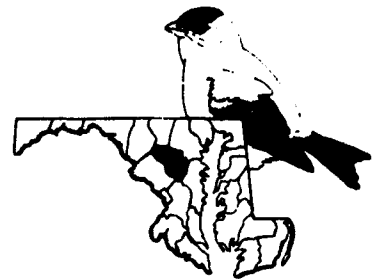




Vol. 18, No 3
Jan-Feb 1990

Howard

A Chapter of the
Maryland Ornithological Society



HOWARD COUNTY MOS MIDWINTER BIRD COUNT - January 28, 1989 - David Holmes & Joanne Solem, Co-Compilers

Do you remember a gorgeous day last January with lots of sunshine and mild temperatures when many of us were having the time of our lives counting birds? Guess what! It's almost time to do it again. The 1990 Howard County Midwinter Bird Count comes on Saturday, January 27. Our count last January was by far the biggest effort in the whole state with our 268 party hours greatly exceeding second high Baltimore's 208. In a comparison of eight similar 1989 western shore midwinter efforts, Howard County amassed high counts for 41 species. For a county which is small in area and has so little dependable water, this is wonderful. And besides, I suspect that each of us has at least one area we might have covered more thoroughly if we had just had the time. For optimum weather and coverage, this is surely the count to compare with as we look both forward and back at our own efforts. Now, what did we find?

We found 156,481 birds of 88 species. It is not our highest species count (1988 was 89), but we had no help from semi-hardy lingerers like Gray Catbirds or Eastern Phoebes or from winter erratics like Pine Siskins or Red-breasted Nuthatches. The number of individuals was staggeringly high (1988's count was 41,729) because we hosted at least two mammoth blackbird flocks during that day. That's right, 115,000 blackbirds were getting food and shelter in our little part of the world - $\frac{3}{4}$ the number of humans in the county. Sixteen species of waterfowl surpassed our previous high by two and it may be a long while before the weather lets us do that well again. The same comment would apply to the numbers of Great Blue Herons (10) and Belted Kingfishers (30). Other high counts appeared for both vultures although that might be compiler laziness. Blue Jays, Carolina Wrens as they continued the boom part of their normal boom and bust cycle, Eastern Bluebirds (doubled previous high--congratulations to all you hard working people who keep up bluebird trails and houses), Field and Swamp Sparrows. Lower than expected counts came for Canada Goose, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Northern Cardinal (down 200 birds from last year's high), Song, White-throated, and White-crowned Sparrows, House Finch, and House Sparrow. Some of the cardinal and "house bird" differences may be due to the dramatic decrease in the number of feeder hours (down by half in 1989) but the others? We know Cedar Waxwings, Purple Finches, and American Goldfinches are irregular wanderers and last year was simply not a year they wandered in our direction.

Normally this article has drawn some fascinating comparisons between our count at the end of January and the Triadelphia Christmas Bird Count which comes the end of December. But last year the Triadelphia Count experienced rain from about 7:00 - 10:30 a.m. and all numbers and species were quite low. Comparisons won't work when conditions are so dissimilar. Perhaps next year. In looking over informal figures for the other 1989 Midwinter Counts, our single strange occurrence is the Evening Grosbeak, the only one in the state (gulp!). Garrett County did have the state's only Pine Siskin but we expect oddities out there. It is a different world.

We salute our feeder watchers who provided us with most of our Northern Bobwhites (7), $\frac{1}{4}$ of our Cooper's Hawks (1), and our only Red-headed Woodpecker. We make it tough for these people by limiting how they may count numbers because we

don't know how to handle a single bird's comings and goings to a single location. A bander friend put up a net at his feeder one year to catch the pair of Downy Woodpeckers--and over the season caught 23. We don't know how to handle that aspect of feeder watching either--especially when other field or feeder watchers may be close by. But we are glad you are there and we hope lots of you are watching for the count. Sometimes you see amazing things. But more importantly, a good number of Howard County birds depend on feeders, and many of those feeders are not accessible to regular field watchers. You are appreciated.

More people who are appreciated include the area leaders who do a good bit of recruiting and much organizing, Zelda and Hal Simon who in graciously and efficiently hosting the tally make it a much anticipated ending to the day, and all of you field counters who are helping to find out what birds are really out there. Additional thanks this year to the group who spent the better part of a cold day a weekend before the count surveying an extensive area of pines in an effort to stake out a saw-whet owl. No success this time--better luck another year: Jay Sheppard, Nancy Magnusson, Mike & Sandy Meyerhoff, Jo Solem, Jane Farrell, Marty Chestem and Mary Lou Clark. We are always aware that our coverage is much improved with the help of birders from afar. In 1989 we were indebted to individuals from Baltimore, Prince George's, Carroll, Montgomery, and Allegany Counties!

HOWARD COUNTY MOS MIDWINTER BIRD COUNT - January 28, 1989

Total species	88	Total individuals	156,481
Party miles - foot	159	Party hours - foot	179.0
Party miles - car	804	Party hours - car	88.5
	963		267.5
Party hours - owling	8.5	Party hours - feeders	37.0
Party miles - owling	57.0		

Great Blue Heron	10	Cooper's Hawk	4	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	European Starling	24571
Tundra Swan	33	Red-shouldered Hawk	114	Downy Woodpecker	186	Yellow-rumped Warbler	23
Mute Swan	15	Red-tailed Hawk	71	Hairy Woodpecker	29	Northern Cardinal	973
Snow Goose	9	American Kestrel	53	Northern Flicker	120	Rufous-sided Towhee	30
Canada Goose	1448	Peregrine Falcon	1	Pileated Woodpecker	28	American Tree Sparrow	22
Wood Duck	2	Ring-necked Pheasant	1	Horned Lark	6	Chipping Sparrow	4
American Black Duck	86	Northern Bobwhite	9	Blue Jay	926	Field Sparrow	159
Mallard	620	Killdeer	3	American Crow	2335	Fox Sparrow	2
Northern Shoveler	2	Common Snipe	2	Fish Crow	263	Song Sparrow	486
American Wigeon	42	American Woodcock	1	crow sp.	1458	Swamp Sparrow	46
Canvasback	30	Ring-billed Gull	1034	Carolina Chickadee	829	White-throated Sparrow	1047
Ring-necked Duck	26	Herring Gull	3232	Tufted Titmouse	566	White-crowned Sparrow	107
Lesser Scaup	19	Lesser Black-backed Gull	2	White-breasted Nuthatch	131	Dark-eyed Junco	1415
Bufflehead	1	Great Black-backed Gull	54	Brown Creeper	35	Red-winged Blackbird	39725
Hooded Merganser	1	gull sp.	609	Carolina Wren	211	Eastern Meadowlark	6
Common Merganser	35	Rock Dove	2589	Winter Wren	8	Common Grackle	55803
merganser sp.	1	Mourning Dove	1338	Golden-crowned Kinglet	66	Brown-headed Cowbird	8519
Ruddy Duck	4	Eastern Screech-Owl	7	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	blackbird sp.	735
Black Vulture	145	Great Horned Owl	11	Eastern Bluebird	225	Purple Finch	6
Turkey Vulture	423	Barred Owl	9	Hermit Thrush	3	House Finch	1158
Bald Eagle	1	Belted Kingfisher	30	American Robin	2	American Goldfinch	205
Northern Harrier	1	Red-headed Woodpecker	1	Northern Mockingbird	449	Evening Grosbeak	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	10	Red-bellied Woodpecker	234	Cedar Waxwing	32	House Sparrow	826


OBSERVERS: AREA 1: MARK WALLACE, Paul Jung, Bill Wendell, Jay Sheppard, Woody Martin, Mark Weatherholt, Teresa Simons, Susan Jones, Rob Gibbs; AREA 2: NANCY MAGNUSSON, Peter Osenton, Tom Strikwerda, Mariano Gonzales, Mary Lou Clark, John Hoffman, Don Henderson, Val Barnes, Frances Ehlers*, Judy Proia*; AREA 3: KAREN SKULDT & DAVE HARVEY, Brent & Mary Byers, David Holmes, Will & Robin Tress, Art Rogers, Don Johnson, Steve Sanford, Maureen Ritz, Dan Haft, Michele Wright, Shiras Guion, Joe Byrnes, Debbie Markwitz, Bob Ringler; AREA 4: MIKE McCLURE, Grazina McClure, Chuck Stirrat, Mike Leumas, Yrjo Collan, Jim Orgain, Jim Blanchard*, Georgia & Jim Eacker*, Bob Doyle*, Pat Jackson*, Peggy Willson*; AREA 5: MARTHA CHESTEM, Helen Zeichner, George Chase, John, Eileen & Andrew Clegg, Burton & Johnathan Alexander, Gerald Elgert, Linda Stirrat, Pat Hirt, Gerald Einen, John Blaisdell*, Dennis Luck*, Zelda Simon*, Rosamond Munro*; AREA 6: CHUCK DUPREE, David Nazurkovich, Ralph Geuder, Charles Williams, Jim Rose, Bruce Moore, Robin Jenkins, William & Louise Dove, Cathy Williamson, Bob Davis, Brigitte Lund, Monika Botsai, Nancy Huting, Connie Bockstie*, Jane Geuder*, Kathleen Cahill*, AREA 7: JO SOLEM, Jane Farrell, Eva Sunell, Maud Banks, Don Waugh, Ed Gould, Georgia & Mike Morris, Bob Solem*, Bea Newkirk*.


CAPITALS - Area Leaders; * - indicates a feeder/yard watcher


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 or fewer than 3 participants. Questions? Call leader or Field Trip Chair Michele Wright 465-6057.*


 JAN 11 **"BIRDING IN PERU"** - Dave Harvey. A birding adventure in a land with hundreds of exotic species and a variety of habitats.
Thurs

 JAN 27 **FIFTH ANNUAL MID-WINTER COUNT.** Field observers & feeder watchers needed for all or part of the day. Compilers: David Holmes & Jo Solem. Call Jo Solem 725-5037 to volunteer. Tally meal in evening at Hal & Zelda Simon's for field participants. Call Zelda 730-8328 to reserve space & tell her what food you can bring.
Sat


 JAN 28 **WINTER HABITAT WALK AT ROCKBURN BRANCH PARK.** 1:00 p.m. Meet at park office for 2 hour trip. Leaders: Bill Eckert 992-2464 days, Mike & Sandy Meyerhoff 465-4489. Co-sponsored with Howard County Recreation and Parks.
Sun


 FEB 3 **WINTER SEED SALE PICK-UP DATE.** Order blank enclosed. If you have questions, want to volunteer or need extra seed sale blanks, call Eileen at 730-4362.
Sat


 FEB 8 **"IDENTIFYING THE LITTLE BROWN BIRDS"** - David Holmes. Bring along a field guide for a "hands on" evening with an experienced bander, photographer and field birder. David will provide help in sorting out the confusing sparrow-finch group.
Thurs

 FEB 17 **SANDY POINT STATE PARK.** Leader: Karen Skuldt 788-6079. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Grempler. Bring snack & hot beverage. End early p.m. Dress warmly, winds off bay. Chance for diving ducks & snow buntings.
Sat

FEB 17 **LEISUREFEST AT COLUMBIA MALL.** Coordinator: Eileen Clegg 730-4362. This all day event is one in which we have participated for many years as a way to publicize Club activities. Volunteers to stay with the table and chat with people are needed for an hour or two from 10:00 a.m. - 9:30 p.m. If inexperienced, Eileen will arrange to put you with someone.
Sat

 FEB 24 **FEEDER TRIP.** Leader: Michele Wright 465-6057. Meet at 1:00 p.m. at Grempler. ½ day. Close looks at birds at Frances Ehlers' and Peggy Willson's feeders.
Sat

 MARCH 3 **WATERFOWL ON THE COLUMBIA LAKES.** Leaders: Mike & Grazina McClure 531-2780. Meet at 1:00 p.m. at Grempler. ½ day. Wide variety of water birds possible.
Sat

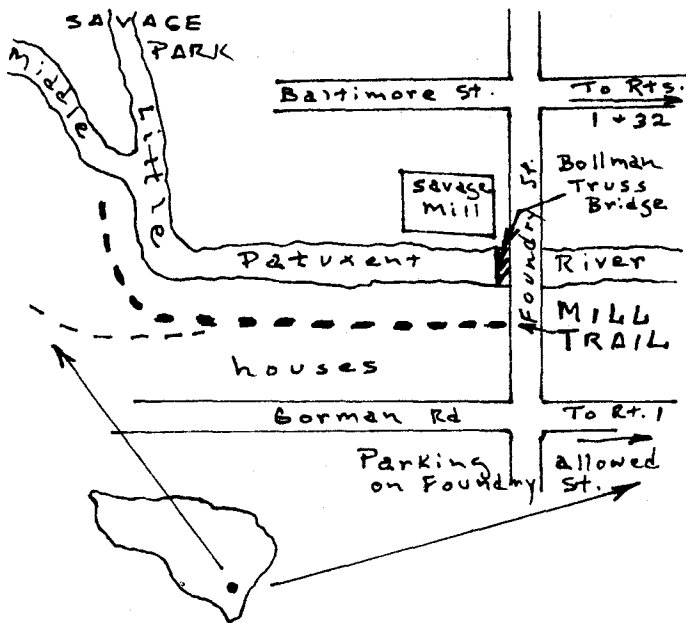
 MARCH 3 **17TH ANNUAL POTLUCK DINNER.** Annual potluck at Florence Bain Center. See article in this newsletter for details.
Sat

BOARD MEETINGS

JAN 25 **EILEEN CLEGG's** at 7:30 p.m. 6007 Flywheel Court, Columbia, MD 21044.
Thurs
Tel. 730-4362 for directions.

FEB 22 **HELEN ZEICHNER's** at 7:30 p.m. 10167 Pasture Gate Lane, Columbia, MD 21044.
Thurs
Tel. 730-3695 for directions.

BIRDING "HOT SPOTS" IN HOWARD COUNTY - Joanne & Bob Solem
SAVAGE II*



The ½ mile Savage Historic Mill Trail is a wide level path that lies along the south side of the Little Patuxent River just below its junction with the Middle Patuxent. This trail begins on Foundry Street a few feet north of its junction with Gorman Road. Because it is located across the river from the historic mills in Savage, just south of the restored Bollman Truss Bridge, and along the Fall Line marking the boundary between the Piedmont and the Coastal Plain, this trail qualifies as one of the most scenic in Howard County.

The Mill Trail provides an attractive walk at almost any season. The boulder strewn river boils with roaring whitewater during periods of high water. In spring, leafing trees and blooming wildflowers tend to be among the earliest in the county,

summer provides a cool shaded walk in a green tunnel, while autumn brings colorful falling leaves. Late autumn, winter, and early spring find few visitors. That changes with the advent of warm weather for it is a favorite spot for partying young people. Several observation platforms, built by the Youth Conservation Corps in the early '80's, offer river views. The Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks has installed a series of numbered posts which mark historic and natural points of interest. These are detailed in a brochure available from them on request.

Although not birded intensively by many local birders, the Mill Trail can be worthwhile--especially in the spring. The oaks tend to leaf out a bit before those in the northern part of the county, proving attractive to numerous migrants. Generally, the best spots are along the western half of the main path, especially the short section of mixed scrub pine and deciduous woods that angles uphill to the left just beyond a clearing, and the section from the picnic tables on the right to the wooden ladder that provides descent to the river bank. Among the birds that have been observed here in migration are Prothonotary, Golden-winged, Nashville, Yellow-throated, Black-throated Green, and Black-throated Blue Warblers, Wood Ducks, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Scarlet Tanagers, and an occasional Osprey. Of the birds that reside in the area, Chimney Swifts use chimneys in Savage for nesting, Belted Kingfishers and Rough-winged Swallows cruise the river, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Northern Parulas buzz along the path, and a Pileated Woodpecker periodically flies from one side of the river to the other.

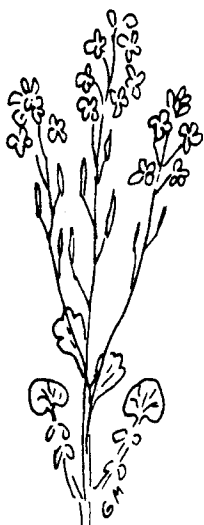
The Savage Mill Trail has other natural attractions. Although many of the trees are not mature, there are beech, tulip, box elder, Norway maple, oaks, and sycamore. Trumpet creeper has escaped while Japanese knotweed is a pest of amazing proportions for an annual (there is an abundance of this plant just west of the picnic area). Bladdernut, an understory tree, is a particular curiosity when the green inflated seed pods dangle from its branches.

Some wildflowers are worth the search: beechdrops (under beech trees), wild comfrey, bowman's-root, silverrod, and hairy skullcap. There are many others depending on the season. On Patuxent River Discovery Day in early May, the Bird Club sponsors a wildflower walk on this trail or one in Savage Park in alternate years.

Be sure to observe the "No Parking" signs on Gorman Road as well as the posted hours when parking on Foundry Street.

*Savage I, the Wincopin Neck Trail, was covered in the Sept-Oct 1987 issue of this newsletter.

FLOWER FEATURE: YELLOW ROCKET - Georgia Morris and Bob Solem



YELLOW ROCKET - *Barbarea vulgaris*

FAMILY - Mustard (*Cruciferae*)

HABITAT - Roadsides, waste places, disturbed ground

HOWARD COUNTY BLOOMING SEASON - Mid-April to Mid-July

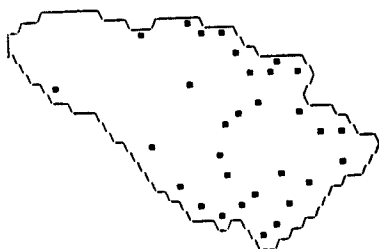
HOWARD COUNTY LOCATION - Widespread. Look for it in Centennial Park, Cedar Lane Park, Lake Elkhorn and Patapsco River valley.

PLANT - 1' to 2' high

FLOWERS - Four tiny bright yellow petals. Flowers clustered on long spike that continues to grow and produce blooms.

LEAVES - Upper leaves are toothed and clasping. The basal leaves are rounded at top and broadly toothed at base.

FRUIT - Elongated pods (siliques) point upward and contain two sets of seeds separated by a thin membrane. The seeds scatter in late summer and germinate in a basal rosette of leaves in the early fall which will produce next spring's flowers.



SPECIAL INFORMATION - When cold winds blow it is hard to imagine anything growing, but a close look at Yellow Rocket reveals that new basal leaves are produced throughout the winter. The ability to photosynthesize and grow at very cold temperatures enables it to take advantages of winter thaws and warm spells to get a head start on spring. In April, flower stalks grow and the tiny bright yellow flowers burst into bloom, announcing spring with reckless abandon. Many bees, flies and butterflies visit Yellow Rocket for nectar. Some people gather the leaves for salad greens. Other members of the mustard family are cultivated, especially the genus *Brassica*, which includes kale, cauliflower, cabbage, broccoli and brussels sprouts.

17TH ANNUAL POTLUCK MARCH 3, 1990. RESERVE SOON! The annual potluck will be held at the Florence Bain Senior Center on Saturday, March 3, 1990. All of our members and their guests are welcome to share the food, fun and nature slides. The Chapter furnishes eating utensils, beverages, social hour snacks, and rolls; those attending bring a salad, vegetable, main dish or dessert. **YOU MUST RESERVE IN ADVANCE.** Call Monika Botsai 465-5758 or Grazina McClure 531-2780 no later than Tuesday, February 27 to let them know the number in your party along with the food you will bring. Can't cook? Adjustments can be made. If you are a photographer, bring along a maximum of one dozen of your favorite nature slides. The social hour begins at 6:30 p.m. with dinner at 7:00 p.m. Mark serving dishes and the accompanying serving implements with your name. Let the organizers know if you can come early to help set up.

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



ANNUAL COUNTY BIRD LIST DUE JANUARY 15, 1990 - Look over your 1989 bird records and send a list (complete or partial) of species seen during the year within Howard County to compiler Jane Farrell, 6324 Sandchain Rd., Columbia, MD 21045. Be a part of the eleventh annual compilation--even if what you saw was obtained in your own backyard. Can we top the all time record of 220 species set last year?

MY 600TH BIRD: SPRUCE GROUSE - Joe Byrnes

Among active field birders, seeing 600 species of birds in North America marks a special plateau. There are a few Howard County Bird Club members who have attained this goal. If you are one of these birders, please share the sighting of your 600th bird in one or more paragraphs. Include where you were, who you were with, what you saw, or anything you consider pertinent or memorable.



Wednesday, Sept 9, 1987 10:48 a.m. Pleasant, 70-75, bright, sunny, no breeze (or bugs).

Baraga State Park/Plains, Michigan (north of Covington).

FINALLY got this bird after about five stops and looking much of yesterday in Ottawa National Forest. Was getting discouraged. Walking along I detected something to my left on the ground about 12 feet from me, and there he was! Male, beautiful bird. Larger and plumper than I expected with raised red eyebrows, black chest, and beautiful tail feathers.

Not sure what attracted me to the "fool's hen." He may have made a noise or was moving. I watched him, he walked a little. Apparently I got too close for he flew up into a tree maybe 5 feet from the ground. Tree limbs went to about 1 foot of the ground. Area was sandy with fairly large open areas (maybe 50% of area was open).

At first bird was tame, then became more skittish as I watched him from about 25 feet. I wanted Sally (my wife) to see him (number 600) so I walked about 30 yards away and called her (she was in car, but I didn't know just where car was since I had completed a rather large loop looking for the bird). No response so I walked maybe another 30 yards and called again. This time she heard me and walked in to where I was. I was afraid of losing the bird or not relocating the stand of pines he was in. Fortunately, he didn't move.

Sally showed up with a small bottle of champagne she had been trying to keep chilled in the trunk of the car for the last two days (unbeknownst to me). She got some good looks at the bird. I went back to the car to get my camera. We both took some pictures, but not very close (about 20 feet) since he was nervous.

I noticed that he had a narrow (about 1/4 inch) white band across his breast, i.e., horizontally between the black in his breast and the black in his belly. This doesn't agree exactly with NGS guide. Young male? White feathering on side was spectacular, crisp, white with edgings.

When we moved in to get a better picture he flew. The rust/orange tips to tail feathers were very obvious, all the way across, but only when he flew. The closest Sally and I got was probably 20 feet. He was jittery before he flew. He stood up, walked down the limb, turned around and then flew. Flew about 20 yards and disappeared.

Time for champagne and a few more pictures (this time of us). My spirits had picked up considerably. I had been looking for a day and half for this bird. We arrived at the Baraga Plains areas at 7:05 a.m., so it took me 3³/₄ hours today just tramping along, much of it in areas which were full of large ruts or tractor trails. My knees bothered me so much the following week that I decided to try walking and bicycle riding in lieu of jogging.

Walked back to the car and left at 11:25 a.m. Target was now the Black-backed Woodpecker (no luck).

To quote many birders I talked to about finding Black-backed Woodpeckers and Spruce Grouse, "they are where you find them."

TRUMPLING SWANS - Helen Thompson says that Dr. Sladen has placed a pair of "Trumping" Swans on Wilde Lake. These are hybrids (Trumpeter x Whistling). An attempt will be made to foster Trumpeter eggs in any nest built to help reintroduce this species in the East.

THE BIRDING YEAR IN HOWARD COUNTY: FEBRUARY - Jo Solem



- Depending on the weather, ducks may begin migrating anytime after the middle of the month. Check lakes & reservoirs regularly as soon as ice begins to melt. On any given day species may be different from the previous day or from those on a nearby body of water.
- Fox Sparrows may begin turning up in larger than winter numbers if there is a thaw. They are most frequently seen from the second week in February through the second week in March.
- Woodcock first appear after thaws the middle of the month.
- Robin flocks begin to appear usually after mid month.
- Blackbirds are highly visible in flocks; many may visit feeders this month and during March. Check these groups for Rusty or Yellow-headed (usually immature birds).
- From the middle of the month on, Killdeer may return in numbers, some years not till March.
- From late February through March, watch and listen for snipe in wet, muddy, grassy areas and pond edges.
- Watch for crossbills around the middle of the month, especially in cones near the tops of conifers.
- Best time to spot the UNcommon Common Redpolls is late February to early March although they have also been seen occasionally in late January. If you see one, CALL SOMEONE! (This is also true for crossbills.)
- Continue to check gull flocks for unusual species.
- Ice storms during the winter may strand birds such as loons and grebes in yards, parking lots, or small patches of water.
- Great Horned Owls on nests this month. Look for nests in the main crotches of mature deciduous trees in an old hawk or crow's nest. Look for "horns" sticking above the edge of the nest. These owls are often easier to find in March when the bird on the nest may be sitting higher with young under her.

MOS SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE - The Maryland Ornithological Society annually grants scholarships to teachers, youth leaders and others who work with young people enabling them to attend Audubon ecology camps in one of several locations or ornithology workshops at Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology. Contact Pres. Tom Strikwerda 942-2841 immediately as completed applications are due at the State MOS Scholarship Committee by January 31, 1990. Applicants must be endorsed by an MOS chapter.

MARYLAND'S CHESAPEAKE BAY AND ENDANGERED SPECIES FUND - Established in 1988 by the Maryland legislature as a checkoff on the state income tax blank, the fund is divided equally between endangered species and the Chesapeake Bay. Designate a portion of any refund or add a few dollars to your state tax return for this fund. Last year the fund raised over \$900,000--and Howard County ranked first in percentage of contributors. Let's lead the way again this year! Check box at line 63 on your Maryland State Income Tax Return.



WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND A DEAD BIRD - If you find a dead bird, check to see if either leg contains an aluminum or a color band. If so the band number, your name, date, and the exact location where the bird was found should be reported to the Bird Banding Laboratory in Laurel, MD. To determine whether the Bird Club needs the specimen for its collection, call Jo Solem 725-5037. Birds killed by cats or hit by cars are often not usable. Wrap the bird tightly in aluminum foil, place in a plastic bag (squeeze out as much air as possible) and label with species name, date, location and finder. The Bird Club has the state and federal permits necessary to keep such specimens.

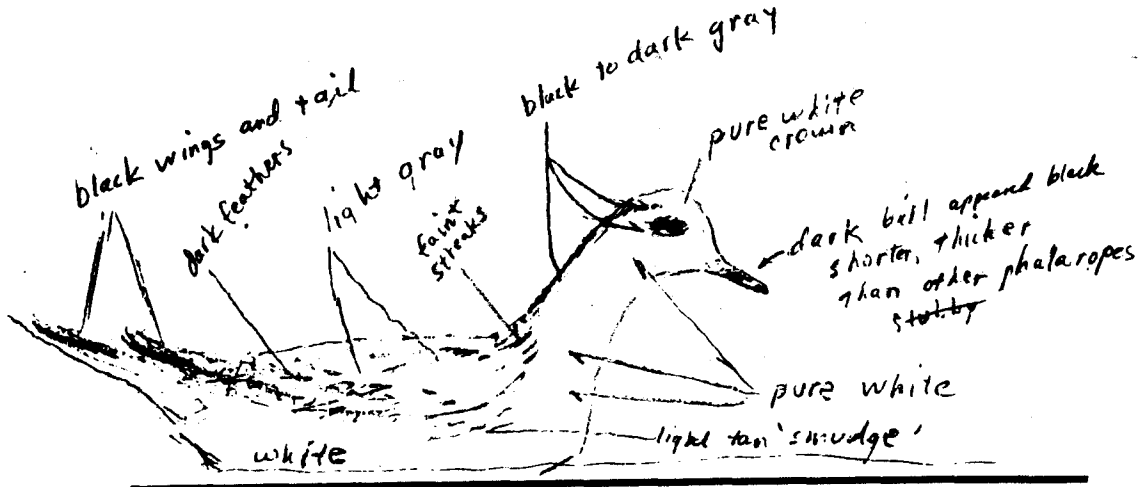
DEADLINE FOR MARCH-APRIL NEWSLETTER IS FEBRUARY 1, 1990. Send material to Jo Solem, 10617 Grae Loch Road, Laurel, MD 20707 or call 725-5037.

RED PHALAROPE REPORTED FROM CENTENNIAL PARK IS SECOND COUNTY RECORD

A Red Phalarope was watched for at least 15 minutes between 4-4:30 p.m. on Saturday, October 21, 1989, by Jim Wilkinson and Carol Cunningham in the shallow west end of Centennial Lake. It was seen feeding in vegetation at the lake's edge, swimming close to the pontoon bridge, and in flight to a point near an island.

Among Jim's notes were the following: "Thick black bill not needle-like. Pure white on top of head, black around eye, black or dark gray stripe down back of neck moving up and on either side of crown above eye patch; faint streaks on lower hind neck where neck meets body; a light gray back (color of Ring-billed Gull mantle)--light gray on mantle and scapulars with black feathers on wings, tail and upper part of scapulars. Bright white wing bar, dark rump with white sides. No white streaks observed on back as I've seen on Red-necked Phalarope ... legs not seen. Bird flew twice and gave high-pitched 'wheet' or 'wheep' call. In flight, back & wings looked dark & contrasted with white wing stripe. Large area of central & upper back light gray when swimming. Smudge on sides below wings appeared to be light tan but late afternoon light was not the best. Total observation time was 15-20 minutes, closest view was 20 feet from the path near floating bridge. Seen with 10x50 binoculars. Both observers commented on bill being like a sandpiper's in shape. All Wilson's & Red-necked Phalarope bills I've seen were needle-like."

The sighting was put on the county Rare Bird Alert the same evening. Sunday morning, which coincided with a Bird Club sponsored Centennial Park walk, found well over 50 birders from several counties combing the lake edge for the rare shorebird, but it was not seen again. Jim's written description and accompanying drawing (below) have been submitted to the MOS Records Committee and is subject to their acceptance. On his list of birds that were seen on the same trip were three other fine sightings for the park: Horned Lark, Savannah and Lincoln's Sparrows.



Maryland Ornithological
Society, Inc.
Cylburn Mansion
4915 Greenspring Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21209

