

Chesupioc

Fall 2008 Newsletter

A local Chapter of National Audubon Society



Paper, Plastic or Cloth?

By Kathy Woods

What do Bangladesh, Rwanda, Ireland and China all have in common?

They have banned free plastic bags at the grocery store.

Plastic bags are made of polyethylene – a thermoplastic made from oil. In China, the government expects to reduce their foreign oil dependency, and they project a savings of 37 million barrels of oil each year by banning free thin plastic bags.

In time, whether in landfills, sewer drains or oceans, this material photodegrades, leaching into our soil and water. Bags blow into trees. Bags clog up the sewers. Bags litter the beaches. Bags strangle turtles, dolphins and birds. Bags are mistaken by animals as food and choke them; 200 species of sea life have fallen victim to a plastic bag. Bags have been found north of the Arctic Circle and as far south as the Falkland Islands.

In 2002, Ireland took the lead by taxing plastic bag usage. They have now succeeded in reducing this usage by 90%.

Every day we are hammered with ways to reduce our carbon footprint. Perhaps there is nothing you can do about the size of your house and the fuel you use to heat it. Perhaps now is not a good time to trade in your old gas-guzzler, even though you use way too much gasoline. Perhaps you are not willing to give up luxuries that you consider essential. But what if you knew you were making a difference by just using cloth bags at the grocery store? National Geographic reports that between 500 billion and one trillion plastic bags are used worldwide each year. You could be saving over 25,000 bags in your lifetime. While recycling may be popping into your mind as you finish this article, consider that less than 1% of bags are recycled and the cost to recycle them is expensive.

Let's do our part to get America on the plus side of responsible energy use. ■■

New Report Identifies Bird Species at Greatest Risk

By David Curson

Thirty seven of the birds that call Maryland and DC home for at least part of the year have been identified by the National Audubon Society and the American Bird Conservancy as top-priority for conservation to ensure their survival. They have the dubious distinction of being included on the WatchList 2007, which is the newest and most scientifically sound list of America's birds at greatest risk. Unlike the birds on Audubon's Common birds in Decline list, these species are often rare and limited in range, and consequently, they face a more imminent threat of extinction. For many of these WatchList birds, conservation efforts in Maryland and DC and nationally will play a critical role in determining their future health and survival.

Some of the U.S.'s most imperiled birds make their home in Maryland and DC

The continental WatchList is based on a comprehensive analysis of population size and trends, distribution, and environmental threats, and has been subject to extensive scientific review. There are 59 species on the "red list," which are of greatest concern, and 119 species on the "yellow list" and of concern just by virtue of being either rare or seriously declining in numbers.

These WatchList species are the birds most in need of conservation here in Maryland and DC. One feature of these birds that makes them so vulnerable is the fact that they are habitat specialist—they depend on one particular type of natural habitat, be it tidal marsh,

Continued on page 5

Newsletter Contents:	Page
Field Trips	2
Field Trip Highlight	3
Kid's Corner.....	4
Notices	5
Chili Dinner	6
Kudos to Audubon Maryland-DC Staff	7

Field Trips and Programs:

SEPTEMBER

Saturday, Sept. 6, 7:30am Soldier's Delight Fall Migration Walk with Keith Eric Costley

Early September is an excellent time to see Fall migrants in this globally rare ecosystem. We hope to find many southbound species including wood warblers, hawks, flycatchers, and thrushes. To register, contact Keith Eric Costley: 443-985-6489 or oriolekec1@comcast.net

Directions to Soldiers Delight. From I-695 Beltway exit 18 Liberty Rd go west 4 miles, bear right onto Deer Park Rd just before traffic light and water tower, go approximately 2 miles to the historical marker.

Saturday, Sept. 13, 8:00am Harford Glen with Ruth Bergstrom

Visit this Harford County jewel of a park located just outside of Bel Air and a few blocks off Route 24. A variety of habitats increases the possibility of seeing many different species of birds. Coupled with the knowledge and enthusiasm of this walk's leader, this experience will have you marking Harford Glen as a must visit on your birding itinerary! e-mail Ruth at ruthb22@yahoo.com or call Marian at 410-852-9913 for information or registration.

Sunday, Sept. 21, 7:30am Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Park with Ranger Matt Grey

Fall warblers will be around and you won't want to miss them. This undeveloped, new property in Anne Arundel County never fails to surprise us with its migration-time visitors. Matt Grey, one of the county park rangers responsible for the area, knows the birds and where they are. Time permitting, we'll visit neighboring Fort Smallwood Park, too. To register and for directions, contact ChesAudubonInfo@aol.com or call Marian Argentino @ 410-852-9913.

Saturday, Sept. 27, 8am Patterson Park with Staff of the Patterson Park Audubon Center

Join Audubon for a birdwalk through Patterson Park! You will be surprised by what you will find in this city park. Meet at the fountain near the Pagoda. Meet your neighbors and learn something about birds! Call Audubon if you need binoculars 410-558-BIRD.

Sunday, Sept. 28 Day Trip to Pennsylvania's Hawk Mountain with Marian Argentino

No Autumn would be complete without our annual trip to Hawk Mountain. This year, we're going earlier in the season to catch some different species of birds as they head south for the winter. Ospreys, broadwings, kestrels and sharpies will be riding the updrafts along with a smattering of eagles, merlins, red-shoulders, and

more. To register or for more information, please call Marian Argentino @ 410-852-9913 or email ChesAudubonInfo@aol.com.

OCTOBER

Saturday, Oct. 11 Cromwell Valley Park Fall Harvest Festival

Join Hugh Simmons for an early bird walk concentrating on both southbound migrant passerines and raptors. Then for a special treat, stay for a raptor presentation by Kathy Woods. For more information, please contact Hugh or Kathy on 410-628-4246 before 9 PM or you can e-mail hughsimmons@comcast.net

Sunday, Oct. 12 Pickering Creek Audubon Center's Annual Harvest Hoedown

This family-oriented event on the Eastern Shore attracts thousands of visitors. Families can hike nature trails, enjoy hayrides, visit the children's activity area, explore the children's imagination garden or just relax by our shoreline. Local soap makers, basket makers, potters, herb crafters, fresh local produce growers, and other exhibitors will be demonstrating their skills and offering their goods for sale. There is a per car entry fee. Please check their website for details: <http://www.pickeringcreek.org/>



Saturday, Oct. 18, 8:00-1100am Oregon Ridge Nature Center with Ruth Bergstrom

Oregon Ridge was the location of a mining operation during the mid 19th century. Now we can enjoy its many nature trails while searching for birds. Maybe we'll find the Winter Wren we saw last year. After the hike, explore the nature center and see their new turtle exhibit. Register by emailing Ruth at ruthb22@yahoo.com

Sunday, Oct. 19, 7:30am Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Park with Ranger Matt Grey

Fall sparrows begin coming in and you'll get plenty of help sorting them out from Matt. This new park in northern Anne Arundel County is undeveloped, unspoiled, and full of birds. Matt Grey, one of the county park rangers responsible for the area, knows the birds and where they are. To register and for directions, contact ChesAudubonInfo@aol.com or call Marian Argentino @ 410-852-9913.

Continued on page 3

Field Trips and Programs continued...

Saturday, Oct. 25, 8am Patterson Park *with Staff of the Patterson Park Audubon Center*
Join Audubon for a birdwalk through Patterson Park! You will be surprised by what you will find in this city park. Meet at the fountain near the Pagoda. Meet your neighbors and learn something about birds! Call Audubon if you need binoculars 410-558-BIRD.

Saturday, Oct. 25 Chesapeake Audubon Annual Chili Dinner – See page 6 of the Newsletter for Details

Enjoy an incredible bowl of chili and enjoy Spain and Morocco through the eyes of Dennis and Jean Kirkwood.



NOVEMBER

Saturday, Nov. 8 Day Trip to Bombay Hook *with Hugh Simmons*

Once again, CAS President Hugh Simmons will lead us along the refuge road by car and various paths by foot to show us many interesting things. As I write this, there's no telling what species we'll see but there's always something special at the "Hook." Please register by November 1st. Contact Hugh Simmons at 410-628-4246; call before 9:00PM please or you can send e-mail to hughsimmons@comcast.net

Sunday, Nov. 16, 7:30am Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Park *with Ranger Matt Grey*

It's always difficult to predict just what you will see at this time of year. Will the warm weather linger and migration start? Come find out; if anyone can find the birds, it's Matt Grey, AA County Park Ranger who is responsible for this area and knows it well. To register and for directions, contact ChesAudubonInfo@aol.com or call Marian Argentino @ 410-852-9913.

Saturday, Nov. 22, 8am Patterson Park *with Staff of the Patterson Park Audubon Center*

Join Audubon for a birdwalk through Patterson Park! You will be surprised by what you will find in this city park. Meet at the fountain near the Pagoda. Meet your neighbors and learn something about birds! Call Audubon if you need binoculars 410-558-BIRD.

DECEMBER

Saturday, Dec. 6 Eagles and More Eagles at Conowingo Dam *with Marian Argentino*

Although no longer considered endangered, the American Bald Eagle gathered in large numbers is still a rare sight in many parts of the country. Not so at the Conowingo Dam on the Susquehanna River. Here it is not uncommon to be surrounded by them on an early December day. Join Marian at the dam for some winter birding; then at her nearby home to warm up with some homemade soup and some feeder-birding in the warm comfort of her glassed in living/dining room. To register and for directions, contact ChesAudubonInfo@aol.com or call Marian Argentino @ 410-852-9913. Note: please register early so we can make sure we have enough soup!!

Sunday, Dec. 14 A Winter Morning at Loch Raven *with Hugh Simmons*

CAS President Hugh Simmons has found this location to be a great winter birding spot and would love to share it with you. For information about meeting location and time, and to register, call Hugh at 410-628-4246 before 9 PM or you can send e-mail to hughsimmons@comcast.net

Field Trip Highlights

Biking and Birding on the NCR Trail

July 19, 2008

by Ruth Bergstrom

The tall trees along the NCR trail kept us cool as the sun crept higher during this morning's leisurely ride. Heading south from Monkton, we heard or saw 19 species including Acadian Flycatcher, Wood Thrush, Eastern Kingbird, Indigo Bunting, and Red-eyed Vireo. A few ripe berries along the trail were an added treat to enjoy with our packed snacks and water. The group started at 8am and were done a 6-7 mile roundtrip ride around 10am. Some of the group took advantage of the lovely day and scenic trail and continued riding. The youngest birder, who is not yet two years old, extends a special invitation to families for next year's trip. One nice surprise at the Monkton start point was a bike tuning station sponsored by REI. Possibly they will be there next year so we can have our bikes checked before we ride. In addition to portable snacks and drinks, remember to bring a helmet, binoculars and keen ears! ■■

KID'S CORNER



Nature is all around us, whether you live in the city, the county, or the country. What do you know about the birds and mammals (small hairy animals) you see below? Questions



What kind of bird is this?

What does this bird like to eat?

Where does it hunt for food?



What kind of bird is this?

What does this bird like to eat?

Where does this bird like to nest?



What kind of mammal is this?

What does this mammal like to eat?

Where does this mammal live?



What is this?

Is it a bird or a mammal?

What do most of these like to eat?

The answers to the questions are inside this box. Each answer can only be used once.

Bat	calm shallow water
Fox	fish
Great Blue Heron	berries
Woodpecker	insects
cavities (holes) inside trees	den in the ground
insects	

Find out a little bit more about the wildlife pictured here on the next page under Learn More

Bird Species at Greatest Risk continued

beaches or forest. It is vital that we do all we can to protect our existing natural habitats from threats such as poorly planned development, pollution to the Chesapeake Bay and sea level rise resulting from global warming.

Some of the species in the Maryland-DC area that are on the Priority WatchList are:

The **Black Rail** lives in shallow, grassy wetlands along the Atlantic Coast, San Francisco Bay, southern Great Plains, and the Lower Colorado River. In Maryland, it is confined to the tidal saltmarshes on the Eastern Shore. This bird is so secretive that research is needed to understand their natural history, ecological requirements, conservation needs. The closest estimate for this population is a 2006 survey in which birds were only found at 15% of sites where this species was found in a similar survey in the early 1990s.

The **Piping Plover** nests along the Atlantic coast on shorelines and dry lakebeds in the Mid-west and Great Plains. Beachfront development and recreation, pets and predation from gulls, crows and foxes threaten their survival. Conservation measures have designated protected nesting grounds on Assateague Island, which has increased nesting pairs from 17 in 1986 to almost 77 today.

The **Least Tern** is a tiny seabird that nests on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts and river beaches on the Great Plains. It also nests on Assateague Island, but has adapted very well to nesting on gravel rooftops, parking lots, and other manmade surfaces. Maryland has 600+ pairs.

The **Golden-winged Warbler** nests in shrubby habitats such as abandoned farm fields or forest edges

along the Appalachian mountain range. It migrates to Central America in the winter. This beautiful bird has been declining rapidly from habitat loss and also competition and interbreeding with the Blue-winged Warbler (a close relative). In Maryland, it nests solely in Garrett and Allegany Counties; better monitoring is needed to estimate their population size.

For the full WatchList and information on how you can help reverse these declines visit <http://www.audubon.org>. ■■

Learn more about the...

Great Blue Heron: Is one of the seven kinds of white herons and the largest and heaviest. It has a wing span of 72 inches, length of 46 inches and weighs 5.3 pounds. They are light grey and you will often see them stationary in a stream or pond.

Fox: Red fox and grey fox can be found in Maryland. While red fox have adapted to urban and suburban environments, grey fox are not fond of people and are found mostly in rural areas. In addition to berries, they eat small mammals, fruits, and vegetables.

Woodpecker: There are 22 species in 5 classes of woodpeckers. All species have stiff tails that they use as props while they cling to tree bark and sturdy chisel-like bills that they use to peel back bark or bore wood to find insects.

Bat: Bats can be found everywhere except the polar regions and extreme deserts. There are almost 1,000 kinds of bats worldwide. One of the great benefits of bats is they make a meal on insects (70% of bat species). They are great to have hanging around your house!

Notices

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.

Go Green! Get timely news about Chesapeake Audubon Society events, trips and activities. Fill out the form on page 7 and save many, many trees!

Chesapeake Audubon Society

Annual Chili Dinner

6:00 p.m., Saturday October 25, 2008

"A Birding and Cultural Tour of Southern Spain and Morocco"

Speakers: Dr. Dennis Kirkwood and Mrs. Jean Kirkwood

Dr. Dennis Kirkwood and Mrs. Jean Kirkwood are recently retired science educators in the Harford County Public School system. Dennis retired as Supervisor of Science and Jean last served as Science Department Chair at Bel Air High School. Both are avid travelers and nature enthusiasts who enjoy sharing their journeys with others who have similar interests. They have led tours to Belize, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, Texas and Wyoming and will be returning to Spain and Morocco in April to lead another group through this fascinating area. Dennis and Jean live on a farm in northwest Harford County that has been in the family for over 200 years. They are the parents of two grown daughters, Heather and Kristin.

Also, before and during dinner, you will enjoy the soothing live sounds of the **10 Directions Jazz Band**

Reservations: Call 410-203-1819; specify if you prefer vegetarian chili. Please send checks payable to The Chesapeake Audubon Society, P.O. Box 3173, Baltimore, MD 21228 *or* call and leave a message with your name, telephone number, number of people in your party, and note that you will pay at the door.

Please note that we strongly encourage you to call and reserve your meal ticket in advance. We do always welcome walk-ins, but we cannot guarantee that there will be enough food if we cannot plan for them. We greatly appreciate your cooperation. Bon appetite!

Directions: Take the Baltimore Beltway to exit 15A (Route 40, Baltimore National Pike east, towards Baltimore). Stay on Route 40 for about 2 miles, just past the convergence of Route 40 and Edmondson Avenue. The church will be on the right side.



European Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*)



Lammergyer

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

Cost: \$8.00/person for dinner and the program; \$11.00 for a glass of wine or a beer with dinner and program.

Donations: Donate a dessert, which will be sold by the slice as an after dinner treat!

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 use your email address so we can keep in touch better.

Email us at: karen.e.meadow@verizon.net

We promise not to share your email address with any other parties or organizations, and to use it strictly for CAS news and announcements.

If you'd prefer to continue receiving this newsletter as a paper copy by mail, please let us know by filling out the form below and sending it to: Chesapeake Audubon Society, P.O. Box 3173, Baltimore, MD 21228

Name: _____

Address: _____ **City, Zip:** _____

Email(if any): _____

The birds. . . and the trees. . . thank you very much!

Kudos to Maryland-DC Audubon Staff

Congratulations to the staff of the Patterson Park Audubon Center for tripling their income for fiscal year 2008 compared to last year! As an added bonus, there will be a \$45,000 carry over in fiscal year 2009 to give programs a head start in the Park. Their secret? Hard work and tired fingers from writing foundation grants and hunting down corporate gifts. Many warm thanks to **Tekla Ayers**, **Callie Schwartz** And **Melissa Dietz**, and **Susanna Scallion** for their tremendous effort.



Congratulations also to **Dave Curson**, Director of Bird Conservation, for the strongest financial standing that we have ever had for the Important Bird Area (IBA) program. His efforts have been rewarded by four major grants totaling \$98,000. The Town Creek Foundation gave \$40,000, the Keith Campbell Foundation gave \$50,000, DNR's State Wildlife Grant Program gave \$15,000, and the Coastal Bay Program gave \$3,000. Most of this grant money will be used for an initiative on the Lower Eastern Shore that is working to get IBA's recognized in the County comprehensive planning process.
