

How to Find an Owl  
2020 Report  
Jay Sheppard

February 22, 2020, was a beautiful day, maybe a little crisp in the early AM. Bright and sunny! The first session started at 9:30 with 19 participants and three instructor assistants; the afternoon class started at 1:00 PM with 19 new participants and three instructor assistants. Names of all are listed below.

Each session started off with a discussion of habitat and prey needs of our owls. How we need to focus on the prey's habitat first and then see if there are any owls benefitting from the abundance of the local prey. We examined a variety of owl pellets and their contents. After this informational part of the class, the participants filed over to the white pines nearby. They all lined up and took a row of pines. Then they slowly walked down the rows looking for scat/droppings and pellets of owls and other wildlife. They found some Northern Saw-whet Owl pellets in about eight sites in these pines. Those are the first signs of this owl from this extensive pine plantation for this whole winter. The freshest pellet was maybe 4–5 days old. That was about as close as we got to finding any special owls—saw-whets, Long-eared, etc.

All participants got a 'Certificate' for completing this little class and hopefully they will all now find owls in their bird walks around Maryland and elsewhere. It was disappointing not finding any saw-whets or other owls, but everyone seemed to appreciate the time spent learning to look down for signs of owls and not just up.

**AM SESSION—**

Reggina Allen  
Amy Anderson  
Duncan Beall  
Patty Beall  
Sharon Brown  
Bob Cammarata  
LeAnn Cammarata  
Lisa Colangelo  
Marc Fahringer  
Tim Frye  
Dianna Garvis  
Pam Killgallon  
Vallerie Killgallon  
Ann Looker  
Tim McGowan  
Nancy O'Hara  
Jackie Raiford  
Eveylyn Ralston  
Heather Westing

**PM SESSION—**

Beth Bandy  
Debbie Brown  
Derek DeLia  
Mary DeLia  
Ann Finneran  
Paul Finneran  
Elliot Geiger  
Tara Geiger  
Wayne Gordon  
Joanne Howl  
Patty Iammatteo  
Shannon Kennedy  
Randy Koster  
Malcolm Lakey  
Morgan Lakey  
Diana Linnekin  
Pam Perna  
Jon Ranson  
Sharon Zingler

**INSTRUCTOR ASSISTS—**

Crystal Bancroft (PM only)  
Mary Lou Clark  
Sarah Romero  
Anthony VanSchoor (AM only)

MOS Chapters represented (Not all indicated a chapter affiliation):

AA–6  
BalC–1  
CarC–1  
FrC–1  
HoC–7  
MoC–2  
Pax–2

Audubon–1

AM CLASS PICTURE



PM CLASS PICTURE



A number of birders came back at 5:45 PM to watch American Woodcock displaying in a nearby field. We had three males flying around us as it got dark but the displaying stopped almost as soon as it started. I did not check my watch but they were calling and doing their flight display from about 6:15 to 6:25 on a calm and clear evening with no moon. One male sat just out of sight over a small rise, and we were never able to see it on the ground.

NOTES FOR NEXT YEAR:

- 1) Suggest AM session start at 9 AM. Rushed introductory talk and rushed search of pines.
- 2) Continue Certificates. Almost everyone seemed to appreciate these. Sample below.

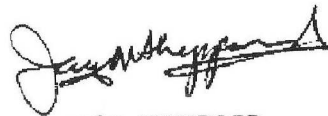
## Certificate of Course Completion

*This certifies that*

JANE BIRDER

*Has completed a course in **How to Find an Owl** at Patuxent River State Park, Howard County, Maryland. Upon completion of the course, she is now able to identify scat, pellets and other animal signs found in the forest. Further, she has learned the habitat and dietary needs of our local owls.*

*Dated: 22 February 2020*



JAY M. SHEPPARD  
PROF. SCATOLOGY  
WISE OWL UNIVERSITY

February 25, 2020

Sarah Romero, recorder

Patuxent River SP--Annapolis Rock Road

Feb 22, 2020 8:56 AM - 11:58 AM

Mourning Dove 2

Black Vulture 3

Turkey Vulture 2

Bald Eagle 1

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 1

Red-bellied Woodpecker 1

Pileated Woodpecker 3

American Crow 1

Golden-crowned Kinglet 3

Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1

Eastern Towhee 1

Patuxent River SP--Annapolis Rock Road

Feb 22, 2020 1:16 PM - 4:12 PM

Black Vulture 4

Turkey Vulture 1

Red-bellied Woodpecker 1

Blue Jay 1

American Crow 1

Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1

Eastern Towhee 1

Patuxent River SP--Hipsley Mill Road

Feb 22, 2020 5:31 PM - 6:39 PM

Mourning Dove 2

American Woodcock 3 First flight 6:13, last call 6:28

White-throated Sparrow 30