



Vol. 20, No 1
Sept-Oct 1991

Howard

A Chapter of the
Maryland Ornithological Society



PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

Ralph W. Geuder

This is the first newsletter of the nineteenth year of the Howard County Bird Club. It brings with it our sincere welcome and an invitation to join us by renewing your membership, or giving us a try if you haven't been a member before.

Our club is among the most active chapters in the Maryland Ornithological Society. We work hard on issues related to conservation. Last year we raised and donated significant amounts of money for such causes as habitat preservation in the rain forest. Most of this came about as a result of our fall and winter seed sales. We hope to do as well or better with such projects during the coming year.

Every other month we mail members a copy of our outstanding newsletter. Interesting monthly meetings with informative programs provide a time for members to get together and to see what's new in our book store. Field trips and habitat walks are another important part of our program.

Please join us at Longfellow Elementary School at 7:45 on Thursday, September 12, for our initial meeting of the year. We look forward to seeing you there and hope that you will be with us all year as we learn, work, and have a good time. Welcome!

Ralph W. Geuder

THE BIRDING YEAR IN HOWARD COUNTY

OCTOBER

Jo Solem



- Storms and heavy rains may force down unusual species or concentrations of more common migrants. Don't confine your birding to gorgeous autumn days.
- Watch for late Green-backed Herons toward the end of the month.
- Although some flocks come through in late September, watch for major Canada Goose movement in early to mid October. The large numbers of resident geese may cause difficulty in distinguishing migrating birds.
- Hawk migration continues with accipiters and falcons predominating. Red-tails increase in the last half of October; Merlins may be seen from September through November.
- Despite few county rail records, it is known that a warm fall can extend their migration well into October or later.
- Coots begin to move in.
- Waterfowl begin to arrive in good numbers in October, especially the latter half of the month--often in bad weather. Numbers and species may change daily. Remember that some fall days will produce cool air and warm water temperatures. Fog is often a problem on the reservoirs producing frustrating viewing conditions.
- Chimney Swifts are normally gone just after the middle of the month.
- Winter Wrens, kinglets, and sapsuckers show up in numbers.
- The last few days of September and the first week in October should be the prime time to catch Marsh Wrens moving through the county.
- Passerines are still going through: vireos, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, thrushes, etc. Warbler numbers drop dramatically by the last third of the month. Falling leaves complicate sightings.
- October is sparrow month. Rarities are always a possibility if one is willing to seek the specialized habitats of the more unusual species. Lincoln's may be found in dense, shrubby areas frequently (but not exclusively) near water. Among the regulars that should be seen in weedy habitats are White-crowned, Swamp, and Savannah. Centennial, Rockburn Branch, and Schooley Mill Parks all have good sparrow habitat. Be on the alert for the highly unusual species such as Sharp-tailed, Lark and Harris'. Be prepared to document these sightings.
- Look for Rusty Blackbirds in wet, floodplain woods. Patuxent River State Park is a good area in which to search for this species in the fall and winter.
- Winter feeder birds begin showing up in numbers, usually the last third of the month.

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.

✓ SEPT 12 **"PIPING PLOVERS IN MARYLAND"** - Laurie MacIvor, Maryland Natural Heritage Program. Piping Plovers are an endangered species in Maryland. What is their current status? Do they have a future in this state?
Thursday

OCT 10 **"A VISIT TO THE GALAPAGOS"** - Anne Coren. One of our members photographed some of the very approachable bird and animal life on these unique islands.
Thursday

Field trips meet as described for each trip. Carpooling is encouraged with riders sharing the cost of gas and tolls. Dress for field work with stout, reasonably waterproof footgear & 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 Bonnie Ott 461-3361.

SEPT 15 **GWYNN ACRES.** Meet at 7:45 a.m. at Rt. 29 & Rt. 103 Park and Ride. 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Beautiful woodlands with warblers, thrushes and flycatchers. Easy walking on paved path.
Sunday

✓ SEPT 22 **ROCKBURN BRANCH PARK.** Leader: Bonnie Ott 461-3361. 7:30 a.m. - 11:00. Meet at park office off Landing Road. Sparrows & warblers. Possible Broad-wings; peak for migrant Red-headed Woodpeckers (2 seen last year).
Sunday

✓ OCT 5 **TURF VALLEY OVERLOOK.** Leader: Jo Solem 725-5037. Meet at 7:45 a.m. at Rt. 29 & Rt. 103 Park and Ride. 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Club members have been monitoring this area of field, woodland, streams & ponds. Variety of species possible.
Saturday

✓ OCT 12 **AUTUMN SEED SALE.** Seed sale order blanks will be mailed in September to all members and to those on our mailing list. If you have questions, call Eileen at 730-4362. Volunteers are always needed and welcome.
Saturday

✓ OCT 19 **HAWK WATCH AT ROCKBURN BRANCH PARK.** Leader: Ralph Geuder. Meet at 10:00 a.m. (or drop in later) in the field above tennis court off Montgomery Road entrance. Bring lawn chair & lunch for an opportunity to watch migrating hawks. Over 50 species were seen last year including cormorants, Purple Finches and Red-breasted Nuthatch.
Saturday

✓ OCT 20 **HABITAT WALK AT GWYNN ACRES.** Co-sponsored with Howard Co. Rec. & Parks. Call Bonnie Ott 461-3361 for info. 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Meet at Dorsey Hall Community Center.
Sunday

OCT 20,27 **CENTENNIAL PARK FALL WEEKLY WALKS.** 4 leaders. 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
NOV 3,10 Call Bonnie Ott 461-3361 for info. Meet in West Area parking lot off Centennial Lane in park. Many interesting species seen last year - Virginia Rail, Purple Finch, Northern Harrier; winter birds arriving.
Sundays

- **BOARD MEETING:** Thursday, Oct. 24 at 7:30 p.m. Longfellow Elementary School.

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1991 NEWSLETTER MATERIAL is due Oct. 5. Call or mail to Jo Solem, 10617 Graeoch Road, Laurel, MD 20723; telephone 725-5037. Autumn arrival and departure dates are due December 7; sheets available from Jo.

WATERFOWL FEEDING

Pass the word to friends and neighbors that feeding waterfowl at county lakes is being discouraged. A pamphlet detailing some of the problems that arise is available on request from the Howard County Dept. of Recreation and Parks.

TAX CHECKOFF TOPS \$1,000,000

Maryland taxpayers used their 1990 state income tax returns to donate \$1,048,709 to the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund. In Howard County 5,493 individuals contributed \$71,136.70. Howard and Montgomery

counties tied for the highest percentage of participation with 4.3% of its taxpayers contributing to the fund.

BLUEBIRD SURVEY FORMS COMING

If you have been monitoring nest boxes in the club's Boost Bluebirds project, you will soon be receiving a survey form in the mail. Please return it promptly to coordinators Mark Wallace 725-6370 or Joe Sues 596-9561 (note: this is a new number). If you had cavity nesters, but do not receive a form by October 15, give one of them a call. They are always anxious to talk about bluebirds and welcome offers of assistance.

The participation of the following individuals in the 1991 May Count is greatly appreciated: Burton Alexander, Fell Alvarez, Scott Atkinson, Connie Bockstie, Monika Botsal, Mike Bowen, Joe Byrnes, Marty Chestem, Eileen & John Clegg, Jane Farrell, Alfred Feldman, Charles Fuller, Jane & Ralph Geuder, Rich Giannola, Ernest Grant, Shiras Guion, Dave & Maureen Harvey, Kevin Heffernan, Jane Heim, Ann Higgins, Mike Kerwin, Anu & Marci Krishnamoorthy, Dave Kubitsky, Margie Kupiec, Mike Leumas, Fran Linfield, Brigitte & Bob Lund, Nancy Magnusson, Sherry Martin, Grazina & Mike McClure, Peter Osenton, Bonnie Ott, Suzanne Probst, Karan Repsher, Susan Reschke, Chandler Robbins, Susan Setterberg, Mike Smith, Jo Solem, Chuck Stirrat, Tom Strikwerda, Eva Sunell, Linda Tripi, Mark Wallace, Don Waugh, Cathy & Leroy Williamson, Helen Zeichner, and Paul Zucker (usual Howard County May Count compiler).

Finally, the Club offers special thanks to Don and Jan Randle who, once again, generously offered their home as the tally site.



M. SUZANNE PROBST WINS MOS CONVENTION PIN COMPETITION

Howard County artist M. Suzanne Probst was the winner of the 1991 MOS convention pin competition. Winner on her first try, she chose a Common Yellowthroat which she placed against a maroon background. The letters and numbers were in gold. Sue was trained as a graphic artist. She has been generous with her talent providing several items for bird club use including the goldfinch on the club brochure. Not only did a Howard County design win for the second consecutive year, but Sue kept it in the family. Her mother, Connie Bockstie, was the 1990 winner.

SEED SALE! THIRTEENTH YEAR

FIRST SALE
OF 1991-1992
YEAR IS SAT,
OCTOBER 12.

ORDER BLANKS
WILL BE SENT
IN SEPT. IF
YOU DO NOT
RECEIVE AN
ORDER BLANK
BY OCT 1, OR
IF YOU HAVE
QUESTIONS,
CALL EILEEN,
730-4362.

FLOWER FEATURE

SMALL-FLOWERED AGRIMONY

Georgia Morris & Bob Solem



Flowers
not to
scale

SMALL-FLOWERED AGRIMONY - *Agrimonia parviflora*

FAMILY - Rose (*Roseaceae*)

HABITAT - Edges of woods, roadsides.

HOWARD COUNTY BLOOMING SEASON - End of July to mid October.

HOWARD COUNTY LOCATION - Hollofield and Daniels sections PVSP; along the Patapsco River; Schooley Mill Park; Lake Elkhorn; Cedar Lane Park; Centennial Park.

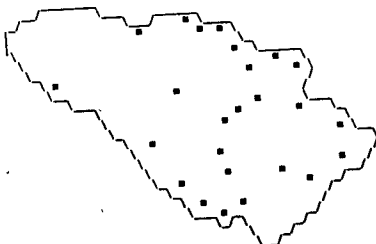
PLANT - 1' to 4' tall weedy plant with a hairy, sticky stem. The flowers grow on a spike at the top of the plant.

FLOWERS - 1/4" across with five small yellow petals which surround a somewhat shaggy center of stamens and pistils.

FRUIT - The seedpod is tiny and has hooked bristles which stick to clothing as one brushes by the plant.

LEAVES - Numerous, alternate, pinnately divided, compound leaves are coarsely toothed. Larger pairs of leaflets are separated by pairs of tiny leaflets.

SPECIAL INFORMATION - The stem has a spicy smell when cut. Agrimony was used as a yellow dye and for medicinal purposes by the early settlers. In Howard County there is another species, Tall Agrimony (*Agrimonia gryposepala*) which grows to 5' tall.



CONSERVATION REPORT

Bob Solem

Recycling for people in Howard County is more convenient than ever with more locations for MoRT and more people with weekly curbside pickup. Remember that MoRT (Mobile Recycling Truck) will take many more kinds of paper than ever before (including junk mail and magazines). When you take your recyclables to one of the locations, ask for a copy of the latest Fact Finder about recycling services.

The other significant news of the fall is on the national level. The following information is from a Clean Water Action newsletter:

The War on Waste is Clean Water Action's two year campaign to fight for a strong Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). RCRA, our nation's solid and hazardous waste law, is up for reauthorization this year in Congress. Clean Water Action is committed to strengthening this law so that it embodies principles of waste reduction and recycling instead of burning and dumping our trash and toxics. Bills are being introduced in the Senate and the House of Representatives this summer which will set our country's waste policies for decades to come. In the House, several bills are being drafted which need our support.

Rep. Tom McMillen is a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which is the first "battleground" for RCRA legislation in the House of Representatives. All Marylanders, even those outside his district, should write to him. Urge him to support and cosponsor the following legislation:

- place a moratorium on incinerators until the year 2000;
- support strong mandatory recycling goals;
- give communities the "right to know more" about toxics;
- include recycled content in packaging.

Write to: **The Hon. C. Thomas McMillen; U.S. House of Representatives; Washington, DC 20515**
or phone: (202) 225-8090.

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PLEASE RETURN THE ENCLOSED MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION SOON. MEMBERSHIP YEAR RUNS FROM SEPTEMBER 1 - AUGUST 31. YOUR PROMPT RENEWAL SAVES POSTAGE.

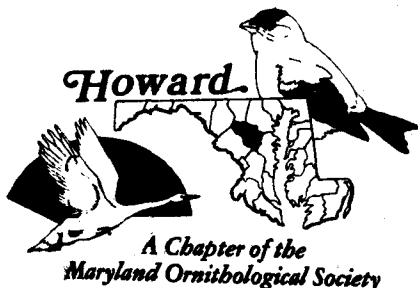
HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

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Baltimore, MD 21209-4698



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RENEWAL



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