Join the Great Backyard Bird Count
By Christine Holzmueller

If you have 15 minutes or more to spare sometime between February 13 and 16, 2009, you can be part of an extremely important conservation effort to protect birds and biodiversity. Simply count the birds you see by species in the same spot for at least 15 minutes, or all day if you wish, and report your sightings online at http://www.birdcount.org. Come on, make it interesting – count in your backyard, then go to another location like a local park and count and compare your species list. Do you have more or less birds or different species in your backyard? If less, is there something in the park attracting birds that you could add around your house? Ahh, now you can add “citizen scientist” to your resume!

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is an annual project that is jointly sponsored by the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. In 2008, birdwatchers submitted 85,700 bird count checklists and surpassed the previous years all-time count by several thousand. The 635 species identified was also a new record. The top five most-reported birds were: Northern Cardinal, Mourning Dove, Dark-eyed Junco, Downy Woodpecker, and American Goldfinch (visit http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/08followrealease for more details). In Maryland, 162 species and 252,988 total birds were reported for 2008. Canada Goose followed by the European Starling topped the chart in numbers sighted.

There is no age limit, as long as you can identify a species and count. To participate, print out a bird checklist in your region (go to http://gbbc.birdsource.org/gbbcApps/checklist put in your zip code or town and state), write-in your tallies for each species, and enter your results online before March 1, 2009. If you take on my suggestion to count in multiple places, use a separate checklist for each location. You can also capture birds with your camera lens, and enter your best digital images in the GBBC photo contest.

Organized groups (for example, nature clubs, schools, scout troops) can contact Cornell at 800-843-2473 or National Audubon at e-mail citizenscience@audubon.org or phone 215-355-9588 ext. 16. On a local level, you can join CAS’s Meet and Greet with Robin Schless on February 1, 2009 and find out more details about GBBC. See the list of field trips on the next page for contact information.

Chapter Birdseed Sale!
By Robin Schless

Our annual fall birdseed sale on November 22 was a great success! We raised over $1,300.00. Our members generously donated an additional $319 for the educational programs that we support. This year’s proceeds will support 50% of the costs incurred to run our week-long summer program, called Mean, Green and Growing, at our Patterson Park Center. Up to 15 children from Kindergarten to second grade living in the urban neighborhoods around the park will benefit from this program. For 3 hours each day, children will learn about plants, trees, and food origination through games, crafts, dissections, and plant tasting in the great outdoors of this amazing 180-acre city park. Our donation will lower the cost of the program and possibly allow each child to attend free of charge. For more information on the Patterson Park Audubon Center visit http://www.audubonmddc.org/centers_PPAC.html.

Our volunteers made 32 home deliveries, and managed to deliver most to the right home! Our best seller by far is black-oil sunflower seed--3,700 pounds. Since this is the most popular seed for all birds in our area, it’s a good and reasonably priced choice. Songbird mix took second place this year--1,800 pounds. This is a good quality mix with millet, black-oil sunflower, corn, peanuts, and

Continued on page 5
**Field Trips and Programs:**

**FEBRUARY**

**Sunday, February 1, 10 AM**  **Meet ’N Greet with Robin Schless**

Come and meet other Chesapeake Audubon members at my house in Windsor Mill (21244) in an informal setting with coffee and pastries. Talk about bird feeding, viewing, outdoor interests, and the upcoming Backyard Bird Count that everyone can participate in. Bring binoculars—weather permitting, we’ll see what’s singing in the woods! Contact Robin, 410-277-9213, or e-mail rjschless@yahoo.com for sign-up and directions.

**Sunday, February 8, Daytrip  Blackwater Wildlife Refuge with Marian Argentino**

One of our most popular winter birding destinations! Come enjoy a wide variety of waterfowl in the waters off the marshes (will the WHITE Pelicans be back?); count the Bald Eagles (will there be a Golden among them this year?); enjoy the antics of wintering songbirds (perhaps the Pine Siskins will choose to visit the refuge). Dress warm; bring something hot to drink! I know a great Mexican restaurant we can visit on the way home! Contact Marian, 410-852-9913 or e-mail ChesAudubonInfo@aol.com to reserve your spot. We will try to accommodate carpooling requests.

**Sunday, February 15, 8 AM  Fort Smallwood with Ranger Matt Grey**

Strategically located on the tip of a peninsula in Anne Arundel County, Fort Smallwood has become a popular location for Ranger Grey’s monthly bird walks. Interesting waterfowl dot the Chesapeake Bay and Patapsco River; songbirds seek shelter from winter’s cold among the marshes and trees; raptors fly above them all. What will we find today? Join us and find out. Contact Marian, 410-852-9913 or e-mail ChesAudubonInfo@aol.com for more information.

**Saturday, February 28, 8 AM  Lake Centennial with Marian Argentino**

One of Howard County’s prime birding locations, Columbia’s Lake Centennial always holds some nice surprises. American Tree Sparrows are regulars as are the beautiful Hooded Mergansers that usually dot the lake. We’ll take a trip around the shoreline, hopefully with a fellow CAS member who often birds this locale and find out who is visiting this late winter morning. Contact Marian, 410-852-9913 or e-mail ChesAudubonInfo@aol.com for sign up and/or more information.

**MARCH**

**Saturday, March 14, 10AM  Avalon Area, Patapsco State Park with Owen Bamford**

Walk in the Avalon area of Patapsco State Park along the Sawmill Branch and return by Buzzard Rock. This is a moderate trail with pretty cascades, and a view of the dam and lake. Not primarily a birding trip but we’ll enjoy what we see along the way. For sign up or more information, contact Owen by email owen.bamford@gmail.com or call 410-609-0976 (evenings).

**Saturday, March 21, Dusk  Timberdoodles in Harford County with Marian Argentino**

Join me for a fun trip down a dusky road in an unlikely section of Harford County and watch the male American Woodcocks woo their lady loves! We’ll arrive shortly before dark, check out the local ponds for anything interesting and then watch the action begin. Once the show is over, perhaps we can have a friendly dinner outing somewhere in the area. Contact Marian, 410-852-9913 or e-mail ChesAudubonInfo@aol.com for information on meeting time and place.

**APRIL**

**Saturday, April 4, 8 AM  Harford Glen Reopens with Ruth Bergstrom**

It’s opening day at Harford Glen! Please join us for an easy walk around the environmental education center of Harford County. Last year we spotted 35 species including Bald Eagle, Osprey, Wood Duck, and Green-winged Teal. Let Ruth know you’re coming by emailing her at ruthb22@yahoo.com or calling 443-752-1967.

**Saturday, April 11  Sweet Air Section, Gunpowder State Park with Hugh Simmons**

Resident birds will be mating and spring migration will bring us many visitors this time of year. This site provides a variety of habitats including fields, edges, woodlands and stream valleys. Join Hugh for a walk in one of his favorite places and hear spring come to life in birdsong! Register with Hugh at 410-628-4246 before 9 PM or e-mail him at hughsimmons@comcast.net

**Saturday, April 18, 8 AM  Birds & Blooms along the Susquehanna with Ruth & Hugh**

There are few prettier sights than the profusion of Virginia Bluebells blooming along the Susquehanna in spring unless it’s the beautiful warblers flitting in the trees above them. Ruth Bergstrom and Hugh Simmons will lead us on one of our not to be missed outings. Register by contacting Hugh at 410-628-4246 before 9 PM or e-mail him at hughsimmons@comcast.net
Field Trips and Programs continued…

Wednesday, April 22 Daytrip          Old Rag Mountain Hike with John Love

It’s time to celebrate Spring and Earth Day while enjoying the beauty of nature on John Love’s Old Rag Mountain hike. The climb is strenuous, 7.5 miles roundtrip taking 6-7 hours (including time for lunch at the top), but not technically difficult. You will need well broken in walking shoes or boots with hiking socks, lunch, at least a quart of water, warm clothing and rain gear (just in case) and a day pack to carry it all in. We’ll stop for dinner in Warrenton VA, arriving back in the Baltimore area after 8 PM. We meet at the new farmers’ market parking lot in Sperryville, VA at 10 AM. For more information or directions call John Love at 301-498-1978.

Saturday, April 25          Cylburn Arboretum with Ruth and Tim

Please join us for this migration-time visit to one of Baltimore’s premier birding hotspots. Enjoy the beautiful gardens of the arboretum and be amazed at the variety of birdlife all around you. Mark this one on your calendar now! You don’t want to miss it. Please register with Ruth by emailing her at ruthb22@yahoo.com or calling 443-752-1967.

Saturday, April 25, 6 PM          CAS Annual Spaghetti Dinner

See details elsewhere in this newsletter. Plant sale on premises.

Sunday, April 26, 8 AM          Ft. Smallwood Bird Walk & Hawk Watch with Matt & Marian

The spring hawkwatch at Ft. Smallwood is unusual enough to have earned it a place on the Maryland list of Important Bird Areas. Ranger Matt Grey will lead us around the park and then we’ll join the hawkwatchers to see what magnificent birds of prey visit us today. Contact Marian, 410-852-9913 or e-mail ChesAudubonInfo@aol.com for information.

MAY

Sunday, May 2, 7 AM          Cromwell Valley Park with Marian and Tim

Cromwell Valley Park in early May! Does it get any better than this? Come prepared with visions of warblers dancing before your eyes. Tanagers, vireos, and orioles all visit (or better yet, nest) this time of year. Contact Marian, 410-852-9913 or e-mail ChesAudubonInfo@aol.com for sign-up or more information.

Saturday, May 9, 8 AM          Adkins Arboretum with Ruth Bergstrom

Join us on Maryland’s Eastern Shore for our annual walk that coincides with the Arboretum’s spring native plant sale. Audubon MD-DC recently designated the Arboretum as an Important Bird Area (IBA). Come explore the woodland and meadow paths with us in this 400-acre native plant garden. Register by emailing Ruth at ruthb22@yahoo.com or calling her on 443-752-1967.

Sunday, May 17, 8 AM          Spring Warbler Walk with Robin Schless

Come stroll the woods and along the stream at my house in Windsor Mill (21244). Be prepared for some wet ground. We’ll look for spring warblers and hopefully identify spring flora (natives and invasives). Coffee and sweets after! Beginners always welcome!! Contact Robin at rjschless@yahoo.com or 410-277-9213 for directions.

Sunday, May 23, Daytrip          Bombay Hook with Hugh Simmons

What is 540 million years old and key to the survival of several species of shorebirds? Answer, the horseshoe crab. Come with us to witness this ancient but endangered spawning ritual and the shorebirds that depend on it. In addition we will bird the fields, woods and impoundments of the Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge, considered one of the best birding locations on the east coast. Usually lots to see in one day, a great trip for beginning birders. To register, contact Hugh at 410-628-4246 by 9 PM or e-mail him, hughsimmons@comcast.net

Saturday, May 30          Cromwell Valley Park with Hugh Simmons

The variety of habitats in this park make for excellent birding. Many birds, resident and summer breeders, will be nesting and raising young. Baltimore and Orchard Orioles are very likely. It’s a perfect time to visit the park and find a wide variety of species readily available for your viewing pleasure. Call Hugh at 410-628-4246 before 9 PM or you can e-mail him at hughsimmons@comcast.net
WORD SEARCH

COMMON BACKYARD BIRDS

HUMMINGBIRD
KHLNLBLUEBIRD
KGIWELWFROKIIWE
HITDOEAHONLIOWG
OFRIBRDONWRROI
UFACEACARNLLO
SLMGRIRTKATDRAK
EIEKRSNPCFUBNN
FCLOISSSIIITIP
IKPRONENNWXHIDG
NERSMSGCKATCRM
CRUHUEHLJFILHAN
HPOHLHAEIBRLCN
OAHWLIYATNIBORN
NERWESUOHDEISHW

SOLUTION

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Chapter Birdseed Sale continued...

safflower. We also sold 1,375 pounds of sunflower hearts (i.e., bird filet mignon!), over 500 pounds of Wild 'n Free mix (available only at Wildlife Authority), hundreds of pounds of both Woodpecker Mix and Nyjer Thistle, and over 200 suet cakes.

Our sale could not happen without volunteers. This year, we give kudos (as well as doughnuts, bagels, and coffee) to: Cathy Franklin at Wildlife Authority, Debbie Geisenkotter, Mark Hollis, Hugh Simmons, Owen Bamford, Eileen and Frank Doll, Priscilla and Rodger Waldman, John Love, Kevin and Mary McCahill, Ruth Bergstrom, and Norm and Karen Meadow.

THANKS to our volunteers AND to all of you who ordered birdseed!!

Bombay Hook 2008

On November 8, we visited Bombay Hook once again during the Fall waterfowl season. For the first time in many years, we were almost rained out. Intermittent downpours had us occasionally running to our cars, and limited the amount of hiking we could do on the trails. I am sure it decreased the passerine activity as well. In spite of the weather, Bombay Hook did not disappoint anyone. We logged forty-three species including: the requisite huge flocks of Snow Geese (see photo below), Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, a low flyover by a Bald Eagle, a number of Harriers including a male "grey ghost," Black-bellied Plover, Avocet, Marbled Godwit, a Great Horned Owl perched in a tree, and an American Pipit. Thanks to all who braved the weather forecasts and came out for a successful day!

Notices

2009 Birdathon Challenge

Be on the lookout for a spring mailing introducing our 2009 Birdathon Challenge. The goal is to identify as many bird species as possible during a 24-hour period to raise money for our children’s educational programs. You can participate by forming a team and finding your own sponsors (and you can even count butterflies or plants!), or you can support one of the Chesapeake Audubon teams by pledging a set dollar or per species amount. Counts typically occur in May, so stay tuned for more details.

Interested in volunteering? Chesapeake Audubon will have several opportunities in 2009 in which you can volunteer your time toward habitat restoration projects, including invasive plant removal, throughout the Baltimore metropolitan and Eastern Shore areas. This is an excellent opportunity for students looking for projects to complete community service work. Please send an email to AS.volunteers@yahoo.com to be kept informed of upcoming projects.

A CPA or accountant is needed to serve as Treasurer for Chesapeake Audubon. Please contact Hugh Simmons at 410-628-4246 or hughsimmons@comcast.net for more information.

Have you heard of the No Child Left Inside (NCLI) Coalition? In 2005, author Richard Louv wrote a fascinating book entitled Last Child in the Woods which was updated in 2008. In it he described how the lack of nature in children’s lives, or “Nature Deficit Disorder”, was thought to be directly related to the rise in obesity, attention disorders, and depression. The NCLI Act would provide federal funding for environmental education and meaningful outdoor learning activities to reconnect children with nature. This funding would also train teachers, allow environmental education to be integrated throughout core subject areas, and prepare students to understand future environmental challenges. Chesapeake Audubon, along with over 1000 national and state organizations, supports the Coalition. If you would like to learn more or sign their petition to Congress, please visit their website at www.nclicoalition.org.

Sign up for the Bay Journal; it is free! Learn about efforts to clean up the Chesapeake Bay. Send a note to: BAY JOURNAL, P.O. Box 222, Jacobus, PA 17407-0222 requesting placement on their mailing list, or visit http://www.bayjournal.com/subscribe.cfm to subscribe online.
Chesapeake Audubon Society

Annual Spaghetti Dinner
6:00 p.m., Saturday April 25, 2008

SAVE THE DATE!
Speaker and additional details to be announced

Where: St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church, 4713 Edmondson Avenue, Baltimore, MD

Cost: $8.00 per person for dinner and the program, $11.00 if you would like a glass of wine or a beer with dinner.

Reservations: Call (410) 203-1819; specify if you prefer vegetarian sauce. Please send checks payable to The Chesapeake Audubon Society PO Box 3173, Baltimore, MD 21228 or call (410) 203-1819 and leave a message with your name, telephone number and number of people you will be bringing.

Directions: take Baltimore beltway to exit 15A (Rte. 40, Baltimore National Pike east, towards Baltimore.) Take Rte. 40 about 2 miles, just past the convergence of Rte. 40 and Edmondson Ave. The Church is on the right.

Please note: we ask that you reserve your meal ticket in advance. As always, walk-ins are welcome, but we can’t guarantee there will be enough food for them.

Behind the Scenes

Last November 28th, multiple volunteers from CAS braved a chilly day to post missing private property signs around the Farm Creek property on the Eastern Shore. A local resident and clearly a friend of CAS noticed our signs disappearing and an unknown sign posted on our property. Kudos to Rodger Waldman, John Love, Richard Schurmann, Hugh Simmons, and Marian and Harry Argentino for rectifying the signage! Also, a huge thank you to our local resident-friends, Scott Shipley and Melvin Pritchett for the heads-up and the boat to post our signs.
HELP SAVE SONGBIRDS!

Millions of birds are killed each year from collisions with glass buildings and from light pollution. Migratory birds use the constellations to navigate, and excessive light from cities and populated areas confuse them and lure them into inhospitable urban environments filled with deadly glass.

Toronto, New York, Chicago, Boston, and Houston have established “Lights Out” programs that save energy and save migratory birds.

Would you like to help Baltimore to become a bird-friendly city? Volunteers are patrolling Baltimore’s downtown to collect data on bird strikes in the city and are working to bring positive change on this front to Charm City. The most common victims found in Baltimore are American Woodcock, Common Yellowthroat, White Throated Sparrow, Ovenbird, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Swamp Sparrow. If you are over 18 and would like to join the “Lights Out Baltimore” effort, please contact us!

The beautiful Common Yellowthroat is one of the most frequent victims of window strikes and light pollution in Baltimore City. You can help save these birds by participating in Lights Out Baltimore. Photo courtesy

We welcome those willing to contribute their time and skills to saving migratory birds by monitoring for injured songbirds in spring migration season (March – June), transporting injured birds to licensed wildlife rehabilitators, preparing educational materials, and educating the public on the challenges birds face in urban environments. Please contact savebirds@verizon.net if you are interested in learning more about this exciting opportunity.

[Lights Out Baltimore is sponsored by a group from the Maryland Ornithological Society.]

EMAIL IS FOR THE BIRDS!

Get timely news and updates on CAS trips, events and activities. . .

Help us reduce paper and postage expenses. . . So we can use those resources for conservation, education, and nature activities!

Please send your email address to - karen.e.meadow@verizon.net

We promise to use your email address strictly for CAS news and NOT share it with anyone else.

If you prefer to continue receiving this newsletter by mail, please fill out the form below and sending it to: Chesapeake Audubon Society, P.O. Box 3173, Baltimore, MD 21228

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