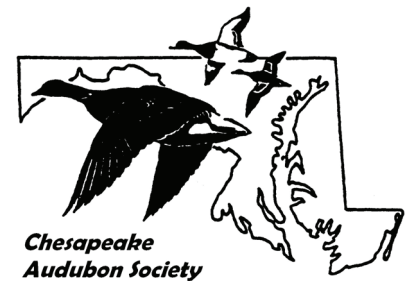


# Chesupioc

Summer 2010 Newsletter

A local Chapter of National Audubon Society



## Do You Really Need to Use That Pesticide?

By Christine Holzmüller

Prevention is the best medicine. While a classic cliché, it really does apply to many aspects of life, from our health to that of the natural world outside our backdoor. Pesticides are used to treat a problem. While effective, pesticides are formulated to destroy or kill something and rarely do these poisons impact on just the intended target. These toxic products seep into the ground and our waterways and threaten the health of humans, pets, and wildlife.

Audubon's pesticide guide published in 2001 describes 73 million lbs. of synthetic pesticides sprayed on home lawns, golf courses, and school yards, and 67 million birds killed from exposure annually. It also notes that 103,046 human cases of pesticide exposure were identified in poison control centers (these centers only see 50% of the population) across the US in 1998. This information is clearly dated and pesticide use has only increased. Moreover, what I have described does not even include use in agriculture and by sewage and wastewater treatment plants.

Obviously, treating pests is simply creating a problem. Do you use **insecticides** on ants, aphids, and other insects, **rodenticides** on mice and rats, or **herbicides** for dandelions and other weeds?



Have you ever thought of just preventing the problem? Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is an environmentally-conscious method of preventing pest problems while minimizing any impact on people and nature. There are many things you can do to practice IPM, including attracting pest enemies (lady bugs, toads, lacewings, bats, dragonflies), planting pest-resistant (native) species, following practices that do not attract insects (contain/remove trash, remove standing water), and monitoring your gardens and plants to remove pests (hose off or cut off foliage).

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## What I'm Reading

Each newsletter, A Chesapeake Audubon Society board member will provide an overview of a book they have read and think may be of interest to our members.

### Of a Feather: A Brief History of American Birding - by Scott Weidensaul

Review by Hugh Simmons, President of Chesapeake Audubon Society

I was browsing our library last summer looking for a book to take to the beach. My usual fare consists of crime and spy novels but I came across *Of a Feather - A Brief History of American Birding* by Scott Weidensaul. The book was a Christmas gift from friends who knew of my birding obsession. I knew a little bit about Scott Weidensaul by reputation and by the fact that he had married a good friend and former director of the Jean Ellen Dupont Shehan Audubon Sanctuary, Amy Burke, now Amy Weidensaul. Since reading the book I have had the pleasure of getting together with Scott and Amy and will use that privilege to refer to Scott in the first person from now on.

Scott was reputed to be quite an intellect, so I thoroughly expected the book to be a dry, high-brow recounting of history, which was not a favorite subject in school. I had, however, done this sort of thing to myself before having taken Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time* to the beach a couple of summers earlier. Not sure what the pattern is with brief histories. Perhaps I was thinking that a brief history would be more palatable than the tedious history I had endured in school. So I snatched the book off the shelf along with a couple of spy novels just in case I got through the second chapter and decided that my beach brain wanted somewhat less challenging material.

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## Field Trips and Programs:

Some of the dates provide an opportunity to choose a trip or double up and participate in two; see asterisks\*\*. Beginner birders are welcome and encouraged to attend our walks!

### Saturday, July 10, 10:00AM-1:00PM

#### Marshy Point Canoe Trip

Ages 8 to Adult, \$10. Learn about watershed and wetland ecology in the shallow creek at Marshy Point in Baltimore County. We'll be joined by the nature center guides as we paddle and observe the resident birds, fish, and reptiles. Space is limited so please reserve your spot early with Ruth Bergstrom at [ruthb22@yahoo.com](mailto:ruthb22@yahoo.com), or call her at 443-752-1967. Canoes are provided, beginners are welcome.

### Sunday, July 11, 9-11:00AM

#### Forest Bird Walk at Pickering Creek with Mandy Smith

Cost: \$5/adult; Free/child

Families will learn how to use binoculars, look for birds in the skies, forests and shores of Pickering Creek, look through our viewing scope to get an even better view, and explore some other creatures living throughout the forest. We hope to see herons, egrets, ospreys, eagles, barn swallows, wood thrushes and more! Binoculars and field guides will be provided or you may bring your own. **Please register in advance (this is required)** by calling 410/822-4903. Ages 15 and under are considered children.

### Sunday, July 25, 7:00AM

#### Birding @ Gunpowder State Park, Sweet Air area

This park provides a variety of good habitats for birds and a pleasant mid-summer walk through fields, deep woods and cool stream valleys. Contact Hugh Simmons at [hughsimmons@comcast.net](mailto:hughsimmons@comcast.net) or 410-628-4246 (before 9pm please) for meeting location.

### Sunday, August 8, 9:00AM

#### Irvine Nature Center Visit with Ruth Bergstrom

Let's explore some of the Center's 116 acres of natural areas and see what resident birds we can find. Irvine also has indoor exhibits, a native plant garden, and an extensive nature store to investigate. Let Ruth know you're coming by e-mailing her at [ruthb22@yahoo.com](mailto:ruthb22@yahoo.com), or calling her at 443-752-1967.



### Sunday, August 15, 7:00AM Birding @ Gunpowder State Park, Sweet Air area

Same park as July 25th, but we will cover a different section and habitat. Contact Hugh Simmons at [hughsimmons@comcast.net](mailto:hughsimmons@comcast.net) or 410-628-4246 (before 9pm please) for meeting location.

### Sunday, September 5, 8:00AM Hawk Watch and Migrant Songbirds with Ruth Bergstrom

We'll join the Hawk Watch hosted by Cecil Bird Club, and then walk the woods and fields towards the lighthouse looking for migrant songbirds. Woody's Crab House is the perfect place to stop for lunch on our way home. Please e-mail Ruth at [ruthb22@yahoo.com](mailto:ruthb22@yahoo.com) or call her at 443-752-1967 to register.

### Sunday, September 12, Time to be determined A Swift Night Out with Ruth Bergstrom

As summer ends, Chimney Swifts congregate in communal roosts prior to their migration in the fall. We'll join Baltimore Bird Club again this year to watch hundreds of them dive into their favorite chimney at dusk. Please e-mail Ruth for meeting time and location at [ruthb22@yahoo.com](mailto:ruthb22@yahoo.com), or call her at 443-752-1967.

### Saturday, September 18, 8:30 – 11:00 AM

#### Soldier's Delight Wildflowers Walk with Bryan MacKay

Soldiers Delight is the most unique habitat in Maryland. Mid-September is when the most varieties of wildflowers are blooming, and grasses are mature. Join Bryan MacKay for a 2 mile walk through several habitats in search of blooms and birds. Sign up by calling Bryan evenings 6-10 pm at 410 747 7132, or e-mailing [mackay@umbc.edu](mailto:mackay@umbc.edu).



Volunteering is an excellent opportunity for school students to complete community service. Of course, adults are always welcome and encouraged to volunteer. See below for an upcoming volunteer opportunity. To learn about future events, send an e-mail to [information@chesapeakeaudubon.org](mailto:information@chesapeakeaudubon.org) and we will put you on our e-mail list.

### Saturday, August 7, 8-9:00AM

#### Patterson Park Boat Lake Cleanup, Baltimore City

Patterson Park Boat Lake Chesapeake Audubon will be joining Patterson Park Audubon and Friends of Patterson Park volunteers for the monthly clean up. Meet at the lake at 8:00 AM. We have all the necessary supplies – we just need YOU! Following the cleanup, you are invited to join the volunteer breakfast and bird walk. Please email Ruth Bergstrom at [ruthb22@yahoo.com](mailto:ruthb22@yahoo.com), or phone her at 443-752-1967, to let her know you are coming or if you need directions. See you by the Lake!

**Chesupioc is going digital!** This means the Newsletter will be accessible electronically. See Important Notices on page 5 for details.

## What I'm Reading continued...

I also thought that, as a birder and President of an Audubon chapter, I should know more than I did about the history of birding in our country.

So I dove into the book at the beach with guarded enthusiasm and was pleasantly surprised by Scott's writing. His has a well structured but easy flowing storytelling style. The book was an easy novel-style read, and I looked forward to getting back to it every day to find out more about the men and women who laid the foundation for the study, appreciation, and protection of birds in this country and for what we call birding today.

Amateur birder, or ornithologist? Some might think that the two are distinct. The ornithologist likely has a few degrees and makes a career of research. The amateur goes on weekend walks in the woods. But the line separating them is often not clear with amateurs contributing significantly to scientific knowledge. In the early years there were no professional ornithologists and there certainly were no amateur birders. Recreational birding did not really take off until after World War II when quality optics and field guides became available. The early bird guides by the likes of Audubon, Bartram, and Wilson were called folios with dimensions measured in feet. They were certainly not designed for the field unless you had a band of Sherpas to carry them.

The people we look back on as the original professional ornithologists were adventurers with a passion for birds. In Scott Weidensaul's words "The history of birding on this continent is bound up with tales of liars, drunks, slave-runners and scoundrels of every unfortunate stripe." Now I bet this is starting to sound interesting. For some, the passion for birds exceeded their knowledge. Alexander Wilson came to this country in 1794, a penniless convicted blackmailer from Scotland. Upon seeing this land's bird life, he declared that he would create a book to illustrate them all, despite the fact that "except for three or four I do not know them." Wilson's work turned out to be exceptional, even though his friends had to help with IDs.

I particularly enjoyed that the book showed how the lives of the great names of the past were intertwined. In one story, Wilson is travelling about peddling his folio. He walked into a store in Louisville, Kentucky and showed his plates to the shopkeeper who seemed very impressed by them. He thought he made a sale when another gentleman came out of the back and spoke to the first in French. With that conversation the possibility of a sale ended and Wilson left dejected. Not so remarkable a story until you read that the shopkeeper was John James Audubon and the other man was his friend Ferdinand Rozier who advised Audubon that his work was better

and he should be crafting his own plates rather than buying another's.

And on the book goes through the founder of the National Museum of Natural History who hired army officers to collect specimens from around the country, to the petite, shotgun-toting female taxidermist who stood a "man's" field on its ear and discovered a subspecies of Eastern Screech Owl named after her, to the society women, incensed with the millinery trade, who took George Grinnell's failed concept of the Audubon Society and breathed life into it, to Roger Tory Peterson's revolutionary field guide, to the modern great birders, ornithologists and illustrators, and finally to the important contributions made to further our knowledge of birds by the now legion "amateur" birders.

At one point Scott recounts a pivotal moment in his life. He was watching the Beverly Hillbillies and the super-nerdy Jane Hathaway, who you may recall was a birdwatcher. "Wait a minute" he thought, "they're birdwatchers. I'm a birdwatcher. But they are *really, really* weird. Which means....Aw, crap."

So, if you can relate to that realization, or even if you are still in denial, you will thoroughly enjoy this book, even if it is history. ■■

## Pesticides continued..

There will be times, however, when you have to intervene. But, there are still alternatives to applying toxic products. You can simply pull yard weeds, and pour boiling water on weeds shooting up through driveway or sidewalk cracks. The latter also works on ant colonies, particularly in the morning when they are close to the surface of the ground. You can also sprinkle corn gluten meal on dandelions and crabgrass while they are germinating; it inhibits root formation. I was particularly excited to read this and plan to try it next season on my yard.



Audubon's *Guide for a Healthy Yard and Beyond* provides more details about toxic products you may have on your shelf, alternatives to using these products, and at last resort some basic information about the least toxic active ingredients to look for if you must buy a pesticide (<http://www.audubon.org/bird/pdf/pesticideguide.pdf> ). ■■



## The Lost Ladybug Project

Scientists need detailed information on which ladybugs are still out there and how many can be found. Here's how you can help and become a young scientist.

**COLLECT** Go out and collect ladybugs! Let them crawl on your hand, don't try to pick them up or you might crush them. Put them in a container with some twigs, grass and a few drops of water.

**TAKE NOTES** Note the date, time location, and habitat (for example, your garden, wetlands, meadow)

**TAKE THEIR PICTURE** If you find any ladybugs, take pictures of them all! Please do not kill the insects.



**SEND YOUR NOTES AND PICTURES** To send your notes and digital pictures, go to [www.lostladybug.org](http://www.lostladybug.org). If you do not have a digital camera, send color prints to Lost Ladybug Project, Cornell University, Department of Entomology, 4117 Comstock Hall, Ithaca 14853.

**RETURN THEM** Remember to put the ladybugs back where you found them!

### Tools You Might Want to Use

Sweep net: Make one with a coat hanger, stick, and cloth or pillow case. (See instructions at [www.lostladybug.org](http://www.lostladybug.org).) Sweep the leaves of plants and grasses as you walk along. Check for ladybugs in your net or carefully empty the net, inside out, into a washbasin or onto a sheet. Let any bees fly away.

Beating sheet: Place a light-colored cloth under a bush that looks good for ladybugs and then gently tap the bush with a stick to knock the ladybugs onto the sheet.

Hand lens: Use a magnifying glass to see a ladybug close up.

Cooler or freezer: Chill out! Your ladybug will be too active to get a good photo unless you slow it down. You can do this in a freezer safely for 5 minutes (over 6 may kill them) and this will quiet them for 2 to 4 minutes. Coolers are not as cold as freezers, so it will take 30 or more minutes to get 1 to 6 minutes of quiet time. Ladybugs will survive for days in a refrigerator.

### Tips for Finding Ladybugs

- ◆ Ladybugs hibernate from late fall through winter, so look for them from May through October.
- ◆ Look in gardens, bushes, trees, and fields where corn, wheat and other crops are grown since ladybugs like to eat soft-bodied insects that live and eat in these areas.
- ◆ Look in your garden or bushes for wrinkly or misshapen leaves that may have aphids on the underside of the leaf eating it.
- ◆ Look where you see ants because ants like to eat the sweet honeydew that aphids produce.

Visit <http://www.lostladybug.org/files/LADybug%20web.pdf> for details.

## Birdathon 2010 Results

On Saturday, May 15th at 6:30am, the Chesapeake Audubon team of Tim Houghton, Kye Jenkins, and Ruth Bergstrom began a 12-hour bird hunting quest. Many generous sponsors donated money for each bird species identified by the team or a set amount of money. Of course, our mission was to spot as many different kinds of birds as we possibly could. Our goal was to raise money to help send children to the Pickering Creek EcoCamp this summer. EcoCamp is a day camp for school-aged children entering kindergarten through grade 7 this coming Fall (brochure available at <http://www.pickeringcreek.org/ecocamp/2010EcoCampBrochure.pdf>)

We started at Susquehanna State Park, then moved on to Perryman Park, Canning Road shorebird area, and finally Swan Harbor. All of these great birding locations are located in Harford County.

A fun time was had by all and we tallied **105 species**, beating last year's total of 80! Thank you to everyone who pledged a per species or dollar amount. Please see our website for a complete list of species. ■■



Photo borrowed from the EcoCamp brochure.

## Important Notices

### ***This is the LAST printed issue of Chesupioc !***

After this issue we will no longer be mailing paper copies of our newsletter, *Chesupioc*. This will save Chesapeake Audubon about \$3,000 per year in printing and postage costs. These funds can be put to better use supporting our educational and conservation programs. And, of course we will be saving a few trees.

*Chesupioc* is already available electronically on our website at [www.chesapeakeaudubon.org](http://www.chesapeakeaudubon.org). Please go there and take a look. The electronic version is in color, in pdf format, and can be easily printed. You can also print only the pages you need to have in hard copy, the event and field trip lists or the Kids Corner, for example.

After this issue there will be two ways you can get *Chesupioc*. You can go to our website or you can receive an email with it attached. If you want to receive our newsletter by email please send us an email to [ChesAudubonInfo@aol.com](mailto:ChesAudubonInfo@aol.com) saying that you want to be added to the newsletter distribution.

**If you do not use email or the internet and still want to receive a paper copy of *Chesupioc* please send us a note to that effect at: Chesapeake Audubon Society, PO Box 3173, Baltimore, MD 21228.**

Thank you for your understanding and your support of our efforts to conserve.

### **Birds in Trouble - Gulf Oil Disaster**

The tragic oil platform explosion off Louisiana's Gulf Coast is rapidly becoming an environmental disaster. The loss of 11 oil workers may be just the beginning of this tragedy as millions of gallons of oil head for land, putting birds, wildlife and the coastal environment in grave danger.

A number of species are prompting special concern, including the Brown Pelican — just removed from the Endangered Species List, and beach-nesting terns and gulls (Caspian Tern, Royal Tern, Sandwich Tern, Least Tern, Laughing Gull, Black Skimmer) and shorebirds (American Oystercatcher, Wilson's Plover, Snowy Plover). The coastal Reddish Egret, large wading birds (Roseate Spoonbill, Ibises, Herons, Egrets), and marsh birds (Mottled Duck, Clapper Rail, Black Rail, Seaside Sparrow, Marsh-Dwelling Songbirds) are all threatened as well.

Audubon staff across the country are marshalling resources and personnel to respond to the looming disaster. Audubon Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi staff and chapters are working to prepare for impacts to birds, wildlife and important habitat as the spill makes its way toward land. Audubon is coordinating volunteer efforts and you can help! From cleaning oiled birds (requires proper training) to counting birds to picking up trash on beaches before the oil hits — there are many things that you can do to help. If you are interested in volunteering, please go to our website: [www.chesapeakeaudubon.org](http://www.chesapeakeaudubon.org), and click on "Gulf Oil Disaster."

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## Birding the Everglades

By Bryan MacKay

In March, Debi and I spent spring break in the Everglades. If you are interested in birds, you'll find it the best place in the US to see and photograph them up close. And, if you are not interested in birds, you will be once you get there! Here's a quick guide to some of the best places in this huge park.

About an hour from Miami is the park entrance, and four miles beyond that, the Anhinga Trail. We found it challenging to get out of the parking lot at the Anhinga Trail: black vultures were perched on cars, pecking at windshield wipers; a big gator occupied the picnic table area; and flyovers like swallow-tailed kites and red-shouldered hawks were common. The trail itself is paved for about 100 yards, with another 400 on boardwalk. Right away, birds are everywhere: anhingas, cormorants, ibis, herons (at least 5 species), many within six feet of the Trail. We spent two full days here and were never bored.

Thirty-eight miles south, at the tip of Florida, is Flamingo. The birding is mediocre, but osprey, brown pelicans, assorted gulls and bald eagles can usually be seen from the marina. Mrazek Pond is occasionally spectacular if its fish are plentiful, but otherwise dead. Eco Pond is overgrown with vegetation and the mosquitoes will carry you away at dawn or dusk, even when there are few elsewhere in the park. By the way, while the Park remains open, no one goes there between late April and early November due to mosquitoes.

Another not-to-be-missed destination is Shark Valley, located on the Tamiami Trail halfway across Florida. The best birding is again virtually within sight of the small parking lot (go early, spots are limited), and rivals the Anhinga Trail for seeing birds close up. Mostly the same species, but add in night herons and limpkins in the sawgrass prairies. You can take a tram tour seven miles



south into the heart of the park to a giant observation tower, as remote a place as any in the continental US. We chose to rent bikes and travel at leisurely pace and stop when we wanted.

Traveling west from Shark Valley on the Tamiami Trail, don't miss Clyde Butcher's new photography gallery, located at the edge of a beautiful cypress swamp. His black and white photos of the Everglades, some of them huge, are spectacular.

The remaining section of Everglades NP is the Ten Thousand Islands in Everglades City. There is only a Visitor Center, but you can take a couple of different worthwhile boat tours, or do it yourself by renting a kayak. It's not primarily a birding destination, but is worthwhile. We saw manatees and dolphins by boat, and dozens of gliding pelicans near dockside restaurants in town. Don't miss the Rod and Gun Club, a relic of old Florida, even if you don't eat there. We also canoed the nearby Turner River; I recommend going upstream first for a mile or two in cypress swamp and looping back downstream a mile or two through mangrove tunnels and sawgrass.

If you have more time, continue up the west coast to Sanibel Island and the Ding Darling NWR, and inland a bit to National Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. Both have superb opportunities for seeing birds up close. ■■

## Birds & Birding

The Wood Thrush has become a symbol of declining Nearctic-Neotropical migratory forest birds, its population having decreased significantly since the late 1970s. Wood Thrushes breed in forests throughout the eastern United States and southeastern Canada. In September, they fly south to winter mostly in Mexico to Panama. In February, Audubon staff joined representatives from 8 countries and 16 organizations in a workshop at Los Tuxtlas Biosphere Reserve, Veracruz, Mexico, where they explored the Wood Thrush's potential as an umbrella for forest bird conservation in southeastern Canada, eastern United States, southern Mexico, and Central America. The workshop was the first step in building an international alliance that will coordinate work throughout the Western Hemisphere for bird monitoring, habitat protection, forest management, and environmental education to benefit forest birds and other wildlife. If you would like to learn more about this project or would like to be on the mailing lists please contact: Matt Jeffery [http://us.mc356.mail.yahoo.com/mc/compose?to=mjeffery@audubon.org](mailto:us.mc356@mail.yahoo.com)

## Search and Find:

Find these active ingredients found in insecticides, rodenticides, and herbicides. (Words in parenthesis not included in puzzle.) If you must use a pesticide, look for the EPA toxicity rating and buy those that say "caution" (least toxic) and avoid those that say "warning, poison" (most toxic).

(Insecticides)

Acephate

Bendiocarb

Chlorpyrifos

Diazinon

Dimethoate

(Rodenticides)

Brodifacoum

(Herbicides)

Glyphosate

Weed B Gone (the active ingredi-

ent is 2,4-D)

(Other product names)

d-CON (d will be capitalized)

Scotts Turf (Builder Plus 2)

Orthene

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