

# HOWARD

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 1980 VOL. VIII NO. 3

## BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER SEEN FOR NEW HOWARD COUNTY RECORD - Rick Blom

Following are the field notes submitted by Rick Blom of the Baltimore Chapter of MOS to substantiate the sighting of a Buff-breasted Sandpiper which is a new species for Howard County.

9-15-79. While scoping through a flock of Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferous*) at a turf sod farm on Rt. 32 in Howard Co. I saw a bird I identified as a first year Buff-breasted Sandpiper. It was 1:30 p.m. and I was sitting in my car on the shoulder of the road scanning the turf for birds. The turf farm sits below the level of the road, so the view is excellent. There were about 70 Killdeer present. Just as I was about to quit, I noticed a small flock of Killdeer less than 30' away from the road. With them was one different bird. It was slightly smaller than a Killdeer, though when it raised its head & extended its neck, it appeared taller than a Killdeer. It had the general look of a "typical" plover: short-bill, small head, long neck. The legs were pale yellowish. The upper breast was washed with buff, fading as it approached the belly, and becoming white at the under tail coverts. At close range through a 30x scope, faint streaks could be seen on the sides, 4-6 on each side, and very fine. The throat was whitish. The head was buff/brown, slightly darker on the cap. The bird had a complete distinct white eye ring. The bill was entirely black, not as short as a Black-bellied Plover's (*Pluvialis squatarola*), but thinner. The bill was shorter in relation to the size of the bird than typical *Calidris* sandpipers. The eye was dark. The head was dove-like, roundish, & small, the neck longer & thinner than most sandpipers. The upper back was pale brown, the lower back darker. The tail did not extend beyond the wingtips and was dark in the center, edged with white.

While on the ground, it was constantly "alert," head up. It would dart 8-10 steps, freeze, pick at the ground no more than twice, freeze in a head up position, and repeat the process. The manner much resembles a Killdeer. When working rapidly the bird bobbed its head back & forth like a pigeon.

The Killdeer were feeding primarily on open dirt where strips of sod had been torn out, but the Buff-breast stayed strictly on the edge, being occasionally in the dirt & occasionally in the short grass.

When the birds flew to another open area about 50 yds. away, the feeding pattern was the same. In all I watched the bird for 30-35 minutes. The sky was 95% clear & the sun was at my back. Humidity was low. Winds were N-NW at about 12 MPH. Temperature was about 77°F. A moderate cold front had passed through the night before.

I saw four Buff-breasts at Brigantine in New Jersey in August of 1977, in this same plumage. This is the first I have seen in Md. & I believe the 1st record for Howard Co.

9-16-79 Bob Ringler failed to find the bird in mid-afternoon.

BIRD NAMES \* OWLS

Second in a series. For bibliography see VOL. VIII, NO. 2 of HOWARD.

BARN OWLS - Tytonidae

Tytonidae - Latinized form of Greek tyto, "a night owl"; family has distinctive monkey face and comblike edge to the claw of the middle toe; word for owl has a common ancestor of imitative origin derived from calls whether it is the Old English "ule", Swedish "uggla", German "eule, or Latin "ulula".

Barn Owl - Tyto alba

Tyto - Greek for "a night owl"

alba - Latin for "white" which describes large portions of the plumage, the white being especially visible in flight

Barn - one of the possible nest sites

Other Common Names - Monkey-faced Owl; Golden Owl; White Owl

TYPICAL OWLS - Strigidae

Strigidae - from Latin "strix" & Greek "strigx" meaning "screech-owl"

Common Screech Owl - Otus asio

Otus - Greek for "eared owl"

asio - Latin for a kind of "horned owl"

Screech - supposedly describes the call which in reality is a quavering, plaintive whistle

Other Common Names - Little Horned Owl; Gray Owl; Red Owl; Shivering Owl

Great Horned Owl - Bubo virginianus

Bubo - similar in Latin (bubo) & Greek (buas) meaning "the great horned owl"

virginianus - "Virginian" for the type locality

Great Horned - from the resemblance of the large feathered head tufts to horns

Other Common Names - Big Hoot Owl; Cat Owl; Virginia Horned Owl

Snowy Owl - Nyctea scandiaca

Nyctea - Greek for "nocturnal" which may be applicable to most owls but not this species

scandiaca - Latinized form of the type locality, "of Scandinavia"

Snowy - for its apparently white plumage

Other Common Names - Great White Owl; Ermine Owl; Arctic Owl

Barred Owl - Strix varia

Strix - Latin & Greek "screech-owl"

varia - Latin for "variegated"

Other Common Names - Hoot Owl; Rain Owl; Swamp Owl; Round-headed Owl

Long-eared Owl - Asio otus

Asio - see Common Screech Owl

otus - see Common Screech Owl - resorting to a reversal of the Latin name for the Common Screech Owl indicates a lack of imagination to say the least.

Long-eared - feather tufts on head appear especially long on this species

Other Common Names - Cat Owl; Lesser Horned Owl

Short-eared Owl - Asio flammeus

Asio - see Common Screech Owl

flammeus - Latin for "flaming" or "flame-colored" which is puzzling. The generally buffy plumage would be the color of only the palest of flames.

Short-eared - short ear tufts are difficult to see

Other Common Names - Marsh Owl; Swamp Owl; Prairie Owl

(cont. on page 4)

## SUCCESSFUL SEED SALE SPAWNS A SECOND

The Howard County Bird Club's initial bird seed sale had a modest beginning with sales of 4900 pounds of sunflower and 250 pounds of thistle (niger). It could only have been possible with the enthusiastic cooperation of those members who helped in a variety of capacities, the many individuals who purchased seed, and the organizational leadership of President Eileen Clegg. Max Casper, Eva Sunell, and a friend of the club hauled seed, Sheila Glanz helped with telephoning, and Chuck Dupree and Jo Solem assisted Eileen. On the day of the sale the following members helped for varying periods: Max Casper, Eileen and John Clegg, Alice and Terry Kretz, Linda McDaniel, Jeanne Nicholson, Nan and Fred Rhineland, Jo and Bob Solem, and Eva Sunell. Our thanks to each one for help and enthusiasm. Despite initial advertising costs associated with a new venture we cleared about \$150.00 and are planning a second sale (see article below). Sales provide members and friends with seed at attractive prices and benefit club projects. The Board is currently discussing several ideas which will be described in a future newsletter.

## JANUARY SEED SALE - ORDER NOW FOR THE REST OF THE SEASON

As many of our readers may be aware there was almost a total absence of mast this fall with acorns and hickory nuts being in especially short supply. This may mean your feeders will be even more heavily used than usual--and hungry squirrels will want a share. The worst and longest part of the winter is still to come for feeding continues well into April in this part of the Piedmont. Take stock of your seed needs and place an order now. Some of you may wonder why we offer only sunflower and niger. The inclination of many individuals is to buy mixed seed because it is cheaper, but much of the mix remains uneaten and it is likely to draw House Sparrows, European Starlings, Rock Doves, and members of the blackbird family. In order to discourage those species, we feel it is more sensible to stick to types of seed that attract finches, cardinals, titmice, chickadees, woodpeckers, grosbeaks, etc. If you have little problem with pest species you may want to pick up some mixed seed or fine cracked corn at a local store to keep our native sparrows, juncos, and Mourning Doves coming to your feeders.

The second seed sale (and final one for this winter) will have a pick-up date of Saturday, January 26th, at the First Presbyterian Church just east of Hy. 29 on Rt. 108. In case a snow emergency is declared for that date and citizens are urged to stay off the roads, the pickup will be postponed one week to Saturday, February 2nd. Pickup is from 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. Take advantage of our inflation-fighting prices--they remain the same as for the first sale.

50 lbs. Sunflower	- \$12.50 plus .63 tax
25 lbs. Sunflower	- \$ 6.75 plus .34 tax
50 lbs. Niger (thistle)	- \$65.00 plus \$3.25 tax
5 lbs. Niger	- \$ 6.50 plus .33 tax

Orders must be received by January 16, 1980 accompanied by payment in full. Include your name, address, and telephone number. Make checks payable to Howard County MOS. Send orders to Eileen Clegg, 9094 Lambskin Lane, Columbia, Md. 21045. Mark the pickup date and time on your new calendar; last time a few people forgot to pick up their seed.

We again need helpers on the pickup date and hope to be able to schedule you so one hour is all that's needed. Call Eileen, 730-4362, if you can give her a hand. As the workers at the first sale will be quick to tell you, they enjoyed their time together with coffee and doughnuts providing sustenance.

Saw-whet Owl - Aegolius acadicus

Aegolius - of unknown origin but used by Aristotle for a kind of owl  
acadicus - a Latinism for "of Acadia" for Nova Scotia where first specimens were taken

Saw-whet - from the resemblance of its call to the sound of a saw being sharpened  
Other Common Names - Acadian Owl; White-fronted Owl; Kirtland's Owl; Sparrow Owl

**BAULDRY BLUEBIRD BOX HELPS THWART NESTING HOUSE SPARROWS - Chuck Dupree**

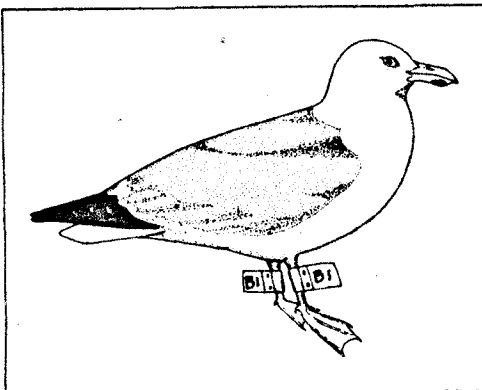
Vincent Bauldry of Green Bay, Wisconsin, utilizing his open top nestbox has had great success in discouraging House Sparrows from using the boxes. Conventional boxes can easily be converted to an open top box by cutting a 3" diameter hole in the top and covering the hole with a piece of hardware cloth.

Apparently the House Sparrow doesn't like the rain or maybe it is the light coming in through the top that bothers it. Though it is unacceptable to the House Sparrow, the bluebird readily uses the box. Come to think of it I have seen bluebirds nesting in the tops of tree snags and have heard of them using the rotted tops of fence posts for nesting sites. On Larry Zeleny's trail bluebirds successfully nested in an open top box. I have seen successful nestings of bluebirds in open top boxes at the Friends' Home in Montgomery County where only sparrows had previously nested in conventional boxes.

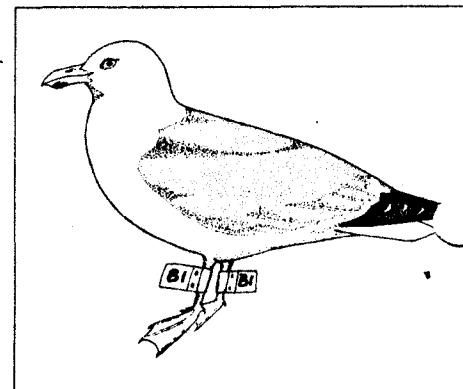
If you have had sparrow problems or have not put up bluebird boxes because you felt that it was useless, why not try converting your standard box or installing an open top box. Plans or boxes are available through the North American Bluebird Society, Inc., P.O. Box 6295, Silver Spring, Md. 20906 or at the next Howard Bird Club meeting. Information on your successes or failures would be greatly appreciated by the society.

**1979 HOWARD COUNTY BIRD LISTS DUE**

As indicated in the Nov.-Dec. issue of HOWARD the club is reviving a practice of compiling a yearly bird list for the county. Please submit a list of all bird species you have seen within the boundaries of Howard County to David Holmes, 5643-A Harpers Farm Rd., Columbia, Md. 21044 on or before January 15, 1980. If you can't finish it by that date drop him a postcard or give him a call letting him know that it will be coming shortly. We will publish the list in an upcoming newsletter. Let's make it as complete as possible.



Great Lakes Herring Gulls have been marked with numbered and lettered green, orange, blue or pink leg ribbon - one on each leg. If you see any Herring Gulls so marked, please note number, letter and colour of each ribbon and date and place of sighting. Contact Dr. D. V. Chip Weseloh or Mr. Pierre Mineau, Canadian Wildlife Service, Box 5050, Burlington, Ontario, Canada, L7R 4A6. Tel. (416) 637-4264.



## CALENDAR

Listed below are the programs and field trips for January and February. Meeting place for both programs and field trips is the GREMPER REALTY BUILDING ON LITTLE PATUXENT PARKWAY IN COLUMBIA unless otherwise indicated. From the south entrance of Columbia the building is located left, beyond Symphony Woods and the Fire House, but before you reach Howard Community College (across from Wilson Garden Center).

### NOTE CHANGES

#### PROGRAMS

- Jan. ~~10~~<sup>21</sup>, Thurs. - "Nature Studies" - Luther Goldman. Now retired, Luther has had a distinguished career with the U.S. Department of Interior as chief photographer. He was the first refuge manager of Santa Ana and Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuges in Texas. He is bringing some of his choice photos for this program which will certainly include numerous birds. 7:45 P.M.
- Feb. 14, Thurs. - "Annual Potluck" at Nan & Fred Rhinelanders'. This is the special meeting which draws families and photographers. Bring a dozen of your best nature slides to share. Call Alice Kretz, 997-9597 to reserve space and choose food for the meal. NOTE: This event has become so popular that we are forced to plan ahead and limit the group to the first 60 who call. Reserve space soon. The Rhinelanders live on Folly Quarter Rd. The entrance to their road is marked with "The Herbiary" sign. Follow lane to the last house. Call Nan at 286-2427 for more specific directions. 6:30-7:00 P.M. arrival.

#### FIELD TRIPS

Field trip chairman is Chuck Dupree, 796-1086. Severe weather conditions may force trip cancellation; if in doubt, contact Chuck or trip leader.

- Jan. 19, Sat. - FEEDER TRIP, HOWARD COUNTY - 8:00 A.M. Leader: Nan Rhinelanders, 286-2427. Nan always find a variety of interesting feeders to visit. Check what other people are doing to attract birds.  $\frac{1}{2}$  day.
- Feb. 3, Sun. - FEEDER TRIP, COLUMBIA - 1:00 P.M. A second opportunity to see what's new in feeding and feeders concentrating on areas in Columbia.  $\frac{1}{2}$  day.
- Feb. 17, Sun. - BACK RIVER SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT, BALTIMORE - 8:00 A.M. Leader: David Holmes. This is the location where most of the rare gulls were spotted the last winters. Even if there are no rarities it will be an excellent opportunity to study the expected gulls in a variety of plumages in the company of a highly experienced leader.  $\frac{1}{2}$  day.

#### BOARD MEETING

The January Board meeting will be held on Thursday, Jan. ~~24~~<sup>31<sup>st</sup></sup> at 7:30 P.M. at Jo Solem's, 10617 Graeloch Rd., Laurel, Md. Call 725-5037 for directions.

#### NORTHERN ORIOLES AT MY FEEDER - Sheila Glanz

On January 12, 1979, a Northern (Baltimore) Oriole appeared at our front feeder. The oriole came back about four times that month. During the first half of February it appeared sporadically. By the second half of February, an oriole appeared every day. On the twentieth we saw five orioles in our backyard. The orioles continued to come

(cont. on page 6)

ORIOLES (cont.)

into the first week of May. The last we saw of them was the day of May Count which was the fifth.

We think we had at least four immature orioles, two males and two females, but all during the winter months we could not distinguish one from the other. I have pictures taken in late April.

The feeder which attracted the orioles originally contained sunflower seeds. The feeder hung from my porch ceiling. I filled the feeder with diced apple slices (the skin was left on but never eaten). The birds took turns sitting in the bottom of the feeder eating the pieces of apple. I generally put in at least one apple a day. Very occasionally the birds would go to another feeder and eat bits of sunflower seed.



BOOKSTORE NOTES - Brenda Ericsson

Thanks to Max Casper and Lynne and Jeffrey Clary who helped with the bookstore in November and December respectively.

Lawrence Zeleny's book, The Bluebird, is now in paperback and will be available at the January meeting for \$4.04.

With the start of the new year you may be thinking of ways to get your bird lists in order. We have several books to help you with your record keeping. Among the choices are The American Birding Association ABA Checklist (\$2.76), The Bird Finder's 3-year Notebook (Ericsson, \$6.61), and Birder's Life List and Diary (Dietait, \$2.52).

Bargain hunters take note! On special sale at the January meeting will be Current greeting and note cards at \$.25 the pack--that's right 25¢. We will also have handmade suet bags.

Howard County Bird Club  
10617 Graeloch Rd.  
Laurel, Md. 20810

