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Chesapeake
Audubon Society



Summer 2015 Newsletter

Going Green Means Going Native

By Chris Holzmüller

"Going green" is more than just recycling and using "clean" energy, its going native. I recently bought a book about sustaining wildlife with native plants and proceeded to read an excerpt on the diminishing wild spaces in the United States. I bought the book to see what I could do to create the most native yard scape for birds, amphibians, mammals, and the like. Although I knew wild spaces were diminishing in the U.S., I was alarmed to read that only 3 to 5 percent of undisturbed habitat remains for our wildlife and plants.

The next day as I was creeping up I-83 after work in bumper to bumper traffic, a reporter on NPR elatedly announced that new housing construction seemed to be rebounding for the first time in 7 years, with 1.14 million units reported last quarter. I guess if you are an economist or a builder this is good news, but in my opinion this is bad news, particularly for all things wild. With this new development comes more roads, asphalt parking lots, and in many cases sterile lawns. I live in a rural area of south central Pennsylvania, and I am blessed with many species of birds, mammals, butterflies and other insects, frogs, turtles, toads, and even snakes. As I look out my back window, I do see forest, but these wood sections are merely small islands surrounded by crop fields, horse pastures, farms, or houses.

In the book I am reading, *Bringing Nature Home*, author Douglas Tallamy offers a doable solution—go native. Now, I am just finishing chapter four on biodiversity, why it matters, and why introduced species are bad. With ten chapters to go, this is far from a book review. My point in mentioning this book is to prompt everyone to think how they can make their yards, patios, and cement backyards less sterile and more sustainable for insects, spiders, amphibians, birds, and mammals.

Coexisting with nature is likely our best solution, which means adding back native plants, trees, and bushes. Without delving into every detail, native species require little maintenance, support good insects (our natural pesticides), and the plants and insects support our wildlife. Nonnative species are difficult to grow, do not support native insects and wildlife, and can cause trouble. Some have been carriers of insects, such as the Japanese beetle and, more recently, the "stink bug." Some invasively destroy native flora, such as the kudzu vine, multiflora rose, and Japanese honeysuckle.

If each of us, whether we live in the city, suburbia, or the rural countryside, *went native*, we could expand and reconnect the habitats that are home to our wildlife and plants. Doug Tallamy provides a list of native trees, conifers, vines, and plants, and even some species that deer find unpalatable in his book (*Bringing Nature Home*, Timber Press, updated edition, 2009). Another

option is to turn to the Web and search by state or the mid-Atlantic region. (See page 3 for an abbreviated list of natives in our region.) ■■

What I'm Reading

by Bryan MacKay

Book Review: *The Miracle Pond*
Authored by Middleton Evans

Middleton Evans has now published his long-anticipated book about the "boat lake" at Patterson Park. Fifteen years in the making, *The Miracle Pond* is a celebration of the astounding variety of life drawn to a two-acre pond within a 155-acre park surrounded by dozens of blocks of row houses, busy city streets, and tens of thousands of people. And, although there are photos of insects, plants, turtles, etc, it's clear that birds are the real stars of this coffee-table sized tome. Among the birds, wood ducks are the central characters. Woodies are well-known as shy, secretive, hard-to-photograph ducks, but for several years breeding pairs could be found at Patterson Park year round within easy photographic distance. Middleton has documented every aspect of the woody life cycle, confirming this duck's reputation as perhaps America's prettiest bird.

This is a large book, ten by thirteen inches, almost 350 pages, and is printed on heavyweight, glossy paper. Every aspect of its production was done in Baltimore, unusual among books published in this day and age. While its price of \$50 may seem high, Middleton is actually selling it at cost; he makes no profit. *The Miracle Pond* is truly a labor of love.

Books may be ordered directly from Middleton via his publisher, Ravenwood Press, 2400 Boston Street, Suite 102, Baltimore, MD, 21224. Middleton's website is www.RavenwoodPress.com. ■■

It's not too late; tickets are still available!

Tour, Toast & Taste
June 13, 2015 @ 5:30pm

Support Pickering Creek Audubon Center by attending their fundraiser! Tickets: \$125 in advance; \$150 at the door. Visit <http://www.pcevents.org> or call 410-822-4903 to purchase tickets.

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Field Trips and Programs:

Some of the dates provide an opportunity to choose a trip or double up and participate in two. Beginner birders are welcome and encouraged to attend our walks!

Sunday, July 19, 8:00am Leader: Hugh Simmons
Sweet Air Section of Gunpowder Falls State Park
(Baldwin, MD)

Join National Audubon and CAS President Hugh Simmons as he takes participants around the Sweet Air Section of the Gunpowder State Park. This area offers a great mix of habitats for birding and a very pleasant hike. Fields, edges, deep woods and the Gunpowder River provide opportunities to find a good variety of birds. The walk will include uneven terrain and hills. There are also often wet areas so wear shoes that can tolerate getting wet. Call Hugh Simmons at [410-456-0017](tel:410-456-0017) or lennonature@gmail.com for meeting location and details.

Saturday, July 25, 8:00am Leader: Ruth Bergstrom
North Point State Park Birdwalk for Beginners
(Edgemere, MD)

Take a walk along the wetlands, Chesapeake Bay shoreline, and woods to search especially for egrets and herons and other resident birds. This walk is mainly for fledgling birders, but all are welcome! Entrance fee of \$4 for Maryland residents. No need to register but email Ruth at ruthb22@yahoo.com or calling 443-752-1967 if you have questions. We will meet at the first parking lot to the left after you pass the entrance.

Saturday, August 1, 10:00am–12:30pm
Kayaking/Canoeing at Dundee Creek (Harford County)
Leaders: Anita Tyler and Ruth Bergstrom

Join us for a leisurely kayak/canoe trip along the shoreline of Dundee Creek. This is one of the most pristine areas in the upper Chesapeake Bay, bordered by undeveloped state park land and APG property. In this brackish marsh area surrounded by coastal woodland, we'll look for waterfowl, songbirds, turtles, beavers, and more, while admiring wildflowers, grasses, and native trees. It's typical to see bald eagles flying above us, and we'll paddle by an occupied osprey nest. Bring your binoculars. Meet at 9:45am at the Dundee Marina kayak launch area. Bring your own kayak or canoe. Kayaks can be rented from Ultimate Watersports right at the launch area. To register contact Ruth at atruthb22@yahoo.com or 443-752-1967. Limit 12 paddlers. Information on Ultimate Watersports can be found here: <http://www.ultimatewatersports.com>.

Sunday, August 9, 8:00am Leader: Hugh Simmons
BYOB Kayak/Canoe Trip Location TBD

Call Hugh Simmons at [410-456-0017](tel:410-456-0017) or lennonature@gmail.com for location and details.

Saturday, September 12, 8:00am Leader: Tim Houghton
Soldiers Delight (Owings Mills, MD)

September is an excellent time to see Fall migrants in this globally rare ecosystem. Soldiers Delight is a 1,900-acre state park in Baltimore County (in Owings Mills). We hope to find many south-bound species, including wood warblers, hawks, flycatchers, and thrushes. Contact Tim at thoughton@loyola.edu (or 410-510-7504).

Sunday, September 20, 8:00am Leader: Hugh Simmons
Cromwell Valley Park (Baltimore County)

This is the peak time for Broad-Winged Hawk migration. You'll spend time at the Hawk Watch as well as hike trails in search of migrating sparrows and other songbirds. Cromwell Valley is a 426

-acre stream valley park in Baltimore County and one of the best places in MD for migrating hawks and other fall birds. There are cultivated gardens, pasture land, woods, hedgerows, orchards, and wood piedmont hills—diverse habitat for bird species and mammals. The park is several miles off the Cromwell Bridge exit (exit 29) of I-695. Beginners are welcome! Contact Hugh Simmons at [410-456-0017](tel:410-456-0017) or lennonature@gmail.com for meeting location and details.

Sunday, September 27, 8:00am Leader: Kye Jenkins
Swan Harbor Farm (Harford County)

Just south of Havre de Grace on the Chesapeake Bay are the beautiful grounds of Swan Harbor Park. It is full of colorful Butterflies, shore birds, and land birds for your enjoyment. You don't want to miss this trip! Contact Kye for meeting location and directions at kyebird56@yahoo.com.



PATTERSON PARK Audubon CENTER

Patterson Park Urban Bird Watching Walks

More than 180 bird species visit Patterson Park and more than 50 species are permanent residents. Stroll and search for resident and migrant birds with Audubon. The park is an urban oasis, with 44 native plant species in Audubon-maintained habitat gardens, and 50 species of trees. Friday walks are led in partnership with Chesapeake Audubon Society and Saturday walks are led by Audubon MD-DC's conservation director.

Walks are from 8:00am to 9:30am and all ages are welcome. Free. No registration required. Meet at the fountain in the northwest corner of the park. No need to RSVP but contact Patterson Park Audubon if you need to borrow binoculars; either email ppaudubon@gmail.com or call 410-558-2473. Walks are scheduled on the following dates:

	Friday	Saturday
June	12	27
July	10	25
August	14	29
September	11	26

Volunteers Needed!

Habitat Garden in Patterson Park

Staff at the Patterson Park Audubon Center are looking for volunteers to help in their habitat garden. **This is a good way to collect service hours.** Tools, gloves, water, and snacks will be provided. No need to register. Meet at the western edge of the Boat Lake or wetland garden, which is closer to the Eastern Avenue (south) side of the park. Come dig in the dirt the first Saturday of each month! Next date: **Saturday, June 6, 9:00am–11:00am** E-mail ppaudubon@gmail.com if more information is needed.

Visit us at



Home Improvements: Prothonotary Warbler-style

By Vicki Dodson

You've probably done this before (after all, who hasn't?), but imagine for a moment that you can fly.

Now imagine that you weigh less than half an ounce, about the weight of five pennies, and have just made your way, oh, about 2,500 miles from Central America to the Chesapeake...at night. If you were a Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*), this scenario would be fact, not a flight of fancy, yet your hardest work would have only just begun: Now it's time to raise a family.



Photograph courtesy of Vicki Dodson

Remember the realtor's adage, "Location, location, location." Like any prospective parent, you carefully compare housing and neighborhood amenities. As a Prothonotary Warbler, you need a suitably sized tree cavity (a vacant woodpecker hole will do nicely) or nest box, preferably in a shady swamp—no bright and sunny bluebird meadow for this species. And there is fierce competition for nest cavities, not only from Prothonotary Warblers, but from other types of birds, so males search out and aggressively defend potential nest sites right away.

They stake their claims to several cavities by placing a little moss inside (some are believed to be dummy nests that may confound predators). The male presents these digs to his mate by successively entering and exiting each cavity ("See, honey, the door works!"). His mate then selects her favorite and begins home improvements of her own. First, a thick foundation of damp moss and liverwort is laid down, usually dressed up with a little moist lichen. Then a cozy cup of dried leaves, grasses, and fine tree roots is built on top. When construction is complete, it's time to get down to business...Three to seven eggs are laid and incubated for about two weeks. Yep, it's a lot of work for a pint-sized passerine.

Prothonotary Warblers are one of only two species of warbler that nest in cavities (Lucy's, the smallest warbler in the New World, is the second and inhabits Southwestern deserts). Once called the "Golden Swamp Warbler," Prothonotary Warblers are unusual among cavity nesting birds for their heavy use of liverworts and for the high moisture level of their nest cavities.

Are you wondering why warblers would intentionally build damp

"basements" beneath their nurseries? Studies indicate that the underlayment of damp plant matter actually improves the microclimate within the nest (remember: this species nests in confined spaces in warm places like swamps.). Think of the moist material as air conditioning. Researchers studying these warblers in Virginia found that during nesting season, a tree's surface often exceeds 113°F. That would be a very toasty incubator, indeed, and indicates why the evaporative cooling provided by a moist nest bed is crucial.

When the researchers studied nest boxes late in the breeding season, they recorded maximum temperatures of 86°F–93.2°F. Before May 20, however, the maximum temperatures were 95°F–102°F. *What gives?* It turns out that these warblers choose higher temperature boxes if they breed *earlier* in the season and cooler boxes if they breed *later*. It is a bit of a Goldilocks situation, apparently.

Some biologists believe that the foundation of mosses, liverworts, and lichens may also act as an insecticide, reducing parasites and nest pests. Others posit that the high humidity provided by damp plant matter helps prevent the eggs from drying out. What is certain is that these warblers go to great lengths to ensure that their nests are successful. Housing is a big investment and it's wise to choose and build carefully. Now if only the neighborhood Cowbirds would stay away. ■ ■

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Short list of native species

Shade & specimen trees

Acer rubrum (red maple)
Castanea dentate (American chestnut) *blight resistant variety
Quercus alba (white oak)

Shrubs & understory trees

Amelanchier laevis, smooth serviceberry
Cercis Canadensis, redbud
Cornus florida, flowering dogwood
Hydrangea arborescens, smooth hydrangea

Conifers

Chamaecyparis thyoides, Atlantic white cedar
Tsuga Canadensis, eastern hemlock

Vines

Lonicera sempervirens, coral honeysuckle
Wisteria frutescens, American wisteria

Ground covers

Phlox stolonifera, creeping phlox
Viola papilionacea, common blue violet

Perennials

Aquilegia Canadensis, wild columbine
Asclepias syriaca, common milkweed (**Monarchs need it!**)
Chrysopsis mariana, Maryland golden aster

Ospreys of the Chesapeake Bay

GET OUTSIDE MAKE A SPLASH



Awesome. Maynard hopped from his knees onto the sweet spot of his blue paddle board (SUP), eager to investigate the osprey nest inside Harness Creek. He, Rebecca, and Eve, all nearly twelve years old, and summer friends since first grade, had rented SUPs from Quiet Waters Park for the afternoon. Eve had noticed that Oscar and Pearl, the resident ospreys, had been busy since their return in March adding smaller sticks and grass padding to their already-built nest atop one of the channel-markers. Last year, Pearl had laid 3 chestnut-speckled eggs. Although, Pearl had mostly sat on the eggs during the 6 weeks of incubation, Oscar, who also has a brood patch (a patch of bare skin in his belly), helped keep the eggs

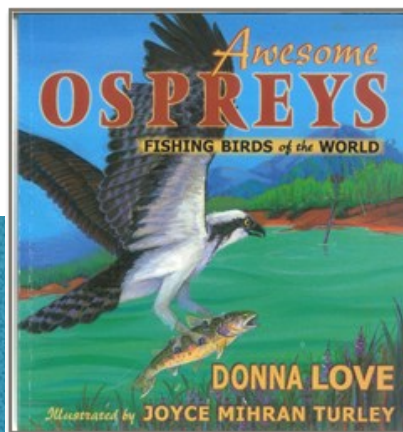
warm at times while Pearl was eating. When the chicks hatched one to 2 days apart, they were the size of a plum, and covered in pale tan down. Their orange eyes were nearly blind. For three months, Pearl fed the chicks small bites of fish that Oscar had caught. One day, as the chicks spread their wings, the wind lifted them out of the nest. They had fledged. By late August, and fishing on their own, the three, now juvenile osprey, followed Oscar and Pearl to wintering grounds in the Southern Hemisphere. The juveniles would return to Harness Creek in two years. In 5 years the now adult osprey would select a mate and raise chicks of their own. Today, though, for the three 'tweens, it was all about the new chicks, and a much anticipated welcoming of them to Harness Creek. **Awesome.**



Ospreys are one of the most widespread birds in the world. About one-quarter of all ospreys inside the contiguous United States nest in the Chesapeake Bay region from spring through late summer.



Osprey catch fish, than rearrange it in their talons so the fish is facing forward. This reduces drag, making it easier for the osprey to fly.



Activity

To see what it is like to fly like an osprey, hold your arms slightly above your head and flap your arms, but when you flap, only bring our arms down as far as your shoulders before quickly raising them again. Now you are flying like an osprey. **Awesome.**

Thanks to [Donna Love](#) and [Joyce Mihran Turley](#) for permission to use the illustrations, materials, and activity from their book, *Awesome Ospreys Fishing Birds of the World*, 2006, [Mountain Press](#).

More about ospreys at <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/fieldguide/critter/osprey>, Photo, Alan Vernon/Flickr from the same site.

Chesapeake Bay Osprey Watch Cam <http://www.chesapeakeconservancy.org/osprey-cam>

Give at the Office!



It's hard to believe, but fall will soon be here and with it the 2015 Charity Campaigns.

Chesapeake Audubon Society is a charter member of EarthShare Mid-Atlantic. EarthShare is a nationwide federation of the most respected environmental and conservation charities in the United States. EarthShare Mid-Atlantic is the regional chapter of EarthShare, a federation of 32 local, grassroots, environmental organizations in the Maryland, Delaware, DC, and Northern Virginia area.

EarthShare Mid-Atlantic provides employees in this region who are environmental advocates the most convenient and flexible way to contribute to the environmental charity of their choice (including, of course, Chesapeake Audubon Society), via the payroll deduction system.

If you are a federal, state, or local government employee or retiree, you can contribute to Chesapeake Audubon Society through the EarthShare payroll deduction plan at your workplace. Government charity campaigns in which Chesapeake Audubon Society participates include:

<u>Campaign</u>	<u>CAS #</u>
All Regional Combined Federal Campaigns (CFC's)	#57607
State of Maryland Combined Charity Campaign (CCC)	#214
Baltimore City Combined Charity Campaign (CCC)	#2033

In addition to federal, state, and local government charity campaigns, over 77 non-profit organizations and international, national, and regional private companies are also participating in EarthShare's workplace-giving campaigns, increasing the opportunity for individuals to conveniently donate to Chesapeake Audubon Society through their payroll deduction system. The most-well known of these organizations include:

Allstate	Amazon.com	American Express Hewlett-Packard
American Airlines	BJ's Wholesale Club	Dell Computer
HBO	Hewlett-Packard	JP Morgan Chase
Microsoft Corporation	The World Bank	Toyota Motor Sales
United Health Group	United Airlines	

If you have previously donated to Chesapeake Audubon Society through your payroll deduction program, we thank you very much, and urge you to continue your support! This easy and convenient donation method has become a significant portion of contributions received by CAS in recent years.

If you are an eligible employee or retiree, please consider contributing to Chesapeake Audubon Society through your payroll deduction plan. It's easy to enroll, and even a very small periodic contribution, which you will hardly miss, will make a big difference when multiplied by hundreds, or even thousands, of individual contributions.

Your contribution will be used by Chesapeake Audubon Society to continue our work for open space, cleaner air, cleaner water, and a healthier environment in the Mid-Atlantic region. The Chesapeake Audubon Society provides child/adult environmental education programs and field trips to the public, owns Pickering Creek Audubon Center, conserves 750 acres of undisturbed rare salt marsh, and advocates for environmental protection policies in the region.

If you have never considered workplace giving, perhaps it is time to find out whether your employer provides employees with the opportunity to make charitable gifts through payroll contributions. If your employer does not have a workplace giving charity campaign, or does not currently include EarthShare in its campaign, please let us know. We would be happy to introduce them to EarthShare!

Contact us at 410-203-1819 or information@chesapeakeaudubon.org.

Noteworthy Information

Would you like to know what we find on our field trips? Visit our blog at <http://chesapeakeaudubon.blogspot.com/>

Volunteer! Do you enjoy helping out at special events, like to write letters, or have an idea for a field trip or workshop? Chesapeake Audubon is always looking for volunteers or new committee members. Please e-mail information@chesapeakeaudubon.org if you'd like to become more involved with our chapter. Visit our Web site for a peek: <http://www.chesapeakeaudubon.org/>.

Chesupioc is published by
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