

# HOWARD

MARYLAND  
ORNITHOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY

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## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

On March 15, five individuals braved the rain and cold in the early morning hours to accompany Erv Klaas on a Columbia Open Space birding trip. The weather wasn't that bad all the time and scouting the areas turned up 34 species. It was interesting that two albinistic birds, one junco and one white-throated sparrow were seen. And then there was a small white gull seen flying over Lake Elkhorn that was never specifically identified but a Ross' was definitely ruled out!



The 17 birders on the Blackwater Wildlife Refuge trip on Saturday, March 22 enjoyed several special surprises. On the way down a horned grebe was seen in almost full breeding plumage (not often seen in this area), also there were whistling swans, Canada geese, Old Squaw, yellowlegs, lots of scaup, and canvasback. The bald eagle was on the nest near the refuge and flew from the nest while the group watched. Ducks were plentiful. There were blue-wing and green-wing teal, shovelers, mallards, gadwalls and coot. However, the big treat of the afternoon were the numerous and exciting close views of four immature bald eagles. An adult was also seen but at a distance.

There were 59 species in all and a good day for everyone. On the way home, one car stopped at Piney Creek and saw a male and female white-tail deer casually crossing the road.

Blackwater is our most accessible wildlife refuge and well worth the trip. Its a good family outing and of course at this time, one should see the eagle's nest on Egypt Road. Do be careful and do not unnecessarily disturb the birds. The refuge management advises you stay in the car and there is no need to get out as the nest is very visible from the road.

### HELP

Our slide shows you have all heard about and hopefully seen have been a popular and satisfying project. They have also added some money to our treasury. In fact Bob Herndon is working on new programs. But we do have a problem. That is that we do not have our own projector and are getting to the point we can no longer borrow since we need one so frequently. Most of the time we use one belonging to Bob Herndon but he has to use it often too. So we now have one machine that can not handle all this activity. We need the help of our members and friends to help us. Does anyone know where we can get a projector--perhaps someone has one no longer being used or does anyone know of where one can be purchased with a healthy discount! Call Bob Herndon (730-0942).

## F I E L D   T R I P S

### HOWARD COUNTY

SUNDAY, APRIL 20 -- Woodbine -- a popular area last spring for warblers and again this year there will be a banding demonstration by Larry Hood. This will be a half-day trip but bring lunch if you would like and stay longer. Its a beautiful area for a picnic and lots of good birding all afternoon. Meet at 8 a.m. at Swansfield Elementary School parking lot. (Note: This trip date was changed since the last newsletter).

THURSDAY, APRIL 17 -- Woodcock time again! Al Geis who is our expert in finding woodcock will lead again this year. Meet at 7 p.m. at Swansfield Elementary School parking lot. This evening trip will last about 3 hours.

SUNDAY, APRIL 27 -- Larry Hood will lead a trip to Little Creek-Indian River Inlet area, and maybe we will also take in Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge. This is all in Delaware so we will have to get an early start for an all day outing. Bring lunch and expect to be home around 6. Expect to see a variety of shore birds. Meet at Swansfield Elementary School parking lot at 7 a.m.

### PATUXENT BIRD CLUB

SATURDAY, APRIL 19 -- Annual Spring wild flower trip. Leaders will be Joyce Longcore and Jo Solem. Meet at 9th and Montgomery in Laurel at 8 a.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 26 -- A night trip for woodcock and screech owl. Jay Sheppard will lead you to both. Meet at 6:45 p.m. at 9th and Montgomery in Laurel for car pooling. This trip will be canceled if its raining.

### P R O G R A M

THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 7:45 p.m. -- The legendary whooping crane will be the subject this evening. It will be a slide show prepared by the Fish and Wildlife Service. The program will follow the cranes from their nesting grounds in northwest Canada on Wood Buffalo National Park to their winter home on the Arnsas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas.

### A N E W   Y E A R

April is the month for changing of the guard in Maryland Ornithological Chapters. For Howard Co. the new Board members are:

President - Marty Chestem (730-1527); Vice-President and Field Chairman - Tom Moyer (730-0138); Secretary - Lucille Peters (465-6293); Treasurer - Ben Dawson (730-8549); Newsletter - Nan Rhinelander (286-2427) and Jo Solem (725-5037); Community Relations - Anita Conron (988-9390); Education and Planning - Bob Herndon (730-0942); Membership - Bud Perrett (730-7546); Publicity - Frances Dawson (730-8549); MPVA Representative - David Brown (730-6941); Bookstore - Sydney Brown (730-6941).

The Board meets once a month to plan chapter activities. It wants to make decisions that will be responsive to the needs of the membership. The phone numbers are stated above so that members can call individuals and express ideas and suggestions. Please call.

## ABOUT BIRD BANDING

Did you know that one of the first birdbanding experiments occurred in Germany in 1740? Strings were tied around the legs of young swallows in an attempt to learn something of their migration habits. Banding first came to the United States in 1803 when John James Audubon marked a brood of young eastern phoebes with silver threads and found that two of them returned to the same locality a year later.

Individual experiments were combined and organized as a federal project in 1920, and since that time several million birds have been marked with numbered aluminum leg bands. The massive files of data on all of these birds are maintained by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Migratory Bird Management at the Bird Banding Laboratory in Laurel, Md.

Birdbanding is done in a number of ways. Some birds may receive their lifetime bracelets before leaving the nest. There are many types of devices for catching adult birds for banding, including one which fires a large net over feeding flocks by the use of an explosive charge. The mallards on Wilde Lake were captured for banding by this method. Drop nets, which are set up on posts over a baited area and then dropped on the feeding birds are also used. For quail and dove banding projects, funnel traps often prove most effective. The funnel traps are wire, walk-in traps which are baited to lure the birds inside.

The most popular device for taking songbirds is a fine nylon net known as a mist net. These nets can be 20 to 30 feet long and several feet high. When stretched between poles across bird flyways or near feeding and watering areas, they entangle and trap any bird that happens to fly into the nearly invisible web.

Once the bird is removed from the net, it is weighed and measured, and notes are taken on its age, breeding condition and plumage. A proper-sized band is attached, the number is recorded and the bird released to continue on its way. All of the information gathered serves to increase our knowledge of the life and habits of birds. The accumulated measurements help to define different races of the same species, their growth rate, various plumage changes with age and the season of the year and perhaps even their ultimate age.

Biologists use the information to determine mortality rates, distribution, home range, local movements, migration patterns and population trends of the birds. The information proves invaluable for management studies on the game and non-game birds.

One of the most exciting uses of birdbanding is the study of migration. From banding we learned the Arctic Tern makes the longest known migration flight of any living species. This champion of migrators flies more than 10,000 miles from the Arctic where it nests to the Antarctic where it winters.

Anyone who is at least 18 years old and knows how to identify all the common birds in their different seasonal plumages may apply for a banding permit. The applicant must furnish the names of three well-known bird banders, bird students, or naturalists who can vouch for his fitness as a bird bander. Only the well qualified are issued permits through the Fish and Wildlife Service.