

July/August 2023 ECOPort Newsletter

MDOT Maryland Port Administration sent this bulletin at 08/24/2023 02:26 PM EDT



*View of Masonville Cove
courtesy Living Classroom
Foundation*

July/August 2023

ENVIRONMENT

Rare Birdwatching Sightings at MPA Sites

Roseate Spoonbills ([Platalea ajaja](#)), typically found in Florida, Texas, and throughout South America, have brought joy to Maryland birdwatchers this summer. Occasional "irruptions", or mass movement outside of normal range, brought these amazing wetland birds for the first time to three [Maryland Port Administration](#) (MPA) [Dredged Material Management Program](#) (DMMP) sites: [Poplar Island](#), [Hart-Miller Island](#), and [Masonville Cove](#).



[Maryland Environmental Service](#) (MES) Senior Environmental Specialist Tim Carney observed the Poplar Island spoonbill fly in on June 28th. Since then, this rare bird has become a frequent sight, delighting birdwatchers. Two additional spoonbills were spotted at Masonville Cove on July 18th and at Hart-Miller Island on July 24th, further enhancing the excitement for nature enthusiasts. These rare sightings underscore the significance of conservation efforts in maintaining the welcoming nature of Maryland's diverse ecosystems.

Photo: Roseate Spoonbills have a unique feeding behavior, wading in shallow waters and slowly advancing while gracefully swinging their heads from side to side. With their wide, flat bills, they skillfully sift the mud and water to find their food. Photo credit: Kristina Motley/MES

Masonville Cove Migration Bird Banding

Do you know how *bird banding* works? As explained by the [Birds of Urban Baltimore](#) (BURB), a local non-profit organization dedicated to engaging the community in bird science and conservation, it is “a way for scientists to study both individual birds and populations of birds, over time.” The band does not obstruct the bird’s comfort or movement and it can remain attached for years. This enables scientists to gather information about the bird’s longevity, demographics, and other population dynamics.



Photo: In the inaugural season of migration bird banding at Masonville Cove between March 31st and June 9th, 571 birds of 53 species were banded, such as the Yellow-breasted Chat (Left) and the Indigo Bunting (Right). Photo credits: Ela Sita-Carpenter/USFWS (Yellow Chat) and Matias Orrego/MES (Indigo Bunting).

Every Wednesday, Thursday, and every other Saturday, starting on August 16th, BURB will perform banding at the Masonville Bird Banding Station. With the help of staff from MES and [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services](#) (USFWS), and local volunteers, birds are captured, and a small, uniquely numbered metal band is placed on the bird’s leg.





Photo: BURB's bander volunteer, Michael Hudson, showing the measuring of a Traill's Flycatcher to a child. Visitors (of all ages) can observe the procedure, ask questions, and interact with ecologists and volunteers. Photo credit: Ela Sita-Carpenter/USFWS

MPA's WildSTEM Internship Program: Fostering Passion, Opportunity, and Diversity in Conservation

Summer 2023 is off to a WILD start! MPA and its partners, Harbor City Link, and Lillie May Carroll Jackson Charter School hosted the Masonville Cove WildSTEM internship program; designed for students pursuing education in science, technology, engineering, and math, to explore the diverse field of environmental conservation careers.

WildSTEM fostered opportunities for students attending Historically Black Colleges & Universities, pursuing a variety of majors, to apply their skillsets to conservation projects. During the six-week program, interns were exposed to meaningful environmental conservation experiences, and gained practical work experience in a wide variety of conservation jobs. They were provided opportunities to network with high level staff at Masonville Cove partnering agencies, supporters like the Brown Advisory, Maryland Environmental Service, and even had access to invite-only events including an address by Vice President Kamala Harris. The program concluded with presentations and reflection on the bonding experience, value of the program, and knowledge gained through their participation in the WildSTEM!





Photos: Programs such as WildSTEM demonstrate the importance and value of exposure. Students were quoted as saying: "An open mind leads to open opportunities", stated Samuel Adekoya, a business major in the conservation internship. "This has been an amazing opportunity. I wish I knew about Masonville Cove before my internship. I will be a lifetime advocate of Masonville Cove" – Shayla Harris, Computer Science Major Coppin State University. Photo Credit: Masonville Cove WildSTEM Internship

COMMUNITY

MPA Hosts Three Spectacular Birding Tours During the Baltimore Birding Weekend



The [Patterson Park Audubon Center's](#) award-winning [Baltimore Birding Weekend](#) took place in May and offered a delightful itinerary of bird watching field trips in and around Baltimore. The event included a bus tour at Hart-Miller Island and a walking tour at Masonville Cove on May 12th, followed by a walking tour at Cox Creek on May 13th.

The Hart-Miller Island tour attracted 20 birdwatchers who spotted 83 bird species, including Trumpeter Swan, King Rail, Black-bellied Plover, and Bay-breasted Warbler. The Masonville Cove tour had 12 participants who observed 53 bird species, such as Common Tern and Bald Eagle. At Cox Creek, 18 participants enjoyed sightings of 93 bird species, including Tundra Swan, Little Blue Heron, Marsh Wren, and over a hundred Bobolinks gracefully flying overhead.

Photo (above): The tours showcased the rich diversity of birdlife at Masonville Cove, Hart-Miller Island and Cox Creek, providing bird enthusiasts with memorable experiences and valuable insights into the local avian world. Participants at the Hart-Miller Island and Cox Creek tours also got to look for birds in areas of the sites not usually open to the public. Photo credit: courtesy of the Patterson Park Audubon Center



Photo (left): The Patterson Park Audubon Center is among MPA's esteemed community partners, and the relationship has been further strengthened through the collaborative efforts for this event.

Photo credit: courtesy of the Patterson Park Audubon Center

Broken Glass Art Workshop & Sound Healing Session at Masonville Cove



On July 6th, [Baltimore Broken Glass](#), a South Baltimore youth-led business that recycles glass collected from the surrounding communities and turns it into beautiful glass art, hosted a workshop at [Masonville Cove Campus](#). Fifteen community members learned how the glass is collected, the process used to smooth it, and the positive impacts of repurposing the material.

After the broken glass workshop, the back deck of the Masonville Cove Environmental Education Center became the site for a [WOCO Hike & Sound Healing](#) (WOCO) session at sunset for 20 women of different races and nationalities. Led by South Baltimore resident Ralinda Wimbush, WOCO hosts monthly hikes and sacred sound meditation for women of color, creating a safe and supportive space for women to connect and rejuvenate.

Photo (above): Attendees had the opportunity to clean, wrap and mold broken glass into a beautiful art piece. This will be the first of many Broken Glass workshops at Masonville Cove Campus. Photo credit: MPA



Photo: Attendees were able to enjoy guided meditation with singing bowls and sounds of nature, all while taking in the beautiful scenery at Masonville Cove. Photo credit: Ralinda Wimbush/WOCO

4th Annual Hart-Miller Island Run on October 21st

Get ready for the 4th annual Hart-Miller Island Run! Returning on Saturday, October 21st, this exciting event provides a unique opportunity to experience the natural beauty of Hart-Miller Island through a 5.3-mile foot-race around the site.



Please use [this link](#) to secure your spot, but hurry, as the race is limited to 120 registrants and 25 guests (one guest per registrant until the guest limit is reached). Besides a race shirt and an experience like no other, the registration also includes boat transportation to and from Hart-Miller Island, making it a hassle-free event to attend. In partnership with MPA, [Maryland Department of Natural Resources](#) (DNR), MES, [Friends of Hart-Miller Island](#), and [Charm City Run](#), the Hart-Miller Island Run promises an unforgettable experience for participants.

Photo: Last year, following a pandemic hiatus since 2019, the 3rd Hart-Miller Island Race welcomed 109 participants who completed the course. Let's make this year's event even bigger and better! Photo credit: Ranger Robin Reed/DNR

Youth Birding Week with the Port of Baltimore Concluded Another Successful Year

Throughout this immersive outdoor adventure that lasted for a whole week, eleven young birders from the Baltimore area had the exclusive opportunity to deepen their knowledge about bird species and learn how MPA's habitat restoration projects contribute to local bird populations.

The children's journey included bird walks at Masonville Cove, exploring the beach and spotting the Trumpeter Swan family at Hart-Miller Island, banding Osprey nestlings, and sighting a Roseate Spoonbill at Poplar Island. The participants also learned to seine for fish at Cox Creek and completed a captivating week-long art project to showcase their newfound expertise. Special gratitude is extended to the [Chesapeake Bay Trust](#) and the [Maryland Ornithological Society](#) for their financial support, which made this special experience possible for the budding avian enthusiasts.



Photo: The lucky group had the opportunity to spend an entire summer week getting up close with some of Maryland's most unique birds and the experts who know them best.

Photo credit: Emily Sperling/MES

Community Members Tour Cox Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility and Connect with Dredged Material Management Program Team

Transparency, inclusivity, and responsiveness were the themes at the [Cox Creek Citizens Oversight Committee \(COC\)](#)'s Open House on July 12th. The Maryland Port Administration (MPA) offered van tours of the [Cox Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility](#), and set up interactive stations with information about the [Dredged Material Management Program \(DMMP\)](#). The meeting also provided a hybrid opportunity for community members to hear a short presentation about the DMMP, regulatory guidelines, and program goals.

The format of the open house was developed to provide community members an opportunity to ask questions and directly engage with MPA team members. MPA team members listened to attendees, gathered their feedback, and discussed innovations in dredged material management, including the approaches underway at the Cox Creek facility.

"Thanks goes out to all the presenters, attendees, and our local politicians. The information provided was very informative, and those who were involved walked away knowing that the Dredging Operations, whether for current or future projects, would always be conveyed to the general public prior to implementation," said Cox Creek COC member Gary Gakenheimer about the Open House.

There will be more in-person and virtual opportunities for community members to learn about the DMMP and the MPA's effort to have a rolling 20-year plan to sustainably manage sediment removed from the Baltimore Harbor shipping channel. The Fourth Annual Cox Creek Open House will be held October 21st. This event and others will be updated on the calendar at maryland-dmmp.com.



Photo: MPA team members created educational stations where attendees could learn about the DMMP

and the innovative reuse research program by displaying sample products made using dredged material.



Photo: The feedback received from the open house will guide DMMP planning and consideration of future projects such as Confine Aquatic Disposal (CAD).

OUTREACH

2023 Cox Creek Open House is Coming Up!



You are cordially invited to attend the 2023 Open House at the [Maryland Port Administration's Cox Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility](#) (DMCF) on Saturday, October 21st. This free family-friendly event is open to the public and is an excellent opportunity for residents to learn about the [Port of Baltimore](#) (POB), its DMMP innovations, gain further insight into the Cox Creek DMCF expansion, see the construction progress via van tours, and meet with the POB DMMP staff and partners.

Also, you and your family will be able to enjoy fun and interactive activities, like self-guided birding, Touch-A-Truck – including bulldozers, fire truck, and dump truck - a chance to meet live animals and play educational games!

Photo (Left): At the 2022 Cox Creek Open House, children had the opportunity to engage in arts and crafts projects. Photo credit: Katrina Jones/MPA



Photo: Following the success of last year's event, the 2023 Cox Creek Open House will also have fire trucks! Photo credit: Katrina Jones/MPA

UPCOMING EVENTS

These committee meetings are open to the public. Some meetings may be virtual or in-person. Please visit maryland-dmmp.com for details and access information for each meeting.

DMMP Annual Field Trip - August 24th

Poplar Island - This trip is now full.

For more information, visit maryland-dmmp.com

For questions, please contact ecoport@marylandports.com.

Masonville Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting - September 12th at 5:30PM

Masonville Cove Environmental Center

1000 Frankfurst Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21226

For more information, visit maryland-dmmp.com

For questions, please contact ecoport@marylandports.com.

DMMP Management Committee Meeting - September 27th at 10:00AM

Virtual

For more information, visit maryland-dmmp.com

For questions, please contact ecoport@marylandports.com.

Cox Creek Citizens Oversight Committee - October 11th at 5:30PM

Cox Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility

1000 Kembo Road, Curtis Bay, MD 21226

For more information, visit maryland-dmmp.com

For questions, please contact ecoport@marylandports.com.

Innovative Reuse Committee Meeting - October 17th at 5:30PM

TBD

For more information, visit maryland-dmmp.com

For questions, please contact ecoport@marylandports.com.

Cox Creek Open House - October 21st at 10:00AM

Cox Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility

1000 Kembo Rd., Baltimore, MD 21226

For more information, visit maryland-dmmp.com

For questions, please contact ecoport@marylandports.com.

Hart-Miller Citizen's Oversight Committee Meeting - October 24th at 6:30PM

TBD

For more information, visit maryland-dmmp.com

For questions, please contact ecoport@marylandports.com.

[MPA Website](#)

[Port of Baltimore Magazine](#)

[Environment Website](#)



ECO Port Newsletter is the Maryland Port Administration's bi-monthly update of projects and programs that help the agency contribute to a thriving economy, environmental stewardship, and community partnerships. As always, we thank the many private sector businesses, government leaders, communities, and individual citizens who have helped make these achievements a reality.



 SHARE

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

Brian Miller, Interim Acting Executive Director
Maryland Port Administration
The World Trade Center
401 East Pratt Street, Baltimore MD 21202
1-800-638-7519 / www.marylandports.com

[ADA Compliance](#) | [Privacy Notice](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [FAQ](#) | [POB eBroadcasting Messages](#)

Stay Connected with MDOT Maryland Port Administration:



SUBSCRIBER SERVICES:
[Manage Subscriptions](#) | [Unsubscribe All](#) | [Help](#)



Maryland now features 511 traveler information! Call 511 or visit www.md511.org

Subscribe to updates from MDOT Maryland Port Administration

Email Address e.g. name@example.com

Share Bulletin



Powered by



[Privacy Policy](#) | [Cookie Statement](#) | [Help](#)