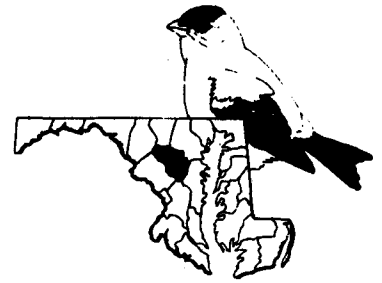


VOL. 21, No 4  
MAR-APR 1993

# Howard

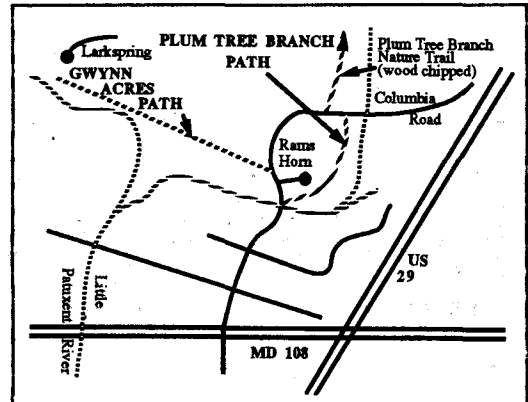
A Chapter of the  
Maryland Ornithological Society



## BIRDING "HOT SPOT" IN HOWARD COUNTY -

### Gwynn Acres Path by Joanne Solem & Bonnie Ott

*Directions:* From U.S. 29 go west on MD 108 to the first traffic light, 0.3 miles, which is Old Columbia Road. Turn right and continue 0.4 mile. Park on either side of the road in the vicinity of the intersection with Ram's Horn Row (avoiding the fire hydrants). From this point it is possible to enter either the Gwynn Acres Path or the Plum Tree Path.



Much of the land administered by the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks is not encompassed within traditional park boundaries but is undesignated "open space." Many of these parcels lie in floodplains which make them particularly valuable to wildlife. Paved and wood chip paths in Dorsey Hall's open space provide easy access to productive birding areas.

Gwynn Acres Path begins on the north side of Columbia Road almost directly across from Ram's Horn Row. This 8,800 foot paved trail winds along the east side of the Little Patuxent River terminating at Larkspring Row. A number of wooden bridges span tributaries or wetlands. Bridge numbers mentioned in the text are counted from Columbia Road. This is primarily a wooded path adjacent to floodplain on one side and close to private property on the other. During the breeding season, leaves buffer much human activity that is more apparent when the trees are bare. The best birding is in the early morning, not only because birds are most active at that time, but because lawn mowers and other intrusive sounds are at a minimum. Despite its proximity to houses, Gwynn Acres Path offers a pleasant walk at any time of the day or during any season of the year.

One of the most productive sections for birds is a short unpaved trail to the left of the paved path about 100 feet from the Columbia Road sidewalk (just beyond the first tree on the left). This narrow trace skirts floodplain where birds often concentrate in the wetland vegetation taking advantage of the available cover, food, and water. On crisp, sunny mornings or on windy days in late fall and winter, this may be an especially rewarding detour. Stand quietly wherever there is an opening and watch for movement.



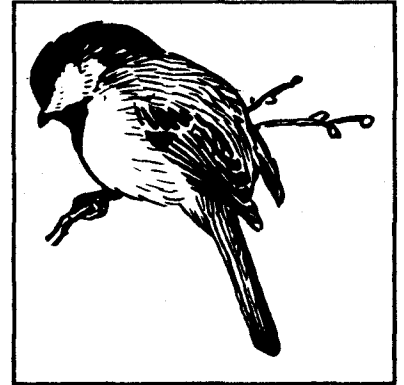
Along the first few hundred yards of the paved path, there is a partial view of the sky so watch for flyovers. The predominant plants here are herbaceous, though some are more than head high. During the breeding season look and listen for Barn Swallows, Gray Catbirds, White-eyed Vireos, Yellow Warblers, Common Yellowthroats, Blue Grosbeaks, Chipping Sparrows, and American Goldfinches. Along the right side of the path in this first section, do not fail to note the venerable tulip tree.

Although it is a severely pruned and not very vigorous remnant of what was once a massive tree, it remains an impressive reminder of the past glory of Maryland's old-growth forests.

Along most of its length, the trail passes through maturing deciduous forest. Several species of woodpeckers nest as do Eastern Wood-Pewees, Acadian Flycatchers, Eastern Kingbirds, and Louisiana Waterthrushes. Red-shouldered Hawks and Barred Owls are residents and are heard and seen with consistency. In the spring, Wood Ducks have been observed perched near sizeable cavities in some of the large sycamores. It is always worth examining the seed-laden tulip trees in late winter and spring for normally scarce Purple Finches. Flocks of House Finches and American Goldfinches are the predominant finches at all seasons. Whenever it is possible to see the river, watch for Great Blue Herons.

Parts of the path are slightly elevated above the floor of the floodplain making warbler watching easier on the neck than in locations where the path is low and trees tall. Many of the migrant warblers have been seen, and most other spring woodland migrants are also likely to show up here. Both spring and fall, this path usually produces good views of Swainson's Thrushes. Particularly in spring, watch the muddy area near the second bridge for Rusty Blackbirds.

By June the visitors have moved on leaving the residents. In addition to those mentioned above, watch and listen for others. A walk at dusk provides a chorus of Wood Thrushes along with a few Veerys whistling their ethereal notes. A Northern Parula nested near the first bridge one year. White-breasted Nuthatches, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Red-eyed Vireos, Ovenbirds, and Scarlet Tanagers are also regular breeders. From early summer until heavy frost, vegetation adjoining the path tends to intrude over the pavement. It is best to avoid brushing against unknown plants as wood nettle grows here; contact with it's stinging hairs is painful.

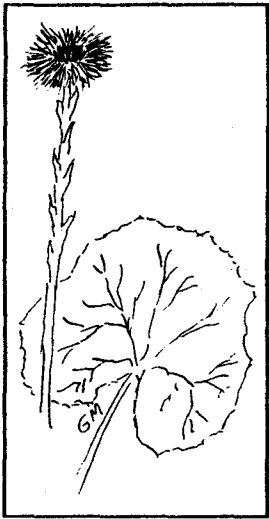


During late autumn the path is covered with a layer of fallen leaves. In mid to late October tree colors are especially attractive. From now until spring, birds are rather few. An occasional wintering raptor may dash across an opening or circle overhead. Look and listen for feeding flocks of small birds which will provide good looks at Golden- and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, White-breasted Nuthatches, Carolina Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, Brown Creepers, several species of woodpeckers, and, occasionally, Yellow-rumped Warblers. Whenever yards are visible, look for visitors at feeders.

If wildflowers are your special interest (or birding is slow), Gwynn Acres Path has variety throughout the blooming season. Because it is close to human habitation it suffers from such pests as garlic mustard, dodder, and perfoliate tearthumb; however, there are many other, more appealing, plants to be found here. In the spring, search for bloodroot, trout lily, wild ginger, yellow violet, swamp buttercup, and spring cress. From mid to late May spot the blooms of yellow iris from the second bridge. During this period also look for wild geranium, hog peanut, and swamp milkweed. Summer brings spotted St. Johnswort, white avens, black cohosh, pointed-leaved tick-trefoil, field and Canada thistles, motherwort, and American germander. By late summer hoary tick-trefoil, water hemlock, grass-leaved goldenrod, and scarlet lobelia may be seen. Panicked aster is especially prominent near the third bridge. Ferns are neither particularly abundant nor varied. The broad beech fern, which can be seen near the north end of the path, is perhaps the most noteworthy.

Sometimes this path is strangely quiet even during migration. Fortunately, when this is the case, there often is activity on the nearby Plum Tree Path. And that will be the subject of another newsletter *Hot Spot*. (Editor's note: See the calendar page in this issue for club field trips scheduled to this hot spot in April.)

Recycling Tip: What do you do with that foam loose-fill, commonly called packaging "peanuts"? It can be recycled at Mail Boxes Etc. Four centers will recycle the material: Normandy Shopping Center in Ellicott City, Wilde Lake and Kings Contrivance in Columbia, and Tower Plaza Shopping Center in Laurel. It is suggested that you call the center before you drop off the peanuts.



## Flower Feature - Coltsfoot

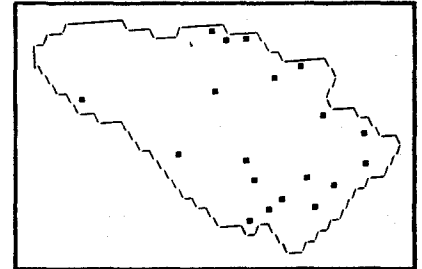
by Georgia Morris & Bob Solem

**NAME** - Coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*)

**FAMILY** - Composite (*Compositae*)

**HABITAT** - Stream banks, moist meadows, roadsides, waste places.

**HOWARD COUNTY LOCATIONS** - Avalon section of Patapsco Valley State Park, Daniels Road, Marriottsville Road, Sykesville-River Road, Scott's Cove, Triadelphia Reservoir, Savage Park, and Lake Elkhorn.



**HOWARD COUNTY BLOOMING SEASON** - Flowers appear in early spring, leaves are not produced until later, well after flowering.

**FLOWER** - Single yellow (dandelion-like) flower on a scaly stalk that grows 3" to 18" high. The flower head is about 1" across and consists of both disk (center) and ray (outer) flowers. As the flower matures the flower head becomes white and fluffy and the seeds are dispersed by the wind.

**LEAVES** - The leaves are produced at the base of the plant (one per plant) after the bloom is gone. Leaves are roughly heart-shaped, toothed, and fuzzy on the underside, 2" to 7" across.

**SPECIAL INFORMATION** - There are many yellow wildflowers in the composite family. One way to begin to identify them is to learn the ones (like Coltsfoot) that are easily distinguished. Coltsfoot has no leaves at the time of bloom and has unusual reddish scales on the stalk. Coltsfoot is named for the shape of the leaves--supposedly about the size and shape of a colt's foot. This flower is an alien imported from Europe and historically the leaves were used to make a cough remedy.

## Revised Centennial Park Bird Checklist Published

The Howard County Bird Club has published a revised Bird Checklist for Centennial Park. Like the earlier checklist, this was a cooperative effort. The Bird Club compiled the data and the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks printed and will distribute the checklist. The new checklist provides data on the 203 species observed in Centennial Park from 1983 through 1992; for the 1989 edition, only 189 species has been observed. Special thanks goes to **Connie Bockstie**, the Centennial Park coordinator, and to all who contributed data. The new checklist can be obtained at the club meetings from **Connie Bockstie** or **Jane Farrell** or by sending a self addressed and stamped, long envelope to Cedar Lane Park, 5081 Cedar Lane, Columbia, MD 21044. -- *Jane Farrell*

**Congratulations to Suzanne Probst** who's drawing of Ruddy Ducks will be used as the cover illustration for the upcoming bird checklist for Columbia lakes.

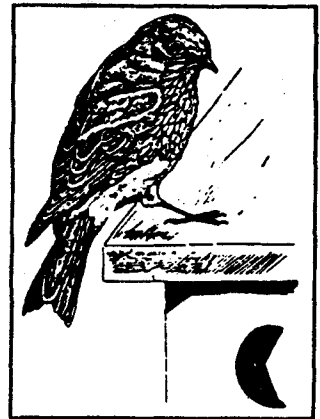


**Calling All Artists** → A cover illustration is needed for a Bird Club butterfly handout which is in preparation. Submit a black and white drawing of any of the swallowtail butterflies which occur in Howard County: Pipe Vine (rare), Zebra (rare), Black (uncommon), Tiger (common), or Spicebush (common). The cover will be 3.5" wide by 8.5" high including

lettering; the illustration should fit in a maximum 3.5" x 6" space. Give or mail to **Richard H. Smith**, 5213 Eliots Oak Road, Columbia, MD 21044 by April 1, 1993.

## 1992 BLUEBIRD PROGRAM RESULTS by Mark Wallace

In spite of a record high 925 boxes monitored and an astounding 176 cooperators, the Bird Club's bluebird program in 1992 fledged the lowest number of bluebirds of any of the last five years. This drop in production could be attributed mainly to cool, damp weather and its effect on the insect supply. Five storm periods during May plus a 30° morning on May 21 did most of the damage. A record 102 young were reported lost to the weather. It was probably also responsible for many of the 108 eggs listed as infertile or the 53 abandoned.



Although 1992 was a comparatively poor year for bluebird production, once again the total of 1365 was well over 1000, a figure which has been maintained since 1986. A record 100 Carolina Chickadees and 68 Tree Swallows were fledged in 1992. One pair of Great Crested Flycatchers attempted to nest in a wooden newspaper box but the young died.

Thanks to the following individuals who cooperated in the countywide bluebird program: William E. Adams, Greg & Renee Anderson, Ann Andrews, Julie & Tony Anthony, William Ballentine, Dan Barnes, Alvin Bates, Richard Baumgardner, Brian Becker, Tish Bell, Paul Belz, Bernein, Robert Bogdan, Jon K. Boone, Lanny Booth, Monika Botsai, William Bottle, Bushy Park E.S., Frank Bready, Marilyn Brinkley, Rick & Nan Brokaw, Allen & Estell Brown, Gisela Brown, Adam Bulharowski, Susan R. Buswell, Kathleen Cahill, John & Ermina Cameron, Cindy Carmichael, Nancy & Mike Cattone, Tom Clark, Clarksville M.S., John & Eileen Clegg, Pam & Dale Cockran, Kathy Colston, Barbara Condon, Florence Conroy, Regina Cope, Ralph Cullison, Carol Delaney, Demino, Susan Dodd, Leonard Dolhert, Wesley & Susan Earp, John & Debbie Erwin, Rosemary Fisher, John & Emily Frasier, Richard & Joanne Freas, Sonny & Shirley Freeland, Sandra French, Glenn Fulmer, Sarah Funkhouser, Craig & Belinda Fyfe, Barbara & Len Ganbin, Arthur Gebhart, Evelyn B. Gilbert, Cory Glennon, John & Corrine Gorzo, Lee & Carol Grant, Kimberly Gross, David Haines, Kenneth Hall, Mary Hall, Heartlands, Nancy & Guy Hawkins, Richard & Alice Hegner, James Heller, Lawrence & Marilyn Hill, Patricia Hirt, Paul Hogue, Carroll R. Holt, Jr., Eugene & Naomi Hostetler, Dorothea Howard, Albert Jager, Howard L. Jager, Iglehart, Clifton E. Jackson, Jr., Patricia Jackson, Jones, Chris & Tim Keeseey, Tim Keller, Joyce Kelly, Hugh & Sandy Kendell, Michael Kerwin, Elaine Kielman, Dave Kirkwood, Steve & Kathy Klein, David & Annabelle Keiser, Ray & Nancy Kohn, Dave Kobitsky, Marie Lohr, Margaret Lord, Sara Lustbader, JoAnn & Jack Lutes, Lorraine Malinowski, Mark Marden, Mary & Joseph A. Marilley, Grazina & Mike McClure, Debbie McGrann, Charles Miller, Marie G. Miller, Rosamond Munro, John Muskovac, Jr., Bea Newkirk, Jim Nichols, Turner & Janet Nichols, John Olow, Bonnie Ott, Donald Parlette, Paul & Nancy Parlette, Robert & Nancy Pearre, Karl G. Peters, Jan Petrides, Daniel Powell, Dick Raver, Margaret Rennels, James Resau, Eleanor Robbins, Hilde Rodgers, Rolfe, Carol Rolnick, Michele & Morton Rubin, Max Ruger, James M. Sanborn, Fred Schwaner, Elizabeth P. Scott, Margaret Sears, Phil Serafinas, Mary E. Shea, Mary Simonsen, William B. Sines, Skip Skipton, Boyd & Edna Smith, Carolyn Smith, Keith Smith, Charene Snyder, Hank Stanton, Chuck Stevens, Chuck Stirrat, Shane Stroup, Ralph Stup, Susan Sullivan, William H. Theis, Andre & Vera Thomann, Jan & Dot Titherington, Rose & Susanne Townsend, Ann Traynham, Trump, Norman & Helen Tyson, Ron Upchurch, Mark D. Wallace, Randy & Margaret Walton, Felix Westwood, Al White, Wild Bird Center, Lisa A. Willett, Mary Jane Wright, Roger & Carol Young, Peter Zerhusen.

John and Ermina Cameron had a male bluebird who managed to fledge three young after a cat killed his mate. The Muskovacs again had bluebirds successfully use a wooden newspaper box. Randy and Margaret Walton fledged four Carolina Wrens from a stove pipe in a storage trailer. John and Corine Gorzo fledged four Tufted Titmice from a conventional wooden box, while Jim Heller had a family of titmice nest in a clay jar. The Colstons, unfortunately, had no luck due to an infestation of gypsy moth caterpillars which were highly localized in the county in 1992. Ann Traynham near Glenwood fledged four Tree Swallows. Others who had swallows were Turner Nichols, Chuck Stevens, and some of mine for a new county high.

Bluebirds fledged four young at the River Hill Garden Center in Clarksville from a decorative barn box which was for sale. Bob Bogdan and Florence Conroy were the only two monitors reporting three successful clutches from the same box. Last year there were 21! Conroy observed bluebirds from the first brood help feed the second and third. John and Debbie Erwin watched bluebirds lay 54 eggs, abandon 28, but manage to fledge 26 young from the remaining eggs. Dorothea Howard used Tanglefoot on the bottom third of her box posts to stop an ant problem. She fledged 13 young out of 14 eggs. Karl Peters fledged three bluebirds from a Williamsburg bottle.

I monitored or kept track of 375 nest sites, including a dozen natural cavities. One of my female bluebirds lined her nest with orange plastic baling twine fragments. The adult

female in one box was predated by a rodent. Her three eggs were placed in a House Sparrow's nest in exchange for the sparrow's three eggs. Surprisingly, two bluebirds hatched. One later disappeared; the other was moved to an active bluebird nest from which it fledged. For the first time in the county, a pair of swallows fledged two clutches from a box. It was located at Waterford Farm. Two experimental boxes made of 4" schedule 40 PVC (thick-walled) pipe which I used for the first time this year fledged a total of three clutches. Hank Stanton has proved an outstanding addition to the bluebird program for the second year. He took over many of Joe Suess's boxes and also has a trail of his own near Ellicott City. Altogether he monitored 131 boxes, assisted with banding, and provided invaluable computer support. American Kestrels near his home fledged three young from a natural cavity. Dave Kubitsky is to be thanked for continuing to monitor boxes at Belmont despite living in southern Pennsylvania.

The *Bluebirds in the Parks* program which the Bird Club co-sponsors with the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks (HCRP) produced 84 bluebirds from 19 of the 57 boxes in 14 park locations. (Totals are included in chart totals.) These boxes also fledged 42 House Wrens and 23 Carolina Chickadees. Program coordinator Bill Eckert reported that predation by snakes and blowflies was down this year. The club provided the money and HCRP the labor to install metal predator guards on the nest box poles. Some were installed in 1992; more will be added in the coming season. One park monitor reported bluebirds using pine needles as nesting material. Nineteen of the park's nestling bluebirds were banded. The following individuals monitored in the parks in 1992: Leonie Cawley, Julie Dunlap, Susan Earp, Sharon Femrite, Al Goins, Clifford Gross, Mary Ellen Hux, Phil Jacobson, Kiekebusch-Steinitz family, Mike Meyerhoff, Sandy Meyerhoff, Sue Muller, Kirsten M. Saxe, Eileen Skidmore, Mike Stinson, Don Tharpe, Melanie Waters, Michele Wright.

Results from the last five years for the county are shown for comparative purposes:

	<u>Boxes Monitored</u>	<u>Total Used</u>	<u>Eggs Laid</u>	<u>Eggs Lost</u>	<u>Eggs Hatched</u>	<u>Young Lost</u>	<u>Young Fledged</u>	<u>Young Banded</u>
1988	636	425	2405	586	1813	256	1563	778
1989	713	334	2383	606	1777	262	1515	838
1990	763	426	2260	469	1781	292	1499	776
1991	750	385	2109	508	1601	167	1434	782
1992	925	469	2293	600	1693	328	1365	571

	<u>Chickadee</u>	<u>Titmouse</u>	<u>House Wren</u>	<u>Carolina Wren</u>	<u>Tree Swallow</u>	<u>Purple Martin</u>
1990	72	25	333	11	14	105
1991	48	18	491	45	51	149
1992	100	19	567	23	68	142

If you would like to help monitor boxes, establish a trail in the county, or report the location of a nest box, contact me at (301) 725-6370. Leave a message and I will get back to you.

## **CLUB BOOKSTORE - A Great Place to Shop**

If you have yet to take a moment to browse through the selections offered by the club bookstore, you may find it well worth your time. The bookstore unfolds from a collection of cardboard boxes carted to each meeting and seed sale by Michelle Wright. For sale are the Peterson, Nature Study and Golden field guides on a variety of subjects; a wide selection of books on birds and nature; bird feeders; nature note cards; club publications and checklists to name a few items. Michelle is diligent about obtaining copies of what is hot in the birding press, having in stock such publications as the newly revised Finding Birds in the National Capitol Area, by local writer Claudia Wilds. Don't see it? Ask Michelle; she will find it for you if available. And, prices are discounted up to 20 percent of the list price with profits going to support club activities and wildlife preservation programs.

## UPPER TEXAS COAST TRIP REPORT, Part II

by Phil Davis

*(Editor's note: As promised, a continuation of Phil's account of Barbara and Phil's trip to the Upper Texas Coast last spring. See the Jan-Feb issue of this newsletter for the Part I where Phil discussed the best birding spots closer to Houston.)*

Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge, east of Houston, is one of Barbara's and my favorite places. If you take your time driving through its network of roads, overlooking its marshes, ponds and fields, you can find lots of interesting things. Birds seen included Black-crowned Night-Herons; Mottled Ducks; Least Bitterns; Dickcissel; Yellow Warbler; Marsh and Sedge Wren; Orchard Orioles; Purple Gallinules; Soras; Northern Oriole; Louisiana Waterthrush; Gray-cheeked Thrush; Chuck-will's-widow; and Yellow and King Rail. We were standing by the road admiring the Chuck-will's-widow, with the refuge totally to ourselves, when all of a sudden, we thought one of the Navy Blue Angels buzzed us. Turns out it was a Common Nighthawk doing its courtship display. We continued to watch it climb high doing its "peenting" call, then break out into a nose dive, pulling up at the last moment with a sudden, loud "swoosh" sound.



Further down the coast, there are two primary birding areas in the town of High Island, Audubon Woods and Smith Woods. Both are owned by the Houston Audubon Society. I recommend checking in at Audubon Woods; sightings are posted. Audubon Woods features a pond with benches, where one can sit and watch a parade of warblers come to bathe. Many trails and several different habitats are to be found.

We found warblers galore one afternoon including Tennessee, Magnolia, Chestnut-sided, Blackburnian, Blackpoll, Black-and-white, Hooded, Cerulean, Kentucky, Golden-winged, Blue-winged, and Worm-eating plus Ovenbird and Northern Waterthrush. There were so many birds, you did not know which way to point your binoculars. Many were only 8 to 10 feet away at eye level. A Black-and-white Warbler made a pass at me, attempting to land on my head. ~~I guess he figured I had been standing so long, I had taken root. At the pond, a male and female Cerulean came to drink together, and at one time a wood thrush, Swainson's Thrush and grey-cheeked thrush were all lined up next to each other for a good study opportunity. Several other species of warblers were being seen at these High Island areas, but we did not make warblering our only priority, so we did miss a few good sightings.~~

Smith Woods is the larger tract and features many "magnet" trees (mulberry, etc) and underbrush areas. Birds seen in this area included Scarlet Tanager; Indigo Bunting; Solitary Vireo; Ruby-throated Hummingbird; Black-and-white Warbler; Cedar Waxwing; American Robin; Veery, Swainson's and Wood Thrushes. Thanks to Victor Emanuel, who was leading a group there, we picked up a Great Horned Owl, high in a tree top and a Wild Turkey on a nest. The turkey was only about 8 feet from the trail; it looked like it was dead it was so still, but its eyes were open.

Located at the town of Gilcrest, a canal and narrow isthmus allows easy access to both the Gulf and the Intercostal Waterway. This is a great place for terns including Royal, Forster's, Black, Least and Sandwich. Also Black Skimmers; Great Blue and Little Blue Herons; Reddish Egrets; White Pelicans; Dunlin; Red-breasted Merganser; Surf Scoter; Great and Snowy Egrets were around. There is a tidal shore and mudflats located at the south end of the Bolivar Peninsula. Driving down the peninsula, we saw a Barn Owl hunting about one hour before sunset. Other birds of note included Lesser Golden, Snowy, Semi-palmated, and Piping Plovers; Red Knot; American Avocet; Brown Pelican; and Long-billed Curlew.

In the Galveston Island area probably 8 Mile Road and Sportsman's Road are the best birding locations. At 8 Mile Road there were American Bittern, Reddish Egrets; Little Blue Herons, Tricolored Herons, and Roseate Spoonbills.

Four and a half days of leisurely birding at the end of April paid off with 176 total species. Several other interesting birds could have been found locally, but having observed them in previous trips, we didn't go after them. It is definitely a worthwhile trip.



## CALENDAR OF PROGRAMS AND FIELD TRIPS



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

March 11 **Identification Lecture** - David Holmes will continue his series of identification lectures which in past years Thursday have been so helpful to new and experienced birders alike. As we go to press, David is working on gathering slides for the presentation; his program will surely help us in our spring bird identifications.

April 8 **"Approaches to Bird Art"** - John Taylor. John is Maryland's best known bird artist. This program was Thursday rescheduled due to a weather cancellation in December. The Ward Museum in Salisbury is currently showing a special exhibit featuring the original paintings of John's book, Birds of Chesapeake.

**Field Trips** meet as described for each trip. Carpooling is encouraged; riders share the cost of gas and tolls. Dress for the field 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 three participants.* Questions? Call the trip leader or Field Trip Chair, Bonnie Ott (410) 461-3361.

March 7 **WOODCOCK AND OWLS** - Meet at 5:30 am. Call trip leader Bonnie Ott at (410) 461-3361 to reserve a space and for Sunday details on where to meet. Eastern Screech and Great Horned Owls possible. Chance for displaying woodcock.

March 13 **LOCAL LAKES WATERFOWL** - Meet at 8:00 am, Centennial Park concession stand. Bufflehead, Ring-necked Duck, Saturday Canvasback, Ruddy Duck, and grebes likely. Leader: Jane Farrell, (410) 381-7344.

March 27 **WOODLAND AND WATER BIRDS AT WILDE LAKE** - Meet at 8:00 am, at boat dock. Possible Winter Wren, Brown Creeper, Saturday Hermit Thrush and wide variety of waterfowl. Leader: Helen Zeichner, (410) 730-3695.

Apr 4, 11 **CENTENNIAL WEEKLY SPRING BIRD WALKS** - Meet at 8:00 am, at west end lot. Four leaders; co-sponsored with Howard 18, 25 County Rec & Parks (HCRP). Highlights from previous years include Caspian Tern, Common Snipe, loons, swallows, Sundays orioles, kinglets, and warblers.

April 24 **WILDFLOWERS AT GWYNN ACRES** - Meet at 10:00 am, at Columbia Rd and Ram's Horn Row. Morning walk on paved path Saturday to search for spring flowers. Leader: Bob Solem, (301) 725-5037.

May 2 **HUGG-THOMAS WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA** - Meet at 7:00 am, at Gremler Realty on Little Patuxent Parkway for half Sunday day trip for migrants. Anything possible! Leader: Dave Harvey, (410) 795-3117. (*See the May-June 1991 issue of this newsletter featuring Hugg-Thomas as a Hot Spot.*)

May 2 **HABITAT WALK AT CEDAR LANE PARK**. 1:00-2:30 pm, meet at park office off Cedar Lane entrance. Co-sponsored with Sunday HCRP. Look for a wide variety of flora and fauna on paved woodland path. Leader: Bob Solem, (301) 725-5037.

**Weekday Walks** are scheduled so that people who have time during the weekdays to bird can go out with a group rather than bird alone on isolated trails. Meeting times and places are listed below.

March 31 **Centennial Park** - Meet at 8:30 am at the west end lot to walk around the lake. Wednesday

April 8 **PLUM TREE & GWYNN ACRES** - Meet at 8:30 am on Columbia Road at Ram's Horn Row to walk paved paths. Thursday

April 20 **WILDE LAKE** - Meet at 8:30 am at boat dock to walk paved path and bird the woods. Tuesday

**Board of Directors Meeting:** March 25, 1993, at 7:30 pm, Longfellow Elementary School. There is no April meeting.

**MAY-JUNE NEWSLETTER MATERIAL** due April 1, 1993. Call or mail to Susan Setterberg, 9445 Clocktower Lane, Columbia, MD 21046; (301) 498-4734.

## CONSERVATION REPORT Bob Solem

Here are three stories worth sharing. Several years ago when D. Daniel Boone worked for the Maryland Natural Heritage Program, he learned that the Maryland Department of Transportation, Bureau of Highways, was planning the right-of-way for the new US 48 right through a major shale barren that supported a stand of Alleghany plum (*Prunus alleghaniensis*), an endangered plant species in Maryland. Dan got an appointment with the state highway engineer in charge of the project and explained that the proposed routing would destroy the shale barren habitat of this endangered species. The engineer was confident he could help. He told Dan, "You just tell me where you want that plant moved, and we have big enough equipment that we can transplant it for you." The highway was built as planned; the road cut destroyed the area of shale barrens. The plum needed that specific habitat; transplanting was not a solution. The Bureau of Highways just didn't get it.

We received a card during the holiday season in December, 1992; as I often do, I turned it over to identify the painting on the front. In addition to that information, there was this message: "This greetings card has been made from the wood pulp of managed Scandinavian forests. For every tree cut down at least one more is replanted, thus replenishing the Earth's atmosphere." Tree farming is wonderful, and it is nice that the growers practice sustained yield management; but it has little to do with preserving old-growth forests and natural ecosystems.

The final vignette is from the travel section of *The Washington Post* in a description of completion of the final 12-mile section of I-70 in Colorado: "The four-lane road, 13 years in the building, was an engineering challenge... And such was the concern for environmental impact that rock cuts were modeled to imitate natural canyon walls and stained to match canyon colors." Now that probably employed a lot of set designers and covered up a lot of geologic history, but making a highway cut into the make-believe world of an amusement park has nothing to do with mitigating the environmental impact of the highway.

When will we learn that we can have economic progress and protection of natural ecosystems. We must look for alternatives that BOTH protect the environment and address other legitimate concerns. This will be the challenge when renewal of the Endangered Species Act comes before Congress in 1993.

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### HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

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- ▶ HOT SPOT - GWYNN ACRES

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