

HOWARD

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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IMMATURE PEREGRINE FALCON SIGHTED IN COLUMBIA - Paul Zucker

After the Columbia feeder trip (Feb. 26), Cathy and I drove around the Dobbin Road and Snowden River Parkway area looking for the Rough-legged Hawks that were reported to be present. Although we never found the Rough-legs, we managed to spot a Red-tailed Hawk, two male Marsh Hawks, and a Red-shouldered Hawk. Then shortly after turning off of the parkway onto Berger Road, I noticed a hawk facing us perched upon a metal fence post across the road. Its size was approximately that of a Red-shouldered Hawk, but it had a heavily streaked breast. Putting my binoculars on it, I immediately noticed a dark vertical band on each ~~shoulder~~ ^{cheek}. I was all set to jump (quietly of course) out of the car and creep up on the bird (which was not more than 10 or 15 yards away) when it flew to a more distant fencepost. As it flew, I noticed the dark brown coloration of its back, the pointed wings, and general falcon shape. Its long tail did not show prominent markings. Soon it flew to a tree at the far end of the fenced-in area. Although I went after it and observed it for about thirty more minutes, I did not get as close as before (due to the fence). At one point, the bird flew into the strong breeze, swooped down and disappeared from sight in a small ditch. Shortly afterwards I heard three sharp calls somewhat like a crow's calls but much harsher. They may have come from this bird. Because of its size, shape, coloration, and prominent cheek marks, I am sure this bird was an immature Peregrine Falcon. (Ed. note: Paul could not determine whether the bird was banded.)

BARN OWL BANDING

For the last few years a pair of Barn Owls have raised a family in a barn adjoining the property of one of our members. At an appropriate age the young are banded. If you are interested in watching the banding which is usually mid-May let Jo Solem know, 725-5037. Woody Martin, a biologist from the Patuxent Research Center, usually does the banding after work so it takes place between 5:00-6:00 P.M. The barn will eventually be razed as the development of one of Columbia's villages proceeds so this may be the last year the owls will be able to nest in this location.

WORKSHOP THANKS

The Fifth Birding Workshop and Wildlife Art Show on April 8 was the most successful yet with over a hundred people participating in workshop sessions and many more perusing the many arts and crafts. Money was raised for the MOS Sanctuary Fund and proceeds from the club food booth went into our educational fund. Eileen Glegg and Jo Solem thank all of the members and friends who through their support and participation helped to make this event so successful. If anyone forgot a navy blue ladies raincoat, size 10/12 contact John Glegg 730-4362.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS PRESENTED DURING THE PAST YEAR

Anita Conron headed the educational committee which presented slide programs, showed our nest sets, gave talks using the mounted bird specimens, and demonstrated simple feeders and how to make them. She had help from the following individuals: Eileen Glegg, Sheila Glanz, Marcia Krishnamoorthy, Dawn Morris, Lucile Peters, Nan Rhineland, and Jo Solem. Following is a list of the groups to whom presentations were made: kindergarten thru third at West Friendship Elementary School, Fifth District Garden Club Workshop, first grades at Hammond Elementary, Cadet Troops 608 & 646, Columbia campus of the Maryland School for the Deaf, Children of Worthington Elementary, Green Team at Bryant Woods Elementary (so well received we were asked to come back and present the material to the rest of the school), Team 1 of Jeffers Hill Elementary, several Brownie troops, Outdoor Women of Columbia, Unitarian-Universalist Sunday School, Longfellow Garden Club, Greenbrier Garden Club, Hammond Middle sixth grade science classes, grades 1-5 at Glenelg Country School, Landsdowne School, Taylor Manor Hospital, Branch and Twig Garden Club, and Fifth Birding Workshop. During the 1977-1978 school year we spoke to almost 1600 children and adults.

NEW AREA TELEVISION PROGRAM OF INTEREST TO MEMBERS

Amateur naturalists in the area will welcome the news that Jean (Miss Jean of "Hodgepodge Lodge") and Elmer Worthley of the Baltimore chapter will be starring in a new PBS television series beginning May 8 at 9:00 P.M. on Channels 22 & 67. The 26-part series is entitled "On Nature's Trail" and will use visits to various locations in the out-of-doors to enlighten the viewing audience about a range of natural things.

FAREWELL TO LUCILE AND ANITA

We are sorry to lose the talents of two of our most active Board members. Lucile Peters has served as Secretary, Vice-president, and President, has been a participant in most facets of club activities and organized an outdoor workshop several years ago. She and her husband will be moving to the mountains of North Carolina at the end of the teaching year.

Since this chapter's founding six years ago Anita Conron has capably, and in some cases almost singlehandedly, taken care of the community education in which the club engaged. She has donated evenings as well as daytime hours to present programs to adults as well as to children and we are tremendously grateful for her efforts. She will soon be leaving with her family for residence in Buffalo, N.Y. We wish both Lucile and Anita much happiness and many new birds.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION WEEK BOOTH AT THE COLUMBIA MALL

The Howard Chapter of MOS participated in the exposition for Resource Conservation Week in the Columbia Mall. Did you visit our booth? We were there on May 1, 2, and 3 from 10 A.M. till 9 P.M. Special thanks are due Eileen Glegg for coordinating this event and to the numerous volunteers who staffed it. We will also have a booth at the Foxfire Fair at Waterloo Middle School on Saturday, May 20 from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. If anyone is interested in helping to staff the booth for an hour or two call Chuck Dupree, 796-1086. These are valuable ways to publicize the existence of our group and let people know what we are doing in the community.

NESTING BIRDS OF HOWARD COUNTY SLIDE PROGRAM NEEDS YOUR HELP

In order to put together as complete a program of the Nesting Birds of Howard County as possible we need the help of our members. If during the coming breeding season you find any of the following nests with either eggs or young in a situation where they could be photographed please contact John Clegg, 730-4362. Active nests needed are Yellowthroat, Green Heron, Field Sparrow, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Rufous-sided Towhee, Barn Owl, any of the woodpeckers, Chipping Sparrow, Cardinal, Common Grackle, House Wren, Horned Lark, Eastern Meadowlark, Brown Thrasher, and Carolina Chickadee. If any photographers already have good pictures of the following birds that you would allow the club to copy let us know: Belted Kingfisher, any flycatcher, Northern Oriole, Yellow-breasted Chat, Ovenbird, any vireo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Carolina Wren, or Tufted Titmouse. If you find a nest that we need and you can't contact John, then call Jo Solem, 725-5037.

ESSAY CONTEST COMING

Next fall the club plans to sponsor an essay contest for adults and student members. We are interested in observations or experiences you have had with some aspect of natural history so keep your eyes open this summer. Best entries will be published in the newsletter as well as receiving a small prize. Details next fall.

NORTH AMERICAN BLUEBIRD SOCIETY

In order to promote the cause of the bluebird an organization has recently been founded by Lawrence Zeleny and an active group of local enthusiasts. This group is the North American Bluebird Society and will be a clearinghouse for information on all aspects of the three bluebird species native to this continent. If these birds are of special interest to you, you can obtain additional information by writing to NABS, 6002 Hunt Club Road, Elkridge, Maryland 21227.

DUCKS TO THE ZOO

The Columbia Waterfowl Committee urges owners of Easter ducks which have outworn their welcome to take their pets to the Children's Zoo in Symphony Woods. Ducks are welcomed there, 10-5, seven days a week. Please do NOT take ducks to any of Columbia's lakes for release. Survival is not assured, but if they should survive they will interbreed with the wild ducks.

PHOTOGRAPHERS INTERESTED IN NESTING BIRDS

Irene Hinke and Randy Sacilotto who exhibited at our Workshop are interested in photographing additional nesting birds. Please contact them if you find nests under 15". Particularly desired are nests of the Red-headed Woodpecker, warblers, orioles, woodcock, owls, and Brown Thrasher. Call 301-426-5071 (Baltimore, Md.)

SPRING WILD FLOWER LISTS

If you have been keeping track of the blooming dates of spring wild flowers in Howard County, please give or send them to Chuck Dupree, 6002 Hunt Club Rd., Elkridge, Md. 21227 or Jo Solem, 10617 Graefloch Rd., Laurel, Md. 20810 after the 15th of June.

CALENDAR

Field Trips

- MAY 6 (Sat.) - MAY COUNT AND TALLY - Contact Cathy Williamson for info 730-0338.
- MAY 7 (Sun.) - SWAMP WALK - jointly sponsored by Howard Co. Recreation & Parks. To wet area of David Force Park ordinarily not yet open to the public. Meet at 8:00 P.M. at bridge on Turf Valley Rd. off Rt. 40. Amphibians; maybe owls?? Leaders Bill Eckert & Jo Solem 725-5037.
- MAY 9 (Tues.) - DISCOVERY WALK - PATAPSCO STATE PARK - Hoblofield Section. Meet at entrance booth 9:30 A.M. for two hour walk. Located on Rt. 40 just before crossing Patapsco River into Baltimore Co. Leader Jo Solem.
- MAY 12-14 - MOG STATE CONVENTION - Ocean City, Md. Flyer should have been received by all members. If you have questions call John Glegg 730-4362.
- MAY 14 (Sun.) - WARBLERS AT PATUXENT RIVER STATE PARK. Peak period for migrants. Meet at Swansfield at 7:00 A.M. Leader "Kris" Krishnamoorthy 997-5967.
- MAY 17 (Wed.) - DISCOVERY WALK - LONG REACH. Jointly sponsored by Howard Co. Rec. & Parks. Meet at 9:30 A.M. at Stonehouse, Long Reach Village Center for a 2 hour walk. Leader Cathy Williamson 730-0338.
- MAY 20 (Sat.) - ADVENTURE SANCTUARY AND HUGHES HOLLOW. Banding and migrants. Meet at Swansfield at 7:30 A.M. $\frac{1}{2}$ day; stay longer if you wish
- MAY 28 (Sun.) - BIKE AND BIRD HIKE - COLUMBIA, EAST - Easy biking with stops for birding, about 3 hours. Meet in Long Reach Village Center parking lot at 1:00 P.M. Leaders John and Eileen Glegg 730-4362.
- JUNE 11 (Sun.) - NASA/GODDARD SPACE CENTER. Meet at Swansfield at 8:00 A.M. for a day trip to observe birds and go through the visitor center. This is a fine trip for individuals and families. Bring a picnic lunch. Leader Chuck Dupree 796-1086.

Meetings

- MAY 11 (Thurs.) - MONTHLY MEETING - "Marsh and Water Birds" which is one of the club's slide shows. This is the last meeting until September and will feature a social period after the program. Swansfield Elementary 7:45 P.M.
- MAY 18 (Thurs.) - PLANNING SESSION for 1978-79 Field Trips and Programs at Cathy Williamson's, 5782 Flagflower Place, Columbia, 730-0338. Any member wishing to contribute ideas is welcome. 7:30 P.M.

Any field trips that may be planned for the summer will be announced in local county papers. The Howard County Dept. of Recreation and Parks has a full schedule and some of these may be co-sponsored by our chapter. The particulars will be published in county newspapers. To give you some idea of their diversity the following dates are noted:

Tuesday evenings at Lake Kittamaquundi - July 11, 25, Aug. 1, and 8 at 7:00 P.M. and two special "Werewolf" hikes under the full moon on July 18, Aug. 15 at 10:15 P.M.
 Wednesday morning series at 10:00 A.M. June 7, July 12, and July 26.
 Thursday evenings at Wilde Lake - May 31, June 29, and July 27.
 Wednesday morning at Lake Elkhorn - Aug. 9

For additional information or to let them know if you plan to attend (trips can be canceled if no one demonstrates interest) call Dept. of Rec. & Parks & ask for Bill Eckert, 992-2483 between 8:30 A.M. & 4:30 P.M. If he is not available, leave a message.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

Of the early American naturalists who had a major influence on ornithology the one who is known to more people than any other is John J. Audubon. Born in the West Indies in 1785, the son of a French admiral, he spent his childhood on an estate in France after he and his father successfully fled a native uprising in which his mother was killed. Educated in Paris he studied art under some of the finest teachers of the day and early developed a dual interest in drawing and natural history. At the age of 17 he was sent to the United States to take charge of one of his father's estates near Philadelphia. While there he met and married Lucy Bakewell, managed to dissipate much of his inheritance, and shortly thereafter began a series of commercial ventures in Kentucky and later New Orleans. He gave insufficient attention to his business to be successful since he spent much of his time shooting and drawing birds. As he accumulated paintings he became totally devoted to the dream of publishing a series of paintings which would include every North American bird. Fortunately for him, his wife supported his goal so she largely raised the children, supplemented their meager income by teaching, and endured years of separation while Audubon lived a hand-to-mouth existence as he traveled to far parts of the wilderness searching for specimens. Among the new areas he examined ornithologically were the Florida Keys, Labrador, and Texas.

Between collecting trips he wrote the text for his "book" and solicited subscriptions in the major eastern cities as well as in Great Britain and France. The completed elephant folio of the Birds of America was bound separately from the descriptive material. Each of the 435 colored plates was about three by two and a half feet and contained a total of 1,055 birds of natural size. A project of this magnitude could only have been completed by an unusual individual. Audubon's physical endurance, determination, and bravery were extraordinary. He had great self-confidence, a magnetic personality, and a flair for self-dramatization which helped his sales. He meagerly supported himself and his family by drawing portraits, as well as teaching drawing, dancing, and fencing.

As he was nearing 60 he continued to seek new specimens taking a trip to the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains. Prior to 1846 he had completed all 155 paintings of the quadrupeds of North America, collaborating with Dr. John Bachman of Charleston, S.C., in the preparation of the book which was published posthumously. Audubon's health and mind began to fail rapidly in 1848; he was completely blind at the time of his death in 1851.

As an artist his paintings achieved a new plateau in depicting wildlife for most pictures of birds up to that time were done of stuffed (and often badly mounted) specimens. Colors were not faithful and poses were stylized. Audubon's paintings, on the other hand, were life-sized with the bird posed on a flowering plant or tree that was part of the bird's habitat. The most common criticism of his painting is that some of the poses are too dramatic and not ones birds normally assume. Audubon failed to realize the extreme value of preserving the specimens he was drawing seeming to believe his paintings would be a sufficient record. Unfortunately, his pictures included some European species he claims to have shot on this continent and several "species" which have never been seen again. These don't appear to be explainable as hybrids or juvenile plumage. In these cases it would be especially valuable to be able to examine the skins. Of the errors Audubon made in recognizing winter or immature plumage, color phases within a species, and generic relationships, most were simply due to a lack of ornithological data at that time. His journals have become increasingly useful to non-ornithologists for they include descriptions of the settlements, people, manners, etc. as well as observations relating to wildlife. He was correct in foretelling the disappearance of the wilderness and the consequent reduction or disappearance of certain species even in his lifetime.