



Vol. 17, No 4
Mar-Apr 1989

Howard

A Chapter of the
Maryland Ornithological Society



A RECORD 1563 BLUEBIRDS FLEDGED IN 1988 - Joseph Suess and Mark Wallace

The "drought of '88" will long be remembered as one of the hottest and driest summers on records. The bluebird fledge rate was slightly reduced due to infertile eggs and some early discontinuance of nesting. Four young were found dead as a direct result of the heat. They were discovered in a sub-standard shallow box made of $\frac{3}{8}$ " cedar with no ventilation provided under the top! These "death traps" are constructed and sold all over the country. Unfortunately, there isn't much we can do about it except urge their replacement and advise newcomers to birding of their shortcomings. The young birds are especially vulnerable when ready to fledge. Their size consumes much of the volume available in the box. Since they do not perspire and cannot open their wings to keep cool, panting is the only method for them to dissipate heat. Next box plans for the recommended box are available.

The other extreme during the '88 nesting season was the cold, damp spring. Early nesters who began during a warm spell were caught in the steady rains and cold in late April and early May. The birds in the western section of the county were hardest hit. Over 60 young were lost and, in one box, the adult female was found dead on her young. In another box on the Ehlers trail, two young were found barely alive. The warmth of Frances' hands revived them during the trip to place them in another box from which they eventually fledged. It is suspected that the combination of cold and the length of time the adults had to spend looking for food were the major contributing factors in these losses. Blowfly infestation was down, probably as a result of this cold snap.

In spite of the problems, the bluebirds fared rather well. Our 1988 figures surpass those of 1987; however, this is attributed to receipt of additional reports. We continue to appreciate the kindness of property owners who allow bluebirders to monitor boxes on their land. Their names are too numerous to mention. We also extend our thanks to the following individuals who submitted data for 1988:

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sue Andrews | Frances Ehlers | Hope Hutton | Eleanor Robbins |
| William Ballentine | Bob Ellis | Albert Iager | Hilde Rodgers |
| Dan Barnes | Rosemary Fisher | Pat Jackson | Phil Serafinas |
| Robert Bogdan | Diane Fleck | Bill Jacobsen | Gary Smith |
| Jon E. & Jon K. Boone | Herb Fox | Marie Lohr | Ruth & Keith Smith |
| Connie Bockstie | John & Emily Frazier | Margaret Lord | Charene Snyder |
| Monika & Rod Botsai | Sandra French | Grazina & Mike McClure | Chuck Stirrat |
| Nadine Bready | Glen & Sarah Funkhouser | Charles Miller | Joseph Suess |
| Marilyn Brinkley | Louise Graham | John & Betty Millman | Bill Theis |
| Susan Buswell | Lee & Carol Grant | Bea Newkirk | Vera & Andre Thomann |
| Ceil Casciaro | Nancy & Guy Hawkins | Jim Nichols | Helen Thompson |
| Ann Cockrell | Dana Heisey | Karl Peters | Ann Traynham |
| Kathy Colston | Jim Heller | William H. Phillips | Mark Wallace |
| Diane & Walt Connoley | Ann Hermann | Don & Judy Proia | Randy & Margaret Walton |
| Regina Cope | Pat Hirt | James Resau | Felix Westwood |
| Carolyn Cradler | Paul Hogue | Frank Reilly | Janie Zimmer-Long |
| Chris Cuddeback | How. Co. Rec & Parks | Edward Riley | |
| Allen Douglas | | | |

Our special thanks is extended to Connie Bockstie and Ceil Casciaro for their timely and effective management of the Sharp Road Bluebird Trail. Decked out in their fancy headgear for protection from the sun and toting a five gallon bucket to extend their height at some of the boxes, they became a "hit" in the neighborhood every Tuesday morning. The bluebirds are prolific on this trail, and it is a pleasure to see so many in a relatively small area.

| Boxes Monitored | Boxes Used Successfully | Eggs Laid | Young Fledged | Fledge Rate | Bluebirds Banded | Other Cavity Nesters Banded |
|-----------------|-------------------------|-----------|---------------|-------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| 636 | 345 | 2405 | 1563 | 65% | 778 | 15 |

Eggs Lost - 586 Young Lost - 256

Other Cavity Nesters Fledged in 1988:

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|----|---------------|-----|---------------------|----|
| Carolina Chickadee | 59 | Carolina Wren | 6 | Tree Swallow | 22 |
| Tufted Titmouse | 30 | House Wren | 184 | Eastern Screech-Owl | 3 |

House Sparrows trapped and removed - 1700-1800
 European Starlings trapped and removed - 1000+

We are finding that more and more monitors understand the necessity for removing House Sparrow nests and eggs. This introduced and unprotected species destroys bluebird eggs and will kill the adult bluebird and young. The impact of House Sparrows on our bluebirds is NOT part of a natural balance of nature on this continent. Without question, a House Sparrow control program results in an increase of our bluebird population.

Bill Eckert reported that our joint trail with Howard County Recreation and Parks fledged the second highest number of bluebirds since the beginning of the program in 1983. The 135 bluebirds are included in the above total. They fledged from 52 boxes in 15 parks. ~~Bill expressed continued appreciation to Cliff Grant for building and donating the sturdy, well-crafted cedar nest boxes for use in the parks.~~

In the annual competition between the Bluebirds and the Cows "played" in Benson Branch Park, the Bluebirds won 12 to 0! That is, 12 bluebirds fledged from the two boxes in the park, and the cows were unable to knock down either of the boxes. The construction of barbed wire barricades around the boxes by Rec and Parks employees appears to have settled the problem once and for all.

Thanks to the following individuals who monitored boxes in the parks in 1988:

| | | |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Linda Adams | Michele Wright | Bernd & Lucy Kiekebusch- |
| Betsie Yowel | Phil Jacobson | Steinitz |
| Nancy Griffin | Linda Schiffer | Gary Landes |
| Carol Delaney | Barbara Rowe | Cliff Gross |
| Linda & Dave Fleischer | Marie Battle | Susan Earp |
| Mike & Sandy Meyerhoff | Joyce Kelly | Joe Suess |

Jim Heller had three Eastern Screech-owls fledge from a cavity in his front yard as they have for the past several years and Mr. Sines on Triadelphia Mill Road fledged nine Tree Swallows in two broods from his bluebird boxes.

Although no cavity nesting bird used the kestrel box on the large dead tree in Schooley Mill Park last year, we were pleasantly surprised to find a flying squirrel occupying it when we checked it in the fall.


A final indication that our Boost Cavity Nesters Program is working in the county. Yrjo Collan remarked after seeing 8-10 bluebirds at Centennial Park on a field trip in October, that 14 years ago when he was here for a year he didn't see any bluebirds in the county. Now he had seen them in three different places in just one park! For help or information, contact Joe Suess 854-0250 and leave a message. Joe or Mark will get back to you.

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 noted. Carpooling is encouraged with riders sharing the cost of gas and tolls. Dress for field work with stout, reasonably waterproof footgear 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 Chair Michele Wright 465-6057.

 **MAR 9** **A BLUEBIRD EVENING.** Joe Suess, Mark Wallace & Chuck Dupree. A bluebird video along with county status report, answers to questions, displays, etc.
Thurs


 **MAR 11** **WATERFOWL ON THE COLUMBIA LAKES.** Leader: Jane Farrell 596-2630. Meet at Grempler at 1:00 p.m. to check migrant and wintering duck populations.
Sat

APR 9, 16, 23, 30 & MAY 7 **FIVE WEEKLY WALKS IN CENTENNIAL PARK, SUNDAYS 7:00-9:00 A.M.** Jointly sponsored by How. Co. Rec & Parks. No attempt will be made to walk entirely around the lake. Each week will bring different birds during an exciting migration period. In the course of this month there should be waterfowl, shorebirds, swallows, raptors and some warblers. A different leader each week: Jane Farrell, Charles Swift, Marty Chestem, Paul Zucker, Jo Solem. At least one scope will be available. No beginning bird walks are being scheduled this spring as these will be excellent for all levels. No fee. Meet at the concession building off Rt. 108. Areas and habitat to be covered will be at the discretion of the leader.
Sundays

 **APR 13** **WILDFLOWERS AND NATURE.** Ted Oberman. Ted has specialized in wildflowers and other natural history subjects. Get a taste of spring from a Montgomery MOS member.
Thurs

 **APR 22** **SPRING WILDFLOWER WALK** - Leader: Bob Solem 725-5037. Cedar Lane Park. Meet at 1:00 p.m. at front of the gray building near the parking lot at the Cedar Lane entrance. Half day.
Sat

APR 29 **SPECIAL FIELD TRIP TO MEYER'S STATION WITH BILL BRIDGELAND SPONSORED BY MEMORIAL/GIFTS FUND** - The Memorial/Gifts Fund allows special events to be scheduled. This field trip to a private wildlife sanctuary in Anne Arundel County will be led by biologist William Bridgeland. Bill has an M.S. from Cornell University and has taught natural history classes at Howard Community College. This field trip will visit a section of floodplain along the Patuxent River which contains beaver ponds, a Great Blue Heron rookery and marshlands; Wood Duck and bluebird boxes have been erected and food plots planted. We will see resident and migrant birds along with wildflowers, amphibians, small mammals, etc. A special opportunity in a half day trip. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the park and ride lot at the northwest corner of Rt. 32 and Broken Land Parkway. Wear waterproof footgear; although there are trails, it may be damp and/or muddy in spots.
Sat

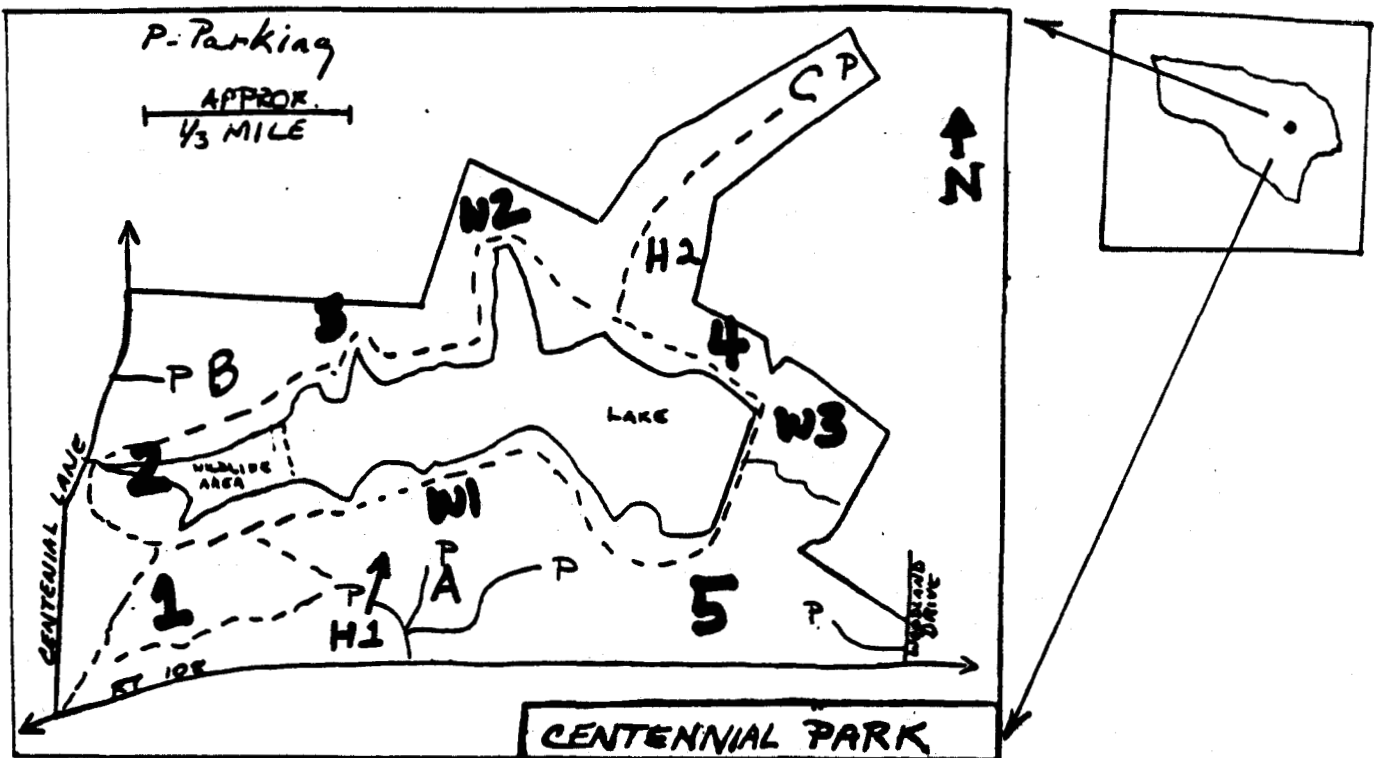
 **MAY 6** **PATUXENT RIVER APPRECIATION DAY - Wildflower Walk.** Leader: Bob Solem. Meet at 10:30 a.m. at the building in Savage Park.
Sat

 **MAY 13** **MAY COUNT** - Save this Sat. for all day count. Details in next newsletter.

BOARD MEETING - March 23 - Thurs 7:30 p.m. Miller Branch Library Meeting Room.

Jane Zuke can receive small groups to see the hawks and owls she is rehabilitating. If you are interested, contact her at 937-6718 to set a visiting time.

BIRDING "HOT SPOTS" IN HOWARD COUNTY - Charles Swift - Centennial Park, Part III



This will be the last "Hot Spots" issue looking at Centennial Park. The past few months the park has produced an interesting variety of water birds including Bonaparte's Gull, ~~Great Black backed Gull, Green winged Teal, and Northern Shoveler.~~ I have also found White-crowned Sparrows on every visit since October. The best months are coming up and if this isn't inducement enough, the Bird Club will sponsor a series of walks at the park in April. (See details in the calendar in this newsletter.)

The White-crowned Sparrows have been in a large mixed flock of sparrows at the west end of the park. They move between the areas marked 2 on the map, and a weedy plot between the tennis courts and Centennial Lane (near parking lot B). The white-crowns will perch in the open when attracted by spishing. Look for the boldly striped white and black crown, pink bill, and distinctly sloping head profile. They are larger than White-throated Sparrows and have a more erect posture.

In the last newsletter Ralph Geuder wrote an article on fall hawk migration. Centennial Park has the potential for producing good hawk flights. I have found two vantage points for observing migrating hawks (marked H1 and H2). H1 is the parking lot above and west of the concession stand. H2 is the highest point on the trail between the lake-loop and the north area (C). One day last October I observed about ten hawks here in fifteen minutes. They flew down to my vantage point and then rode thermals straight over my head. It was quite a sight.

I hope these articles have encouraged you to explore Howard County's newest birding "Hot Spot." Remember to visit the park as early and as often as possible to find the best birds. Also avoid warm weekend afternoons that bring out the hordes. Centennial Park should continue to produce good birding opportunities and stimulate interest in nature study in our county parks.

The Howard Bird Club voted to support the Nontidal Wetlands Bill. We need your support. Call today!

Bob Solem

Bob Solem
Conservation Chair



MARYLANDS' NONTIDAL WETLANDS BILL

Background: In Maryland, nontidal (freshwater) wetlands are generally marshes, bogs, and hardwood swamps that are not influenced by the tides. Although these wetlands are found further inland, they are extremely important to the Chesapeake Bay's water quality and living resources. Nontidal wetlands provide important fish and wildlife habitat, help to reduce damage from storms and floods, and control pollution from sediment, excess nutrients and toxics.

However, Maryland is quickly losing this important resource. From 1955 to 1978, over 24,000 acres of Maryland's tidal (coastal) and nontidal wetlands were destroyed through agricultural and development activities such as draining, ditching, damming and filling. In addition, nontidal wetlands continue to be destroyed at a rate of more than 1,000 acres per year.

The 1987 Chesapeake Bay Agreement, signed by the governors of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, recognized the importance of wetlands to the bay cleanup effort. Although Maryland has a law to protect tidal wetlands, no such law exists for nontidal wetlands. Consequently, Governor Schaefer recently introduced a bill, ~~SB 481 and HB 647~~, that will significantly increase protection for this threatened resource.

About the bill: Senate Bill 481 sets up a statewide program within the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for the "conservation, regulation, enhancement, creation, monitoring, and wise use of nontidal wetlands." The overall goal of the program is to strive toward a no net loss and a net resource gain in nontidal wetlands acreage and function.

Local governments will have an 18-month period--until December 31, 1990--to develop their own programs, as long as they are consistent with standards adopted by the DNR. The DNR will assist local governments in nontidal wetland management planning, including mapping, technical assistance and expediting the permit process.

Under the program, a person wanting to conduct a regulated activity--such as dredging, draining, or filling--in a nontidal wetland or its 25-foot buffer, would have to obtain a permit from the DNR (or authorized local government). A permit would be issued only if certain standards were met. Mitigation, such as restoration or creation of new wetlands, may be required for "unavoidable" losses of wetlands due to the proposed activity.

Exemptions from the permitting and mitigation requirements include: agricultural activities undertaken in accordance with Public Drainage Regulations; activities conducted in nontidal wetlands in the critical area; activities which "normally" occur in nontidal wetlands with minimal impact,

(Over)

CONSERVATION ALERT

such as repair and maintenance of existing structures; and activities in "isolated" nontidal wetlands of less than one acre and having no significant plant or wildlife value.

Action: There is strong opposition to this bill from the agricultural and development. Please write your Senator and Delegates immediately urging them to support SB 481 and HB 647. Urge them to become co-sponsors of the bill. Tell them of examples of wetlands destruction in your community (urban development, road construction, etc.) that this bill would help to control. And finally, urge them to support strengthening amendments that will help to increase wetlands protection. Write to the following addresses:

The Honorable (Senator's name)
James Senate Office Bldg.
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable (Delegate's name)
Lowe House Office Bldg.
Annapolis, MD 21401

If you have questions or need more information, please call Linda Winter at (703)528-1818.



THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.
1401 Wilson Boulevard, Level B
Arlington, Virginia 22209

Call your Senator or Delegate to the State Legislature. Our newsletter goes out too late to affect the committee hearing, but there is still time for the final vote. Tell your Senator you support SB 481; tell your Delegate you support HB647.

To Call Your Representatives:

Baltimore/Annapolis calling area: 841 plus the four digit number
Washington Suburban calling area: 858 plus the four digit number

District 4 - Carroll, Frederick & Howard Counties

Senator Charles H. Smelser - 3704 Delegate Donald B. Elliott (4B) - 3371

District 13 - Howard & Prince George's Counties

Senator Thomas M. Yeager - 3572 Delegate Virginia M. Thomas (13A)-3205
Delegate William C. Bevan (13B)-3205 Delegate Susan R. Buswell (13B) - 3205

District 14 - Howard & Montgomery Counties

Senator Edward J. Kasemeyer - 3671 Delegate Joel Chasnoff (14A)
Delegate Robert L. Flanagan (14B)-3052 Delegate Robert H. Kittleman (14B)-3200

CONSERVATION ALERT

SEED SALE WORKERS AND DONATIONS - Eileen Clegg

The second seed sale of the 1988-89 year was marked by cold weather, many willing workers and numerous donations to the Nature Conservancy's Appalachian Campaign. The following loaders moved 31,000 pounds of seed cheerfully and efficiently: Gus & Cleo Karafas, Jim Blanchard, Cy Hammond, Don Waugh, John Greer, Bill Phillips, Dennis Luck, Tom Horwath and two daughters, Shiras and Bill Guion, Mark Wallace, Jane Farrell, Larry Weaver, Rod Botsai, Steve Clarkson, and David Thelen. Helping at the desk or the bookstore were Frank & Harriet Baldau, Linda McDaniel, Melinda Upp, Martha Waugh, Zelda Simon, Margo Garner, Michele Wright, Norma Peterson, Robin Jenkins, Sue Greer, Jo Solem and Marty Chestem. Providing much appreciated baked goods were Barbara Davis, Sue Greer, Ronnie Phillips and Eileen Clegg. At the time of writing, almost \$700.00 has been donated by individuals for land preservation in western Maryland. There will be an announcement in the next newsletter of the amount donated by the Club, along with the list of individual donors. If any Club members would like to make a donation, there is still time. Make your check to Howard County Chapter - MOS and mark it for The Nature Conservancy's Appalachian Campaign. Send it to Treasurer Nancy Magnusson, 304 Thomas Drive Apt. 5, Laurel, MD 20707.

ENCOUNTER WITH A SAPSUCKER - Nancy Huting

Do you remember February 1988 when it was below zero at night and not much above it in the daytime? At that time a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker came to one of our maple trees every day. About five feet above the ground he dug a large hole from which the sap flowed freely. One day while I was busy at the kitchen sink I saw a squirrel climbing the tree trunk toward the sapsucker who was busy at his favored spot. The bird began frantically flapping his wings but was unable to fly away. I knew at once what was wrong. His feet were frozen to the sap seeping from the tree. I raced out the back door, chased the squirrel away, and stood right next to the poor bird. I briefly considered putting my hand on the sap to warm it until I looked at that strong beak and decided not to try that. About this time the sapsucker broke loose and flew away -- to the relief of both of us. He did return to the same tree the rest of the month but chose a different spot.

NEWS - NEWS - NEWS - NEWS - NEWS - NEWS - NEWS - NEWS - NEWS - NEWS

ANNUAL MOS CONVENTION IS JUNE 2-4, 1989 AT FROSTBURG STATE COLLEGE - Reserve this weekend for field trips, workshops, exhibits, and the chance to meet other birders.

BOOKSTORE MANAGER OR CO-MANAGER NEEDED - If you are interested in helping with the Club bookstore at meetings and seed sales, contact Pres. Tom Strikwerda evenings 942-2841. Many thanks to Michele Wright and Norma Peterson for their help this year.

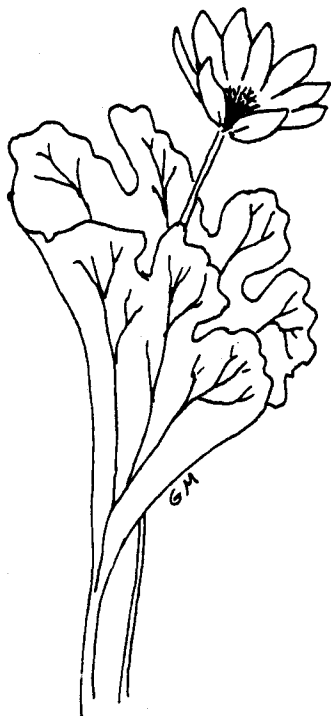
MARTHA WAUGH FILLS CENTRAL LIBRARY FEEDER - Again this year Martha has kept the Howard County Central Library feeder filled. This Hylarious feeder was donated by the Bird Club some years ago to enhance the library grounds. Many thanks, Martha.

PARKS LIST PROJECT CONTINUING - Anyone interested in contributing to the parks checklist project at one or more county parks should contact Jane Farrell 596-2630 for tally sheets. With spring approaching more people will be out walking and bird watching. Contribute your sightings. Records of common birds are needed along with the more unusual.

PLATE & CUP LEFT AT WINTER COUNT TALLY - Are you missing a plate & cup (each decorated with flowers)? If so, call Zelda Simon 730-8328.

MOCKINGBIRDS EATING DEAD BEES - Monika Botsai reports that a mockingbird in her yard is eating the dead bees that have been discarded in front of the hive by the colony.

FLOWER FEATURE: BLOODROOT - Georgia Morris and Bob Solem



BLOODROOT - *Sanguinaria canadensis*

FAMILY - Poppy (*Papaveraceae*)

HABITAT - Rich open wooded slopes; shady embankments.

HOWARD COUNTY BLOOMING SEASON - Mostly April.

HOWARD COUNTY LOCATION - North side Kindler Road, Daniels PVSP, Rockburn Park, Centennial Park, Lake Elkhorn, Hollofield PVSP, Cedar Lane Park.

FLOWERS - 3"-8" high. 1"-1 1/2" across; 8 to 12 petals plus two sepals that fall as the flower opens. Golden stamens are numerous and surround a single pistil.

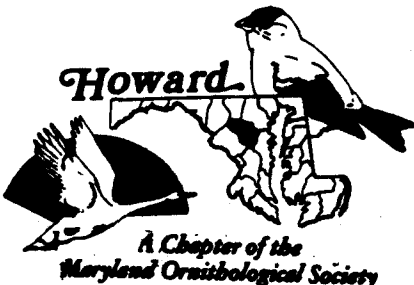
FRUIT - Oblong capsule.

LEAVES - Up to 4" across, deeply lobed, pale bluegreen beneath, green on top.

SPECIAL INFORMATION - Flowers and leaves grow on individual stalks. The rounded, deeply lobed leaf encircles the flower in a cup-like manner. The undersides of the petals can be pink as the flower opens. Alternate petals are narrower and more sharply pointed. The flower opens in sunlight and closes at night. Each flower blooms and dies within a few days. The flower produces no nectar and is visited only by bees who gather pollen. Bloodroot gets its name from the red-orange juice that drips from a cut stem. American Indians used the juice for dye for cloth, basketwork and warpaint and as an insect repellent and treatment for rheumatism and ringworm. Early settlers also used Bloodroot in the treatment of bronchitis and asthma.

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4915 Greenspring Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21209

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