# Chip Notes

Spring 2026
No. 435


*Willet at MOS Irish Grove Sanctuary (by Dominic Nucifora)*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE



CONSERVATION CORNER

## MOS Conservation Activities

*Marcia Watson*
*Member, BBC Conservation Committee and BBC Representative to MOS Board of Directors*

Fellow Baltimore Bird Club members: Did you know that, without even trying, you are contributing substantially to the conservation of birds across the state of Maryland? Almost without lifting a finger? It happens when you annually renew your membership in the Baltimore Bird Club and the Maryland Ornithological Society.

As you know, part of your annual dues goes to the Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS), the parent organization for bird club chapters across the state. What you may not realize is that MOS is a quiet powerhouse for important bird conservation efforts throughout Maryland. MOS engages in both advocacy for conservation and hands-on efforts.

### MOS Conservation Committee

Advocacy for habitat conservation, environmental stewardship, and land preservation is carried out through the MOS Conservation Committee and is aimed at both the national, state, and local levels. MOS does not employ lobbyists, instead relying on volunteers who engage in promoting public awareness of critical issues (those "MOS conservation alerts" that you receive in your email inbox), outreach to legislators and congress, providing public testimony, and filing public comments on pending legislation and rules and regulations. The Conservation Committee is led by Chair, Robin Todd and Chair Emeritus, Kurt Schwarz.

*Continued, next page*

## Safe Skies Maryland

Safe Skies Maryland is a subcommittee of the MOS Conservation Committee with a focused goal: it works to raise awareness across Maryland about the threats of bird collisions with man-made structures. Similar to our own Lights Out Baltimore, Safe Skies Maryland has the ultimate goal of preserving biodiversity in a world that is more and more dominated by humans. Safe Skies employs educational, community, and legislative outreach to reach its goals. The Director of Safe Skies is Carolyn Parsa and Mark Southerland is the Legislative Director. Southerland notes that Safe Skies was instrumental in passing the first Bird Safe Building legislation—first in Howard County in 2020, and then at the state level in 2023. Safe Skies is currently pursuing legislation in Montgomery County and is also conducting educational activities, surveys of bird collisions, and promoting retrofits of existing buildings. Most recently, the Maryland Science Center in Baltimore's Inner Harbor area added treatments to problematic windows at the urging of Safe Skies Maryland. Read more: mdbirds.org/safeskiesmaryland.

## Hands-On Conservation

In addition to the advocacy conducted by the MOS Conservation Committee and Safe Skies Maryland, MOS supports hands-on conservation efforts carried out by partner organizations and through the MOS Sanctuary Program. MOS annually dedicates a portion of its budget—derived from your dues—to these activities, which vary widely in their approach and targets. Here are just a few of the projects that MOS supports.

## Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership (MBCP)

In 2014-2015, MOS partnered with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and US Fish and Wildlife Service to launch MBCP, which serves as an umbrella organization for several statewide bird conservation initiatives. Many other organizations have since joined as partners, including Audubon Mid-Atlantic, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, the American

*Continued, next page*

*Bald Eagles at nest (Photo courtesy USFWS)*

Bird Conservancy, the Chesapeake Conservancy, the Greater Baltimore Wilderness Coalition, the Irvine Nature Center, Lights Out Baltimore, the Maryland Biodiversity Project, Nature Forward (formerly Audubon Naturalist Society), the Phoenix Wildlife Center, and others too numerous to mention here.

These supporting organizations provide financial resources, expertise, and volunteers to enable MBCP to fulfill its mission "to maintain and enhance native bird populations and the habitats they use by fostering partnerships with public and private entities and promoting community action." MOS provided initial matching seed money to set up MBCP and has continued to provide annual financial support.

Key MBCP programs include the Farmland Raptor Program (see below); the Bird City Maryland Initiative; the Third Breeding Bird Atlas for Maryland & DC (BBA3), including taking the lead on data analysis and publication; the Chimney Swift Conservation Program; and the Maryland Avian Research and Conservation (MARC) Fund for Youth, which supports research by young people on Maryland's Species of Greatest Conservation Need. The MARC Fund for Youth is a joint initiative of MBCP and YMOS, the youth division of MOS. MBCP also conducts two ongoing statewide monitoring projects: Bald Eagle nest monitoring and Audubon Important Bird Area (IBA) monitoring. Gabriel Foley currently serves as Executive Director of MBCP; he previously served as the BBA3 Coordinator. Read more: marylandbirds.org.

*Alex Pellegrini installs a kestrel nest box (Photo courtesy MBCP Farmland Raptor Program)*

## The Farmland Raptor Program

Established just a few years ago, the Farmland Raptor Program has quickly become one of the most visible MBCP projects. The program focuses on four species—American Barn Owl, American Kestrel, Short-eared Owl, and Northern Harrier—and builds on previous work by Andy Brown in his former role as a naturalist in Calvert County. Andy is now the lead on the Farmland Raptor Program and is assisted by Alex Pelligrini. They work with landowners to install and monitor nest boxes for kestrels and Barn Owls; they also conduct trapping, banding, and monitoring of Short-eared Owls, and collect data on distribution and population trends of all four species. MOS is providing financial support to the Farmland Raptor Program, and in addition, is providing the Irish Grove Sanctuary as a study site. The MOS Sanctuary Committee has installed Barn Owl nest boxes in the marshes at Irish Grove, and the Farmland Raptor program has been trapping and banding both Short-eared and Barn Owls there, resulting in a couple of recent successful captures. Read more at marylandbirds.org/farmland-raptors.

## Tern Rafts – Maryland Coastal Bays Foundation

Many of us are probably aware of the artificial rafts that have been placed in the Chincoteague Bay near Assateague, to support nesting terns that have lost habitat because of development or island erosion in the Coastal Bays (the inland waterways behind Ocean City and Assateague). The tern raft project is now entering its sixth year and has been spectacularly successful, supporting a growing number of nesting Common

*Continued, next page*

*A Royal Tern adult and chick on Maryland's tern raft (by Kim Abplanalp/Maryland Coastal Bays Program)*

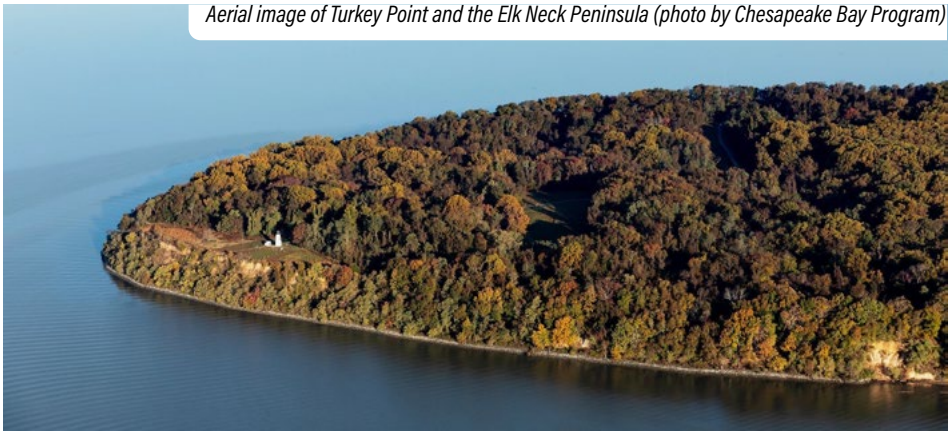
Terns each year, and in 2025, Royal Terns joined the Commons nesting on the raft. The tern raft project is jointly conducted by the Maryland Coastal Bays Program, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and Audubon Mid-Atlantic. Major financial support is provided by DNR; MOS provided critically important matching funds in 2025, and is poised to budget additional funding for the 2026 nesting season. Read more at news.maryland.gov/dnr/2025/11/05/marylands-tern-raft-celebrates-five-successful-years-of-hosting-nesting-waterbirds.

## Turkey Point Bird Count – Maryland Biodiversity Program

Turkey Point, located on the tip of the Elk Neck peninsula at the top of the Chesapeake Bay in Cecil County, has been known for its spectacular fall hawk migration since the 1990s, when the Cecil Bird Club chapter of MOS launched the Turkey Point Hawk Watch. Each fall, volunteers from the Cecil Bird Club collected data on migrating diurnal raptors and submitted data to the Hawk Migration Association's worldwide database. Cecil members also noticed the heavy concentration of migrating songbirds in fall, when warblers and others would drip from the trees. The Cecil chapter ceased staffing of the hawk watch site after the 2016 season, primarily because of lack of volunteers. But the fame of the site as a migrant trap for landbirds as well as the raptor migration led the Maryland Biodiversity Program (MBP) to pick up and expand the effort, starting in fall of 2021. MBP's Turkey Point Bird Count is now a comprehensive count of all bird species observed at Turkey Point during the fall migration season, and is staffed by a paid counter. The count uses modern software to track and display bird counts on a real-time basis through the MBP website. MOS has provided financial support for the MBP Turkey Point count annually since its inception. Read more at marylandbiodiversity.com/project/turkeypoint.

*Continued, next page*

*Aerial image of Turkey Point and the Elk Neck Peninsula (photo by Chesapeake Bay Program)*



## Washington College: The Eirik A. T. Blom Ornithology Internship at Foreman's Branch Bird Observatory and Field Sparrow Research Support

Since 2023, MOS has provided annual funding for a paid bird banding internship to support a Washington College student working at the Foreman's Branch Bird Observatory, run by the college. The scholarship is named in honor of the late Eirik A.T. Blom, known as Rick, who was a prominent member of MOS and a friend and mentor to many of us throughout the state. Among his innumerable contributions to ornithology, Rick was the chief consultant and map compiler for the second edition of the *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, and served as the project coordinator for the first *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Maryland & DC*. Rick was an enthusiastic field birder who was one of the first to take up the challenge of all-county listing, and he had a prodigious knowledge of the seasonal distributions of birds in Maryland and the larger region. The Blom Scholarship Fund at Washington College was initiated by Rick's former wife Bonnie Kerr, and supports bird banding internships at the Foreman's Branch Bird Observatory in Kent County, MD. Foreman's Branch is the only major migratory bird

↑ *Field Sparrow (by Bill Hubick)*

banding station operating on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Read more at washcoll.edu/admissions/admitted/honors-fellowships.php and washcoll.edu/learn-by-doing/ces/fbbo.php. Rick's obituary in the Baltimore Sun is at baltimoresun.com/2002/12/16/eirik-blom-55-noted-ornithologist-author-of-bird-field-guides-teacher (may require subscription to read); there is also a remembrance of Rick in the May-June 2003 issue of the MOS newsletter, *The Maryland Yellowthroat*.

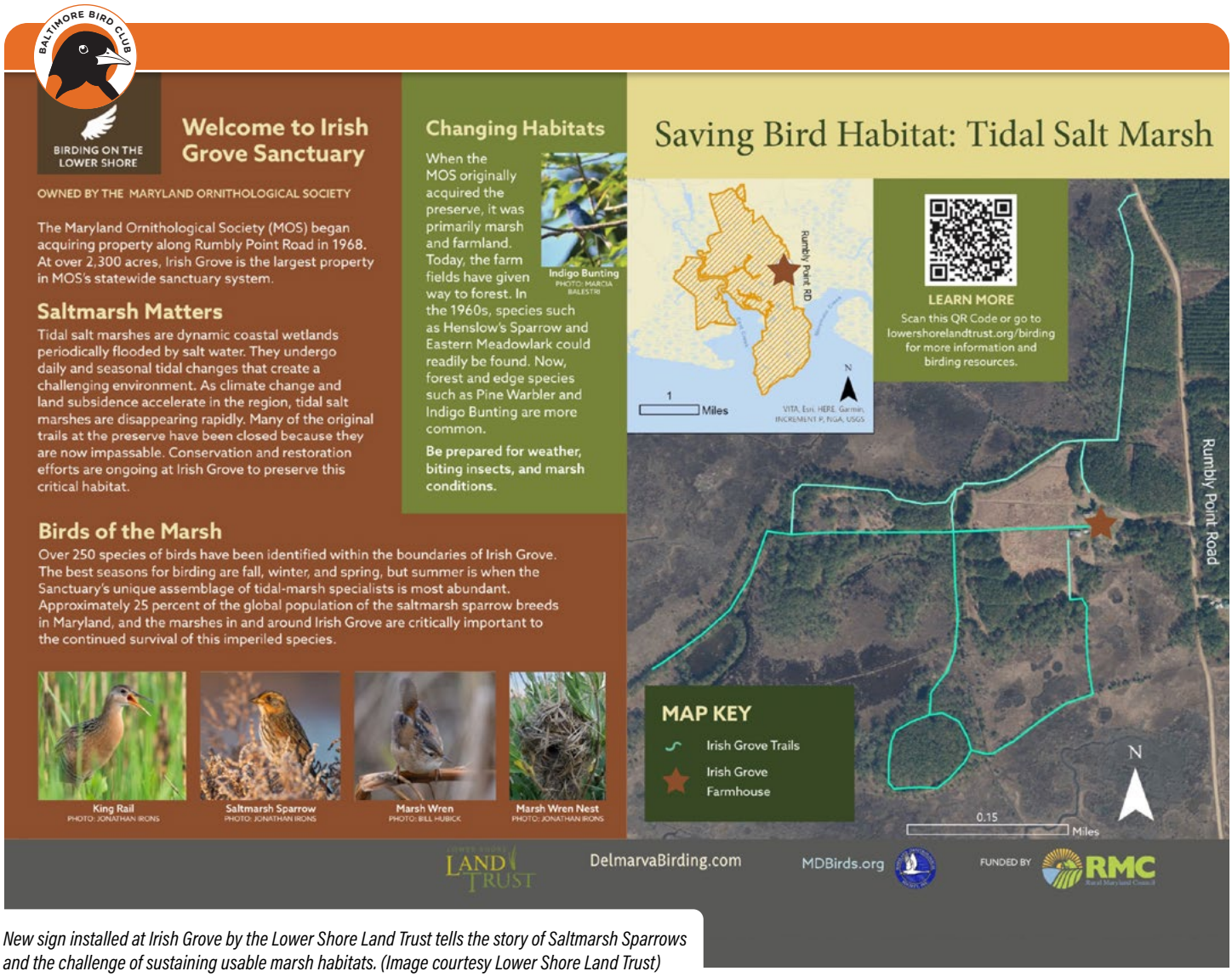
MOS has also provided separate funding for the purchase of a spotting scope used by students monitoring nesting Field Sparrows at Washington College's River and Field Campus. The College's Natural Lands Project has been conducting research and restoring habitat for Field Sparrows and other grassland birds, including Northern Bobwhite. Read more here: www.washcoll.edu/learn-by-doing/rafc/index.php and https://www.washcoll.edu/learn-by-doing/ces/natural-lands-project.php.

## MOS Sanctuaries

The ten wildlife sanctuaries owned by MOS are physical evidence of MOS's commitment to conservation and land preservation. Active conservation and habitat restoration projects have occurred, or are planned, at some of the sanctuaries. Here's a brief rundown:

- **Irish Grove (Somerset County)** As mentioned above, the Irish Grove MOS Sanctuary is hosting Barn Owl nest boxes and trapping and banding of Barn Owls and Short-eared Owls as part of MBCP's Farmland Raptor Program. Irish Grove is also serving as a site for an ambitious pilot study of salt marsh restoration techniques; this study is being led by Audubon Mid-Atlantic with support from MD DNR, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Towson University, and other partners. The intent is to restore vegetation that can be used for nesting by Saltmarsh Sparrows in areas of salt marsh that were formerly vegetated, but are now inexplicably covered with open water. The marshes of Irish Grove are part of a

*Continued, next page*




*New sign installed at Irish Grove by the Lower Shore Land Trust tells the story of Saltmarsh Sparrows and the challenge of sustaining usable marsh habitats. (Image courtesy Lower Shore Land Trust)*

larger swath of marshland on the southern Eastern Shore that supports 25% of the global population of Saltmarsh Sparrows. Planning and baseline bird monitoring for this marsh restoration is currently underway. Permits must be obtained from a number of agencies before restoration work in the marsh can begin. Read more in the November 2024 issue of *The Maryland Yellowthroat*, starting on page 14.

- **Carey Run Sanctuary (Garrett County)** • Carey Run has for decades been the site of nestbox research conducted by faculty and students at Frostburg State University. Recently, MOS partnered with Trout Unlimited to conduct an extensive planting of native trees and shrubs, with the purpose of slowing surface water runoff and improving water quality in the stream at Carey Run. The trees were planted by the MOS Sanctuary Committee with the invaluable assistance of a group of energetic and enthusiastic Frostburg State students. Another ongoing project at Carey Run is control of Hemlock Wooly Adelgids, an invasive exotic insect that is threatening the survival of the Eastern Hemlock Forest at Carey Run. The control program is being conducted by the USDA Forest Service supervising students from the Forestry Program at

*Continued, next page*

*Planting trees at Carey Run (photo by Marcia Watson)*

Allegany College. Saving the hemlock trees is important because an entire ecosystem depends on them—they shade the streams at Carey Run, and thus support habitat for a whole host of aquatic organisms that need cool, clean waters, as well as the songbirds, mammals, and others that use the hemlock forest. Read more in the February 2022 issue of *The Maryland Yellowthroat*, starting on page 8.

- **Myrtle Simons Pelot Sanctuary (Caroline County)** For several years now, Pelot has hosted research by scientists from the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC) who have been monitoring water

*Continued, next page*

temperatures and the presence of migratory fish in Gravelly Run, the stream that runs through the heart of the sanctuary. Gravelly Run is a tributary of the nearby Choptank River, and the scientists are interested in what parts of the Choptank Watershed support migratory fish. They have found that Gravelly Run has some of the coolest waters in the watershed, and supports a diverse fish community that serves as a keystone in this aquatic ecosystem. The 24 fish species that have been found to date in the waters of Pelot Sanctuary are documented in iNaturalist. MOS is dedicated to maintaining a healthy forest canopy to protect the cool stream waters of this valuable habitat.

Additional projects have been conducted at other MOS sanctuaries. To learn more about all ten MOS Sanctuaries, go to https://birdersguidemddc.org/about-us/mos-sanctuaries/.

MOS appreciates the loyal members of local chapters throughout the state who support these conservation activities through annual dues and donations. Perhaps you would like to do more. If you would like to volunteer for any of the initiatives described above, use the <read more> links to find the contacts for the appropriate projects, or if you're not sure who to contact, please feel free to get in touch with me at marshwren50@comcast.net and I'll steer you to the right person.

IN MEMORIAM

## Ruth Elizabeth Culbertson

*October 21, 1925–August 6, 2023*

Dear Friends,

On behalf of our mother Ruth E. Culbertson, an avid birder and long-time member of the Baltimore Bird Club, please accept her donation as designated in her will to be given to the BBC.

Birding was a central activity and interest of our mother for most of her life. She and our father loved going on bird walks and trips to see birds. It gave her great pleasure to be part of the BBC and to know she could contribute to the good work that goes on to support birding in Baltimore and beyond.

Sincerely,
Ruth's daughters,

**Rev. Terry Ruth Culbertson**
**Nancy L. Geesey**

IN LOVING MEMORY
Ruth Elizabeth Culbertson
*October 21, 1925 - August 6, 2023*

**A Beautiful Life**

A beautiful life
that came to an end,
she died as she lived,
everyone's friend.
In our hearts,
a memory
will always be kept,
of one we loved,
and will never forget.

Lemmon Funeral Home of Dulaney Valley Inc. | 410-252-6000

*A Barrow's Goldeneye demonstrating her impressive cardio abilities on the Choptank River at Cambridge, Maryland in 2009 (by Bill Hubick)*

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

## Birding and a Healthy Life

*Joe Corcoran, BBC President (with a lot of help from the First Lady Linda)*

Winter is here, a lot of cold and snow, but for many of us in the BBC it's not a time for staying inside. I can't wait to get out in to the clear, clean air every day. It refreshes my spirit, helps me deal with the inevitable life downers, and restores a sense of perspective. And what better reason is there to get outside than to observe and experience birds.

And birding can be a good source of exercise. Though it's not especially known as a strenuous sport, parts of it can be. When finishing a birding trail one way, hustle back aggressively where you've already birded. Don't avoid going up hills. Push yourself a little. Carry around a backpack with some birding gear weight, and add some extra. And don't forget to stretch before a bird walk. For those with mobility limitations, birding still provides the fresh air and sun and peace of mind we all need.

So, Instead of writing about my October New Guinea trip, which I told an attendee at our Annual Covered Dish Dinner/ Peter Kaestner Lecture that I would do for this *Chip Notes*—I'll be sure to get him a recording of my recent presentation about the trip—health and fitness will be my topic. That's because the importance of exercise and a healthy lifestyle has been on my mind a lot lately due to a rash of health emergencies this past year in my family. My 87 year

*Continued, next page*

old mother had a nasty fall and broke her shoulder and was in a hospital for four months, my younger brother had a serious stroke and is now just recovering after months, and my youngest sister was recently diagnosed with colon cancer which has spread. Geeeshh!!

All these issues have me itching to preach to my birding family and everyone else the importance of keeping fit. So here goes.

Exercise, exercise, and exercise some more. It doesn't have to be three hours a day, and you don't have to train for a marathon. You just have to keep doing it. Little bits here and there. Walk fast, frequently. Take stairs, almost always.

Run up stairs if you can. Lift small weights while on commercial break from a TV show. Keep moving. And stretch, always stretch. Your legs, your back, work those joints, do yoga or simple stretches at home against a wall.

Maybe you're suffering from joint or leg or whatever pain, which limits your movement. Get it fixed if you can. Don't hesitate. Modern medicine is miraculous and can solve a lot of problems. Exercise other parts of your body that aren't hurting.

And if you go to a doctor, or have a procedure or operation, follow the doctor/therapist instructions for recovery. Religiously. If you're supposed to get physical therapy three times a week, get it three times a week. If you're supposed to do 20 elbow lifts a day, then do 20 elbow lifts a day.

Get outside, every day! Get fresh air and sunshine, it's good for you. While you're outside, move. Walk, work, play, whatever, get outside.

Don't smoke, and quit if you do. Strokes (like my brother's), lung cancer, high blood pressure, why? Give up smoking! It's hard to. Very hard. Very, very hard! As a smoker for a total of 23 years I know. Don't give up. Figure out a way, read up on it, keep trying any suggestion anyone gives you.

See your physician regularly, religiously. And do what she says! She says you need a colonoscopy, lung scan, blood test, whatever, do it and do it right away.

Of course, eat as healthy as you can. And if you've taken in a bit too many carbs, work them off. Easier said than done, I understand, but just try, and don't give up. Find a partner to work with, sign up for sports or exercise programs where you have a committed time. That's it, that's enough. I hope you can get the message and learn from people who didn't get the message and are now suffering.

And to end on a good note, it's so awesome to see some of our newer members getting really into birding. Big time, hard core even. Sarah, who just stared a couple months ago, Kevin Yan, AB and Gil, Carl Engstrom, Ian Moody, Caroline, Gabdiel and Bobby. They're out at the hot spots all the time now. And they're a lot of fun! Say Hi when you see them.

**CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS**

## Our vibrant, fun, and very, very active club is growing rapidly and we could use your help.

Do you have writing, computer, software, audio visual or finance skills? Would you like to be involved in conservation issues and make a difference? Be a part of our special Board Team. We have openings and can find a place to use your talents.

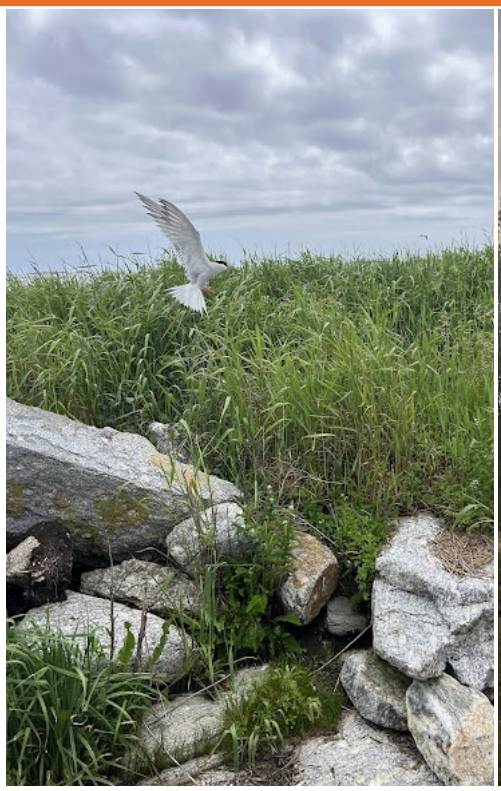
Anything you can do will be appreciated!

Contact Joe Corcoran: corcoran2921@gmail.com

FEATURE

# The Hog

*Acadia M*



*(photos by Acadia M)*

My name is Acadia. I am a freshman in the Environmental Science magnet program at Western School of Technology and Environmental Science. I am also a student athlete at Western as I run for their track team, go Wolverines! I spend most of my time out of school with friends and family, as most people my age do. During breaks from school I enjoy going on trips and spending time outdoors with my parents. I have also loved going out hiking, birding, and appreciating what mother nature has to offer us for as long as I can remember. I credit my father, Jason, for my passion for exploration and appreciation for the great outdoors and most importantly birds.

My story at Hog Island, or what I've nicknamed "The Hog", started when I was six months old. My dad has been volunteering at Hog Island (in Bremen, ME) since 2011 so I was allowed the chance to visit for the first time when I was a small baby. My story at the Hog continued when I reached the age of 8 and was finally old enough to go to Family Camp. To 8 year old me, Hog Island was magical. Everyday was special, full of learning and fun. It's the perfect place for little ones to connect with each other, their families, and nature.

One of the many highlights of the week for all of the Hog Island programs for kids, teens and adults is a trip around Eastern Egg Rock, home of Project Puffin, to see the puffins. Kids and adults are able to appreciate the wide variety of sea birds, including Guillemots and Terns. During my session at Teen Camp last summer, my group was lucky to see a rare Tufted Puffin while on Egg Rock. While teens get to go onto the island and experience everything Eastern Egg Rock has to offer up close and person. Lucky teens even get some love taps from some territorial terns.

Hog Island programs for Teens, I think, are the most special. Teens not only go onto Egg Rock but also go on a variety of field trips throughout the week. I especially appreciate all the activities we partake in, like nature journaling and forest bathing. For those who don't know what forest bathing is, it is a practice where you find a calm quiet spot in nature and sit quietly for an extended amount of time.

I highly recommend making an effort to make your way to The Hog. For those who love nature, art, and birds, Hog Island is the place to visit. It is also a great place to find like minded people and make friendships that'll last a lifetime.

TRIP REPORTS

# November–December 2025

### Nov. 1, 2025: Southwest Area Park

*Leader: Wendy Crowe*

A pleasantly cool morning, sunny, 47-59 degrees, light 6mpg wind, walk at Southwest Area Park with 8 participants. We walked from the boat ramp, did a sidetrack onto the brushy hillside trail and had to back track due to an impassable huge deep puddle. Walked the road past the good views of the waterway and then up and around the model airplane field and completed the loop back to the boat ramp area.

Birds of note besides expected species were lingering Great Egrets which are not totally uncommon in this park (but were an eBird high count), a Purple Finch, and a nice find was a late Marsh Wren in the tiny pond not far from the park entrance.

All in all, a nice morning with some winter arrivals, a couple departing fall migrants and a friendly and helpful group of birders. *37 species total*

↑ *Purple Finch (by Wendy Crowe)*

### Nov. 1, 2025: Baltimore County Public Library Arbutus Branch

*Leader: Charisma Burrows*

The Baltimore Bird Club led its third walk this fall for the Baltimore County Public Library at the Arbutus Branch. The trip had 15 library patrons attend, and we went on a leisurely walk around the edge of Arbutus Memorial Park and around the Arbutus Rec and Parks facility to look for birds. By the end we saw 21 species. The highlight of the walk was a small flock of Purple Finches that landed in a tree near the group which many people got to see before they flew off. Please keep your eyes out for the event posting for the next set of Baltimore County Library Partnership walks we will have this Spring 2026.

### Nov. 2, 2025: Eccleston Wetland Restoration Site

*(Access by Guided Tour Only)*

*Leaders: Alex Pellegrini & Ed Hirsch*

Members of the Bird Club enjoyed a beautiful fall morning at a 100 acre upper Jones Falls wetland restoration site, thanks to the property owners and the site manager, Jim Morris, who attended the walk. The group enjoyed many raptor sightings, including great flybys and fun distanced ID challenges. A very cooperative female Purple Finch offered a great opportunity to learn field marks for the bird, and a Rusty Blackbird seen late in the walk was a lifer for several attendees. The walk ended only one species short of closing out the Maryland woodpecker list. Species highlights included Wilson's Snipe, American Kestrel, Merlin, Common Raven, Purple Finch, and Rusty Blackbird. *49 species, 18 wonderful birders*

*Continued, next page*

## Nov. 14, 2025: Hawkins Point

*Leader: Tim Carney*
*(Toby Ditz reporting)*

First ever birdwalk at Hawkins Point! We are grateful to Maryland Environmental Service (MES), which hosted us on behalf of the Maryland Port Administration. Thanks also to Tim Carney, our untiring ambassador for environmental preservation and rehabilitation, for arranging it.

It was a brilliantly sunny morning, and the habitat at this former dredge containment facility was wonderfully varied, from newly reforested woodland to open water. As a result, we saw 49 species of birds, ranging from smallest of perching birds—including Ruby-crowned Kinglets (5), a Golden-crowned Kinglet, a variety of sparrows, and 1 Purple Finch—to a really nice sampling of raptors: 2 Cooper's Hawks, a Bald Eagle, a Red-shouldered Hawk, and a Red-tailed Hawk. Oh, and a Sharp-shinned Hawk, too. The dredge site, we are told, shelters one nesting pair of Bald Eagles.

On the water, Double-crested Cormorants (100) and Buffleheads (120) were out in force, and the Herring Gulls (40) and Great Black-backed Gulls (40) far outnumbered the Ring-billed Gulls (20). The prize sighting, though, was probably the single female Surf Scoter not too far off shore.

*We love urban birding! (by Mark Martin)*

It was a privilege to be on this first walk, with its awe-inspiring combination of wildlife and urban setting. Let's hope there will be more to come. *49 species, 12 birders*

## Nov. 15, 2025: Fort McHenry

*Leader: Wendy Alexander*

The morning began with overcast skies and temperatures ranging from 49 to 51°F. Humidity was moderate, between 53% and 59%. There was a gentle breeze from the east at 8 mph,

*Continued, next page*

which later shifted to a calmer wind coming from the south.

The three birders carefully checked the Canada Goose flock for anything unusual and there was an exciting discovery—a Brant foraging in the grass. The Brant sighting was a rare treat and the first confirmed Brant to be seen at Fort McHenry since 2012 (Jim Peters), making it a truly special moment. News of the Brant spread quickly in local birding community. Birders from nearby areas joined in the excitement, hoping to catch a glimpse of the rare visiting Brant. The shared discovery sparked conversation and connection, turning the event into a celebration of nature and community. Other highlights included a lively, large flock of approximately 40 slate-colored Dark-eyed Juncos,

↑ *Fort McHenry Brant grazing with Canada Geese–11/15/2025 (by Wendy Alexander)*

*Continued, next page*

## SPRING MIGRATORY BIRDS WORD SEARCH

N E F E N I H R E D N E C K E D G R E B E I Q F J
Q Y X V A C A D I A N F L Y C A T C H E R I N I R
V E S P E R S P A R R O W I C L Z Y O K Y C O B Y
O M V K C H E R K A R Y K Q H N S Y I N V Q F C D
R P Y Y U J A P D M A G N O L I A W A R B L E R M
C K A W C B S A Q N V Q D A J M J X W R D K G Q S
H O X X Z P T S M K A P A L M W A R B L E R E M G
A L J X P I E C C E Z R T J E T C N V F K F O H R
R D B U B W R A O W R R Y G Y K H C L K P T L R H
D T U C P G N R M I L I J N W V L I B P C H S I E
O Q I A N H K L M U E I C D G O B V V W P T V U N
R N N S X W I E O N B C T A B R O X U E J R C R K
I X D P D J N T N E V Y Q T N A E D A X W D B J R
O I I I P L G T G L I X U U L R W E T Q R V B D B
L N G A H I B A O F B C H R F E E N N H D N X A Y
E S O N R C I N L O L I N F J D B D N H R I X S C
A M B T K I R A D X G D W U J T E L S Q E U U P X
H K U E Z B D G E S U E L U J V E H U T U R S I P
G J N R T C F E N P J J E F W J P E D E A Y O H S
R I T N O P F R E A J B S Y V M Z W X R H R V N T
J F I M M K D E Y R W U M W Z E E Z B S L E T Q D
S J N D I U A M E R I C A N W O O D C O C K R T L
O P G R P P P I D O V E E R Y W A M Y L S H G O J
L I C J H K A S Z W W Y M V L N Z F R S Y V S S N
F W A S F N T A H I A Z Z P S I M B W D U R N G D

**Find these birds across, down and diagonally, (but not backwards):**

Caspian Tern
Green Heron
Little Blue Heron
Vesper Sparrow
American Woodcock
American Redstart
Fox Sparrow
Palm Warbler
Red-necked Grebe
Wood Thrush
Scarlet Tanager
Indigo Bunting
Eastern Kingbird
Orchard Oriole
Veery
Magnolia Warbler
Acadian Flycatcher
Common Goldeneye

and a groundhog that briefly appeared. The birders—Peter, Steve, and Wendy—were also delighted to observe a Red-breasted Nuthatch near the wetlands. Red-breasted Nuthatches have appeared more regularly in the area. The walk ended after visiting the leaf-covered wetland trails and when light rain began to fall. The group recorded 30 different bird species and counted 266 individual birds. Although the numbers were modest, the rare sighting and camaraderie made for a memorable day at Fort McHenry.

### Nov. 16, 2025: Prettyboy Boat Ramp

*Leaders: Tim Carney, Libby Errickson*

This one was a bust. I've found that this location provides good "winter finch" flyovers early in the morning and raptor flights later in the morning and early afternoon. The purpose of this trip was to nab some of those winter finches (Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, maybe Evening Grosbeak) and then focus on picking out a Golden Eagle among the other raptors. Northwest winds are good for these target birds, but a ***20 mph WNW wind*** was... not. We couldn't hear any flight calls over the wind, and the raptor flight was mostly limited to the local Turkey Vultures and Bald Eagles. We still managed to spot a Merlin, two Eastern Phoebes, and two Brown Creepers, and a few participants saw a Common Raven. Trying to find our target birds started to feel like trying to nail Jell-O to a tree, so I called it quits at 10:55 even though we were supposed to go much later. Hopefully we'll have better conditions next year! *39 species, 11 birders*

### Nov. 22, 2025: Fort Howard

*Leader: Tim Carney*

From my eBird checklist: "Cool, cloudy, soggy, and loaded with birds." I couldn't believe how many American Goldfinches were present. We found flocks of approximately 60 and 40 early on, the latter of which appeared jump out over the bay and keep going. And then... the mega-flock. Approaching the playground, we found an entire swarm of goldfinches carpeting the ground. Counting by 10s, I estimated about 220 here. Waves would flush off the ground and re-settle elsewhere, then new birds would drop in from seemingly nowhere. There were additional flocks of 20-50 throughout the park. I estimated 500 total and this was probably low. Aside from that, some other favorites included a flyby Northern Harrier seen by a few, 7 Fox Sparrows (several were singing), at least 10 Purple Finches, and a Rusty Blackbird expertly picked out by Laura L at the end of the walk. We didn't find anything particularly rare and there wasn't an obvious influx of waterfowl, but it was still a very enjoyable walk with a great group. *48 species, 13 birders*

### Nov. 22, 2025 Family Birding: Turkey Talk

*Leader: Daisy Sudano*

The Baltimore Bird Club Youth/Family Program has been busy this Fall/Winter. November 22nd brought us to Cylburn Arboretum for "Turkey Talk" where we learned all about the Wild turkey then made a "Turkey Fall Fairy" to take home. I also did 3 programs on "Turkey Talk" for the Coppermine Du Burns Enrichment Program with 70 children aged 4–12.

↑ *"Turkey Talk" (by Daisy Sudano)*

*Continued, next page*

## Nov. 23, 2025: Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center

*Leader: Stacy Hartman*

Clear skies and about 50 degrees—great weather for the walk. We observed a Pileated Woodpecker not far into the walk who was very cooperative while he drummed and investigated a hole long enough for the whole group to get good looks at him. We saw a lot of Yellow-rumped Warblers along the entire walk. There were several Bald Eagles that flew over as well as 2 Swans. On the water, there were Buffleheads, Ruddy Ducks, Greater Scaup (F), 1 Ring-necked Duck (F), and 2 Common Loons which only gave a quick look to a few in the group. We saw 1 Red-breasted Nuthatch which was nice and of course the expected Brown-headed Nuthatches too. Always a joy to watch and hear them call out to each other. We ended the walk on the hunt to confirm a Virginia Rail that Merlin picked up during the walk, but it didn't call again. We did find however, a pair of Wood Ducks and another Kingfisher. *17 participants, 50 species observed*

*Masonville Cove after the sun came out (by Mark Martin)*

## Dec. 6, 2025: Masonville Cove Environmental Learning Center

*Leader: Tim Carney (Toby Ditz reporting)*

Thanks again to the Maryland Environmental Service (MES), which hosts our BBC walks at Masonville Cove on behalf of the Maryland Port Administration. This particular Saturday morning was foggy and misty—quite dark, really— until after 10:30, when the sun finally broke through. Just goes to show that our walks take place in all kinds of weather: the slightly soggy conditions did not deter the birders or the abundant and varied waterfowl. In addition to the numerous Ruddy Ducks (100), Greater and Lesser Scaups (200), and Buffleheads (120), we also spotted at least fifteen Canvasbacks, five Red-breasted Mergansers, and a surprisingly large number of Horned Grebes (at least 25). One of the latter was swimming solo and called several times—Tim Carney said it was the first time he'd heard a Horned Grebe call! A Redhead and two Common Goldeneyes also made an appearance, and, toward the end of our walk, Tim got his scope on two Surf Scoters and two White-winged Scoters way off in the distance. The Scoters

↑ *Common Mergansers flying in the mist (by Mark Martin)*

*Continued, next page*

gave us long looks as they cruised in front of the huge cargo ships anchored directly across the water from the Cove. The White-winged Scoter were also lifers for several of us. Woot! Woot!

As a bonus, some folks spotted an Orange-crowned Warbler. Another great morning for urban birding. *43 species; 9 birders began the walk and were later joined by 3 others*

### Dec. 20, 2025: Fort McHenry

*Leader: Wendy Alexander*

This winter walk took place on a crisp, sunny morning with blue skies. The temperature was a chilly 36°F. Winds started from the south at 5 mph, then shifted to the west-southwest.

↑ *American Kestrel pair (by Wendy Alexander)*

The group—Danny, Steve, and Wendy—observed 29 bird species, totaling 335 individual birds. Winter often brings greater duck diversity, and this event was no exception. Among the highlights were brightly colored Northern Shovelers. The group also counted exactly 40 Gadwalls, which is an unusually high number for this location. While not as colorful as the Northern Shovelers, Gadwalls are quite lovely with elegant gray and brown plumage, admired by birders for their subtle beauty. An American Coot made an appearance as well. Another memorable moment came when a pair of American Kestrel was spotted perched together on one of the historic Rodman guns near the Fort McHenry ramparts. These historic military perches for raptors provide a great view of the field of grass below. Both birds were active, displaying their characteristic rapid wing-beat hovering into the wind and searching for prey below. The birders also photographed a Brant flying away from the grounds. Remarkably, this Brant continued to be seen at Fort McHenry for more than a month, much to the delight of the local birding community.

### Dec. 20, 2025 Family Birding: Fly Like an Eagle at Fisherman's Park, Conowingo Dam

*Leader: Daisy Sudano*

December was our annual "Eagles at Conowingo" trip. It was a very chilly day but we still

*Continued, next page*

## NEW MEMBERS

Audrey Azzam • Baltimore

Nick Barczak and Dara Farber • Baltimore

Matthew Black • Baltimore

Michael Brent • Baltimore

Colin Chappell • Baltimore

Jacqueline Dyer and Tara Hammonds • Baltimore

Robbie Horwitz • Baltimore

Courtney (Cai) Meadows • Baltimore

Deb Smulyan • Baltimore

Maya Sorini • Baltimore

Cynthia Wolberger and Jeffrey Adams • Baltimore

Gabdiel Yulfo-Soto and Bobby Murphy • Baltimore

Michael Bradley • Baltimore

Tim McGowan • Ellicott City

Nicole Baer • Fallston

Jim Williams • Linthicum

Mary Chetelat • Parkville

Don Chance and Linda Anderson • Pikesville

Diane Lonsdale • Reisterstown

Conor Satchell • Reisterstown

River Castro • Towson

Robin Zimmerman and Richard Dallam • Upperco

listed over 55 eagles among many other birds. One tree had 9 eagles sitting in it. We had 25+ visitors to the BBC table to learn about the eagles and use our binoculars for a close up look.

*BBC volunteer, Ray Alt, helped bring the eagles and crowd with our eagle costume (by Daisy Sudano)*

*Participants at the Conowingo trip checking out a tree with several eagles in it (by Daisy Sudano)*


Chip Notes, newsletter of the Baltimore Bird Club, is published quarterly.

Current issue: **Spring 2026**

*Editor:* JoAnn Bochmann

*Designer:* Kristen Argenio, Ideal Design

Submit materials to: JoAnn Bochmann at jlbochmann@gmail.com

The deadline for submitting articles for the next issue is **Friday, April 24**.

**Moving or email change?** Send update to Terry Ross at trosstva@gmail.com


## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The membership year is September 1—August 30. 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** where you may pay your dues using PayPal.

**Or, you may join by mail.** Make check payable to "MOS" and mail with completed application, which can be found at https://baltimorebirdclub.org/MembershipApplication_website.pdf

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