staff

September 2024.

## **Cromwell Valley Fall Festival and Arts in the Park Youth and Family Birding**

*Leader: Daisy Sudano.*

We've been busy this Fall and Winter with some fun and educational trips. In September we participated in the Cromwell Valley Fall Festival and Arts in the Park where we enjoyed a celebration of our migrating raptors, an ecosystem investigation and family-centered festivities, crafts, music and art vendors. The art vendors were in partnership with Towson Arts Collective. There were food trucks, live birds of prey demonstrations, the Hawk Watch with talks on counting and identifying migrating birds, guided nature walks and insect programs. Lots of exhibits and displays with children's games and craft activities. We also got to meet the Willow Grove Nature Center animals.

October 20, 2024

## **Hydes Road Park**

*Leader: Tim Carney*

Sometimes you just get lucky. Everything aligned to make this one of the best birding tours I've ever had the pleasure of leading. Perfect fall weather, beautiful fall scenery, a great group of birders ranging from seasoned experts all the way to one individual who had never been on a birdwalk before, and lots of good birds that showed well and at close range. Upon arriving, a well-lit male Wood Duck flew in front of the moon as it was setting, and an adult Bald Eagle flew over heading a different direction. The reliable Rusty Blackbird flock emerged and began singing from the treetops bordering the beaver pond, then dropped into the pond to forage. Rather than skulking along the back edge, they actually moved closer to us, and some continued singing while they foraged! We were able to see a variety of plumages ranging from all-black adult males to the stunning females displaying their copper and bronze scalloped patterns. A Wilson's Snipe appeared and probed in the mud beside the Rusties. Alison spotted a Nashville Warbler that eventually showed well for everyone, and Laura picked out a distant Blue-headed Vireo and described its location well enough for everyone to see. Savannah Sparrows were everywhere and we also enjoyed some newly-arrived Purple Finches. eBird checklist:

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S199653377>

October 26, 2024

## **Stoney Run Bird Festival, Youth and Family Birding**

*Leader: Daisy Sudano*

The Baltimore Bird Club, Youth and Family Birding was also represented at the Stoney Run Bird Festival cohosted by Audubon. One of the highlights was meeting "Gobbles," the Wild turkey animal ambassador from the Carrie Murray Nature Center, walking around checking out the vendors. October was also busy with the Fairwood Forest Hawk event sponsored by Baltimore Green Space. Fairwood Forest is an important hawk flyway where thousands of hawks are sighted each year. This was a family-friendly event with fun activities including hawk watching, live birds with Falconer William Dieng, forest tours, arts and crafts, story time, and more!

October 26, 2024.

## **Chesapeake Environmental Center**

*Leader: Stacy Hartman*

Three participants and 38 species observed. It was a beautiful day for the walk with clear sunny skies and about 60 degrees, with some strong winds picking up halfway through the walk. We had a nice start as we were serenaded by the Brown-headed Nuthatch's rubber ducky like call and found four Northern Pintail and a Belted Kingfisher at the lake. At the overlook near the kayaks, Pam spotted a very large float of about 40 Gadwall that we viewed from the scope. We had some great looks at two Hermit Thrushes that tolerated us for a bit and stayed on the path and trees nearby. Also had a nice view of a Sharp-shinned Hawk that swooped in for breakfast right above us but was unsuccessful. It perched in the tree for a few minutes before taking off again. We ended the walk with a trip through the Birds of Prey Exhibit that houses injured raptors.



Gadwall tipping  
Marty Brazeau



October 27, 2024

## Oregon Ridge Park

Leader: Simon Best

A beautiful and chilly morning at Oregon Ridge Park was enjoyed by the trip members. Bird activity was high throughout, with plenty of common species seen in high numbers. Highlights were a pair of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers giving clear and unobstructed views for all participants, and two Purple Finch 'brownies' feeding at eye level contentedly with no regard for the excitement they were causing!

November 3, 2024

## Eccleston Wetland Restoration Site

Leader: Tim Carney

This one was challenging but fun. We're still in the low single digits as far as BBC walks hosted here and are still learning the most efficient ways to navigate the property. Let me personally apologize for leading the group through a squishy wetland for far too long; as there are no defined paths, I had to wing it! Next time, I won't head in a direction that not everyone is comfortable traversing. Thanks to Mark Linardi for finding a fallen tree over a stream and securing it long enough for each of us to cross, one by one. The birding was great, however. We began with a perched and calling Eastern Meadowlark. Eastern Bluebirds were everywhere; we estimated 40 and this was likely low. We heard Purple Finches calling in flight then found a small flock in the woods. Most of them were "brownies" (females or immature males) but we found at least two raspberry adult males. Wilson's Snipes flushed throughout, and we heard several flyover American Pipits and Pine Siskins. However, the absolute highlight came courtesy of eagle-eyed Alina Martin, who spotted three swallows high overhead. They were so high up that we couldn't find them with our naked eye, but Alina described their location well enough that most of us found them with binoculars. She also expertly captured nearly 50 photos of them. We assumed they were Tree Swallows, but one struck me as slightly orange-ish or brownish. Photo review showed that at least one was a CAVE SWALLOW! An obvious Tree Swallow was also in the mix. None of the pics showed all three birds together, so we entered them as 1 Cave, 1 Tree, and 1 swallow sp. In eBird. <https://ebird.org/checklist/S201294648>

Savannah Sparrow  
Marty Brazeau



December 1, 2024

## North Point State Park

Leader: Charisma Burrows

It was a brisk day at North Point State Park with a total of eight birders and a surprise visit from the Baltimore Bird Club president, Joe Corcoran, at the end of our walk raising our total attendees to nine. We saw 43 total species, including great looks at the resident snow buntings on Crystal Pier and some visiting Dunlins and Least Sandpipers off the edge of the pier. After the walk I offered to lead a short excursion over to Fort Howard Park to see the King Eider that had been spotted earlier in the week. Seven people joined us at Fort Howard and everyone was able to get great looks at the King Eider which was a lifer for the majority of birders there.

December 7, 2024.

## Breakfast with the Birds, Masonville Cove Environmental Learning Center

Leader: Tim Carney

What a great opportunity to study diverse waterfowl at close range! The group sorted through the large waterfowl rafts that were mostly comprised of Lesser Scaups and Ruddy Ducks, and were able to pick out one Redhead and two Ring-necked Ducks. A few Greater Scaup were mixed in and it was nice to compare head shapes of Greater and Lesser side by side. Green-winged Teal floated along the edge of the claw, and then we began to see Horned Grebes appear seemingly out of thin air. It began with one, then two, then three, and the total was up to eleven by the time we left the pier. We barely entered the reforestation/meadow area before a late Common Yellowthroat and a close Yellow-bellied Sapsucker appeared, and then we found an Orange-crowned Warbler and an American Tree Sparrow along one of the freshwater wetlands. A Savannah Sparrow landed about 20 feet away on the path in front of us. At the tip of the claw, a Marsh Wren quietly gave a few "chet" calls, heard by some of us. Finally, a Fox Sparrow popped up in the tree-save area on the return trip and sat still for almost five minutes. <https://ebird.org/checklist/S204750652>

December 8, 2024

**Quarry Lake**

*Leader: Brian Rollfinke*

Eight birders enjoyed a cool, but clear, morning high above the cliffs of Quarry Lake. Twenty-nine species were observed in all. Waterfowl were particularly cooperative, as we enjoyed close views of Gadwall, Ring-necked Ducks, and Hooded Mergansers, while a half-dozen Pied-billed Grebes fished farther from shore. Three hardy, late-lingering Killdeer walked the muddy shallows of the eastern end of the lake, and an adult Bald Eagle soared directly south overhead. We were surprised by the amount of songbird activity right along busy Greenspring Avenue, where we encountered 50+ Dark-eyed Juncos, several sparrow species, and a couple of handsome male bluebirds. Admittedly, several of us who remember birding here a decade ago expressed frustration that the entire southwestern third of the lake is now gated off to non-residents and, inexplicably, the "public" Blue Stone Park seems to be no longer open to the public. For many, this was a favorite birding hotspot close to the city; however, much of the better songbird habitat is no longer accessible to outsiders.



Long-tailed Duck



American Wigeon



Brant

Waterfowl images, Marty Brazeau

December 15, 2024

**Eagles of Conowingo, Youth and Family Birding**

*Leader: Daisy Sudano*

In December we visited Fisherman's Park at Conowingo Dam to view the eagles. WOW, did the eagles put on a show for us. We didn't officially do a count but we saw well over 70 eagles, along with thousands of seagulls (Herring, Laughing & Ring-billed), along with the usual Cormorants, Canada Geese, Great Blue Herons, Black Vultures (over 40 of them) quite a presence. A Pileated woodpecker stopped by but looked so small when compared to staring at eagles all day. I had a table set up with information about eagles and the Conowingo eagles for people to take with them. Many enjoyed using the extra binoculars and being an eagle themselves with the eagle head. I met visitors from LA, Miami, Texas, and our neighboring PA.

January 1, 2025

**Old Picnic Area Trail, Loch Raven Reservoir**

*Leader: Joe Corcoran*

On the first birding day of the new year we saw 33 species, including 5 duck/goose species and a nice raft of 110 American Coots. Woodpeckers were Red-bellied and Hairy, Yellow-bellied, and Downy. A Peregrine Falcon flew in and landed close to us providing for a nice photo opportunity. Both Kinglets and 2 Brown Creepers graced our trip.



American Coots at Old Picnic Trail Walk  
Joe Corcoran



Peregrine Falcon at Old Picnic Trail Walk  
Joe Corcoran

# Baltimore Bird Club

<http://baltimorebirdclub.org>

A Chapter of

## Maryland Ornithological Society

4915 Greenspring Avenue

Baltimore, MD 21209



Female Hooded Merganser



Male Hooded Merganser

Marty Brazeau

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Moving or email change?  
Send update to  
Terry Ross at [trosstva@gmail.com](mailto:trosstva@gmail.com)

Deadlines for submitting articles  
for upcoming issues:  
April 24, 2025



### Application

The membership year is September 1-August 31. Only new members 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:

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