

HOWARD

HOWARD COUNTY CHAPTER

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WE SUPPORT --

The Open Space Committee of the Oakland Mills Village Board is concerned about preserving the natural environment of Columbia and are doing something about it. The Howard County Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society supports the Committee's concept plan and recommendations for open space management and several of our members have worked closely with the committee in an advisory capacity. Agencies which have been sources of information for the committee's recommendations include the Urban Wildlife Research Center, the Department of Natural Resources, the United States Department of Agriculture, the National Wildlife Federation and the United States Fish and Wildlife Services. It is important to recognize that the committee has sought the assistance of recognized experts so that the plan will be one that can be implemented with optimal results.

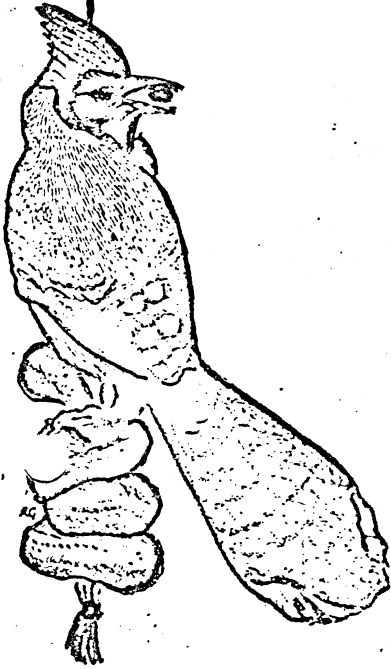
The goals of the Committee are to provide wildlife habitat promoting use for education, enrich aesthetic experience, and provide for sports and active recreation.

The town meeting where residents can hear the plan, ask questions, and offer suggestions will be held January 9, at 8 p.m. at Wilde Lake High School in the auditorium. This date does conflict with our regularly scheduled program night so we are sending Dr. Erwin Klaas to represent the chapter and to voice its support for the committee's goals.

We do recommend our members and friends of the society follow the committee's activities through attending its public meetings, following the newspaper articles, and we will continue to report on the progress and important activities in this newsletter.

WHOOPER REPORT

Six endangered whooping cranes have arrived on the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge along the gulf coast of Texas after completing their 2,600-mile fall migration from Canada's northwest territories. These first arrivals are expected to be followed over the next several weeks by the rest of the world's population of wild whoopers which nest in Canada. Last fall, 49 whoopers--47 adults and 2 young--migrated to Aransas.



P R O G R A M

FEBRUARY 13, THURSDAY at 7:45 p.m.: Dr. William J. L. Sladen of Johns Hopkins University will be the speaker. Dr. Sladen heads a team of ecologists conducting a long-term study of the whistling swan. The study has been conducted in collaboration with biologists from Federal, State and Provincial Agencies in the U.S.A. and Canada, and with the help of private individuals and Foundations. Interest in such research began back in 1962 when a Viscount airliner with all passengers aboard was lost after striking a flock of migrating swans over Maryland. The purpose of the study has been to learn: how to minimize swan-aircraft hazards; what impact human environmental change has on swan behavior; what effect the oil industry will have on their breeding grounds; and why swans are now often seen feeding in fields instead of shallow water.

F I E L D T R I P S

JANUARY 18, SATURDAY: Kent Island birding touching on several good areas. This will involve moderate amount of walking (dress warmly). Expect to see a good variety of water and land birds. Lunch and a thermos of coffee if you wish to spend the day. Leader: Larry Hood (730-9251). Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Swansfield Elementary School parking lot for car pooling.

FEBRUARY 15-17, WEEKEND: The annual 3-day weekend trip this year will be a visit to the Outer Banks of North Carolina. This is one of the richest birding areas in the country. Larry Hood will be the leader; call him very soon so plans can be made for car pooling etc. Telephone: 730-9251.

T R I P R E P O R T

The local birding trip for December was led by Erv Klaas. Eight birders hiked along the Little Patuxent with a side trip to Lake Kittamaqundi. The barred owl birders always hope to see was seen and other pleasant surprises were hooded mergansers, canvasbacks and gadwalls on the Lake.

L O C A L S I G H T I N G S

A beautiful red fox was observed one morning recently at close range in the Lake Elkhorn area. The hungry animal was so intent on finding a suitable lunch that he did not notice the intruder for some time until, in fact, a sudden movement caught his attention and the show was quickly ended with the star disappearing into the woods. A scene like that convinces one that the wildlife habitats in our area must be preserved and to realize the importance of supporting the work of the Open Space Committee of the Oakland Mills Village Board.

Lake Kittamaqundi is the lake to scout frequently this year. Sunday, Jan. 5, there were 30 hooded mergansers (more females than males), 5 coot, several canvasbacks, gadwalls, and the always present mallards. Buffleheads have also been seen there. Wilde Lake has been visited by ring-billed gulls in numbers and usually, a visitor can find a canvasback or two.

If you have wildlife sightings to share with our readers, please call 730-1527 after 6 p.m.