CHIP & BRUSH NOTES

The newsletter of the Baltimore Bird Club

December 2002-January 2003

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Fort McHenry Bird Big Sit Results by Jim Pinkerton
Fort McHenry Ranger is MOS Scholarship Winner by Steve Sanford
MOS Scholarship Applications for 2003
Dues Reminder
Fall Count 2002 Results: Baltimore City and County - Sep 21, 2002 by Debbie Terry
Field Trip Reports by Gail Fraserr
Chimney Swifts -- Spring and Fall 2002 by Carol Schreiber
Trip to Phoenix by Bonnie Powell
BBC Mail Order
Back Yard Birding and Beyond by Gail Fraserr

Deadline for next CHIP NOTES: December 31, 2002 (the next issue will be February/March 2003). If possible, please email material to

bmaurer@bcpl.net

Otherwise, Send material to:

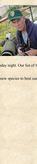
Steve Sanford
2917 Dorsey Glen Drive
Randallstown MD 21133

Please help CHIP NOTES get out on time.

Back to Table of Contents

Fort McHenry Big Sit Results

By Jim Pinkerton



The night was cool, damp and overcast with the possibility of rain in the forecast when the Star Spangled Birders assembled at 11:30 p.m. at the Fort McHenry Wetland to begin our second "Big Sit" which started at the stroke of midnight October 12th.

Our goal a local record had been set the previous year. We had underestimated the number of birds that would be present. The maintenance personnel of the Fort created a 16-foot high scaffold adjacent to the shelter to act as an observation tower. We had all the comforts of home and a wonderful Thanksgiving, Christmas and night vision scopes to our 17-foot circle to assure no escapes.

Black-crowned Night Heron	1	Tree Swallow	1
Great Blue Heron	1	Barn Swallow	1
Great Egret	1	Tufted Titmouse	1
Mute Swan	2	Golden-crowned Kinglet	1
Canada Goose	6	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
Gadwall	1	Swainson's Thrush	1
Coyoty	1	American Robin	2
American Black Duck	1	Gray Catbird	1
American Kestrel	1	Northern Mockingbird	4
Killdeer	2	Brown Thrasher	1
Ring-billed Gull	2	European Starling	50
Herring Gull	1	Cedar Waxwing	1
Ring-billed Gull	12	Pale Warbler	1
Rock Dove	2	Palm Warbler	1
Ye Blackbird Gull	1	Yellowthroat	1
Cangler Tern	1	Eastern Towhee	8
Mourning Dove	2	Chipping Sparrow	1
Barn Owl	1	Clay-colored Sparrow	1
Mourning Dove	28	Field Sparrow	3
Chimney Swift	1	Dark-eyed Junco	1
Belted Kingfisher	1	Song Sparrow	15

Starting at 12:00 midnight we had a great list of birds by noon, a record for us. The Fort Bowers in the circle above have been removed. The gaddam gull has flown to Miami, but the resident day white is temperature in the winter made for a black walk for the night feeders stop today. The birds did not cooperate, with only eighteen species. The only bright spot, a possible Northern Saw-whet Owl (Scott Wheeler).

Back to Table of Contents

Fort McHenry Ranger is MOS Scholarship Winner

By Steve Sanford

You may have heard about MOS Scholarship Bird Club funds collected of what they are all about. Winners attend Audubon camps or workshops giving instruction in ecology and ornithology. The May-June 2002 issue of the *Maryland Yellowthroat* (page 7) lists the 10 winners of the 2002 scholarships. They include 8 teachers, 2 Park Rangers, and one Naturalist. These 2002 winners went to Baltimore City or County.

Last October, Ranger Jim Pinkerton, Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine, was selected to attend a week-long Audubon Camp session at Big Island, Maine. Afterwards he wrote some letters that really bring the experience to life. Ranger Jim wrote:

One of the most exciting aspects of the Audubon camp at Hog Island, Maine, was the quality of the instructors. While being experts in ornithology, each had a particular specialty that provided a well-rounded understanding and appreciation for birds. Being able to learn from these experts for a week and to converse with them informally typified camaraderie that I intend to use during my entire Park Service career. In the future, if the park needs a guest speaker, assistance in developing an interpretive program or even a volunteer to help with a program, I know I can call on my friends at Audubon.

Ranger Jim also met Robert Westbrook (in his presentation on migration and the impact of human development. Tom Lacky (for demonstrating field techniques, and Steven Kress for pointers on giving effective slide programs.

As for the personal and career impact of the scholarship, he stated:

The trip to Hog Island, Maine represents a new direction in my National Park Service career. I am deeply appreciative for this opportunity to expand my knowledge regarding birds and natural history and explore the responsibility to share this knowledge, particularly with young people. Since, I have developed a firm plan to share what I learned at Audubon with my co-workers at Fort McHenry.

1. To pledge support to bird banding and monitoring operations in the wetland on site and to recruit more members to assist.
2. To develop a traveling slide and display showing the changes of bird life in the ecosystem of Maryland over the past 400 years. This will be made available to other National Park Sites and local, county parks upon request.
3. To lead local walks in the spring at Fort McHenry National Monument & Historic Shrine.

In conclusion, he wrote:

Once last note. I owe a debt of gratitude to Jim Pinkerton who started the bird monitoring program at Fort McHenry. Over the past several years he has served as mentor and guide by recommending books to read, leading walks, teaching bird banding and introducing me to the Maryland Ornithological Society. I'm sure his letter of recommendation was a deciding factor in my scholarship award.

Thank you, Ranger Steve, for sharing the MOS scholarships are all about!

Back to Table of Contents

MOS Scholarship Applications for 2003

MOS is now accepting applications from Maryland teachers, park rangers, and nature center coordinators and instructors for scholarships to attend summer ecology workshops. State Audubon societies hold them at their camps in Maine, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Also, MOS is accepting applications from Maryland teachers and youth leaders for a scholarship of an intensive six-day course in ornithology at the Audubon summer workshop in Maine.

The value of these scholarships is between $600-$900. Deadline for applications is January 31, 2003.

For further information contact:

Benjamin Pascoral
BBC Scholarship Representative
410-523-2540

bmaurer@bcpl.net

Back to Table of Contents

Dues Reminder

If you have not already done so, please pay your dues promptly! Notices have been sent to everyone whose 2001-2003 dues have not been received. If an expiration date entered is red to ent your mailing label, we have not received your dues. If the information on the label is incorrect, or your name or address is wrong, please call Catherine Bishop. **Unpaid members WILL be dropped from the mailing list effective January 15, 2003.**

Make checks payable to Baltimore Bird Club:
2 Catherine Bishop
8033 Belmont Ave
Baltimore, MD 21224-2632
410-522-2540
or email: ashleigh@crossfire.net

Once applied dues, which include membership in the state organization, are left out or unlisted for a membership. Members of another chapter or life members of MOS can enter a child after 8/1/99 pay the "chapter only" dues of $20 for an individual or $25 for a household membership. (Before 8/1/99, the Baltimore chapter also offered a life membership. If you are a life member of the Baltimore chapter and MOS who joined before 8/1/99, you do not owe anything.)

Back to Table of Contents

Fall Count 2002 Results

Baltimore City and County - Sep 21, 2002

Compiled by Debbie Terry

This year saw 22 participants spread out over 19 circles of 15 miles. The day was warm, averaging around 70 degrees with light winds from the south. Possibly and light southerly winds contributed to the low warbler and Broadwing count. Of the 121 species of warblers seen, Common Yellowthroats, Black-throated Blue Warbler with 31 and the 25 Black and White Warblers tied were a close second. Surprisingly, only 7 Broadwings were tallied in the Baltimore City and County circles. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were tallied in record numbers.

Included in all who participated in the 2002 Fall Count: Dorsia Bocaccio, Anne Brooks, Don Burgard, Catherine Carroll, Ruth Culbertson, Joan Cox, Gail Fraterr, Helene Gadell, Phyllis Grimm, Elliot Kirschbaum, Nancy Kirschbaum, Elise Kress, Paul Kress, Peter Lyle, Sharon Metcalf, Paul Nash, Jim Peters, Sue Raczynski, Bob Rinear, Steve Sanford, Gene Scarpulla, Carol Schreiber, Steve Marts, Wendy Tapanadaras, Debbie Terry, Dave Thornblad, David Thornell, Paula Warner, Pete Webb.

Double-crested Cormorant	54	Tufted Titmouse	1
Great Blue Heron	15	Carolina Wren	1
Great Egret	1	House Wren	1
Green Heron	1	Golden-crowned Kinglet	1
Black-crowned Night-heron	3	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
Mute Swan	2	Hermit Thrush	1
Tundra Swan	1	Wood Thrush	1
Canada Goose	151	American Robin	1
Mallard	1	Gray Catbird	1
Gadwall	1	Brown Thrasher	1
Coyoty	1	European Starling	1
American Black Duck	1	Cedar Waxwing	1
Hooded Merganser	1	Pale Warbler	1
Turkey Vulture	1	Palm Warbler	1
Canada Goose	151	Yellowthroat	1
Mallard	1	Eastern Towhee	1
Gadwall	1	Chipping Sparrow	1
Coyoty	1	Clay-colored Sparrow	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Field Sparrow	1
Cooper's hawk	4	Dark-eyed Junco	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	Song Sparrow	1
Red-tailed hawk	1		
Ring-billed Gull	1		
Herring Gull	1		
Killdeer	21		
Spotted Sandpiper	1		
Sanderling	1		
Semipalmated Sandpiper	20		
Pectoral Sandpiper	1		
Least Sandpiper	1		
Baird's Sandpiper	4		
Stilt Sandpiper	1		
Short-billed Dowitcher	1		
Wilson's Snipe	1		
American Woodcock	1		
Rock Dove	1		
Mourning Dove	219		
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	1		
Chimney Swift	1555		
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	1		
Belted Kingfisher	3		
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1		
Downy Woodpecker	1		
Hairy Woodpecker	1		
Northern Flicker	1		
Pileated Woodpecker	1		
Eastern Wood-Pewee	1		
Eastern Phoebe	1		
Great Crested Flycatcher	1		
White-eyed Vireo	1		
Blue Jay	1		
Fish Crow	1		
Tree Swallow	1		
Barn Swallow	1		
Tufted Titmouse	1		
Carolina Wren	1		
House Wren	1		
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1		
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1		
Hermit Thrush	1		
Wood Thrush	1		
American Robin	1		
Gray Catbird	1		
Brown Thrasher	1		
European Starling	1		
Cedar Waxwing	1		
Pale Warbler	1		
Palm Warbler	1		
Yellowthroat	1		
Eastern Towhee	1		
Chipping Sparrow	1		
Clay-colored Sparrow	1		
Northern Cardinal	1		
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1		
Indigo Bunting	1		
Red-winged Blackbird	1		
Eastern Meadowlark	1		
Brown-headed Cowbird	1		
Orchard Oriole	1		
Baltimore Oriole	1		
House Sparrow	92		
TOTAL SPECIES	98		

Back to Table of Contents

Field Trip Reports

Compiled by Dave Thornblad

Sep 1 - **Cylburn Sunrise Morning** - Rained out. (Note the previous issue of Chip Notes erroneously showed this description for August 25)

Sep 7 - **Patapsco Valley State Park** - Leader Carol Schreiber reports "Had a fabulous walk with four participants. There were 3 hummingbirds and 7 dragonflies on this trip which focused on insects as well as birds. 8 participants. Weather: Partly sunny, 87° to 65°."

Sep 8 - **Cylburn Sunday Morning** - This was a perfect Fall day. With temperatures ranging in the 60's - 70's, the blue sky and our pal of the Bowers in a special light at the Arboretum. Twenty-five species showed themselves to the nine birders that walked along. Leader Dave Thornblad. Chestnut-sided Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Red-eyed Vireo, Hermit thrush, and a Red-shouldered Hawk. (Joseph Lewandowski)

Sep 15 - **Cylburn Sunrise in Hampden** - Leader Carol Schreiber reports "At dusk Chimney Swifts gathered from all directions. Without much cracking, they entered the MSI Center chimney quickly. We counted 4720 as they passed into the chimney between 7:40 and 7:45 PM. This is a commonest record during migration." Weather: 65° and clear. 12 participants.

September 15, 2002 - **Cylburn Sunday Morning** - Due to a forecast of rain participation was low but second-hand reports indicate the birding was pretty decent.

Sep 15 - **Lake Roland** - Leader Bob Schreiber writes: "Exciting day for warblers! Had 18 species". Bob's numbers unofortunately are Pale Male sitting the sixteen. Lots of Black-throated Green Warblers in the pine tree near the picnic area. Bob's report: Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Canada Goose, Mallard, Turkey Vulture, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Nashville Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Palm Warbler, Yellowthroat, Canada Warbler, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, Purple Finch, House Sparrow. Leader Joseph Lewandowski.

Sep 21 - **Lake Roland** - Bird feed was Philadelphia Vireo, well-seen by almost all at the beginning of the walk. There were seven warbler species (Parula, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Bl-throa, Myrtle, B&W, N. Waterthrush) as well as Rose-breasted Grosbeak. 15 participants. Weather: Mostly sunny, 80's to low 70's. Leader Don Gustafson.

Sep 21 - **Oregon Ridge** - Migration abroad was a location for this field trip which was also part of the Fall Count. The highlight was a film look at a beautiful Nashville Warbler. The weather was mostly sunny, and warm. 5 participants. 40 species (5 warblers). Leader Gail Fraserr.

Sep 22 - **Cylburn Sunday Morning** - It was rather warm and muggy with a threat of rain. Even the common birds were scarce. One participant summarized it perfectly with a loud yawn. Well, at least the flowers were beautiful. (Steve Sanford)

Sep 28 - **Patapsco Valley State Park** - Leader Peter Lee writes: "Presiding winds have been southerly for weeks, so fall migration has been slow. Still, we had a good time at Cornwell today. Highlights were 3 Palm Warblers (2 Yellow, 1 Western), 3-4 American Kestrels, and 2-3 Yellow-bellied Sapsucks. We had a Chesapeake Audubon field trip twice during the morning, the 2nd time at exactly the moment that 2 Palm Warblers appeared." The group also had good looks at Yellow-rumped Warblers, 3-4 Brown Creepers, and a Red-shouldered Hawk. 8 participants. Weather: Sunny, 60's.

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Sep 21 - **Lake Roland** - Another friend passage brought temperature down into the 50's and 60's, with NE wind 10 to 20 mph. The transition to fall was reflected in nighttime calls in Wilson-detected Spectrum, arrival Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Hermit Thrush and Yellow and Palm Warblers. Bob Schreiber, Leader. Highlights were a Blackpoll Warbler in its very first confusing fall plumage. Patient waiting allowed us to separate it from this treasured by seeing its pale yellow legs and white unstreaked crown. Two lingering Scarlet Tanagers, with no scarlet plumage left, reminded us of departing summer species: 47 species with 5 warblers species (Parula, Magnolia, Bl-throa, Myrtle, Blackpoll). 17 participants. Leader: Carl Fraserr.

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Back to Table of Contents

Chimney Swifts -- Spring and Fall 2002

By Carol Schreiber

In both 2001 and 2002, Baltimoreans ranked second in the nation in early September counts of migrating Chimney Swifts. Count over 4,500 to 5,000 migrating Swifts were counted at dusk as they dropped into a Hampden chimney, a commonest roost site. (See "Swift Night Out" where results with birds both years at www.geocities.com/ -IPRA.)

Charts accompanying this article detail weekly Spring and Fall counts at Hampden. These numbers were supplied to Fred Heinzelmann, a migration research project at William and Mary College in Virginia. (See their informative website at www.IbisWatch.org.)

Notice that Spring migration, northward, lasts about a month. Fall migration, southward with young of the year, seems to last two full months -- or until the first hard. As Hampden the action continues, night after night.

Banisters might be a Chimney Swift migration hot spot. A turn of more than 20 Baltimore birdwatchers was watching for Chimney Swift migration across all over town in the Spring and Fall 2002.

Swifts Around Town

- Kernan Hospital's main building in southwest Baltimore:
High count of 2,042 Swifts on September 25, 2002 reported by Nancy Moser and Candy Andrejowski.

- 5th Regiment Armory in downtown Baltimore:
High count of 1,017 Swifts on August 25, 2002 reported by Clare Barbley.

- Brown and Hospital Center of Baltimore County Schools, Brooklandville:
High count of 500 Swifts on October 7, 2002 reported by Adelaide Backstrom.

- Aperture building at 1700 N. Charles Street:
High count of 500 Swifts on September 12, 2002 reported by Joan Cox.

- Masons Temple, 85 Mass St. at Remington, MD:
High count of 1,000 Swifts on September 12, 2002 reported by Phyllis Grimm and Gail Fraserr.

Swifts have been seen pouring into other chimneys. These three chimneys entertain watching next year:

- Westchester Center, a school building in Orlle, MD;

- Garrett Heights Elementary School in Hamilton -- watch in the Fall;

- Carey Hall at Johns Hopkins University in Roland Park.

Switching Chimneys

We don't know why Swifts choose or change chimneys. In Hampden they switch from the Bookbinders to the MSI Center -- or any both chimneys. Less than a block apart. In the 1700 N. Charles Street apartment building with two chimneys, the Chimney Swifts switched from one chimney to the other in the middle of the Spring migration. Perhaps the birds were disturbed by workers on the roof. Perhaps the birds just changed young in a nest September 20th at the height of Fall migration. We were allowed to learn from the building manager that we had not observed the birds with their chimney -- allowing our concerns that cover birds for a nesting season could not be penalized by human fear of human activity.

SwiftWatch is a project of the BBC Conservation Committee. We hope to document the roost sites of migrating Chimney Swifts and alert building managers to the importance of keeping these chimneys open for the Chimney Swifts.

Let us know if you are interested in watching a chimney near you and sending counts to the SwiftWatch researchers. Contact Carol Schreiber at 410-366-0371 or Alice Nelson at alice@clarkinc.com

Chimney Swifts in Hampden -- Spring 2002

Date	Where	First Bird In	Last In	Count Total
4/17/02	Bookbinders	6:05 PM	9:15 PM	132
4/18/02	Bookbinders	6:05 PM	9:15 PM	150
4/19/02	Bookbinders	6:05 PM	9:15 PM	90
4/20/02	Bookbinders	5:50 PM	9:15 PM	1,000+ (est.)
4/21/02	Bookbinders	5:50 PM	9:15 PM	1,000+
5/8/02	MSI Center (BCC)	6:30 PM	7:52 PM	4,000
5/9/02	MSI Center	6:30 PM	7:52 PM	3,000
5/14/02	MSI Center	6:32 PM	7:52 PM	4,221
5/15/02	MSI Center	6:32 PM	7:52 PM	4,000
5/16/02	MSI Center	6:32 PM	7:52 PM	3,000
5/6/02	MSI Center	6:32 PM	7:52 PM	530
5/7/02	MSI Center	6:32 PM	7:52 PM	1,000
10/12/02	MSI Center	6:25 PM	8:45 PM	51
5/11/02	MSI Center	6:04 PM	9:15 PM	463

Back to Table of Contents

Trip to Phoenix

By Bonnie Powell

Having just returned from my trip to Phoenix and the Sonoran Desert, I am indebted to those in MOS who answered my inquiry concerning traveling with binoculars, scope, and tripod as well as the suggestions as to where my time was George and myself could best spend time.

Packing every thing as a check-in and not doing it as carry-on worked very well for me. I did pack a smaller scope, 40mm, which facilitated this process. In addition to the suggestions we received on birding sites, we found the following book a great help and would recommend it without hesitation to anyone planning a birding trip to the Phoenix area: Rupp, Michael J. *Guide to 101 Birding Sites* (Phoenix: Rupp Assoc/Photography, Inc. 2002).

If you wanted to interview a bird list, I would say advice from to the Sonoran Desert during the middle of October. Summer migratory birds were gone for the most part and winter species had not yet arrived. But if one wanted good conditions in which to observe the Sonoran Desert, the time was ripe for us. The weather was beautiful with temperatures in the upper 70's and low 80's, dry and clear, and no Chicken Little.

We did find 77 species with 10 of them being lifb birds. Most of our species were those listed as "abundant" or "common". However, as far as birding was concerned, we had a wonderful and thrilled at the birds we saw. The Sonoran Desert was a delight. Having visited the Maine Coast, Florida, and the Great Lakes, I looked forward to finally seeing the Sonoran desert with much anticipation. The Saguaro Cactus defined it for me. Why did I think that it was an endangered species found only in very specific locations? Well, I guess I was just wrong.

Here are some of the places we visited and the lifb birds we sighted:

October 17: South Mountain Park, Needy Water Ranch, and Gilbert Water Ranch - Gila Woodpecker, Black Phoebe, Say's Phoebe, Verdin, Townsend's Solitaire, Bendire's Thrasher, Curvi Billed Thrasher, Canyon Towhee, Abert's Towhee, Spotted Towhee, Black Throated Sparrow.

October 18: Salt River, Bosque Thompson Arboretum - Harris Hawk, Anna's Hummingbird, Brewer's Blackbird, Wren, Hermit Warbler, Phainopepla.

October 19: Saguaro National Park, Arizona City NPC Lake, City Wash, Water Water Treatment Plant - White-faced Ibis, Black-crowned Hummingbird.

Back to Table of Contents

BBC Mail Order

The Baltimore Bird Club is now offering its merchandise for sale through its mail order section. The following items are available. All prices include shipping costs.

Baltimore Bird Club Hoodie Sweat Shirt: $23.00
Baltimore Bird Club T-Shirt - $10.00 (only XL left)
Bird Club Tie - $15.00
MOS Decal - $3.50

Please make your check or money order payable to "The Baltimore Bird Club" and send your order to: Joseph Lewandowski, 1021 Temple Gate, Baltimore, Maryland 21209.

Back to Table of Contents

Back Yard Birding and Beyond

By Gail Fraserr

Window Mills

- From Elise Kirsten Shoffner: **such Black-throated Blue Warbler** on the hanging feeder Saturday morning. It picked around in the sand. Rev off to a tree, captured in and maze flycatcher-like, returned to the feeder, and seemed to find something. Then the same bird **Common Yellowthroat** seen on Leader Park to not relatives.

Remarkable

- Sept 15, Gail Fraserr-BC Good day for raptors on Bob Schreiber's property. **Harrier, Cooper's, Sharp-shinned and Red-tailed Hawks.** Also **Kestrels and Merlins, Broad-winged and Barn Swallows** along with **23 Chimney Swifts.**

Oct. 22, Gail Fraserr-BC the Mandell wetland sparrows included **long, White-crowned, White-throated, Swamp, Field and Clipping Sparrows** in a variety of plumages, No Tree Sparrows yet.

Beyond

- September 28, Elise Kirsten reports that her neighbors have two production mounting or Chebec, which she qualified as not first sighting like this. I heard a chip or two in my yard. Almost immediately I saw a handsome **Blue-headed Vireo.** After a while I saw a **Gail's Black-throated Blue Warbler** and then **a Black-throated Green Warbler**, and also my first **White-throated Sparrow** in the yard for the fall. For me, and this is a fall for me, I saw **two Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** in the yard for a long time.