

HOWARD

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 1981 VOL. 10 NO. 2

HAPPY BIRTHDAY HOWARD CHAPTER!

NOVEMBER MEETING TO MARK TENTH ANNIVERSARY

If your schedule will allow you to attend only one meeting during the 1981-1982 year, make sure it's the November 12th celebration of our tenth "birthday" at Longfellow Elementary School. The program, "Forests Are for the Birds," will be presented by Chandler S. Robbins, winner of numerous ornithological awards and author of Birds of North America (bring your guides to be autographed). You may remember that Chan was the featured speaker at our first public meeting. A special item of the evening will be a review of highlights of our first decade by Martha Chestem, a founding member and a past president.

Steve Hamblin of The Nature Conservancy will be on hand to receive our anniversary donation for Nassawango Creek. (There is still time to make your tax-deductible donation and have your name included among those who helped to save one of Maryland's natural treasures.) One donation was part of an anniversary gift while several other members gave the proceeds from recycling more than 3,600 aluminum cans they collected while hiking in the county. Are you counted among those who cared enough to make a contribution? Make your check to Howard County M.O.S. (Nassawango) today and mail it to David Pardoe, Treasurer, 13128 Williamfield Dr., Ellicott City, MD 21043.

And what would a birthday party be without appropriate food? A truly special evening has been planned so come for the program--the special features--and the social hour. Come to see old friends, chat with new ones, and meet the invited guests. Numerous clubs and organizations have come and gone in Howard County during the last decade. We not only have survived, but we have the distinction of being the fastest growing chapter belonging to the Maryland Ornithological Society. Set aside this evening to share the fun, the friendship, and the food in a memorable celebration.

1981 HOWARD COUNTY BIRD LIST TO BE COMPILED

David Holmes requests that lists of all bird species seen in Howard County during 1981 be submitted to him by January 15, 1982. His address is 5643-A Harpers Farm Rd., Columbia, MD 21044. He hopes that many members will send a complete list of the birds they saw in the county during 1981; however, he will gladly accept even a few species. Each year there are individuals who turn in highly abbreviated lists which, nevertheless, contain species not seen by anyone else. Last year's 206 species was a new high and included such notable birds as White Ibis, Ruffed Grouse, and Long-billed Dowitcher. What species can YOU contribute to this year's total?

SOME MYTHS OF BIRD FEEDING

From the Winter 1976 (No. 79, pp. 3-4) issue of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology Newsletter come some interesting comments regarding oft-repeated "rules" of bird feeding. Read and heed!

FEEDING—FACT AND FICTION

We've asked our Assistant Director, Sam Weeks, who is in charge of extension work for the Laboratory, to comment on feeding. Here is his report.

Over the years I have heard many "rules" of bird feeding — often things you must never do. Some of these are rather silly and were easily dismissed until, more and more, they were picked up and reproduced in a growing number of books on the subject. Now even more people are quoting these dictates.

Today a majority of households in this country are involved in bird feeding; and it has become a big business, amounting to perhaps fifty million dollars or more annually. More area is being devoted to bird food in grocery stores, where potential income is computer-analyzed in terms of dollars per square foot of display space. Many farm and garden stores and seed companies, where this item is usually less expensive but sold in larger units, display bird food by the ton.

Perhaps it is time to do away with some of the myths associated with the practice of feeding birds — to start saving some money and enjoying it more.

First, one should realize that a well operated feeding station may be the last stopping place for birds that are diseased or injured. Your food sanctuary may add another day or two to the life of such a bird. Thus, when you find a dead bird at or near your feeder, don't assume that it was somehow your fault. Many people think that the seed is contaminated, for instance, and want it analyzed immediately.

Freak accidents sometimes occur at feeders, perhaps partly due to the fact that a sick bird may spend more time there. Since a few birds have been seen with their feet frozen to a metal object, we are told never to use a feeder with metal on it. People who have felt the catch of cold metal freezing to their moist hands are quick to pick this up. But birds' feet are normally dry, and it is only in very rare situations, usually combining peculiar weather and a sick bird, that such freezing takes place. Indeed, under such conditions I have found a bird frozen to a wooden perch.

An incident which received much mileage was that of an unfortunate bird, again probably not in the best of health, whose moist eye membrane happened to make contact with, and freeze to, some metal. Birds, however, do not normally allow their eyes to touch foreign objects any more than

we do. These really rare incidents have been reported over and over until they sound as common as the common cold. A well designed bird feeder kept fairly clean and free from moldy seeds, with or without metal, has a much better safety record than most devices used by mankind.

The cause of death of small songbirds has sometimes been attributed to peanut butter, the birds presumably choking to death. It is more likely, however, that the bird's last meal was peanut butter, which was found in its mouth when the stricken bird was examined. Of the thousands of birds to which I have fed, and have seen feeding on, peanut butter, none have shown any signs of distress other than wiping their bills.

Some people attempt to put seeds into suet cakes. Birds feeding on suet need protein in addition to the fat. It is best to add high protein materials, such as canned dog food, dehydrated eggs, or peanut butter, to suet cakes rather than adding seeds.

Finally, it is often said: "Once you start feeding, you must not stop until winter is over." And one sometimes hears its corollary: "Since I am unable to feed regularly this winter, I'm not going to start." Continuous and regular

feeding certainly facilitates winter foraging for the birds and gives one a larger and more satisfying avian clientele, but they are equipped to make it without you. Most birds living in northern winters have evolved ways to exploit ever changing food resources. There is no single, localized, natural source which is guaranteed to last them all winter and they search out, often in flocks, new sources. As a matter of fact, a reserve does not have to run out for them to look elsewhere; birds will practically abandon a feeder when a period of unusually mild winter weather makes wild foods temporarily available again.

If you plan to be away from home and cannot find anyone to keep your feeder well stocked, then ease off on the quantities you feed before you leave. Barring a coincidental heavy snow storm and cold weather, birds will find other food sources and will locate your full feeders again when you return.

Many small feeders at various locations around your yard will attract more birds per pound of seed than one big feeder that holds five to ten pounds of seed and was supposed to need filling only once or twice a week. Large feeders are wasteful, as they attract squirrels and Blue Jays, either of which can easily dominate a feeder and empty it.

CONSERVATION NEWS - Martha Chestem

Are you reading "Doonesbury" these days--the comic strip by Garry Trudeau which appears in the Washington Post and the morning Baltimore Sun? Trudeau has become a national hero to many environmentalists through his Richard Davenport character, gentleman birder and husband of Congresswoman Lacey Davenport. Until recently Davenport appeared infrequently in a rather passive role, but he is now being given more and more space. He is Secretary of the "Maryland Audubon Society" and has become a political activist because of his outrage toward Secretary of Interior James Watt's policies. However, Davenport is having problems moving his birding buddies to action--even to signing a petition. Trudeau's message to his conservation-minded readers is that THEY have to take seriously the responsibilities of protecting wildlife and habitats.

Newsletters throughout the country are printing "Doonesbury" comments so maybe Trudeau is accomplishing what he seemingly set out to do. The newsletter Signal Smoke (Travis County, Texas Audubon Chapter) under the heading "God Bless Garry Trudeau" discussed the comic strip and then suggested its members set aside three hours a month for reading and researching a conservation issue, writing letters to Congressmen and Senators on this issue, and attending and taking part in local meetings where environmental issues are discussed. It seems like good advice to pass along.

C A L E N D A R

PROGRAMS - 7:45 p.m. Longfellow Elementary School, 5470 Hesperus Drive, Columbia.

Nov. 12 - Thur. TENTH ANNIVERSARY MEETING. "Forests Are for the Birds" - Chandler S. Robbins. See article on page 1. Don't miss this evening.

Dec. 10 - Thur. "Exotic America: Caribbean Islands" - David Holmes & Robert F. Ringler. Emphasis will be on Puerto Rico. Ever popular lecturer David teams with "The Season" compiler for Maryland Birdlife, Bob Ringler, for an evening of birding the islands.

Field Trips - Field trips will continue to leave from the Grempler Realty Building parking lot (across from the Flier building) on Little Patuxent Parkway in Columbia unless otherwise indicated.

Roy Trudel, 465-9398 (home) is the field trip chairman. Severe weather conditions may result in trip cancellation at the leader's discretion. If in doubt, call first. Carpooling will continue. Riders are expected to share gas and toll costs. Please make an effort to arrive on time.

Nov. 14 - Sat. - WILDE LAKE WALK - Waterfowl Committee. Leader: John Bascietto, 992-0025. Meet at the public boat dock at 2:30 p.m.

Nov. 21 - Sat. - LAKE KITTAMAQUNDI - Waterfowl Committee. Leader: Chick Rhodehamel, 997-7022. Meet at Oliver's Carriage House on Vantage Point Rd. in Columbia, 10:00 a.m. Chick is the biologist for the Columbia Assoc.

Dec. 5 - Sat. - BLACKWATER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE. - Leaders: Bill Eckert, 992-2483 & Diane Rogler, 992-9104. Co-sponsored by Howard Co. Rec. & Parks. Bus trip to a favorite area on Eastern Shore for geese, ducks, winter residents. All day; bring lunch. Leave from parking lot near George Howard Building on Court House Drive in Ellicott City at 7:30 a.m.; return about 6:30 p.m. Fee \$8.50 per person. Children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult. Registration can be made in person or by mail. Make checks to Director of Finance, Howard County and send to Howard County Dept. of Recreation & Parks, 3430 Courthouse Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043 by Dec. 1. The trip will go rain or shine. For more information call 992-2483.

Dec. 13 - Sun. - LAKE ELKHORN - Waterfowl Committee. Leader: Chick Rhodehamel, 997-7022. Meet at the boat dock across from the Roy Rogers on Gradlerock Way in Columbia at 1:30 p.m.

Dec. 26 - Sat. - TRIADELPHIA CHRISTMAS COUNT - Compiler: Bob Whitcomb, 344-2339 (office phone only). A dawn to dusk count of wintering birds sponsored by the National Audubon Society. Includes western half of Howard as well as part of Montgomery County. You may request a territory of your own or you may choose to go with other birders. \$1.50 fee toward publication of nationwide results.

BOARD MEETING - A Board meeting will be held at Carole Cleland's, 9518 Good Lion Rd., Columbia on Thursday, November 19 at 7:30 p.m. Call 730-2946 for directions. All officers and committee chairmen should attend.

NATIONAL CONTAINER DEPOSIT LEGISLATION BEING CONSIDERED - HELP NEEDED

The Senate Commerce Committee will begin holding hearings on nationwide container deposit legislation by early November. A show of support is important. Call or write Senator Mathias and Senator Sarbanes immediately. The U.S. Capitol switchboard number is (202) 224-3121. Or write them at the Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510.

THANKS FOR BIRD SPECIMEN CASES

Most of our bird collection can now travel in relative safety thanks to John Clegg and Bob Solem. In a marathon building session they constructed eight plywood cases for those specimens which were still being stored in corrugated boxes. Now the base of each bird contains a label. A diagram is attached to each case showing the interior arrangement. Birds may be borrowed by club members. The total collection is enumerated on another page of this newsletter.

FROM THE PAST: TRIADELPHIA CHRISTMAS COUNT 1954

Rosamond Munro recently found a summary of a Christmas Count she had participated in on December 26 more than 25 years ago. The summary noted the following: the "new" Rocky Gorge reservoir was partially flooded; the temperature varied between 20 and 48 degrees; the wind was calm, the ground clear, and the surface of the reservoirs was 90% frozen. There were 20 observers in 8 parties. Total party-hours 59 (37 on foot, 22 by car) and total party-miles 281 (35 on foot, 246 by car). These observers turned up 69 species and a total of 9845 individual birds. Which names do you recognize from the past? C.E. Addy, W.D. Addy, Richard D. Cole, Richard P. Dubois, David H. Fales, Elizabeth H. Fales, John H. Fales, Seth H. Low (compiler), Seth T. Low, Mrs. G.C. Munro, Howard Munson, John W. Richards, Eleanor C. Robbins, Chandler S. Robbins, Mrs. Gordon Schaum, Stephen W. Simon, James Travis, Marylou Travis, Clark G. Webster, Elmer G. Worthley.

If we compare the results of the 1980 Triadelphia Christmas Count, the date was December 27, temperature ranged from 10 to 30 F, wind SE-NNE 2-10 m.p.h. and the water was mostly frozen. There were 59 observers: 54 in 39 parties, 5 at feeders. Total party-hours 216.5 (181.5 on foot, 35 by car); total party-miles 491 (169.5 on foot, 321.5 by car). Counters found 97 species and 67,377 individuals. Twenty-six years later the only two names which appear on both lists are Chandler S. Robbins and Mrs. G.C. Munro. Chan and Rosamond's staying power is to be commended!

AUTUMN MIGRATION DATES NEEDED

Please return fall arrival and departure dates to Jo Solem by Dec. 15. They will be forwarded to Bob Ringler for inclusion in Maryland Birdlife.

Deadline for the January - February issue of the Howard newsletter is December 1. Submissions are welcome. Mail to Jo Solem, 10617 Grae Loch Rd., Laurel, MD 20707 or call 725-5037.

NEW CHAPTER BROCHURE ENCLOSED

Included as one page of this newsletter is a copy of the most recent printing of the club brochure. David Pardoe deserves the credit for obtaining permission for use of the cover drawing as well as handling the details of printing. If you have not yet sent in your dues for 1981-82 (Sept. 1981-Aug. 1982) and have misplaced the membership form, use the application on the brochure. If you have already joined the chapter, please pass the brochure along to a friend or neighbor or post it on a bulletin board in order to introduce others to our activities. If you do not renew promptly you will miss succeeding issues of the Howard newsletter.

Mounted Bird Specimens Howard County Chapter Maryland Ornithological Society

Listed by wooden cases in which they are stored - 10/1/81

- A. Birds of Prey
 Red-shouldered Hawk
 Barred Owl
- B. Water Birds & a Hawk
 Green Heron
 American Coot
 Sharp-shinned Hawk (immature)
 Common Gallinule
- C. Woodpeckers
 Common Flicker
 Red-bellied Woodpecker
 Downy Woodpeckers (male & female)
 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (adult male & immature)
- D. Winter Birds
 American Goldfinch (breeding plumage & winter)
 Evening Grosbeak
 Northern Cardinal (male & female)
 Blue Jay
- E. Mimic Thrushes & True Thrushes
 Wood Thrush
 Northern Mockingbird
 Hermit Thrush
 Gray Catbird
 Veery
 Gray-chkd. Thrush
 Wood Thrush (fledgling)
 Brown Thrasher
- F. Winter Birds
 Cedar Waxwing
 House Finch (male)
 Northern Junco
 White-throated Sparrow
 Tufted Titmouse
 Purple Finches (male & female)
 American Tree Sparrow
- G. Winter Birds
 Mourning Dove
 Golden-crowned Kinglet
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet
 Carolina Wren
 Carolina Chickadee
 White-breasted Nuthatch
 Red-breasted Nuthatch
- H. Pest Birds and Common Bobwhite
 Common Grackle
 Common Bobwhite
 European Starling
 House Sparrows (male & female)
 Brown-headed Cowbirds (male & female)
- I. Blackbirds, Flycatchers, etc.
 American Robin
 Scarlet Tanager (male)
 Eastern Phoebe
 Rose-breasted Grosbeak (female)
 Eastern Kingbird
 Red-winged Blackbirds (male & female)
 Northern Oriole (male)
- J. Warblers & Vireos
 Ovenbird
 Black-throated Blue Warbler (male & female)
 Northern Waterthrush
 Connecticut Warbler (fall)
 Magnolia Warbler
 Cape May Warbler (fall)
 Northern Parula Warbler
 Kentucky Warbler
 Blackburnian Warbler (female)
 Red-eyed Vireo
 Common Yellowthroat (male)
 Black-and-white Warblers (male & female)
- K. Birds of Prey and American Woodcock
 Sharp-shinned Hawk
 American Woodcock
 American Kestrels (male & female)
- L. Wing-spread Birds & Others
 Ruby-throated Hummingbird (female)
 Chipping Sparrow
 Rufous-sided Towhee (female)
 Fox Sparrow
 Barn Swallow (immature)
 Tree Swallow
- M. Miscellaneous
 American Goldfinch (breeding male)
 Mallard (duckling)
 Dunlin (winter)
 Sora (immature)
- N. Birds of Prey
 Barn Owl (no case)
- O. Ring-necked Pheasant (no case)
- P. "Touchable" Birds
 White-throated Sparrow
 Red-breasted Nuthatch
 Chipping Sparrow
 Tufted Titmouse
 Cedar Waxwing
- Q. Mallard (no case)

MOUNTED BIRDS FROM THIS COLLECTION MAY BE BORROWED BY ANY HOWARD MOS MEMBER FOR DISPLAYS, PRESENTATIONS, CLASSES, OR PERSONAL STUDY. BECAUSE OF THEIR FRAGILE NATURE, SPECIMENS ARE LENT BY THE CASE RATHER THAN BY THE INDIVIDUAL BIRD.

TO BORROW BIRDS CALL JO SOLEM 725-5037.

SEED SALE REMINDER

The first bird club seed sale this year will be held on Saturday, November 7, 1981. Coordinator Eileen Clegg mailed price lists in early October to former customers and all Howard-MOS members. Prepaid orders should be in her hands by October 25. Give her a call at 730-4362 if you have let this matter slip your mind. Note: Black oil sunflower seed prices are lower now than they were in January 1981. Can you afford to pass up that kind of a bargain?

Be sure to pick up your seed during the appointed hours. If an emergency should arise, notify Eileen at the above number or Mike McClure 286-2780. Otherwise **ORDERS THAT ARE NOT PICKED UP BY MONDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 9th WILL BE FORFEITED** because the club has no storage facilities. Volunteers are welcome. A second sale is planned for mid-January.

CENTRAL LIBRARY READY FOR BIRDS

The Howard County Central Library is now prepared to serve birds (as well as people). Alice & Cliff Grant along with Bob & Jo Solem installed a stone birdbath near the patio area in early September. The metal squirrel-proof feeder donated by our chapter was erected in that same area later in the same month by John & Eileen Clegg. The Howard Bird Club has agreed to keep the feeder supplied with sunflower seed during the winter. Birds spotted on or over the library grounds should be reported to Marty Chestem 730-1527 or Alice Grant 997-3742.

Howard County MOS
10617 Graeoch Rd.
Laurel, MD 20707



American Goldfinch
Official Howard County Bird

rubby-crossed
Chipping Sparrow
Rufous-sided
Lark Sparrow
Town Sparrow
Tree Sparrow

