



June - August 2019

# 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](http://www.pgaudubon.org)

## MEMBER-SHARE NIGHT: FAVORITE BIRDING AND NATURE PHOTOS

**Featured Speakers: Us/You!**

7:30 pm, Tuesday, June 11, 2019

College Park Airport

Operations Building, 2nd Floor,  
1909 Cpl. Frank Scott Dr., College Park



Join members of the Prince George's Audubon Society and the Patuxent Bird Club as they present a few of their favorite photos and give brief presentations about their birding adventures. Not a member? All are invited to join us on this informal night to share *your* favorite photo(s) - or sit back and enjoy those of others. Those who wish to present must contact Marcia Watson at <mailto:marshwren50@comcast.net> no later than June 4, so that she can organize the agenda for the evening. See you there. Bring a friend!



Photo Sources: Ken Cohen (top right) and Dimitri Tundra (bottom left and right).

## 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.



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2019-2020 Roster

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Calendar of Activities .....	2
Live Bird Cams .....	2
President's Perch .....	3
Photo Walk Around Oxon Cove Park and Farm.....	4-6
FUNA Bird Walk .....	6
Good Neighbor Day 2019...	7
Patuxent Research Refuge South Tract Bird Walk.....	8
Conservation Notes .....	9
Outreach .....	10

# 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.

## 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.

## Thursdays, Jun 6 & 20, Jul 18\* and Aug 1 & 15, 6 pm, 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](mailto:mozurk@bellatlantic.net) or 301-509-5122 for more information. **\*NOTE: There will be no bird walk on Thursday, July 4 because of festivities at the site.**

## Saturdays, Jun 1, Jul 6 and Aug 3, 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](mailto:kiwisuits@msn.com) or 240-603-5201 for more information.

## Saturdays, Jun 15, Jul 20 and Aug 17, 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](mailto:kiwisuits@msn.com) or 240-603-5201.

## Saturday, Jun 29, 7:30 am, South Tract of Patuxent Research Refuge

One of a series of walks to explore the seasonal variations in bird use of the habitats at South Tract. Be prepared to walk up to 2 miles. Wear sturdy shoes and bring a water bottle. Target species include breeding warblers, flycatchers, vireos, and sparrows.

Meet at 7:30 am in the parking lot of the National Wildlife Visitor Center off Powder Mill Rd.; bear left on entering the parking area and go all the way to the last section of the lot past the covered solar recharging station for electric vehicles. For directions, click [here](#). For further information, contact the leader, Ken Cohen, at [kvulture@aol.com](mailto:kvulture@aol.com).

## Saturday, Aug 17, 9 am, Delaware Bayshore

The trip will visit Bombay Hook and other refuges along the shores of the Delaware Bay with a focus on migrating shorebirds, waders, and passerines. Bring spotting scope, sunscreen, bug repellent, water & other drinks, lunch and snacks. Long pants, long-sleeved shirt, and closed-toes shoes recommended. Meet at the Visitor Center at Bombay Hook. (directions available from leaders). Leaders will be Marcia Watson and Gene Scarpulla. Please RSVP to Marcia ([marshwren50@comcast.net](mailto:marshwren50@comcast.net)) no later than August 14 so that they have a headcount and know who to expect.

## CONTACT US:

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

Meetup: [www.meetup.com/PrinceGeorge's-Audubon-Society](http://www.meetup.com/PrinceGeorge's-Audubon-Society)

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

PGAS Website: [www.pgaudubon.org](http://www.pgaudubon.org)



## MORE ABOUT WILDLIFE NEST CAMS

Our own Patuxent River Park's two Osprey nest cams are live and streaming. The park, the jewel of Prince George's County, is located at 16000 Croom Airport Road, Croom, Maryland, at the park's headquarters at Jug Bay Natural Area. Jug Bay is an IBA, an Important Bird Area, and a Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Refuge, for its wild rice marshes so important as a stopover for migrating ducks, herons, and other waterfowl. Read more about Ospreys and the park's resources, trails, Rural Life Museums, pontoon boat tours, kayak rentals, and more at [www.PatuxentRiverPark.com](http://www.PatuxentRiverPark.com), where you can also scroll to Wildlife Cams to see these nests side-by-side. Call 301-627-6074 for more information and to receive their newsletter.

Regardless of your birding skills, cams are a great way to learn about these beautiful creatures and their nesting habits.

**Osprey Nest 1 Cam** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBsRlCgGPH0>) - Is about three weeks behind Osprey nest 2. As of June 1, it has 3 hatched chicks. Located on a tall nesting platform across from Jackson's Landing, it can be seen with the scope from the picnic area up by the Observation Tower and Visitor Center.

**Osprey Nest 2 Cam** ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMQ\\_AXQ8alw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMQ_AXQ8alw)) - Has 3 three-week old chicks. It is located about 60 yards down from Jackson's Landing, where the pontoon and other boats dock.

## PRESIDENT'S PERCH BY KEN COHEN

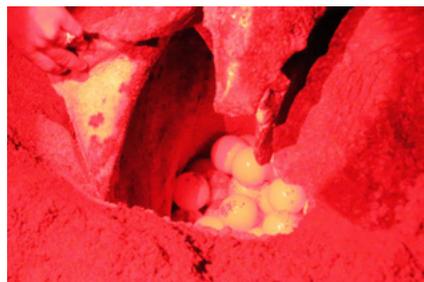
### WELCOMING THE MIGRATION SEASON

Yesterday (back in April), I heard my first Blue Grosbeak of the year. The bird was perched at the top of a leafless sapling in plain sight. It sang, turned, and remained long enough for a full scope view from all sides. In other words, it gave me and the other watchers the "Full Audubon." Sorry Dirty Harry, but that bird "made my day" without the need to take down a bad guy. Spring songbird migration is underway.



My family knows not to expect me around much during the first two weeks of May. This year is no exception. Not only will I be back in the Delmarva, but after a one-year absence will be returning to McGee Marsh and the south shore of Lake Erie. Hello Oak Openings, Sandy Ridge, Headland State Park, Presque Isle, Tiff Farm, Goat Island, and places in between. In this area, it will be back to Governor Bridge Natural Area, Jug Bay, Patuxent North and South, Fort Smallwood, and North Point State Park. Now is the time to be in the field.

My preference is to bird around home at the beginning of migration and then watch farther afield as the season progresses. This year was a major exception, because my wife and I desired to see Giant Leatherback Turtles coming ashore in Trinidad and Tobago to lay their eggs in April. Of course, we combined that experience with some great Trinidad and Tobago bird watching. We studied hummingbirds at the Asa Wright Nature Sanctuary, watched Scarlet Ibis turn their roosting island from green to red as they arrived in the evening, and enjoyed the experience of seeing many tropical species new to us. Hope everyone enjoys this migration season and that you enjoy renewing your enthusiasm for bird watching and the birds. Now, if I can just remember to call my wife on Mother's Day! 🕒



Leatherback turtle eggs (top right),  
Giant Leatherback turtle (above), and a vulture  
resting on a Leatherback turtle (bottom right).

Source: Ken Cohen



### 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.

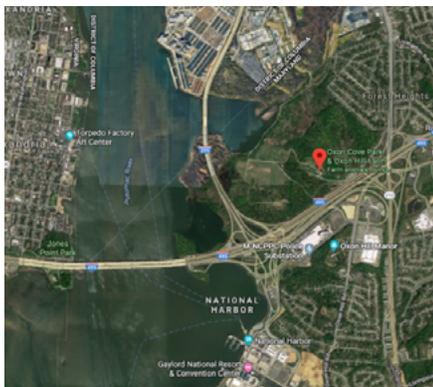
With over 800 members and officers elected by the general membership, our chapter continues to provide bird walks, field trips, speaker programs, its annual birding festival at Lake Artemesia, and also participates in community and other educational events for its members and the general public.

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.

# A PHOTOGRAPHIC WALK AROUND OXON COVE PARK AND FARM BY KEN COHEN

1. Oxon Cove Park and Farm provides its visitors with an historical agricultural farm in a pastoral, aquatic, and forested environment along the Potomac River. National Harbor, the District of Columbia, the Beltway, and the Potomac River surround the park.



2. Exit 3B from the 495 Inner Loop straight across Route 414, Oxon Hill Road, onto Bald Eagle Drive brings you right to the park's entrance. A tractor pulling a wagonload of families may greet you in the parking lot.



3. Entrance signs provide an overview of the park's geography, events, and some of its history.



4. The entrance path leading to the park's Visitor Center passes an old barn and meadow. Look for bulls resting in the grass.



5. At the visitor center the park's friendly staff will answer your questions about events, park history, and tell you about the livestock on the farm. The park permits its chickens to roam free. The staff knows each chicken and tries to keep foxes from preying on them. The roosters continuously call.



6. Visit the hen house, windmill, and farm museum which are all adjacent to the Visitor Center.



7. The road through the farm leading to Oxon Cove provides scenic views of the park, Alexandria and the Potomac River.



## A PHOTOGRAPHIC WALK AROUND OXON COVE PARK AND FARM CONTINUED

**8.** A walk down the road in the center of the previous photo leads to a picnic pavilion. Cardinals like this area of the park.



**9.** Turn the corner of this road, past the pavilion to walk along Oxon Cove.



**10.** Look for Bald Eagles, Osprey, Geese, Turkey Vultures, and other birds and animals. Over the last 20 years, over 180 different species of birds have been seen in this park.



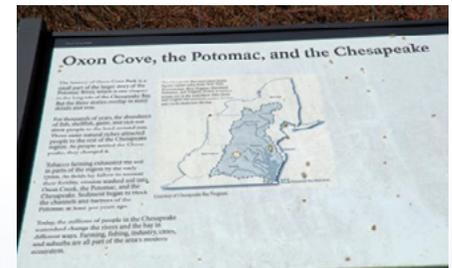
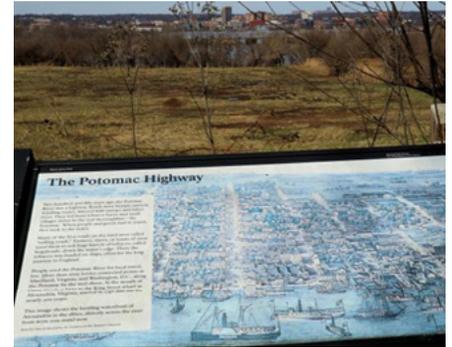
**11.** Cross the bridge at the end of the cove for a view of Oxon Creek as it enters Oxon Cove.



**12.** The trail continues to the boundary of the park with the District of Columbia. The bike path through the park is part of a 14-mile bike path between the park and the Frederick Douglas Memorial Bridge.



**13.** The park's interpretive signs report its history, agricultural practices, and importance as being part of the Chesapeake Watershed. One sign depicts the old port of Alexandria with a view of how Alexandria appears today.

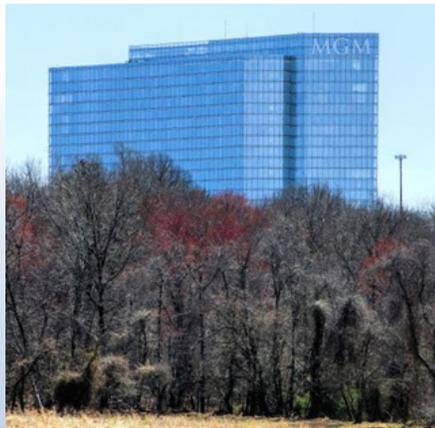


**14.** The Potomac River subjects Oxon Cove Park to continuous tidal flooding. This flooding deposits garbage along the banks of the Cove. Park officials and volunteers stage continuous cleanups throughout the year to collect this debris. The District of Columbia's sewage treatment plant at the entrance to the Cove



## A PHOTOGRAPHIC WALK AROUND OXON COVE PARK AND FARM CONTINUED

15. A walk back up the trail provides great views of the old manor house and also the MGM National Harbor Resort and Casino which overlooks Oxon Cove Park and Farm.



This park provides its visitors educational opportunities to study early farming practices, hiking and biking trails, and a place to picnic and enjoy wildlife by the Potomac River. The park supports a wide variety of wildlife throughout the year.

Governor Larry Hogan has proposed a land swap to acquire Oxon Cove Park and Farm from the Department of Interior in exchange for Battlefield Park in western Maryland. The Governor desires to develop the park either as a site for a new Washington Redskins football stadium or as a Gateway to Maryland. If this land swap is completed, the public will lose the use of this valuable resource. Prince George's Audubon Society has joined a coalition of other organizations to oppose this land swap and the removal of Oxon Cove Park and Farm from public use. 🧐

Source for all photos: Ken Cohen

## FRAN UHLER NATURAL AREA BIRD WALK MAY 4, 2019

[Click on the chart to make it larger](#)

Let's just see now...

We had 8 birders for this walk and 60 species, including 11 warblers, between FUNA and Horsepen. Of those 60 species, only one was a true transient for our area – all others can be found in the winter or summer (or both). Can you pick the oddball out of the list?

Best bird of the day: Maybe the Protonotary Warbler? It had been teasing us by calling from the area near the first wooden bridge, but we couldn't catch a glimpse. Then, as we were headed back to the cars, it popped to the top of a tree overhanging the path, and gave us the full view and full audio. Nice!

Until next time!

*Bill Sefton*



Source: Tim Hudspeth

# GOOD NEIGHBOR DAY 2019: 900 COLLEGE PARK STUDENTS AND RESIDENTS VOLUNTEERED! BY LISA BIERER-GARRETT, PGAS BOARD MEMBER

I was volunteer project leader at Lake Artemesia at the Meadow Restoration project for GND 2019. Our goal was to remove invasive bushes and do a restoration with native plants. Bush Honeysuckle was cut and removed for chipping by 50 students in two teams lead by Invasive Removal Park Ranger Mike Ellis and Park Ranger Brooke Westby.

My team was about 25 students and faculty, mostly from the University of MD Smith School of Business. Our 2019 goal was to plant 36 perennials to increase meadow habitat, and a dozen native trees and shrubs to increase bird-friendly habitat. The Pollinator Meadow is sponsored by the Prince George's Audubon Society (PGAS) and includes a beautiful Butterfly Bench.

5 PGAS members came out and helped at GND, too. The Park Rangers have been watering the pollinator plants, and this week they went and planted 100 more native trees in the places where the invasive Japanese bush honeysuckle was removed. The Lake Artemesia restoration project is a successful partnership!

I suggested the Park Rangers be nominated for a special Service Award for all the support work they do setting up the logistics for Good Neighbor Day and other support they provide, such as the Migration Celebration festival we hold in the fall at the Lake. They all won as VIP Unit of the Year at the annual Service Awards for M-NCPPC!! 🦋



Source: Lisa Bierer-Garrett

## PATUXENT RESEARCH REFUGE SOUTH TRACT WALK KEN COHEN

A singing Brown Thrasher perched on a tall Sycamore tree greeted 5 hearty bird watchers at the South Tract of Patuxent Research Refuge on Sunday, March 31, 2019. Ken, Marc, Robin, Betsy, and Debbie braved the 50-degree weather, clouds, and the winds for a morning walk to evaluate early spring migration. The walk provided a wide range of birds from lingering winter species to some early migrants.



Robin, Betsy and Debbie on the morning walk.

The refuge staff recently burned the meadows on the Ding Darling Trail and at the southeastern end of the lake. This habitat attracted blackbirds and sparrows. We saw both male and female Redwings, Cowbirds, and Grackles. The Blackbirds are back and singing on territory. Our wintering White-throated, Song, and Field Sparrows together with Juncos and Towhees were now joined by Chipping and Swamp Sparrows and increased numbers of Song and Field Sparrows. It was a great day to observe sparrows foraging in the burnt grass.



Where the Swamp Sparrow was.



Eastern Towhee.  
Source for all photos: Ken Cohen

Waterfowl were remarkably low in species and number. We saw only about 16 Canada Geese spread over Cash and Redding Lakes. A small flock of about 8 Ring-necked Ducks represented the only remaining diving ducks. A couple Pied-billed Grebes and several Wood Ducks just up from the south (you could see their tan lines) joined the lingering winter visitors.



A pair of noisy Osprey occupied one of the nesting platforms. Their presence supplemented the usual raptors, Bald Eagle, Red-Shouldered Hawk, and both vultures. Careful observation of the Osprey resulted in the conclusion that baby Osprey would soon be hatching.

The Woodpeckers also joined the Osprey in singing. A Flicker

gave a great imitation of a Pileated Woodpecker. We also saw or heard Red-bellied, Downy, and a real Pileated. A Belted Kingfisher flew by. The resident Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wrens, Northern Mockingbirds, Cardinals, and Blue Jays also sang much more than in winter.



Robin, Betsy, Debbie and Ken.

The White-breasted Nuthatch called in the birdwatchers and other birds. A small mixed winter flock containing Ruby-Crowned Kinglet, Tufted Titmouse, Carolina Wren, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Pine Warbler, and about 3 newly-arrived Palm Warblers foraged in the trees near the Nuthatch. An Eastern Phoebe hawked insects from a low perch along Cash Lake.

By the end of the walk we had seen or heard 48 different species. Spring migration was underway. 🦋

## CONSERVATION NOTES BY KEN COHEN

This year, the Prince George's Audubon Society (PGAS) has continued its efforts to join with other conservation groups to lobby both the state and federal governments to support bird-friendly and environmentally friendly legislation. It has also joined a coalition that opposes the proposed land transfer of Oxon Cove Park and Farm from the Department of Interior to the State of Maryland in exchange for Battlefield Park in Western Maryland.

At the state level, the biggest victory was passage of the ban on Styrofoam food packages and confirming the authority of local government entities to establish standards that are at least as stringent as those in the Act.

At the federal level, we joined the American Bird Conservancy in supporting the Bird-safe Buildings Act, Albatross and Petrel Conservation Act, North American Wetlands Conservation Act, Saving America's Pollinators Act, and its efforts to restore the protections of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Currently, the court in New York has consolidated the litigation initiated by the National Audubon Society and other NGOs with the later litigation initiated by Maryland and other states. This litigation is now at the stage where the court is facing the motions of the U.S. to dismiss the case.

Prince George's Audubon Society has provided substantial assistance to the effort opposing the federal-to-state land swap of Oxon Cove Park and Farm to the State of Maryland. Initially, Maryland desired to use the land as a site for a new Washington Redskins football stadium. Currently, it has changed its position to using the land for either the stadium or a "Gateway" to Maryland. Governor Hogan's office has not specified what that "Gateway" would be. PG Audubon has provided the coalition with research about the park and its benefits to the neighborhood and wildlife. It has provided a photographic tour of the park, and has met with other opposition groups to help coordinate action. On April 29, 2019, it met with a representative of Congressman Brown's office to voice its opposition to the exchange and provide information about the park. Congressman Brown is not convinced that this exchange will happen. Neither the state nor the federal government informed Congressman Brown about the proposed exchange. Congressman Brown is very familiar with the park, because he performs Earth Day services at the park through the auspices of the Alice Ferguson Foundation. Congressman Brown's office agreed to keep PG Audubon informed about his actions related to this transfer.

Please remember to contact your representatives about issues which concern you and your interest in the environment and bird conservation. 🕒

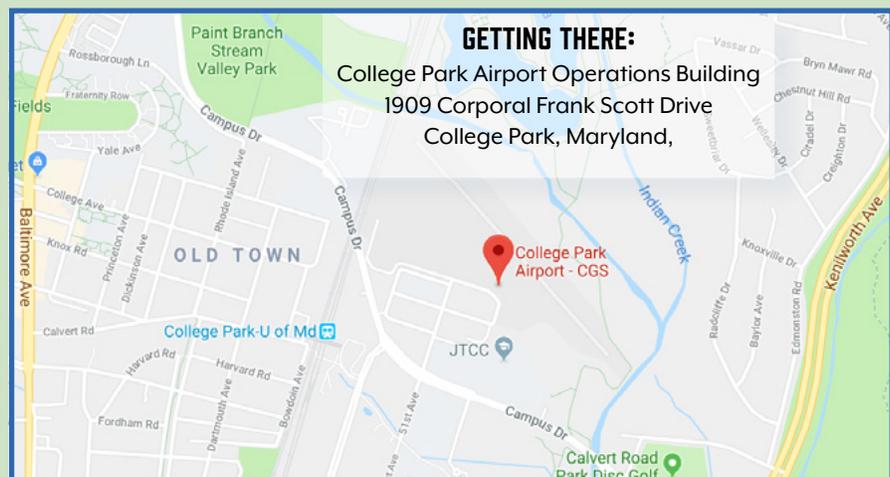
### ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS:

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.



## THIS SPRING PGAS PARTICIPATED AT THREE LOCAL FESTIVALS

The first festival was the annual **April Bowie Green Expo** held at the Kenhill Center in Bowie. Ken Cohen, our president, and I were there. The Expo gets larger each year. We were so busy at our table talking to people. Ken had a great idea to place a toy stuffed Resplendent Quetzal bird somewhere in the room and ask children to use his binoculars to find the bird. The kids loved it. He also had the bird on the table, which he asked the kids to draw and color. I couldn't believe how enthusiastic the kids were. We talked to the parents as the artists worked.



*Teresa tabling at the Bowie Green Expo.*

The second festival was the annual May **Mount Rainier Spring Greening Fair**. It was held at the Mount Rainier Nature and Recreation Center. Katy Pape, a past PGAS board member and volunteer, was in attendance with me. This has become one of my favorite festivals. We were set up in a large field next to the nature center. The weather was perfect for all the residents from the surrounding apartments to attend and they did. Great turnout.

The third festival was the annual May **Greenbelt Green Man Festival** held at Roosevelt Center. It's always a wonderful time with music, demonstrations, a kids area, and many other groups making our world more conservation-minded. Katy Pape and Mike Reinsel, both PGAS member volunteers, were a big help at our table. We were lucky enough to be visited by a true Green Man. It was a wonderful turnout again.



At all of the festivals, we enjoyed exchanging bird stories with our visitors. It is amazing what people have observed in their neighborhoods and how much they want information on more things they can do to help nature.

We are always happy to have volunteers visit and help out. Everyone has a good time. We're now setting up library visits for the summer, and welcome your library suggestions.

*Rob Gimpel, a brother of the Beneficent Order of the Green Man, with Teresa.*

◀ *Source: Angela Baccala.*

Teresa Watson,  
tlwatsonl@verizon.net

## 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](http://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.