

# Chesupioc

Chesapeake  
Audubon Society



## Fall 2013 Newsletter

### Give at the Office!



It's hard to believe, but fall is here, and with it a new workplace giving campaign season.

Chesapeake Audubon Society is a charter member of EarthShare Mid-Atlantic, which is a regional chapter for EarthShare. EarthShare is a nationwide federation of the most respected environmental and conservation charities in the United States. EarthShare Mid-Atlantic is 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 with the most convenient and flexible way to contribute to the environmental charity of their choice (including, Chesapeake Audubon Society) – through your payroll deduction system.

If you are a federal, state, or local government employee or retiree, you can contribute to Chesapeake Audubon Society via 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
Maryland Charity Campaign (CCC)	#214
Baltimore City Combined Charity Campaign (CCC)	#2033

In addition to 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

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### Fall Adventures

Nature Blog by Bryan MacKay

The September equinox is upon us, and that signifies the onset of autumn. The weather is still pleasant, but in another six weeks the days will be noticeably shorter and temperatures frosty at night. This season of change brings any number of opportunities

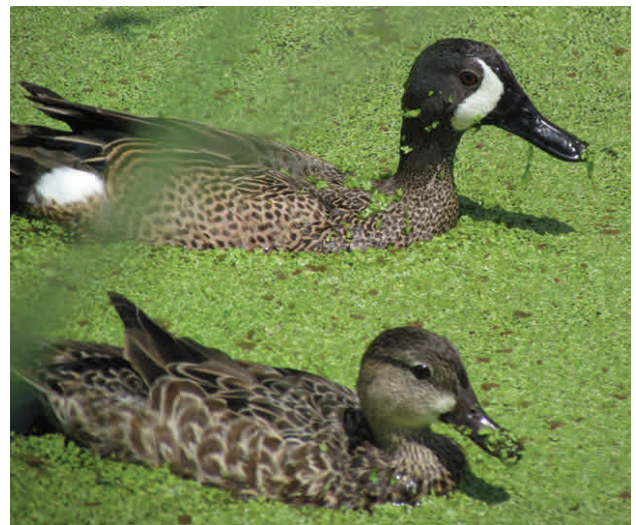
for us to experience nature, and here are some of the best for October and November.

The fall migration of songbirds is a subtle affair; the birds have lost their bright vernal colors and are now dressed in autumn drab. Most birds are quiet; even the dawn chorus is a pale imitation of its springtime counterpart. Still, birding can be rewarding. Consider joining the monthly walk in Patterson Park, in Baltimore City, with Audubon leaders, and you'll see some of the fall migrants in a location where minimal cover makes them easier to spot. Patterson Park gets a surprising diversity of birds, considering its urban location. Farther afield, perhaps the best place to see the fall migration of songbirds is Cape May, New Jersey. Although mid-to-late September is probably best, early October is still good. Assateague Island is usually productive as well.

The first week in October is peak migration for sharp-shinned hawks. These swift accipiters rocket past the observant birder, unlike the "boiling kettles" of broad-winged hawks that are more easily visible as they soar on the thermals of late September. My favorite place for seeing sharpies is Hawk Mountain, Pennsylvania, where the birds sometimes fly past at near eye level. Locally, Cromwell Valley Park in Baltimore County invariably has high counts of fall sharpies, although they are often just dots in the

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Blue-winged Teal, photograph by Bryan MacKay



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# PATTERSON PARK Audubon CENTER

## 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, October 13, 11:00am-4:00pm

#### Harvest Hoedown at Pickering Creek Audubon Center

Don't miss some good old fashioned foot stompin fun at the annual Harvest Hoedown in Easton, Maryland. Listen to live music on two different stages, featuring New & Used Bluegrass, Rick Forrest, Alan Girard, Oil City Ramblers, and Slim Harrison. Jump on a hayride, participate in children's activities and waterfront activities, chow down on some yummy food, and see what local artisans are selling. **Cost: \$10 per car. For more details contact 410-822-4903.**

### Saturday, October 19, 8:00am

#### Mount Pleasant Farm

Leader: Tim Houghton

Mount Pleasant Farm in Howard County is a premier place for field birds, including a large variety of sparrows. This is an easy walk in a beautiful location. **Contact Tim for meeting location and directions: 410-510-7504 or (email) thoughton@loyola.edu.**

### Saturday, October 26 Annual Chili Dinner!

Bryan MacKay, director at large of CAS, will speak about his new book — "A Year Across Maryland." See details on page 6.

### Sunday, November 10, 9:00am

#### Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge

Leader: Kye Jenkins

Join Kye for a road trip to Bombay Hook in Delaware. You will look for waterfowl, Black-necked Stilts, Avocets, and many other birds at this beautiful refuge. Meet Kye at the Visitor's Center at 9:00am. If you have a telescope, bring it along. **Contact Kye for more information: 410-628-7257 or (email) Kyebird46@yahoo.com.**

### Saturday, December 7, 8:30am

#### Eagles at Conowingo Dam

Leader: Ruth Bergstrom

Some years, more than a hundred Bald Eagles can be viewed near Conowingo Dam; an amazing sight. Gulls and Great Blue Herons are present in large numbers too. After spotting birds at the dam, we'll hike along the old railroad tracks searching for winter residents. Join us after the walk for a quick stop at the boardwalk in Havre de Grace and brunch at a local restaurant. **Contact Ruth to register and for instructions: 443-752-1967, (email) ruthb22@yahoo.com.**

### Sunday, January 19, 11:00am

#### Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge

Leader: Ruth Bergstrom

Take a trip with Ruth to the Blackwater NWR on the eastern shore. You will search for Tundra Swans, Snow Geese, Brown-headed Nuthatches, wintering ducks, and other avian treasures. Join Ruth for dinner after the trip to compare birds lists and tally the results. **Contact Ruth to register: 443-752-1967, (email) ruthb22@yahoo.com.** Carpooling will be possible from the White Marsh park-n-ride.

### 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](mailto:ppaudubon@gmail.com) or call 410-558-2473. Walks are scheduled on the following dates:

	Friday	Saturday
October	11	26
November	8	30
December	13	21
January	10	25

## Fall Birdseed Sale!

Our annual birdseed sale is November 2, 2013. Proceeds will support environmental programs at the Patterson Park Audubon Center. This year, Baltimore's Meyer Seed Company is sponsoring our sale and promises fresh, high-quality seed at fantastic prices. Our pickup location is St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church on Edmondson Avenue in Catonsville; and pickup time between 9:00 am and 11:30 am. We will offer home delivery for a nominal charge, but we encourage people to come pick up their orders since we rely on an ever dwindling group of volunteers to make our deliveries.

If you can help unload seed bags and load cars on Nov. 2, please contact Robin ([rjschless@gmail.com](mailto:rjschless@gmail.com)) or phone (410-277-9213). If you have strong high-school children or grandchildren who have community-service hours to perform, we can offer up to 4 hours on sale day.

**The bird seed order form has been mailed out soon, or you can find it on our Web site - [www.chesapeakeaudubon.org](http://www.chesapeakeaudubon.org).**

If you're uncertain about what seeds to order, here is some information that might help. Black-oil sunflower seed is the best all-around seed year-round. Virtually, all seed-eating birds eat it. Its only drawback is the shell waste that ends up on the ground for us to clean up. To avoid that, sunflower seed comes shelled, *Continued on page 7*

Friend us on





## What – Cerulean Warblers!

By Tim Houghton

Around the middle of May, when most of spring songbird migration begins to wind down, I tend to get a little sad, but last spring was different. Audubon asked me to conduct a Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) in the McKeldin area of the Patapsco Valley (a little west of Baltimore) for several species, with the focus on the Cerulean Warbler, a lovely little bird with blue top, white throat, and black necklace, which likes to nest high in mature forest trees, often near cliffs and water. At the very time when I usually slow down my birding activities, I was now going to work intensively to find breeding Cerulean Warblers (whose numbers are declining), spreading my search throughout the breeding period of May 20 to the end of June.

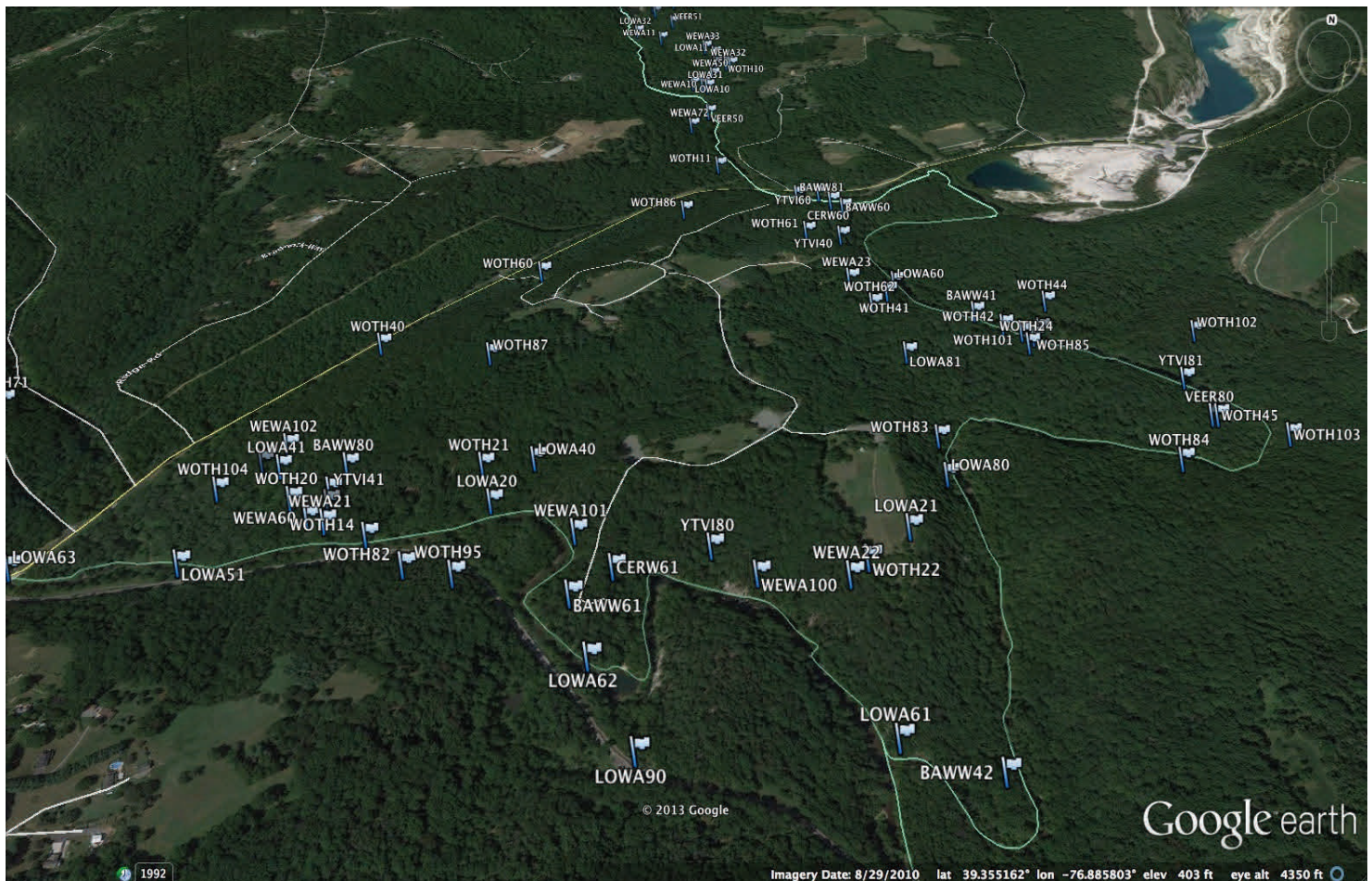
In recent years, Ceruleans seemed to have largely disappeared from the Patapsco Valley, so when I started to look for them, I was pessimistic, expecting to be happy if I found perhaps one breeding male, two if I was lucky. Because of their small size and penchant for conducting their business high in the trees, I largely had to rely on recognizing their buzzy, three-part song (which can resemble that of a Northern Parula), and each time I heard

that song initially, I experienced a thrill. For me, the process eventually reached the comical point where the song was like a pop tune that gets stuck in the head; the song even appeared in my dreams.

The Cerulean may be close to earning the label "endangered," its numbers having tumbled dramatically since the 1960s, due to habitat destruction in its North American breeding territory and in its South American wintering grounds, so I was happy to find a number of them in the Patapsco area, more than expected. In the end I found 6 singing male Ceruleans—all of them likely breeders. (Plus two quiet, hard-to-spot females.) Who knows what the future holds. Hopefully they will be around for a long time.



Cerulean Warbler, photograph by Kye Jenkins



### Breeding Map for McKeldin area

Each flag with corresponding abbreviation marks the precise location and GPS coordinates for a bird species listed below.

CERW (Cerulean Warbler)

WOTH (Wood Thrush)

YTVI (Yellow-throated Vireo)

VEER (Veery)

WEWA (Worm-eating Warbler)

BAWW (Black-in-white Warbler)

LOWA (Louisiana Warbler)



## Give at the Office *continued...*

opportunity for individuals to conveniently donate to Chesapeake Audubon Society through their payroll deduction system. The most-well known of these organizations include:

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

If you have donated to the 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 via 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 the 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 conducts environmental education programs and field trips for children and adults, 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](mailto:information@chesapeakeaudubon.org).)

## Fall Adventures *continued*

sky to a casual observer. Still, volunteers at the Cromwell Hawk Watch can help you see sharpies.

Let's not forget Maryland's native flora. The first week in October is the prime time for viewing one of our rarest but beautiful wildflowers. Fringed gentians grow in wet meadows at Soldiers Delight in Baltimore County. Be sure to stay on the trail (per regulations) and view the flowers with your binoculars; gentians have often been trampled in past years by careless aficionados. The grasses at Soldiers Delight are also beautiful in autumn.

Mid-October brings fall color to the Appalachians, and a visit to

Swallow Falls State Park in Garrett County will reveal some of the best palettes. For a full experience, camp overnight there, but for the less adventurous there are plenty of fine accommodations at nearby Deep Creek Lake. Prime fall color in the metro region is usually the last week in October, while the Eastern Shore is typically a week or two behind Baltimore.

And speaking of the Eastern Shore, your entire family will enjoy Harvest Hoedown at our own Audubon Center, Pickering Creek. It's 400 acres of wetlands, farmland and Bay frontage is beautiful, and Hoedown is a perfect time to get to know what your Audubon membership supports. This year, Hoedown is Sunday, October 13 from 11 am to 4 pm. It is about a 90-minute drive from Baltimore.

By November, waterfowl migration is underway, and visiting one of my three favorite National Wildlife Refuges on the Eastern Shore is a perfect way to spend an autumn day. Bombay Hook, Blackwater, and Chincoteague each host tens of thousands of geese and almost as many ducks by mid-month. Chesapeake Audubon usually runs a trip to Bombay Hook or to Blackwater in November. I visit Chincoteague annually over Thanksgiving weekend, when the weather is often surprisingly mild. There is a good wildlife art festival going on, and the dirt road behind the dunes is open to cars for the only time all year.

The end of November brings yet another avian spectacle onto our calendars. Visit Fisherman's Park (Shures Landing) at the base of Conowingo Dam in Harford County. This may be the best time and place in the eastern U.S. to see bald eagles up close; they often perch in the sycamores fringing the parking lot. Still, binoculars or preferably a spotting scope are helpful. Although eagles are present at this site year-round, these few weeks near Thanksgiving bring peak numbers. A well-kept secret five years ago, Conowingo is now attracting more and more people. Chesapeake Audubon usually has a morning field trip here in late November, so look for it on the trip schedule.

I hope you enjoy the autumnal season!



# Chesapeake Audubon Society

2013 Fall Chili Dinner  
Saturday, October 26, 2013 at 6:00 p.m.

*Featuring*

**Bryan MacKay**

*“A Year Across Maryland”*



Join author **Bryan MacKay** on a journey through the natural year here in the Free State. When is the best time to see migrating hawks in the skies over Baltimore? Where might you go to see acres of native wildflowers in bloom? What's a good destination this weekend to experience nature in the Chesapeake region? Through photographs and words, Bryan will lead you on an enticing armchair tour of Maryland's biodiversity.

Bryan has been a member of Chesapeake Audubon's Board of Directors for 35 years, and has led field trips to many destinations around the state. This talk is based on his newest book, "A Year Across Maryland," his third guidebook published by the Johns Hopkins University Press.



Guess who is preparing his award-winning chili again this year? **John Love!** As most of you know, a few years ago John moved to Las Cruces NM with his bride, Terre. But there is more to the back-story of John's upcoming job of cooking his most excellent chili this year. Since moving to New Mexico, he has returned to Maryland each fall to visit family, join with friends on a fall vacation, *and* cook chili for our annual dinner. This year, John could not combine his visit with family and friends with the chili dinner, so he is flying to Baltimore specifically to cook for us! A huge thank you to John for this generous gesture!

And, if Bryan's presentation and John's wonderful chili aren't enough to get you excited about this year's edition of CAS' fall chili dinner, we will also again have **Sean McCahill** performing his magic on guitar for your listening pleasure during dinner!



**Where:** St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 4713 Edmondson Avenue, Baltimore, MD

**Cost:** \$10.00 per person for dinner and the program, \$13.00 if you would like a glass of wine or a beer with dinner.

**Reservations:** Call (410) 203-1819; specify if you prefer vegetarian sauce. Please send checks payable to The Chesapeake Audubon Society PO Box 3173, Baltimore, MD 21228 or call (410) 203-1819 and leave a message with your name, telephone number and number of people you will be bringing.

**Directions:** Take Baltimore beltway to exit 15A (Rte. 40, Baltimore National Pike east, towards Baltimore.) Take Rte. 40 about 2 miles, just past the convergence of Route 40 and Edmondson Ave. The Church is on the right.

*Please note: we ask that you reserve your meal ticket in advance. As always, walk-ins are welcome, but we can't guarantee there will be enough food for them.*

## Noteworthy Information

**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](mailto: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/>.

Visit us at



# K I D'S

# Common Raven



# O R N E R

**Who** is your favorite Raven? You might think about Joe Flacco or Michael Oher, but what about the Common Raven, one of the 11 raven subspecies (types) that belong, along with the crow, to the genus *Corvus* (crow family). Native American legend places the raven at the heart of many tales about the beginning of the earth, moon, sun, and stars. Here in the Chesapeake Bay area, Edgar Allen Poe famously gave the Raven the line "Nevermore." The Raven is a year-long backyard visitor, and yes, on purple Friday and game day, a football player.

## Rave Reviews for Ravens: Common Ravens can

- Roll and somersault through the air!
- Fly upside down for almost a mile!
- Copy the sound of a human voice! (Nevermore!)
- Outsmart all other birds!
- Learn to count...1, 2, 3...



## Bird sleuthing: Common Raven or American Crow?

Common Raven	HELPFUL HINTS	American Crow
		
Uniformly glossy black	<b>Plumage</b>	Uniformly black
Long and thick	<b>Beak</b>	Long and thin
Wedge-shaped	<b>Tail</b>	Fan-shaped
Long and shaggy	<b>Neck Feathers</b>	Smooth
Kraaah or broonk	<b>Call</b>	Caw-caw-caw
Yes	<b>Soars</b>	No
Yes	<b>Trickster</b>	No
In Baltimore!	<b>Plays football</b>	No

Listen to Common Raven and American Crow sounds at:

<http://birds.audubon.org/birds/common-raven>

<http://birds.audubon.org/birds/american-crow>

## **Bird Seed Sale continued...**

as well—for a price. Everybody loves the shelled seed—no work on the bird's part, no mess on our part! Shelled peanuts are great favorites of woodland birds—Blue Jays, woodpeckers, nuthatches, titmice, and chickadees. My neighborhood Blue Jays start calling when I come outside in the morning. They wait for me to appear with peanuts! White millet, which has skyrocketed in price, is still a great seed for wintering sparrows and juncos. You can spray it on the ground as that's where they want to eat it. Safflower is a good seed if squirrels or grackles overwhelm your feeders, and cardinals love it. Nyger thistle is a specialized seed for finches and needs special thistle feeders. Be careful to keep it dry as it will rot easily if wet. If you hang suet and have trouble with grackles, hang it upside down. Woodpeckers have no trouble eating "up." Contact Robin at 410-277-9213 or at [rjschless@yahoo.com](mailto:rjschless@yahoo.com) for anything related to the seed sale.

## **Wildlife in a "Less than Wonderful Environment"**

Here is a list of wildlife that Tom Simmons, past president of York Audubon in York PA, has seen on a 1.5-mile route through Hunt Valley industrial park.

### **Birds**

Great Blue Heron  
Tundra Swan  
Canada Goose  
Snow Goose  
Mallard  
Turkey Vulture  
Black Vulture  
Cooper's Hawk  
Red-shouldered Hawk  
Red-tailed Hawk  
Killdeer  
Ring-billed Gull  
Herring Gull  
Sooty Tern  
Mourning Dove  
Rock Dove (pigeon)  
Chimney Swift  
Red-bellied Woodpecker  
Downy Woodpecker  
Eastern Kingbird  
Blue Jay  
Common Crow  
Fish Crow  
Tree Swallow  
Tufted Titmouse  
Carolina Chickadee  
White-breasted Nuthatch  
Carolina Wren  
Eastern Bluebird  
American Robin  
Gray Catbird  
Northern Mockingbird  
Brown Thrasher  
European Starling  
Cedar Waxwing  
Northern Cardinal  
Chipping Sparrow  
Song Sparrow  
Dark-eyed Junco

Brown-headed Cowbird  
Red-winged Blackbird  
Common Grackle  
Baltimore Oriole  
House Finch  
American Goldfinch  
House Sparrow

### **Mammals**

Cottontail Rabbit  
Gray Squirrel  
Groundhog  
Beaver  
Red fox  
White-tailed Deer

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