

The Newsletter of the Baltimore Bird Club

August/September 1998 - Online Edition

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Deadline for next *Chip Notes*: August 25, 1998 (the next issue will be October-November 1998). Send material to:

Steve Sanford
8412 Downey Dale Drive
Randallstown MD 21133

or e-mail to janager@bcpl.net
Please help *Chip Notes* get out on time.

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WANTED: Compiler of Baltimore Birds

by Joy Wheeler

Maryland Birdlife has been a valuable addition to the study of birds for over 50 years. "The Season" contributes in large part to that value. We have an international readership and those observers who track the worldwide picture of bird populations may be as interested in our records as we are who take a more Maryland-centered view.

It is to this end that we are seeking from our membership an observer, or committee of observers, to call for and compile records of Baltimore City and County birds. These records would track early and late dates, numbers, migration patterns, aberrations, anomalies, etc. With our beautiful new site guide to use as a tool we can now expect reports of great interest from within these sites and beyond.

As we discussed this search for a compiler in the June board meeting, we identified a few requirements:

1. Willingness to do the job
2. Ability to determine the accuracy of the reports
3. Computer literacy and a liking for listing
4. Ability to meet deadlines of *Maryland Birdlife* and *Chip Notes*
5. Ability to motivate our local observers to send in their reports
6. Absolute refusal to supplant Call Frantz's popular "Backyard Birding" column

If you find yourself fitting into this description in any way, from 1 to 6, please e-mail Tarye.Bass. Gene Scarpulla our regular Hart-Miller Island contributor to "The Season," commends our effort to find a Baltimore City/County Compiler. Having a database would be a valuable tool for future studies of birds of Maryland, the Atlantic Flyway and beyond, he agrees.

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A Birder's Guide to Baltimore and Baltimore County

After several years of effort by Baltimore Bird Club members, *A Birder's Guide to Baltimore and Baltimore County*, edited by Elliot Kirschbaum, is now available.



This book contains detailed accounts of thirty-four birding locations in Baltimore City and Baltimore County, Maryland, each one written by a member of the Baltimore Bird Club who is familiar with the site and has birded there often. Each account gives directions to the site, a description of the area, and information about the site trails and the birds that may be expected. Each account also has a "Site at a Glance" box that provides a synopsis of site information: habitat, terrain, the length of time you should expect to spend at the site, the best seasons to visit, there is also a list of such nearby amenities as visitor centers, restrooms, and restaurants. The book contains 12 maps and a checklist of local birds.

Copies of *A Birder's Guide to Baltimore and Baltimore County* will be available for \$10.00 at the Baltimore Bird Club's Tuesday meetings. To receive a copy by first-class mail, send a check for \$12.00 made out to Baltimore Bird Club to

Joseph Lewandowski
3021 Temple Gate
Baltimore MD 21209

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BBC Supports Carrie Murray Wilderness Day Camp

by Joy Wheeler

The officers and directors of the Baltimore Bird Club announce the presentation of a gift of \$500 to the Scholarship fund of the Carrie Murray Wilderness Day Camp. The camp is based in Gwynns Falls/Larkin Park, one of the largest parks of its kind in the nation. In its 2000 acres there are meadows, wetlands, fields, and forests which provide habitat for many species of birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians, as well as a wide variety of plants. The Center is a bird of prey rehabilitation facility and home for permanently injured birds, providing close-up views for many children from Baltimore City, unaccustomed to being so close to a hawk or owl. There are 15 miles of hiking trails, with 6 miles of the Gwynns Falls stream and 2 miles of the Dead Run stream.

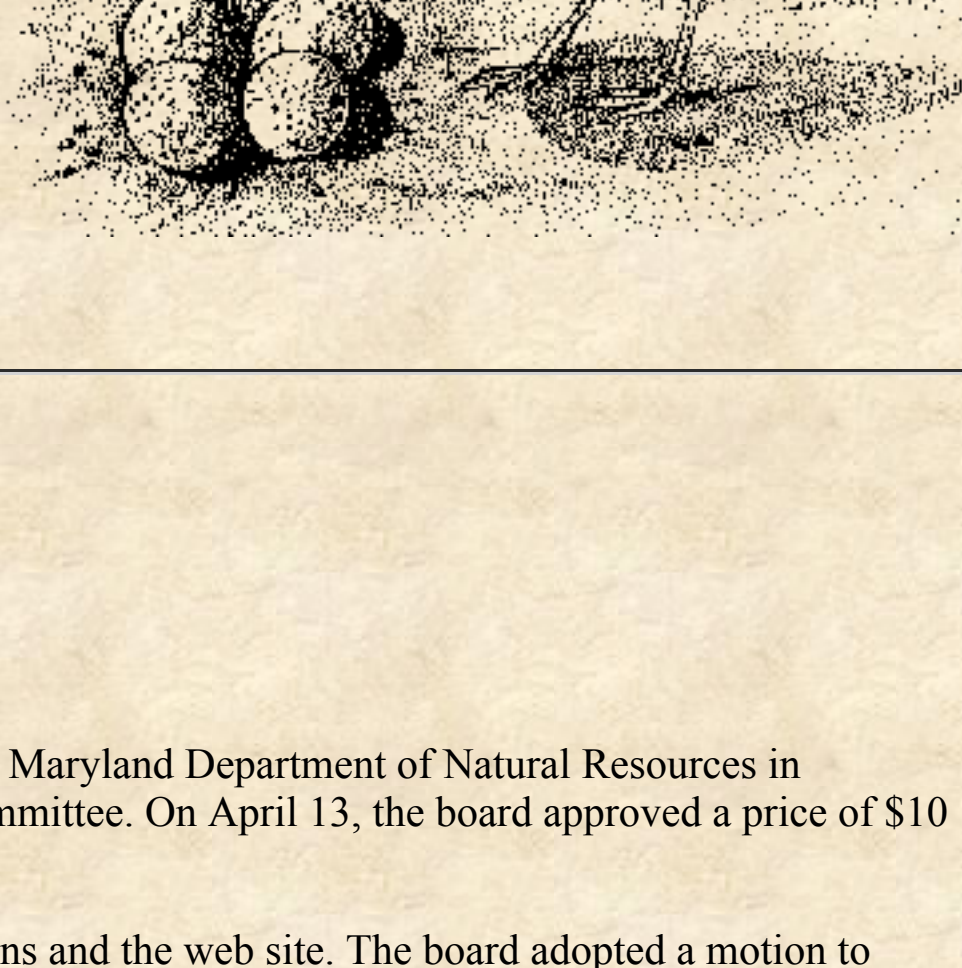
Our scholarship money will provide one week of Day Camp for five Baltimore City children. They will each spend 5 days in "well rounded outdoor programs, nature studies, arts & crafts and outdoor games in groups of 8 campers per adult leader. Included is a T-shirt, lunch and a snack." We join other like-minded groups such as the Fresh Air Fund in making these scholarships available. We believe that these scholarships will enrich the lives of these 5 children and "promote the appreciation and conservation of wildlife and the natural environment" as stated in one of our Purposes, page 2 of the Program 1997-98. If you feel as if you would also care to contribute to this project you may send contributions to Director of Finance, Carrie Murray Outdoor Education Campus, 1901 Ridgely Road, Baltimore MD 21207.

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Postcard from Monomoy

by Mary Paul

I'm working on the beach on Monomoy NWR on Cape Cod, studying gull-plover interactions. I bird-watch all day long. It's a tough job, but somebody has to do it. There are thousands and thousands of gulls! Mainly Great Black Back-backed, and Herring. There are a few Laughing Gulls. There are about 1500 terns, including Common, Least, and Roseate. So far we have had about 20 Piping Plover nests. Three have been predated by a coyote and 2 were washed out in high tides. I was on the island during the nor'easter May 9-12. Winds were 30-40 MPH. That wasn't much fun. See ya in September.



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Board of Directors Meetings

by Alan Bromberg, Recording Secretary

The BBC Board of Directors met on March 9, April 13, May 11, and June 8. At the March meeting, the board approved a motion to have the BBC participate in an environmental exhibition being held by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources in Annapolis. The board discussed the printing of the site guide and authorized funding for the work. The board also discussed the Web of Life display being developed for Cyburn and named a new budget committee. On April 13, the board approved a price of \$10 for the site guide and reviewed and accepted the proposed budget for 1998-1999.

At the May 11 meeting, new members of the board were introduced. The board discussed ways of increasing membership, getting more people involved in club activities, and centralization of club publications and the web site. The board adopted a motion to purchase two new feeders at Cyburn. On June 8, the board approved sending \$500 to the Carrie Murray Camp to sponsor school children during the summer and discussed sales of the site guide, which has been published. The board considered whether we should keep detailed records of bird sightings in Baltimore County and submit them to *Maryland Birdlife*, as the Howard County chapter does. The consensus was that this would be a demanding job, but it can be done if someone can be recruited as compiler.

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Dues Are Due

by Roberta Ross

It's time to send in your yearly membership dues. Please send them in the dues envelope included with this *Chip Notes*. If you have any questions, or if the envelope was not included, please contact our Membership Secretary:

Roberta Ross
4128 Roland Avenue
Baltimore MD 21211-2034
(410) 467-8137
email: tross@bcpl.net

Dues are \$20 for an individual or \$30 for a household.

New members who joined after April 30, 1998, and paid a full year's dues at that time, have already paid for the 1998-99 membership year and do not have to pay any further dues now.

E-mail Address

We've made some changes in the dues envelope. We've added a line for your e-mail address. If you would like your e-mail address included in future membership lists, please fill this in.

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MOS Audubon Society Scholarships Report

by Phyllis Gerber

This year there were 19 applications for Audubon scholarships--10 from the Baltimore Bird Club. Nine scholarships were awarded with three of the recipients being from our group.

I was advised that had there been a bit more money, two more of our applicants would have won. That is outstanding! I have personally contacted the losing applicants to encourage them to re-apply next year. I was informed that the judges take this fact into consideration.

Keep up the good work and enthusiasm, BBC members!

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Native Plant Seminar and Sale

On Saturday, August 29th the Irvine Natural Science Center will hold the seventh Annual Native Plant Seminar and Sale. FM Moosberry, founder of the Millersville Native Plant Conference in Pennsylvania; Kim Hawks of Niche Gardens in Chapel Hill, North Carolina; and Claire Sagers of Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania are the featured speakers for the event. The benefits and techniques associated with identifying, cultivating, and selecting native plants for landscape and restoration, as well as specific planting suggestions will be presented. A select representation of the region's native plant nurseries will participate in the plant sale held the same day.

The seminar registration is \$50.00. Those who register before August 1 will receive a discount coupon for purchases at the plant sale. The first session begins at 9:00 a.m. and the conference concludes at 1 p.m. Registered participants may access the plant sale beginning at 8:00 a.m. The sale is free and open to the public from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The Irvine Natural Science Center is a nonprofit organization dedicated to environmental education. The Center is located at 8400 Greenspring Avenue, Stevenson, MD (one mile north of the Baltimore Beltway Exit 22). Call 410-484-2413 for more information.

You can also get information on the [Native Plant Page](#).

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Cyburn Lectures 1998-99

- Sept. 1, 1998: **Land Birds Seen East of the Mississippi** by Lester Simon
- Oct. 6: **Grassland Bird Management** by Kyle Ramm
- Nov. 3: **Churchill: Living on the Edge** by Robert E. Mumford, Jr.
- Dec 1: **Wildlife of Nambibia** by Hank Kaestner
- Jan 10, 1999: **Covered Dish Supper: Supper at 5:30 p.m., Show & Tell Night.** Members and friends of the BBC. Bring your beautiful, interesting or unusual slides of local or international birds.
- Feb. 2: **Bird Watching's Top Ten Myths, More or Less** by Rick Blom
- Mar 2: **An Inventory of Neotropical Migratory Land Birds At Aberdeen Proving Grounds** by Jim McCann
- April 6: **Sights and Sounds of Early Migration** by David Holmes
- May 4: **Escape to the Islands: Hart-Miller** by Gene Scarpulla

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Field Trip Reports

compiled by Steve Sanford

A special treat this season was the American Bittern seen on several Lake Roland Trips. Spring warbler migration was rather late and slow, possibly due to the persistent rain in the first two weeks of May.

March 6 - Baltimore Harbors - The party saw 29 species including Rusty Blackbirds at Southwest Park and Meadowlarks at Cherry Hill. They also saw a Barred Owl, and Leader Mark alone saw a Short-eared Owl. A visitor from California enjoyed the eastern species. 16 participants. Weather: Partly cloudy, mid-40s. Leader: Mark and Leanne Pemburn.

March 21 - Lake Roland - The 16 participants saw 29 seasonal species including a Wood Duck plus a swimming muskrat. Weather: cloudy and cool. Leader: Adelaide Rackemann.

March 31 - Lake Roland - Leader Dot Gustafson writes, "Seeing the two warblers [Myrtle and Pine Warbler] and the Eastern Phoebe after the winter was a treat. Other members including Paul Noell found two worms [mushrooms]." 35 species, 26 participants. Sunny in the 70s to 80s.

April 7 - Lake Roland - The group had a special treat in the form of an American Bittern in the marshy area at the north end of the lake. Other species included Black-crowned Night-Heron (not Yellow-crowned), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Palm Warbler, Yellow-billed Sapsucker, and a possible Common Snipe. 47 species, 39 participants. "Perfect day - sunny, no wind." 39°-57°. Leader: Patsy Perlman.

April 14 - Lake Roland - The American Bittern was seen again, and to continue the same theme a Virginia Rail was heard. 22 participants, 45 species, 3 warblers (Parula, Palm, and Myrtle). Mostly sunny and warm. Leader: Matilda Weiss.

April 16 - Cyburn Arboretum - The trip featured the first House Wren of the season for many of the 18 participants. 15 species. Weather: "Perfect." Leader: Jean Wortley.

April 21 - Lake Roland - Leader Dot Gustafson writes, "Nearly everyone saw the Barred Owl. This was in a different location." 22 participants, 47 species (4 warblers). Clear, cool, 50s and 60s.

April 23 - Cyburn Birds and Wildflowers - 12 participants, 21 species. Cloudy weather. Leader: Jean Wortley.

April 28 - Lake Roland - Orioles have returned! Species: Leader Shirley Geddes. There were three heron species: old faithful Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (finally), Black-crowned Night-Heron, and Green-backed Heron. A Killdeer and its 4 young were seen on the roof of an old warehouse. 23 participants, 59 species, 4 warblers.

May 2 - Lake Roland - This trip featured an adult Bald Eagle "fishing," a good look at a Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and eye-level Black-throated Blue Warbler, and both night-herons. 8 participants, 53 species, 8 warblers. Weather: Started in drizzle, mostly cleared except towards end. The originally-planned second part of the trip—a visit by light rail to Southwest Area Park—was abandoned. Leader: Mark Pemburn.

May 3 - Phoenix Pond - Leader: Michele Melia writes: "We had 13 warbler species, but most sightings (or "hearings") were of single individuals—a "fall out" day this was not! Both Waterthrush species heard at the same time, giving everyone a good opportunity to let the two songs apart. This is a reliable spot for singing Warbling Vireo and Worm-eating Warbler - and did not disappoint us. Steve Simon showed everyone a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher nest he had found there earlier in the week. Both oriole species were seen from the parking area." 18 participants, 49 species, 13 warblers. Foggy, overcast, cool, about 60°.

May 10 - Millford Mill Park - Once again the drizzles struck (off and on) keeping spirits and species numbers low. 8 participants, 32 species, 9 warblers. Leader: Steve Sanford.

May 12 - Lake Roland - No drizzles today. Instead, the weather was "pouring rain," and only 55°. Nevertheless, the 7 bold participants, 32 species, 9 Common Nighthawk sitting on a branch of a honey locust tree, and 6 Baltimore Orioles singing at different places. 31 species, 4 meadowlarks. Leader: Shirley Geddes.

May 16 - Glen Meadows - Trip highlight was a very good look at a Magnolia Warbler. 7 participants, 40 species, 4 warblers. Clear, hot and calm. Leader: Steve Simon.

May 19 - Lake Roland - Highlights were a Pileated Woodpecker foraging on the ground, and a live ring-necked snake. 18 participants, 60 species, 10 warblers, including Wilson's. Sunny, warm, about 70°. Leader: Bob Wood.

May 26 - Lake Roland - Trip featuring "numerous and clear sightings" of Pileated Woodpecker. The once-reliable species, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, was seen again.

May 31 - Owings Mills + - Treating forecast made for only 4 participants, but warmer turned out to be sunny, and somewhat hot. At the marsh and pond by the lake there were several Willow Flycatchers, Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, and Spotted Sandpipers. The Woodsburg area provided Bluebirds, Warbling Vireos, and a Black-billed Cuckoo. The industrial area on Rt. 91 east of 140 featured Cliff Swallows and a Yellow-breasted Chat. 60 species, 4 warblers. Leader: Gail Frantz.

June 13 - Leader: Bob Ringler writes: "The Baltimore Bird Club field trip to the grasslands and adjacent habitats of NW Carroll County MD and southern Adams County PA was very successful. We started on Roops Mill Rd with Willow Flycatcher and both orioles, but the highlight here was Warbling Vireo feeding young in the nest. On Jassonown Rd we saw Grasshopper and Vesper Sparrows and Horned Lark, all singing. On Baust Church Rd were 3 Red-headed Woodpeckers. Along Stonestifer Rd were another Grasshopper Sparrow, Meadowlarks, and also a singing Savannah Sparrow. The Bobolink field at Hagerstown Lane had been mowed and there were no Bobolinks. However, at the NW corner of the intersection of Sixes Bridge Rd and Mumma Ford Rd we saw both singing Bobolink and Dickcissel. The Bobolink was on the Mumma Ford Rd side and the Dickcissel was down Sixes Bridge Rd about 2 to 3 miles though it could be heard from the intersection. We continued north into Adams County where we found another singing Dickcissel, a pair of Killdeer with four small downy young in the middle of the road, more Bobolinks and Red-headed Woodpecker, and finished with a Loggerhead Shrike. Best butterfly of the trip was a Bronze Copper on Mumma Ford Rd."

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Cyburn Self-Guided Trips

Reported by Joseph Lewandowski

March 22, 1998 - With the mild winter that Baltimore has had, few would have guessed that the first spring self-guided bird walk at Cyburn would have been a walk in the snow. Six birders ventured out to see Cyburn cloaked in white just like a holiday card. We had 17 species with special views of two Killdeer, Cardinals, Song and White-throated Sparrows and Chickadees. Of special interest was an owl nest that was located in a tree near the water's edge.

March 28, 1998 - What a difference a week makes! This week, the weather was in the 70s and the birders were enjoying Cyburn in shirtsleeves. The warm weather brought out fifteen birders; some of them were little birders, no higher than my waist. Twenty-three birds made our species list with some good views of a Song Sparrow, Carolina Wren, Cardinals, White-throated Sparrow, and Killdeer. The daffodils were in full bloom creating a sea of yellow beneath the trees.

April 5, 1998 - The weather has definitely changed again. The morning started off with a good wind and a 40° chill in the air. It was the warmth of the three birders out today that led to the sun coming out and making this day a good birding day. Twenty-five species topped our list of birds. We again had some good looks at Chipping Sparrows, a Carolina Wren, Flicker, Killdeer, and a good array of songbirds. We have not spotted any warblers so far but are looking forward to their return to Cyburn. The Arboretum lost the yellow of the daffodils but white and purple wildflowers covered the forest floor. The shrubs were also in bloom with yellow, pink, and white doting the landscapes.

April 12, 1998 - The seven birders who came out to see Cyburn on this Easter Sunday, were greeted with a temperature in the 50s and the tulips beginning to bloom. More wildflowers were out and they swayed gently in the breeze. Twenty-six birds topped our species list. The first thrust of the self-guided walk was seen that a Hermit Thrush. Flickers were flying about, White-throated Sparrows were still around, and we had a Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

April 19, 1998 - The day was overcast, cool, and rainy. Not a day that would be conducive to birding, but five birders did come to Cyburn to see what the Arboretum had to offer. The tulips were beginning to come out and fourteen species of birds were located before the rain put a halt to the activity. Regardless of the species count, it is always nice to see our old standards: Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and the Mockingbird.

April 26, 1998 - They're here, they're here! The long awaited arrival of the warblers at Cyburn is something all of us wait for and today proved to be the day. Eight birders saw the Yellow-rumped and the Black-and-White Warbler frolic among the trees of the Arboretum. It was a perfect day. The tulips put on a delightful display and wildflowers were still out and about along the trails. The one proactive bird-wise with thirty species gracing our list. In addition to the warblers, we saw our first Wood Thrush and House Wren of the season on the Sunday walk. Indigo Bunting, Rough-winged Swallow, White-breasted Nuthatch, a Spotted Sandpiper, and a Rufous-sided Towhee were some other notable species that we saw.

May 3, 1998 - With temperatures in the 50s and overcast skies, eight birders made their way through the trails of Cyburn. The tulips had already shown their wear, with petals on the ground in most of the garden areas. Even with this rate of passage, we saw 32 species of birds. Seeing Solitary and Spotted Sandpipers, side by side, was excellent. Yellow-rumped and Yellow Warblers found their way to our binoculars. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Wood Thrush, Ovenbird, Veery, Brown Thrasher and a Red-eyed and Warbling Vireo were all sights to behold. Seeing a Green Heron, Baltimore Oriole, and Orchard Oriole made this a memorable self-guided trip at Cyburn.

May 10 - Rained out

May 17, 1998 - Today was a great day for birding! Temperatures were in the 70s and the seven birders who came out for the last self-guided tour of the Arboretum came out with high spirits and shirtsleeves. We heard plenty of birds singing and got some close up views of the 36 species that dotted our list. Close-up views of a Least Sandpiper, Acadian Flycatcher, Swainson's Thrush, Orchard and Baltimore Orioles, and copulating Killdeers were just some of the many sightings. Yellow warblers were flying around like chickadees, and a close-up look at the Barn Swallow was spectacular. However, the picture that will remain with me will be the green frog croaking along the water's edge with a Yellow Warbler bathing in a small stream runoff! What a better way to end the last spring walk at Cyburn.

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Postcard from the Edge

By Hank Kaestner

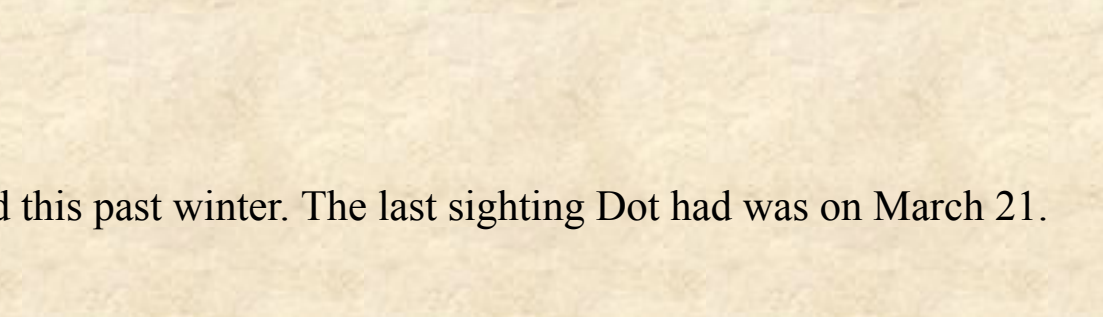
May 21

Dear Chippers,

I've just returned from 10 days in China—a birdwatcher's nightmare. All birds are killed for the "pot," and I saw more species in restaurants than in the wild. No good habitat is left, and the only species seen were House Swifts and Barn Swallows. Finally on Hainan Island I did get to a protected national park where I found the recently described Hainan Warbler as one of only five lifers for the trip.

Regards, Hank Kaestner

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A Reminder

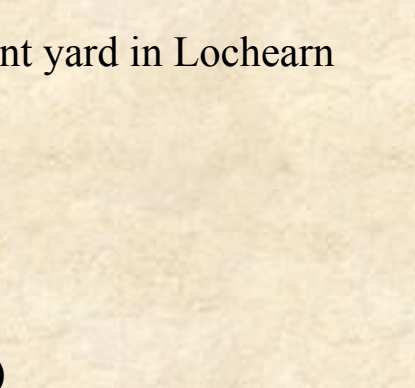
Let us remember that we do have a [Baltimore birding hotline](#), and we need your reports.

Let us hear about your sightings. Naturally we want to hear about uncommon birds and "rarities." But also let us know about highlights of your birding in the region, as well as interesting yard birds, seasonal arrivals, and nesting. We urge field trip leaders especially to report trip highlights directly to the Birdline in addition to mailing in your reports. You can call in your sightings to (410) 467-0653. You can also e-mail your sightings to the Birdline at birdline@stxabo.com. For best results, please include the specific words "BBC Birdline Sighting" on the subject line.

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Back Yard Birding

Gail Frantz



Baltimore City

Cyburn

- On March 9, Pete Webb arrived at Cyburn a bit before 7:00 for the BBC board meeting. To his delight he saw and heard a displaying Woodcock. Pete had a reprise of the same species on March 27. While Pete was watching in his front yard in Lochearn talking to a neighbor, another Timberdoodle "whistled" overhead and crossed Pete's yard.

Hamilton

- Kevin Graff writes: "On March 1, I have a new bird for my backyard list, a Solitary Sandpiper seen flying high, moving northwest. The warm weather has caused a change in bird migration, especially Canada Geese.

• A total of 16,689 Canada Geese in 188 flocks, 246 Snow Geese in four flocks, 203 Tundra Swans in eight flocks and 20 N. Pintails seen from my house and from Essex Community College in the last 4 days (February 27 to March 2.)

Roland Park

- From Tom and Doris Simpson who reported evening flights of Yellow-crowned Night Herons flying across the open area around the intersection of Tuscany and Ridgemedle (which our front porch faces.) This is an unprecedented observation in our 27 years here. We have seen singles, pairs, or 3-5 on each night May 14-18, 20, and 23. Then June 1 & 2. At the same time a "mystery bird," smaller than the YCNHs, buffly colored without the heron's crook in its neck but with legs outstretched behind it. Any guesses?

Baltimore County

Sparrows Point

- On April 9 Roberta Ross reports: "The Osprey are nesting again at Sparrows Point. Last week I saw one fly overhead from my office window. It was carrying a huge branch in its beak.

• There is a nest clearly visible from the Killdeer. It's on top of a big utility pole to the right of the Beltway as you drive north from Sparrows Point on the outer loop. I think it's between exits 42 and 41. They have nested there for several years, and this week I've seen a bird on this nest a couple of times, so they're back there!"

Towson

- Dot Gustafson enjoyed at least two Red-breasted Nuthatches that frequently visited her yard this past winter. The last sighting Dot had was on March 21.

Lochearn

- The Herons Are Back! The Herons Are Back!

March 31: Carolyn Update: Mama and Papa have produced five little ones. Pete's sure it's the same pair from last year and the nursery is set up in the same Red oak as last year.

June 6 Herons Update: Pete and Anna have arrived five little ones. There is also a first year bird that Pete believes is from last year's nesting because this young heron includes himself in the family group by begging food from the adults. In case you lost count that makes a grand total of eight Yellow-crowned Night-Herons!

Randallstown

- In March, Steve Sanford writes: "Remember how excited I was a few months ago just to have heard a Red-breasted Nuthatch across the street? Well, here it is Friday the 13th and I am still seeing one occasionally coming to my feeder... After a winter break of several months, the Goldfinches are returning from my 'Upside-down' feeder."

March 24 update: "Hot news from the feeder front. My Red-breasted Nuthatch has been coming to my feeder all day! A few days ago I saw that a squirrel had finally figured out how to jump to my sunflower-seed feeder, and clean it out. So I greased the edges and sides of the feeder with olive oil (because it was handy). The next time he jumped on the feeder -SLIP- down he went. Ha, ha, ha. Foiled! But probably not for long."

Steve's Nuthatch was still around on April 17.

May 14: Returning home from a 3 day Western MD trip, Steve was greeted by "a Blackpoll Warbler singing in my yard as I pulled in around 6:30."

• While driving to school around 8:00 A.M. on March 31, Chris McSwain was