Chesupioc

Chesapeake Audubon Society

Spring Issue 2020 Newsletter



Chesapeake Audubon Society recognized for their environmental and public impact as a nonprofit!

Plogging Anyone?

By Christine Holzmueller

You may be wondering what plogging is and what it has to do with birds and the environment. Plogging is a word that grabbed my curiosity, and I was encouraged when I realized it was a Swedish term for "I pick up litter while jogging." Litter is responsible for thousands of wildlife injuries or deaths every year in the United States.(1) Britain reports even higher numbers, at 5000 a year, which is about 14 per day.(2)

I am a runner. I have lived and run everywhere from urban streets to rural backroads for decades picking up cigarette

packs and butts, beer cans, bottle tops, bits of plastic and more, but I never knew what I did had a name. Sweden started this eco-exercise trend in 2016 and combined "plocka upp," meaning pick up, with 'joggning' or jogging. Plogging is a catchy word and the trend is spreading to other countries, such as Germany, and gaining ground in the United States. Some states, including Tennessee and Virginia, have created cleanup-exercise programs.



Dead bird and butt Creative Commons image.

What is nice about plogging is you can go it alone or with a group and you can walk if running is not your bailiwick.

Of course, the point of plogging is to pick up litter. In the United States, we drive by slogans like "Don't litter" or "Keep America Beautiful," yet more trash is landing on the ground and in our waterways. The impact to our wildlife is unthinkable. You can Google "trash and wildlife" and find images of the impact, but it is worth describing some of the damage from litter.

Anything with an opening that can keep a beak, muzzle, or mouth shut will starve or suffocate an animal. Plastic domed latte or milk shake lids, aluminum soda can tabs, plastic rings left after you unscrew your soda bottle top, and six-pack rings are just a few examples. Fishing line, plastic twine, rubber bands, latex balloons and ribbon,

netting, and the like will snare, mutilate, hang, or strangle animals.

Wildlife and even stray dogs and cats can and have gotten their heads stuck in containers with narrow tops and wide bottoms (like single serve yogurt), glass and plastic jars, plastic bags, and salty snack bags. The list is endless. While the bear in this image was rescued, other animals are not so lucky.



From Florida Bear Rescue. Creative Commons image.

Tiny mammals such as mice and shrews crawl in glass and plastic

bottles and can't escape up the slippery sides. Some drown if there is liquid in the bottom, and often there are multiple dead critters found in one bottle.(3)

A highly toxic piece of litter is the cigarette butt. Roughly 18 billion cigarettes are smoked daily around the world and about two-thirds are either flicked on the ground or out a vehicle window.(4) The filter of a cigarette is actually made of a type of plastic and is full of nicotine, heavy metals, arsenic, and other chemicals. These toxins leech into the ground and our water, and ingested butts are poisonous and deadly to our birds and other animals.

Earth Day is just a few months away, but as stewards of our planet, we must be proactive about litter more than one day a year. Instead of stepping over litter, we all need to start picking it up.

- (1) Humane Society of the United States article, https://www.humanesociety.org/sites/default/files/docs/dont-trash-wildlife.pdf;
- (2) RSPCA (Britain) article, https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7998075/Litter-harms-5-000-animals-year-RSPCA-warns.html? https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7998075/Litter-harms-5-000-animals-year-RSPCA-warns.html?
- (3) Study of litter along roadside pull-off sites in Southern Appalachian Mountains, https://www.incas.org/doi/full/10.7572/2167-5880-129.3.126
- (4) Tik Root. What's the world's most littered plastic item? Cigarette butts. National Geographic website; August 9, 2019.

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Join Chesapeake Audubon on Facebook!



Many nonprofits have found that a very good way to keep members informed is via Facebook. CAS is upgrading its Facebook Page with the goal of getting out one post a day about birds, birding, their habitats, and conservation in general. Please consider joining the CAS Facebook Page! If you don't do Facebook at present, signing up is easy, and you won't see many posts unless you want to. Our goal is to be informative and entertaining. Join CAS on Facebook!

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!

Would you like to get notifications of our field trips and events? You can by signing up for MeetUp and joining the Chesapeake Audubon Society **MeetUp** group.

Evening Woodcock Watch

Date: Thursday, March 12, 7:00PM

Leader: Tim Houghton **Location:** Harford County

Meet Tim at the southwest parking area of Home Depot on Route 40 in Edgewood. From this spot, we will watch nearby for woodcocks. Hopefully, we will see the fascinating Woodcock sky-mating display and hear their distinctive songs or call notes. Bring binoculars and a strong flashlight if you have one. E-mail or call Tim with any questions and to REGISTER at timhoughton@comcast.net or 410-510-7504. NOTE: The location and date may change. If so, there will be an announcement.

Photographing Nature

Date: Saturday, April 4, 9:00AM

Leader: Fred Brundick

Location: Cromwell Valley Park

Bring your camera and binoculars—Fred Brundick will take you around wonderful Cromwell Valley Park. This will be a great way to get into practice just as the flowers, butterflies, and birds are beginning to show their stuff. To

REGISTER please contact Fred: gpferd@gmail.com or

443-752-5607.

Signs of Spring Walk

Date: Saturday, April 11, 10:00AM to noon Leader: Bryan MacKay

Location: Patapsco Valley State Park Join naturalist Bryan MacKay for a 2-mile hike as buds begin to swell and birds begin to sing. Learn about early season plants and the history of the valley; we may even see a few birds! We will walk 300 yards uphill on a rocky trail to view a beautiful cascade, then continue upstream on a rough trail. There is a small fee to get in the park. To REGISTER please contact Bryan: mackay@umbc.edu at

least a day in advance.

Feathers and Flowers

Date: Saturday, April 18, 7:30AM **Leader:** Colleen Webster

Location: Susquehanna State Park

An ideal time to enjoy emerging wildflowers as well as early migrant songbirds and lingering winter visitors. Meet at the parking area at the confluence of Deer Creek and the Susquehanna River, just north of Rock Run Mill at 7:30 AM. No registration necessary. Any questions, contact

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Colleen: 410-459-4577 or cwebster@harford.edu.

Annual Spaghetti Dinner

Date: Saturday, April 18, 6:00PM to 9:00PM

For 38 years, Chesapeake Audubon has held an annual spaghetti dinner, serving delicious homemade red sauce and tasty desserts, and offering an interesting speaker. Advanced reservations required! Details, pg. 4.

Warblers & Other Songbirds

Date: Saturday, May 2, 8:00AM

Leader: Brad Phoebus

Location: Milford Mill (Villa Nova Park)

Directions: I-695, right on Liberty Rd., right on Washington Ave., right on Milford Mill Rd., right into parking area

immediately after going under I-695.

◆Join Brad at this excellent warbler migrant trap along a creek and woods; an easy mile loop. Often during the first half of May this spot is popping with warblers and other songbirds. To REGISTER and ask questions about location or anything else, please contact Brad at bradphoebus@ gmail.com or 443-415-9776.

Native Orchid Search

Date: Sunday, May 3, 2:00PM to 5:00PM Leader: Bryan MacKay

Join naturalist Bryan Mackay for a two-mile hike on the rough backcountry trails of Patapsco Valley State Park in search of native wildflowers, including orchids, and migrating songbirds. Please REGISTER at least a day in advance with Bryan at mackay@umbc.edu.

Susquehanna State Park Bird Walk

Date: Saturday, May 9, 7:30AM

Leader: Tim Houghton

Location: Harford County Susquehanna State Park is Harford County's (and maybe the state's) best place to find Cerulean Warblers and other warbler and songbird species. This park has a little bit of everything. Meeting place will be at Rock Run Mill (corner of Stafford Rd. and Rock Run Rd.). E-mail Tim for information and to REGISTER at timhoughton@comcast.net or call **410-510-7504**.

North Point State Park Bird Walk

Date: Saturday, May 16, 8:30AM

Leader: Fred Brundick

North Point is a 1,310 acre park on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay (Edgemere, MD). We'll be searching for spring migrants and resident birds on the Marsh Trail and bay front. All levels of birders welcome, scope helpful if you have one. Park entrance fee is \$3/vehicle (have exact change). To REGISTER please contact Fred at gpferd@gmail.com or 443-752-5607.

CAS's One-Day-Only Birdseed Store

Our annual Fall Birdseed Sale was a heavy weight success with 9,000 pounds of birdseed lifted, dragged, pulled, and hauled to our generous 96 customers in Baltimore and Easton. Overall, we earned \$1,697 from sales in these locations, which will be shared by the Audubon Centers in Patterson Park and Pickering Creek for educational programs. Kudos to all those who participated, especially Robin Schless who coordinated the sale and generously supplied hot coffee and donuts to the volunteers! Your backyard birds will be happy and fat this winter, and communities' children will have great nature programs.

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Pickering Creek Audubon Center

By Rodger Waldman

A few miles north of Easton, Maryland, restored rainwater-filled wetlands and inspirational, old-growth forest await you at the Pickering Creek Audubon Center. Four miles of trails wind through the Center's 400 acres that also include densely wooded succession forest. Eastern forests change in plant composition as they age. They transition from fields/shrubs to closed canopy mature forests and eventually to old growth forests. Succession forest is a stage in this progression from field to mature forests. As such, different birds species have adapted to these differing habitats. Yet, forests are not static in that disturbances (for example, wind or fire) set them back to an earlier stage.

These varied habitats at Pickering resound in spring with the deafening chorus of numerous frog species and in winter with the loud honking of hundreds of migratory Canada geese. Summer and fall offer their own special wildlife moments, watching meadow pollinators together with the plants they feed upon being especially fascinating.

Along the wetland trail viewing platforms and bird blinds overlook 75 wetland acres where you might see foraging herons, ducks, geese, and swans. You may also spot coot, snipe, wood ducks, and songbirds as you walk this wetland trail. I would advise wearing a pair of boots after a rain for a much more enjoyable hike, as the wetland trail lives up to its name. The woodland trail provides an opportunity to see the formerly endangered Delmarva fox squirrel, woodpeckers, and such species as the wood thrush, and scarlet tanager. Not to be outdone, the succession forest is home to buntings, grosbeaks, and woodcock.

The deeper waters of Pickering Creek, a Chesapeake Bay tributary, border a portion of the Center's land. Here you might see bald eagles, and with luck, the elusive river otter. If you visit Monday-Friday between 9 am and 5 pm, you can stop by the office at the waterfront to check out binoculars, dip nets to explore the pond, and field guides or children's books to read in the woods during your visit.

All of this wonder of nature is a mere 7 minute drive from Route 50! Look for the AUDUBON CENTER sign near mile marker 58 as you journey south. (There is no sign traveling north.) Once you turn onto Route 662, follow the AUDUBON CENTER signs to the Center. Whether you are going to Ocean City, Assateague Island, the Waterfowl Festival, Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, St. Michaels, Crisfield, or to visit friends, Pickering Creek Audubon Center is a side trip well worth your time. More Information: https://pickering.audubon.org/

Being a member of the Chesapeake Audubon Society, the owner of the Pickering Creek Audubon Center, brings with it the satisfaction and the responsibility of helping native wildlife dependent on this part of Maryland continue their existence in a less tolerant world; a world where many are uninformed of the importance of Earth's fellow passengers. The Audubon Center is the primary conservation education source for Talbot County schools and schools in neighboring counties in Maryland. Center staff strive to instill in people a love of nature and a realization that ALL LIFE on EARTH is interconnected.

Environmental Advocacy



Dead bird in balloon string Creative Commons image

Balloon Release Ban

Maryland state lawmakers passed a bill February 20, 2020 banning the release of balloons; next stop is Governor Hogan's desk for approval. If Hogan approves the bill, Anyone deliberately releasing balloons will be fined up to \$250. What the ban wants to stop is the intentional release of balloons, not the child that accidentally lets go of their balloon. This will be a big win for wildlife and marine life. See more at: https://wtop.com/maryland/2020/01/md-lawmakers-eye-balloon-ban-it-kills-wildlife/

TREES Act

Congressman Sarbanes and representatives from California and Nebraska introduced *The Residential Energy and Economics Savings (TREES)* Act January 15, 2020. The "bill will help homeowners lower energy costs, reduce stormwater runoff, and mitigate the effects of climate change by planting more trees." If the bill passes, a grant program will be created and managed by the Department of Energy. They will work with retail power companies to target urban and suburban areas for tree-planting programs. See more at: https://matsui.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx? DocumentID=1917&emci=9a029cb3-f348-ea11-a1cc-00155d03b1e8&emdi=da990729-b249-ea11-a1cc-00155d03b1e8&ecid=219993

CAS Annual Spaghetti Dinner

"Caught in a SNOWstorm"

Featuring:

Dave F. Brinker

Regional Ecologist, Natural Heritage Program, Wildlife and Heritage Service, Maryland DNR

Saturday, April 18, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

The winter of 2013-14 saw the largest invasion of Snowy Owls in decades. By the first week of December 2013, birders realized something extraordinary was underway. Thousands of Snowy Owls were flooding south into the United States. In some cases, birders found dozens, even hundreds, gathered in a single location.



There will NOT be a live owl at the dinner.

As the magnitude of the irruption became clear, veteran owl researchers mobilized a response, and Project SNOWstorm (SNOW is the four-letter code that banders and birders use for SNowy OWI) was born. Project SNOWstorm is an unprecedented, crowd funded research program designed to gather information about these raptors using telemetry, banding, toxicology screening, DNA analysis, and more.

Dave Brinker created Project SNOWstorm in partnership with naturalist and author Scott Weidensaul, who directs the owl migration research program for the Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art in Pennsylvania, and Norman Smith of Massachusetts Audubon, who has studied Snowy Owls for more than 30 years at Boston's Logan Airport. The project is a collaborative effort of a diverse group of scientists and organizations who all rapidly mobilized to study this historic Snowy Owl irruption. Project SNOWstorm is an example of a growing number of community science efforts energized by the rapid communication and coordination facilitated by the internet and social media.

The researchers behind **Project SNOWstorm** are hopeful that their efforts will not only produce useful information about the winter movements of Snowy Owls, but will ultimately better inform conservation efforts. Dave will present an overview of **Project SNOWstorm** and will share essential findings from the research.

Where: St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 4711 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.

Advanced Reservations required: We expect this dinner will sell out and we do not want to turn anyone away at the door. We also need to plan in advance for food—call (443) 423-1847—leave your name, telephone number, number of people, and specify if you prefer vegetarian sauce. Please send checks payable to the Chesapeake Audubon Society, PO Box 3173, Baltimore, MD 21228.

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



We are again extremely fortunate to have a local guitarist and songwriter, Sean McCahill, performing for your listening pleasure.

What's Up with Trash

▶ Trash is a breeding ground for mosquitoes, including the type that carries Zika, West Nile, and dengue fever. Cases of West Nile and dengue transmitted by mosquito have been reported in Maryland. Soggy fast food wrappers, plastic containers, abandoned car tires, anything where water collects and lays still is a pond for mosquito larvae.

▶ A recent study of pollution in our oceans found that one in five seabirds will die from ingested balloons or balloon fragments. Balloons are pliable rubber that can easily contort in the birds' gut and get stuck. Unfortunately, seabirds think floating balloons and other plastics are small

fish or squid. Read more at: https://e360.yale.edu/digest/balloons-more-deadly-for-seabirds-than-any-other-kind-of-plastic

► Another study found that microplastics in the soil are stunting the growth of earthworms.

Read more at: https:// www.newsweek.com/ microplastics-growth-wormsweight-study-1458887



Creative Commons image.

A Tribute to Richard Schurman: Thanks for the Memories! By Bryan MacKay

Chesapeake Audubon bids a fond farewell to longtime member, past President, and hard-working volunteer Richard Schurmann. Richard and his wife Carolyn are moving to Georgia to be closer to family, but will remain CAS members!

Richard joined the National Audubon Society and CAS in 1981, seeking diversion from a heavy professional workload. Never one to shy away when he saw a need, Richard was quickly active "so that my workload increased rather than decreased!" Over the last forty years, Richard has been President, Board member, Treasurer, committee member, and volunteer. Especially valuable to CAS has been his work with the boring but critical paperwork tasks that permit us to do fundraising and allow government oversight of our non-profit status. Richard has staffed innumerable display tables at places like the Social Security Administration and community fairs, where his unfailing enthusiasm for birds and CAS has won him friends and new members.

Personally, one fond memory I have of Richard is in environmental advocacy. One day after a heavy thunderstorm, he noted that the small sewage pumping station behind his home had overflowed, leaving a nasty mess and draining raw sewage into the Patapsco River. The pumping station was powered by current



Richard, back row on left; 1985, and the workgroup that helped at Pickering Creek.

from the nearby telephone pole, so when electricity was lost due to storms, sewage overflowed. There was no battery backup! Richard lobbied Baltimore County about this issue, kept after it, and eventually persuaded the County to provide backup generators for more than 100 of its small pumping stations! This is a perfect example of how one person can make a big difference for the environment.

Below is a note from Richard that sums up his Audubon experience.

"Chesapeake Audubon has been a major positive factor in my life. I have worked hard for CAS, but I have also derived enormous benefits from this association. I have traveled widely to places near and far that I would never have experienced without my connection to CAS. I have met many people, and made many friends. I can honestly say that I never met a person associated with Audubon (local, regional, national, or international) that I didn't like. I can only conclude that there must be something about our common curiosity, interest, and wonder about the beauty, complexity, and magnificence of the natural world that binds us all together!"

Well said, Richard!

Pickering Creek Audubon Center

Programs (Easton, Maryland) Register for these programs at https:// act.audubon.org/onlineactions/IpalBjAAz0WyyQNnRyay3A2 or call 410-822-4903.

Owl Prowl

Date: Friday, April 10, 7:00PM-9:00PM; **\$5/person** Come out and join Pickering Creek naturalists as we venture out into the spring night in search of our nocturnal feathered friends. We'll hike around the wetlands, meadows and forests in search of Barred, Great Horned, or Eastern Screech owls during out annual owl prowl. Please register.

5th Annual Seed and Plant Swap

Date: Saturday, April 18, 10:00 AM-noon; FREE Get ready for Earth Day! The public is invited to come share their garden treasures with others by bringing along plants and seeds to share. Pickering will host some activities that highlight the value of native plants in healthy yards and wild landscapes. Volunteers are needed to help with plant giveaways and activities, gardening in the Byron, settlers, and entrance gardens, and leading informal tours to show native plants found in those spaces.

Ephemeral Beauty: A Spring Forest Walk Date: Saturday, April 18, noon-1:30PM; **\$5/person** Enjoy a walk through Pickering Creek's woodlands as we search for spring ephemerals! These tiny blooms are vital food sources

for pollinators after a long and barren winter, but they don't stay long, so make sure to come out and see these beautiful fleet blossoms. Please register.

Birding at Nassawango Creek with Wayne Bell Date: Friday, May 1, 7:45AM-4:00PM; **\$45/person** Join expert birder Wayne Bell for a delightful day exploring the marshes around Nassawango Creek in Wicomico County during the peak of spring migration. Last year we spotted Scarlet Tanagers, Prothonotary Warblers, Ovenbird, and more. Bring your lunch and water bottles. We'll have extra binoculars; novices are welcome! Transportation by van provided from the Easton Airport parking lot at 7:45AM or the Dorchester Visitors Center at 8:15AM. We'll return between 3 and 4PM. Please register.

Azalea Bloom with Author Bryan Mackay

Date: Saturday, May 2, **\$85/person**The National Arboretum is a lesser known gem of Washington, DC, but nowhere else are the glories of spring so abundantly displayed. We expect more than 50,000 azaleas to be near peak flowering! We'll stroll the wood chip paths of Azalea Hill and the Fern Valley trails in search of native wildflowers, where our naturalist guide and author of Hike Maryland and A Year Across Maryland, Bryan MacKay, will delight you with tales of botanical trivia. To cap off the morning, we'll enjoy a gourmet lunch at picnic tables under large shade trees. Van transportation from Pickering Creek to the National Arboretum provided.

Please register; call 410-822-4903.

Help send a child to summer camp to learn about the natural world and how to protect it.

The summer eco-camps at Pickering Creek Audubon Center (Talbot County) and Patterson Park Audubon Center (Baltimore City) provide children with exposure to an understanding of the natural world that they would not other-wise have. We at Chesapeake Audubon believe that there are few efforts more important than instilling a sense of wonder, joy and appreciation for nature in the next generation. Some children may access the natural world easily. These scholarships are for those who cannot. Please make a donation to send a child, or two, or three to a week of eco-camp at either or both of these locations. You may specify which you would like to support, if you choose.

Our **Pickering Creek Audubon Center** is in Easton, MD on the Eastern Shore, where a **week of summer camp costs \$150 per child.**

\	\$30 will support one child for a day
\	\$60 will support one child for 2 days
\	\$150 will support one child for a week
\	\$ whatever you wish will be helpful and appreciated.
Our	Patterson Park Audubon Center is in Baltimore City, and summer day camp costs \$65 for a week per child.
\	\$65 will support one child for the week
\	\$whatever you wish will be helpful and appreciated.
	Please send your check in the envelope provided, or to P.O. Box 3173, Baltimore, MD 21228.

Your gift is fully *tax deductible* and immensely appreciated. Thank you for your generosity.

Help Wanted!

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Chesapeake Audubon could really, really use several volunteers. Make a difference for birds and conservation by volunteering for just a few hours each month! See below; contact us at info@chesapeakeaudubon.com.

CAS Board of Directors: We are looking for wise, collaborative, and thoughtful individuals committed to furthering CAS's mission and overseeing the business of the Society. Our Board of Directors meets six times annually, the second Wednesday of even-numbered months, in the Mt. Washington neighborhood of Baltimore City. **Thank you!**

Climate Watch: Can you reliably identify a bluebird or a nuthatch by sight and sound? If so, you are qualified to participate in an important Audubon community science project called Climate Watch. If this sounds interesting go to https://www.audubon.org/conservation/climate-watch for more information and then contact Hugh Simmons at lensonnature@gmail.com if you would like to participate or have questions. Thank you!

CAS Received Guidestar Award

Chesapeake Audubon Society was awarded the Platinum Seal of Transparency in 2019 from GuideStar! GuideStar gathers and makes information about United States nonprofits available to donors, funders, and others searching for information. Their award system recognizes the hard work of



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nonprofits, and Platinum is the highest level given to a nonprofit that reports the details of their public impact. For example, we provided 632 scholarships for students to attend programs at the Pickering Creek Audubon Center, which we own. Check out our full profile by searching for Chesapeake Audubon Society at https://www.quidestar.org/search.

DONORS

Chesapeake Audubon Society would like to acknowledge the generous support provided by the following donors in 2019. We could not achieve our mission without you! (Please let us know if we missed anyone.)

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Joan & Malcolm Reichart Marion Jones Stern Robert L. Dale

Patterson Park Audubon Center

(address: 2901 E. Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21224)

Programs (Baltimore City)

For dates, complete list of events, and more information visit https://patterson.audubon.org/events

Wildlife Gardening Workshops

Learn to transform your home, school, work, or community space into a bird paradise with Audubon experts! There are few green spaces in Baltimore City for migrating birds to rest and feed on their long journeys. Join a workshop that is free and open to the public and turn your windowbox, backyard, balcony, or rooftop into a garden. Space is limited. Register to reserve your spot, by either email Baltimore@audubon.org or calling 410-558-2473.

Guided Bird Watching Walks

Stroll and search for birds with Audubon experts in two parks in Baltimore City. No need to register for these walks, just show up and explore. Go to the website above for directions and meeting location.

▶ Patterson Park is an important migratory stopover for more than 200 bird species and an urban oasis located

in East Baltimore. The park has walking paths, a large pond, native gardens, and more. It is worth the visit.

▶ **Druid Hill Park** is another important migratory stopover with more than 180 bird species documented. The Park is home to the Maryland Zoo and experts from the Zoo will lead this walk to help find birds. (address: 3001 East Drive, Baltimore, MD 21217)



Chesapeake Audubon Society P.O. Box 3173 Baltimore, MD 21229 www.chesapeakeaudubon.org

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