

The Bluebird

Newsletter of the Prince George's Audubon Society

PGAS is a local chapter of the National Audubon Society

September-October 2013



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President's Perch

Maureen Blades
President, PGAS

I pick up exactly where outgoing President Carolyn Sturtevant did in this space in June: Transitions. Carolyn has successfully migrated north to Erie, PA, where her nest is becoming more adorned and complete daily, and I have alighted in a familiar place as well. Fall is upon us and with it change and opportunities to experience the wonders a new season brings. Colorful summer flowers fade, sturdy new plants bloom and leaves turn those gorgeous crimsons, burgundies, oranges, and yellows that take our breath away on a clear blue-sky crisp autumn day. Familiar birds of summer are fattening up and leaving as northern birds are passing through on their way to warmer climes and wintering grounds as far away as South America. What a great time to take advantage of bird walks and field trips that PGAS board members and those of the Patuxent Bird Club of MOS planned for the 2013-14 season!

PGAS has accomplished much since committed birders chartered this chapter in 1972. Our work is still important work – to instill an appreciation of the natural world and the interdependence of all living things, and ensure that it will all be here for future generations. The challenge is large. Even living in our county are residents unaware of these challenges, those who don't get out into natural areas, children who haven't had the opportunity to explore nature as many of us did growing up. We can help change that. The alternative won't serve our fellow residents, our youth, our mission, or our commitment to make a difference. One person can make a difference. It's easier when we band together. Not sure how you can contribute? Thought about helping, but weren't sure that you had the time? You can do as little or as much as you want. We'd love to have you and need you.

As President, I want to build on our chapter's strengths and expand our reach. Some goals close to my heart are:

- Attract new members
- Unleash new ideas
- Heighten environmental education awareness and knowledge of birds in our youth and adults
- Have a chapter liaison to Audubon Maryland-DC
- Improve the quality of birdlife, wildlife, and our lives in our county
- Use our monies to make an impact

Those are my ideas. Our chapter is 800 strong. What are yours? What most concerns *you* about the environment, the plight of birds, and/or conservation in our county, our state? What goals do *you* think our chapter should make a priority? Where can we best use our resources, time, and talent to make a difference? I'd like to hear from you. Please call me at 301-262-5148, email me at mblades@gmail.com, talk to me at a meeting, or catch me on a bird walk. There's much to do. The great thing about birdwatchers and this chapter is that there are so many ways to do it – and have fun in the process!

Audubon's Mission Statement: 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.

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Upcoming Monthly Meetings

“What Future for Maryland’s Salt Marsh Birds? Audubon’s Salt Marsh Conservation Initiative”

Presented by Dave Curson

Tuesday, September 10, 7:30 pm

College Park Airport Annex, 1909 Cpl. Frank Scott Drive, College Park, MD 20740

Maryland is home to some of the largest tidal marshes in the northeastern United States and an impressive array of bird species, such as Saltmarsh Sparrow and Black Rail, which live only in this harsh yet beautiful ecosystem. Unfortunately, the future for these birds is uncertain – sea level rise, caused in part by climate change, threatens to drown many of our salt marshes during the present century. To address this threat, the National Audubon Society has launched a salt marsh conservation initiative as part of its Atlantic Flyway strategy. In Maryland, Audubon has recently completed a 2-year salt marsh survey to locate the highest priority sites for salt marsh birds, and is producing conservation plans to help Maryland’s tidal marshes adapt to sea level rise. David Curson, Audubon’s Director of Bird Conservation in Maryland, will provide the latest update on this story and explain how Audubon is using science and partnerships to give Maryland’s salt marsh birds a brighter future.

David Curson has worked as Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon Maryland-DC since 2004, overseeing the MD-DC Important Bird Areas Program, and designing and implementing conservation projects for birds and their habitats in Maryland and DC. Since 2010, Dave’s work with Audubon in Maryland has focused on tidal marsh conservation. Dave grew up in London, England. He has been birding since childhood and has birded extensively throughout Western Europe, North America, and Mexico. In 1985, he received his BSc in Ecology at the University of East Anglia and began a career in conservation biology, working as a Habitat Survey Ecologist for local government and NGOs in London. He came to the United States in 1993 to begin graduate studies and received MS and PhD degrees in the Department of Wildlife Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His graduate research focused on the ecology and behavior of Brown-headed Cowbirds and their hosts in northern New Mexico.

“Birding Panama and Audubon International Bird Conservation”

Presented by Hugh Simmons

Tuesday, October 8, 7:30 pm

College Park Airport Annex, 1909 Cpl. Frank Scott Drive, College Park, MD 20740

The National Audubon Society (NAS) recognizes that bird conservation efforts in North America are not enough if healthy populations of our neo-tropical migrants are to be maintained. It is crucial that their wintering grounds be protected also. With that mandate in mind, the National Audubon board of directors held its February 2013 meeting in Panama to see firsthand the challenges for bird conservation in that one, key Central American country, and to meet with Panama Audubon, the international partner of NAS in Panama. Following the meeting, Hugh Simmons spent several days birding and photographing the famous Pipeline Road and surrounding areas. This presentation provides insight into bird conservation challenges in Panama and the efforts of Panama Audubon and National Audubon to protect habitat and affect public policy there. It is also a birding travel log of the Panama Canal Zone featuring Hugh Simmons' photography.

Hugh is a lifelong Maryland resident, a twenty-five year Audubon member, and has served on the board of the Chesapeake Audubon Society based in Baltimore. He is Chair of the Chapter Relations Committee of Audubon Maryland-DC, the Audubon State office for Maryland and DC. In January 2012, he was elected by the chapters in the region to a three-year term on the board of the National Audubon Society as Regional Director for the Atlantic Flyway, South. In that position he represents the interests of chapters from Maryland to Florida on the National Audubon board. Having photographed as a hobby for 40 years, Hugh recently retired and is now photographing professionally.

Members of the Prince George’s Audubon Society and Patuxent Bird Club, a Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society, cordially invite you to these important programs, open to all who are interested at no charge. Bring a neighbor or a friend! Doors will be open at 7:00 pm. Feel free to come early to mingle and enjoy refreshments at either of these meetings. Visit pgaudubon.org or call 301-262-5148 for more information.

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Upcoming Field Trips

PGAS jointly plans field trips and programs with the Patuxent Bird Club, a chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society. PGAS sponsors Saturday morning bird walks to FUNA and GBNA, two areas of Patuxent River Park co-managed by PGAS and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

Fran Uhler Natural Area

Lemons Bridge Road, Bowie, MD

This park features miles of trails through mature woodlands and open water wetland.

Dates: First Saturdays monthly (September 7, October 5, November 2, December 7)

Time: Meet in the parking area at the end of Lemons Bridge Road (off of 197) at 7:30 am. No reservations are needed.

Contact: Bill Sefton (kiwisuits@msn.com)

Governor Bridge Natural Area

Governor Bridge Road, Bowie, MD

This park offers a wide variety of habitats along the Patuxent River – mature riparian woodlands, second growth scrub, open grassy fields, and small ponds and creeks.

Dates: Third Saturdays monthly (September 21, October 19, November 16, December 21)

Time: Meet in the parking lot at 7:30 am. This is about 1 mile east of Route 301. No reservations are needed.

Contact: Bill Sefton (kiwisuits@msn.com)

Lake Artemesia Natural Area

Luther Goldman Birding Trail

The 2.2-mile paved birding trail loops around the 38-acre lake and alongside Indian Creek. Open water, wetlands, wood edge, riparian forest, and meadow offer opportunities to see a wide variety of resident and migrating songbirds, waterfowl, and raptor flyovers in different seasons. For beginners and experts. Binoculars recommended.

Dates/Times: PGAS and members of the Patuxent Bird Club invite you to join us on 1st and 3rd Thursdays monthly (September 5 and 19, October 3 and 17, November 7 and 21, December 5 and 19 at 3:00 pm.) Meet at the parking lot at Berwyn Road and Ballew Ave in Berwyn Heights. No reservations needed.

Contact: David Mozurkewich (301-509-2212 or mozurk@bellatlantic.net)

Patuxent River Park, Jug Bay

Picnic and Boat Trip. Join Greg Kearns on a pontoon boat to search for Soras, Least Bitterns, and other marsh birds followed by land birding and a pot-luck picnic. Reservations are required if you want a guaranteed place on the boat. There is a \$5 fee for the boat.

Date: Saturday, September 14 Time: 7:00 am

Contact: Maureen Blades (301-262-5148 or mblades@comcast.net)

Prince George's County Fall Bird Count

All day. Since our goal is to count every bird in the county, more counters are always needed. You can cover an area yourself or join a group.

Date: Sunday, September 22

Contact: David Mozurkewich, compiler (301-509-2212 or mozurk@bellatlantic.net) for more information and to coordinate coverage between parties.

Kiptopeke State Park

Overnight trip to the southern tip of the Delmarva Peninsula. The area has spectacular concentrations of migrant songbirds and hawks.

Dates: Saturday, September 28-Sunday, September 29

Contact: Marcia Watson (mww@udel.edu) for reservations and more information.

Irish Grove Work Weekend

Come out for a weekend in the marshes of the lower Eastern Shore. The purpose of this weekend is to do maintenance on this lovely MOS sanctuary but there will be lots of time available for birding.

Dates: Saturday, November 2-Sunday, November 3

Contact: David Mozurkewich (301-509-2212 or mozurk@bellatlantic.net) for more information.

Point Lookout State Park

For waterbirds and late raptor migrants.

Date: Saturday, November 23

Time: Meet 7:30 am at Bowie Park and Ride.

Contact: Fred Fallon (410-286-8152 or fwfallon@ymail.com) for more information.

Piscataway Creek

An afternoon trip for waterfowl.

Date: Sunday, December 1

Time: Meet at 1:00 pm at the boardwalk parking lot. No reservation necessary.

Contact: David Mozurkewich (301-509-2122 or mozurk@bellatlantic.net) for more information.

Jug Bay Christmas Bird Count

Date: Sunday, December 15

Contact: Sam Droege, compiler (samdroege@yahoo.com) for more information.

Bowie Christmas Bird Count

Date: Wednesday, January 1, 2014

Contact: David Mozurkewich, compiler (301-509-2212 or mozurk@bellatlantic.net) for more information.

Jug Bay & Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary

Date: Sunday, January 12, 2014 Time: Meet 7:00 am at Bowie Park and Ride. Contact: David Mozurkewich (301-509-2212 or mozurk@bellatlantic.net) for more information.



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The Bluebird is a vital link between our chapter and you, a right of your membership in the National Audubon Society. It informs you of meetings, local field trips and those further afield, counts, trip reports, issues, interesting stories, and more. It's printing, addressing, and mailing is also the biggest expense in our budget. With the goal of reducing that expense, while also becoming more "green" by reducing the amount of paper and ink it requires, we are exploring alternative ways for you to receive it. Many groups, indeed newspapers, have gone digital. Perhaps you are among those who read them from a computer, tablet, or Smart Phone screen and like having no leftover evidence to accumulate or recycle. We recognize that many of you still enjoy sitting down with the printed version in your hands. Please take time to respond to the short survey below to let us know how you would like to receive future issues and if you are interested in volunteering or have other concerns.

Please check your preferences and mail this form to:

The Bluebird Editor, PGAS
P.O. Box 1658, Greenbelt, MD 20768-1658
Or email us at info@pgaudubon.org

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- 5. I would like more information about:

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Membership Application

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

- Four issues of *Audubon* magazine
- Membership in the local chapter (PGAS)
- The PGAS newsletter, *The Bluebird*

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Please make checks payable to National Audubon Society and mail to:
PGAS, P.O. Box 1658, Greenbelt, MD 20768-1658

Prince George's Audubon Society Chapter C2ZL010Z



Black-throated Trogon
Photo by Hugh Simmons