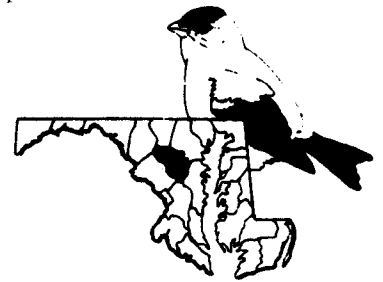




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Nov-Dec 1989

# Howard

A Chapter of the  
Maryland Ornithological Society



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## OSPREY NESTING PLATFORMS ERECTED ON LOCAL RESERVOIRS



The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) has erected four Osprey nesting platforms recently on Triadelphia and Rocky Gorge Reservoirs hoping to attract Ospreys to nest. Although they are regularly seen during spring and fall migration and wanderers are observed for much of the summer, there are no recent historical records of nesting in this fresh water location (Triadelphia Reservoir is about 40 years old and Rocky Gorge 50). *Birds of Maryland* by Stewart and Robbins does not indicate any Piedmont nests, but Chandler Robbins (pers. comm.) suggests that there is a good chance for success with the venture if the food supply is adequate and the birds accept the platforms.

Larry Iager, WSSC guard, says that two platforms were placed on each reservoir. On Triadelphia one platform is on the Howard side and one on the Montgomery. Birders may be able to help monitor activities on Triadelphia as they bird the Brighton Dam/Greenbridge area. Each of the supporting pressure-treated poles is fitted with a 3 foot band of aluminum as a predator guard. The 3 X 3 foot basket is made from aluminum grating.

We applaud WSSC for committing time, material and personnel to this project and will look forward to the coming breeding season with anticipation.

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## 43,000 POUNDS OF SEED SOLD IN LARGEST SALE EVER - Eileen Clegg

The Bird Club's twice yearly seed sales continue to be highly successful and well supported by members and friends. Profits from these sales have enabled us to retain a stable dues structure and donate thousands of dollars to conservation causes. The many willing volunteers make it all possible. Working either inside at the desk and bookstore or outside loading were Margo Garner, Sue & John Greer, Martha & Don Waugh, Nancy Magnusson, Pat Jackson, Jo Solem, Michele Wright, Robin Jenkins, Glenn Davis, Bill Phillips,, Bob Bogdan, Rod Botsai, Peter Osenton, Steve Koziol, Chuck Stirrat, Gus & Cleo Karafas, Mark Wallace, Deborah Schultz, Tim Keller, Jane Farrall, Michael Courbron, Marty Chestem, and Helen Zeichner. Baked goods were generously supplied by Roni Phillips, Sue Greer, Monika Botsai, Barbara Davis, and Roselle Martin and were much appreciated. Thanks to each of the volunteers, donors and customers.

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## ROCKBURN HABITAT WALKS BEING LED BY SANDY AND MIKE MEYERHOFF

The seasonal habitat walks jointly sponsored with Howard County Recreation and Parks are being led this year by Bird Club members Sandy and Mike Meyerhoff who are experienced naturalists. Over the last few years they have spent a great deal of time at Rockburn Park, are contributing to the bird checklist of that park, and monitor the bluebird boxes there. The Club thanks Chuck Dupree for his leadership of these walks for the past half dozen years. Although his knee will no longer allow him to make extended hikes, he will continue his support in less strenuous ways.

## 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 footwear and layers of clothes. Trips do not always follow paths. No pets. Leaders may cancel due to inclement weather or fewer than 3 participants. Questions? Call leader or Field Trip Chair Michele Wright 465-6057.

NOV 5,12 **SUNDAY MORNING WALKS AT CENTENNIAL PARK.** 8:00-10:00 a.m. Meet at the Sun building off the Rt. 108 entrance. Leaders: N. Magnusson; C. Swift.

NOV 9 **"THE CANADA GOOSE IN MARYLAND"** - Larry Hindman, Migratory Bird Supervisor for the Maryland Forest, Park and Wildlife Service. Our wintering population of the Canada Goose is declining. What are the reasons? Are there solutions? This slide program will provide some of the answers.



NOV 12 **BOAT TRIP ON THE POTOMAC.** Leaders: Greg Kearns & Rich Dolesh. Local contact: Michele 465-6057. Maximum 16 people. Reservations required by November 9. Meet at 6:45 a.m. to see waterfowl from an unusual vantage point. Highly recommended by those who have taken this trip previously. Dress warmly. 1/2 day.



NOV 18 **PATUXENT WILDLIFE RESEARCH CENTER TOUR.** Leader: Matthew Perry. Local contact: Michele 465-6057. Maximum 15 people. Reservations required by November 15. Meeting time 11:00 a.m. at Grempler, 12:00 n. at the Center. ~~At the Center, a van will be provided for transportation.~~ If oversubscribed, an attempt will be made to add another van. A rare opportunity to see part of the Center and some of its current research projects.



DEC 2 **BLACKWATER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE WATERFOWL TRIP.** Leaders: Bill Eckert 992-2464 (days) & Chuck Dupree 796-1086 (evenings). Annual bus trip co-sponsored with How. Co. Rec & Parks. Bus leaves George Howard Building parking lot at 7:30 a.m., return about 5:00 p.m. Fee \$18.00 which includes refuge entry fee. Good views of numerous species of wintering waterfowl. Eagles likely. Views of species with telescope. Especially recommended for beginning birders and those new to this areas. Make reservations with Bill or use application in Rec & Parks flyer mailed to all residents.



DEC 14 **"FOR TODAY SAVE TOMORROW"** - Linda Fields, Solid Waste Program Manager for Howard County. A slide program describing the necessity for recycling, the county's program and goals, and a word about the national problem.



DEC ?? **TRIADELPHIA CHRISTMAS COUNT.** For date and information, contact compiler  
 Bob Whitcomb: 344-2339 (O); 299-5215 (H). Fee.

**BOARD MEETING**

NOV 30 **MILLER BRANCH LIBRARY** meeting room at 7:30 p.m. All elected officers and committee heads.

**DATES TO CIRCLE ON YOUR 1990 CALENDAR:**

- Jan. 27 - Sat. - Fifth Annual Mid-Winter Count
- Feb. 3 - Sat. - Second Seed Sale Pickup Date

Material for Jan-Feb. newsletter should be phoned or mailed to Jo Solem (725-5037) 10617 Graeoch Rd., Laurel, MD 20707 by Nov. 20. Autumn migration dates (Aug-Nov) must be received by Dec. 7 for inclusion in reports for state and region.

At the southwestern end of the park there is a small wooden foot bridge (G) over the stream. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers have nested along the stream to the left, and Orchard Orioles have nested on the open hillside just behind the bridge. The paths upstream to the right, one on either side of the stream, lead to a pond on fenced private land (visible from the park) where Wood Ducks have been seen in spring. Northern Waterthrushes have also been found here in springtime, whereas Louisiana Waterthrushes, Acadian Flycatchers and Ovenbirds are found anywhere in the woods along the streams during the breeding season. American Redstarts and Eastern Wood-Pewees also like this area of the park. Eastern Kingbirds prefer the open areas, while Great Crested Flycatchers like a combination of stream and open air. Eastern Phoebes are possible from early March into November.

Reversing course from the foot bridge, there is a horse trail that leads to a hill back up onto the open area (H). For variety of species, this is probably the most productive area of the park. To the left of this trail is a ravine containing a dense growth suitable for Rufous-sided Towhee and other thicket-loving species. In the lone tree between this ravine and a soccer field, Northern Orioles have nested. The fields on either side of this ravine can yield countless bluebirds, cardinals, sparrows, and finches. This year a female Ring-necked Pheasant was flushed in this vicinity.

#### **HOWARD COUNTY FAIR BOOTH WELL STAFFED**

Mike McClure did his usual fine job of organizing the exhibit in the commercial building at the Howard County Fair and recruiting individuals to staff it evenings and weekends. Because August is prime vacation time, his job is not an easy one. Mike constructed the display table, and he and Grazina transported it to and from the exhibit area. The crew of volunteers who talked to a stream of fair goers included Don & Martha Waugh, Ken & Anne Hart, Marty Chestem, Ralph & Jane Geuder, John & Eileen Clegg, Connie Bockstie, Jack & Jane Farrell, Leroy & Cathy Williamson, Helen Zeichner, Mike & Georgia Morris, Tom Strikwerda, Rod & Monika Botsai, Bob & Jo Solem, and Nancy Magnusson. This is an excellent activity for parents with school age children; some families choose a convenient night, see the fair, and help at the booth. Those new to birding are always welcome and are placed with experienced individuals. The Club purchases several passes which are moved among volunteers along with the mounted specimens which must be transported each day.

If you have ideas for the booth or would like to work with others in planning next year's exhibit, mention that fact to Pres. Tom Strikwerda at any meeting or contact him at 942-2841.

**CORRECTION: JERRY EINEM HAD FIRST ACTIVE VEERY NEST** - The last newsletter credited an active Veery nest found near Schooley Mill Park in 1989 with being a new county record. Actually, Jerry Einem found an active nest in the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area while he was working on the Breeding Bird Atlas in 1987. Thanks to Marjorie Mountjoy and Marty Chestem for pointing this out. Sorry, Jerry! -- Jo Solem.

**MARYLAND BIRDLIFE MAILING** - The Bird Club has agreed to mail the next four issues of *Maryland Birdlife*, the state journal. A UPS dropoff point in central Howard County for 4-5 cartons is needed (carport, garage, covered porch). No other obligation involved. If you can help, please call Pres. Tom Strikwerda 792-5000 ex 8291 (W); 942-2841 (H).

**ALL HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB MEMBERS** are automatically members of the state organization, so any trips listed in *The Yellowthroat* which are not described as restricted to a particular chapter can be participated in by any Bird Club member. This provides the opportunity to bird the entire state of Maryland under the guidance of local knowledgeable leaders enabling anyone to see new birds, to find new birding areas and to become acquainted with birders in other parts of the state.

BIRDING "HOT SPOTS" IN HOWARD COUNTY - George Chase & Nancy Magnusson  
Schooley Mill Park, Part III

*Letters in the following material refer to the map published in the Sept-Oct 1989 newsletter.*

The open areas of the park just inside the gate present a migration stopover for Bobolinks and Vesper Sparrows and a summer home for Eastern Bluebirds, Eastern Meadowlarks, Killdeer, and Grasshopper Sparrows. A small pond with cattails (A) on the right as one proceeds into the park attracts Tree, Barn, Cliff, Rough-winged Swallows and Purple Martins, as well as an occasional Green-backed or Great Blue Heron; migrant Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers stop along the edges; and it is a summer home for Red-winged Blackbirds. The old farm house on the left is, unfortunately, a haven for European Starlings. Though it looks like a good shelter for Barn Owls or Turkey Vultures, their presence has not been evident.

Walking toward the woods from behind the house, look to the far right beyond the ball fields. American Kestrels often hunt in that far corner of the park and a Red-tailed or Red-shouldered Hawk can often be found sitting in a large dead tree standing prominently in front of the tree line. The kestrel nesting box attached to that tree has been used by flying squirrels.

The wide mowed horse trail (B), encountered where woods and field meet, circumnavigates the entire open area of the park. This trail provides easy strolling and good birding. Don't be surprised if you meet a fox coming the other way. Study the sparrows and finches for this walk: Song, Field, American Tree, White-throated, and White-crowned Sparrows in winter; Lincoln's, Swamp, Fox, Vesper, and Savannah during migration; Grasshopper, Field, Song, and Chipping Sparrows in summer; Gold and House Finches at any time. Yellow-breasted Chats, Common Yellowthroats, Indigo Buntings, and Blue Grosbeaks can be found during the breeding season. Look for a Sharp-shinned or Cooper's Hawk sampling the larder fall, winter and spring. Northern Bobwhites can be flushed along this trail at any time of the year.

There is a second path (C) (a horse trail) that follows closely along the streams that roughly mark the boundary of the park. The entrance to the paths (D) into the woods nearest the house leads to mixed mature trees: tulip, oak, beech and scatted pine with little underbrush. Here are the haunts of the migrant Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and resident Hairy, Downy, Red-bellied and Pileated Woodpeckers, Northern Flickers, nuthatches, owls, hawks, and raccoons.

Many lesser paths lead to and from this main path. All the thrushes have been found here during migration. Depending on the season, warblers also abound along this trail: Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Canada, Chestnut-sided, Black-and-white, etc.

On the steep hillside (E) behind the flying squirrel box stand many large oaks that attract migrant songbirds including Yellow-throated Vireos and Blackburnian Warblers. Scarlet Tanagers nest here. At the bottom of this hill along the stream can be found breeding Kentucky, Northern Parula and Hooded Warblers.

Following clockwise along the stream from this point the trees thin out into an area of briars and brushy growth (F) with blackhaws, dogwoods and scattered red cedars. Here Gray Catbirds, Brown Thrashers and American Robins are possible all year round. Blue-winged, Prairie and Yellow Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chats, Yellow-billed Cuckoos, and White-eyed Vireos also frequent this area during the breeding season. There are many deer trails that lead to secluded clearings among the brush.

**FLOWER FEATURE: COMMON EVENING PRIMROSE - Georgia Morris and Bob Solem**



**COMMON EVENING PRIMROSE - *Oenothera biennis***

**FAMILY - Evening Primrose (*Onagraceae*)**

**HABITAT - Roadsides, fields**

**HOWARD COUNTY BLOOMING SEASON - Early June to end Nov.**

**HOWARD COUNTY LOCATION - Widespread. Many parks: Atholton, Savage, Cypressmede, Centennial, Rockburn.**

**FLOWERS - Four broad pale yellow petals arise from the top of a long thin calyx tube which surrounds a swollen ovary. The stigma (top of pistil) is "X" shaped. There are 8 stamens with long anthers. The 1-2" wide flowers bloom in a spike at the top of a single leafy stalk. The stem is hairy and reddish.**

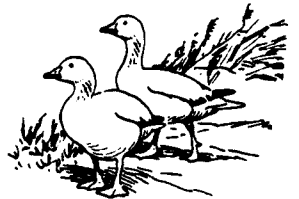
**LEAVES - This mid-summer to late fall flower has alternate leaves which are narrowly lance shaped and slightly toothed. The plant is 1-5' tall.**

**FRUIT - A 1" long thin capsule which contains many seeds. An average plant may produce 6,000 seeds.**

**SPECIAL INFORMATION - Although many European flowers were brought to America by settlers, this native American wildflower has been successfully introduced in Europe. It is called "evening" because the flowers open in the late afternoon or early evening and droop and close by the following mid-day. Because the blooms are principally nocturnal, they attract many moths which sip nectar and, incidentally, pollinate the flowers. They remain partially open the following day when they are also visited by bees. Many insects feed on other parts of the Evening Primrose. Spittlebugs feed on the juices of the leaves. ~~Caterpillars eat the flower buds.~~ The Pink Night Moth (*Rhodophora florida*) comes to sip nectar at night and then sleeps during the day on the faded flowers. Evening Primrose seeds are an important source of food for birds, particularly the American Goldfinch.**

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**THE BIRDING YEAR IN HOWARD COUNTY: NOVEMBER - Jo Solem**



A constantly changing variety of waterfowl should be looked for at lakes and reservoirs. Some will remain for weeks; others may stay only a few hours. Check plowed fields and mud flats for American Pipits (formerly Water Pipit). Fox Sparrows start showing up at feeders in numbers the first ten days of the month. American Tree Sparrows can be located from about the middle of the month thru winter. Tundra Swan migration builds from early in the month to a peak in mid-November. Watch feeders for northern species: Purple Finches, Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Siskins, and Red-breasted Nuthatches. Check feeding and resting flocks of Canada Geese for a White-fronted or Snow Goose. Although the largest number of migrant hawks have passed, for the patient or lucky, there is the chance of seeing a No. Goshawk, either eagle, or Rough-legged Hawk. A few shorebirds may linger occasionally. Greater Yellowlegs and Common Snipe have both been seen in November in recent years. Bonaparte's Gulls are still possible this month. Check gull flocks carefully for the occasional Lesser Black-backed Gull. Watch for a late Forster's Tern over the reservoirs (be sure to write details!) Although most warblers (other than Yellow-rumps) will have departed by late October, there is always the chance of finding a lingering Palm, Pine, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat or other species.

**WATCH FOR NEWS OF HOWARD COUNTY GENERAL PLAN - Bob Solem**

Watch the newspapers for announcements that the draft Howard County General Plan is available for comment, probably in early November. Study the draft to be sure it includes environmental protection, preservation of ecologically sensitive areas, growth management techniques, provisions for the phasing of development growth, adequate public facilities controls, or any of the other priorities that the Howard County Bird Club has supported.

When the first draft of the Howard County General Plan is released, you can provide comments at public meetings called by the Howard County Planning Board. Comments from these meetings are used by the Administration to revise the proposed General Plan before sending it to the Howard County Council as legislation (in the form of a resolution). You will have another chance to comment on the proposed General Plan in public hearings before the County Council.

County Executive Elizabeth Bobo released "land use scenarios" with alternatives showing how the county could look at "build-out" (when no more uncommitted land is left). These scenarios were explained in a series of public meetings in September and were intended to provide a basis for land use recommendations in the General Plan. I want to thank Linda Furlong for calling people to tell them about the public meetings.

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**BLUEBIRD/CAVITY NESTER SURVEY FORMS WANTED** - Joe Suess and Mark Wallace are entering 1989 data on the computer and need any remaining results soon.

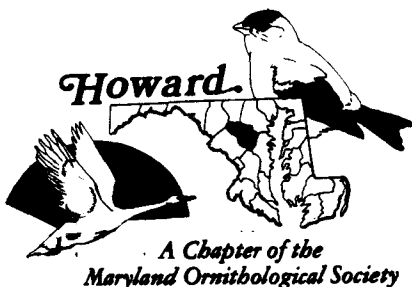
**HUNTING SEASON IS HERE AGAIN.** All dates cannot be listed, but there are seasons of varying lengths for rabbit, pheasant, squirrel, raccoon, deer, quail, dove and woodcock. Until January 31, 1990 there may be several kinds of game legal at once. Although there is no hunting on Sunday, prudence should be exercised at all times in the vicinity of Triadelphia Reservoir and the Hugg-Thomas Wildlife Management Area.

**MARYLAND COUNTY CHECK-LISTS AND 1990 NATURAL HERITAGE CALENDARS AVAILABLE.** The Maryland Natural Heritage Program has put out a 1990 calendar with 12 attractive full color illustrations of state flora and fauna. The Bird Club is selling them for \$3.50 with part of the proceeds staying with the chapter and part going to the state MOS. Also newly published is *Birds of Maryland and the District of Columbia: A County Checklist*, a compendium of check-lists for each Maryland county by Norm and Fran Saunders at \$6.00. Each of these items is available from the Club Bookstore. See them at the Nov. or Dec. meetings or call Michele Wright 465-6057.

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