



The Bluebird



This newsletter is published by the Prince George's Audubon Society, a local chapter of the National Audubon Society for over 30 years.

WEBSITE: www.pgaudubon.org

PRINCE GEORGE'S AUDUBON SOCIETY

January-March 2005

PRESIDENT'S PERCH

by Beth Kantrowitz
President PGAS

I have to admit that the first sign of approaching winter that I noticed, other than the falling leaves and biting wind, was not a bird but a bunch of very fat gray squirrels. I suppose they had a good summer, with all the cicadas to munch on for extra protein and lots of acorns to eat, stash away for colder days, or toss down on the heads of passing humans while chattering in a nasty tone that could rival any annoyed chickadee or wren.

A Carolina Chickadee occasionally buzzing a few *chickadee-dee-dee-dees* near my morning bus stop this October made me notice how our other year-round avian residents make their presence known while we're focused on the birds that are leaving us on their fall migration. First it was the mockingbirds, in early October, singing shorter, less varied versions of their breeding-season repertoires. Not as loud as in summer and not sung from the highest perch. Instead of finding mates or protecting territories, the ecologist in me hypothesized that the mockers were defining their winter feeding territories, while the poet in me fancied they were just reminding us that they stayed with us while all the migrants left.

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Upcoming PGAS - Patuxent Bird Club Meetings

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Tuesday, January 11, 2005, 7:30 p.m.
College Park Airport Annex

"Birding Around the World"
presented by Hank Kaestner

Come and enjoy another fascinating talk by world traveler, Hank Kaestner, a consultant with McCormick Spice Company. Last winter Hank took us to several exotic places including Madagascar and South America. Open to both members and non-members.

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Tuesday, February 8, 2005, 7:30 p.m.
College Park Airport Annex



***"The Important Bird Area Program
in Maryland and D.C."***
presented by David Curson
Dir. of Bird Conservation, Audubon MD-DC

David Curson came to the U.S. from England for graduate work in Wisconsin and now resides in Maryland. Last year he became the Director of Bird Conservation and runs the IBA Program for MD and DC. This program identifies sites that are important for conservation of viable bird populations and is constantly searching for new areas to protect. He will talk to us about how we can help identify future IBAs.

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Field Trips

January - March



Jan. 1 (Sat.) No walk on New Year's Day FUNA

Jan. 15 (Sat.) 7:30 a.m. - Meet at Governor's Bridge Park
for a foray to nearby ponds.

Jan. 29 (Sat.) 8:30 a.m. 1/2 day trip to western shore locations in search of wintering snow buntings, longspurs, and waterfowl. Meet at Bowie P&R. Leaders: Fred and Jane Fallon*.

Feb. 5 (Sat.) 7:30-10:30 a.m. FUNA

Feb. 19 (Sat.) 7:30-10:30 a.m. Governor's Bridge Park

Feb. 19 (Sat.) 8:30 a.m. All-day trip to coastal spots - Ocean City and Indian River Inlet. Waterfowl, gulls, and possible winter rarities. Meet at Bowie P&R. Leader: Fred Shaffer*.

Mar. 5 (Sat.) 7:30-10:30 a.m. FUNA

Mar. 12 (Sat.) 4:30 a.m. !! Wooten's Landing, in search of woodcocks and owls. Meet at Parole P&R. Leader: Fred Fallon*.

Mar. 19 (Sat.) 7:30-10:30 a.m. Governor's Bridge Park

*Trips depart from either the Bowie Park & Ride at the time given. Please arrive earlier so the group can leave at the scheduled time. Call the field trip leader in advance for reservations.

Fred Fallon 301 249-1518

Fred Shaffer 410 721-1744

Fran Uhler Nature Area: 1st Sunday of every month except January and July. FUNA is located at the end of Lemon Bridge Rd off Rte 197 just north of bridge over AMTRAK RR line.

Governors Bridge Park: 3d Saturday of every month except December and July. GBP is located on Governor's Bridge Rd 2 miles from Rte 301, entrance at double gate.

Walks start at 7:30 a.m.; no reservations are required.

Upcoming Programs

Continued from page 1

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Tuesday, March 8, 2005
7:30 p.m.
College Park Airport Annex

Maryland Breeding Bird Atlas: A Status Report

Presented by Walter Ellison



Walter Ellison is the Maryland State Coord Coordinator for the **Maryland/DC Breeding Bird Atlas Project (MAP)**. This is a 5-year survey of the population of birds breeding in Maryland and DC. It began in 2002 and is conducted by the Maryland Ornithological Society in cooperation with the Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources.

This is an important program which depends of volunteer "atlasers" to identify and verify which bird species are breeding in Maryland and DC.

Walter will report on the status of the project and some preliminary findings.

websites:

MOS Atlas -

www.mdbirds.org/atlas.html

PG County Atlas -

home.earthlink.net/~fwfallon/

President's Perch

Continued from page 1

The mockingbirds fell silent after a week or so, then the cardinals started singing, males and females still paired off and calling back and forth through the leaf-depleted trees. Gangs of rowdy blue jays passed through my neighborhood on their way to bully smaller birds away from feeders. Crows cawed to each other like old high school friends home on winter break, glad to see each other, wondering what all that West Nile virus fuss was about. When I ventured into the woods near my home I found the shy year-round residents, the wrens and woodpeckers, and I only had to step outside onto suburban sidewalks to find ubiquitous native mourning doves and immigrant rock pigeons, starlings, and house sparrows.

Winter visitors are a delight after the migrants leave, and it's always nice to find the pretty little woodpecker with the name non-birders think is a joke or something out of a Dr. Seuss book, the acrobatic yellow-bellied sapsucker. I can easily recognize a group of cedar waxwings as they tumble and roll through the sky, determined to have fun and tease the Canada geese flying in rigid formation. Soon the snow will fall and we may see large flocks of robins descending on berry-bearing trees, defying the common conception

that *Turdus migratorius*, the familiar migratory turd, leaves us completely in the fall and returns solitary in early spring, one bright-bellied male per manicured green lawn, catching worms, marking the beginning of spring.

But it's too soon to talk of Spring. Like the migrant birds and the hibernating squirrels and the bare-limbed trees, Prince George's Audubon slows down a bit in the winter, breaking our monthly lecture routine with a holiday party in December. Our monthly Governor's Bridge bird walk takes the month off in December, while the Fran Uhler walk takes a break in January. We're not hibernating, though, and we have a full slate of interesting talks for you in the upcoming months, from local topics like the MD Breeding Bird Atlas and Audubon's statewide Important Bird Areas program to a talk on the birds and bats of Brazil and Hank Kaestner's worldwide birding adventures. Don't forget to check out the field trips our friends at the Patuxent Bird Club have planned for 2005. We look forward to seeing you in the new year.

Trip Report - Horsehead Sanctuary November 13, 2004 by Bill Sefton

It was cold and very windy, and the waterfowl were not all that plentiful. The good species that we could see were far away and it was hard to tell what they were even with a scope. We saw about 2000 Ruddy Ducks. Probably the highlight of the day was a Purple Finch.

Common Loon
Great Blue Heron
Mute Swan
Tundra Swan
Canada Goose
American Black Duck
Bufflehead
Mallard
American Widgeon
Surf Scoter
Lesser Scaup
Ruddy Duck
Turkey Vulture
Black Vulture

Bald Eagle
Red-tailed Hawk
Red-shouldered Hawk
Northern Harrier
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Carolina Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
Ring-billed Gull
Great Black-backed Gull
Herring Gull
Mourning Dove
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Am. Crow
Blue Jay

Carolina Wren
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
American Robin
Northern Mockingbird
European Starling
Cedar Waxwing
Yellow-rumped Warbler
White-throated Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Northern Cardinal
Red-winged
Blackbird
Purple Finch
American Goldfinch

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Join the **NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY** for an introductory rate of just \$20.00 and receive these benefits:

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



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Please make check payable to: **National Audubon Society** and mail to:

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P.O. Box 693
Bowie, MD 20718

Prince George's Audubon Chapter L01 7XCH

The Prince George's Audubon Society (PGAS) was established over 30 years ago as a chapter of the National Audubon Society to serve northern Prince George's County. Incorporated in the State of Maryland, PGAS is a non-profit organization of about 650 members with officers elected by the general membership. Membership in PGAS comes from joining the National Audubon Society; members from northern P.G. County automatically become members of PGAS and will receive the award winning *Audubon* magazine and this newsletter, *The Bluebird*, which advises members of field trips, monthly program meetings, other activities and topics of environmental interest. A membership application is included with this newsletter for your convenience.

The Bluebird is published by the Prince George's Audubon Society. To contribute to the newsletter, please contact the editor **Steve Noyes** at 301 937-6499 or by e-mail to baea43@earthlink.net by the 10th of the month prior to the month of publication. You may reach PGAS officers through the website: www.pgaudubon.org or by e-mail at mailinfo@pgaudubon.org.

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