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Deadline for next **CHIP NOTES**: December 26, 2005 (the next issue will be February/March 2006). If possible, please email material to cawebb@mequest.com

Otherwise, send material to:

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7014 Lancaster Road
Baltimore, MD 21207
(410) 486-1100

Please help **CHIP NOTES** get out on time.

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Counting on Chimney Swifts

By Carol Schreter

Sixty people attended BBC's chimney swift counts in Hampden on Sept. 9, 10, 11, and 18, 2005. Two-thirds were Hampden locals. Just five were BBC members. Most came in response to recent articles in Hampden Happenings or the Messenger. Some had seen the "Maryland Outdoors" TV segment "Night Falls Swiftly" which aired on RPT last spring.

The chimney swifts swooped and swirled. The count rose each time, from 2,300 to 3,170, to 4,630 to 7,330. The September 18 count was just 1% short of our all time high of 7,403 on Sept. 5, 2003.

Our first three counts were posted on the "Swift Night Out 2005" website run by the Driftwood Wildlife Association in Texas. Again, this year they got about 50 reports from 20 states. With our Sunday count of 4,630 chimney swifts, we tied for 2nd place with Columbia, Missouri; Muskogee, Oklahoma, visited by 6,500 migratory swifts, had the highest reported count this year. (See www.chimneyswifts.org).

In Hampden this fall the migrating swifts roosted in the Freestake Bookery at 3110 Elm Avenue, next the nearby Mill Center. People often ask why these chimney swifts use one chimney or the other. We may have our theories, but no one knows.

Many thanks to the BBC SwiftWatch Team: Alice and David Nelson, Bryce Butler, and Joan Cwi. At least three of us had to be there for each announced event. While Alice talks to the crowd as the "bird interpreter," we other team members quietly click away on a hand counter. We count by tens as the swifts deftly drop into the chimney, at dusk.

Our Chimney Swift session continued on Sept. 22 when the Audubon MD-DC leadership joined us in Hampden. That night we tallied 2,730 chimney swifts. David Curson invited the BBC SwiftWatch team to "nominat" these Hampden chimneys for the designation of "Important Bird Area" (IBA). Alice Nelson and I will ask owners of the Mill Center and Bookery if they are inclined to help us seek an IBA designation, which involves no regulatory powers. The Conservation Committee's Swift Watch in Hampden is proving to be a rich mix of conservation and public education.

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BANANA, BEER, & BUTTERFLIES

By Gail Frantz

A word to the wise: If you're a tidy person, or have a pronounced allergic reaction to stings from insects read no further. Skip this article.

Since I am neither tidy nor do I have any insect allergies, the following technique of attracting butterflies from early spring right up to the last seasonal moment, has afforded me a great deal of pleasure.

It all began in late April '02 at Oregon Ridge. Someone dropped off several dozen, ripe paw paw fruits at the nature center. My own Paw Paw trees have yet to develop fruit so when the ranger instructed me to take some home and "feed" to the butterflies, I did just that.

At home I peeled them, smeared them under a plate, then placed the plate on the railing of our deck. Within the hour, a Mourning Cloak and Anglewing were sucking up the juices. Naturally, wasps and bees also found them delectable and the paw paws were soon gone. I've never been bitten yet, but have made plastic departures when agitated bees zoomed in and around my body and learned the hard way to keep the plate away from outside eating areas.

The feeding plate needed replenished. Fortunately, I recalled reading an article that suggested using rotten fruit mixed with beer & a bit of molasses. I mounded up brown bananas with the molasses, beer available (left out the molasses). Instant success! And the action began again and has never stopped until the summer and the summer's after. We fed a constant parade of colorful butterflies. Red-spotted Purples, Anglewings, an occasional Mourning Cloak, Red Admirals, Variegated Fritillaries, Viceroys an last summer a county record - one White Admiral. Happy sighs to a butterfly lover.

Due to the cold and wet spring '06, the B&B didn't get out until early May, but the rest of the summer was a delight. Richard Smith (Maryland butterfly expert) tells me they can actually smell the rotten fruit. So can you if you placed the mixture too close to the house!

Commercial butterfly food is available, but rotten fruit and cheap beer on an old plate seems to work just fine. If the homemade mixture still has a good amount of pulp but has dried out in the sun, simply stir in more beer. Whichever type of mixture you use, placing it in the sun works best.

This summer I noticed an interesting phenomenon. The flies would often land a foot or so away from the feeding plate and walk the rest of the way to the plate. An intriguing (Coma) came on November 16th with no sun shining and high winds with a color front expected in the afternoon. I'm eagerly waiting to see how late the footfall will last before the snow falls.

Some species of butterflies you may expect to see at your B&B mixture include: Anglewings (haven't seen a question mark yet), Red Admirals, White Admiral, Variegated Fritillary, Red-spotted Purple, Viceroys, Mourning Cloak.

Although we have them in the yard, I've never seen the following butterflies at the mixture: Black, Pipevine, or Spicebush Swallowtails, Gray Hairstreak, Cabbage, Sulphurs, Great Spangled or Meadow Fritillary, Azures, Skippers, Duskywing, Sootywings, Painted Lady, Eastern Tailed Wood or Pearl Crescent.

Good luck with your own gourmet butterfly concoction. Let me know who comes to feast.

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Board of Directors Meetings

By Carol Schreter, Recording Secretary

The BBC Board met on September 13 and October 11, 2005. The membership vote on the new By-Laws was not taken at the October lecture because our President Pete Webb was not present. This vote will, hopefully, occur at the November 1 lecture.

The September Treasurer's Report showed that BBC income in 2004-2005 exceeded expenses by \$1,424. This excess is not likely to recur, as we lowered the dues for this year from \$40 to \$35 per individual member.

Pete Webb reported on a brief meeting with Bill Vondrasek, Chief of Horticulture for the Baltimore City Dept. of Recreation and Parks. Webb and Vondrasek agreed that instead of charging BBC for use of the Cyburn Mension House, the City will list BBC designation of "Important Bird Area" (IBA). Alice Nelson and I will ask owners of the Mill Center and Bookery if they are inclined to help us seek an IBA designation, which involves no regulatory powers. The Conservation Committee's Swift Watch in Hampden is proving to be a rich mix of conservation and public education.

The City hopes that birders will return to Druid Hill Park. On October 11, Anne Draddy of the Baltimore City Dept. of Recreation and Parks took Bryce Butler and me on a tour of Druid Hill. Draddy pointed out where the new Jones Falls Hike & Bike Trail will be developed. The BBC Field Trip Committee agreed to do a spring 2006 "scouting trip" with Draddy to investigate the park's birdwatching potential.

Trip Leaders should note that the Field Trip Report which is usually mailed to trip leaders in advance of their walks will now be found on the BBC website at <http://baltimorebirdclub.org/fieldtrip.pdf>. To save mailing costs, we ask trip leaders to download the form from there.

Bryce Butler of the Conservation Committee set a BBC tour at the Jones Falls festival on September 18. Joan Cwi, Wendy and Bob Olsson assisted him there.

Urbane Magazine article printed a fine article featuring BBC: (Urban birds: A how-to guide for spotting your feathered friends, by Marianne Amoss, October 2005.) You can find this article at [their website](http://www.urbanmagazine.com).

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Field Trip Reports

By Mary Chetelat

MAY 22 2005 - OWINGS MILLS MALL WETLANDS: Keith Costley led a group of 8 on this cloudy, cool day. They were rewarded with views of 64 species including 5 flycatcher species, 3 vireo, 11 warblers and 2 sparrow. Highlights included 4 Great Blue Heron nests with nestlings, close-up looks at a Warbling Vireo, and a Downy Woodpecker feeding young in a nest cavity.

JUNE 5 - SOLDIER'S DELIGHT NEA: It was hot and clear as David Curson led this walk along the Choate Mine Trail and forested Yellow Trail. Singing warblers included Pine, Prairie, Black-and-White, and Ovenbird. Scarlet Tanager and Yellow-billed Cuckoo were also spotted. Participants: 3. Species viewed: 29.

JUNE 18 - PVP GRANITE AREA: Keith Costley and 4 participants viewed 53 species including 10 ovenbirds, 6 Scarlet Tanagers, 2 Pileated Woodpeckers, 7 Wood Ducks. There were numerous Acadian Flycatchers and Eastern Wood-Pewees, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Wood Thrushes.

JULY 19 - BANNEKER PARK: This excursion, with Keith Costley as sole participant, sounded like a delightful opportunity for viewing birds on the nest and young birds. fledglings viewed included Baltimore Oriole, Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers, Indigo Bunting and Turkey Vultures, a Red-tailed Hawk and a Merlin. Paul reported a brief glimpse of overlapping flight between vireos gave the impression of a Merlin. And fortunately a few minutes later it was speed perched atop a bare tree, permitting close-up scrutiny-the highlight of the day! 39 species total, including a Veery, were recorded.

THE FOLLOWING WAS SUBMITTED BY Gene Scarpulla
HART-MILLER ISLAND BY October 10 Weather: cloudy MD Environmental Service Tour Leaders: Chrissy Albanese, Rusty LaMotte

This was a first time visit for three of the eleven birds on board. In spite of the cloudy day most everyone had good looks at the shore birds. Stephanie Stone, enjoyed the day while writing up the trip for an article in a sailing magazine called SpinSheet Magazine.43 total

Species of Note: Snow Goose Black-bellied Plover, Sempalmated Plover, American Avocet, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Sanderling, Sempalmated Sandpiper, Sempalmated/western peep sp., Least Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Dunlin, Sill Sandpiper.

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May Count 2005: May 14, 2005

Compiled by Joel Martin

Common Loon	1	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	29	Tennessee Warbler	4
Pied-billed Grebe	2	Great Horned Owl	2	Nashville Warbler	3
Black-bellied Cormorant	66	Barred Owl	1	Northern Parula	97
Great Blue Heron	60	Common Nighthawk	2	Yellow Warbler	96
Great Egret	5	Chimney Swift	239	Chestnut-sided Warbler	8
Snow Egret	1	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	9	Magnolia Warbler	70
Battle Egret	12	Belted Kingfisher	3	Black-throated Blue Warbler	41
Green Heron	3	Red-billed Woodpecker	106	Yellow-rumped Warbler	6
Black-crowned Night-Heron	6	Downy Woodpecker	37	Black-throated Green Warbler	23
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	1	Hairy Woodpecker	9	Blackburnian Warbler	1
Wioser Ibis	3	Northern Flicker	38	White-throated Warbler	1
Black Vulture	18	Pileated Woodpecker	7	Pine Warbler	7
Turkey Vulture	92	Eastern Wood-Pewee	39	Prairie Warbler	19
Canada Goose	336	Acadian Flycatcher	70	Blackpool Warbler	209
Mute Swan	30	Willow Flycatcher	4	Cerulean Warbler	1
Wood Duck	13	Least Flycatcher	1	Black-and-white Warbler	14
Gadwall	1	Eastern Phoebe	29	American Redstart	79
Blue Jay	1	Great-crested Flycatcher	25	Protonotary Warbler	10
Blue-winged Teal	2	Eastern Kingbird	82	Worm-eating Warbler	4
Green-winged Teal	5	White-eyed Vireo	29	Ovenbird	82
Lesser Scaup	1	Blue-headed Vireo	1	Northern Waterthrush	25
Osprey	38	Yellow-throated Vireo	9	Louisiana Waterthrush	9
Bald Eagle	7	Warbling Vireo	51	Kentucky Warbler	3
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	Red-eyed Vireo	267	Common Yellowthroat	144
Cooper's Hawk	7	Blue Jay	839	Woodcock	4
Red-shouldered Hawk	13	American Crow	136	Wilson's Warbler	3
Red-tailed Hawk	25	Fish Crow	28	Canada Warbler	2
American Kestrel	1	crow sp.	8	Yellow-breasted Chat	12
Peregrine Falcon*	1	Purple Martin	10	Summer Tanager	74
Black-bellied Plover	167	Tree Swallow	142	Scarlet Tanager	7
Sempalmated Plover	20	North-winged Swallow	103	Eastern Towhee	54
Killdeer	22	Rough Swallow	38	Chipping Sparrow	68
Greater Yellowlegs	7	Cliff Swallow	21	Field Sparrow	25
Lesser Yellowlegs	16	Barn Swallow	196	Savannah Sparrow	4
Southern Yellowlegs	29	Carolina Chickadee	81	Grasshopper Sparrow	1
Willet	1	Tufted Titmouse	74	Song Sparrow	152
Spotted Sandpiper	62	White-breasted Nuthatch	24	Swamp Sparrow	13
Sempalmated Sandpiper	35	Brown Creeper	1	White-throated Sparrow	6
Least Sandpiper	145	House Wren	93	Northern Cardinal	394
White-rumped Sandpiper*	2	Marsh Wren	57	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	6
Dunlin	166	Carolina Wren	3	Blue Grosbeak	14
Pumpin Sandpiper**	1	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	3	Indigo Bunting	120
Short-billed Dowitcher	6	Eastern Bluebird	43	Red-winged Blackbird	490
Laughing Gull	1	Veery	22	Eastern Meadowlark	1
Herring Gull	152	Gray-cheeked Thrush*	1	Common Grackle	445
Great Black-backed Gull	131	Bickney's Thrush	1	Brown-headed Cowbird	147
Caspian Tern	213	Swainson's Thrush	25	Orchard Oriole	45
Common Tern	245	Hermitt Thrush	3	Baltimore Oriole	130
Forster's Tern	5	Wood Thrush	135	House Finch	736
Least Tern	15	American Robin	463	American Goldfinch	238
Rock Pigeon	108	Gray Catbird	327	House Sparrow	276
Mourning Dove	155	Northern Mockingbird	78		
Black-billed Cuckoo	1	Brown Thrasher	13		
		European Starling	479		
		Cedar Waxwing	154		
		Total Individuals	11,408		
		Species Total	162		

May Count 2005 Observers:
Elaine Arnold, Stan Amold, Lavin Brammer, Peg Brammer, Anne Brooks, Bryce Butler, Brent Byers, Mary Chetelat, Keith Costley, John Denny, JoAnn Dwyer, Kevin Graff, Linda Groff, Dot Gustafson, Jim Highsaw, Yve Jenkins, John Landers, Chris Manning, Jane Manning, Kate Marrott, Joel Martin, Jim Meyers, Paul Noel, Jim Peters, John Sala, Steve Starford, Gery Scarpulla, Carol Schreter, Brian Sykes, Debbie Terry, David Thykell, Pete Webb

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Slate of Officers

In pursuance of the recent change voted in at the November Tuesday Evening at Cyburn meeting, the club board has assumed the duties of coming up with a slate of officers, to be voted up or down at the March 7, 2006 Tuesday Evening at Cyburn meeting. That's the Cyburn lecture featuring "The Longest Leaflet - 24 days in the Southern Hemisphere" with Gail Mackiernan.

Here's a advance preview of the slate of officers we've managed to come up with:

Slate of officers for the 2006-07 season

President	Pete Webb
Vice President	David Thornhill
Treasurer	Paula Dunn
Recording Secretary	Martha Schugam
Membership Secretary	Dot Gustafson
BBC Director	Joel Martin
BBC Director	Kevin Cwi
BBC Director	Joan Graff
State Director	Helene Gardel
State Director	David Curson
State Director	Roberta Ross

This slate, meant nobody else is welcome; rather, it's the people who we've managed to get a "yes" out of. Anyone interested in decision making by our Board of Directors and Officers at the regular Board business meetings can come to one of them. They're held every SECOND Tuesday of the month at Cyburn at 7:30 pm. (That's usually a week after the Tuesday lectures which are usually the first Tuesday of the month. While the lectures run from September through May, the Board meetings run September through June.) You can contact any board member or Officer for more details.

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COVERED DISH DINNER

Don't miss our annual covered dish dinner which will be on Sunday, January 8 at 5:00 p.m. at Bykota in Towson. Our speaker will be Hank Kaestner, BBC member, world traveler, and birdwatcher extraordinaire and his topic will be, "The 2005 Edition of Bird Watching Adventures Around the World." Reservations and food dish coordination: Shirley Geddes, 377-6583.

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Conservation Corner: Gardening for Winter Interest and Wildlife

by Wendy Olsson, BBC Conservation Committee

With Spring around the corner, now is the time to consider what type of gardening projects await in your yard. While gardening and landscaping is aesthetically pleasing, our yards are also becoming more and more important to our feathered friends. Consider the projected 6,000 new homes planned for an area close to Backwater National Wildlife Refuge. While a good percentage of the area may be converted to concrete, consider if at least half of the yards at the new development contained trees, shrubs, and perennials valuable to wildlife while at the same time improving the look of an area being developed and advertised as "close to nature".

While the Backwater National Wildlife Refuge proposed development may be an extreme example of habitat loss as you view trials to songbirds and waterfowl, the Baltimore area is also converting much of its former farmland, grassland, and woods to parking lots and parking areas. Landfills, and office buildings. You can make a difference by landscaping for wildlife. As an area critical to birds and woods in which many species are dormant, some native plants provide beautiful interesting features during the winter months. Try out these plants:

River Birch (Betula nigricana) This tree has lovely peeling bark that provides wonderful winter interest for your garden. The tree usually is multi-stemmed and grows to between 30 and 50 feet high. It can take a variety of conditions.

White Pine (Pinus strobus) This fast-growing, soft-needled evergreen is good for a large space, since it can reach up to 100 feet tall and may have a spread of 50 to 75 feet at maturity. This pine does best on moist, well-drained sandy/loamy soil, although I have seen them growing in a variety of types.

Switchgrass (Panicum virgatum) This perennial grass is widely available in most nurseries in a variety of cultivars. This is also being planted widely around the Baltimore Beltway as it provides excellent erosion control and is attractive all year round. This grass usually gets to around 5 feet tall and can tolerate drought.

Mountain Laurel (Kalmia latifolia) This beautiful evergreen shrub has dark green, glossy leaves. It provides winter cover for animals and has white or pinkish/purple flowers from May-July. This shrub is poisonous to hoofed browsers for those of you who need to garden with deer in mind. Mountain Laurel reaches a height of between 12 and 20 feet.

Sheep Laurel or Lambkill (Kalmia angustifolia) With a name like "Lambkill" this one is hopefully also a shrub that hooved animals won't munch on. This evergreen shrub reaches a height of 2 to 3 feet, and has white, pink, purple or red blooms in May-July. Both Kalmia latifolia and Kalmia angustifolia like acidic soil.

Blue Stem (Schizachyrium scoparium) This beautiful grass provides interest both in the warm and cool seasons. In summer, this grass is blue, and turns gray in winter. Birds eat the seeds in fall and winter. This grass grows to about 3 - 4 feet tall, and its flowers are small and full sun. In very fertile soils this plant tends to flop and will need some sort of support. If you want to see blue stem grass, visit Soldier's Delight Natural Environmental Area in Owings Mills. This area boasts both Big Bluestem and Little Bluestem, along with Indian Grass.

These are only a few of the plants that can enhance your yard in winter. For more information on plants with winter interest for your garden, contact the Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection & Resource Management at (410) 887-5683. The plants listed above are a sampling from their resource sheet entitled "Winter Wonderful Landscapes", or visit [their website](http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov). The Home and Garden Information Center of the University of Maryland, MD Cooperative Extension is another excellent resource for gardening. Visit [their website](http://www.hort.psu.edu) or call them at (800)342-2507.

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MAINE AUDUBON HOG ISLAND FIELD ORNITHOLOGY CAMP

By Ann Davis

Imagine that you are spending a week on an island, where everyone else inhabiting the island, shares the same interest as you do. It is a place where cutting-edge experts have come to share their knowledge with you. The experts, always within an arm's length, graciously answer every question that pops into your head no matter how insignificant. No, they don't just answer your questions. The instructors patiently take their time to explain the answers to you and make sure you comprehend them. If you think that I am making up this imaginary place, then you have not been to Maine Audubon's Hog Island!

Upon arriving on the "surreal" Hog Island, you quickly let go of the material world you left behind. You unpacked, and move into your shared cabin room with two bathrooms down the hall. Everyone quickly realizes that working together will benefit the whole cabin. As the camper nestled midway through the second day, we had already become a community. We were shocked to realize that she was right, and we weren't sure when it happened. However, we most definitely had made the transition from a group of individuals to a friendly community. We shared the rhythms of the island.

Some of us rose at the crack of dawn to pursue bird watching with our guides. Others chose to avoid the early morning mosquito bites and waited under cover of the breakfast bell to announce the beginning of our day. At the sound of the morning bell, which also announced the beginning of all activities, we moved to the dining room to enjoy each other's company. The mornings were packed with activities from sunrise to well past sunset. We pursued birds by foot, by boat, and by sound. We were treated to sightings of Upland Sandpipers, Puffins, Ospreys, Elders, and Loons, but I could go on forever naming the birds. No bird was too obscure for our instructors. Our instructors gave us not only the bird's name, but its flight pattern mating rituals, migration behavior, and other information that might like to hear. At one point, I called out using my "experienced" bird-ling knowledge, "It's black with fuzzy feathers on its head, there, there!" to which Tom Leskey replied, "Yes, that would be a baby Grackle being fed from a parent bird." He hadn't even seen or heard the bird yet! Of course, he was right, and in a few short moments, we were treated to the parent bird flying into the tree to feed its youngster. (I still think he somehow plucked the bird for us knowing the food spot it.) He then went on to enlighten us with information about how the parents feed and take care of their young.

Did I mention we would eat? We were always provided with delicious and nutritious meals - spanakopita, lobster bisque, poached eggs - the list of wonderful dishes goes on. The meals are served cafeteria style with an instructor at each table. Once again, no question was too trivial for the instructors. Ken Kaufman, Scott Weidenstau, Sarah Morris, Greg Budney, and Bonnie Bochan were just a few of the people who spent their precious time guiding us through the world of birds.

When we weren't in the field or eating with the instructors, we spent our time listening to their enthralling lectures on their favorite aspects of the world of ornithology. There was so much to learn that I wished I had packed a few extra brains so I could soak in all the wonderful information that might like to hear. At one point, I called out using my "experienced" bird-ling knowledge, "It's black with fuzzy feathers on its head, there, there!" to which Tom Leskey replied, "Yes, that would be a baby Grackle being fed from a parent bird." He hadn't even seen or heard the bird yet! Of course, he was right, and in a few short moments, we were treated to the parent bird flying into the tree to feed its youngster. (I still think he somehow plucked the bird for us knowing the food spot it.) He then went on to enlighten us with information about how the parents feed and take care of their young.

Suddenly, the week came to an end. What an incredible gift we had been given! I am humoring in that I will be able to recall back of the information that was presented to us. However, I am sure that I will always remember the extraordinary people, and the wonderful experiences I had while I was an islander. Even if it was just a fleeting moment.

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North Florida in Winter

by Jim Highsaw and Linda Prentice

Continuing our exploration of Chipping-sparrows parks of Florida, we next explored Northern Florida, 2005 in north Florida, viewing parks, natural areas and historic sites in the Jacksonville, Gainesville and St. Augustine areas. It looked that the birding was pleasant, the parks and trails were not crowded, and the weather was generally good.

On the first day we spent the afternoon at Fort Clinch State Park, on the coast north of Jacksonville. We visited the Willow Pond Trail was a nice trail through woodland habitat, and we got our first birds of the trip - Black-and-White Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Phoebe and Eastern Towhee. We returned to the park the following morning and found a Kestrel, Red-shouldered Hawk, Common Tern and a number of shorbirds. After lunch we drove south down the coast to Kingsley Plantation on the St. John's River. Here we had a nice look at a Common Loon and also saw a number of common landbirds.

On the third day we visited areas in and around Gainesville - the Morrisville Nature Center, Gum Root Park and San Felasco Preserve. The Nature Center property is a good place for woodland species and had a wonderful early morning chorus. The observation/photo bin on one of the trails was a perfect place to observe Carolina Wren, White-eyed Vireo, Eastern Towhee and other birds. The property has an extensive trail system which we did not have time to fully