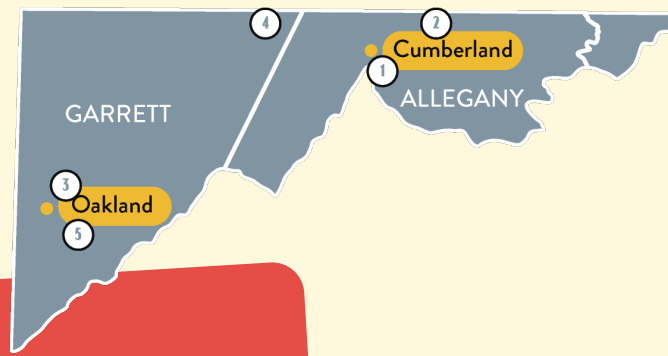


— GUIDE TO —

# BIRDING

≈≈≈ IN MARYLAND ≈≈≈



# Maryland's Hottest Birding Regions and Species Counts

Listed by region and in order of species count according to eBird.

## WESTERN MARYLAND REGION

1. C&O Canal—North Branch  
Allegany County (233)
2. Rocky Gap State Park  
Allegany County (223)
3. Broadford Lake  
Garrett County (218)
4. Piney Reservoir  
Garrett County (209)
5. Trout Run Wastewater Treatment Plant  
Garrett County (208)
6. Fort Frederick State Park—Big Pool  
Washington County (206)

## CAPITAL REGION

1. C&O Canal – Violette's Lock  
Montgomery County (273)
2. Lilypons Water Gardens  
Frederick County (256)
3. Hughes Hollow—McKee Beshers Wildlife Management Area  
Montgomery County (251)
4. Beltsville Agricultural Research Center  
Prince George's County (241)
5. Schoolhouse Pond  
Prince George's County (237)
6. Merkle Natural Resources Management Area  
Prince George's County (229)

## SOUTHERN MARYLAND REGION

1. Point Lookout State Park  
St. Mary's County (304)
2. Patuxent River Naval Air Station (restricted access)  
St. Mary's County (287)
3. North Beach—Marsh  
Calvert County (257)
4. Flag Ponds Nature Park  
Calvert County (242)
5. Harry James Road  
St. Mary's County (214)

## CENTRAL MARYLAND REGION

1. Sandy Point State Park  
Anne Arundel County (299)
2. Hart-Miller Island State Park  
Baltimore County (297)
3. Swan Creek Wetlands – Cox Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility  
Anne Arundel County (281)
4. Swan Harbor Farm Park  
Harford County (274)
5. Fort Smallwood Park  
Anne Arundel County (269)
6. Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine  
Baltimore County (265)
7. North Point State Park  
Baltimore County (260)

## CENTRAL MARYLAND CONT'D

8. Masonville Cove Environmental Education Center  
Baltimore County (259)
9. Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary  
Anne Arundel County (258)

## EASTERN SHORE REGION

1. Assateague Island National Seashore and Assateague State Park  
Worcester County (278/269)
2. Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge  
Dorchester County (272)
3. Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge  
Kent County (262)
4. Pickering Creek Audubon Center  
Talbot County (251)
5. Terrapin Nature Park  
Queen Anne's County (251)
6. Poplar Island  
Talbot County (251)
7. Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center  
Queen Anne's County (246)
8. Elliott Island Road  
Dorchester County (243)
9. Truitt's Landing  
Worcester County (242)



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# Welcome

**Maryland may only cover a small area of America, but it's top 10 when it comes to birds per square mile. In other words, it's a birder's paradise.**

If you're in the northeastern corner of the country and considering a birdwatching adventure, you can't go wrong with Maryland. The diversity of Maryland's natural environments, combined with its central location on the Atlantic Flyway migration path, make the state incredibly fertile ground for birders.

Ranging from coastal barrier islands to swamps, marshes, grassy fields and forests, the bird habitats in Maryland provide for a huge variety of winged wildlife. The state is home to 42 Important Bird Areas, and boasts a remarkable species count for such a small area; 455 species have been documented here, ranging from seabirds to warblers to birds of prey.

The hero of the bunch in Maryland is the Baltimore Oriole, a vibrant orange songbird that is easily spotted throughout the state, and was named the official state bird in 1947.

Maryland also plays host to the largest breeding population of ospreys in the world, and in January 2021, a rare sighting of a Painted Bunting—a technicolor, finch-like beauty—at one of the state's parks created quite a buzz.

Birders should also look for Bald Eagles, Prothonotary Warblers and Scarlet Tanagers, as well as the majestic Great Blue Heron (pictured above), which you can spot anywhere there's water—but try the Chesapeake Bay, where the Heron's silhouette against the tidal marsh will leave a lasting impression.

Spring and fall are peak times for birdwatching in Maryland, as avian flocks undertake their northerly and southerly migrations. In this *Guide to Birding in Maryland*, learn more

about the ornithological bounties of these seasons, including birds you'll spot, some history of the regions and species, and ideal birdwatching localities.

We have also rounded up information from each of the state's birding regions, so you can do a deep dive into the various environments of Maryland and plan your adventure. Check out the hot birding spots map on the previous page, which are where you can find the most species in the state. But remember, wherever you are in Maryland, there's likely a decent number of birds nearby. So, while we hope this guide gives you plenty of inspiration, make sure you get out and explore Maryland for yourself. ●



Baltimore Oriole



Osprey



# Maryland Birding Events

**Birding festivals and events are organized to ensure that you visit the best birding spots at the best time of year, meet other birders, see a variety of birds, and learn from the experts. Below are some events that offer the best of birding around the state.**

## **Maryland Bird Symposium**

January, Laurel  
[marylandbirds.org](http://marylandbirds.org)

## **Winter Delmarva Birding Weekend**

January, Delmarva  
[delmarvabirding.com](http://delmarvabirding.com)

## **Eagle Festival at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge**

March, Cambridge  
[friendsofblackwater.org](http://friendsofblackwater.org)

## **Spring Delmarva Birding Weekend**

April, Delmarva  
[delmarvabirding.com](http://delmarvabirding.com)

## **Ward World Championship Wildfowl Carving Competition and Art Festival**

April, Ocean City  
[wardmuseum.org](http://wardmuseum.org)

## **Maryland Ornithological Society Annual Convention**

June, location varies annually  
[mdbirds.org](http://mdbirds.org)

## **Audubon's Baltimore Birding Weekend**

September/October, Baltimore  
[baltimorebirding.com](http://baltimorebirding.com)

## **The Big Sit at Audrey Carroll Sanctuary**

October, Mount Airy  
[centralmdaudubon.org](http://centralmdaudubon.org)

## **Waterfowl Festival**

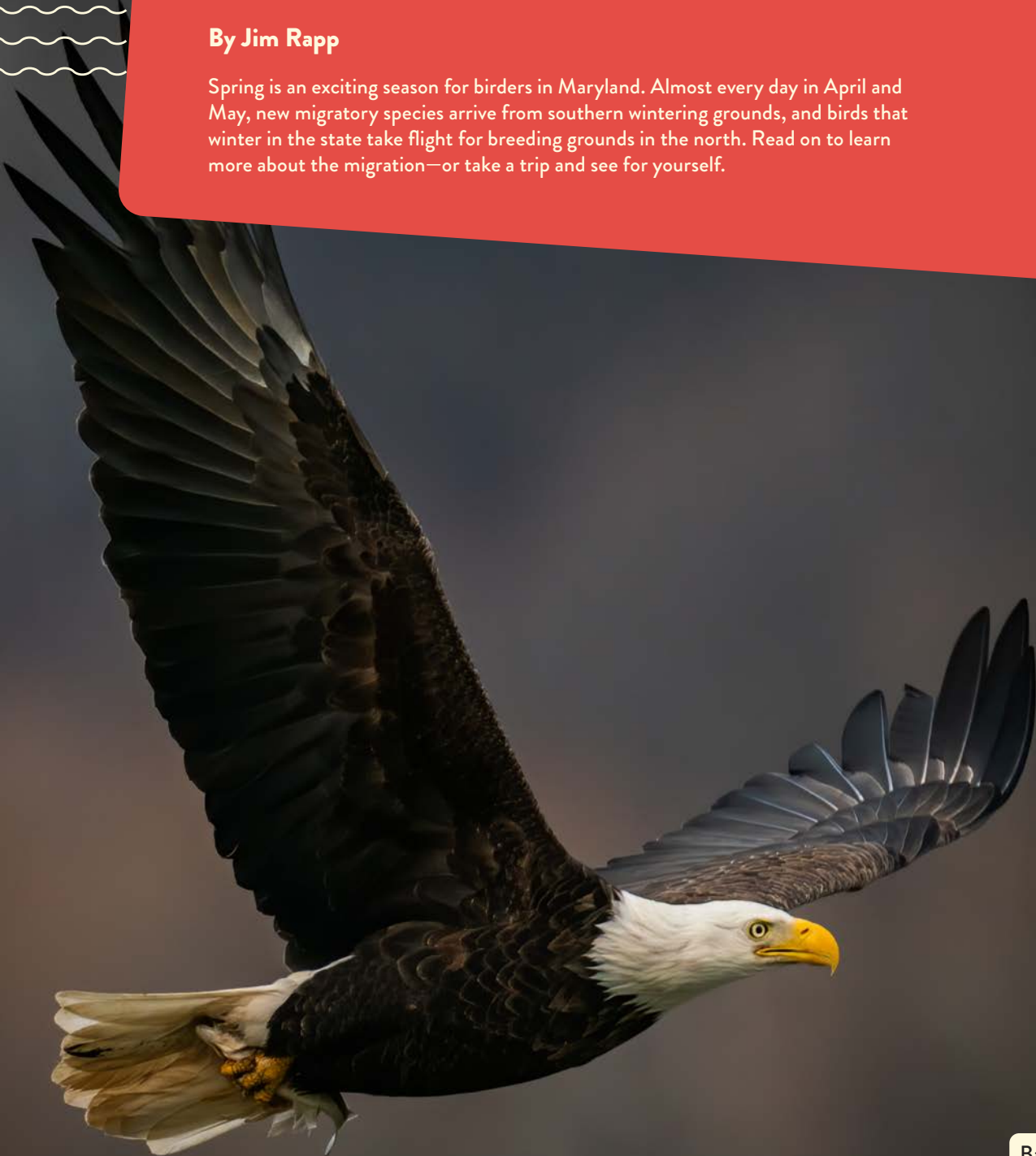
November, Easton  
[waterfowlfestival.org](http://waterfowlfestival.org)

Brown Pelicans

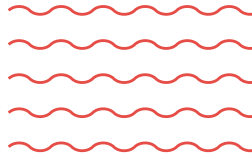
# Spring Migration in Maryland

By Jim Rapp

Spring is an exciting season for birders in Maryland. Almost every day in April and May, new migratory species arrive from southern wintering grounds, and birds that winter in the state take flight for breeding grounds in the north. Read on to learn more about the migration—or take a trip and see for yourself.



Bald Eagle



**Waterfowl and loons on the Chesapeake Bay and other coastal bays are replaced by warblers in the woods and shorebirds on the beaches. Each sunrise brings the promise of new spring birdsong filling the air as neotropical migrants begin their ancient courtship rituals.**

Neotropical migratory birds actually spend most of their year in the Caribbean, Mexico, Central America and South America. They arrive in Maryland to nest and raise young in the summer. Some nest in the Chesapeake region, while others migrate through the state to breed in the northeastern United States and Canada.

The term “neotropical” refers to migratory birds of the western hemisphere that winter south of the Tropic of Cancer and breed north of that same latitudinal line. There are close to 200 bird species that fit that definition, and most are small songbirds and shorebirds.

You might wonder why a warbler or sandpiper would leave the tropics and southern South America to breed and raise young in the north, when there is so much life south of the border. Besides fleeing winter conditions in the southern hemisphere, the incredible abundance of the food that migratory birds need to raise their babies can be found here and farther north—fare such as caterpillars, small insects, fruit and nectar in our forests, and horseshoe crab eggs and invertebrates on our beaches.

Places to gather food and rest are vital for migratory birds, and Maryland’s forests, marshes and beaches—not to mention its wildlife refuges—are like a giant, never-ending buffet for avian life. Residents of the state also help by creating backyard habitats with native plants; keeping cats and other animals indoors, and limiting the use of pesticides.

Birds also have more daylight in Maryland for feeding in the spring and summer than they do near the equator. When that food disappears and the days begin to shorten in the fall, these same birds fly south with their young to survive the winter months.

Many of these tiny birds migrate tremendous distances to get to Maryland in time for the spring breeding season. A Scarlet Tanager migrating from Colombia or Ecuador might



Scarlet Tanager

travel 3,000 miles to nest in Maryland, while a Red Knot might travel almost 10,000 miles from the southern tip of Argentina to its breeding grounds in the Arctic.

Most small birds migrate at night when temperatures are cooler, the air is calmer, and predators are fewer. They stop to rest and feed during the day. Most fly between 20 to 40 miles per hour. A single non-stop flight between rest stops may last for several hours or several days.

Songbirds flying over the expansive Gulf of Mexico are known to rest on boats or oil rigs before completing their open-water flights to the U.S. When they make landfall, they are exhausted and hungry. If they hit rough weather, a phenomenon known as a “fallout” occurs, when hundreds and thousands of birds concentrate in an area to rest and feed before starting the next leg of their journey.





Purple Martins

By early April, many spring migrants, like waterfowl and raptors, have already arrived in Maryland to establish nesting territories. They are soon followed by species that migrate northward through the state, including shorebirds, terns, tanagers and orioles. Here are a few to look and listen for when you're exploring Maryland's parks and preserves.

Purple Martins arrive from South America to nest in man-made martin houses along the shorelines of the Chesapeake Bay and other coastal bays. Purple Martins are our largest swallow, and they are known for their aerial maneuvers when flying to catch insects on the wing—and for keeping the state's mosquito population under control. Males are a dark, glossy purple and females are mostly brown.

Native Americans hung hollow gourds to serve as Purple Martin nest houses well before Europeans arrived in the Americas. Purple Martins in the eastern United States now nest almost exclusively in birdhouses, while those in the west use tree cavities.

The Louisiana Water Thrush prefers Maryland's bald cypress swamps and slow-moving streams. This large warbler looks more like a thrush or sparrow, with its drab brown back, white belly with dark stripes, and white stripe over the eye. It can be found walking between tree roots and cypress knees at the water's edge, constantly bobbing its tail up and down.

Louisiana Water Thrush



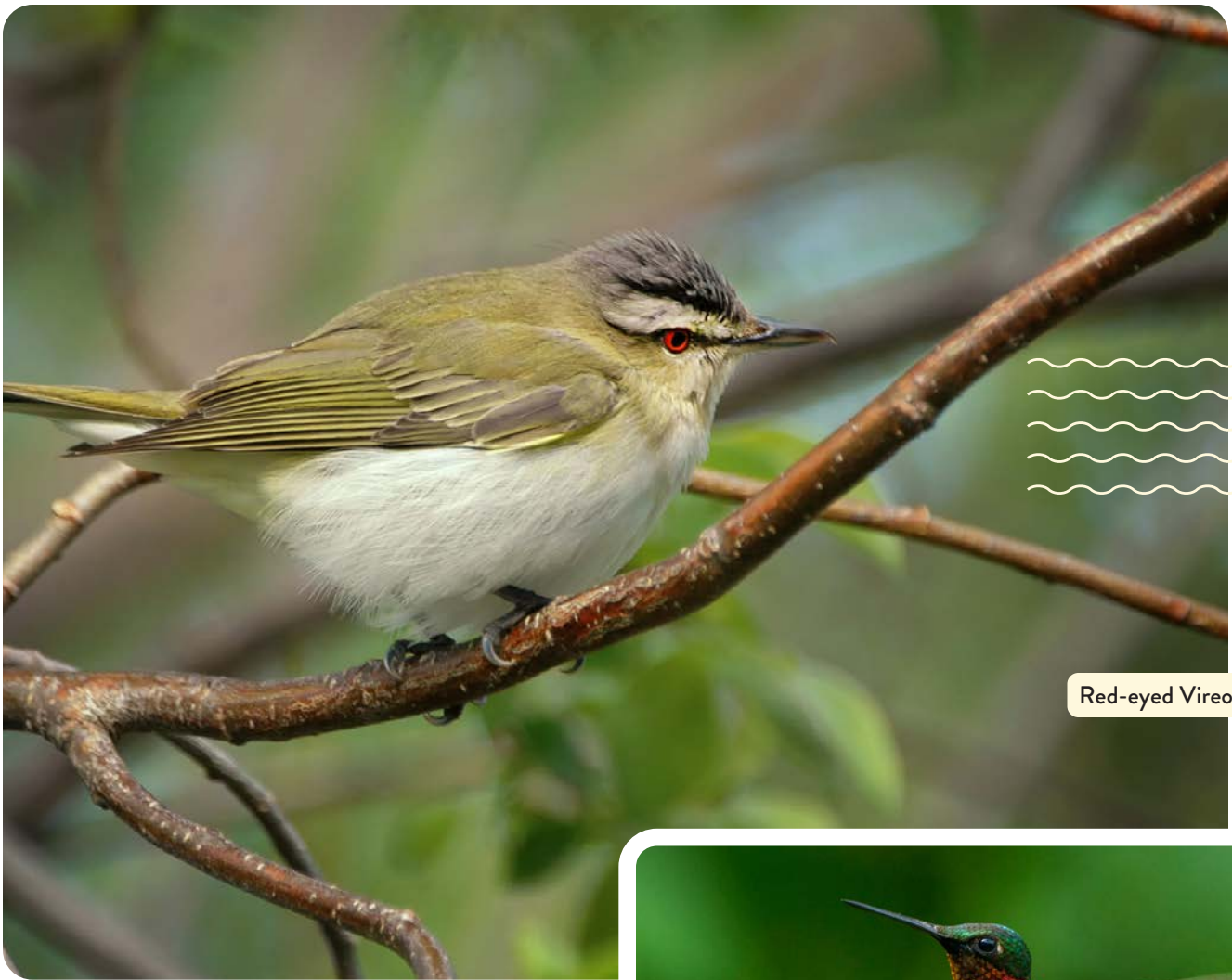
When the Louisiana Water Thrush arrives on its Maryland breeding grounds from wintering in Mexico and Central America, males begin to sing immediately. They will sing almost non-stop all day until they acquire a mate.

Another warbler of Maryland's forests is the brilliant gold-yellow Prothonotary Warbler. It is one of only two neotropical warblers that nest in tree cavities. The name "prothonotary" refers to clerks in the Roman Catholic Church who wore bright yellow robes.

Prothonotary Warbler







Red-eyed Vireo

Known to some as the “preacher bird” for sermonizing all day, the Red-eyed Vireo is one of the most commonly seen—and heard—neotropical migrants in Maryland’s forests. They have olive-green backs, white bellies, a gray cap, and black-and-white streaks near their red eyes. Males will sing constantly from dawn to dusk; their loud calls dominate the forest soundscape, and sound like they’re saying, “See me... here I am!” More than 20,000 individual phrases of the Red-eyed Vireo’s song have been counted in a single day.

Male Scarlet Tanagers are one of the most beautifully colored neotropical migrants in Maryland’s spring and summer forests. Males have electric crimson bodies with ink-black wings and tails, while females are yellowish-green with dark wings. Look for these birds high in the forest canopy from May until late summer, when they take off for northern South America.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are the only breeding hummingbird found in the Eastern United States. They arrive in Maryland after flying from Central America. During migration, many hummingbirds cross the Gulf of Mexico in a single, non-stop flight. You can find these tiny,



Ruby-throated Hummingbird

iridescent green birds glittering in the sun as they feed on the nectar provided by red and orange spring flowers, or at a hummingbird feeder outside of a kitchen window. Feeders must contain the correct ratio of sugar to water; the sugar is important to provide the birds energy for their long flights.

Neotropical migrants fill Maryland’s natural areas with color and song every spring and summer. Come and explore Maryland’s many natural wonders and see the incredible beauty of these winged creatures. ●

# Allegany and Garrett Counties: Community Birding

*Images by Aaron Graham*

Sedge Wren

**Western Maryland is home to Allegany & Garrett Counties Bird Club—a chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society that is an active bird club with a year-round schedule of birding field trips, outings and bird counts.**

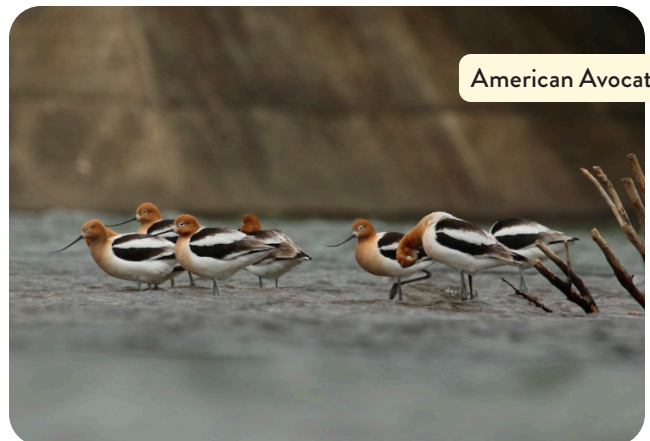
Allegany and Garrett counties are home to a variety of great bird-watching locations; from thick old-growth forests to wide-open fields and beautiful wetlands, riverbanks and lakes. Watch eagles and hawks soar above, cast your eye on a Field Sparrow, follow the song of a Cerulean Warbler, and be entertained by any of seven different species of woodpeckers.

A few times a year, the Bird Club members and friends take part in organized bird counts, where participants count all the birds they can properly identify and report findings to a volunteer coordinator. The bird counts are conducted at a group or individual level, and data is merged into either the Maryland Ornithological Society or the National Audubon Society data. These counts occur throughout a 24-hour period in September, December and May each year.

Field trips vary in location and activity, and can include join-ups at state parks, travel down rural roads, or walking a trail in search of interesting species. All persons interested in birds are welcome, no matter the level of experience.

Bird watching is not only a fun activity, but if you log birds and various behaviors during your visit, you're contributing to citizen science data for Western Maryland. Before you set out on a walk or a drive, download the eBird app, and track

American Avocet





what you see, and where. New to birding? Check out the Merlin Bird ID app, which will assist you in identifying birds on the go.

Bird watchers are encouraged to participate in the Maryland & DC Breeding Bird Atlas when birding Western Maryland during the breeding season. While birding, if you observe breeding behaviors or even young fledglings, simply make notes including species and logged behaviors in the MD-DC Breeding Bird Portal of eBird. Learn more about how you can participate in the Atlas at [ebird.org/atlasmddc/about](http://ebird.org/atlasmddc/about).

The Maryland Ornithological Society holds an annual convention in which local bird clubs play a large part. The convention features field trips to regional birding hot spots, workshops, competitions and speakers. Learn more about the convention at [mosconvention.org](http://mosconvention.org), or Maryland Ornithological Society at [mdbirds.org](http://mdbirds.org).

Visit the club's website at [westernmdbirding.com](http://westernmdbirding.com) for directions to birding sites in Allegany and Garrett counties. Contact the Allegany and Garrett Counties Bird Club by email: [westernmdbirdclub@gmail.com](mailto:westernmdbirdclub@gmail.com). •

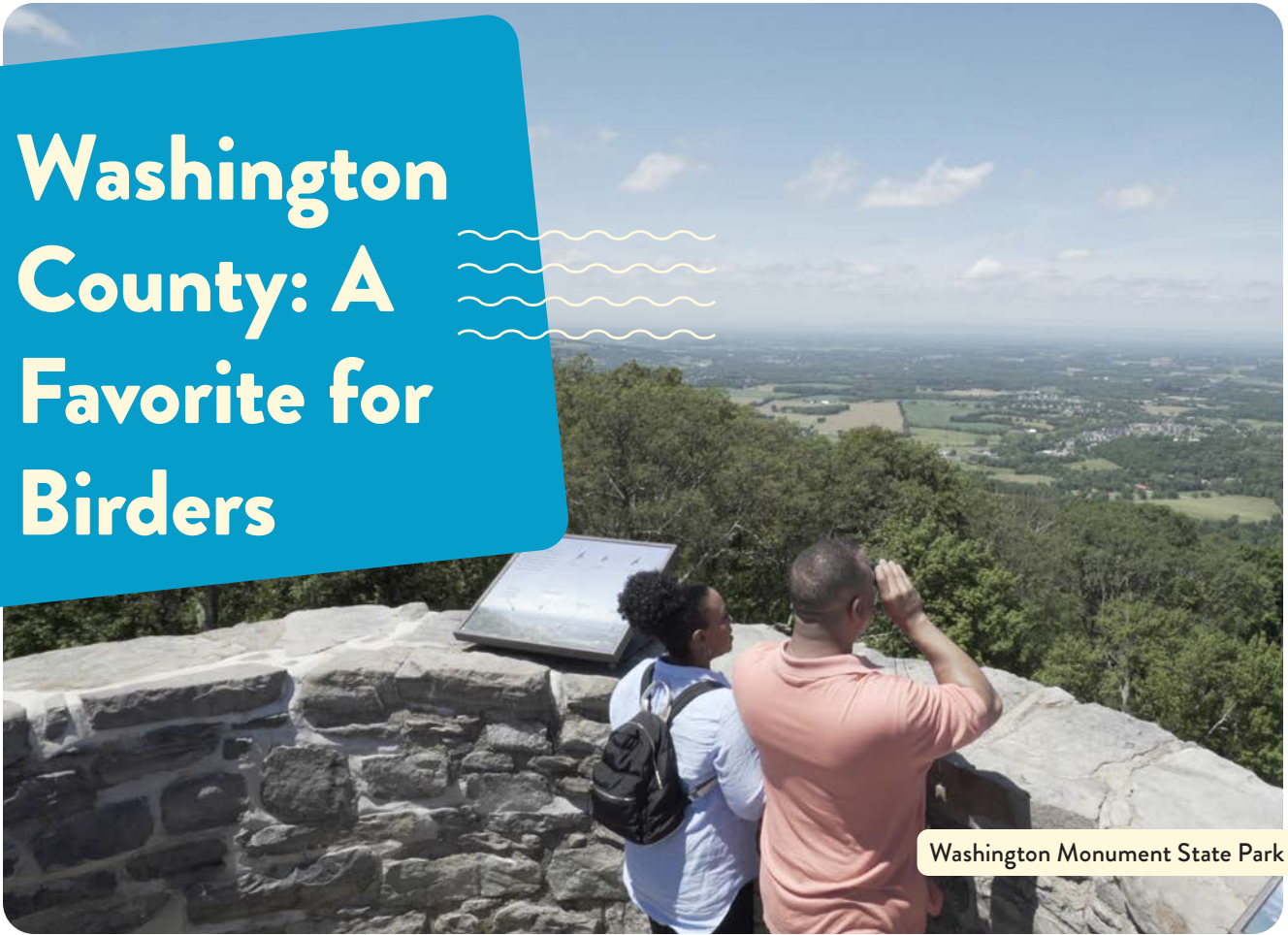
White Rumped Sandpiper



Black-and-white Warbler



# Washington County: A Favorite for Birders



Washington Monument State Park

**Bird-watching has long been a favorite activity in Washington County. Professional ornithologists, photographers, birdwatching enthusiasts and nature lovers come from across the USA to soak up the scenery, snap the common and elusive bird pics, do scientific research, and simply enjoy.**

According to Maryland’s Department of Natural Resources’ website, there are more than 445 species of birds in the state, with about 222 species regularly nesting here. A complete list can be found here: [Maryland Birds](#). The county’s location with the Potomac River as its southern border lends itself to some of the best bird-watching in the mid-Atlantic.

The spine of South Mountain is known as the “Atlantic Flyway,” and is the pathway for neotropical migrating birds travelling to and from warmer climates, such as hawks, eagles and owls. Washington Monument State Park has an official Hawk Watch station, recognized by the Hawk Migration Association of North America. [washingtonmonumenthawkwatch.webs.com](http://www.washingtonmonumenthawkwatch.webs.com)

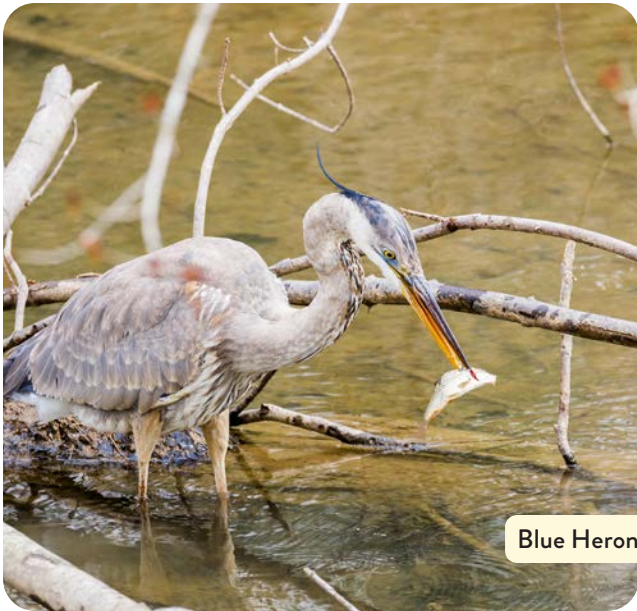


Cooper’s Hawk

Depending on migration patterns, birds commonly seen in the springtime are Grasshopper Sparrows, Eastern Meadowlarks, Indigo Buntings, Red-headed Woodpeckers, and various flycatchers, vireos and warblers. Raptors and Red-tailed Hawks are also commonly seen, as are American Bald Eagles.

Other common raptor sightings include the Sharp-shinned and Cooper’s Hawks, American Kestrel, and Broad-winged Hawks.





Blue Heron

Great Blue Herons are frequently spotted along the Potomac River and the C&O Canal. White-crowned Sparrows are among the wintering species. At night, Barred Owls, Screech Owls, and Great Horned Owls can be heard and seen.

Bird trails and opportunities to view birdlife are abundant in Washington County. See below and click the links for some of our favorite places to watch and wait for a feathered sighting.

- [Antietam Bird Trail](#)
- [C&O Canal Bird Trail](#)
- [Bird Watching South Mountain Recreation Area](#)
- [Indian Springs Wildlife Management Area](#)
- [Sideling Hill Wildlife Management Area](#)

**Birding Resources:**  
[Maryland Department of Natural Resources](#)  
[The Potomac Valley Audubon Society](#)



Eastern Meadowlark

*Open for*  
**TAKING FLIGHT**  
 IN HAGERSTOWN & WASHINGTON COUNTY

Popular Birding Spots: South Mountain Atlantic Flyway, Antietam Bird Trail, C&O Canal Bird Trail, Indian Springs & Sideling Hill Wildlife Management Areas

Visit **HAGERSTOWN** & Washington County  
 Convention and Visitors Bureau

#MasksUpMaryland / #RecreateResponsibly  
**301-791-3246**  
**VISITHAGERSTOWN.COM**

Conowingo Hydroelectric Dam

# Harford County: Home of the Eagles

**Harford County is home to the largest eagle population on the east coast. Photographers and bird lovers come from all over just to witness these magnificent birds. The Conowingo Visitor Center displays winning photographs from the eagle photo contest, which occurs every fall. The Conowingo Hydroelectric Dam is the hottest spot for the eagles—on a single day in November, 148 different Bald Eagles were spotted at this location.**

And don't think eagles are the only birds in Harford County. This area is home to many species, and is on the migratory path for others passing up and down the east coast.

Aside from Conowingo, there are a number of birding spots in Harford County, including the Anita C. Leight Estuary Center, where birders will find Bald Eagles, Great Blue Herons, Wood Ducks, Belted Kingfishers and Turkey Vultures—among many others.

The Bradenbaugh Flats are open farm fields and pasture, and offer plenty of water to attract birds—including a manmade wetland complex. Keep your eyes peeled for Horned Larks, Grasshopper and Savannah Sparrows, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Blue Grosbeaks, and Willow Flycatchers.

For a variety of habitats and bird species, Perryman Park is a great spot. More than 175 species have been identified here amid the forest, fields and water areas, including Savannah Sparrow, Vesper's Sparrow and Lincoln's Sparrow.

Grasshopper Sparrow



Harford Glen's 400 acres are paradise for 200 identified species (and those who watch them), with miles and miles of trails, wetlands, running streams and creeks, forests and meadows bringing a wide variety of species to the location.

Swan Harbor is a mega spot for birding in Harford County, located right alongside the Chesapeake Bay. Waterfowl, birds of prey and migrants are plentiful, and there is a variety of shorebirds. Snow Buntings have been known to make an appearance at this spot in different years. •





*Visit*  
**HARFORD**

MARYLAND

*"Keep close to nature's heart"*

*John Muir*

*Fisherman's Park at Conowingo Dam is a very popular place to view eagles. At least 170 species of birds have been observed at the dam. Peak viewing times for eagles is from November to February. Whether you are a wildlife photographer, a recreational bird watcher, or a nature enthusiast, don't miss this hot spot.*

V I S I T H A R F O R D . C O M



# Howard County: A Small Hub



Birdwatchers searching for Abine's Gull at the Triadelphia Reservoir

**Conveniently located just outside Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, Howard County, despite its small size, is a hub for varied and ever-changing birdlife at many accessible sites. There are 307 species on the county's Field Checklist, of which 220 or more are seen annually. This provides great opportunities to see and hear many birds, whatever the season.**

Nature's calendar begins in late winter as waterfowl begin moving northward. Skeins of Canada Geese honking high overhead or flocks of large, white Tundra Swans against a bright blue sky are definite signs of spring.

By late March, pairs of Eastern Bluebirds begin to claim nest sites. Their flash of blue and quiet warble is a soothing treat. Because many people monitored hundreds of nest boxes over the last 40 years, this attractive species is now easily seen in many parts of the county.

Spring also brings a colorful assortment of warblers and other neotropical migrants, all in their most attractive plumage. A May morning after a warm night might produce dozens of birds in any location—a highlight of a birder's year. One of the most elusive species to be found are rails like Sora, Virginia, Black and Clapper; however, Meadowbrook Park is a place where these birds have been seen and heard in migration.

More than 90 bird species breed locally, including the American Goldfinch, Howard County's official bird, and the Baltimore Oriole, the Maryland State Bird. The American Goldfinch can be seen almost anywhere in the county, but their suitable habitats can be found in Centennial Park, Schooley Mill Park, and Rockburn Branch Park, as well as

the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area. When searching for nesting birds, don't overlook cell towers, as they are becoming surprisingly popular with Ospreys, Bald Eagles, and Common Ravens, which used to be extremely rare to see.

By August, some birds have started to trickle south. Autumn hawk migration is one of nature's major spectacles. Although local raptor numbers do not usually rival those at the best-known sites, hundreds of Broad-winged Hawks may pass through during a few days in late September. Some lucky observers have been known to tally several thousand birds for an unforgettable day.

As the year winds down, some birds depart; others arrive for the winter. By late December, Common Mergansers show up at Triadelphia Reservoir. A visit to Brighton Dam may find several thousand birds on the water—multiple wintering Bald Eagles are a bonus at this site.

Some county locations can produce a variety of species year-round. Among the best are Centennial Park, the three Columbia lakes, the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (east of Trotter Road), and the Howard County Conservancy property at Mount Pleasant (MD 99 near Woodstock Road). The Skywatch at the last location merits a visit during hawk migration.

The Howard County Bird Club's website ([howardbirds.org](http://howardbirds.org)) is an unparalleled resource for detailed county bird information. Photographs, checklists, site guides, and much more are available to anyone interested in exploring the rich and rewarding birdlife of Howard County. •

*Information and photos provided by Howard Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society.*





Oriole



Blue Heron



Bluebird

# 307 SPECIES AND COUNTING...



307 documented species

220 annual species

90 breeding species

Historic Ellicott City



American Goldfinch

## HOWARD COUNTY

*The green in between*

Lovely lakes and award-winning parks all connected by over 100 miles of paved scenic trails. Minutes from the Washington DC and Baltimore beltways with comfortable amenities, delicious dining, arts & culture, and more!

Wildlife Images by Bonnie Ott

Plan your trip today!

[www.VisitHowardCounty.com](http://www.VisitHowardCounty.com)

@visithocomd





# Kent County: A Birding Paradise

**A patchwork of green, yellow and brown covers a landscape surrounded by large swaths of silvery-blue, glinting like a mirror for the sun; ribbons of jade and teal weave through clusters of lush green groves, and quaint towns where life is easy offer fountains and flower gardens by which to rest. This is Kent County from a bird's eye view. With a landscape this inviting, it's no wonder the area is a haven for birds and waterfowl.**

From wooded to wetland and agricultural to pelagic, Kent County's variety of ecosystems offer both migratory and resident birds prime habitats for respite or long-term stays, and the year-round accommodations mean it's a major destination for birding enthusiasts, too. The Maryland Ornithological Society has listed 310 species of birds in Kent County.

## High-Tech Birding in Kent County

In the old days, birders would have a bird book and a pair of binoculars—and high hopes of finding something worth looking at. Today, binoculars and spotting scopes offer keener vision and better value; smart phone apps help you locate birds and identify them once you've spotted them; and digital cameras let you capture them in still photographs and even videos that you can share instantly. The smart phone app, eBird, links you with birders from around the world, even if you happen to be on a remote island wildlife refuge at the mouth of the Chester River.

## Hubs for Birding

Once home to the Leni Lenape Indians, the Millington Wildlife Management Area has 4,000 acres of protected land dedicated to conservation and protection of wildlife and their habitats. Birders can aim long lenses to catch a shot at colorful and elusive specimens resting on sun-dappled branches. Fishing, cycling, hiking, and horseback riding are also welcome activities in the wildlife management area.



The Sassafras Natural Resources Management Area provides birding experiences atop wooded hillsides, and rocky bluffs overlooking the Sassafras River and along its wetland banks. Nine miles of trails offer a pathway into the forested sanctuary of songbirds. Watch raptors soar overhead as they search for their next meal and herons forage for fish in tidal pools and lily ponds.

Located at the southern tip of the county, Eastern Neck Island National Wildlife Refuge, a seven-minute drive from Rock Hall, has nearly 2,300 acres of refuge for migratory birds, including the elegant Tundra Swan that flocks to the area in late November. You may also find the majestic Bald Eagle soaring the skies high above Kent County. There are numerous chances to catch a glimpse of these regal beauties year-round at the refuge's trails and observation platforms at Eastern Neck.

## Timing is Key

Kent County affords several occasions for bird sightings, but timing is key. Sunset and sunrise are good times for viewing, since that's when birds are most active and sightings are plentiful. With more than 310 species of birds in Kent County, birdwatching is one of the easiest hobbies to enjoy; you simply have to walk outside and be still.

Stay at one of Kent County's quaint B&Bs or historic inns, and dine at restaurants featuring the finest Chesapeake Bay seafood and farm-to-table cuisine. Enjoy a weekend adventure on your next birding excursion. Visit [kentcounty.com/visitors](http://kentcounty.com/visitors) to plan your stay today. •

# OPEN FOR SIGHTINGS



Catch a glimpse of colorful and majestic songbirds resting peacefully on sun-dappled branches. Watch as raptors soar searching for aquatic delicacies. Spy herons foraging among the lily ponds. We're open for you. As long as you're

**OPEN FOR IT**



**Maryland**

**KENT COUNTY**

[kentcounty.com/visitors](http://kentcounty.com/visitors)

Chestertown • Rock Hall • Galena • Betterton • Millington







# Nature Reigns in Queen Anne's County

The best place to get started with birding in Queen Anne's County is at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center. The facility includes large freshwater ponds, trails throughout the property, and a kayak launch; paddle board and kayak rentals are available spring through fall, or by special request. Over 121 species of birds can be spotted from this location on the confluence of Prospect Bay and Marshy Creek, including Green-winged Teal, Eastern Towhee, Greater Yellowlegs, and Dark-eyed Junco. For more information about birding at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center visit [bayrestoration.org/birding](http://bayrestoration.org/birding).

Other natural areas to explore include the Wye Island Natural Resource Management Area (NRMA), the Terrapin Nature Park, Conquest Beach Park, and Tuckahoe State Park. The South and Cross Island Trails are popular recreational trails where local wildlife is also visible and easily accessible. The county boasts more than 55 miles of protected trails in natural areas, across flat ground. •

Greater Yellowlegs





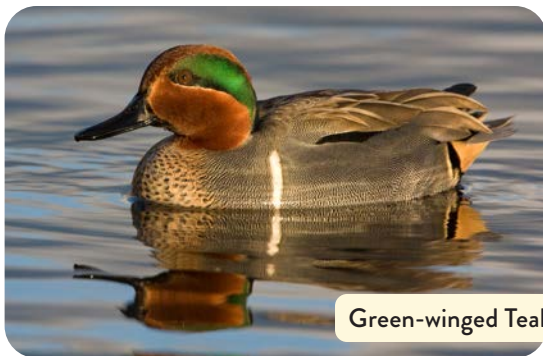
Dark-eyed Junco



Eastern Towhee



Green-winged Teal



DISCOVER THE BEST OF CHESAPEAKE BAY BIRDING

# Queen Anne's COUNTY



EXPLORE OUR NETWORK OF ACCESSIBLE OUTDOOR PARKS, TRAILS, AND WATERWAYS.

ALL LOCATED WITHIN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO OUR CRAFT BREWERIES, WATERFRONT DINING, AND HISTORIC SMALL TOWNS.



VISIT OUR BIRDING RESOURCE PAGE  
[VISITQUEENANNES.COM](http://VISITQUEENANNES.COM)  

# A World Away in Calvert County

Solomons Island

**Calvert County is ready to welcome you. Miles of wooded trails, exquisite beachfront, museums, boutique shopping and a delicious food, brewery and winery scene await. Though it's only an hour south of Washington, D.C., Calvert County will feel like a world away.**

Ready for the island life? *Coastal Living* magazine voted Solomons Island as “One of the 15 Happiest Seaside Towns in America,” making it a must-see on your visit to the area. Nestled where the Patuxent River meets the Chesapeake Bay, this charming spot offers shopping, restaurants and a boardwalk that is perfect for a waterfront stroll at sunset. The family-friendly Calvert Marine Museum is also located here. With its incredible marine life programs, nautical exhibits and host of year-round events, the museum offers something for every age.

Looking to channel your inner artist? Annmarie Sculpture Garden & Arts Center offers rotating art exhibits, festivals, classes and family activities throughout the year. Wander through the wooded walking paths and enjoy sculptures on loan from the Smithsonian Institution and the National Gallery of Art. Or, enjoy one of the studio art classes and create your very own masterpiece to take home.

Feeling adventurous? Charter a fishing boat and make the catch of the day. Or, make your own waves and hop on a jet ski, take a sailing lesson, visit the Chesapeake Beach Water

Park, paddle a kayak or rent a power boat at one of the local marinas. Ready to slow it down? Spend the afternoon on one of Calvert's incredible beaches and enjoy miles of gentle surf and sand. Stop at Calvert Cliffs State Park and hunt for fossils and shark's teeth at the water's edge. You might find an incredible, 23-million-year-old memento.

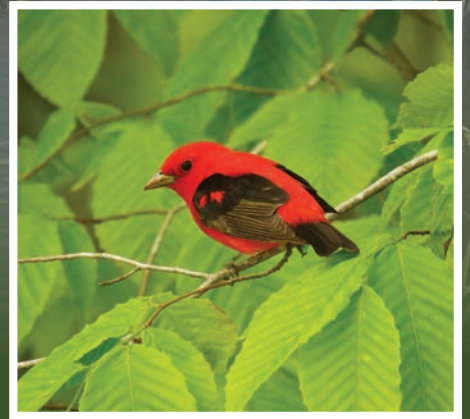
Want to stay on land? With serene hiking trails, beautiful beaches, majestic cliffs and miles of trails to explore, Calvert County offers diverse habitats to hundreds of bird species. Visit [www.ChooseCalvert.com/MDBG](http://www.ChooseCalvert.com/MDBG) for an interactive map of the Calvert County Birding Trail. Hiking enthusiasts will want to visit the American Chestnut Land Trust to enjoy 22 miles of serene public hiking trails. Guided canoe trips and hikes through pristine wetlands provide the perfect opportunity to reconnect with nature.

As your day winds down, grab a table at a waterfront restaurant and take in an unforgettable view and delicious meal. Afterward, explore local galleries, enjoy an ice cream, window shop or simply gaze at the wide open views of the Chesapeake Bay from the boardwalk benches.

It's not hard to see why Calvert County is loved by both visitors and locals alike. With waterside views, delicious food and year-round fun, there's always something new to see in the southern tip of the Old Line State. Dust off your sense of adventure and discover something out of the ordinary in Calvert County today. •



# Explore the Calvert County BIRDING TRAIL



## *Always in Season*

With serene hiking trails, beautiful beaches and majestic cliffs, Calvert County offers diverse habitats to hundreds of bird species.

Visit [www.ChooseCalvert.com/MDBG](http://www.ChooseCalvert.com/MDBG)  
for an interactive map of the Calvert County Birding Trail.



*Calvert County*  
MARYLAND





A scenic view of a river with a large tree on the left and two people in a red canoe on the right. The tree's branches are reflected in the water. The background is a dense forest.

# The Sounds of Nature

Nassawango Creek Preserve



**Spending time in nature has a restorative effect on our psyche. If you close your eyes, you can imagine the clear-headed calmness that you feel during a walk through the woods. The sounds of rustling leaves, a babbling stream, bird songs, and the chorus of insects will melt the stress away. There is a growing body of science dedicated to the study of nature soundscapes and how we interpret the sounds of nature, including a new study by the Maryland/DC chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC).**

For the past several years, Gabe Cahalan, TNC conservation steward, has been conducting an acoustic monitoring study on two TNC preserves in Maryland. Cahalan is comparing biodiversity in forests that we have kept open with controlled burns, to dense forests where fire has been suppressed, by measuring the “bio-acoustic index” of each forest type.

“In open forests, where we have been burning, we’re hearing a higher diversity of birds and other species than in the overgrown forests,” says Cahalan. “I think this study confirms that our fire management is working. It’s helping preserve some of the rare species that we aim to protect on our lands.”

The science is clear that healthy, well-managed forests are good for people and nature. The global pandemic caused by COVID-19 has resulted in new and different levels of stress for all of humanity. It has emphasized the need to protect and conserve nature at a faster rate than ever before. Nature is talking to us, and we must listen.

To hear some of the bird sounds that TNC captured in the acoustic study, visit Nassawango Creek Preserve on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, where you’ll get the chance to listen to whip-poor-wills, woodpeckers, and warblers. •



**“What I am interested in with birds...is what they do and why they do it.”**

- Sir David Attenborough



Visit  
**Nature.org/Nassawango**  
to plan your next birding adventure



Baltimore oriole © Laurie Painter/2019 TNC Photo Contest; prothonotary warbler © Steve S. Meyer; scarlet tanager © Kent Mason



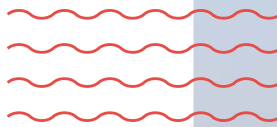


# Fall Migration in Maryland is Like No Other

By Dave Wilson

Fall migration in Maryland is a spectacle matched by few places in the United States.

Canada Geese



**Overnight, relatively quiet parks and natural areas are transformed into bustling, open aviaries, with songbirds dancing on every tree branch and shorebirds concentrating in tight, organized flocks on mud flats and beaches along the coastal bays and the Chesapeake Bay. Species not seen since the spring make their annual autumn appearance as they push south to warmer wintering grounds, some traveling as far as Tierra del Fuego at the very southern tip of the South American continent.**

There are several reasons for the Free State's high position on the birding destination wish list. The first is geography: birds often follow coastlines during migration. The Chesapeake Bay and barrier island system are right in the middle of the Atlantic Flyway, a major route for many of the Western Hemisphere's most sought-after species.

Birds also seem to prefer funnel-shaped peninsulas with a north-south orientation. Each autumn, migratory birds descend on Maryland's eastern flank before bottlenecking



Assateague Island

on Delmarva's southern tip, where they rest and forage before taking flight over the expansive mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. The numbers of individuals and species headed south are dazzling. Spend a weekend birding on the state's Lower Shore, and you might top 150 species on your bird tally.

Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge







**Black-throated Blue Warbler**



**Black-and-white Warbler**

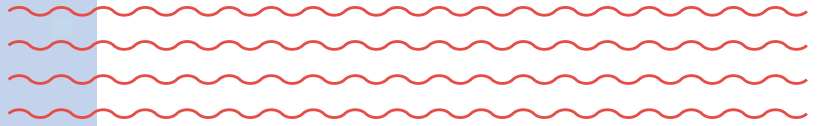
All over Maryland, songbirds, ospreys, pelicans, herons and egrets are checking out for warmer climes as ducks, shorebirds, and raptors head south to fill the void. All will take advantage of the state's national wildlife refuges, state and local parks, and wildlife management areas.

Winds and weather also deliver birds to almost any Maryland location. During fall migration, rapidly changing weather can produce migratory bird "fallouts," when thousands of birds leave the skies to congregate in a small area while waiting for better weather. Some fallouts can be small, such as a narrow, shrubby point jutting out into a bay, while others can cover city parks and backyards.

If strong winds blow from the south, many migrants will wait for days until favorable tail winds appear to help carry them over the Chesapeake Bay. Heavy storms and fog can cause birds to fly a little too far over the Atlantic, and these cautious migrants will quickly snap back toward the coast, where they can wait safely for the bad weather to pass.

Such a spectacle occurred at our home near Berlin, Maryland a few years ago in late September. A heavy rain storm followed by multiple days of strong southerly winds dropped thousands of songbirds on our nine-acre property. As dry conditions succeeded, hundreds

## Blue Grosbeak



Some species migrate thousands of miles, non-stop, from departure to arrival. Scientists are learning more about these epic migrations with the help of technology. Using tiny satellite transmitters, scientists with the Center for Conservation Biology at the College of William and Mary and The Nature Conservancy tracked a tall shorebird known as a Whimbrel that flew 3,200 miles, non-stop, in just under seven days. To accomplish this incredible migration, the Whimbrel sustained an average flight speed of 22 miles per hour for the duration of its journey.

Birds and the wild areas that support them add to the quality of life we enjoy here in Maryland, but birding is also big business. We hope you'll come to Maryland this fall to experience the best of bird migration on the East Coast. •

of individuals representing dozens of species would congregate around our sprinkler for a bath and a cool drink. Species included a variety of warblers—Black-and-white, Black-throated Green, and Black-throated Blue, in addition to American Redstarts. At one point a Summer Tanager and Blue Grosbeak preened next to each other on the same branch.

Fall migration actually starts in early summer for some shorebirds, but August, September and October are peak months for most songbirds and raptors. November and December are when the waterfowl and seabirds arrive to take advantage of the state's copious winter habitats for our iconic ducks, geese, and swans.

Typically, big, soaring birds, such as raptors and egrets, migrate during the day when they can make use of thermals and air currents that provide lift under their large wings to assist them on their journey south. Smaller songbirds, such as warblers and sparrows, tend to migrate at night. After a long night flight, they will spend the morning foraging on fruits, seeds and insects to get their energy up for the next leg of their trip. While they're feeding, you can get a good look at these birds, who seem much more concerned about breakfast than any threat posed by a quiet, patient birder.

## Osprey





— GUIDE TO —  
**BIRDING**  
≈≈≈ IN MARYLAND ≈≈≈



Published by Executive Media Global, LP  
With thanks to the Maryland Office of Tourism - OPEN for Birding  
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