

HOWARD

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 1979 VOL. VIII NO. 1

WELCOME

As we begin our eighth year we look forward to a full schedule of activities in the coming months. The Howard County Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society emphasizes the study and observation of birds but members have wide-ranging interests in other areas of natural history. Included in this issue is a membership blank for the 1979-80 year. PLEASE COMPLETE IT IN ITS ENTIRETY AND RETURN IT SOON BY MAIL OR BRING IT TO THE SEPTEMBER MEETING. Only those who have paid their dues by mid-October will receive the next issue of the newsletter. Membership entitles you to quarterly issues of Maryland Birdlife, five copies of the Howard newsletter, and the chance to participate in a varied schedule of programs and field trips during the coming months. We hope you will take advantage of many of them. Last year our membership topped 100 for the first time. Let's do it again this year!

BIRD BOOK PUBLISHED BY HOWARD COUNTY CHAPTER IS NOW AVAILABLE

ATTRACTING BIRDS IN THE MARYLAND FIEDMONT, a 90 page manual designed to help individuals who would like to attract birds, has just been received from the printer. This project dates to the early spring of 1977 when questionnaires were distributed to people willing to share their bird-attracting experiences. Thanks to those individuals and the club members who cooperated in its production, the Howard Chapter has produced material relating to food, water, and plants geared to central Maryland. Editor Jo Solem gratefully acknowledges the time and effort of members Marty Cheston, Frank Griffin, Jr., Linda McDaniel, Rosemond Munro, and Cathy Williamson in the production of this volume. The book will, of course, be available at meetings but the club would also like to place them in some local outlets. If you know individuals who might be willing to stock them or if you have suggestions as to their placement, talk to one of the people named above. The book is intended to serve as an introduction to anyone just beginning to feed or attract birds while also containing much specific information for the more experienced individual. Among the frequently asked questions it will help to answer are the following:

- What should I plant to attract hummingbirds?
- Where should I locate a bluebird box?
- Am I likely to have Purple Martins nest in my martin box?
- How can I discourage pest birds?
- What should I do if I find a baby bird?
- What qualities should I look for in buying or building a feeder?
- What native trees have proven most popular as nest sites?
- What field guides are available?
- Where can I get more information on this topic?
- What are the best foods to put out to attract orioles?
- Do I need to put out water during the winter?
- How can I aid nesting birds?

CALENDAR

Listed below are the programs and field trips for September and October. One of the November field trips is described because it involves reservations. PLEASE NOTE: Meetings and programs which take place on the second Thursday of the month at 7:45 P.M. will now meet at the GREYFLER REALTY BUILDING ON LITTLE PATUXENT PARKWAY IN COLUMBIA. It is located between Symphony Woods and the Fire House almost across from the Wilson Garden Center. There is a lighted agency sign and a lighted "visitor parking" sign. We hope this will provide a bit more space for us as the room seats 100.

PROGRAMS

- Sept. 13, Thurs. - "Birds of Australia" - Chandler S. Robbins. We are fortunate to receive the benefit of the experience and skills of this nationally known birder. Chan participates in Howard County's May Count, the Triadelphia Christmas Count, and breeding bird studies along the Middle Patuxent River in addition to his full-time position with the Patuxent Research Center. He is, of course, the senior author of Birds of North America. If you would like your copy autographed bring it (or them) along.
- Oct. 11, Thurs. - "Planting the Backyard for Birds" - Alice Grant, Joanne Moroney, and Nan Rhinelanders. These three Howard County residents have worked hard to landscape their areas to attract the maximum number of birds at all seasons. Find out what they have found successful. They will certainly provide a period in which to answer questions. Be sure to note the field trip that is planned in conjunction with this presentation on Sunday, Oct. 14.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips will meet at the GREYFLER REALTY BUILDING PARKING LOT ON LITTLE PATUXENT PARKWAY IN COLUMBIA. You will notice that most of our trips have been planned on a local basis for maximum energy conservation. Whenever possible we will car-pool from the meeting point. We will also experiment with the use of a bus on the Eastern Shore trip described on the next page. If there is a sufficient response it will be considered for other long day trips. Field trip chairman for this year is Chuck Dupree 796-1086.

- Sept. 8, Sat. - LILYPONS FISH HATCHERY - 7:00 A.M. Leader: Chuck Dupree 796-1086. This trip to a fine Frederick County location will feature shore-birds in their most confusing plumage. $\frac{1}{2}$ day.
- Sept. 16, Sun. - FALL WILDFLOWERS - 1:00 P.M. Leader: Steve Simon 730-4619. Steve will lead a group along a portion of the Patuxent River in the Daniels section of the state park. Bring a hand lens or magnifying glass. Binoculars may be useful if hawks are migrating.
- Sept. 22, Sat. - DEEP RUN, HOWARD COUNTY - 8:00 A.M. Leader: Jo Solem 725-5037. A half day trip to the far southeastern part of the county for some fall birding.
- Oct. 5, Fri. - MOON WATCH AT RHINELANDERS - 9:00 P.M. This "adults only" activity revives a trip last tried four years ago. It involves rotating watches using a telescope aimed at the face of the moon in order to tally migrating birds (and occasional bats). Viewing will begin around 9:00 P.M. and last until midnight (or whenever the observers give out). If the weather is favorable it can be exciting. Best

results are obtained when a cold front is just beginning to come through with strong north or northwesterly winds. If that is the case be sure to dress warmly. In case of inclement weather this event will be cancelled. If in doubt call Nan 286-2427. Bring a telescope if you have one. High powered binoculars will also work but unless you can prop them on something or use a tripod they usually are not practical for lengthy viewing.

- Oct. 7, Sun. - AUTUMN HABITAT TRIP TO TROTTER ROAD - 1:00 P.M. Leaders: Cathy & Leroy Williamson 730-0338 and Bill Eckert. Co-sponsored by Howard County Recreation & Parks. Last year we visited David Foran Park three times to watch it through the changing seasons. This year several visits are planned to the Trotter Road Area of the Middle Patuxent River Valley.
- Oct. 14, Sun. - PLANTING FOR WILDLIFE - 1:00 P.M. A visit to both Alice Grant's and Joanne Moroney's 730-0076 to see how they have landscaped for wildlife. Both of these yards are registered with the National Wildlife Federation.
- Oct. 21, Sun. - FERN HIKE - 1:00 P.M. Leaders: Sarah Haviland, Anne Idewallyn, & Jo Solem 725-5037. A trip to the southwestern part of Howard Co. to find the Mountain Splenwort and other ferns and club-mosses.
- Nov. 17, Sat. - BOMBAY HOOK REFUGE AND LITTLE CREEK, DE. 7:30 A.M. Transportation by bus arranged by Howard Co. Recreation and Parks, \$6.00 per person. Capacity of the school bus is about 35. Registration is through the flyer put out by the Rec. & Parks Dept. the week of Sept. 4th. It will be sent out through the schools and will also be available at libraries, community halls, and recreation centers. This trip is open to the general public on a first-come basis so if you want to go, get your application in soon. If cancellation is necessary because of illness a refund can be obtained with a letter from your doctor. If the trip is over-subscribed a list will be kept so that in case of last minute cancellations there may still be a chance to go. The bus will leave from the George Howard Building parking lot in Ellicott City at 7:30 A.M. If there is a demand for it there may be car-pooling from Columbia. Talk to Chuck Dupree about this. This is an excellent chance to see waterfowl along with some lingering migrants. There will be multiple leaders so that there will be plenty of help for new birders. Marty Chestnut, Eileen & John Olegg, Chuck Dupree, and Marcia & "Kris" Krishnamoorthy are among the experienced birders who will be going. A great way to save gas, see the birds, and spend an enjoyable day in the company of others with similar interests so get your application in early.

BOARD MEETING

A Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, Sept. 27, 1979 at 7:30 P.M. at Eileen Olegg's, 9094 Lambkin Lane, Columbia. Telephone 730-4362 for directions.

FALL COURSES AT HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The Community Education section of Howard Community College is offering two courses this fall which may be of interest to members. Introduction to Ornithology (6 weeks) a field course for beginners meets on Saturdays beginning Sept. 29 (Bill Hilgartner). Attracting Birds Through Plantings and Feeding (8 weeks) meets on Monday evenings at Oakland Mills High School beginning Sept. 17 (Jo Solem).

MOUNTED BIRD COLLECTION EXPANDING

During the summer a number of bird specimens were taken to George Cassels for mounting. They should be ready soon. If you are interested in sponsoring a bird with a tax-deductible contribution call Jo Solem 725-5037 or see her at the Sept. meeting. Among the new birds will be a hummingbird, pheasant, several warblers, woodcock, gallinule, several blackbirds, and our first shorebird (a winter-plumaged dunlin). Prices range from \$2 to \$12 with the majority \$4. Thanks to the individuals who saved these skins. Not all skins are useable because of duplication (these are passed on to other groups) or damage. Sometimes a skin that appears at first to be in good condition turns out to have a crushed skull, torn back, or some other major damage. The club thanks George Cassels, Eileen Clegg, Frances Ehlers, Al Geis, Alice Grant, Sarah Haviland, Genevieve McCormack, Joanne Moroney, Fran Nahrgang, Nan Rhinelander, Eva Sunell, Mark Wallace, Cathy Williamson, Anne Willis and Larry Zeleny for salvaging specimens.

SNAKESKIN SETS BIRDS ALL A-TWITTER

Many of you are familiar with the use of a screech owl tape to draw small birds from concealment. One of our members discovered another effective method. On Saturday, August 18, Rosemond Munro hung a four foot snakeskin that she had found in a Rose of Sharon shrub near her home. At about 10:00 A.M. she observed the following collection of birds eyeing the skin and making appropriate squeaks and chips: American Redstart, Worm-eating, Yellow, and Blue-winged Warblers, Red-eyed and White-eyed Vireos, a hummingbird, cardinal, chickadees, and titmice. Small migrants were beginning to come through by that date which swelled the congregation. You may not have the same success, but if you do find a snakeskin and use it to entice birds out of hiding, other members might be interested in hearing what species you attracted.

BARN OWL PICTURES

As usual there was an excellent turnout for the Barn Owl banding near the Nahrgang's June 7. It was the largest brood, the latest banded, and the best photographed in the five years or so that banding has been taking place here. Be sure to bring your good shots to the September meeting to share.

DID YOU READ THE BALTIMORE SUN ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 26?

We're delighted that the Baltimore Sun initiated their Howard Living section by featuring the Howard County Bird Club. In case you didn't have an opportunity to see the article, someone will certainly bring a copy to the September meeting.

CLUB BOOKSTORE AT MEETINGS

Brenda Ericsson, this year's bookstore manager, reminds members that she will have a stock of books for birders and those with other natural history interests. Prices are lower than commercial bookstores and profits are contributed to the MOS Sanctuary Fund and other birding causes. If you need items between meetings contact her at 730-3563. Some sale items will be offered at the September meeting. A list is available which allows you to order from the Baltimore MOS bookstore at attractive prices. If you would be interested in helping with the bookstore during meetings this year give Brenda a call. Two selections dealing with nature study in winter will be available at the first meeting: Weeds in Winter by Lauren Brown (paperback) \$4.36 and A Guide to Nature in Winter by Donald Stokes (hard cover) \$7.56. The latter covers winter weeds, tracks, trees, snow crystals, birds, etc.)