

Chip Notes

No. 378

WINTER 2011



BALTIMORE BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

BBC/MOS Collections	1
President's Corner	2
Conservation Corner	2
The Big Year	3
Birder Cam: RELP	4 & 5
Message Board	6 & 7
Field Trip Reports.....	8 & 9
Whale of a Tale.....	9
BBC Application	12



Please

LET US KNOW BY
DECEMBER 31, 2011 IF YOU
WANT YOUR BBC/MOS
NEWSLETTERS AS HARD
COPY. IF WE DON'T HEAR
FROM YOU BY THEN, AND
YOU HAVE AN EMAIL AD-
DRESS, YOU WILL RECEIVE
IT ELECTRONICALLY.

See the President's Corner
for more information on this.

Final Reminder!
Dues are due
See page 12 for
application form

BBC and MOS Collections Project



Sample of specimens held

The BBC and MOS have established an MOS committee to inventory, assess and decide the current and future use of their joint natural history collections. Members of the committee, chaired by Karen Morley, are Bob Ringler, Don Messersmith, Phil Davis, Brent

Byers, Joan Cwi, Peter Lev, Patsy Perlman and Kevin Graff. The committee will recommend a comprehensive BBC/MOS collections policy to the BBC and MOS boards later this year.

Over the years MOS and the BBC have accumulated a large inventory of natural history specimens, books, journals and other records. Some items date back to the 19th century, and come from various donors, from school children attending Junior Nature Camps, from birders who collected dead specimens at the TV towers and along the roadside, and from dedicated birders who wanted their collections preserved for research and educational purposes.

The natural history collections include several large egg collections, mounted birds (many of which are displayed in the Cylburn Nature Museum), bird study skins, nests, butterflies, mammal skulls, pine cones, sea shells, fossils, and rocks. Besides historical MOS records, there are many handwritten field note journals, including those of early Maryland ornithologists Frank Kirkwood, John Sommers, Edward Cook and William Wholey. There are banding records and slide programs. The library



Kevin Graff and Peter Lev don gloves to work on the inventory at Cylburn

(Continued on page 10)



We Marylanders have had some excitement this last quarter. It started with a magnitude 5.8 level earthquake in August, that was rapidly followed by a month of solid rain, followed by a brief burst of sunshine, then more rain. Heads are still being scratched figuring out what affect the wind and rains have had on migration. Talk about the weather was soon replaced by the release of the movie *The Big Year* based on the book by the same name that tracked three avid birders, including our own Greg Miller, in competition to set a new "North American" *Big Year* records. And finally, after being closed for two years for repairs, Robert E Lee Park (aka Lake Roland) was reopened with much fanfare. In spring migration, we will resume our weekly Tuesday walks in the much-improved park. (For more about these two topics see the accompanying articles.)

Enough excitement and down to the nitty-gritty. Last month I wrote that about 75% of our \$7,500 operating budget goes toward publication costs--paper, printing and postage. Another 20% goes to supporting the lecture series, and the remaining 5% supports all other activities and expenses. Like everything else, our costs are escalating rapidly and it is increasingly difficult to operate within our budget that hasn't changed since 2005, and income from investments is now minimal. We know we can't increase membership costs in these difficult times, **but we have found a solution that still delivers to our members and benefits the environment**—electronic (no hardcopy) delivery of Chip Notes. Did you realize that \$8.56 of each \$15.00 you pay for BBC membership goes to producing Chip Notes?

What are the benefits of electronic delivery? First and foremost, based on the results of the orange survey card in your renewal package, about half our members have already responded that they want electronic delivery only. In fact, they are pretty adamant about that. That already saves us about \$1,000 a year. It is a "greener" option, eliminating cutting trees for paper, using chemicals for ink, and fuel-associated costs of mail delivery. For iPad, iPod and iPhone (and similar

(Continued on page 10)

Conservation CORNER

Chimney Swifts—A New Record, Alas

by Joan Cwi

We set an all-time swift record this fall—for the first time ever we had more spectators than roosting swifts!! Thirty two people came to Swift Night Out on September 11, 2011 at the Druid Hill Park Conservatory, and only 23 swifts entered the chimney that evening. A week before we had more than 200 enter, so we thought we had figured out their prime roosting place, but as has happened frequently lately they had other plans.

What has been found swift-wise this fall? A little, but not much action at the Hampden chimneys—up to 200 birds entering. The Temple of the Scottish Rite (3800 N. Charles Street) shared honors with the apartment building at the corner of Charles Street and University Parkway a half block away with 700 and 400 swifts respectively. About 150 were spotted going down the Home and Hospital Center at 6229 Falls Road (below Princeton Sport). And we've received odds and ends of reports of other swift sightings.

What is happening? Last year we speculated that swifts were just migrating later due to the long, hot summer resulting in lots of late bug activity. Was this year delayed because of the month-long storm surges that kept pelting the northeast? Clearly the swift team has to figure out something for next year's watches to provide better watching opportunities for all.



“The Big Year”

By Joan Cwi with excerpts taken from MDOsprey from Phil Davis, Jason Berry, Patricia Wood, and Diane Ford

The movie, *The Big Year*, is based on the Mark Obmascik book of the same title that opened nationwide on Friday, 14 October. How often do we birders get such press! Although not a box office hit, the movie resonated with most Maryland bird watchers.

Fifty birders from 8 chapters of MOS (including 13 BBC members) got together at the UA Snowdon Square Stadium movie theatre in Columbia on October 15th to join Greg Miller at the movie. Below are some excerpts from MDOsprey postings about the movie and get together, as well as some stories Greg relayed to us. If it's still available at your local theatre, go see it. If not, watch the DVD. It's good entertainment.



Greg Miller poses next to *The Big Year* poster - he was portrayed by Jack Black (top) in the movie

Phil Davis

“The story line is based on three avid birders in a competition to set a new ‘North American’ Big Year record of the most species seen in one year. The movie stars included Steve Martin, Owen Wilson, and Jack Black and a host of well-known supporting cast members. The character played by Jack Black is based on our friend and former Maryland resident, Greg Miller. The book chronicled the 1998 competition; however, the movie is set in the present. It's really a movie about characters and relationships, set in a birding framework. I smiled at all of the accurate birding references and just chuckled where they took birding liberties. Any hardcore birders who might want to pick it apart, ornithologically, will be missing the point!”

Jason Berry. “...a group of DC birders spent the afternoon splitting our sides with laughter with the *Big Year* movie! It was a funny, sweet film with tons of birding fun. Back in the Spring I was afraid the movie would make birders look like a bunch of clowns. Instead the passion and joy of birding came through in all of its glory. Was it perfect - probably not, but we were having so much fun we couldn't think of any criticisms.”

Patricia Wood. “I think people who don't bird will enjoy the movie, but it does add another level to recognize just how spot-on a lot of the scenes really are--the mad dashes, the just-missed rarity, or the one that turns out to be right over your head, and just the excitement of it all.”

Diane Ford. “I echo Patricia's words; it was a wonderful evening! My non-birding son (potential there!) came with me. He cracked up when the guy's ringtone was “Bird is the word” by the Trashman, one of his favorite songs.”

Pre- and post-movie, Greg regaled the MOS crowd with some of his adventures on the movie set. He mentioned how he received a message from the Director about joining as a movie consultant. Certain this was a hoax, Greg googled David Frankel's name only to discover he was the director of the *Devil Wears Prada*, and hence legit! On-set Jack Black asked Greg to take him bird watching one day so he could understand his character better. Jack asked what was the name of a bird he was watching. A Red-winged Blackbird, Greg answers seeing a bird with his royal epaulettes covered up. Why red-winged, asks Jack whereupon the bird flared his shoulders in a fiery display. Ohhhhh....says Jack. Ohhhh I say—'twas fun for all. For more, visit Greg's website at:

<http://www.gregmillerbirding.com/>



BBC Birder Cam

Robert E. Lee Park (aka Lake Roland) Reopens!

by Peter Lev, Carol Schreter, Joan Cwi

Huzza! Huzza! At long last our beloved Robert E. Lee Park (RELP) has reopened after a three-year hiatus while Baltimore County made improvements to the Park. You may recall that Baltimore City leased the Park to the County in 2009. During the Phase 1 improvement, some much-needed repairs and changes were made to the peninsula area. These include: reconfiguring and improving parking and entrance options, building a boardwalk connecting the Park to the MTA Light Rail lot at Falls Road, rebuilding the bridge at the dam, constructing an enclosed dog park (Paw Point) at the tip of the peninsula, making a natural-looking stairwell down to the Light Rail tracks, resurfacing of walkways in the peninsula, erosion control of the shoreline, as well as other repairs. **What an improvement!** This effort was undertaken by Baltimore County Department of Recreation in partnership with the officially approved volunteer organization called Robert E. Lee Park Nature Council (RELPC).



Kevin Graff on the new boardwalk



BBC members Mike Stahl, Rose Anderson (not pictured), Mary Shock, and Kevin with the BBC display.

Grand Reopening. The RELPC celebrated the reopening on October 14th with a ribbon cutting attended by both County Executive Kevin Kamenetz and Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake. On the 15th there was a grand festival in the park that included children's activities, introduction to the new dog park, bird watching, and tours of the park by boat, bike, walking and hiking. Of course BBC was there leading an early morning and mid-day bird walk and staffing a display table so we could introduce ourselves and our programs to interested people.

History of RELP. RELP has recently had a checkered history regarding its condition and even survival. The railroad predates the lake. The Greenspring Branch Railroad was completed in 1832 and ran from the park to Owings Mills and eventually to Westminster. Operations ended in 1933 although used occasionally as a detour route for freight service. The line ceased all operation in 1961.

The dam was finished in 1860 to provide drinking water to the City. It served as a water source for 53 years until it was determined that the water quantity was insufficient. In the 1940's the land surrounding the lake was consolidated to form Robert E Lee Memorial Park with its woodland, wetlands, serpentine barrens, rare plants and rocky plateaus. Since then people have used the park as a recreational facility. Unfortunately, due to lack of resources,

(Continued on page 5)

BBC Birder Cam



the park has recently been going downhill rapidly and the bridge (built in 1852) was declared unsafe, resulting in the closure of the dam entrance to the Park in July 2008.

BBC Involvement. For the last twelve years, **BBC's Conservation Committee** has been actively involved in attempts to ensure the Park's future. We successfully fought the City's efforts to close the Light Rail Crossing. Beginning in 1999, we wrote periodic letters to Councilmen and attended County zoning meetings to encourage the County to rezone the park land from DR-1 (residential, one house per acre) to RC-7 (rural, one house per 25 acres). Our intent was to prevent the city from simply selling off the parkland for much needed cash. This resolution passed in 2004. As a result, starting in 2009, cash-strapped Baltimore City leased the Park to Baltimore County for 100+ years to make the necessary improvements. The County committed \$6 million into park improvements, half coming from the County, half from the State. In 2009 when Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks invited citizen volunteers to help with planning and programming at RELP, BBC members were there. Bill Wolf, Kevin Graff, John Landers, Peter Lev, Carol Schreter, and Joan Cwi have attended meetings since the get-go. Peter and Kevin are now BBC's official representatives at the Robert E. Lee Park Nature Council and the Environmental, Educational and Historic Preservation Committees respectively. All will continue to promote a bird-related agenda as the park program develops under volunteer citizen leadership.

YES—BBC WILL RESUME TUESDAY MIGRATION WALKS AT RELP STARTING SPRING 2012!! More details will follow closer to the date. You can now legally visit the whole park, including the peninsula area. Peninsula parking patterns have changed--you can no longer park on the road that runs parallel to the Jones Falls. Parking for 50+ cars is available above the dam (from Hollins Avenue, bear right at the bridge) or at the Falls Road Light Rail station that is connected to the park with a new 1/3rd mile wooden boardwalk over a wetland (from which the birding is excellent). For birders and hikers, the main improvement aside from the boardwalk is a set of wooden steps leading from the peninsula down to the light rail tracks. As you may recall, this downhill section had become a series of treacherous, ankle-twisting gullies. Few if any improvements have yet been made in the interior sections of the park, which is part of Phase 2. We'll keep you abreast of future happenings.



Left: Old eroding pathway down to Light Rail tracks

Middle: New improved stairs have replaced the treacherous root road.

Right: New fenced dog park called Paw Point.



BBC Message Board

BBC Needs Help with a Financial Audit

Are you an auditor or have auditing skills? We could you use your pro bono help with a long overdue audit of our finances in the next few months. If you can help, please contact me.

Joan Cwi, BBC President
Jafjsc@verizon.net
 410-467-5352



Save the Date!

Time Again for January's Covered Dish Dinner and Lecture

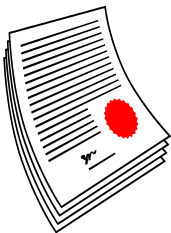
BBC will have our Covered Dish Dinner and Lecture, open to all members, on the evening of Sunday January 8th, 2012 beginning at 5:00 pm. Once again it will be held at Cyburn's Vollmer Visitor Center. We look forward to this opportunity to socialize, meet our new Youth Backpack Award winner, and hear a fantastic lecture. This year's featured talk is "Changes in Birding in China over 25 Years, 1982-2007." It will be given by Don Messersmith. Don is Professor Emeritus of Entomology at the University of Maryland. Earlier this year he was received the Annual Chandler S. Robbins Distinguished Teaching Award from the American Birding Association. Hope to see you there! Be sure to contact Kevin Graff

(KeyWeststyle2001@gmail.com) to let him know you are coming and what you plan to bring. Hope to see you there!



BBC Bylaws Update!

You may recall that at last year's Covered Dish Dinner we voted on some changes to the BBC Bylaws that were required to maintain our tax free non-profit 501(c) status. A careful review of the Bylaws at that time showed that they needed other revisions as our operations have changed some since the previous update in 2002. As required by our current Bylaws, in early December we will mail the Board-approved changes to all members for their review. The changes will be voted on by our membership at the January Covered Dish Dinner.



Loudon Park Cemetery Plots



When the late Orville W. Crowder (MOS's second President) died he left all his property to Don Messersmith. Among his papers Don found a deed to a family cemetery plot in Loudon Park Cemetery in Baltimore. Three grave sites are still available. Don would like to sell this deed to someone for whatever they will offer above \$100, preferably more. Don will donate that money to the MOS Sanctuary Fund. There would also be a Transfer Fee (about \$165) charged by the cemetery. If interested, contact Don Messersmith at dsmessersmith@comcast.net

Want a Product with the BBC or MOS Logo?

MOS now has an agreement with Custom Print, LLC, an internet firm, to imprint various MOS and Chapter (including BBC) logos on merchandise and make it available on the internet. It works like this—you log into the MOS web site and click on the link to the MOS Web Store. Or log indirectly at <https://imprintsite.com/p/mos/index.php/mos-available-logos.html>. Once there you select the item, size, color, and logo you want. Complete the order form, enter your credit card number, and in 10 days or so the merchandise arrives at your door. MOS and Chapter logos, as well as recent conference pin designs are available. You can add additional text on some items.



There will lots of types of merchandise available (tote bags, coffee mugs, t-shirts, etc.). This arrangement eliminates MOS or the Chapters as middle-men having to deal with upfront costs and inventory. And, as an added bonus, on a quarterly basis MOS will receive a check for 20% of the sales.

Christmas Shopping Idea Get "Birds of North America On Line" with MOS Discount



If you are looking for the perfect gift to give to your birding friends (or yourself) this upcoming holiday season, MOS has a suggestion ... As a benefit of membership in MOS, you can receive a substantial discount on a subscription to The Birds of North America (BNA) *online edition* – the most comprehensive reference covering the life histories of over 700 species of birds that breed in the US and Canada. You can visit the Birds of North America Online website to view sample species accounts at <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna/>.

Under the MOS organizational rate, a one-year subscription to BNA Online is \$25. That's a 40% savings below the standard rate of \$42 per individual! If interested in a subscription that covers 2012, contact Treasurer Dave Webb, porzana@comcast.net to arrange payment or ask further questions about BNA Online.



Compiled by Kevin Graff

Aug 13 - Bombay Hook - White-faced Ibis (state bird for leader) -young bird, identifiable only by red eye and absence of white lines in front of eye like the Glossy Ibis all had; hard to see these features. Long-billed Dowitcher females larger than similar appearing Henderson (prairie) Short-billed Dowitchers, brighter colors and longer bills; one male ID'd only by call blended in with female Hendersons. Hummingbird show at visitor center upstaged by birds on the tower including Blue Grosbeak and Bobolinks posing for telescope views. Seaside Sparrow with no tail, looking like a miniature Rail, hanging out with Ruddy Turnstones at Port Mahon Road tidal gut. Trip cut off after Port Mahon Road, when rain started.

68 species. 16 participants.
Leader: Pete Webb.

Aug 30 - Cromwell Valley - We started our walk on the trail on the right side of the road, where we were hearing a Warbling Vireo. Suddenly 9 Canada Geese flew over in V-formation, followed by a Great Egret and a Northern Harrier. Found goldfinches and Indigo Buntings plus 3 Redtails and a Red-shouldered Hawk soaring. Then we found a Cooper's Hawk sitting in the field. 42 species. 13 participants.

Leader: Ruth Culbertson.

Sep 6 - Cromwell Valley - After an evening of heavy rain, four hardy members of BBC walked between light and heavy showers to see 30 species of birds. In two patches along the Minebank we observed 4 species of warblers: magnolia, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Blue (f) and Northern Parula. We were thrilled with our sightings considering the weather conditions.

Leader: Debbie Terry.

Sep 10 - Milford Mill - A couple of days after major flooding, most of the high water had receded, but a couple of downed trees still blocked the path and we had to bushwhack around one of those and around some high water remaining over a low point in the path. More of an obstacle: a wooden footbridge over a

wet area in the woods was broken, presumably by a fallen tree since cleared away, and we had to hang on to the railings while our feet were on slippery, sloped flooring. We didn't find large numbers of migrant warblers, but did come up with non-breeding plumage Scarlet Tanagers in their winter yellow-green, a young male Baltimore Oriole, two Yellow-billed Cuckoos, American Redstarts, Magnolia Warblers, and a brief glimpse at a Northern Waterthrush.

22 species. 7 participants.

Leader: Pete Webb.

Sep 11 - Chimney Swift Watch at Conservatory - Where were the swifts? After a late evening thunderstorm the weather turned beautiful. Swifts skirted the chimneys but not in great numbers. Alice Nelson was checking the Hampden chimneys at the same time, but only about 200 went in. Another late season?

23 swifts total. 32 participants.

Leaders: Joan Cwi and Carol Schreter.

Sep 13 - Cromwell Valley - Beautiful, warm day. 3 visitors joined us. Yehuda & Zippi Katz were visiting their daughter Vered: Yehuda is a dedicated birder and took some wonderful pictures. There were numerous Chipping Sparrows, White-breasted Nuthatches and at least 3 species of flycatchers. Seeing the Yellow-billed Cuckoo while we sat at the picnic bench at the old foundry area was a treat. There may have been a Nashville Warbler among the Common Yellowthroats, and Paul got a Black-and-white. 2 Baltimore Orioles too!

41 species. 11 participants.

Leader: Mary Chetelat.

Sep 20 - Cromwell Valley - Four hardy birders produced 9 warbler species on this rainy Tuesday morning. In addition we had great views of Blue Grosbeaks and Indigo Buntings.

47 species.

Leader: Debbie Terry.

Sep 25 - Cylburn - The walk started with a bit of action near the classroom and Carriage House, but then dulled down significantly. The prize was the sighting of a juvenile Red-headed Woodpecker easily seen by all. The dead tree it was on soon became the battleground between the Red-headed and two Red-bellied Woodpeckers. At two-against-one, guess who won? The trip ended at the parking lot with several female/juvenile Scarlet Tanagers. In addition to BBC regulars, we were joined by a young family (father and two young daughters). The older daughter (about 12) enhanced

(Continued on page 9)

Field Trip Reports



her bird list by several species, and then entered the trip sightings into Trail Tracker for us. Her father reports that she went home and immediately joined eBird. 33 species. 7 participants. Leader: Joan Cwi.

Oct 4 - Cromwell Valley Park - A fairly slow day, starting out with overcast skies, eventually rewarded us with good numbers: 56 species overall, including only a few (6) warblers. We were treated to over flights of a Double-crested Cormorant and a quartet of loons. Since the fall hawk watch was also in play, we added some nice raptors to the count: both vultures, Osprey and Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawk, good numbers of Broad-wings, Red-tailed Hawks and an American Kestrel. Warblers included: Ovenbird, Black-and-white, Common Yellowthroat, Magnolia,

Palm, and Black-throated Green. The resident Chip-pers were augmented by a Song and a nice Lincoln's Sparrow. For those who persevered, nice looks were afforded of the Blue-headed Vireo and a colorful male Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

56 species. 16 participants.
Leader: Paul Noell.

Oct 9 - Cylburn - Beautiful day. Lots of late fall migrants.

24 species. 4 participants.
Leader: Joan Cwi.

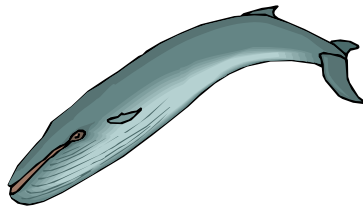
Oct 9 - Marshy Point Nature Center - Today's walk gave us many of us our first White-throated Sparrows, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets. Gorgeous day.

35 species. 5 participants.
Leaders: Debbie Terry and the Byers.

A Whale of a Tale

By Mary Chetelat

Photos by Bill Hubick



July 2011-visited San Francisco again. It's a great city—easy getting around, cool in the summer, and offers good opportunities for birding. This year for something really different—went on a whale-watching trip sponsored by the ocean Conservancy. We traveled out to the Farralon islands, a nature reserve about 25 miles out from S. F. We observed Grey and Hump-backed whales and I saw some life birds—a Black-footed Albatross and Sooty and Pink-footed Shearwaters, along with Common Murres, Pigeon Guillemots, and a Tufted Puffin.

September 2011 - traveled to the Hill Country of San Antonio with my daughter. Stayed at the JW Marriott Hill Country Resort, about 30 minutes drive outside downtown San Antonio (you know-the Alamo). Surrounded by the dry scrub land of the hill country, I was pleasantly surprised by the variety and numbers of birds around the resort. Life birds included Sedge Wren, Ladderback Woodpecker, Rufous Hummingbird, Lesser Goldfinch, Bewick's Wren and a Mourning Warbler.

Wilson's Warblers, Nashville Warblers and Ruby-throated and Rufous Hummingbirds were everywhere. I spent hours just sitting near the chefs garden watching the birds everywhere. I spent hours just sitting near the Chef's garden watching the birds come and go, or walking the paths around the hotel grounds. Just north of the resort gold course is a 700+ acre nature reserve that focuses on preserving habitat for the golden-cheeked Warbler. Unfortunately for me it was not open to the public and guided walks there don't seem to be a regular thing yet. So I didn't see a GCW but all the other birds made this place spectacular!



Lesser Goldfinch



Wilson's Warbler



Mourning Warbler



Nashville Warbler

President's Corner

product) users, it allows for instant access anywhere. And last, as receiver, you will be sent an email notice that full-color online Chip Notes is ready and accessible by clicking on the attached address—a couple of weeks before the hardcopy version is printed and mailed. We are not the only ones looking into email delivery. We notify MOS about those choosing this method, and our Howard and Harford County counterparts have already gone online.

The Board of Directors faced a difficult choice—raise dues or require electronic delivery of newsletters. They are sensitive to the fact that many of our members do not have email/website access or really prefer hardcopy delivery. And we will continue to honor hardcopy requests in the foreseeable future. **But the Board made the difficult decision that rather than raise dues, starting with the Spring edition, all members with email addresses will automatically receive newsletters electronically only--unless you notify us by December 31, 2011 that you still want to receive hardcopy newsletters.** We really encourage everyone who can to accept electronic delivery as a means of choice for all the reasons given above. No one wants an \$8.00 surcharge for this service, which won't happen if most of you help us out by going green. OK, enough. This was a difficult decision for Board members to make. But please be aware of the financial difficulties we face and how much this solution will help us to solve our immediate financial difficulties at no additional cost to our members.

PLEASE HELP US! IF YOU HAVE NOT TOLD US HOW YOU WANT TO RECEIVE YOUR BBC/MOS NEWSLETTERS, PLEASE DO SO BY CONTACTING CATHERINE BISHOP AT icbishop1@verizon.net or 410-435-9569 BY DECEMBER, 31, 2011.



**2012
MOS Winter
Conference
February 24 - 26,
2012
Clarion Resort
Fontainebleau
Hotel
Ocean City, MD**

Collections continued

collection includes many books and serials, including Maryland Birdlife, The Wilson Journal, and The Auk.

Most of these items currently reside at Cylburn Arboretum but some items are located at MOS sanctuaries. The specimens and journals are available for research and educational purposes, but because there is no catalog or inventory most people do not know of this hidden treasure. This also impedes professional archival management of these collections. One of the biggest problems is that there is no independent humidity or temperature control, although some of the collection is stored in airtight metal cabinets. Light, insects, mold and moisture pose serious threats to the collections. An equally serious problem is that loss of associated data regarding the origin, date, collector, and other information not evident from the item itself could substantially reduce the value of the collection for interpretation.



Frank Kirkwood's Field Note Journal

Over the years, members of the BBC have had the responsibility for these collections, including obtaining the necessary permits. Patsy Perlman, Joy Wheeler (MOS Librarian) and Kevin Graff have carefully cared for these materials. But not even those stalwart custodians know everything we have and maintenance and preservation is a serious problem. In 2005, Ralph Eshelman, who has a cultural resource management and museum consultation company in MD, assessed the collections for the BBC and the Cylburn Arboretum Association (CAA) in relation to creating the Nature

(Continued on page 11)

Collections continued

Museum. He recommended that we expend the human and financial resources to become a proper museum, which would mean hiring a part-time curator, getting accreditation, etc. Since that is financially impossible for an organization our size, the other option is to use the non-research collections purely for educational purposes in the context of a nature center. The research collections could be deaccessioned to a proper recipient.

Last year, BCC members & volunteers Sean Stewart, Catherine Sheffield, and Catherine Bishop again assessed the collections and made the following recommendations: 1) Develop a mission statement (in conjunction with the CAA educational arm who run the nature museum); 2) Prepare a Collections Development Policy which describes the nature (only bird related?) and source (only MD items?) of materials to collect in the future; 3) Create a collection level inventory to see what we have; 4) Establish “intellectual control” – create catalogs, finding aids and other guides that allow researchers to locate relevant materials; 5) Categorize collections by value – research value, education value & intrinsic value; and finally 6) Prioritize collections for preservation and conservation actions and create a plan for deaccessioning collections that are not mission-specific or that cannot be properly cared for. We will apply for grants to help cover the cost of some of this work.

The BBC and MOS boards accepted these recommendations and established the committee. We have already started the collections level inventory and are working on the mission statement and collection policy. David Bridge, retired Smithsonian systems manager and ornithologist has agreed to consult with us on this work. It's going to be a big job but we are all excited finally to be putting our “house” in order.....and it's amazing the treasures we are finding. Check out the two inch tall calendar book advertising Singer sewing machines with beautiful bird drawings, circa 1902 to the right.



Sean and Catherine with one of the egg collections



**“American Singers”
Calendar 1902**



Part of one of the egg collections - pre 1900



**Visitors at the Nature Museum
viewing collections on display**

BALTIMORE BIRD CLUB
http://baltimorebirdclub.org
A Chapter of
MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
4915 Greenspring Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21209



Printed on
Recycled Paper

Chip Notes, newsletter of the Baltimore Bird Club,
is published quarterly.

Joan Cwi & Karen Morley, Editors
Keith Costley, Graphic Design

Submit materials to
Joan Cwi - jafjsc@verizon.net

Moving or email change?

Send correction to
Catherine Bishop at jcbishop1@verizon.net
Or... 6111 Bellona Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21212

**Deadlines for submitting articles
for upcoming issues:**

SPRING: January 24 for March-May
SUMMER: April 24 for June-August
FALL: July 24 for September-November
WINTER: October 24 for December-February



**Baltimore Bird Club
APPLICATION**

*Membership year is September 1-August 31. Individuals/households
joining after March 1 may pay half-year rate. A full year's dues
received after April 30 will be applied to the next membership year.*

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

How do you want your newsletters delivered? Electronically _____

Hard Copy _____

Check dues category and circle amount sent.

Category	1-YR	½ YR	Chapter Only+
___ Individual	\$35.00	\$17.50	\$15.00
___ Household	\$45.00	\$22.50	\$20.00
___ Sustaining	\$100.00		
___ Junior*	\$10.00	\$5.00	\$5.00

* Through 17: record age here _____

+Chapter Only membership is available to MOS members who are already
members of another MOS chapter or who are MOS life members.

Mail completed application
with check payable to:

Baltimore Bird Club
Attn: Membership Chairman
4915 Greenspring Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21209