

The Bluebird

Newsletter of the Prince George's Audubon Society

PGAS is a local chapter of the National Audubon Society

September-October 2012



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President's Perch

Carolyn Sturtevant
President, PGAS

Did the heat slow down your summer birding? The heat combined with family commitments diminished my time and energy for birding. Even so, the birds clamored for my attention over and over again. "See that little brown bird with fine streaks on its breast scratching on the ground near the lilac? What is it?" I answered Dad's question by checking my Sibley and National Geographic field guides: juvenile Chipping sparrow.

Following a tourist up the escalator at Capitol South Metro station, I tried to ID the dark silhouettes on the repeated pattern of birds on a power line that covered a teen's t-shirt in a density of about 1 bird per square inch. I tapped the shoulder of this young fellow, "I like your birds," and he grinned back at me. In the bright daylight above, the birds revealed themselves to be vultures, interspersed with a human skull here and there. This shirt obviously didn't come from the friendly bird seed store; probably purchased at a heavy metal rock music event. To each his own.

On another Green Line Metro commute, sitting by the train window as I headed home on a late Thursday afternoon, I spotted a cluster of people on the far side of Lake Artemesia, and they were looking up. Must have been Dave Mozurkewich and his followers on the Luther Goldman Birding Trail field trip. Wonder if they have a solid ID for large white heron I've seen through the train window along that same shoreline in recent weeks? Seeing the distant group reminded me of the fun I've missed by not being in the field with other birders.

With the new schedule of programs and field trips organized jointly by the Prince George's Audubon Society and the Patuxent Bird Club, it's a chance for all of us to be more focused in our pursuit of birds and fun. No more using heat as an excuse! (You can read about how birds manage the hot weather in an article at <http://magblog.audubon.org/how-birds-keep-their-cool>)

Please bring your stories of summer birding and hear how friends have fared. Mark your calendars to take in the terrific speakers and club events. Get ready to welcome the migrants of the Atlantic Flyway. Tell Dave M. that you'll volunteer for the Fall Bird Count on Sunday, September 16. Dig in the closet for the jacket and gloves—birding in the Fall is cool!

Audubon's Mission Statement: To conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

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Upcoming Monthly Meetings

“Hummingbirds of the Mid-Atlantic Region”

Presented by Bruce Peterjohn

Tuesday, September 11, 7:30 pm

College Park Airport Annex

1909 Cpl. Frank Scott Drive, College Park, MD 20740

Thirty years ago, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were thought to be the only hummingbird species that regularly occurred in eastern North America and they were thought to be strictly summer residents. Members of the Prince George's Audubon Society and Patuxent Bird Club invite you to hear how times have changed. The popularity of hummingbird feeders has brought these endearing birds into closer contact with people and has also led to the realization that these species are capable of long-distance travels far from their traditional ranges. Small numbers are now expected to spend the winter in this region, benefiting from the welfare of homeowners who may go to considerable effort to keep thawed feeders available for their use. An ever-expanding list of species has been detected, indicating that almost any species of hummingbird has the potential to wander to this area. This presentation will summarize our current knowledge of the status of hummingbirds across the mid-Atlantic region with an emphasis on the wintering species. Prepare to be surprised, because one never knows what species of hummingbird may show up at your house one day. Bruce Peterjohn is currently Chief of the U.S. Geodetic Survey's Bird Banding Laboratory at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, MD, and has been involved in winter hummingbird banding efforts in the mid-Atlantic region since the late 1990s.

“Bat Zen – Knowing the Ecological Role of Bats”

Presented by Dana Limpert

Tuesday, October 9, 7:30 pm

College Park Airport Annex

1909 Cpl. Frank Scott Drive, College Park, MD 20740

Bats! OK, so the mere thought of them gives you the Stephen King creeps and sends you running for cover. Try thinking of them as furry purple martins clearing the night skies of insects that damage crops and gardens and spread diseases. Bats are the major predator performing this ecological miracle during the night shift. Just one bat can eat over a thousand insects each night. The only problem is that bat populations of all species are declining throughout North America. Maryland has ten species of bats that lead varied lives. Some reside in Maryland all year long, and some migrate through Maryland in the spring and fall. Some species of bats live in groups called colonies and others live by themselves or in small families. Bats belong to the order Chiroptera, which means “hand-wing.” Their hand is literally their wing and they are the only mammals that can fly. Bats are actually more closely related to people than to mice. Dana is a conservation specialist with the Natural Heritage Program, Wildlife and Heritage Service of MD DNR and has worked for the state for over 20 years. She received a B.S. in forest science from Penn State and an M.S. in Ecology from University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Her research was studying the forest bat habitat in the Pocomoke River watershed using radio telemetry and GIS analysis.

These programs promise to be fascinating and are open to all who are interested at no charge. Bring a neighbor or a friend! Doors will be open at 7:00 pm. Feel free to come early to mingle and enjoy refreshments at either of these meetings. Visit pgaudubon.org or call 301-262-5148 for more information.

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Upcoming Field Trips

PGAS-sponsors Saturday morning bird walks to two areas of Patuxent River Park co-managed by PGAS and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission:

Fran Uhler Natural Area

Lemons Bridge Road, Bowie, MD

This park features miles of trails through mature woodlands and open water wetland that can host migrant warblers, Barred Owls, and the occasional Yellow-crowned Night Heron.

Dates: First Saturdays monthly (September 1, October 6, November 3, December 1)

Time: Meet in the parking area at the end of Lemons Bridge Road (off of 197) at 7:30 am.

No reservations are needed.

Contact: Bill Sefton (kiwisuits@msn.com)

Governor Bridge Natural Area

Governor Bridge Road, Bowie, MD

This park offers a wide variety of habitats along the Patuxent River – mature riparian woodlands, second growth scrub, open grassy fields, and small ponds and creeks.

Dates: Third Saturdays monthly (September 15, October 20, November 17, December 15)

Time: Meet in the parking lot at 7:30 am. This is about 1 mile east of Route 301. No reservations are needed.

Contact: Bill Sefton (kiwisuits@msn.com)

Luther Goldman Birding Trail Lake Artemesia Natural Area

Berwyn Heights, MD

The 2.2-mile paved birding trail loops around the 38-acre lake and alongside Indian Creek. Open water, wetlands, wood edge, riparian forest, and meadow offer opportunities to see a wide variety of resident and migrating songbirds, waterfowl, and raptor flyovers in different seasons. For beginners and experts. Binoculars recommended.

Dates/Times: PGAS and members of the Patuxent Bird Club invite you to join us on 1st and 3rd Thursdays monthly (September 6 and 20, October 4 and 18, November 1 and 15, December 6 and 20 at 3:00 pm.) Meet at the parking lot at Berwyn Road and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed.

Contact: David Mozurkewich (301-459-3375)

Monthly Bird Walks

Sponsored by Old Bowie Wild Bird & Nature
Dates/Time: Second Sundays monthly. Meet at the store (8700 Chestnut Ave, Bowie, 20720) by 7:00 am to carpool. You will return to the store by 12:00 noon. You may also meet at the sites.

September 9 ~ Merkle Wildlife Management Area

October 14 ~ Wootton's Landing, Harwood

November 11 ~ Terrapin Nature Park, Stevensville

December 9 ~ Kinder Farm Park, Millersville

Contact: Meghan First (301-464-2663)



Prince George's County Fall Bird Count

Date: Sunday, September 16

Contact: David Mozurkewich, compiler at 301-509-2212 or mozurk@bellatlantic.net

Patuxent River (Southern PG Co. Area)

Possible stops include Jug Bay, Merkle, Milltown Landing, and Aquasco Farms. Itinerary may change depending on conditions.

Date: Saturday, October 27

Time: Meet at the Bowie Park and Ride at 7:15 am.

Contact: David Mozurkewich (301-459-3375)

Piscataway Creek

An afternoon trip for waterfowl.

Date: Sunday, November 25

Time: Meet at 1:00 pm at the boardwalk parking lot.

No reservation necessary.

Contact: Dave Mozurkewich at 301-459-3375 or mozurk@bellatlantic.net for more info.

Piscataway Creek and the Potomac River

Migrating waterfowl and other early winter birds.

Date: Sunday, December 2

Time: Meet 7:30 am at the Beltway Plaza Park & Ride to carpool or 8:15 am at the end of Wharf Rd.

Contact: Dave Mozurkewich at 301-459-3375 or mozurk@bellatlantic.net for more info.

Bowie Christmas Bird Count

Date: Tuesday, January 1, 2013

Contact: David Mozurkewich, compiler at 301-509-2212 or mozurk@bellatlantic.net



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IMPORTANT: MEETING PLACE CHANGE

We are returning to the College Park Airport Annex for program meetings after a year of temporarily meeting in the auditorium of the College Park Aviation Museum. Those of you who remember meeting at the Airport Annex for the past dozen or more years know that it's right next door, also on Cpl. Frank Scott Drive – just drive straight back until you dead-end in the airport's parking lot and you'll find other birding enthusiasts in the meeting room of the modular building on your right.

We thank Park and Planning staff of the Natural and Historical Resources Division, especially aviation museum staff, for their hospitality and help this past year, and for accommodating us once again at the annex.

Upcoming 2nd Tuesday Meetings:

September 11 ~ *Hummingbirds of the Mid-Atlantic Region*

October 9 ~ *Bat Zen – Knowing the Ecological Role of Bats*

November 13 ~ TBD (Check pgaudubon.org for updates.)

December 11 ~ Annual Holiday Social

Membership Application

Join the National Audubon Society for an introductory rate of \$20.00 and receive these benefits:

- Four issues of *Audubon* magazine
- Membership in the local chapter (PGAS)
- The PGAS newsletter, *The Bluebird*

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Please make checks payable to National Audubon Society and mail to:
PGAS, P.O. Box 1658, Greenbelt, MD 20768-1658

Prince George's Audubon Society Chapter C2ZL010Z

