

HOWARD

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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VARIED THRUSH IN HOWARD COUNTY

Howard County birds rarely make ornithological news but December brought a Varied Thrush to a feeder in Savage. This West Coast bird is a member of the thrush family, looks much like a robin to whom it is closely related and is an unusual bird to have appear in your yard. To those who feed birds regularly it is especially exciting because one never knows when and where the next rarity will turn up. Birders from all over the area flocked to see this traveler who was so far afield and found it worth the wait. The thrush usually came to feed several times a day--early in the morning and late afternoon being the most predictable times. The picture in your guide does not do the bird justice for the orange of the throat and breast appeared bright and fresh--much like the newly arrived robins in the spring. The buffy-orange eye stripe and band across the breast as well as wing-bars further served to distinguish it from an American Robin. The Varied Thrush ordinarily inhabits moist coniferous forests along the coast of the Pacific Northwest. This was the third state record for this species. If you would like to be notified when rarities of this type appear call Jo Salem 725-5037.

TRIADELPHIA CHRISTMAS COUNT RESULTS

The thirtieth consecutive Triadelphia Christmas Bird Count was held on Dec. 24th in lovely weather for a winter day. This year 93 species were counted in the circle which is the second highest total since its founding--the record high of 97 species having been set two years ago. Among the birds tallied were 1 Great Blue Heron, a new high for Canada Geese of 2692, a lone Redhead, 2 Canvasbacks, a new high of 55 scaup, 9 Hooded and 60 Common Mergansers. On a sunny days the hawks and vultures were visible: 90 Turkey Vultures, 7 Sharp-shins, 2 Cooper's, 15 Red-tailed Hawks, 50 Red-shoulders, 1 Marsh Hawk and 40 Kestrels along with 1 Rough-legged Hawk which was only the second record in 30 years. Two woodcock and 4 snipe were helpful along with an assortment of owls: 3 Barn Owls was a new high, 6 Screech Owls, 4 Great Horned Owls and a new high of 12 Barreds. Woodpeckers were well represented: flicker 83, Pileated 16 (new high), Red-bellied 146 (3rd highest), Red-headed 2, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 7, Hairy 46 (2nd highest). This year 6 Horned Larks were sighted along with 1 lone Black-capped Chickadee. White-breasted Nuthatches reflected their abundance this winter in the new high of 155 while 29 Red-breasts were found which was the 3rd highest. Winter Wrens came in at 15 with 34 Brown Creepers and 103 Carolina Wrens. A new high of 5 Gray Catbirds were spotted along with 21 Hermit Thrushes, 49 Eastern Bluebirds, a rather low 56 Golden-crowned Kinglets, 13 Cedar Waxwings and 1 Loggerhead Shrike. No large concentration of grackles was located so 73 was the total, but 1940 Brown-headed Cowbirds were logged as well as 775 Cardinals, 58 Evening Grosbeaks, 304 Purple Finches (2nd highest), a new high of 278 House Finches, new high of 82 Pine Siskins and 285 American Goldfinches. The sparrow tribe included 16 towhees, 7 Savannahs, 1839 Juncos, 78 Tree Sparrows, 28 White-crowns, 2383 White-throats, 6 Fox Sparrows, 29 Swamps and 148 Songs. Two Red Crossbills were sighted along with 1 Yellowthroat making its third appearance on a count. New birds to the count this year were a Lincoln's Sparrow and a Western Tanager which Woody Martin spotted in an old orchard in Montgomery County!!

JOHN and WILLIAM BARTRAM

John Bartram was born in 1699 and as a young adult settled on a farm along the Schuylkill River near Philadelphia. Although lacking much formal education he had had an intense interest in plants from childhood and by 1730 was collecting plants for his own botanical garden (which would be the first in the English colonies), had studied some Latin and began getting the attention of learned men in Philadelphia who encouraged him. An English merchant, Peter Collinson, engaged Bartram to collect plant specimens for him—a business relationship which matured into friendship and lasting until the former's death in 1768.

As John Bartram approached forty it was obvious that his interests were increasingly in the study of natural history. Every fall found him off alone collecting, primarily plants, but also animals, reptiles and insects. His trips were often lengthy and dangerous for a lone individual for he visited the Virginia piedmont and mountains, the Mohawk region of New York as well as the Catskills and the Lake Ontario region. Bartram's fourth son, Billy, displayed not only an interest in botany but an aptitude for drawing so John began taking him along on the autumn trips. His garden steadily expanded in size, variety and fame and he found himself the center of a group of colonial naturalists that ranged geographically from Dr. Alexander Garden of Charleston, S.C. to Dr. Cadwalader Golden in N.Y. state.

Although primarily a botanist, John read widely and formulated theories on several fronts. He believed (correctly) that marble was simply another form of limestone, felt that submerged mountains lay beneath the oceans, thought that large areas of America's east coast had once been at the bottom of the sea, and was an early enthusiast of systematically surveying and mapping the whole country. He was anxious to visit the Ohio and Mississippi country but the French and Indian War made it too hazardous so, at the encouragement of Dr. Garden and stimulated by Oatesby's paintings, he set out in 1761 for South Carolina. Unfortunately, the journals for these expeditions have been lost.

With exploration to the west cut off he became more obsessed with the idea of exploring Florida, Alabama and the southern banks of the Mississippi River and queried his mentor as to the feasibility of some of his wealthy friends underwriting such a trip. Collinson successfully petitioned the crown to sponsor an expedition. Thus in 1765 John Bartram was appointed King's Botanist with a stipend of 50 pounds a year but, more important, a commission to explore Georgia and Florida. Though now 65 years of age he was anxious to begin. John picked up Billy where he was operating a failing country store near Cape Fear, N.C., and father and son continued south on what was to be their last collecting trip together.

The two Bartrams explored the Carolinas and then went on to Georgia. It was there along the Altamaha River that they discovered a tree with a lovely white flower which they named *Franklinia* in honor of their friend. They sent some seeds home for propagation which was fortunate because the tree was not found in the wild after the early 1800's. They continued on to Florida investigating an area new to the study of natural history. They set out to find the head of the St. John's River which they did not succeed in doing, going only about as far as present-day Orlando, but the expedition could still be counted a success. Out of this journey would come the diary description entitled An Account of East Florida with a journal kept by John Bartram of Philadelphia.

Billy stayed on in Florida trying to farm along the St. John's while John returned to his Schuylkill home where he was to live for another ten years—years of comparative ease and recognition. The American Revolution cast a cloud across his world for war meant that he was out of touch with his botanical friends in England, he felt a divided loyalty, and he constantly worried that the armies moving across the country would ravage his beloved garden. He died in September 1777, just days before British troops would occupy Philadelphia (his garden was not harmed), glad that he had seen the return of William from extensive journeys in the South. This was the man whom Linnaeus called "The greatest natural botanist in the world."

Meanwhile, the artistic, dreamy Billy, through poor choice of land and mismanagement, had had no success as a farmer in Florida. His father had tried to force him into several types of business convinced that his talent for drawing and botany would not provide him a satisfactory living. John had always been a successful farmer caring for his family and using his botanical interests as an avocation, though at times they took a large share of his time. William, on the other hand, wanted to involve himself with nature full time. He returned to Philadelphia in 1767 and under pressure from his father took a turn at farming and then some business enterprise again. Peter Collinson, in London, was doing his best to secure a patron for Billy so that he could pursue his talents and interest in natural history. He succeeded in interesting Dr. Fothergill, a well-known physician, in some of William's drawings who desired drawings of all of the American shells and turtles. Billy continued to try to draw as well as work which meant he made little headway with the pictures. It took until 1772 to finish the drawings and get them to Dr. Fothergill. William then proposed to his patron that he should go to Florida to draw the plants there. In part this may have arisen from the deaths of his wife and son but it was also a desire to return to an area that had an amazing hold upon him. The doctor agreed so William set sail for Charleston in March of 1773 on the journey that would bring him world-wide fame. The journals which he kept describe the exciting variety of birds he observed as well as the plants. He and a young man John McIntosh spent the growing season of 1773 in the Georgia piedmont. By the spring of 1774 he was ready to continue to Florida, this time alone. He set out up the St. John's River and lived through troubles with bears, alligators and a hurricane. His imagination and writing reflect his romantic nature so unlike his phlegmatic father. His description of the Salt Springs of Lake George is thought to have been the inspiration for Coleridge's poem, "Kubla Khan." He returned in the fall to Charleston and in the spring of 1775 with rumblings of war he turned westward eventually getting into the Great Smoky Mountains.

In late June of 1775 William set out for Augusta with a trading expedition which was leaving for Mobile. The next few months took him to Florida and back to Mobile. He then set sail for the Mississippi River via Lake Pontchartrain and finally in late October 1775 stood on a high bluff overlooking the river. This was the culmination of a lifelong (and unrealized) dream of John Bartram's which had also stirred his son's imagination. This was to be as far westward as he would travel. By late November he was back in Mobile, then on to Augusta and Savannah. His activities during the following year are only sketchily recorded and it would be January 1777 before he returned to Pennsylvania. True to his Quaker principles he took no side and made no mention of the war then going on. The elder Bartram died in the autumn of the year William returned.

Much of the remainder of William's life was spent in caring for his father's famous garden as well as revising and editing his own diaries (these included a listing of the birds of eastern North America--some 215 species, almost twice the number included in Catesby's Natural History). He was the pioneer of "living" ornithology and in his travels had observed a good deal about the migration of a number of species. His Travels Through North & South Carolina, Georgia, East & West Florida included a report on the Indian tribes with which he had had contact in a spirit of tolerance reminiscent of John Lawson. The first edition of his Travels was published in 1791 in America with a London edition in 1792 with nine or ten European editions in the following decade. Its reception in America was disappointing, but it had a decided impact in Britain, France and Germany where the romantic movement created a receptive public. William seemed to be thoroughly happy and refused to travel any more from the acres beside the Schuylkill. Neither the offer of the chair of botany at the University of Pennsylvania nor the invitation from President Jefferson to accompany the Lewis & Clark Expedition as official naturalist could lure him away. He was not too infirm to illustrate a manual of botany nor to entertain a steady stream of distinguished visitors from Washington, Jefferson and Madison to André and Francis Michaux, Alexander Wilson and Charles W. Peale. William died at the age of 85 in 1823.

NEXT ISSUE: Alexander Wilson

JANE GOLDEN - Colonial America's First Woman Botanist - By Siloen Glogg

Jane Golden was the daughter of Dr. Cadwallader Golden, the last Lt. Governor of the New York colony from 1761 until his death in 1776. He was one of the best-informed persons in the American Colonies and wrote extensively on mathematics, astronomy, botany, medicine, history and theology. With the assistance of his daughter Jane, Dr. Golden compiled the first local flora manuscript describing the plants on their 3,000 acres in Orange County, New York. The manuscript was published in Sweden. Carl Linnaeus honored him by naming a genus of plants *Caldonia*.

Jane early showed an aptitude for botany. Her father expanded her knowledge and taught her the new Linnæan system of classifying plants. She was reputed to be the first American woman to master this system. Jane had the advantage of corresponding with and meeting many well-known naturalists of the era including John and William Bartram, Dr. Garden, Peter Kalm, Benjamin Franklin and Carl Linnaeus. She kept records, drawings and descriptions of her botanical findings. Her manuscript contains 340 drawings. The manuscript posthumously reached the hands of a Hessian captain during the Revolutionary War. It was passed through several persons until at the death of Sir Joseph Banks, the last owner, it, along with his extensive scientific possessions, was sent to the British Museum in London where it remains today.

"MARYLAND'S BICENTENNIAL TREES" AVAILABLE

For those readers who might have a special interest in trees you can write for a booklet published by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources containing a list of these trees in each county which were living in 1776 and therefore serve as a living link to the past. The location and owner of each tree is listed along with the species name and age as well as could be determined. There is no charge for this item. Write to the following address requesting a copy of "Maryland's Bicentennial Trees": Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Forest Service, Tawes State Office Building, Annapolis, Md. 21401

ANNUAL WORKSHOP COMING - SATURDAY APRIL 8

Reserve Saturday afternoon, April 8th on your fresh new calendar. That is the date for the annual Birding Workshop sponsored by the Howard and Patuxent Chapters of MQS. It will be held at the Glenelg Country School during the afternoon hours and will once again be held in conjunction with a nature art and craft show and sale. More information will be forthcoming at a later time but, for now, plan to spend a part of that day attending workshop sessions and appreciating some of the fine work done by local artists and craftsmen. If you have a nature-related art or craft and would like to participate in the show contact Siloen Glogg 730-4362 to reserve a table. No charge is made for the table but a 10% donation of sales is asked which is given to the MQS Sanctuary Fund. Donations of items are welcome in our bookstore which will be set up. The workshop and show are both open to the public free of charge so tell your friends and neighbors.

C A L E N D A R

Programs - - -

January 12, Thursday - Dr. Lowell Adams - "Federal Aid to States to Encourage Wildlife Protection." Swansfield Elementary School 7:45 P.M. - PLEASE NOTE - During very cold weather Swansfield, as a gas-heated school, may be closed for evening activities. Howard County newspapers and area radio stations will publish this information. If the school is closed the meeting is canceled.

February 9, Thursday - Annual Member's Program Night - 6:30 P.M. Any member or guest is invited to bring a dozen of his choice nature slides (they don't have to be taken within the last year) to share with the group. This meeting is in the form of a potluck meal which will be held at Fred & Nan Rhinelanders. Check the membership list which you should receive shortly. If your name is listed between names: Go & bring a dessert; Glanz-Munro a salad; Nahrgang-Zucker a main dish. Families and guests are especially welcome. If you find it inconvenient to cook give Jo Selzer (725-5037) a call and we'll make an adjustment. Reservations are not necessary the appreciated (give Jo a call). We normally finish around 9:00 P.M. The Rhinelanders are located near the center of the county. Take Homewood Road off Rt. 108 as you go west. Continue thru the junction with Sheppard's Lane where the road becomes Billy Quarter. The lane is $\frac{1}{2}$ mile on the left beyond the Franciscan Friars (a mailbox on the right side of Billy Quarter with the #12541 is directly across from their lane). Continue straight to the stone house which is the last on the lane. Phone 286-2427 if you need further directions or will be coming from another direction.

Field Trips

January 15, Sunday - Surprise Winter Nature Walk, 1:00-4:00 P.M. We'll go for a winter walk somewhere in Howard County. Be sure to wear warm footgear. Meet at Swansfield.

January 21, Saturday - Howard County Feeder Trip, 8:00 A.M. Meet at Swansfield for a visit to several feeders in the county. Always an especially good trip for children and beginners.

February 5, Sunday - Earlybirders - Meet at Swansfield at 7:00 P.M. for several hours of early morning birding in Howard County. Inclement weather cancels.

February 4, Saturday - ^{Gude's Nursery} ~~National Arboretum~~ For Owls and/or National Zoo Bird House (bad weather alternative or possible alternate part of trip) meet 8:00 a.m. Swansfield. This can be a $\frac{1}{2}$ day trip if you wish or you can extend it if you wish to look for owls in the A.M. and go to the zoo in the P.M. If you choose that alternative bring a lunch.

February 26, Sunday - Columbia Feeder Trip. Meet at 1:00 P.M. at Swansfield for a look at feeders in Columbia.

March 5, Sunday - Earlybirders - Meet at Swansfield at 7:00 A.M. for several hours of early morning birding in Howard County. Inclement weather cancels.

Board Meeting

There will be NO board meeting in January. The next meeting of the Board will be February 23, Thursday at Marty Cheston's, 10850 Faulkner Ridge Circle, Columbia, 730-1527 at 7:30 P.M. Please note the earlier meeting time.

If you have any questions concerning the above field trips contact Cathy Williamson 730-0338. For membership information call Eileen Glegg 730-4362.