



THE BLUEBIRD

A Newsletter of the Prince George's Audubon Society (PGAS)

PGAS is a local chapter of the National Audubon Society

www.pgaudubon.org

eBIRD – A BASIC PRIMER PLUS TIPS, TRICKS, AND FUN WAYS TO USE IT

Featured Speaker: Ross Geredien

7:30 pm, Tuesday, April 9, 2019

College Park Airport

Operations Building, 2nd Floor,

1909 Cpl. Frank Scott Dr., College Park



Have you heard about eBird, but never had the chance to sit down and learn how to use it? Or perhaps you are a beginning eBird user, but have never gotten beyond the basics of submitting data? Then, this program is for you! Ross Geredien will give a primer of the different data and information tools available in eBird, including how to submit your data, find recent bird sightings, locate target birds, do research for an upcoming bird trip, and manage your lists in eBird; as well as answer other questions based on the audience's interest. We will cover tools like species maps, bar charts, personalized species needs alerts, species occurrence frequency, birding "hotspots", range maps, and a brief overview of the eBird mobile app. We won't be able to cover everything, and so we will focus on some of the most fun aspects of eBird, like how to use it to increase your life list/state list/county list!

He has had a highly interdisciplinary career in the fields of environmental science and conservation that includes service in state and federal government as well as the nonprofit sector. He has worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, where he regulated high-profile mining projects as well as hydraulic fracturing. In addition, Ross has managed conservation lands with The Nature Conservancy in Maine and the Mianus River Gorge Preserve in New York; lobbied Congress to strengthen loopholes in the Clean Water Act; started his own nature photography business; worked as a park ranger and naturalist in Denali, Olympic, and Everglades National Parks; and founded a nonprofit association to protect forest land in Annapolis, Maryland.

In 2013, Ross traveled to Peru to investigate the social and environmental impacts of open-pit gold mining. Ross holds a Master of Environmental Management degree in Ecology from Yale University. He speaks fluent Spanish and has traveled extensively in Latin America, including his favorite country to bird, Colombia. He has been birding for 28 years and has led bird walks throughout North America. His birding resume includes many types of avian surveys, including volunteering with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in Arkansas' White River delta to search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. Besides birding, Ross enjoys hiking, cooking, foreign languages, and independent travel. Ross Geredien is a self-described "power-user" of eBird, which he has used extensively since 2009. 🕶️

P.O. Box 1311
Bowie, MD 20718-1311

Officers and Board of Directors

2018-2019 Roster

Officers

President: Kenneth "Ken" Cohen
kvulture@aol.com

Vice President: Beth Kantrowitz
Conservation Chair, Web Master
kantrowitz@comcast.net

Secretary: Sallie McElrath
salliem50@gmail.com

Treasurer: Ikumi Kayama
ikumikayama@gmail.com

Directors

Maureen Blades
Newsletter Editor
mblades5@verizon.net

Lisa Bierer-Garrett
Conservation-Local Issues
froglipp@gmail.com

Claudia Ferguson
Member-at-Large
cafstars@gmail.com

Karen Jackson
Member-at-Large
redmanroots@yahoo.com

John Stith
Publicity Coordinator
john.stith@gmail.com

Teresa "Terry" Watson
Community Outreach
tlwatson1@verizon.net

Volunteer

Helana Zagami, Newsletter Design
helanazagami@gmail.com

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CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

The PGAS and the Patuxent Bird Club (PBC), a chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society, jointly plan programs and field trips. No reservations required for regular bird walks. All skill levels are welcome.

Thursdays, Apr 4 & 18, and May 2 & 16, 6 pm (Start time 6 pm Apr - Aug) Lake Artemesia Natural Area Bird Walk. (1st and 3rd Thursdays monthly)

Wheelchair-accessible. Meet at parking lot at intersection of Berwyn Rd. and Ballew Ave. in Berwyn Heights. Contact David Mozurkewich at mozurk@bellatlantic.net or 301-509-5122 for more information.

Saturdays, Apr 6* and May 4, 7:30 am Fran Uhler Natural Area Bird Walk. (1st Saturday monthly)

Meet at east end of Lemon's Bridge Road, off Route 197 just north of Bowie State University. Contact Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com or 240-603-5201 for more information. *Apr 6 is FUNA's Spring Clean-up Day. Help pick up litter and trash to preserve the area's natural beauty as we also enjoy birding!

Saturday, Apr 13, 9 am - Noon, Good Neighbor Day at Lake Artemesia

Meet by the bathrooms and butterfly bench at 9 am. Join UM college students and others from the community to plant native plants by the bench, move some pea gravel into wet areas, and place stepping stones. Get your picture on the butterfly bench! Looking for Audubon folks, and bird, insect, park, and nature lovers to come help out! For more information, see the GND Flyer [here](#) or contact Lisa Bierer-Garrett at 301-751-4344.

Saturdays, Apr 20 and May 18, 7:30 am, Governor Bridge Natural Area Bird Walk. (3rd Saturday monthly)

Meet at the Natural Area parking lot on the south side of Governor Bridge Rd., 1 mile east of Route 301. For more information contact Bill Sefton at kiwisuits@msn.com or 240-603-5201.

Monday, Apr 22, Earth Day

The Earth Day Network's theme for this year's Earth Day is "Protect our species." Find ways to help our planet and take action this Earth Day [here](#).

Friday, Apr 26, the 233rd birthday of John James Audubon's birth in 1785

Audubon became the greatest painter of birds of all time. Learn more by visiting the John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove, PA, about 2.5 hours



from our area. Walk through a historic house and exhibits, trails, and diverse habitats. See audubon.org.

Saturday, Apr 27, 7 am, Fort Smallwood Hawk Watch

Meet at the Bowie Park and Ride then carpool to Fort Smallwood Park in Anne Arundel County to observe the spring raptor migration spectacle. Bring a folding chair, hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, drinks and snacks. No reservations needed. For more information on the event and parking fees, visit PBC's [website](#) or contact David Mozurkewich at mozurk@bellatlantic.net.

Saturday, May 4, Global Big Day sponsored by Team eBird

Every bird counts. Last May, over 30,000 people took to fields and forests, noting more than 7,000 species in a single day of birding! In only 6 weeks, birding's biggest day is coming back. Create a free ebird account [here](#), then watch birds on May 4 and log your findings on ebird. For more information visit ebird.org.

Saturday, May 4, Noon - 3 pm, Rachel Carson Open House

The Rachel Carson Landmark Alliance will host an open house at the National Historic Landmark home where Rachel Carson wrote her renowned book *Silent Spring*, located at 11701 Berwick Road in Silver Spring, MD. The event will feature key note speakers, organic refreshments, live music, and more. For more information visit their website [here](#).

Sunday, May 5, 7:00 - 7:45 pm, Special Event - Chimney Swift Watch in Baltimore at Dusk

In conjunction with our upcoming May program with Joan Cwi on Chimney Swifts, the Baltimore Bird Club invites us to join them for their annual swift watch at dusk. See page 5 for more details.

Saturday, May 11 & Sunday, May 12, World Migratory Bird Day

This year's theme is Protect Birds: Be the Solution to Plastic Pollution! For more information click [here](#).

Saturday, May 11, May Bird Count

Annual county-wide census of resident and migrating birds. Pick your own start and stop times. For your area and more information, contact Fred Fallon at fwfallon@gmail.com or 410-286-8152.

Friday, May 17, Endangered Species Day and Bike To Work Day

Conserve the environment by helping endangered species at endangered.org and biking to work!

Now thru November 30, Exhibit of National Audubon Society 2017 Wildlife Photography Contest Winners

PGAS and Patuxent River Park invite you to view these dozen extraordinary photographs by amateur and professional photographers. While at the park, take in the view over the Jug Bay wetlands, enjoy scenic trails, visit the Patuxent Rural Life Museums, or get out on the river. 16000 Croom Airport Road, Upper Marlboro 20772. Call 301-627-6074 or visit the [website](#) for more information.

CONTACT US:

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/princegeorgesaudubonsociety>

Meetup: www.meetup.com/PrinceGeorge's-Audubon-Society

Twitter: [@pgaudubon](https://twitter.com/pgaudubon)

PGAS Website: www.pgaudubon.org



*Audubon Painting: George P. A. Healy

MAKING TIME FOR BIRDS

Spring migration has arrived! Hawk watches have started, wintering waterfowl are disappearing, the blackbirds are cleaning out our feeders, and the cardinals are singing. The Department of Interior continues to undermine the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Governor Hogan desires to develop Oxon Cove Park, and President Trump proposes budget cut funding for the EPA, as well as the Interior Dept. The Prince George's Audubon Society (PGAS) and the Patuxent Bird Club must plan next year's programs, field trips, and outreach events, as well as respond to environmental threats. How can we manage our time and resources to respond to these often conflicting demands on our time?

My first priority is to schedule time for the birds. From the last week of April through the first two or more weeks of May, being in the field is my first priority. I will spend a morning at the Fort Smallwood Hawk Watch, join the bird walks at Lake Artemesia, Fran Uhler, and Governor Bridge Natural Areas. At the beginning of May, I expect to be back in Delmarva, and hope to return to Lake Erie at the end of "The Biggest Week of Birding in America". At the end of May, I will be off to see the Red Knots in Delaware Bay. Hello, Kentucky Warbler, goodbye, White-throated Sparrow. Thank you, email, for enabling me to keep in touch with the activities of our chapter to respond as needed, and thank you to our officers and directors who need no supervision.

Governor Hogan's threat to Oxon Cove Park has resulted in the creation of a coordinated coalition of organizations that desire to maintain the park's benefits for the adults and children of Maryland and the District of Columbia, as well as for the habitat, wetlands, forest, and birds, herps, and other wildlife. The Maryland Ornithology Society, Patuxent Bird Club, Prince George's Audubon Society, Southern Maryland Audubon Society, and Central Maryland Heritage League have already expressed their opposition to his plan to the Governor and our State and Local representatives. We will also be coordinating additional action with the Sierra Club and The National Parks Conservation Association in opposing the transfer of Oxon Cove Park to the State of Maryland. D.C. Audubon Society, too, has expressed interest in joining our opposition.

Sharing the work through a variety of chapters increases our effectiveness and efficiency. The Sierra Club organized its annual lobbying night in Annapolis for state environmental issues. PGAS joined that effort to lobby for, among other things, the ban on single-use plastic containers, and also to express our opposition to



the Oxon Cove land grab. Since that night, both the House and Senate of the state legislature have passed the ban on single-use plastic containers under certain circumstances, the first state in the U.S. to do so. The American Bird Conservatory has scheduled a legislative briefing and reception on April 2nd. Representing PGAS, I will be using that opportunity to meet with my Congressman to express my thanks for his support of our chapter's environmental issues and expressing our ongoing concerns on these issues. These coalitions of environmentally-focused organizations enable each individual organization to concentrate on its priorities, while joining others to support their similar priorities.

The Prince George's County Audubon Society recently reorganized and simplified its Committee structure to add efficiency in meeting its objectives, carrying out its programs and initiating action. Our chapter has formed three standing committees: 1. Ikumi Kayama has agreed to be the chair of the Membership Committee. That committee will be responsible for publicity, publications, web site revision, and member outreach, including special notices to members. 2. Lisa Bierer-Garrett has agreed to be the chair of the Activities Committee. That committee will be responsible for festivals, outreach events, field trip planning, and program planning. 3. Beth Kantowitz has agreed to continue to chair the Conservation Committee.

PRESIDENT'S PERCH (CONT.)

That committee will be responsible for responding to threats to birds, other wildlife and their environment, maintaining coalitions with other organizations with similar interests, lobbying at all political levels, and researching environmental issues that affect our county's residents and environment. These committees will include conducting business by way of email and phone with the intent to eliminate unnecessary meetings. Our chapter hopes that this simplification of our structure will also induce you, our members and other interested volunteers, to join a committee and actively engage in an activity which suits your expertise (none needed) and/or your interest.

I know it is only a pipe dream to be able to balance the demands of time to accomplish all we

desire, but by prioritizing, forming coalitions, and relying on others, the Prince George's Audubon Society is laying the foundation for its continued success. Please join a committee and provide our chapter with your expertise and energy. Your participation on a committee provides direct influence on what Prince George's Audubon does and how it accomplishes its mission. Let any one of our officers know if you would like to join the board, if you can help redesign its web site, help with its newsletter, provide a talk about bird-friendly landscaping or gardens, participate in representing PGAS at an event, lobby a politician, meet with a school group, or any other action you believe would benefit our chapter and further its mission. 🕒

FRAN UHLER NATURAL AREA BIRD WALK MARCH 2, 2019

This was supposed to be Clean-up Day at FUNA. But the super wet conditions - and the fact that we only had a half-dozen would-be-trash-pickers/birders in attendance - made for an easy decision to postpone the litter and just go birding.

We reached the 33 species threshold before we left FUNA with good looks at a perched adult Bald Eagle and 2 (maybe 3) Red-tailed Hawks in flight as highlights.

The Horsepen Area provided nice close views of Purple Finch, and 3 Hooded Mergansers swimming and diving in the pond.

We ended the day with a total of 40 species. Preliminary list is shown to the right.

Until next time!

Bill Sefton



It was nice and dry with absolutely no puddles to slow us down - uh, well, maybe a small drop of water here or there...

Source: Tim Hudspeth

Species	FUNA	FUNA Num	Hpen	Hpen Num
Great Blue Heron	1	1		
Black Vulture	1	2		
Canada Goose	1	8	1	6
Mallard	1	2		
Hooded Merganser			1	3
Bald Eagle	1	1		
Red-shouldered Hawk			1	1
Red-tailed Hawk	1	2		
Rock Pigeon	1	2		
Mourning Dove	1	2	1	3
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	3	1	1
Downy Woodpecker	1	1		
Hairy Woodpecker			1	1
Northern Flicker			1	1
Pileated Woodpecker	1	2		
Blue Jay	1	15	1	4
American Crow	1	13	1	3
Fish Crow	1	7		
Carolina Chickadee			1	1
Tufted Titmouse	1	2	1	2
White-breasted Nuthatch	1	3	1	2
Carolina Wren	1	4	1	2
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1	4	1	2
Hermit Thrush	1	1		
American Robin	1	25	1	14
Northern Mockingbird	1	1	1	1
European Starling	1	9	1	7
Eastern Towhee	1	1		
Field Sparrow	1	5		
Song Sparrow	1	8	1	5
Swamp Sparrow	1	6	1	2
White-throated Sparrow	1	29	1	7
Dark-eyed Junco	1	7	1	9
Northern Cardinal	1	10	1	5
Red-winged Blackbird	1	75	1	18
Common Grackle	1	3	1	2
Purple Finch			1	4
House Finch			1	12
American Goldfinch	1	3	1	2
House Sparrow	1	4		
TOTAL	33	261	27	120

MAY PROGRAM

THE ORDINARY, EXTRAORDINARY CHIMNEY SWIFT

Featured Speaker: Joan Cwi

7:30 pm, Tuesday, May 14, 2019

College Park Airport

Operations Building, 2nd Floor,

1909 Cpl. Frank Scott Dr., College Park

Although the hummingbird is the closest taxonomic relative to the swift, swifts certainly did not inherit the hummingbird's "pretty" genes - but these plain, little birds are extraordinary in so many ways. The Chimney Swift is the only swift that migrates to the Eastern U.S., so Joan will discuss this particular species in regard to anatomy, speed, dexterity, nesting, and migration based on sixteen years of research and observation. During the Baltimore Bird Club's migration swift watches, we have counted as many as 7,000 Chimney Swifts entering a roosting chimney in less than an hour!



About the lecturer

The first decade and a half of Joan's adult life was devoted to studying and subsequently teaching medieval art history at the collegiate level. Naturally, she then spent the next three decades as a

survey methodologist for health-related studies. In the decade since retirement, she has dedicated herself to birding, travelling extensively throughout North and South America for this purpose. She has been an active Baltimore Bird Club (BBC) member during this time, including a six-year tenure as President. For the past sixteen years, she and two other birding colleagues have sponsored spring and fall swift migration watches for BBC. Joan is the past committee chair and editor of MOS's Maryland/DC Birding Guide (<https://www.mdbirdingguide.com>), and brought the Guide to life as a website. 🕒

ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS:

PGAS monthly programs are held the second Tuesday each month, September through June, in partnership with the Patuxent Bird Club, a chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society. Programs are open free of charge to all who are interested. Bring a friend!

Doors open at 7:00 p.m. for refreshments and socializing before the 7:30 p.m. presentation. Each program opens with brief statements from leaders of both clubs about upcoming events, items of interest and other club business, followed by the featured speaker with a question-and-answer period afterwards.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY:

All programs are expected to be held as scheduled. PGAS follows M-NCPPC/Prince George's County Government's policy on inclement weather closings, which are announced on both television and radio.

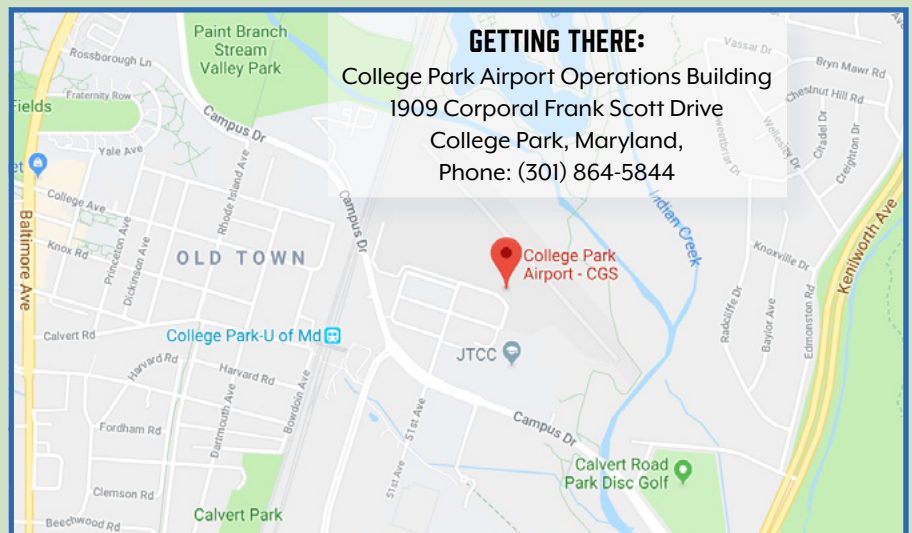
SPECIAL EVENT: CHIMNEY SWIFT WATCH IN BALTIMORE AT DUSK

Sunday, May 5, 7:00 – 7:45 pm

In addition to this upcoming May program, the Baltimore Bird Club invites us to join them for their annual swift watch at dusk. The BBC plans to hold the watch at the Bookbindery Chimney in the Hampden area of Baltimore, but will update their website and Facebook page with any change of venue if the chimney is not productive the week before the event. For updates on location and weather cancellation check the BBC's [website](#) and [Facebook page](#), and for more information contact Leaders Joan Cwi at jafjsc@verizon.net or Alice Nelson at alice.display@verizon.net.

GETTING THERE:

College Park Airport Operations Building
1909 Corporal Frank Scott Drive
College Park, Maryland,
Phone: (301) 864-5844



I BIRD I VOTE REPORT BY SALLIE McELRATH

I attended the 4th Annual “I Bird I Vote Bird Conservation Summit” on March 2, 2019, hosted by Audubon Maryland-DC at the Patuxent National Wildlife Visitors Center. It was both energizing and daunting. As a new attendee and new Board member of PGAS, I had a lot to learn about Audubon’s conservation agenda. The agenda was jam packed with updates on amazing technological advances that are helping to track birds and other wildlife. Check out the Maryland Biodiversity Project [here](#) and Audubon’s Migratory Bird Initiative [here](#).



Source: Hugh Simmons Photography

However, the Summit was even more focused on the many challenges birds face and what various organizations are doing to confront them. Specifically, we heard about the efforts to stop a gas pipeline in western Maryland and about an Offshore Wind Development project proposed along the Delaware-Maryland-Virginia coast. In the case of the wind farm, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources detailed all the measures they are taking to assess environmental impacts to birds and marine life. I applaud Audubon and the various organizations working to monitor and guide these efforts and to reduce negative impacts to the extent possible. These alternative energy sources all have some negative impacts, but none seem as bad to me as coal.

We celebrated the passing of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Reauthorization and also heard about the very promising Maryland 2019 Legislative Session. Several bills that were thwarted last year are moving forward. Both the Maryland Senate and the House of Delegates passed the Polystyrene Bill which prohibits food establishments and sellers from providing carry-out containers, vegetable trays, egg cartons, and other polystyrene food containers, because it can't be recycled, doesn't break down, and doesn't biodegrade. Signed into law, Maryland will become the first state in the nation to ban this pernicious pollutant!

The following bills may still need your support. Tell your state senator and delegate to vote “yes” to protect water, birds and other wildlife in Maryland.

The Task Force on Forest Conservation (SB0729/HB0735) sets up the body to undertake a technical review of existing forest cover in the state and an analysis of the health and quality of state forests. It faces strong opposition from the timber industry.

The No Net Loss Forest Bill (SB0203/HB0120) would change the state standard for achieving a no net loss of forest policy by altering the definition of "no net loss of forest" to mean that 40% of all land in Maryland is covered by forestland.

The Chlorpyrifos ban (SB0270/HB0275) would ban the sale of this bird- and insect-killing chemical in Maryland.

The Healthy Climate Initiative (HBI235/SB0702) would create a Maryland Healthy Climate Initiative housed in the Maryland Department of the Environment. The bill would make polluters and greenhouse gas emitters pay a steadily rising fee for emitting carbon pollution.

The Pipeline and Water Protection Act (SB0387/HB0669) would require those seeking to construct a

fractured-gas pipeline to meet water quality certification standards and pay a nonrefundable fee for the state to review the application. It forces the Maryland Department of the Environment to not waive its right to do a 401 water quality review on such proposals

The Chesapeake Bay Bridge Expanse Consent Bill (HB0102/SB0442) expands consent from only Eastern Shore counties to all impacted counties and the City of Baltimore to having a new bridge expansion over the Bay with its impacts of a new road and massive traffic. The Solar Energy Blueprint Bill (HB0532/SB0744) would establish a commission on the development of a Blueprint for Solar Energy in Maryland to guide units of state and local government in evaluating proposed solar energy projects, including their siting.

The Clean Energy Jobs Act (SB0516/HB1158) would establish criteria for qualified offshore wind projects, and increase the minimum required percentage of energy that must be derived from renewable sources in the State's renewable energy portfolio standard to 50% by 2030.

The Summit was a public event open to everyone and widely advertised to an audience of people interested in bird conservation. Registration was closed at 135 attendees due to room size limitations. Congratulations and thanks to the staff of Audubon Maryland-DC for hosting and organizing this very informative day. 🕒

GOVERNOR BRIDGE NATURAL AREA BIRD WALK MARCH 16, 2019

Spring trash clean-up day at GBNA! 75% of the trash was right there in the parking area. We had at least a dozen birders – including 2 newcomers to our walk – willing to put the binoculars aside while stooping to remove the detritus accumulated over the past few months.

Dave Mozurkewich deserves special mention as he first filled, and then toted our very last trash bag down from the upper fields. He looked a bit like St. Nick with the bag slung over his shoulder – if the jolly old elf carried broken glass and empty beer cans instead of toys.

Anyhow, enough about the garbage. Onto the birds! We really didn't have all that many highlights. We got some great views of Ring-necked Ducks on the big pond. The lighting was so good you could actually see the rings on the necks! And, we had a first of the season look at a high flying Northern Harrier.

We ended at 38 species. I was busy carrying trash, so I could well have missed some along the way. Let me know if you had some that I didn't.

Until next time!

Bill Sefton



Birders spotted 450 robins at GBNA.
Source: Dimitri Tundra

Species	GBNA	GBNA Num
Great Blue Heron	1	1
Black Vulture	1	11
Turkey Vulture	1	14
Canada Goose	1	16
Wood Duck	1	2
Mallard	1	5
Ring-necked Duck	1	62
Northern Harrier	1	1
Buteo Hawk (sp)	1	1
Ring-billed Gull	1	42
Herring Gull	1	1
Mourning Dove	1	10
Belted Kingfisher	1	2
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	3
Downy Woodpecker	1	2
Northern Flicker	1	3
Pileated Woodpecker	1	1
Eastern Phoebe	1	1
Blue Jay	1	4
American Crow	1	7
Tree Swallow	1	1
Carolina Chickadee	1	4
Tufted Titmouse	1	2
Carolina Wren	1	5
Eastern Bluebird	1	1
Hermit Thrush	1	1
American Robin	1	450
Cedar Waxwing	1	6
Eastern Towhee	1	2
Field Sparrow	1	3
Song Sparrow	1	5
Swamp Sparrow	1	1
White-throated Sparrow	1	15
Dark-eyed Junco	1	6
Northern Cardinal	1	8
Red-winged Blackbird	1	7
Brown-headed Cowbird	1	1
American Goldfinch	1	2
TOTAL	38	709

ELECTION OF PGAS 2019-2020 OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Nominating Committee will present this slate for election at the May 14 program meeting. Current PGAS members of the National Audubon Society are eligible to vote and run for office.

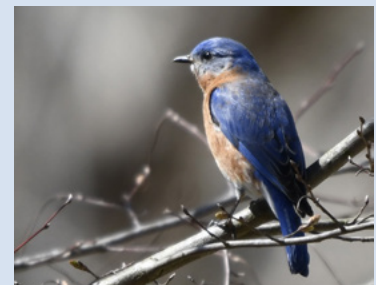
Presently, there are openings on the board. With the consent of the nominee, nominations can be made beforehand to mblades5@verizon.net, including your own! Nominations are also welcome from the floor on election night.

OFFICERS:

President: Kenneth Cohen*
 Vice-President: Lisa Bierer-Garrett
 Treasurer: Ikumi Kayama*
 Secretary: Sallie McElrath*
 *Incumbent

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Maureen Blades*
 Claudia Ferguson*
 Beth Kantrowitz
 Karen Jackson*
 Teresa Watson*



Source: Dimitri Tundra

Our thanks go to outgoing board member **John Stith**.

John has served as publicity coordinator; coordinator of the May Count and Christmas Bird Count in Greenbelt; and as our liaison with MOM's Organic Market for our annual Mi Casa es su Casa migration bird festival, as well as a greeter and helper at the information table that day.

We are thankful for John's thoughtful and ongoing technical advice and assistance on list-serves and websites. We are also glad John will continue to help with publicity, and as an important part of our chapter by serving on the new Membership Committee in the chapter reorganization structure he proposed.

CELEBRATING JOHN JAMES AUDUBON'S 233RD BIRTHDAY BY MAUREEN BLADES

One way to teach young people a love of nature, curiosity, birds and other wildlife is through wonderful books such as these. Below are great reads for all ages.

Reviewed in The Washington Post's Book World, "For Young Readers," by Elizabeth Ward, Sep. 12, 2004:

• ***The Race to Save the Lord God Bird*** by Phillip Hoose (ages 12-up) "Is wildlife conservation boring? Not necessarily. There is probably more passion, sadness, villainy, heroism and sheer suspense in this account of the decline of the ivory-billed woodpecker than in any other book in any genre destined for your readers' shelves this year. Two centuries ago, the enormous black, scarlet and white bird that John James Audubon dubbed the "Van Dyke" for its dramatic appearance was already scarce in the United States." Hoose explained that the better-known nickname echoes a common reaction, "Lord God, what a bird!" It is now considered extinct.

• ***The Boy Who Drew Birds: a Story of John James Audubon***, by Jacqueline Davies, illustrated by Melissa Sweet (ages 5-9), a favorite gift from my sister Ruth. "This delicately illustrated book shows the Haitian-born Audubon as an 18-year-old in Pennsylvania, already crazy about birds and clearly more interested in watching them in the wild than studying them in books. Thus, curious to see whether some pewee flycatchers nesting near his home were the same ones who had built the nest the year before, the teenager became the first person in North America to band a bird. Davies does full justice to this tale of intellectual precocity and single-mindedness." This is a beautiful book by two people for whom birds have been a life-long interest – and it shows.

• ***Audubon: Painter of Birds in the Wild Frontier*** by Jennifer Armstrong, illustrations by Jos. A. Smith. This autographed book, gifted me on my 50th birthday by former PGAS President Carolyn Sturtevant, still graces my bookshelf. The illustrations give great insight into Audubon's work: ducking from "a tornado or a mighty thundercloud" of thousands, a million, passenger pigeons; encountering wolves; and enduring an earthquake. They show his curiosity and determination to record and paint what he saw. The author's and the illustrator's personal notes at the book's conclusion added great insight.

• ***She's Wearing a Dead Bird on Her Head!*** by Kathryn Lasky, illustrated by David Catrow (ages 5-9). This award-winning book also gifted me by my sister is based on the true story of Bostonians Minna Hall and Harriet Hemenway, who decide to do something about the millinery fashion of making hats from birds. The club they formed to protect the birds gave birth to the Massachusetts Audubon Society. The School Library Review points to the humor on each page through exaggerated postures and expressions, "but the serious political action comes through just the same...a fascinating and little-known slice of history." The Author's Note is itself a history of the bird-hat protest movement at a time when women wanted to participate more in society and the right to vote, and notes their early impact on legislation and education of the bird-protection movement. Coincidentally, a clipping from long-ago literature from the National Audubon Society (NAS) fell out of my book with a picture of George Bird (really) Grinnell, who published the first issue of Audubon magazine. Founder of NAS, Grinnell had been schooled as a boy by Lucy Audubon, wife of John James Audubon. Full circle. 🕶️



ABOUT PRINCE GEORGE'S AUDUBON SOCIETY

The Prince George's Audubon Society (PGAS) was established 47 years ago in 1972 as a 501(c)3 chapter of the National Audubon Society (NAS) to serve northern Prince George's County and adjoining parts of Anne Arundel County.

In 1987, PGAS partnered with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) in the clean-up and restoration of an illegal dump site by adopting the Fran Uhler Natural Area as part of the Adopt-A-Refuge Program of the NAS. The chapter conducted on-going clean-ups and free monthly nature/bird walks that continue to this day.

In 2001, PGAS and the Patuxent Bird Club, a chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society, began jointly planning programs and field trips.

In 2003, PGAS led the first monthly bird walk at a second M-NCPPC property, the Governor Bridge Natural Area that continues to this day.

In 2008, PGAS was instrumental with M-NCPPC in the creation of the Luther Goldman Birding Trail at Lake Artemesia, the county's only birding trail, where two monthly bird walks have been led ever since.

With over 800 members and officers elected by the general membership, our chapter continues to provide bird walks, field trips, speaker programs, its annual birding festival at Lake Artemesia, and also participates in community and other educational events for its members and the general public.

Membership in PGAS comes automatically from joining the NAS. Members receive The Bluebird, the newsletter of this chapter, keeping them informed of bird walks, field trips, monthly programs, community events, and other news of interest.

Come join us – and learn more about the natural world, birds, their challenges, and what we can do to help.

THE LAUREL TREE SWALLOW INITIATIVE BY KEN COHEN

Bob and Carol Relitz discovered that mosquitoes and other insects sometimes made use of Victoria Falls' outdoor facilities uncomfortable. They sought an environmentally friendly, technologically feasible response to this problem. They focused on a biological approach - either bats or tree swallows. Bat houses were too complex to build and erect. Bob could make tree swallow nest boxes, poles, baffles and mounts in his garage workshop. They asked PG Audubon (that meant me, their neighbor) for help. We made a presentation to our Homeowners Association reporting the presence of tree swallows near our community, the swallows' voracious appetite for insects, the need to assist swallows from their steep decline in numbers, the utility of birdhouses as a winter shelter for our year-round resident birds, the attractiveness of the bird houses, and the lack of cost to the Homeowners Association. After due deliberation, the Homeowners Association rejected this proposal to place bird houses around its ponds.



Joanne Hall-Barr, Carole Relitz and Bob Relitz at Riverside Park. Source: Ken Cohen

Carol then took her initiative to the City of Laurel. Joanne Hall-Barr, the Director of Parks and Recreation embraced the idea. Bob constructed the houses, poles, and baffles in his workshop. Carol induced others to help decorate

them; Joanne introduced the idea to the community to sponsor a house. A diverse group of businesses and individuals sponsored the houses and either painted them or obtained the help of local schools to decorate them. In return for my help with tree swallow research, Bob gave me lessons in birdhouse construction, baffle construction, and birdhouse



Bob Relitz at the Laurel Lakes. Source: Ken Cohen

maintenance. On October 12, 2018, the first five birdhouses were installed at Laurel's Riverfront Park. Laurel produced a YouTube video viewable [here](#). The houses were a success with the community. People enjoyed the way they were decorated, and the information about tree swallows posted on the baffles.

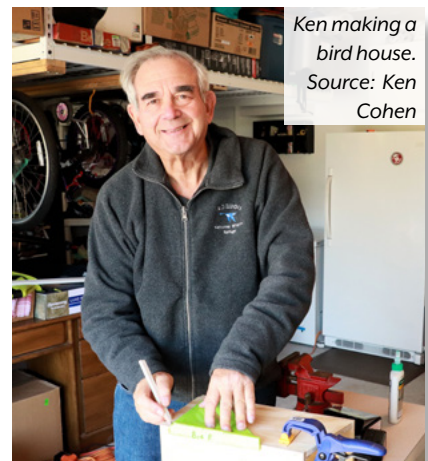
The community embrace of the project resulted in many businesses, organizations, and individuals sponsoring additional houses. CertaPro Painters, Women Working Wonders; Uncommon Design, LLC; Debi Collins, realtor; and the Girl Scouts, are typical of the sponsors. Laurel and Pallotti High Schools decorated some of the boxes. On January 31, 2019, Laurel held an installation event at



Bob Relitz delivering the first five bird houses at Riverside Park. Source: Ken Cohen

Granville Gude Park/Laurel Lakes to display the birdhouses before their installation at the park. See YouTube video [here](#). After installation, some of the boxes required repair and refinishing for additional protection against the weather. None of the boxes have been vandalized. People using the two parks have been very pleased with the birdhouses.

Carol and Bob did not let the Homeowners Association prevent them from erecting tree swallow boxes adjacent to the pond which bred the mosquitoes that inspired their effort. Their research revealed that BGE owned the right of way adjacent to the pond. They negotiated an agreement with BGE which permitted them to erect some bird houses on the right of way.



Ken making a bird house. Source: Ken Cohen

We hope that as winter turns to spring, the tree swallows will discover the nest boxes and use them to raise their young. 🦉

2019 MAY BIRDATHONS

This year, the Prince George's Audubon Society (PGAS) will run two birdathons - the Minibirdathon and a typical birdathon. The **Minibirdathon** is similar to our past Itty Bitty Birdathon except time is 4 consecutive hours, not 3, and in addition to Prince George's County, participants may also bird in Montgomery, Anne Arundel, Howard, Calvert, and Charles Counties. Same scoring applies - that is, warblers count 2 points and all other birds count 1 point. Same \$10 entry fee and, again, the equalizer is that all team members must see the bird - hearing only does not count for the Minibirdathon.

PGAS will also conduct a typical **Maryland Birdathon**: bird all day, anywhere in the State of Maryland. Entry fee is \$10 per team per birdathon, same scoring rules, except birds heard, but not seen, count.

Teams may be comprised of two or more members. On two-member teams, both members must see or hear the bird. On three or more member teams, one more person than half the team must get the bird. On odd-numbered teams, the majority of the team must get the bird.

Both birdathons run throughout the month of May. Enter either or both birdathons by the end of April. Simply send a check (\$10/one; \$20/two) payable to Prince George's Audubon Society together with the date you select to bird, an alternative date, your team name, and a list of your team members. The address for entries is:

Prince George's Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1311
Bowie, MD
20718-1311

The winners and their awards will be announced at the June meeting. Join the fun!!

A Common Grackle perched on a branch.
Source: Dimitri Tundra



OWL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT NEST CAMS

Spring is here and mating season has arrived, meaning bird cams are back in full swing. Regardless of your birding skills, cams are a great way to learn about these beautiful creatures and their nesting habits. Click on the following links to catch up on the latest news for owls, eagles, hawks, and birds throughout the world.

Barred Owls in rural Indiana prepare for breeding season

Bald Eagles Mr. President and The First Lady raise eaglets in the U.S. National Arboretum

Red-tailed Hawks brace themselves and their eggs for New York's gusty winds

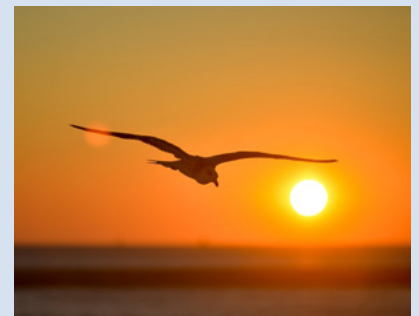
For more bird cams, visit the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's website.



Source: Dimitri Tundra

AUDUBON'S MISSION:

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. The Prince George's Audubon Society was established in 1972 as a chapter of the National Audubon Society covering northern Prince George's County and neighboring parts of western Anne Arundel County.



PGAS GREEN COMMUNITY EVENTS!

Our chapter will participate in the following local events to let the community know we are an active group and share info about our bird walks, programs, clean-up efforts, and other activities. We talk with people about their bird and nature questions and tell them what PGAS does to help. Our table has diverse handouts on birds/butterflies/other wildlife, items for kids, etc. We hopefully gain new members to make our chapter stronger.

9th Annual Bowie Green Expo:

Educate the Youth, Inspire the Future

Saturday, April 13, 12-4 pm, free.
Family fun, Kids Zone, puppet show, live entertainment, electric car display, over 50 green vendors.
Kenhill Center, 2614 Kenhill Drive, Bowie, MD 20715. Visit [website](#).

Spring Greening Fair 2019

Saturday, May 4,
12 noon-5 pm, Mount Rainier Nature and Recreation Center, Prince George's County's only urban nature center,
4701 31st Place, Mount Rainier, MD 20712

Greenbelt Green Man Festival

Saturday, May 11, 10 am-6 pm.
Fine arts and crafts, kids area, demonstrations, music, food booths - all with many other groups involved in making our world more conservation-minded.
Roosevelt Center, 113 Centerway, Historic Greenbelt, MD 20770

We would appreciate and can use volunteers at all the above. You need not volunteer for all day. Being there lends a hand for extra help and a break when needed – and it's fun! There is a lot of camaraderie between those volunteering, those visiting our table, and the other groups participating as well. Please consider helping "tabling" at any event, particularly these first three right around the corner, and let us know now by contacting Teresa Watson at tlwatson1@verizon.net.

CHECK IT TO PROTECT IT! LINE 35 ON YOUR MD TAX FORM

As a Maryland taxpayer, you can help conserve rare, threatened and endangered species by donating to the [Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund](#) on your tax form. It's simple: just check line 35 on Form 502 or line 13 on Form 503 and enter in the amount you would like to donate.

Donations to this fund are divided evenly between Bay restoration grants provided by the Chesapeake Bay Trust and rare species programs run by the Wildlife and Heritage Service at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Not only will your donation help the Bay, it also is tax deductible the following year!

MEMBERSHIP

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

- Audubon magazine, 4 issues a year
- Membership in the local chapter (PGAS)
- PGAS newsletter, *The Bluebird*
- 10 free monthly programs
- 4 free monthly bird walks for all skill levels at local area parks
- Free local and Mid-Atlantic field trips



Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

I would also like to add a contribution to the chapter's work and activities. \$ _____

Please make your check payable to the National Audubon Society and mail to: PGAS, P.O. Box 1311, Bowie, MD 20718. Your membership fee is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. 40% up to a maximum amount of \$10 is directed to Audubon magazine. To join using a credit card, please visit our website (www.pgaudubon.org) and follow the link under Membership. Enter Prince George's Audubon Society's chapter code: C2ZL010Z. Prince George's Audubon Society is a 501(c)3 organization.