
Maryland Bird Conservation Symposium



**“Encouraging, Educating, and Empowering our
Youth Conservation Leaders”**

**Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center
Millersville MD
January 26, 2019**

The Maryland Bird Conservation Symposium is presented in partnership with:



Maryland Bird Conservation Symposium

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2019 Maryland Bird Conservation Symposium

Saturday, 26 January 2019

Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, Millersville MD

Objectives

- Provide current state of knowledge on key aspects of bird conservation in Maryland
- Generate interest, partnerships, and participation in bird conservation
- Connect youth with ornithology and conservation professionals

– AGENDA –

9:00 AM

Registration, coffee/tea, exhibit setup

10:00 AM

Welcome Chris Eberly, Patrick Newcombe, George Radcliffe

KeynoteMike Parr

Keynote address brought to you by

Zeiss, Maryland Ornithological Society, and Maryland Biodiversity Project

Bringing Costa Rican endemics, education, and MD birders full circle..... Patrick Newcombe/YMOS

Marshes for tomorrow - Audubon's initiative to save Chesapeake wetlands

Important Bird Areas as a guide for bird conservation in MarylandDominic Serino

Flight by Night: An introduction to nocturnal flight calls.....Daniel Irons/YMOS

from Sea Level RiseDavid Curson

Q&A with morning speakers

12:15 PM

Lunch catered by Absolutely Perfect Catering

Networking, posters/exhibits

1:30 PM

20 years of avian response to a restored grassland in Queen Anne's County..... Maren Gimpel

Natural Lands Project and Northern Bobwhite conservation..... Dan Small

Flight to Extinction: The Conflict between American Progress

and the Passenger Pigeon..... Claire Wayner/YMOS

Toward a sustainable future with birdsBeth Decker

Break – coffee, snacks, networking, posters/exhibits

Maryland forest bird conservation Eric Sprague

Farmland Raptor Nestbox Project of Montgomery and Frederick CountiesSuzanne Shoemaker

Q&A with all speakers

Moving Bird Conservation Forward: Next Steps..... Chris Eberly

Informal discussions and networking

5:00 PM

Adjourn

2019 Maryland Bird Conservation Symposium

Presentation Abstracts

Bringing Costa Rican endemics, education, and MD birders full circle – Patrick Newcombe

The Osa Peninsula of Costa Rica is home to the densest concentrations of biodiversity in the world, including three critically endangered species of birds. Increasing attention in conservation has been given to education and involvement of local people, and birders are a resource who can help protect birds. I used a three-pronged approach to conservation: field research, education, and birders. I studied the ecology of the endangered Black-cheeked Ant-Tanager at Osa Conservation's Piro Biological Station, collecting data on habitat variables, food sources, associate species, behavior, and tips for ecotourist visitors. I established an ongoing environmental education project for low-income students to inspire some to become bird and nature guides. Maryland birders were a key part of both these efforts by donating used binoculars.

20 years of avian response to a restored grassland in Queen Anne's County – Maren Gimpel

In 1998 unproductive poor soil fields on Chino Farms were taken out of agricultural production and planted into replicate blocks of native warm season grasses. The first of its kind major scale restoration in the area, the grasslands were quickly colonized by grassland birds. In the following 20 years, highlights have included breeding Grasshopper Sparrows and Northern Bobwhite, migrating Bobolinks, transitory Dickcissels and wintering birds like Northern Harrier. Long-term research on Grasshopper Sparrows has transitioned to Field Sparrows as our focal species. Education, training and outreach have been important parts of the project mission.

Flight by Night: An introduction to nocturnal flight calls – Daniel Irons

Have you ever been out on a calm night and heard quiet chips, seeps, and squawks from above? In this presentation, we will dive into the little-known world of nocturnal flight calls. Methods of recording and analyzing calls will be reviewed along with details on how to make your own recording device. Lastly, we will look at recordings and identifications of common nocturnal migrants.

Important Bird Areas as a guide for bird conservation in Maryland – Dominic Serino

Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are regions identified worldwide as the most crucial areas of habitat for bird conservation. IBAs in Maryland support populations of at-risk bird species, populations of birds with particular habitat requirements, and very dense populations of breeding, wintering, or migrating birds. Areas designated as IBAs thus act as a guide for Audubon and its partner organizations and agencies to determine the most suitable locations for advocacy and conservation actions. Additionally, an extensive volunteer monitoring program first implemented in spring 2017 allows Audubon to understand the current status and trends in bird populations within IBAs, and to communicate this information to state agencies, land managers, and other partners.

Natural Lands Project and Northern Bobwhite conservation – Dan Small

Northern Bobwhite and their habitats have long been a focus at the River and Field Campus (RAFC), formerly Chino Farms. As a result of this dedicated focus and effort Northern Bobwhite populations along with other grassland dependent species are thriving on the property which stands in contrast to most other properties on the Shore. Using RAFC as a model farm, Washington College's Center for Environment & Society teamed up with ShoreRivers to help make other properties on the upper Eastern Shore more bobwhite friendly while trying to improve water quality. We received generous grant funding to help start the Natural Lands Project with a goal of creating a healthy balance throughout the agricultural landscape of production farming and wildlife habitat. Efforts have been successful, since 2015 over 400 acres of native grasses have been planted on public and private lands providing much needed nesting habitat as well as winter habitat for declining grassland species.

Maryland forest bird conservation – Eric Sprague

Maryland's forests have rebounded over the past century and now make up around 40% of the state's land cover. However, declines in forest diversity and health are stressing bird habitat for species like wood thrush and cerulean warbler. Forest restoration and management are key to sustaining forest birds.

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Presentation Abstracts

Flight to Extinction: The Conflict between American Progress and the Passenger Pigeon – Claire Wayner

Capturing the story of the extinction of the Passenger Pigeon, this 10-minute mini-documentary was awarded Best Documentary Short at the 2018 Johns Hopkins University High School Film Festival and was shown at Maryland History Day in April 2018. Claire made the documentary as part of a capstone project for her high school film class.

Marshes for tomorrow - Audubon's initiative to save Chesapeake wetlands from Sea Level Rise – David Curson

Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge lies at the heart of one of the largest tidal marsh complexes in the northeastern United States, which is recognized as an Important Bird Area (Southern Dorchester County IBA) supporting globally important populations of Black Rail and Saltmarsh Sparrow. Rapid climate-driven sea level rise threatens the survival of this ecosystem during the current century. Audubon Maryland-DC is working with Federal, State and NGO partners to ensure that Maryland's salt marshes and their birds do survive, by implementing innovative strategies to increase marsh resilience, including thin-layer sediment application, Managed Marsh Transition, and enhancing tidal exchange through hydrological management.

Toward a sustainable future with birds – Beth Decker

Both resident and migratory birds face many challenges in coping with a changing world. One of the most significant and rising threats to their survival is the presence of so much glass used in development today. Once thought to be a sustainable option, the use of too much glass increases energy consumption, most notably in heating and cooling, even while allowing natural light. Additionally, in 2009, it was estimated that we lose a billion healthy birds a year that but for the presence of glass would have migrated and reproduced successfully. The good news is that advances in science and technology have yielded important solutions to continue the popular use of glass, but to do so in a way that protects birds and reduces energy waste. By asking our legislators to continue to evolve the principals of sustainable growth we can address both the unsustainable and unrestrained loss of bird life, while also addressing energy efficiency, taking a better stance on climate change. It is equally important to maintaining healthy populations of bird life to consider both habitat needs in the natural world as well as habitat protections in the built environment as humans live ever more closely with birds. Please join us to advocate for birds in our modern world.

Farmland Raptor Nestbox Project of Montgomery and Frederick Counties – Suzanne Shoemaker

Populations of farmland raptors including American Kestrels, Common Barn Owls, and Northern Harriers have been declining nationwide in recent years. In Montgomery and Frederick County MD much of the decline can be attributed to habitat loss as farmland is replaced by subdivisions and shopping centers. In an effort to stem the decline, Owl Moon Raptor Center initiated a nest box project in spring of 2011, installing 11 Kestrel and one Barn Owl nest box in Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve. Results were encouraging in the first year, as over 50% of our Kestrel boxes were occupied and fledged young. We installed more boxes and had over 75% of our Kestrel boxes occupied in some years. In 2018, 18 of 20 Kestrel nest boxes were inspected, and 15 of those were occupied by Kestrels. Thirty-three chicks were banded from 12 of the occupied boxes. We had our first Barn Owl nest in 2015. Four chicks hatched, but only two survived to be banded and fledge. In 2018, 5 of 9 Barn Owl boxes had active nests, and our boxes fledged a total of 14 chicks!

Exhibits and Displays

Nathan Tea	Presenting a line of Pointillism artwork
Oliver Patrick	Piece depicting a map of Maryland composed a collage of bird species
Daniel Irons	Bird carving, Art, Photos - print, Photos - digital
Jonathan Irons	Bird carving, Art, Photos - print, Photos - digital
Nick Spigler	A few unique bird photos
Shivam Chaturvedi	Poster on Indian Birds

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Presenter Information



David Curson

Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon Maryland-DC; dcurson@audubon.org

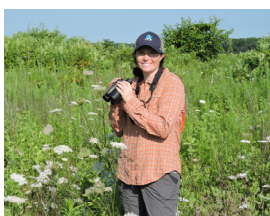
David Curson has worked as Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon Maryland-DC, the state office of the National Audubon Society, since 2004, and in 2018 he also became Interim Executive Director. His duties include designing and implementing ornithological conservation programs and research, directing the science department, policy outreach, coordinating advocacy, fundraising, and administration. Dave grew up in London, England. In 1985 he received his BSc in Ecology at the University of East Anglia. He came to the United States in 1993 to begin graduate studies and received MS (1996) and PhD (2003) degrees in the Department of Wildlife Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Beth Decker

Director, Safe Skies Maryland; beth@safeskiesmaryland.org

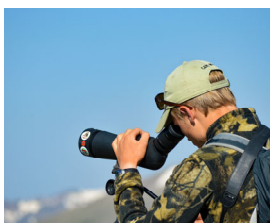
Beth Decker is the Director of Safe Skies Maryland and chairs both a conservation committee for Maryland Ornithological Society, as well as the Sustainability Working Group for the Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership. She is a Program Manager for Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE) and is the Project Learning Tree state coordinator. She is currently working to advance forest literacy, as well as increasing opportunities for students and educators to engage with current and emerging topics in conservation toward a sustainable future.



Maren Gimpel

Field Ecologist, Chester River Field Research Station, Washington College; mgimpel2@washcoll.edu

Maren Gimpel is Field Ecologist and Outreach Coordinator at the Chester River Field Research Station at Chino Farms, overseen by Washington College's Center for Environment & Society where she bands birds for both migratory and breeding studies. A bander since 2002 and a birder for over 25 years, Maren compiles the local Chesterville Christmas Bird Count. Before coming to Washington College, she worked on avian research projects from Nova Scotia to Tobago.



Daniel Irons

YMOS; danielirons02@yahoo.com

An avid birder, wildlife photographer, and avian wood carver, Daniel Irons is 16 years old and resides on Maryland's Eastern Shore. He has been an active member of the Youth Maryland Ornithological Society for 9 years and competes annually in the World Series of Birding. Daniel also leads bird walks for multiple groups around the state, volunteers at the Foreman's Branch Bird Observatory (a banding station on Chino Farms), and has worked as a migration counter at the Cape May Bird Observatory. Specializing in birding by ear, Daniel's favorite types of birding are seawatching, morning flight, nocturnal flight call counts, and stationary counts. He is also passionate about birding little-known and under-birded locations, finding rarities, and late, out of season migrants.

Patrick Newcombe - see Organizing Committee, last page



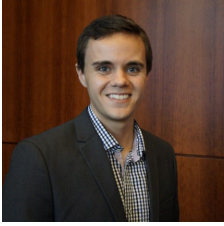
Mike Parr

President, American Bird Conservancy

Mike joined American Bird Conservancy in 1996 after graduating from the University of East Anglia, UK, and working for BirdLife International. He has co-authored seven books including: *Parrots - A Guide to the Parrots of the World*, *Important Bird Areas in the United States*, and *The American Bird Conservancy Guide to Bird Conservation*, along with numerous articles and papers. He is Chair of the Alliance for Zero Extinction, and serves on the Sustainable Forestry Initiative national board, and is an advisor to the Quick Response Biodiversity Fund.

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Presenter Information



Dominic Serino

Chesapeake Conservation Corps intern, Audubon Maryland-DC; dserino@audubon.org

Dominic Serino is working with Audubon Maryland-DC through the Chesapeake Conservation Corps, a program funded through the Chesapeake Bay Trust that places young environmental professionals with agencies and NGOs for one year. During his term with Audubon, Dom is focusing on salt marsh restoration projects in Dorchester County and the Important Bird Areas program. Dom grew up in Massachusetts and recently graduated from Santa Clara University with a B.S. in Environmental Science.



Suzanne Shoemaker

Owl Moon Raptor Center; owlmoonrc@gmail.com

Suzanne trained first as an Animal Scientist (AAS, Univ. of New Hampshire 1975), and then as a Wildlife Biologist (BS, Univ. of Massachusetts 1981, MS, Oregon State Univ. 1986), and more recently as a licensed Master Falconer and Master Wildlife Rehabilitator (MD and USFWS). In 2002, Suzanne founded Owl Moon Raptor Center, now a 501c3 charitable organization. The mission of Owl Moon is to preserve and increase native populations of birds of prey through 1) rescue, rehabilitation, and release; 2) habitat protection, enhancement, and expansion; and 3) public education. Owl Moon currently admits over 250 injured, sick, or orphaned birds of prey annually. In 2011, Suzanne initiated a nest box project to address the declining populations of farmland raptors, including Barn Owls and American Kestrels.



Dan Small

Field Ecologist and Natural Lands Coordinator, Center for Environment & Society at Washington College; dsmall2@washcoll.edu

After years of seasonal field work traveling around the country, Dan settled down in Chestertown, MD in 2006 while working for the University of MD at the Chester River Field Research Station. At CRFRS he helped with the summer time breeding bird research and banded migratory birds in the spring and the fall. More recently, he has been coordinating the Natural Lands Project which started in 2015 run by the Center for Environment & Society at Washington College. Dan now works with landowners on the upper shore who are interested in adding grassland habitat or wetlands to their properties to help declining wildlife populations.



Eric Sprague

American Forests; esprague@americanforests.org

Eric leads the implementation of American Forests' forest conservation efforts, including thornscrub restoration in the bird hotspot of the Lower Rio Grande Valley and whitebark pine restoration for Clark's Nutcracker and other species in the Northern Rockies. Before joining American Forests, he directed the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay's efforts to restore forest ecosystems, including accelerating the planting of trees along streams and using market-based forest conservation strategies.

Eric has also worked with the Pinchot Institute for Conservation, The Conservation Fund and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's smart growth program.



Claire Wayner

YMOS; claire@wayner.org

An 18-year-old young birder, Claire is a first-year undergraduate at Princeton University studying environmental engineering. In addition to spending time outdoors, she enjoys being a part of the varsity rowing team and running climate advocacy campaigns with the Princeton Student Climate Initiative.

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— Organizing Committee —



Chris Eberly

Director, Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership; director@marylandbirds.org

Chris was born in Maryland and grew all over Pennsylvania. He received a B.S. in Computer Science at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and spent 11 years in the computer field. He then returned to grad school and earned an M.S. from the University of Georgia. For the next 17 years Chris managed the bird conservation program for the Department of Defense and consulted with military bases in the U.S. (including AK and HI) . After 1½ years in Texas as Executive Director of the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, he began working with the Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership (MBCP)

as Science Coordinator. Chris has been Director of MBCP since July 2017.



Patrick Newcombe

YMOS; patrickstonecraft@gmail.com

Patrick Newcombe is an avid birder and photographer who is passionate about conservation. He has spent time during the past two summers at Osa Conservation's Piro Biological Station researching the endangered Black-cheeked Ant-Tanager. He is an active member of YMOS (Youth Maryland Ornithological Society) and is the editor of the Montgomery Bird Club's newsletter. He

has been a member of a World Series of Birding team, the Marsh Gigglers, for the last four years. Patrick is a junior at Sidwell Friends School and a Caroline D. Bradley Scholar.



George Radcliffe

YMOS Coordinator; radclifg@gmail.com

George taught middle school science for 38 years in Dorchester and Queen Anne's Counties and has been the Youth Coordinator for the Maryland Ornithological Society since 2005. He has been an active member of the Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Education since its inception in 1986 and has been both President and Trustee of that organization. He currently lives

and works on his farm in Dorchester County, a property which has been in his family since 1663 and the first property in Maryland to be given an environmental easement by the Maryland Environmental Trust.

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Anne Arundel Bird Club

<http://aabirdclub.org/>

Delmarva Birding Weekends

www.DelmarvaBirding.com

Prince George's Audubon Society

www.pgaudubon.org

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<http://dnr.maryland.gov/>

US FWS Chesapeake Bay Field Office

<https://www.fws.gov/chesapeakebay/index.html>

YMOS (Youth MOS)

<https://mdbirds.org/young-birders/>