

The Osprey

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<http://somdaudubon.org/>

Newsletter of the Southern Maryland Audubon Society

HOG ISLAND EXPERIENCE

by Michelle Daubon



We arrived on Hog Island, Maine, on June 20th. As the lobster boat that doubled as our shuttle boat to and from the mainland docked at the shores of this rocky island, it began to shower. We were quickly given our room assignments and I set up camp in the "Queen Mary." I was very excited for all that was in store for the week of Ornithology Camp. I knew the

staff was packed with folks who were renowned in the birding world such as Dr. Steve Kress (National Audubon's vice-president for Bird Conservation), Kenn Kaufman (author of Peterson's Advanced Birding), Scott Weidensaul (author of Living On The Wind) and Dr. Sara Morris (ornithologist).

Within an hour the skies cleared and my first bird was spotted, a Song Sparrow. I met the other teachers who were sponsored by the Southern Maryland Audubon Society and the Maryland Ornithological Society over lobster appetizers and wine. I heard a Winter Wren whose sighting would evade me all week, but whose song still plays in my head. The entire week was spent filling my senses during the bird walks, hikes, visiting Eastern Egg Rock's Atlantic Puffins and stepping back into time on the Wreck Island heron rookery. Hiking around Hog Island with the unforgettable sounds of wood warblers singing while gazing at sea-birds feeding was an amazing experience that challenged my usual birding outings. The birding experience was only matched by the sheer beauty of the Maine coastline, the interesting people I met that week and the knowledge I took away from birding and talking with the experts. I managed to add 17 lifers to my list in addition to spotting Harbor, and Gray Seals for my first time.

As a teacher, my thoughts each day reflected back to how I might be able to share this experience with my students. As I strolled along a path on Hog Island one day by myself in search of the elusive Winter Wren, I was busy again trying to refigure in my head how the beautiful songs of the Hermit Thrush, Dark-eyed



Junco, Blackburnian Warbler, Northern Parula and Purple Finch could be within yards of Black Guillemots, King Eiders and an assortment of gulls. It was at that moment that I realized that the best I can do for my students, besides sharing my passion with them, was to continue to forge opportunities for them to have their own experiences. I know this seems like a simple concept, but in these times of budget and time constraints, we often try to shortcut experiences with disseminating knowledge. Luckily, I am in an area of teaching that allows me to spend much of my time with students out in the natural environment. Still, keeping in mind the experiences of wonderment I had while I was on Hog Island reinforces the need to let students explore their world and natural surroundings and their own observations whether it is in their school yard or during CHESPAX field experiences.

I appreciate the opportunity that SMAS gave me to have the vast experience I had this summer. Many members of SMAS are also program partners with Calvert County Public Schools, and I thank each one of them for enhancing the Green School and CHESPAX experiences of our students. All of our efforts truly make a positive difference in the lives of our students.

Michelle Daubon, Environmental Educator, Calvert County Public Schools.

ADOPT A RAPTOR

by Heather Burk

New Arrivals!!! Between the months of May and July is our busiest time to find nestling birds of prey. This is when we put aluminum leg bands on the birds that will hopefully lead to information about how far young travel and the areas in which the birds finally nest. We are excited to announce that this year we had a successful nest of American Kestrels. We are now adopting out the male and female American Kestrels for \$35.00. And on top of this we have successful Osprey nests both around Cobb Island and along the Patuxent River. We would like to thank you for all of your support in both Adopt-a-Raptor and your kind donations. With this support we have increased nesting success for both Osprey and Barn Owls, and now also with American Kestrels. We still have lots of Osprey and Barn Owls looking for foster parents to help the next generation of young. If you are interested in adopting Barn Owls it is \$25.00 and Osprey are \$10.00. Thank you all for your support!

AUDUBON TAPS NOTED CONSERVATION AND COMMUNICATIONS LEADER AS NEW PRESIDENT

New York, NY, July 29, 2010 - The National Audubon Society today announced that David Yarnold has been named its new President and Chief Executive Officer, giving new momentum to efforts to connect people with nature and their power to protect it. A passionate conservationist, Yarnold currently serves as Executive Director of the Environmental Defense Fund and President of the Environmental Defense Action Fund. Prior to that, he was a Pulitzer Prize-winning editor at the San Jose Mercury News.

“David brings proven leadership in the for-profit and non-profit sectors to Audubon at a time when efforts to protect birds, habitats and the resources that sustain us are needed more than ever,” said Holt Thrasher, Audubon’s Board Chair. “His leadership ability, his passion for conservation and grassroots action, his communications skills and his organizational expertise all make him the perfect fit for the Audubon of 2010 and beyond.”

“David is a boundary-crosser, the kind of flexible thinker and values-based executive that a complex conservation and fundraising landscape demands right now,” Thrasher said. “He shares Audubon’s traditional passion for birds and its visionary understanding that helping people to protect them will safeguard our own future as well. I have no doubt that David will lead Audubon in expanding its reach to new audiences and elevating its conservation successes to new heights.”

Yarnold has been at EDF since April 2005, where he is responsible for all operations, from programs, to development and marketing/communications. He helped expand EDF’s innovative corporate partnerships work, focused on EDF’s international programs, particularly in China, and helped the organization grow from \$52M to \$117M in revenue. He is also President of the organization’s Action Fund, its political action arm.

“Audubon’s mission has never been more relevant. From the grassroots to state houses to national and regional policy, its wingspan is unparalleled,” Yarnold said. “I’m excited by the opportunity to work with a nationwide network of Audubon Chapters and Audubon Centers that combine local concern, knowledge and action to equal conservation that makes a difference on a grand scale. It will be an honor to lead an organization whose name has meant ‘trust’ and ‘conservation achievement’ for more than a hundred years.”

Yarnold’s San Jose Mercury News was consistently ranked as one of America’s 10 Best Newspapers. His paper was called, “America’s Boldest Newspaper” by a panel of international judges. During his time in San Jose, the Mercury News was widely recognized for its commitment to diver-

sity and for its in-depth coverage of technology. He was also one of three Pulitzer Prize finalists for editorial writing in 2005.

“For me, going to Audubon is like going home. Community-based education and action that breeds broader changes has always been engaging and rewarding for me and those are the things Audubon does best,” Yarnold said.

He will assume the Presidency of Audubon on Sept 1.

Audubon Press Releases Contact: Delta Willis
212-979-3197
Senior Communications Manager
dwillis@audubon.org

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

by Millie Kriemelmeyer

Audubon Adventures is a series of natural science instructional booklets for elementary students in grades 3 through 5. Content is aligned with national standards for social studies, science, and language arts.

Southern Maryland Audubon Society offers subscriptions to elementary teachers who will be able to use them with their students.

The new 2010 edition is entitled “Action for the Planet” with issues entitled “At Home in a Habitat, Caretaking Our World’s Water, and Power From Our Planet.” Back issues on many topics also are available.

To read more about Audubon Adventures, go to audubon.org/educate.

To order a subscription from Southern Maryland Audubon Society, contact:

Millie Kriemelmeyer, Education Chair
milliek@radix.net 301-372-8766



Juvenile Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at North Beach Marsh
Photo By Bill Hubick

BIRDING IN THE MOJAVE DESERT

by Ron Runkles

If any of you birders are heading for Las Vegas this fall or next spring to play the slots or the craps tables, drive on down to the City of Henderson, NV to the Bird Viewing Preserve one morning. The preserve covers approximately one hundred forty acres, is comprised of nine lakes and hiking trails, and is part of the City of Henderson water reclamation facilities. It is set aside solely for bird watching and is a great place to improve your birding skills and build your life list with Western species, because numerous species are concentrated in a small area as compared to national wildlife refuges, which may cover hundreds or thousands of acres.

The Bird Viewing Preserve is easy to find. Drive south on Boulder Highway, pass the Welcome to the City of Henderson sign in the median strip, and look for Sunset Avenue. Turn left onto Sunset Avenue and follow the signs to the preserve. The address is 2400 Moser Drive.¹ The preserve opens early in the morning and closes early in the afternoon. The times vary, so check out the times before you go at:

http://www.cityofhenderson.com/parks/parks/bird_preserve.php

Spring and fall are the best times to go as birds are migrating through the area and because the ponds tend to be a migrant trap during these times.

I arrived at about 10:00 a.m. on May 11, checked in at the visitor center, walked out the back door of the center, and was immediately trampled by a covey of Gambel's Quail moving into the bushes. I followed the trail over to pond #2 where I found numerous swallows, sorted through them and found Barn, Cliff, Tree, Violet-green, and Northern Rough-winged Swallows. Purple Martins were conspicuous by their absence.

I travel with a Swarovski 8x20 binocular, which has a 6.3 degree field of view. Because of its narrow field of view, it took me a while to sort through the fast moving swallows. I tend to prefer and would recommend a wider field of view. At the Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve, one is close to the birds so lower power 7x and 8x binoculars with wide fields work well.

Pond #9 was created for research and has some mud flats that the others do not have. A beautiful pair of American Avocets was wading in the shallows of this pond, and there was a lone Cinnamon Teal around the cattails toward the back of the pond from me. As I left pond #9 and headed back to the visitor center, a small bird whipped past me and flew into one of the trees. It was quite active, but once I pinned it down, it turned out to be a Verdin - one of the birds I have been missing on my trips to the desert Southwest.

If you scan the horizon around the preserve, you will quickly understand why it is a migrant trap and Mecca for birds—you see nothing but city, desert, and desert mountains. You might see some snow on the peaks as you look toward Mount Charleston, but that is about the only wet thing that you will see.

As I walked out the front door of the visitor center toward my parked car, three hummingbirds zoomed by almost cutting my legs off. One pulled up at a nearby flower where I had a good look at it. It was covered with so much pollen that I could only guess that it was a female Black-chinned Hummingbird because of its long down-curved bill and because it was about the size of a Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Oh well, you cannot always name all the birds that you see.

¹ The official address is 2400 B Moser Drive. The "B" did not work in my GPS navigation unit, but 2400 Moser Drive did.

THE BIG YEAR MOVIE

by Tyler Bell

Back in 1998, former St. Mary's County birder Greg Miller, decided to do what's known as a Big Year. The goal is to see as many bird species in one year as possible. Greg's area was the ABA area (American Birding Association area including the lower 48 states, Canada and Alaska). Unbeknownst to him, two competitors were doing the same thing. Mark Obmascik wrote a book about it and now it's being made into a movie. Greg was hired on as a consultant and they flew him out to the set in British Columbia. The movie is to premier some time in 2011. They filmed a segment on pelagic birding on a Debi Shearwater trip out of Monterey, CA which was attended by the real Debi Shearwater and Greg Miller. Watch for it in theaters!



Jack Black (left) with Greg Miller (right)
Photographer unknown

YARD SALE ADDS FUNDS TO SMAS TREASURY

by Julie and Will Daniel
Flea Market/Yard Sale Committee



About a dozen SMAS members braved the high heat and humidity to help at the yard sale held on July 17th in Bryantown. Over \$635 was raised. Thanks so much to the volunteers: Gwen Brewer, George Jett, Jean Artes, Carol Gheblian, Millie and Harry Kriemelmeyer, Bev and Warren Walker, Ted and Linda Daniel, and eight-year-old Elizabeth Daniel. Many more members contributed items, and thanks go

out to all of them. If you donated items but did not get a receipt for taxes please e-mail us your home address at juliedaniel@hotmail.com.

We hope that we can coordinate the next yard sale with the field trip schedule to allow for a spring date, so start saving any items that are worth contributing.



WATER TRAILS IN ST. MARY'S COUNTY

Washington Post Travel section

Even with the motivation to get out of the house, sometimes you just need a little extra inspiration on what to do. If you're inclined to scenic waterfronts, history and outdoor recreation, St. Mary's County has quite a few suggestions for you. It recently released a new guide called "Water Trails in St. Mary's County." Use it to fill a couple of hours or to plan an entire weekend. Attractions described include parks, museums and lighthouses. As the name indicates, the brochure also outlines six water trails in the western part of the area. For more information, and to download the guide, visit www.visitstmarysmd.com.

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:

Southern Maryland Audubon Society
ATTN: Adoption Program
c/o Heather Burk
11885 Provident Drive
La Plata, MD 20646-5416



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)

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 1 - WEDNESDAY-7:30 p.m.

Charlotte Hall Library, St. Mary's County
37600 New Market Road (Rt. 6 at Rt. 5), Charlotte Hall, MD 20622

"Wildlife Rehabilitation in Southern Maryland"

LYNN ANDERSON, *Director of Feathers and Friends
Wildlife Rehabilitation Center*

Come and meet licensed rehabilitator Lynn Anderson and learn about this new center, located in Brandywine, dedicated in the care and treatment for injured and orphaned wildlife. With the new center they have been able to expand their services and recruit volunteers. Learn what a day in the life of a wildlife rehabilitator is like, how to become a licensed rehabber, and how to help.

September 18– Saturday – 8 AM – 2 PM

Southern Prince George's County - Field Trip

"EARLY FALL MIGRANT BIRDS"

Leader: Fred Shaffer (410-721-1744, glaucousgull@verizon.net).

Visit a variety of habitats along the Patuxent River in Southern Prince George's County. This section of the County includes some of the best habitat. We will check for shorebirds, gulls and terns along the Patuxent, and grassland birds and maybe early sparrows at Milltown Landing and Merkle, and visit a variety of other locations along the river depending upon conditions. Call the leader for reservations or additional information at 410-721-1744. This will be a 3/4 day trip finishing by mid-afternoon. From Rts. 4 and 301, go south on 301,

left onto Croom Station Rd., left on Croom Rd. then left on Mt. Calvert Rd. Meet in the parking lot near the boat ramp on the Patuxent River. RSVP required.

September 25 - Saturday - 8 AM - noon

Calvert Cliffs State Park, Calvert County - Field Trip

"FALL MIGRATION"

Leader: Tyler Bell (301-862-4623, 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.

Events continued on page 5

EDITOR: Tyler Bell
23035 Forest Way, California, MD 20619
Telephone: (301) 862-4623
E-mail: 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

In This Issue

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