

# The Osprey

Newsletter of the Southern Maryland Audubon Society



Acadian Flycatcher  
Photo by: Bill Hubick

## In This Issue

*President's Perch*

*1st Annual Raptor  
Conservation Awards*

*Baltimore Canyon  
Pelagic Trip*

*Horseshoe Crab Survey  
Funding Secured*

*Upcoming Events*

## **REMINDER - DUES DUE!**

*The dues year is  
July 1 - June 30*



<http://somdaudubon.org/>

## **PRESIDENT'S PERCH OCTOBER 2011**

Our SMAS 2011-2012 Year has had its kick off with our first Board of Directors (BOD) Meeting on August 31 and our first Program Meeting on September 7 on the topic of Coyotes in Southern Maryland. That meeting topic made me think about all the changes to plant and wildlife populations and even other environmental changes that have happened since I started birding. I joined the National Audubon Society over 20 years ago not because I was a birder, but because I had an interest in protecting our natural environment. The National Audubon Society (NAS) was an organization that was an advocate for the environment and not just a birdwatching organization. The local chapters also provided birding and nature field trips and program meetings. It was a perfect match for me.

So why did you join either the NAS or SMAS? Perhaps it is similar to my reason or even a different reason. Whatever the reason, you had to have some interest in birds, nature or the environment. So I ask you to think back to the time you joined this organization and pull from the inspiration that caused you to fill out the membership form. It has been a month since you read my first article as President and my challenge to you is to think about your current role in SMAS and how you might change that too. Each one of you has something you can contribute to make our organization even better than it already is!

So what small step did you decide to take? Will you come to a meeting or two this year? Will it be to attend one or more of our field trips? How about being part of a team or start your own team in our Tailgate Bird Count fundraiser to help raise money for our scholarship fund? We often attend community festivals and events with our educational display throughout Southern Maryland and can use volunteers at the table for a few hours. Maybe you can bring your specialized skills and knowledge to one of our committees or would like to learn something new by participating in one of the committees. See the program guide and our web site for a list of committees and who to talk to. We are in need of a Conservation Committee Representative from St. Mary's County. Also Calvert County makes up the largest part of our membership, but no one from Calvert attends our BOD Meetings. If you like to go birding with a purpose, perhaps you can participate in either a Christmas Bird Count or the May Count.

There are so many ways you can help make a difference to Southern Maryland. Take a moment and contact either one of our BOD members or myself with your decision. We could not be a functional and successful organization without people like you. So spread your wings and glide high for SMAS in a way you never have before. We need you as an active part of our flock and look forward to gliding to greater heights with you over the coming year.

Naturally,  
Mike Callahan

## BALTIMORE CANYON PELAGIC TRIP

by Tyler Bell

On August 14, the Thelma Dale V sailed from Lewes, Delaware headed southeast toward Baltimore Canyon in Maryland waters. It was a bit bumpy on the way there with folks on the lower deck getting drenched. Even up on the upper deck we were getting hit occasionally. Birding in Delaware waters was pretty dead as we didn't even see any gulls once it got light and before we passed south of the DE/MD line, I think we only saw a couple of Wilson's Storm-Petrels and perhaps a Cory's Shearwater. Maryland waters were much more productive particularly because we were in blue water and were in deeper water over the canyon. There are several canyons that have eroded in the face of the coastal shelf drop and these provide an immediately different topography and usually different birds.

Wilson's Storm-Petrel  
Photo by: Jane Kastenka



Although the target species of Band-rumped Storm-Petrel and Long-tailed Jaeger were not found on this trip, there were plenty of good birds to be had. Storm-Petrels and other tubenoses are among the few birds that have a refined sense of smell. When a chum and oil slick is laid out, they can literally fly in from a mile or more away. Wilson's Storm-Petrels are the default seabird and there were lots of them. Leach's Storm-Petrel, a larger cousin of the Wilson's, put in appearances a couple of times. These birds are longer winged and have a more Nighthawk-like flight which helps to pick them out of the flock.

Pomarine Jaeger  
Photo by: George Jett



Twice, Pomarine Jaegers came bombing through the vicinity of the boat but the second bird provided stunning flyby views as it circled the boat then landed in the chum slick.

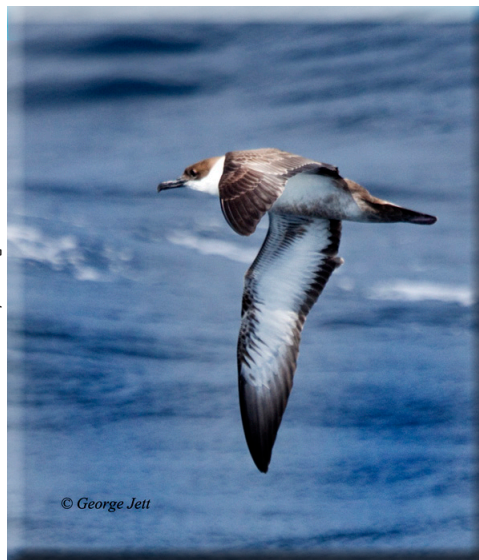
Cory's Shearwater  
Photo by: Tyler Bell



George Jett, photographer extraordinaire, provided two photos from the trip including the Pom as well as Great Shearwater (used to be Greater but was changed to Great recently) which were well represented on the trip. Cory's Shearwater, also known as Banana Bills for their yellowish beak, and Audubon's Shearwaters were fairly common. Photographers were able to capture images of at least one Scopoli's subspecies Cory's Shearwater though no call of this bird was announced on the boat. This is a potential species split so is always of interest as there aren't that many reports of Scopoli's in Maryland waters.

The trip home was not pleasant as we were riding almost parallel to the swells making the boat roll at alarming angles. To top it off, we ran through a torrential thunderstorm. On the other hand, those who were out on the stern after the storm were treated to a magnificent full double arc rainbow! A fine end to a very long day.

Great Shearwater  
Photo by: George Jett



## REMINDER--DUES DUE!

Notices were snail mailed in July for those who have not renewed their Chapter-Only Dues. The dues year is July 1 - June 30. Renewing for multiple years saves all of us work - if it works for you! Thanks for your continuing support.

Make checks payable to:  
**Southern Maryland Audubon Society**

Individual or Family  
One year \$20 Two year \$38 Three year \$56

Senior or Student  
One year \$15 Two year \$28 Three year \$42

Individual Lifetime Membership \$500

Senior (over 62) Lifetime Membership \$250

Mail to: SMAS, PO Box 18, Bryans Road, MD 20616

## HORSESHOE CRAB SURVEY FUNDING SECURED

### NFWF MATCH ENSURES CONTINUATION OF SURVEY FOR 2011

Arlington, VA – Full funding for the 2011 Virginia Tech Horseshoe Crab Trawl Survey has been secured through a matching donation from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). NFWF funds match the combined \$100,000 contribution from Lonza Walkersville, Inc. and Charles River Laboratory, providing the full \$200,000 needed for survey operations in 2011.

The survey, which has been administered by Virginia Tech since 2002, is the only survey designed to sample the horseshoe crab population in coastal waters. Its data are a critical component of the coastwide stock assessment and the new Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) framework, both of which were endorsed through an independent peer review in 2009. The ARM framework includes modeling that links management of horseshoe crab harvest to multispecies objectives, particularly red knot shorebird recovery. It was developed jointly by the Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Geological Survey in recognition of the importance of horseshoe crab eggs to shorebirds in the Delaware Bay Region.

“We are thrilled that the 2011 survey can be conducted with the combined funds from NFWF and the biomedical industry,” stated Thomas O’Connell, ASMFC Horseshoe Crab Board Chair and Maryland DNR Fisheries Service Director. “Without the initial commitments of the biomedical companies and the fishing industry, this opportunity could

not have materialized. I hope that these commitments will spur other interested groups to pledge resources, as the 2012 survey is still in need of funding.”

“Ensuring that there are adequate horseshoe crab resources to support rebuilding Delaware Bay shorebird populations depends upon good science and management, which this survey and the ARM framework support,” said Dr. Anthony Chatwin, Director of Marine and Coastal Conservation at NFWF. “We are happy to help support the survey this year, particularly when all of us are being challenged by tight budgets.”

Additional donations have been pledged by Associates of Cape Cod, Inc., and members of the horseshoe crab and whelk industry including the Chesapeake Bay Packing, LLC, Bernie’s Conchs, LLC, LaMonica Fine Foods, Southern Connection Seafood, Inc., Sea King Corp., Spot’s Fish Company, and Delaware Valley Fish Company. These funds will provide seed money for the 2012 survey, the status of which will be based on the ability to secure full funding.

NFWF is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and restoring the nation’s native wildlife species and habitats. Created by Congress in 1984, NFWF directs public and private conservation dollars to the most pressing environmental needs, facilitating matching funds throughout the process.

Tina Berger, Public Affairs Specialist  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N  
Arlington, VA 22201-2196  
(p) 703.842.0740 (f) 703.842.0741  
tberger@asmfc.org www.asmfc.org

---

## Tuneful by Jane Klemer

Mockingbird serenade  
Draws from a multitude  
Of sweet melodies.

---

Northern Mockingbird  
Photo by: Bill Hubick



---

## FIRST SHORT-TAILED ALBATROSS BORN IN U.S. FLEDGES

(Washington, D.C., June 24, 2011) A Short-tailed Albatross chick has successfully fledged on an island in the Hawaiian archipelago, marking the first time this endangered species has ever been known to breed successfully outside of Japan.

The hatchling broke through its shell in January on Eastern Island, one of three small, flat, coral islands that comprise Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge over 1,300 miles northwest of Honolulu. The parents of the Midway chick first paired up on the refuge four years ago. During that 2007-8 breeding season, they were observed spending only a little time together, but the following season, their time together increased. By the third season, they arrived at the Eastern Island breeding colony together and built a nest, but did not lay eggs. This breeding season, one of the pair was observed incubating a freshly laid egg on November 16, 2010. The pair has been under close observation ever since. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) reports that the birds' leg bands reveal that the male of the pair was hatched on the island of Torishima, Japan in 1987, while the female hatched there in 2003.

After the egg hatched in January, the parents spent the next five months bringing squid and flying fish to their chick every one to three days. In doing so, they logged tens of thousands of miles, likely soaring between Midway and the nutrient-rich feeding grounds some 1,000 miles to the northwest. While the parents were both away on one foraging trip, the chick was swept off its nest by the tsunami resulting from the catastrophic Japanese earthquake of 11 March. It survived the ordeal, and in May, after months of steady feeding and growth, had lost most of its downy look and begun stretching and exercising its wings.

Anticipating its fledging, the chick was banded by FWS biologists on June 8. It has now left the island and is most likely headed in a northwesterly direction to the rich and productive waters near Hokkaido, Japan. On average, Short-tailed Albatrosses begin breeding at 6 years of age, but often begin prospecting at nesting sites several years earlier. So, it is our hope that this bird return in 4-6 years, and it could begin breeding by about 2017, provided it finds a mate.

The endangered Short-tailed Albatross was once the most abundant of the North Pacific albatross species, numbering more than a million birds. It was decimated by feather hunting at the turn of the 20th Century, and by the late 1940s was thought to be extinct. In the early 1950s, ten pairs were discovered breeding on Torishima. The population has now reached 3,000 individuals, with some birds on the Senkaku Islands, but most still on Torishima.

Conservationists fear an eruption of the active volcano on

Torishima could spell disaster. Starting in 2008, an international team led by Japan's Yamashina Institute began translocating Short-tailed Albatross chicks to Mukojima Island to create a new "insurance" population. In 2011, 15 chicks were moved to Mukojima, bringing the total number translocated to 55. So far, seven of these birds have returned to Mukojima as non-breeding juveniles, an encouraging sign that they will return to breed when they reach maturity. Outside the breeding season, the Short-tailed Albatross ranges along the coasts of eastern Russia, Korea, China, Taiwan, and Alaska and the Hawaiian Islands, and occasionally off the Pacific Coast of North America.

Besides the potential volcano threat on Torishima, the bird is vulnerable to rats and other predators, but the biggest recent mortality threat is bycatch in longline fisheries. Thousands of miles of fishing lines, carrying hundreds of millions of hooks, are set by longliners throughout the world's oceans each year. Albatrosses, petrels, shearwaters, and fulmars are killed when they become attracted to the bait attached to the hooks, and either swallow the hooks or become snagged and pulled under the sea to drown as the lines are set.

ABC has campaigned to end seabird deaths from longlining in U.S. fisheries since the mid-90s. Thanks to publications such as ABC's report: Sudden Death on the High Seas – Longline Fishing, a Global Catastrophe for Seabirds and subsequent advocacy efforts by ABC and others, the North American fleets have begun to use bycatch avoidance techniques, and seabird deaths in Hawai'i and Alaska are down by up to 85%. However, a stark reminder of the threat resurfaced when two Short-tailed Albatrosses were killed by longliners in Alaskan waters last September.

American Bird Conservancy  
Robert Johns  
bjohns@abcbirds.org  
202-234-7181 ext.210



Short-Tailed Albatross fledgling: USFWS



## ACCESS MATTERS: VIEWING KIRTLAND'S WARBLERS

From mid-May to early July, Kirtland's Warbler viewing in central Michigan has been facilitated through a long-term partnership. As a result, visitors can safely observe this rare and endangered species under ideal circumstances. Last month, the guided Kirtland's Warbler tour-season run cooperatively by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and Michigan Audubon Society, closed on the Fourth of July weekend, having guided over 800 observers through the season. These breeding-season guided trips were extraordinarily successful in showing participants singing male Kirtland's Warblers on territory

The popular tours have been run by the Forest Service since 1966 (even before the Endangered Species Act) and by the Fish and Wildlife Service since 1974. The USFWS and Michigan Audubon run two tours a day out of Grayling, Michigan; the Forest Service runs one a day out of Mio, Michigan. The yearly visitation over the last decade has averaged 1,050 visitors

These programs are ideally suited to welcome visitors, to educate them about the habitat and management needs of this rare songbird, and to make accommodation available to both dedicated birders and the curious public alike. Instead of keeping people away from an Endangered Species (a reality for some species and at some other sites), people are welcomed and encouraged to view Kirtland's Warblers in their Jack pine habitat.

The public, both local and visiting, has been won over by this effort, and the regional economy, including local commerce and forestry-oriented, benefit by working to save the Kirtland's Warbler.

Controlled visitation is the key to balanced and responsible management and conservation.

It's a win-win-win-win situation – for the warblers, for visitors, for habitat managers, and for locals.

Land-and-wildlife managers and birders alike would do well to carefully consider the Kirtland's Warbler access experience, the cumulative lessons entailed and the public's response. It's one way that controlled access leads to other benefits. A review of this policy is especially important in these times of shrinking budgets, since the value of these types of tours are, if anything, underappreciated.

Finally, indications are that Kirtland's Warblers had another fine nesting season in 2011. Preliminary numbers suggest that it was a record year, with singing males probably approaching 1,850 birds. We'll report on the official numbers once they are released.

Birding Community E-bulletin  
Paul J. Baicich 410-992-9736 paul.baicich@verizon.net

You can access past E-bulletins on the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) website:  
[www.refugenet.org/birding/birding5.html](http://www.refugenet.org/birding/birding5.html)

## FOSTER PARENTS NEEDED



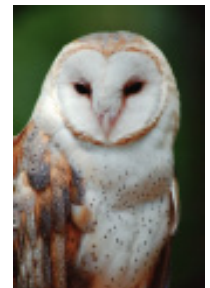
Southern Maryland Audubon Society sponsors the banding of nestling birds of prey, or raptors, with serially numbered aluminum bands in cooperation with the Bird Banding Laboratory of the U. S. Department of the Interior, as part of our bird research and conservation activities in Southern Maryland. Limited numbers of Osprey and Barn Owl nestlings become available each year for adoption. The gift of \$10 for an Osprey adoption, or of \$25 for a Barn Owl adoption, contributes to a special fund for the support of raptor research and raptor conservation projects. The foster parent receives:

- A certificate of adoption with the number of the U. S. Department of the Interior band, and the location and date of the banding.
- Information on the ecology and migration patterns of the species, photo of a fledgling, and any other information on whereabouts or fate of the bird that may be available.

### Interested?

Here's how to become a foster parent of an Osprey or a Barn Owl. Send \$10.00 for each Osprey, \$25 for each Barn Owl, or \$35 for each American Kestrel to:

**Melissa Boyle**  
**10144 Point Lookout Road**  
**Scotland, MD 20687**



### ADOPT A RAPTOR

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I wish to adopt (check one):

\_\_\_\_\_ (# of) Osprey, \$10.00 each

\_\_\_\_\_ (# of) Barn Owl, \$25.00 each

\_\_\_\_\_ (# of) American Kestrel, \$35.00 each

Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to:**  
**Southern Maryland Audubon Society**

# UPCOMING EVENTS

September 24 – Saturday – 8 AM – noon – Field Trip  
Calvert Cliffs State Park, Calvert County  
“FALL MIGRATION”

Leader: Tyler Bell (301-862-4623, [jtylerbell@yahoo.com](mailto:jtylerbell@yahoo.com)).  
Neotropical migrants should be near their peak. Warblers, tanagers, grosbeaks, and other songbirds. Good trails through wooded habitat & along the creek. Take Rt. 2/4 south of Prince Frederick for about 14 miles. Follow signs to the park. Meet leader in parking lot. Facilities and fee. 3 miles round trip. RSVP required.

OCTOBER 5 – WEDNESDAY - 7:30 p.m.

La Plata Volunteer Fire Department, Charles County  
911 Washington Avenue, La Plata, MD 20646  
“Michael L. Smith – The Mad Bluebird, Wildlife Photographer”  
MICHAEL L. SMITH, International Wildlife Photographer  
Everyone knows the Mad Bluebird picture!! Come and meet the extraordinary photographer, Michael L. Smith, and enjoy his world of wildlife photography. He offers revealing glimpses into the lives and behavior of his subjects, as well as their breathtaking beauty. Michael will also explain the photography set-up of many of his photographs. Come and enjoy this wonderful presentation that we are so fortunate to offer.

October 15 – Saturday – 8 AM - noon – Field Trip

Cove Point Marsh, Calvert County  
“SHARP-TAILED SPARROWS”  
Leader: Bob Boxwell (443-404-5549, [bobboxwell@hotmail.com](mailto:bobboxwell@hotmail.com))  
Cove Point beach and marsh were a unique habitat on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay. A Living Shoreline project is attempting to restore the fresh water marsh after a massive breach and salt water incursion. We are targeting sparrows, marsh inhabitants and migrants. This is a restricted area and we are limited to ten guests. Reservations are required at least one week prior to the trip.

October 22- Saturday – 8 AM-noon – Field Trip  
Indian Head Rail Trail, Mason Springs, Charles County  
“RED-HEADS ON THE RAIL TRAIL”

Leaders: Beth and Jason Groth (301-705-7922, [ecocat@yahoo.com](mailto:ecocat@yahoo.com))  
There are a few hot spots along the Indian Head Rail Trail (IHRT) that provide good wintering habitat for Red-headed woodpeckers, yielding high numbers of individuals. One of the hot spots has revealed as many as 23 individuals. Come join us for a leisurely morning of birding along this wonderful trail and search for these beautiful birds as well as sparrows and other land birds. Meet and park at MD Rt. 224 IHRT Parking Lot, located just East of MD Rt. 225.

October 29 - Saturday - 8 AM - noon – Field Trip

Caledon Natural Area, King George, VA  
“FALL MIGRANTS AND RESIDENT BIRDS”  
Leader: Mike Callahan (240-765-5192, [raptorsrule@juno.com](mailto:raptorsrule@juno.com))  
The Caledon Natural Area is a Virginia State Park on the Potomac River on the opposite shore from Riverside and Nanjemoy. Meadow and river bottom, swamp and marsh habitats and is known for Bald Eagles (at least 15 in one spot!), Red-headed Woodpeckers too. Last fall we had flocks of both Wood Storks and White Pelicans at Caledon! Meet at MD

301 visitor center just north of Harry Nice Bridge. Toll southbound for bridge. Contact leader for more info. Limited to 12 participants due to space in the park van. RSVP required. \$3 vehicle fee.

NOVEMBER 2 – WEDNESDAY – 7:30 p.m.

Battle Creek Cypress Swamp Center, Calvert County  
Gray's Road off of Sixes Road (Rt. 506), Prince Frederick, MD  
Call 410-535-5327 for additional information or visit  
[www.calvertparks.org](http://www.calvertparks.org)

“The Art of Falconry - The World's Oldest Sport”

JEREMY ALLEN, Falconer

Falconry dates back 3000 years and is known as the oldest sport in the world. Learn about the history, art and regulations of hunting with a bird of prey. Jeremy will have a live bird with him and may also be in the company with another falconer. Great close up opportunity for photographing and observing a live raptor.

November 6 – Sunday - 8 AM - noon – Field Trip

Myrtle Grove WMA, Charles County Youths especially welcome!  
“BIRDING FOR ALL LEVELS”

Leader: Fred Burggraf (301-934-8042, [fburggraf@aol.com](mailto:fburggraf@aol.com))  
Diverse habitat for hawks, sparrows, woodpeckers, and early waterfowl. Great for beginning birders! From Rt. 301 in La Plata, take Rt. 225 west about 4.5 miles to the WMA on the right. From Rt. 210 take Rt. 225 east about 4 miles to the WMA. Follow the dirt road to the end (about a mile) and meet in the parking lot near the lake. RSVP required.

November 13 - Sunday - 8 AM - noon – Field Trip

King's Landing Park, Calvert County  
“LATE FALL BIRDS”  
Leader: Tom Harten (301-780-6196, [tomharten@verizon.net](mailto:tomharten@verizon.net))  
King's Landing Park, in Huntingtown, offers a variety of habitats attractive to wintering birds including forest, open fields, freshwater wetlands and the Patuxent River. We'll meet next to the CHESPAK office near the main parking lot of the park. King's Landing is located 5 miles north of Prince Frederick following Route 4. Turn left onto Old Town Rd. (MD 524). Turn left at Bowen's Grocery Store and continue straight for about 3 miles to park entrance. RSVP required.

Kirtland's Warbler, Michigan  
Photo by: George Jett



**EDITOR:** Tyler Bell  
23035 Forest Way, California, MD 20619  
**Telephone:** (301) 862-4623  
**E-mail:** [jtylerbell@yahoo.com](mailto:jtylerbell@yahoo.com)

The deadline for the Osprey is the fifth of each month. Please send all short articles, reports, unique sightings, conservation updates, calendar items, etc. to the above address.

**Southern Maryland Audubon Society**  
P.O. Box 181 Bryans Road, MD 20616