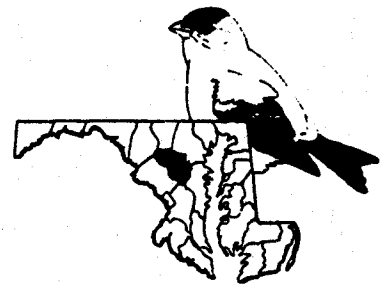




Vol 16, No 3  
Jan-Feb 1988

# Howard

A Chapter of the  
Maryland Ornithological Society

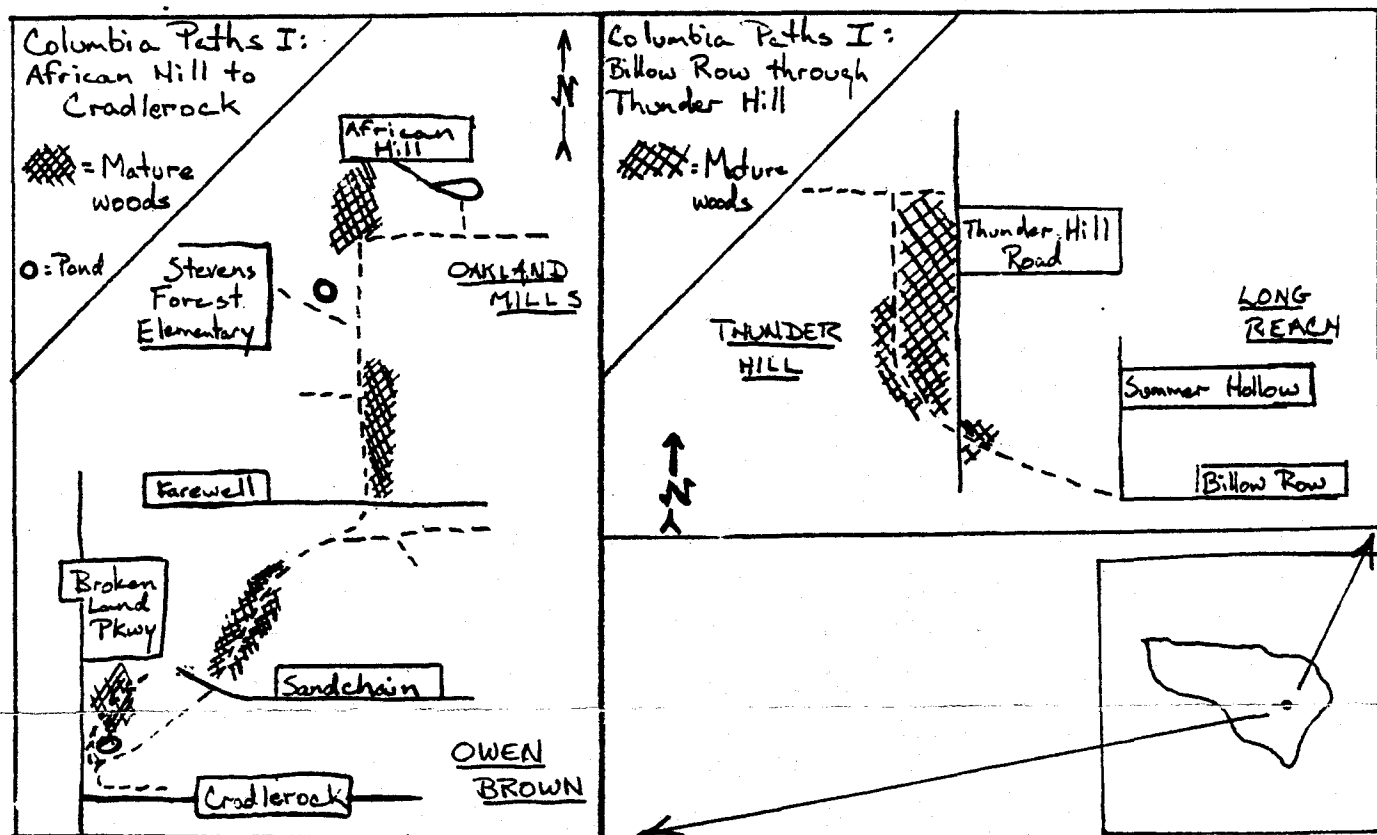


## HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB 1972-1987

- 1972 - CLUB FOUNDED AS A CHAPTER OF THE MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
BOOKSTORE AND NEWSLETTER ESTABLISHED  
MONTGOMERY/HOWARD COUNTY BREEDING BIRD ATLAS PROJECT FIELD WORK IS BEGUN  
First published atlas in the country
- 1974 - FIELD WORK FOR BREEDING BIRD ATLAS PROJECT IS COMPLETED
- 1975 - BIRDING '75 WORKSHOP  
First of five annual workshops jointly sponsored by Patuxent Chapter MOS
- 1976 - HOWARD COUNTY RARE BIRD ALERT FORMED
- 1977 - AMERICAN GOLDFINCH NAMED COUNTY BIRD AT BIRD CLUB'S SUGGESTION  
MOUNTED BIRD COLLECTION STARTED
- 1978 - SPRING WILDFLOWER SURVEY OF COUNTY IS BEGUN
- 1979 - SEED SALES INITIATED AS MEMBER AND COMMUNITY SERVICE AND MAJOR FUNDRAISER  
ATTRACTING BIRDS IN THE MARYLAND PIEDMONT PUBLISHED  
ANNUAL COUNTY BIRD LIST REVIVED  
AD HOC LANDSCAPING COMMITTEE FOR CENTRAL LIBRARY FORMED, SEVERAL CLUB REPS
- 1980 - COLUMBIA WATERFOWL COMMITTEE MERGES WITH BIRD CLUB  
CAVITY NESTING SPECIES EMPHASIS BEGINS
- 1981 - TENTH ANNIVERSARY FUND DRIVE RAISES \$3650 FOR THE NATURE CONSERVANCY'S  
NASSAWANGO CREEK SANCTUARY  
FEDERAL REHABILITATION PERMIT FOR PASSERINES ISSUED TO MEMBER EVA SUNELL  
SPECIAL EDITION OF NEWSLETTER FEATURES BIRD BEHAVIOR
- 1982 - SPRING WILDFLOWER CHECKLIST PUBLISHED; AUTUMN WILDFLOWER SURVEY BEGINS  
DISPLAY AT HOWARD COUNTY FAIR FOR FIRST TIME  
NATURAL HISTORY LIBRARY IS ESTABLISHED  
ANNUAL BIRD LIST FOR COUNTY HITS HIGH OF 213
- 1983 - "BLUEBIRDS IN THE PARKS" PROGRAM INITIATED WITH HOWARD CO. RECREATION & PARKS  
RECEPTION AND DINNER HONORS CHANDLER S. ROBBINS  
Publication of revised edition of Birds of North America field guide  
FIELD WORK FOR FIVE YEAR MARYLAND BREEDING BIRD ATLAS PROJECT BEGINS  
COUNTYWIDE CAVITY NESTER COMPILATION BEGINS
- 1985 - MARYLAND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION STAMP ADOPTED BY STATE LEGISLATURE  
Initiated by member Martha Chestem with chapter and state MOS support  
PRELIMINARY CHECK-LIST OF BIRDS OF HOWARD COUNTY IS PUBLISHED  
BOOST BLUEBIRDS PROJECT  
Record 1343 bluebirds fledged countywide; Booklet I published
- 1986 - WINTER COUNT BEGUN  
First survey in MD to establish presence of bird species during "true" winter  
BOOST BLUEBIRDS (AND OTHER NATIVE CAVITY NESTERS) BOOKLET II PUBLISHED
- 1987 - FIVE YEAR MARYLAND BREEDING BIRD ATLAS PROJECT FIELD WORK COMPLETED  
CHAPTER MEMORIAL FUND IS ESTABLISHED

# BIRDING "HOT SPOTS" IN HOWARD COUNTY - CHRIS LUDWIG - COLUMBIA PATHS I

This feature of "Hot Spots" highlights portions of the extensive path system which runs throughout Columbia. The first path, running from Oakland Mills to Owen Brown, covers more than a mile. The second, from Long Reach to Thunder Hill, is less than half a mile in length. Since many of Columbia's paths can be quite rewarding, I have titled this column Columbia Paths I and will feature other paths as information arrives.



First, we will examine the path through Owen Brown to Oakland Mills. This trail has been watched for years by many Columbia birders including Jane Farrell and Jon K. Boone who supplied information for this feature. Note on the map the mature woods along the path. Watch those areas in the spring and fall migration period when warblers, thrushes and vireos can be abundant.

During the winter look for seed eaters around fields and bird feeders. Common summer breeders include kingbirds, Red-shouldered Hawks and Yellow Warblers. The small sediment ponds (see map) occasionally attract Mallards, Green-backed Herons, Killdeer, Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers. Less common species which have been sighted include Red-headed Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Summer Tanager, Cooper's Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Gray-cheeked Thrush, American Bittern (marshy area along stream-Boone) and American Black Duck (sediment pond-Boone).








The woodland along the second path from Long Reach to Thunder Hill has similar bird species. Like the woods along the first, spring wildflowers are common. Look for Mayapple, Jack-in-the-pulpit, Common Blue Violet, and Spring Beauty among others. In the summer, check the wet areas for Joe-Pye Weed, Tall Coneflower, Monkeyflower, Seed Box and Touch-me-not. In the fall, check the fields for Queen Anne's Lace, Yarrow, Black-eyed Susan and various species of goldenrods and asters.

There are other paths in the Columbia system that may be just as rewarding as those featured above. I welcome information about any of them. Please call me evenings at 796-8373 or provide me with a written description mailed to 7992 Millstream Ct., Elkridge, MD 21227.

## CALENDAR OF PROGRAMS, FIELD TRIPS, SPECIAL EVENTS

Programs are held at Longfellow Elementary School, 5470 Hesperus Dr., Columbia. Meeting is cancelled if schools are closed for any reason. Hospitality session at 7:30 p.m. Meeting/program begins at 8:00 p.m. Club bookstore opens at 7:30 p.m.

Field trips leave from Grempler Realty parking lot (across from the Flier building on Little Patuxent Parkway in Columbia) unless otherwise listed. Carpooling is encouraged with riders sharing cost of gas and tolls. Dress for field work with stout, reasonably waterproof footwear and layers of clothes. Trips do not always follow paths. No pets. Leaders may cancel due to inclement weather. If you have questions, contact the leader or Field Trip Chairman Michele Wright 465-6057.

- ✓ JAN 14 - THIRD ANNUAL MOVIE NIGHT. Jane Geuder has arranged several fine movies in-Thursday cluding the excellent Nature Conservancy film "The Garden of Eden" along with "Treasures of the North." Will there be popcorn again? Certainly!
- ✓ JAN 16 - WINTER TREE IDENTIFICATION WALK AT CYPRESSMEDE PARK. Leader: Michele Wright Saturday 465-6057. Learn to identify some of the common area tree species by looking at bark and branching patterns. Meet at 1:00 p.m. at first parking lot on the right in the park. Enter off Rt. 40, right at the Greenway Dr. entrance to Valley Mede west of Chatham Mall; left on Longview, left on Cypressmede, and left on Fawnwood Dr. 1-2 hrs. A second walk will be held later in the year in this park to look at the same trees when leaves are on the trees.  

- ✓ JAN 18 - GULL TRIP TO ALPHA RIDGE LANDFILL. Leaders: Bob Ringler & David Holmes. Trip Monday limited to 15 people. To register, call Michele 465-6057 by Jan. 15th. Meet at Grempler at 9:00 a.m. Parking is limited so participants will carpool and are expected to leave from and return to Grempler. Rain/snow date is Feb. 15. Dress warmly for standing in breezy, open areas.  $\frac{1}{2}$  day. *postponed*  

- ✓ JAN 24 - WINTER HABITAT WALK: SCHOOLEY MILL PARK. Leaders: Chuck Dupree 796-1086 (even-ings) & Bill Eckert 992-2464 (days). Co-sponsored with How. Co. Rec. & Parks. Second in our popular series of seasonal walks to this new county park. Meet Sunday at park building at 1:00 p.m. Park entrance is about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile west of Rt. 216 on Hall Shop Rd.  

- ✓ JAN 30 - WINTER COUNT. Third annual compilation of wintering birds in the county. Field Saturday observers & feeder watchers welcome for part or all of the day. Compilers are David Holmes & Jo Solem. Call Jo 725-5037 to volunteer. Tally/meal in evening at Hal & Zelda Simon's for field participants. Call Zelda 730-8328 to reserve.  

- ✓ FEB 6 - WINTER SEED SALE PICKUP. Order blanks enclosed. Questions? Call Eileen at Saturday 730-4362. See reverse side of order form for challenge grant information.
- ✓ FEB 11 - "ALL ABOUT BIRD BANDING" - M. Kathleen Klimkiewicz, Biologist, Bird Banding Thursday Laboratory, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. The reasons for, the methods used, the results of banding birds along with entertaining anecdotes. Kathy can draw on years of experience in the office and in the field.  

- ✓ FEB 13 - EAGLE NEST SEARCH. Leader: Karen Skuldt 788-6079. Karen found Bald Eagles on Saturday her atlas territory last year so state biologists have encouraged the chapter to do a ground search of the area for possible nest sites and/or birds. Come along for a half day's hike along the railroad tracks near Ellicott City. Meet at Grempler at 1:00 p.m. (See eagle note elsewhere in this newsletter.)  

- ✓ FEB 20 - RECREATION EXPO. This popular event at the Columbia Mall has been moved from Saturday June to February. We always have a display and need volunteers to staff it. Inexperienced? Ask to be placed with someone who has done it before. Call Eileen 730-4362 to volunteer. An hour or two is most welcome.
- ✓ FEB 27 - COLUMBIA FEEDER TRIP. Leader: Eva Sunell 995-0029. Visit homes with feeders. Saturday Good trip for beginners. Meet at Grempler at 8:00 a.m. for  $\frac{1}{2}$  day. This may be a good year for grosbeaks, finches and siskins. If you don't have any in your yard, this trip may visit feeders where they can be seen.  




CALENDAR (cont.)

MARCH 5 - FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY POTLUCK DINNER. Our annual potluck will continue the Saturday celebration of our 15th year. It will be held at the Florence Bain Sr. Center. Call Monika 465-5758 to reserve space. (See article elsewhere in this newsletter.)



MARCH 6 - NATIONAL ZOO TRIP. Leader: Roy Trudel. If you missed last year's trip, you have a second chance for a behind-the-scenes visit with a general tour of the major exhibits. There is a \$3.00 parking fee so we will be carpooling. Number of participants limited to 15. Register with Michele Wright 465-6057 by Feb. 20th. Leave Grempier at 8:30 a.m.; return by 1:00 p.m.



MARCH 12- WORKSHOP AT MILLER BRANCH LIBRARY ON FREDERICK ROAD. More information in Saturday next newsletter but plan to stop in sometime during the day.

BOARD MEETINGS are held in the Howard County Central Library meeting room at 7:30 p.m.

JAN 7 - Thursday

FEB 24 - Wednesday. Please note change of day.

CLUB Sue Hudson 442-5788 has taken over the Bookstore. Call her to place special BOOKSTORE book orders or if you wish to have her bring particular books from stock to meetings. All books will be available at the seed sale on Saturday 6 February. MOS Recently received are handsome Maryland Ornithological Society pins. They are PINS shield-shaped, 3/4", with a flying Tundra Swan on a blue field. They can be AVAILABLE obtained at any meeting for \$2.00.



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MEMORIAL FUND ESTABLISHED BY HOWARD CHAPTER

At its October meeting, the Board authorized the establishment of a special Memorial Fund for the chapter. It was formed as a direct result of money that was donated in memory of Anne Dowling. The fund will have two aspects. It will be a means by which individuals can remember in a unique way relatives, friends and colleagues who have died; in addition, it will also provide an opportunity to honor special people and the memorable events in their lives such as birthdays and anniversaries. The proceeds will be used as the donor suggests or, if given without restriction, will be used within the county for natural history-related activities or purchases. The Board felt that unrestricted funds should not normally be donated to other organizations, no matter how worthy, because the donor would have made that contribution directly if that had been the intent. Anonymous donations can, of course, be made. These tax deductible gifts should be sent to Treasurer Eva Sunell, 6730 Carlinda Ave., Columbia, MD 21046 (Tel. 995-0029) and marked Howard Co.-MOS Memorial Fund. A handsome acknowledgment card will be sent as designated by the donor.

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WESTERN SANDPIPER AT BROWNBRIDGE IS NEW FOR COUNTY - JIM WILKINSON

I saw a Western Sandpiper at Rocky Gorge Reservoir near the Brown Bridge Road crossing on 23 August and two birds on 7 September 1987. On 8/23 the bird was on mud flats just upstream from the bridge while on 9/7 the birds were on mud flats about 1/4 mile below the road. Both times they were on the Howard County side of the reservoir. There were Pectoral, Least, Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers in the same area on both dates. Both times I observed rufous color on the back (scapulars) and a slight droop at the tip of the bills. They were slightly larger than nearby Least Sandpipers and lacked the breast band (or streaking) that the Least possessed. They were smaller than the Pectorals in the vicinity. All the birds were walking or standing on wet mud. I did not see the Westerns feeding, note leg color, or see them fly.

# FIFTEENTH ANNUAL POTLUCK, SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 1988 - RESERVE NOW!

The Howard County Bird Club's fifteenth annual potluck will be held at the Florence Bain Senior Center on Saturday, March 5, 1988. Singles, couples, and families are encouraged to share a continuation of our anniversary celebration.

The Chapter furnishes eating utensils, beverages, social hour snacks, and rolls; members attending bring a salad, vegetable, main dish or dessert. YOU MUST RESERVE SPACE so adequate seating arrangements can be made and a balance of food choices planned. Call Monika Botsai 465-5758 or Grazina McClure 531-2780 no later than Tuesday, March 1 to indicate the number of people in your party along with the type of food you wish to bring. The buffet is always bountiful and each year people ask about obtaining recipes for some of their favorites. As an anniversary bonus this year, please bring two copies of a recipe for a dish which you have brought to any Bird Club potluck. Jane Geuder has offered to compile them and they will be made available to anyone desiring a copy. (A recipe is optional; it is not necessary to bring one in order to attend.)

Time will be set aside for your favorite slides (choose a dozen of your best) and there will be door prizes, of course. Founder Nan Rhineland and early member David Holmes plan to attend. The social hour begins at 6:30 p.m. with dinner at 7:00 p.m. Be sure your name is on all dishes and the accompanying serving implements. Let Monika or Grazina know if you can come a bit early to help set up.

The Florence Bain Senior Center is located on the west side of Columbia at 5470 Beaverkill Road which is off Harper's Farm Road, one block east of Cedar Lane behind the shopping center. There is ample parking.

The anniversary committee this year was chaired by Marcia Krishnamoorthy; serving with her were Grazina McClure, Eileen Clegg and Martha Chestem. Many thanks to them and to those who were part of the November anniversary program: Tom Strikwerda, Rosamond Munro, Martha Chestem, John Clegg, Mike McClure, Bill Eckert, and Joanne Solem. Door prizes were donated by the Club bookstore, Marty Chestem, The Nature Nook, Frank Griffin.

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## FLOWER FEATURE: COMMON MILKWEED - BOB SOLEM AND GEORGIA MORRIS



3-5 feet

Pods from late summer thru fall

Seeds dispersed in fall and winter

COMMON MILKWEED - Asclepius syriaca

HABITAT - Roadsides and fields

HOWARD COUNTY BLOOMING SEASON - June to August

FAMILY - Milkweed (Asclepiadaceae)

HOWARD COUNTY LOCATION - Look for Common Milkweed along the powerlines at Lake Elkhorn, or at Atholton, Schooley Mill or Cypressmede Parks.

Special Information - Identifying wildflowers in winter when the leaves are mostly gone and the faded, dry flower parts crumble easily can be a challenge. One that is easy to spot is the large rough pod of the Com-

mon Milkweed. During the summer the pinkish blossoms produce a great deal of nectar which is attractive to many insects including the honeybee and Monarch butterfly. Each plant may have 500 blossoms but will produce fewer than 10 pods (fruit) per plant. The pod is thick and leathery and covered with small spines. After the pod opens, the thin flat seeds attached to feathery "silk parachutes" are carried away by the wind. Look inside the pod for the golden yellow interior and the "tongue" that supports the many seeds inside. The milky juice is sticky and served the early settlers as glue. It was also used in the treatment of dropsy; the plant has been found to contain cardiac glycosides used in modern medicine for the treatment of that condition. The long silky hairs attached to the seeds were used to stuff pillows and mattresses. In both World Wars, children collected the "silk" to stuff life preservers.



EAGLE ALERT - In February, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources will conduct its annual flyover to count Bald Eagle nests. Anyone having observed eagles recently (especially courtship or nesting behavior) along the Patapsco River near Ellicott City should call Karen Skuldt 788-6079 evenings so she can alert the proper authorities. Please be as specific as possible in your indication of behavior, possible nest location, dates of sightings, etc. Courtship and nest building for this species can start in early January. (See Calendar for Feb. 13th field trip.)

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BLUEBIRD BOX MONITORS NEEDED FOR TWO AREAS - The "Bluebirds in the Parks" program co-sponsored by this club and Howard Co. Rec & Parks now has 69 boxes on 16 parcels of county land. The 1987 breeding year was a fantastic success according to coordinator Bill Eckert. Results will be included in the county totals in the next newsletter. Faithful monitoring tabulated excellent counts of several cavity nesting species and, highly important, NOT ONE SINGLE HOUSE SPARROW WAS FLEDGED. Two areas have lost monitors: Savage Park and Alpha Ridge Landfill. This was the first year we had boxes at the landfill; the four produced 16 bluebirds including a brood in the box right outside superintendent's office window. If you are interested in monitoring either of the above areas, contact Bill Eckert at a meeting or call him during the day at 992-2464.

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BANDED NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD FOUND BY GRANTS - Alice and Cliff Grant found the skeleton of a mockingbird at the bottom of a woodpile in their yard on the west side of Columbia the week of October 15, 1987. David Holmes checked with the Bird Banding Laboratory at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (PWRC) and found that Kathy Klimkiewicz had banded the bird at the Center on April 13, 1986. It was an adult when banded. Although the distance between the PWRC and Columbia is not great as birds fly, it was an intriguing return for at that time of the year mockingbirds are normally on territory and a movement of that distance would not be anticipated. (Kathy will be the featured speaker at the February 11th meeting. She will describe some of the fascinating aspects of bird-life learned through banding.)

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AUTUMN SEED SALE - The Autumn sale on 17 October was a highly successful effort with numerous people helping and lots of seed, books, and feeders sold. Coordinator Eileen Clegg thanks the following individuals who helped outside: Harry & Maud Banks, Don Waugh, Sue Hudson, Bill Phillips, Jim Blanchard, Bob Bogdan, Bob Solem, Tom Strikwerda, Joe Suess, Michele Wright, Mark Wallace, Jane Farrell, Rod Botsai, Steve & Mike Koziol, John Clegg, & Cleo Karafas. those working inside at the desk, with the bookstore, or with the displays included Martha Waugh, Margo Garner, Barbara Doarnberger, Marty Chestem, Jo Solem, Helen Zeichner, Doris Holmes, Judy Staples, Eva Sunell, Zelda Simon, Sheila Glanz, and Liz Regan. Don Randle had feeders from the Nature Nook and Marty Chestem had set up a display of the newest Maryland Conservation Stamp. Among those who donated the always popular baked goods were Monika Botsai and Eileen Clegg, and others?.

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MOS SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE - Each year the Maryland Ornithological Society awards six scholarships for a week at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology or a one or two week session at an Audubon camp. Applicants must be at least 18 years of age and be in a position where they work with young people; high school and college teachers, naturalists at nature centers, etc. are prime candidates. Typically, winners have demonstrated an interest in helping young people in environmental education beyond their basic job. Application deadline is February 8, 1988. For further information, contact President Martha Chestem 730-1527.

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VOICE OF THE NATURALIST - Call the regional hotline weekly to check on the latest mid-Atlantic rarities. The tape is changed on Wednesday. Call 652-1088 (a DC number).



EVE WATCH AT A NUTHATCH HOLE - GEORGE CHASE

5 APRIL 1987 (intermittent rain and snow)

3:00 p.m. Discovered White-breasted Nuthatch's nesting hole 20 ft. up in a red maple tree, 30 ft. from Hammond Branch. The hole is about two ft. above a tri-fork of large limbs, appears to be the scar of a former limb, fairly large and possibly somewhat vulnerable to rain and north-west wind. Observed much bill touching between pair in nearby willows. One spent much time stripping bark fibers from willow branches and making frequent visits to nest hole.

6:30 p.m. Much bill sweeping by both birds inside and outside hole, above and below, facing into and out of hole, all around the limb.

7:00 p.m. One bird took sunflower seed from feeder and did not return to nest hole.

6 APRIL (morning snow, cloudy and cold)

5:00-5:10 p.m. One bird remained in hole while mate made visits to feeder & hole.

5:20 p.m. One emerged from nest hole to do bill sweep. The other arrived later and touched bills; the first returned to hole and remained. The other visited feeder and stuffed seeds into bark crevices of willows near nest site.

6:30 p.m. Both perform bill sweep all around the limb from about two ft. below to one ft. above hole. One clearly held something in its bill. The sweeping seems independent as often they are not in view of each other. At times one drills and pounds woodpecker fashion against the tree and then resumes bill sweep.

7:00 p.m. One entered hole, returned with fuzz (not an insect) & resumed sweeping.

7:10 p.m. Both appeared to leave and not return. Cardinals and robins still active at 7:45 p.m. but no sign of nuthatches.

7 APRIL

5:00-5:35 p.m. No activity except the bird inside appeared at entrance, then retreated.

5:40 p.m. Mate visited entrance and left again.

6:00 p.m. One did bill sweep while the other hunted among the willows.

6:40 p.m. One did bill sweep with a large object; the other made visits & departures; returned again to bill sweep ~~shaking bill as though to stun an insect~~, while the other performed bill sweeping action inside of hole. Outside sweep continued until 7:00 p.m.

7:02 p.m. A squirrel appeared at base of tri-fork, stood up and sniffed vigorously, tail twitching very sharply. It ran up to a position directly behind the limb from the nest hole, but abruptly reversed course and dashed directly down the trunk out of view. This departure appeared to be unprovoked and seemed inconsistent with the pugnacious curiosity usually displayed by this animal.

7:10 p.m. Sweep is resumed with something large and whitish. On occasion the bird made a quick dash down the limb as though to catch an insect; returned to sweeping.

7:18 p.m. Occupant looked out from hole. Nothing further noted.

8 APRIL

4:45 p.m. Occupant peered out.

5:05 p.m. Some hunting in willows but little activity noted until 6:30 p.m. when sweeping began again. On two occasions sweeper disappeared into hole and reappeared with large object with which sweeping was resumed.

7:03 p.m. Mate arrived, entered hole and left; returned at 7:15 p.m. to sweep until 7:20 p.m., then left again. Nothing further was noted.

9 APRIL

5:50 p.m. Occupant peered out; mate visited occasionally while hunting in the willows.

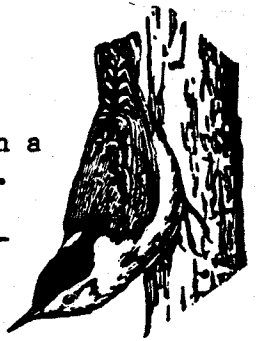
7:15 p.m. Both sexes performed bill sweep.

10 APRIL (70 degrees)

5:35-7:10 p.m. Visits to hole are made every 5 to 15 minutes. At one point the bird sat motionless over the hole for some time. A crow appeared; the nuthatch departed.

11 APRIL

3:30-4:40 p.m. Visits and occasional sweeps are made by one bird while the other remains in hole. In the last hour several crows scouted nearby and two squirrels passed by on the ground, during which times the nuthatches were inactive.



4:50 p.m. A large bright object was found in the willows which was divided by the pair and packed into bark crevices. Mate departed hole.

5:20 p.m. Sweeping resumed often by both birds.

5:25 p.m. Sweeps are carried out inside hole.

#### 12 APRIL

2:00 p.m. Bird on nest often looked out but did not leave.

4:00 p.m. Female cowbird pursued by two males alighted on hole & almost disappeared inside, left quickly pursued by males. No activity for more than 30 minutes.

4:38 p.m. Sweeping was resumed inside and outside of hole.

5:55 p.m. Mate visited hole and departed.

#### 13 APRIL

4:30-5:30 p.m. General inactivity. Occupant looked out on occasion. Mate became very upset by a pair of nearby chickadees & persistently chased them out of the area. In recent days Brown Creepers & kinglets have not evoked such a response.

7:00-7:10 p.m. Sweeping began with many visits to hole. On occasion the bird emerged with much wing flapping. Mate departed and returned with something in bill. Both disappeared into hole; both exited and began to sweep.

7:20 p.m. Bird flew out into the air above entrance and appeared to snatch insect, returned to hole. Mate exited and both resumed sweeping.

7:25 p.m. Sweeping stopped; one bird returned to nest hole, the other departed.

7:38 p.m. A squirrel fed on young buds about 20 ft. away; no other activity noted.

#### 14 APRIL

5:00 p.m. One of the birds was sweeping well above the entrance including around the bases of a few branches. The other arrived with possible large insect, visited hole, left to break up the material, returned to the hole, and then performed sweep for about five minutes.

5:40 p.m. Mate visited entrance and departed.

7:15-7:28 p.m. Some sweeping activity occurred. No other activity was noted.

#### 15 APRIL (light drizzle, chilly)

4:50 p.m. Bird exited, flew across the yard and soon returned.

5:00 p.m. ~~Mate visited to feed hole occupant and then departed to preen.~~

5:28 p.m. Mate visited and departed unperturbed by flicker close by.

5:45 p.m. Mate found something at base of willow and made several trips back and forth to nest hole apparently dropping off bits at cavity.

6:20 p.m. Sometimes one, sometimes both performed bill sweep for five minutes.

#### 16 APRIL

5:00-5:30 p.m. No activity noted.

#### 17 APRIL

4:55-5:15 p.m. No activity.

5:16 p.m. Brooding bird peered out.

5:30 p.m. Mate visited and departed having been absent for 36 minutes.

5:44 p.m. Mate hunted insects in nearby willows; frequent visits to nest hole.

#### 18 APRIL

1:30-2:30 p.m. Red-bellied Woodpecker poked around scouting every hole in the tree. Nuthatches did not protest.

3:30 p.m. Bird was perched at entrance behaving as though feeding young, then left for 15 minutes. The other bird checked around the hole as though to begin sweep, finally flew off.

#### 20 APRIL (rain)

4:55-7:00 p.m. No activity noted yesterday on a rainy Easter or today.

7:19 p.m. A squirrel arrived and without hesitation went directly to the nest hole, stuck its head inside and unhurriedly descended the tree. No further activity seen.

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Editor's Note: Behavioral observations of this nature are welcome additions to the newsletter. The Field List of the Birds of Maryland by Robbins & Bystrak lists egg dates for this species as 7 April to 20 May. The incubation period is 12 days and the young remain in the nest about 14 days. For further interesting behavioral nuthatch activity, see A Guide to Bird Behavior, II by Donald and Lillian Stokes, c. 1983; pp. 130-142.



## SERENDIPITY AND SNOW PRODUCE A NEW YARD BIRD - MARTHA CHESTEM

I look forward to the first snow every year so the very early big snowstorm of November 11th was a special treat. About 9:00 a.m., I thought the snow had ceased (we'd already had a couple of inches as had been predicted for the whole day) so I hiked from my house to Wilde Lake to enjoy the snow and see what birds had come in with the changing weather. It soon began to snow again very hard and I found the lake quiet with only the Mallards looking for a handout. I wandered back enjoying the snow but seeing no more than three birds.

I arrived home about 11:00 a.m. and as soon as I entered the house my glasses clouded with steam. I took them off and was wiping them as I looked out the glass patio doors at the great view. Just at that moment, I saw a dark ball flying unevenly through the falling snow toward the patio (without my glasses I could not even identify it as a bird). It flew under a picnic table that was covered with an opaque plastic sheet which covered the sides but left the ends exposed. I quickly put my glasses on and dropped to my knees. I had a good view of the underside of the table from that position. There was a Winter Wren! It was flitting about--obviously discovering that this was not an ideal shelter and it flew out again across the yard to the bank of the little creek. There are some pretty good habitat spots along the creek for a wren to find cover, but I had never seen a Winter Wren in the area. The whole incident was over in less than a minute, but I had a new yard bird and my first Howard County Winter Wren of the season. It was amazing when I thought about it--the timing had been perfect. It reminded me of Nick Short's article in the Nov-Dec issue of the newsletter. It had been another serendipitous moment and birders do have those in their birding memories.

Do you have a special serendipitous birding moment in your memory? In a few sentences or paragraphs describe it and send it to Editor Jo Solem, 10617 Grae Loch Rd. Laurel, MD 20707 for inclusion in a future newsletter.



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## HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB - FIFTEEN BUSY YEARS

- Each year programs were presented monthly from September through May; from 16 to 42 field trips were run each year; and members participated in the Triadelphia Christmas Count and May Count yearly.
- Birding, wildflower and/or photography workshops were held in 12 of the 15 years.
- Thousands of dollars were donated to environmental and conservation groups including The Nature Conservancy, Committee to Preserve Assateague, Peregrine Fund, Cape May Bird Observatory, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Citizens Against Waste, bird rehabilitation and others.
- Members presented at least 284 educational programs in 37 schools, to 24 garden clubs, and to 58 Scout and 4-H groups.
- The Bird Club donated squirrel-proof Hylarious feeders to the Howard County Central Library and to historic Waverly.
- The Bird Club maintained migration records and documentation for new county bird species which were submitted to Maryland Birdlife and/or the State Records Committee.

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ANNUAL BIRD LISTS FOR 1987 DUE BY JANUARY 15, 1988 - Please send complete or partial lists of birds seen in 1987 in Howard County to Jane Farrell, 6324 Sandchain Rd., Columbia, MD 21045. Preliminary indications suggest that we could come close to the record set in 1982.

DEADLINE FOR MARCH-APRIL NEWSLETTER IS FEBRUARY 1, 1988. Send material to Jo Solem, 10617 Grae Loch Rd., Laurel, MD 20707 or call 725-5037.

## VACATION BIRDING IN HAWAII - JERRY PERSALL

There is no reason I should feel guilty about having to go back to Hawaii. It was fate, after all, that caused me to live there for four years with my family when my father was stationed at Schofield Barracks in the center of Oahu. The fact that those were my high school years is not my fault. When my 25th class reunion came up this past August, obviously I had to go. What evidently is hard to admit is that I gloated to certain friends about the trip before going, while there, and upon returning. I could not resist calling back to Howard County and describing the view of the rolling Pacific from my highrise condo's perspective. Forgive me; I couldn't help it. It's a personality defect I don't work on seriously enough.

I had an opportunity to get in a little birding while there and found delight in my newly-trained observational skills. The work involved in maintaining a feeding station at home, attending club meetings as often as my travel schedule permits, and learning how to use field guides pays rich dividends. This knowledge of how to see is transferable to exotic locales and experiences accumulate in the mind so that the development of observation occurs faster than I sometimes realize.

Naturally, I have my share of Mourning Doves ground feeding in my backyard. I thought I had spotted a familiar species until I looked closer in a park on Oahu. They were Zebra Doves (Geopelia striata), similar in size and silhouette, but pale brown above and barred with black. Also known as Barred Doves, they are present on all eight main islands from sea level to 4000'. They are everywhere, particularly in residential areas. Like a number of mainland U.S. birds, the Zebra Dove is an introduced species, in this case brought to the islands from Asia in 1922. The coo is variable and similar to our own Mourning Dove.

The Common Myna (Acridotheres tristis) was also introduced to Hawaii, this one from India in 1865. Easy to identify because it hops as much as it walks, Myna birds were often seen in pairs and are abundant in the residential areas around Honolulu. They were particularly aggressive and loud. Noisy flocks were common near some of the public beaches.

On Maui, Haleakala Crater is dormant but not extinct. It last erupted in the 18th century. The cauldron is large enough to contain the entire island of Manhattan and sits at an altitude of 10,000' above the Pacific. You have to drive through the puffy cumulus cloud layer at 5000' to get to it. A favorite pastime for residents and tourists alike is to arise early enough to drive the 37 mile winding road to the top and watch the sunrise over the rim of the crater. Found only on the islands of Maui and Hawaii is the Hawaiian Goose or Nene (Nesochen sandvicensis). I found one in front of the ranger station near the top. Calls in flight resemble those of Canada Geese but my roosting example did not demonstrate this. A protected species in Hawaii, the Nene is subject to predation by the introduced mongoose and feral cats.

Many species present in Hawaii would be familiar to Howard Countians: Northern Mockingbird, House Finch, Northern Cardinal, American Wigeon, Black-crowned Night-Heron, and Mallard. It is in Hawaii's native forests, however, that the most extensive adaptive radiation of native birds has occurred. With names like 'Elepaio, 'Oma'o, and the Kauai 'O'o, they challenge the tongue (most vowels are pronounced most of the time) as well as advanced birding skills. Unfortunately, ten days goes by much too quickly on vacations and particularly in Polynesia.

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The State Records Committee has accepted the following rarities reported from Howard County: Baird's Sandpiper 12 September 1982, Buff-breasted Sandpiper 15 September 1979, Limpkin 26 May-10 June 1985 and Yellow-headed Blackbird 9-10 November 1985. A few other records are still under consideration. The Records Committee will no longer routinely consider first county records. All except the blackbird fall into that category. The Limpkin is the second record for the state.



# Howard

A Chapter of the  
Maryland Ornithological Society  
HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB



WINTER SEED SALE PICKUP IS SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1988

**DATE AND PICKUP INFORMATION:** Pickup is at the First Presbyterian Church on Rt. 108, 1/2 mile east of Rt. 29 from 8:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, February 6, 1988. All seed must be picked up on the day of the sale. Seed will not be held. Coordinator Eileen Clegg 730-4362 will advise you, if necessary of other customers in your area. Seed that is not picked up will be sold and customers will receive a refund, minus a \$5.00 fee.

**EXTRA SEED AVAILABLE:** Extra seed will be available at the church between 12:30-1:30 p.m. and unclaimed seed will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis.

**NEW FEEDER TIP SHEET:** Twice yearly seed sales are the major source of funding for the bird club. Your support is vital and much appreciated. If you need additional order blanks for friends or co-workers, call Eileen at 730-4362. Pass the enclosed extra blank along to a neighbor or friend. A new Feeder Tip Sheet (3) will be available free to all customers. Sheets 1 and 2 are still available.

**VOLUNTEERS ARE THE BACKBONE OF THIS EFFORT. JOIN THE FUN FOR A FEW HOURS (LOADERS RECEIVE A BAG OF SEED).**

**LOCATION** is the lower level in the fellowship hall. Check the club bookstore with its ample supply of books and field guides at lower than retail prices. The new MOS pin and club notecards are in stock. The Nature Nook will have feeders and suet cakes for sale.

OUR LOW PRICES ARE THE SAME AS LAST TIME!

➔ **ORDERS MUST BE PREPAID AND RECEIVED BY SATURDAY, JANUARY 30, 1988** ←

PREPARE FOR LATE WINTER/EARLY SPRING STORMS AND LOW NATURAL FOOD SUPPLIES  
**ORDER TODAY! BE SURE TO MARK THE FEBRUARY 6TH PICKUP DATE**

HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB WINTER SEED SALE

No. of Bags

Total

50 lbs. Black Oil Sunflower.....	.....@12.00	_____
25 lbs. Black Oil Sunflower.....	.....@ 6.25	_____
50 lbs. White Proso Millet.....	.....@ 8.50	_____
25 lbs. White Proso Millet.....	.....@ 4.50	_____
50 lbs. Sunflower Chips (hulled).....	.....@22.00	_____
25 lbs. Sunflower Chips (hulled).....	.....@11.00	_____
4 lbs. Niger Thistle Seed.....	.....@ 4.00	_____
8 lbs. Peanut Hearts.....	.....@ 4.00	_____

Donation for Publication of MD Breeding Bird Atlas.....

TOTAL ORDER \_\_\_\_\_

Prices INCLUDE 5% Maryland sales tax. Do NOT add it.

Make checks payable to Howard County Chapter-MOS.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to Howard Co. Bird Club Seed Sale  
6007 Flywheel Court  
Columbia, MD 21044

       This is my first order. Add my name to your mailing list. PHONE (please) \_\_\_\_\_

       YES! I would like to volunteer:        Loading;        Desk;        Baked Goods;        Mailing

       I am interested in Howard County Bird Club membership. Please send me a newsletter.

# BREEDING BIRD ATLAS MATCHING GRANT IS A CHALLENGE FOR CHAPTER AND STATE

From 1983-1987, the Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) undertook the most extensive ornithological study ever conducted in this state. By surveying the entire state, the frequency and distribution of almost 300 species of breeding birds were determined. All the data will be prepared for publication within the next few years. This book will contain the more than 90,000 records in the form of a map for each species. Any publishing venture is expensive. MOS has been asked to help raise funds to insure a quality product.

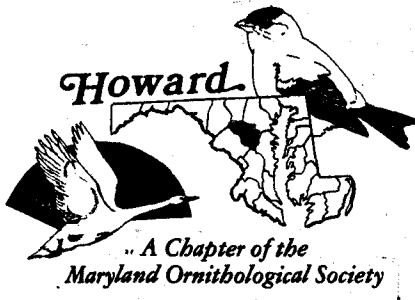
An anonymous donor has offered up to \$5000 providing the state MOS chapters can match it. The Howard Chapter has voted to donate \$500 plus an additional \$500 matching grant of its own so chapter members will be able to make a doubly effective contribution. Please mail your check to Treasurer Eva Sunell, 6730 Carlinda Ave., Columbia, MD 21046, made out to Howard County Chapter-MOS. Mark it Atlas Challenge OR you may add your donation to your seed sale order using the line added for your convenience. Our field work for this project was outstanding; let's show an equal commitment to the publication of the material.

Almost every year the chapter has donated a large portion of its profits from the two seed sales to various ornithological and environmental projects and organizations. Often the money has been donated to purchase land--valuable habitats which help to preserve ecosystems of varying rarity. Although, at first glance, the publication of a set of maps may not seem nearly as worthy of support as buying a few acres of land, IN THE LONG RUN IT MAY BE MUCH MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANY AMOUNT OF LAND THAT WE COULD AFFORD TO PURCHASE.

The Maryland Breeding Bird Atlas Project and the plant and animal survey conducted by the Natural Heritage Program will become the baseline studies in the state allowing judgments to be made about the rarity of a species or habitat. Every time an environmental impact statement is required prior to building highways, bridges, county and state buildings, ~~shopping centers, dams, etc.~~ ~~THESE STUDIES MUST BE CONSULTED.~~ Your participation in this project may save more valuable land in the decades to come than you could possibly imagine. Contributions are, of course, tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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Society, Inc.  
Cylburn Mansion  
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