

Be Charmed by B'more

THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE HEADS TO "CHARM CITY,"
NEAR MARYLAND'S CHESAPEAKE BAY

By Mariah Beyers

The Wildlife Society heads to Baltimore this fall for its 31st Annual Conference. For the first time in Maryland, nearly 2,000 wild-lifers will converge for a week of presentations, meetings and networking events.

I am so excited for my home state to host this year's conference. My love for nature and wildlife began when I was growing up among the rural landscapes of Maryland's Eastern Shore, exploring my local woods and rivers with my brother and our Labrador retrievers. After developing a childhood love of turtles in particular, it was very fitting that I went on to attend the University of Maryland, home of the Terrapins. I first learned about The Wildlife Society during my sophomore year, and soon after, co-founded a student chapter.

Now, nearing my 10th year working for TWS, I am preparing for another conference, this time in my

own backyard. No matter how many times I've driven into Baltimore, I still enjoy watching as the city skyline comes into view. I may be a country girl at heart, but B'more—a nickname often used by the locals—always draws me in. I look forward to seeing many professionals and students experience the city during our conference.

Join us Oct. 19-23, 2024, in Baltimore, Maryland. Keep an eye on twsconference.org for event schedule details and the opening of registration. Remember to register by July 31 to take advantage of our early-bird discount.

Exploring downtown

Downtown Baltimore offers something for everyone. The Inner Harbor, just a short walk from this year's venue (the Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor), is a sightseeing hub, where you'll find the Maryland Science Center and the National Aquarium—one of my favorites. I never tire of meandering through the underwater exhibits.

While exploring the city, you'll surely spot a few Baltimore orioles (*Icterus galbula*) and ravens (*Corvus corax*), but you won't necessarily need your binoculars. As you enter the city from the



◀ Baltimore's Inner Harbor will serve as the backdrop for TWS' 2024 Annual Conference.

Credit: Matthew Binebrink



▲ This year's logo, designed by Claire Huang, showcases Maryland's Chesapeake Bay and wildlife, featuring a great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*), river otter (*Lontra canadensis*), diamondback terrapin (*Malaclemys terrapin*) and blue crab (*Callinectes sapidus*).

south, you'll see Camden Yards and M&T Bank Stadium, home of the Baltimore Orioles and Ravens, respectively. The Orioles baseball team is named after Maryland's state bird, while the Ravens football team is named after Edgar Allan Poe's famous poem, "The Raven." The Ravens' mascot is appropriately named "Poe," and the acclaimed American poet's grave is nearby at Westminster Hall and Burying Ground.

For some actual birding, head to Patterson Park, a historic 133-acre urban green space. This park also serves as a migratory bird stopover, and the local Audubon organization has documented over 200 bird species in the park.

Downtown is also home to many performance venues, such as The Hippodrome Theatre. I've always enjoyed live theater, which I attribute to my first visit to this very spot, when my mom took me to see *Beauty and the Beast* as a child. The local culture doesn't end at the theaters, though. Baltimore has numerous museums and concert venues. Plus, if you're a bookworm like me, there are two well-known public

libraries—the Enoch Pratt Free Library and the George Peabody Library, which is considered one of the most beautiful libraries in the world. The city is rich in history, too. Francis Scott Key was inspired to write a poem, which later became the country's national anthem, the *Star-Spangled Banner*, while watching the attack on Fort McHenry in Baltimore during the War of 1812.

And don't forget about the food scene. There's no shortage of seafood restaurants, given the proximity to the Chesapeake Bay and the ocean, and there are a variety of other dining options, as well. (A Maryland stereotype that I proudly embrace is our love of crab cakes—my dad's recipe is unmatched!)

America in miniature

Outside of your time at the conference, don't miss the unique opportunities our state has to offer. Maryland is nicknamed, "America in Miniature," because you'll find almost every type of terrain here, from beaches and marshes, to farmland and mountains. With the Chesapeake Bay



Credit: Mykola Swarnyk

▲ The Baltimore oriole is Maryland's state bird and the mascot of the Baltimore Orioles baseball team.

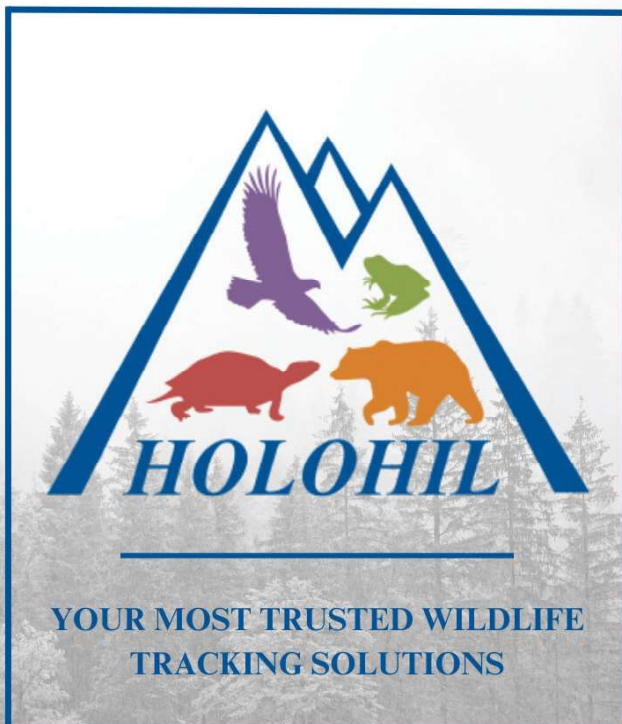
at its center—the largest estuary in the United States—there are numerous coastal wildlife viewing opportunities in and around Baltimore, several species of which are showcased in [this year's logo](#). Outdoor recreation opportunities abound, too. The state boasts numerous parks and two National Wildlife Refuges, including

the nearby Patuxent Research Refuge, the only National Wildlife Refuge in the country established to support wildlife research, and Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. I've had the pleasure of interning at both.

I've always loved the diversity of activities and attractions that Maryland provides, especially when it comes to nature and being on or near the water. There's always a trail to be hiked, a museum to be explored, a body of water to visit, or a restaurant to try, and you'll find all of these in Baltimore. We hope you'll join us in Charm City this fall to experience these opportunities firsthand. I can't wait to welcome you to my home state. ■



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