VALLEY VIEWS

Potomac Valley Audubon Society

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Audubon Discovery Camp Celebrates 10 Years!

Once again, Audubon Discovery Camp had another successful summer of day camp in three different places. This was the 10th anniversary of Audubon Discovery Camp at the Yankauer Preserve. We've come a long way since 2003! The first year was held under two shade tents in front of the Yankauer kiosk and served about 8 kids each week for four weeks (a total of 29). The program has steadily grown over time, with the addition of various remote locations through the years. This year we had satellite sites at the Peter Burr Farm and the For Love of Children (FLOC) Outdoor Education Center and a total of 207 campers attended one or more sessions. Suzi Taylor directed sessions at Yankauer and Ellen Murphy directed the weeks at the Peter Burr Farm.



Bland Campbell, Hunter Norton photo by Ellen Murphy

Sessions at Yankauer included the ever popular Camp Survivor as well as Nature Detectives, Hop, Slither, Sneak, and Mystery Week. Our preschool session, "Out of the Nest" was held in late May. Activities included butterfly chasing, hiking, building forts in the woods, crafts, games, and group challenges like scavenger hunts and blind hikes. Mystery Week was held for 4 days during the first week of July (we took the 4th of July off) and proved to be the most popular session of the summer. Special activities held only during that session included Camp Olympics, an egg drop competition, a dinosaur egg (watermelon) hunt, and making ice cream.

Two of our camps, serving middle school campers, were held

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Cicadas on the Move

Within the last few years, Robinson's Cicada (*Tibicen robinsoniana*) has expanded its range into our area. This handsome, though seldom seen cicada, lives in the treetops of mixed woodlands. Only a few years ago, its distinctive song could be heard only along the C&O canal near the Antietam Creek aqueduct. The next closest colony was in southern Maryland.



photo by Wil Hershberger

In the last two years, Robinson's Cicadas have been heard all over the four county area. There is a large colony at the National Conservation Training Center that is easily heard from the parking area near the main auditorium. Other colonies can be hear along the Potomac River near Shepherdstown, in wooded areas south of Martinsburg, an in woodlots in Back Creek Valley. Scattered groups have also been heard just north of Sharpsburg, Maryland.

Why has this species expanded it range apparently toward the North and West of its former haunts? There is no clear answer, but certainly the warmer summers we have been experiencing since 2009 could be a factor. Perhaps this species is sensitive to very low temperatures during the winter. Our winters have been warmer as well. Perhaps a few adventurous individuals moved into our area several years ago and have survived and multiplied. As with most of our annual cicadas, this species spends 3-5 years as juveniles under the ground feeding on the root of trees. Every year there are some adults that emerge hence the moniker, annual cicadas.

The song of the Robinson's Cicada is distinctive: A measured, grating series of sounds that can go on for several minutes with one pulse of sound every second or so. Its song is heard from mid-afternoon until late evening. You can listen to the song of Robinson's cicada here: http://tinyurl.com/robinsons-cicada

- Wil Hershberger

Potomac Valley Audubon Society is people dedicated to preserving, restoring, and enjoying the natural world through education and action.

Reflections on PVAS

This summer Linda and I were fortunate to be able to hike in Glacier National Park and to kayak on Idaho's Salmon River. With its vistas, interesting geology, and virgin red cedars, Glacier exceeded our expectations. Kayaking the Salmon River is great fun – and the river provides 'immersion' lessons in humility. These were all experiences we expected from our vacation.

Over coffee one morning we agreed that an unsuspected highlight for us was meeting and talking with people along the trail and river. When we are in the midst of the natural environment we meet the most friendly and interesting people – people from all across the US and the world. These exchanges were a joy – and a real highlight of our vacation.

And so it is within PVAS! During my term as vice-president I tried to become familiar with as many PVAS services and activities as I could. As appreciative as I am for what we do, I became even more appreciative for who we are.

Our PVAS membership is wonderfully knowledgeable about and skilled in the natural world. Our membership is very giving of its time and funds, not as a duty, but because it gives us pleasure. We are friendly and accepting and we enjoy each other's company.

Our PVAS birders, nature photographers, nature writers, and master naturalists are really interesting people, and during the coming year I hope we find new opportunities to interact with each other. If you have an idea we should explore, please let us know!

Bob Reynolds
PVAS President

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at the FLOC Outdoor Education Center. These sessions focused on adventure programs (high and low ropes team building courses and rock climbing) and backpacking. The latter group spent the week learning how to pack for a backpack adventure, hiked on the FLOC property, and then took off on the Appalachian Trail for an overnight hike.

The second of our satellite sites this summer was at the Peter Burr Farm where one session of The Simple Life gave campers a taste of "old time living." Activities included natural dyeing, weaving on lap looms, making butter, baking bread, and a daily "chore" game where campers had to "do" a typical farm chore like gathering eggs hidden anywhere on the farm property. A sister session, "Life on the Frontier," found middle school-aged campers making yogurt cheese, applesauce ornaments, and taking a special trip to Old Bedford Village in Bedford PA. A second week at the site, "Nature Detectives," gave campers the chance to explore nature at the farm, including butterfly catching, feather investigations, soil strata investigations (the campers were quite good at using a post hole digger), and a special presentation by Master Naturalists Eldon and Virginia Winston on pollinators. Special thanks go to the Jefferson County Landmarks Commission and Martin Burke for making this site available to our campers.

Thanks also go to the individuals and organizations that provided scholarship assistance to some of our campers. Susan Fluharty, Sheri Cooper, Wanda Miller, Bland Campbell, Mary Lynn Robinson, Joan Cuzzart, Eldon Winston, Virginia Winston, Angie Cummings, Deborah Rocheford, and Wayne Braunstein volunteered at one or more of our camp sessions. Twelve middle school students volunteered as Junior Staff.

No Meeting in September

PVAS is currently in the process of seeking a new location for its monthly membership meetings.

Since a suitable new location has not yet been found, **a meeting will not be held during September**.

PVAS has held its monthly meetings at the National Conservation Training Center since the fall of 2007. However, a shift of location is now necessary because NCTC has changed its policies concerning public lectures presented at the facility. From now on all such lectures must relate directly to courses of instruction being offered at the Center or involve major national issues.

PVAS continues to enjoy a good, productive working relationship with NCTC, and the Center will continue to provide us with space for a wide range of programs and activities that engage and educate the community on conservation topics.

These programs and activities will include but not be limited to our ongoing Master Naturalist Program classes, other classes like Birding 101, Potomac Valley Nature Photographers sessions, bird walks on the NCTC campus, and our annual Race for the Birds.

School Programs Supported by New Grants

School begins again in August and PVAS is ready with programs for all class levels thanks to several grants. PVAS has received a $2500 grant from the Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation which will support PVAS programs in Title I schools and be supplemented by an existing Ecolab grant received late last year. The City of Ranson has awarded $1000 to PVAS for support of school programs at Ranson Elementary School. All of these grants will help some school classes visit Yankauer Nature Preserve or allow a PVAS instructor to visit the classroom. Each session is specific to the grade level and closely aligned with the WV standards of learning (CSOs).

An exciting, new collaboration with Burke Street Elementary School in Berkeley County will help PVAS serve the very diverse Burke Street Promise Neighborhood, a special focus of the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle. Thanks to a $2500 grant to the school from the Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation, PVAS will be able to provide 2 hours of pre- and post-field trip classroom instruction and a day-long field trip to Yankauer Preserve for all kindergarten, first, second, and third grade classes at Burke Street Elementary. In addition, each of those classes will receive a nature exploration classroom kit, compiled of fiction and non-fiction books and classroom supplies for teachers and students to use as resources for science inquiry activities. The backpack kits will also be designed so that students can take them home over the weekend and use the resources to explore nature in their neighborhood.

Our 4th grade watershed program continues in its eleventh year and some classrooms will begin that program this fall while others will wait until January to begin. A year-long program with St. Joseph Parish School's second grade, which began last year, will continue with new students beginning in September. Schools can schedule programs at any time.

During the 2011-12 school year, PVAS served 944 students through school programs at Yankauer and 578 students with in-class programs. An additional 1063 fourth graders participated in the watershed program last year. A WV Division of Natural Resources grant awarded to provide new programs for students in kindergarten, first, fourth and fifth grades reached 857 students as well. A few additional school-related events brought our total school programs to 4299 students last school year!

A new year of programs will make this a busy fall for Ellen Murphy and volunteers! We can always use help with any of our school programs, so if you are interested in helping in any way, would like further information, or want to schedule a program at Yankauer Preserve, contact her at Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org or 304-676-8739.

Wee Naturalists Program Back This Fall

PVAS's popular Wee Naturalists program is returning after a break for the summer. The program is designed to provide regular opportunities for children ages 3-5 to explore nature together safely under the guidance of an experienced PVAS instructor. At each session, children must be accompanied by a parent, grandparent, other adult relative, or guardian.

All sessions are held at the Yankauer Nature Preserve. Each session will last from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Dates for this fall's sessions are August 23; September 17 and 18; October 15 and 16; November 12 and 13; and December 3 and 4.

Each month's sessions will focus on a different topic. Topics range from exploring forest insects and animals to learning about signs of autumn. Although the topics remain the same from year to year, the activities for each topic are always being updated and this year's activities are brand new.

To ensure that everyone receives close, personal attention, enrollment will be limited and pre-registration is required. Easy on-line registration is available on our website www.PotomacAudubon.org. Families may register for one or all the months. The fee is $5 per child/adult team per session.

The program is led by Suzi Taylor, of Sharpsburg, MD, a veteran Audubon camp director who has a degree in environmental education. For more information, contact Suzi at 301-432-1908 or tomandsuzi506@cs.com.

The Wee Naturalists program was established in 2009 with support from the Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation's Two Rivers Giving Circle.

PVAS to Start Youth Bird Club

PVAS will be starting a Youth Bird Club for children that have demonstrated a special interest in birding and want to go to the next level in building their birding skills. The club will go on a birding walk or trip once a month during most months of the year. Trips will coincide with bird groups that are migrating through the Eastern Panhandle during the particular month of the year. In mid-September the club will go to Snicker's Gap to observe the Broadwing Hawk migration. An educational component will be included in the program. Parents will be required to attend the trips with their children.

Children that are interested in joining should first attend at least two regularly scheduled bird walks or activities with a parent. For further information, contact Sandy Sagalkin at monsansagalkin@myactv.net or 240-291-6465.

New Nature Education Program for Kids

PVAS has launched a new nature-education program for children that will be held one weekend day each month throughout the year. The program, called Outdoor Explore!, is for children ages 6-9. It is intended to give them a better understanding and appreciation of the natural world in a safe, supervised way, through hiking, exploration of different local habitats, plant and animal identification, and other natural science activities. Jan Hummer, an experienced natural science educator, will lead each program session.

Each month will focus on a different theme that is appropriate to the time of year and the habitat of the chosen location.The first and second program sessions were held in July and August. The third session, which is set for Saturday, September 8, will be a hike along the C&O Canal towpath in the Sharpsburg area to look for signs of autumn.

Additional sessions will be offered each month, generally on the second Saturday. The cost for each program will be $5.00 per child. Enrollment will be strictly limited to ensure that all children receive personal attention.

Complete information and online registration is available at the PVAS website. Or contact Ellen Murphy at 304-676-8739 or Ellen@PotomacAudubon.org.

The program is being made possible by a grant from the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources.

Jim Jenkins Nominated for Board

Jim Jenkins has been nominated to fill a position on the PVAS board. Jim moved to Harpers Ferry in 1979 to work at FLOC Wilderness School and fell in love with our rivers, woodlands and hills. He has been a teacher for 37 years in elementary schools, an adjunct instructor at Shepherd University, an Aerospace Educator at the Smithsonian Udvar-Hazy Center and a Fulbright teacher in Scotland. He was a river guide for 18 years. Both BS and MEd degrees are from VCU. Hiking, camping, caving, canoeing and fishing with his son, Sam, provide peak experiences. Jim lives minutes from the Appalachian Trail and beloved rivers in Harpers Ferry.

View from the Eagle's Nest

We birders have had a busy summer in the Eastern Panhandle, enjoying the spring migrants that have stayed on to breed. Some of the joys of this time of year are watching the adults build nests and bring food back to the nest, and the fledglings leave the nest. In another article, I described our recent trip to the Eastern Shore of Delaware where we witnessed this small drama: an adult Forster's Tern trying to teach her offspring how to catch its own food. The young bird was planted on a sand bar and mommy would bring it a minnow. She held it out to the young bird, but then flew off with it, trying to lure the youngster over to the pond to catch its own fish. She repeated this routine several times without the young bird ever learning to follow her. Finally, she threw down the fish. As the bird watched on, a gull came by and, thank you for lunch. In the animal world, young birds either learn or die. Only a small percentage will make it through their first year of life.

It was a good summer. We sponsored trips to Stauffer's Marsh Nature Preserve, Murphy's Farm, Virginius Island and the C&O Canal at Harper's Ferry, the Antietam Battlefield, Shannondale Springs Wildlife Management Area, and other birding hot spots, which you can now find on the PVAS website. Whenever we had the opportunity, we ran mini-workshops for school age children at libraries or other venues. They always impress us with their attention, questions and delight in seeing birds.

And we have some interesting events planned for the late summer and early fall. Since it is that time of year, we will search out shorebirds at the shorebird hot spots, the local ponds and drainages. Surprisingly, the Eastern Panhandle routinely gets over a half dozen species of fall shorebird migrants.

By the time this newsletter goes to print, we will have sponsored a "Pledge to Fledge" morning at Stauffer's Marsh Nature Preserve. This is a new nationwide program to get non-birders out for a day of birding in order to build support for birds and bird conservation. As I write this article, I am hoping for a good turnout of new birders. And, as another article notes, PVAS is starting a youth bird club. Children are always invited to join us on our regularly scheduled bird trips. The club will be for youngsters who want to go up to the next level and build birding skills. One of them will teach Birding 101 some day.

We will be running a pilot, Advanced Birding workshop, on raptors starting in mid-September. If successful, we hope to build it into a Master Birding Program that will cover all of the major groups of birds. This program will be a "deep dive" into each group of birds that will ask the students to identify species during field trips based on observable factors, such as habitat, shape, size, behavior and plumage details.

In mid-September, the hawk migration will kick off with the stunning Broadwing Hawk migration. Last year was a banner year, the "perfect storm" from a Broadwing perspective. Thousands of Broadwings in record numbers passed through our area, "kettle" after "kettle." A "kettle" is created over a spot on the earth that is warmer than the surrounding areas creating a "thermal" or plume of rising hot air. The hawks search out these thermals to gain height so they can migrate from one thermal to the next saving energy during their migration. When a bunch of hawks are riding a thermal, they appear to be like a kettle of boiling water with a plume of rising steam. This year we will go to Snicker's Gap, Washington Monument and Waggoner's Gap, the latter for the Golden Eagle migration.

People interested in birds at all levels of experience are invited, especially children with their parents. I hope to see some new faces this year. For more information, contact me at monsansagalkin@myactv.net or 240-291-6465. - *Sandy Sagalkin*

Birding the Eastern Shore

A group of eight birders went out to the Eastern Shore of Delaware August 3-5 with trip leader Matt Orsie. This outing is an annual event that we look forward to. The plan was to start at Cape Henlopen State Park to the south and work our way north up to Bombay Hook NWR. This year we logged 22 species of shorebirds and 97 species of birds overall.



photo by Nathan Snyder

The target bird at Cape Henlopen is always the Piping Plover. This is one of the smallest and rarest birds in the plover family. If you have ever gone to the beach and found an area roped off, it is to protect the nesting areas of this bird. Last year, one came to within 30 feet of our group and lingered for quite awhile. This year, we waited patiently but in vain for the little guy to come out and show itself, all the while baking in 94 degree heat. You may wonder why otherwise seemingly rational adults would subject themselves to this, but this is the life of the birder, always hoping for the rare or interesting sighting. We didn't find the plover, but found American Oystercatchers, Black-necked Stilts, Black Skimmers and other shorebirds.

We next moved on to multiple locations within Prime Hook NWR. This time we were hoping to find some Wilson's Storm-Petrels, a "pelagic" species, usually only found offshore. We set up our spotting scopes at Fowler's Beach and searched the ocean for the storm-petrels. Dave Myles spotted the first one and then others started finding them too. "There are four over there," Matt said, pointing towards Delaware Bay. As everyone but me found them in their scope, I asked with some exasperation, "Where?" Dave Myles came over to put my scope on them. "Look for the black dots. Sometimes they are above the horizon and sometimes below." "Black dots?" I asked. "You're kidding." Last year I saw the storm-petrels with their white rump patch. This year, with eyes one year older, the only black dots I could find were my floaters. Nonetheless, our trip list continued to grow.

Also at Fowler's Beach we were hoping to find a Red Knot, a species whose population is in serious decline. We had almost given up when Matt spotted a rusty colored bird about 100 yards down the beach. "A Red Knot down the beach." We put our scopes on them and caught quick glimpses before it disappeared behind a hummock. (Note to self: Next time, get on birder quicker before it disappears.) Later, we found a small group of American White Pelicans, very

unusual at these latitudes, as well as Glossy Ibises, Royal Terns and other new birds. We tried for the knot again at Mispillion, but the only Red Knot we saw there was the 6 foot plastic knot outside the Dupont Nature Center.

Finally, we arrived at Bombay Hook, where we expected to bird during the evening and next morning. Bombay Hook is one of the jewels of the Delaware Eastern Shore. We decided to head for the "Hook" after dinner to see what was around. As we were searching through thousands of Semipalmated Sandpipers, little sandpipers a little over 6 inches in length that probe the flats for food, Snowy Egrets, Great Egrets and an immature Little Blue Heron started flying in to roost for the night. Groups of 10-30 birds at a time flew in to Raymond Pond, where we were stationed. Before we left, there were upwards of 500 egrets getting ready for the night, an awesome sight.

We headed out the next morning, hoping for a Marbled Godwit, either at the "Hook" or Taylor's Gut, our last stop. Last year, we saw this elegant bird, which stands 18 inches tall with a long, upturned bill at Taylor's Gut and hoped for a look this year. It turned out to be as elusive as the Piping Plover but we did have compensatory species: Tundra and Mute Swans, Pied-billed Grebes, Tri-colored Herons, Black-crowned and Yellow-crowned Night Herons, a Peregrine Falcon catching supper while we watched, Clapper Rails, Stilt Sandpipers, a Great-horned Owl hooting from across the Raymond Pond, a few Bald Eagles and many other birds.

After a quick lunch, we headed home grateful for another successful visit to the Eastern Shore. - *Sandy Sagalkin*

Don't Miss Cathedral State Park Trip

PVAS is planning a field trip to West Virginia's Cathedral State Park on Saturday, September 15. The trip will be led by Master Naturalist Clark Dixon and include a guided park tour led by the park's naturalist. The guided tour will start at 11:00 a.m. and last about one-and-a-half hours. Afterwards, the trip group will travel to nearby Blackwater Falls State Park for a lunch before departing for home.

Located in southeastern Preston County, WV, Cathedral State Park contains the only stand of mixed virgin timber left in West Virginia. The park gets its name from its many ancient hemlocks, which reach majestic proportions and form spectacular natural cloisters. They are one of the last remnants of a vast hemlock forest that once flourished in the Appalachian highlands. It was entered in the National Registry for Natural Historical Landmarks in 1966 as "an area that possesses exceptional value in illustrating the natural history of the United States."

The drive to the park from the Eastern Panhandle is about two-and-a-half hours long. Those who wish to carpool should plan to meet at the Food Lion supermarket parking lot on Route 51 in Inwood, just off I-81; carpoolers will depart from there at 8:00 a.m.

For those who prefer to drive on their own to the park, take I-81 south to the Route 37 bypass around the west side of Winchester; from there, take Route 50 west all the way through the Maryland panhandle and back into West Virginia. The park is approximately five miles west of Red House, MD.

Trip participants should wear comfortable walking shoes and dress for the season. Because of the park's altitude, air temperatures there are likely to be significantly cooler than in the Eastern Panhandle.

Anyone with an interest is welcome to participate, including families with children. However, space will be limited to only 20 people so pre-registration is essential. You can register online on the PVAS website or contact Kelly Wolf at 304-229-6229 or kehldreth@hotmail.com. For more information about the trip, contact Kelly. For more information about the park, see its website at www.cathedralstatepark.com.

Birding Festival Set for Sept. 21-23

The Fifth Annual Berkeley Springs Fall Birding Festival will be held in and around Berkeley Springs the weekend of September 21-23 Most of the festival's events will be free and everyone is invited to attend. The festival is timed to coincide with the annual fall bird migration, which should be in full swing at that time. The festival will include Friday and Saturday evening programs, bird walks and workshops during the day Saturday, and a bird walk Sunday morning. PVAS is the lead festival sponsor.

This year's featured presenter will once again be Sharon Stiteler, the Minnesota naturalist who participated in last year's festival. Sharon authors the popular "Birdchick.com" blog, which has been recognized in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, and on NBC Nightly News. She has a national reputation as a very engaging and entertaining speaker.

The first event will be a program at the Ice House the evening of Friday, September 21. The program will begin at 7:00 p.m. with a presentation about raptors by Northern Virginia raptor expert Liam McGranaghan. At 8:00 p.m. Sharon Stiteler will give a talk entitled "Today's Office," explaining that for birders, an office is an increasingly mobile and flexible concept.

Saturday's events will begin with a free morning bird walk with Liam and Sharon that will start at 8:00 a.m. at the scenic Panorama Overlook on Route 9 west of Berkeley Springs. Bald Eagles can frequently be seen here.

Saturday afternoon, there will be two free events at Cacapon State Park. The first event will be a 1:30 p.m. birding workshop at the Park Nature Center. The workshop will be aimed at children but also open to beginning birders of all ages. It will be led by Park naturalist Renee Fincham and Smithsonian Institution forensic ornithologist March Heacker, and cover such topics as identification basics, birding manners, and using guidebooks and equipment. At 3:00 p.m., in the lower conference room of the Park Lodge, Ron Perrone of the Three Rivers Avian Center in Brooks WV will give a presentation on raptors featuring live rescued birds. The Saturday evening event will include desert and coffee, and a silent auction of items donated by local artists and businesses.

Saturday evening will feature two presentations at the Ice House. At 7:00 p.m., Marcy Heacker, who also participated in the festival last year, will give a talk entitled "Birding Then and Now; More Tales From the Nation's Attic." At 8:15 p.m., Sharon Stiteler will talk about her experiences birding in other countries, most recently in Israel.

The festival will wrap up on the morning of Sunday, September 18, with a free 8:30 a.m. bird walk at Sleepy Creek Retreat, a mountainside meadowland property south of Berkeley Springs. The property offers sweeping views and a rich variety of habitats, and it will provide good opportunities to see migrating raptors, blue jays and warblers.

To help cover festival expenses, a $10 ticket will be sold for the evening programs. This ticket will be good for admission to both those programs. Advance tickets will be available at the Nature Niche store at 168 North Washington Street in Berkeley Springs. Tickets will also be available starting at the Friday evening program.

For more info contact the Nature Niche store at 304-258-0992 or natureniche@earthlink.net.

New "Master Birder" Program

Starting this fall, PVAS is offering a new "Master Birder" program. The program is intended for experienced birders who want to take their knowledge and skills to a higher level.

Instruction will be provided through workshops that include both classroom time and field experiences, with the emphasis on the latter. Each workshop will focus on a specific group of birds or a topic that cuts across groups, such as bird song. All of the workshop sessions will be conducted by one or more of the following instructors: Wil Hershberger, of Hedgesville; Bob Dean, of Martinsburg; and Matt Orsie, of Summit Point. All are highly regarded birding experts. Enrollments will be strictly limited to ensure that all participants receive close personal attention and are able to learn collectively.

After successful completion of a "baseline" set of workshops, successful students will be awarded a "Master Birder" certificate.

Applicants must be graduates of PVAS's "Birding 101" course or have commensurate experience (3 or more years of birding). There is no age requirement but participants under 16 must be accompanied a parent.

The program's first workshop will focus on raptors and begin Thursday, September 13 with a 7:00-9:00 p.m. classroom session at the National Conservation Training Center outside Shepherdstown. Session will be followed by four weekend field trips that will be held at various locations within a two-hour drive of Shepherdstown on a flexible schedule (depending on weather). The tentative dates for these trips are September 15 or 16, October 6, October 20, and November 3 or 4.

The main topics to be covered will be raptor migration, identification in flight and perched, behavior, distribution and population trends, and conservation goals.

The cost will be $75 per person for PVAS members and $100 per person for nonmembers. The nonmember cost includes a one-year household membership in PVAS. Registration is available on-line on the PVAS website at www.potomacaudubon.org or by contacting Matt Orsie at 304-261-5602 or wvbirder@comcast.net.

Future planned workshops include Warblers, Bird Song, Gulls, and Shorebirds.

Cape May Hawk-watch Trip

PVAS will sponsor a hawk-watching trip to Cape May, NJ, the weekend of October 13-14. Anyone with an interest is welcome to participate and there will be no fee. But participants will be expected furnish their own transportation and arrange for their own accommodations. Hotel and motel reservations should be made now, because Cape May is a very popular destination in October.

The trip will be led by local birder Sandy Sagalkin, and it will focus on several hawk-watching sites in the Cape May area. It will offer good opportunities to see Peregrine Falcons, Merlins, American Kestrels, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Coopers Hawks, Bald Eagles, Northern Harriers and other species of hawks.

Those who participate will also be able to take advantage of a variety of free educational opportunities offered by the Cape May Bird Observatory and the New Jersey Audubon Society. Their offerings include such events as a Mini-Hawk ID workshop for beginners, a Hawk-banding demonstration, a Monarch tagging demonstration and bird walks that are open to the public.

The Cape May Bird Observatory website (www.birdcapemay.org) contains a list of Cape May hotels and motels which offer discounts to birders who are members of the Observatory. The savings can be significant enough that trip participants who are not already members may wish to join; this can be done easily online. For those on a very tight budget, the most affordable accommodations may be in nearby Wildwood, NJ.

Those who wish to participate should pre-register by contacting Sandy by phone at 240-291-6465. For more information, contact him by email at monsansagalkin@myactv.net.

Don't Miss This Fall's "Insect Walk"!

PVAS will sponsor an evening "insect walk" along the C&O Canal across from Shepherdstown on Saturday, September 15. The walk will be led by local insect expert Wil Hershberger, who is coauthor of "The Songs of Insects," a book and audio CD published by Houghton-Mifflin Company.

These walks are family-oriented events that are especially popular with young children but anyone with an interest is welcome to participate. There is no fee.

Space will be limited so those who want to participate need to make a reservation as soon as possible. Register on the PVAS website or contact Kelly Wolf at kheldreth@hotmail.com or 304-229-6229.

The walking group will assemble at 7:00 p.m. in the large C& O Canal parking lot on Canal Road, three-tenths of a mile south of the Shepherdstown bridge. From there, Wil will lead an exploration of fields and roadsides near the Canal. Insects likely to be encountered include tree crickets, several species of meadow katydids, one or two species of round-winged katydids, northern true katydids, oblong-wing katydids, and perhaps some bush katydids.

Those who wish to participate should bring a flashlight and be prepared to walk through high grass and weeds. Tucking pants legs into socks and spraying them with a DEET-based insect repellent is recommended.

The walk will not take place if it is raining.

Wil, who lives in Hedgesville, has been a naturalist all his life. He has been photographing and recording the natural world for more than a decade and his work has been published in magazines, calendars, and books. His recordings of birds, frogs and insects are archived at the Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. His website can be found at www.natureimagesandsounds.com.

June Reception A Great Success!

Thanks to the graciousness and generosity of hosts Bob and Tia McMillan, exceptional weather, and the efforts of many volunteers, our June 23 reception at the McMillan's beautiful Terrapin Neck home was a wonderful event that was enjoyed by all.



photo by Nancy Kirschbaum

Lots of volunteers deserve special mention. PVAS's event coordinating committee—Alice Barkus, Susan Brookreson, Gretchen Meadows, Diana Mullis, and Jane Vanderhook—once again did an impressive job. Year after year, these folks donate their time and talents to present food and beverages in ways that meet (and often surpass) the standards of the best professional caterers, and PVAS is very grateful to them for their assistance. Others who pitched in to help with food and beverage service and other arrangements included Neal Barkus, Diane Brookreson, Sean McGowan, Josh Meadows, Peter Smith, Gary and Diane Sylvester, and Jim and Ray Vanderhook.

Bob Dean once again pulled together the very talented Harlan Spring Band, who—as always—provided first-rate musical entertainment. Rodney Woods once again lent his auctioneering skills for a lively auction of donated items. The donors of those items included Alice and Neal Barkus, Wayne Braunstein, Susan Carney, Susan Fluharty, Diane Mayhew, Gretchen Meadows, Diana Mullis, Jean Neely, Jane Vanderhook, and Ray Vanderhook.

In the end, the event netted more than $8,000 for our educational programs.

We can't thank Bob and Tia McMillan and all of the volunteers enough for all of their efforts to make this reception such a success. We also are very grateful to the 95 guests and additional donors who generously contributed to the event.

Birdseed Sale Reminder

Please remember that PVAS's annual fall birdseed sale will get underway in October. Watch your October Valley Views for your Birdseed Order Form.If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact Diana Mullis at DianaMullis@aol.com or 304-267-3482.

Day of Caring on September 11

This year's Day of Caring will be held Tuesday, September 11.

As usual, the day's events will kick off with a 7:30 am breakfast in Berkeley County at War Memorial Park in Martinsburg and in Jefferson County at the Inn at Charles Town. In Morgan County, breakfast will be held at 8 am at the War Memorial Hospital.

This year PVAS is spearheading projects at Yankauer from 8:30 am-3:00 pm You may join PVAS at the Yankauer Preserve to work on invasive removal (like ailanthus, autumn olive and stilt grass), clean up the butterfly garden, trim the trails and parking lot, and final work on the accessible trail project. Lots of work AND fun to be had by all! We'll provide a delicious hot lunch (around 12) if you provide the labor! To pre-register to help at Yankauer, contact Tim Murphy at 304-876-8133 or timurf@comcast.net.

In Morgan County, Joe Gentile is spearheading a volunteer day on PVAS' behalf at the Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. If you'd like to help Joe, you may contact him at 304-258-3197.

After a hard day's work, enjoy dinner at the Clarion in Shepherdstown from 4:00-6:00 pm where you can celebrate a day of work for a good cause with fellow community members. Please pre-register to ensure enough food and t-shirts for all volunteers!

Eidolon Tower Demolition Delayed

The June issue of Valley Views reported that the Federal Aviation Administration was planning to demolish its tower at the Eidolon Nature Preserve during July. The timetable for the project has been pushed back several times since then and the latest word is that demolition will begin on or about September 10 and conclude around the end of September.

While it is underway, the demolition project will no doubt be disruptive and public access to the preserve may be compromised. PVAS will do its best to monitor the situation and keep the public informed through email and on its website.

If you have questions, contact Peter Smith at 304-876-1139 or pvsmith@frontiernet.net.

The tower was built by Western Union in 1962, as part of an upgrade of a nationwide network of some 400 towers that used microwave signals to relay radio signals from point to point. During the Cold War era, the network played a role in national defense communications as well as commercial communications. Western Union sold off its tower network in the 1980s, and the FAA acquired the Eidolon tower at that time.

PVAS Display at Festivals

PVAS will have displays at this year's Sharpsburg and Charles Town Heritage Festivals. The Sharpsburg Festival, which will commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Antietam (or Sharpsburg, depending on your perspective) will be held the weekend of September 15 and 16.The Charles Town Festival will be held the following Saturday, September 22.

If you attend either or both events, please stop by and say hello.

September Birding Trips

PVAS has scheduled six local birding trips for September. All the trips will focus on migrating birds, with those in the middle of the month concentrating on the Broad-winged hawk migration. All are free and anyone with an interest is welcome to come along, regardless of their birding skills. Children will be welcome.

Only one trip requires pre-registration: the hawk-watching trip to the Washington Monument State Park on the 17th. No pre-registration is needed for any of the other trips.

For each trip, participants should wear sturdy footwear, dress appropriately for prevailing weather conditions, and bring along water and bug spray. Binoculars will be available for anyone who needs them.



Glossy Ibis at Bombay Hook, taken by Nathan Snyder on August 5

Trips will cancelled in the event of steady rain. Various trip details could also change depending on weather or recent bird sightings.

Full details can be found on the PVAS website. Unless otherwise noted, the contact for more information about each trip is Sandy Sagalkin at 240-291-6465 or monsansagalkin@myactv.net. The specific dates, destinations and details are as follows:

Saturday, September 1 and Wednesday, September 5: Trips to view migrating shorebirds at various Eastern Panhandle locations. Meet at 7:00 a.m. inside the entrance to the Archer's Rock subdivision in Berkeley County (from Route 9 just north of the intersection with I-81, go right on Harlan Springs Road about 1.5 miles). From there, several ponds and wetlands will be visited.

Monday, September 17: Hawk-watching trip to the Washington Monument State Park on South Mountain, outside Boonsboro, MD. A good opportunity to see migrating Broad-winged hawks in large numbers. This trip will begin at 8:30 a.m. Pre-registration is essential because space constraints at the viewing site will limit participation to just eight people. To register and get directions, contact Sandy at the phone number or email address shown above.

Wednesday, September 19: Bird walk in the Bolivar Heights section of the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. Various species may be seen, including migrating hawks and warblers. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Bolivar Heights parking area. From the Route 340 traffic light at the entrance to the National Park, turn north onto Washington Street and follow it for about ¼ mile, then turn north again (left) onto Whitman Avenue; the parking area is at the top of the hill. For more info contact Deb Hale at debhale72@gmail.com or 304-535-2346.

Thursday, September 20: Hawk-watching trip to Snickers Gap, in Virginia on the Clark/Loudoun County line just below Jefferson County WV. Also a very good site for watching Broad-wings. Participants will meet to carpool to the site at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot in front of the Martin's supermarket in the Jefferson Crossroads Shopping Center just off Route 340 east of Charles Town.

Sunday, September 30: Bird walk at the Stauffer's Marsh Nature Preserve. Will focus on migrating birds, including shorebirds, waders, and others. The Preserve is located in Back Creek Valley in Berkeley County, one-half mile south of Shanghai, on the east side of Back Creek Valley Road (County Route 7). Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking area at the north end of the marsh.



PVAS trip to Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge on May 26. - photo by Lisa Kovatch

United Way/CFC Fund Drives Coming Up

The annual fundraising campaigns of the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle and the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) get underway this month. Both campaigns will last into the winter.

PVAS receives funds from both agencies and encourages its members to give to their campaigns.

Because PVAS is an IRS-qualified non-profit agency, individuals who contribute to either United Way or CFC can designate all or part of those contributions to PVAS, if they wish.

To designate United Way contributions to PVAS, look for the section of the United Way contribution form that asks how you want your donation invested and indicate that you want to make a "Restricted Contribution" to "Potomac Valley Audubon Society, PO Box 578, Shepherdstown, WV."

To designate CFC contributions to PVAS, enter PVAS's CFC number (29061) on the CFC form that you file with your employing agency.

Please note that United Way and CFC deduct a percentage from all designated contributions to cover their administrative costs.

If you have any questions, please contact Kristin Alexander at Kristin@potomacaudubon.org or 304-676-3397.

Annual Meeting and Elections

The PVAS annual meeting was held on June 9 at the Yankauer Nature Preserve. The end of the year was celebrated with a potluck, election of officers and board members, and recognition of volunteers.

After a delicious potluck supper, Peter Smith called the meeting to order to elect officers and board members. Bob Reynolds was elected President and Gary Heichel was elected Vice President. Don Briggs was elected to a second term as an at-large Board member and two new at-large members were elected: Sandy Sagalkin and Lou Scavnicky.

Following the election, Peter Smith, Wayne Braunstein, Rob Hoxton, and Georgia Jeppesen were recognized for their service on the board as they step down due to term limits.

The following volunteers were also recognized for outstanding contributions to PVAS over the last year: Alice Barkus, Kathy Bilton, Sandra Bloom, Joette Borzik, Susan Brookreson, Dan Cogswell, Bob Dean, Robin Dean, Carol Del Colle, James Dillon, Diana Gaviria, Joe Gentile, Jim Harden, Steve Hartman, Wil Hershberger, Georgia Jeppesen, Nan Johnson, Susan Jones, Elliott Kirschbaum, Nancy Kirschbaum, Gretchen Meadows, Wanda Miller, Diana Mullis, James Munnis, Suzi Munnis, Tim Murphy, Matt Orsie, Deb Patthoff, Sandy Sagalkin, Melanie Snyder, Gary Sylvester, Diane Sylvester, Carolyn Thomas, Marie Van Valkenburgh, Jane Vanderhook, Eldon Winston, Virginia Winston, Kelly Wolf.



LOONY FUN FACTS

- Known to dive 240 ft; among birds only penguins can dive deeper!
- Needs a large territory; a 100-acre lake will have only one nesting pair.
- Heavy body and far-back placement of legs are ideal for diving.
- Awkward walker; may actually fall forward when walking.
- State bird of Minnesota.
- Eskimo legend says loon is capable of magic.
- Downy chicks spend up to 65% of first week riding on the back of swimming adult.

Sources:
Laura C. Martin, ***The Folklore of Birds***, (1993) The Globe Pequot Press
Paul R. Ehrlich et al; ***The Birder's Handbook***, (1988), Simon and Schuster, Inc.

JOIN PVAS TODAY!

ALL of your dues will stay here to support local PVAS efforts and help us grow! And here's what you'll get:

- Access to a wide variety of PVAS programs and events for adults and children, including field trips, special events, workshops and courses, and environmental projects.
- A subscription to Valley Views, the PVAS newsletter
- E-mail alerts about events and programs of special interest
- Satisfaction of supporting conservation efforts, youth and adult nature education, individual and family recreation, and a wide array of programs in your community.

To become a local member, send in the form below and enclose a check for $20 ($15 for seniors and students). Make the check out to "PVAS." This fee covers membership for everyone in your household for one year.

Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ____ Zip code: _____

Phone (optional): _____

E-mail: _____

To save postage costs, PVAS regularly sends its newsletter by e-mail. You can be assured that we do not share email addresses with anyone. If you would prefer to receive the newsletter by U.S. mail check here: __.

Clip and mail this form to:

Membership Chair, PVAS
PO Box 578
Shepherdstown, WV 25443

Thank you for your support!

If you'd rather join the National Audubon Society:

Some people prefer National Audubon Society membership, which includes a subscription to the Society's Audubon magazine. To become a National member, go to the Society's website at www.audubon.org and click on "join." If you join National Audubon and reside in Berkeley, Jefferson or Morgan counties in West Virginia, or in Washington County Maryland, you will automatically become a member of PVAS and have access to our events, an e-mail copy of newsletter and e-mail alerts. However almost all of your dues payments will go to the National Audubon Society; only a small percentage will go to PVAS.

RED TEXT - DOT ALERT

If red text or a red dot appears on your mailing label, your membership may have expired and this could be your last issue of Valley Views. Take action to renew your Local membership. If you are a National Audubon Society member, the National Society will notify you directly when your membership is up for renewal.

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A proud partner of the United Way of the Eastern Panhandle and the Combined Federal Campaign.

MAIL TO:

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The Potomac Valley Audubon Society meets at 7:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, September through April. Programs are free and open to the public. For additional information about PVAS or its programs and activities, please call any of the board members listed her or see http://www.potomacaudubon.org. PVAS serves the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia and neighboring Washington County, Maryland.

PVAS BOARD

The PVAS Board meets every other month on the first Thursday of the month (Sept.-June). Meeting location will be announced prior to meetings. These meetings are open to all PVAS members.

PVAS Officers and Board Members

President: Bob Reynolds ..... robert.reynolds40@gmail.com
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Secretary: Mina Goodrich ..... larrymina@peoplepc.com
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