



VOL. 21, No 5  
MAY-JUNE 1993

# Howard

A Chapter of the  
Maryland Ornithological Society



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## 20th YEAR CELEBRATION - BREAKFAST PICNIC MAY 23, 1993

The Howard County Bird Club will close its 20th year with a breakfast picnic on the grounds of the Applied Physics Lab, off Sanner Road. Tables have been reserved in an area next to the Middle Patuxent River. Meet at the ballfield at 8:00 am to bird along the river and mature forest edge. Veerys and Cerulean warblers have been known to nest in this area. This is a rare opportunity to bird this lovely, restricted access area. Call Jo Solem by Thursday, May 20, if you wish to participate (301) 725-5037. Later arrivals should follow the dirt road by the pavillion towards the woods down to the river. Breakfast is planned for 10:00 am after birding.

## 226 SPECIES ON 1992 ANNUAL LIST - A NEW RECORD

by Jane Farrell

Once again we were very consistent, but we also came up with a new county record (226 species), a new county bird (Lapland Longspur), and only the second Sedge Wren record (noted in both 1991 and 1992). Other really good sightings were Tricolored Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, White-winged Scoter, Northern Goshawk, Golden Eagle, Western Sandpiper, and Orange-crowned Warbler. There were notable misses, though; we did not record Gray-cheeked Thrush or Evening Grosbeak for the first time in fourteen years. The latter species reflects the overall paucity of Northern invasion species--not lack of observer effort.

Last year I asked for Redhead, Connecticut Warbler, a variety of shorebirds, and an unusual tern or two. Well, Mark Wallace found the Redhead on private land; no Connecticut Warbler was identified; we found Forster's Tern but missed Black Tern for the first year since 1985; and shorebirds were not abundant or varied. This year I am still asking for a Connecticut Warbler and some northern invasion species. Find these birds, share with others, and if you find an unusual species, activate the Howard County Rare Bird Alert by calling Bea Newkirk on (301) 498-1902.

Jo Solem's work on revising the county checklist produced many additional species from previous years. Add the following species to the following years: 1991 -- Barn Owl, Sedge Wren, and Lawrence's Warbler ["o"]; new total 224. 1989 -- Red Phalarope; new total 224. 1987 -- Alder Flycatcher; new total 216. 1986 -- Northern Goshawk; new total 213. 1984 -- Glaucous Gull; new total 211. 1983 -- Long-eared Owl and Philadelphia Vireo; new total 206. 1982 -- Mute Swan and Northern Saw-whet Owl; new total 217. 1981 -- Mute Swan and Alder Flycatcher; new total 205. 1980 -- Snowy Egret and Prothonotary Warbler; new total 209. 1979 -- Red-throated Loon and Lincoln's Sparrow; new total 204.

Thanks to these members who submitted their complete 1992 lists: Burton J. Alexander, Paula & Sandy Bullinger, Rod Burley, Jane Farrell, Nancy Magnusson, Peter Osenton, Bonnie Ott, Suzanne Probst, Norm & Fran Saunders, Jo Solem, and Helen Zeichner. David Holmes', Jo Solem's, and Paul Zucker's data from special counts and season reports captured some species that would otherwise be missing. Bob Ringler shared his technical expertise and provided guidance. Bob Solem produced the computerized 14 year

compilation. Individuals who submitted their 1992 annual lists will receive a printout of the 14-year compilation. Other members may request it by sending a stamped, self-address long envelope to Jane Farrell, 6324 Sandchain Road, Columbia, MD 21045.

Common Loon	Cooper's Hawk	Great Horned Owl	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Worm-eating Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Northern Goshawk	Barred Owl	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Ovenbird
Horned Grebe	Red-shouldered Hawk	Common Nighthawk	Eastern Bluebird	Northern Waterthrush
Double-crested Cormorant	Broad-winged Hawk	Whip-poor-will	Veery	Louisiana Waterthrush
American Bittern	Red-tailed Hawk	Chimney Swift	Swinson's Thrush	Kentucky Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Rough-legged Hawk	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Hermit Thrush	Mourning Warbler
Great Egret	Golden Eagle	Belted Kingfisher	Wood Thrush	Common Yellowthroat
Little Blue Heron	American Kestrel	Red-headed Woodpecker	American Robin	Hooded Warbler
Tricolored Heron	Merlin	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Gray Catbird	Wilson's Warbler
Cattle Egret	Peregrine Falcon	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Northern Mockingbird	Canada Warbler
Green-backed Heron	Ring-necked Pheasant	Downy Woodpecker	Brown Thrasher	Yellow-breasted Chat
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Wild Turkey	Hairy Woodpecker	American Pipit	Scarlet Tanager
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	Northern Bobwhite	Northern Flicker	Cedar Waxwing	Northern Cardinal
Glossy Ibis	Virginia Rail	Pileated Woodpecker	European Starling	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Tundra Swan	Sora	Olive-sided Flycatcher	White-eyed Vireo	Blue Grosbeak
Mute Swan	Common Moorhen	Eastern Wood-Peevee	Solitary Vireo	Indigo Bunting
Snow Goose	American Coot	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Yellow-throated Vireo	Rufous-sided Towhee
Canada Goose	Semipalmated Plover	Acadian Flycatcher	Warbling Vireo	American Tree Sparrow
Wood Duck	Killdeer	Alder Flycatcher	Philadelphia Vireo	Chipping Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	Greater Yellowlegs	Willow Flycatcher	Red-eyed Vireo	Field Sparrow
American Black Duck	Lesser Yellowlegs	Least Flycatcher	Blue-winged Warbler	Vesper Sparrow
Hallard	Solitary Sandpiper	Eastern Phoebe	Golden-winged Warbler	Savannah Sparrow
Northern Pintail	Spotted Sandpiper	Great Crested Flycatcher	Tennessee Warbler	Grasshopper Sparrow
Blue-winged Teal	Semipalmated Sandpiper	Eastern Kingbird	Orange-crowned Warbler	Fox Sparrow
Northern Shoveler	Western Sandpiper	Horned Lark	Nashville Warbler	Song Sparrow
Gadwall	Least Sandpiper	Purple Martin	Northern Parula	Lincoln's Sparrow
American Wigeon	Pectoral Sandpiper	Tree Swallow	Yellow Warbler	Swamp Sparrow
Canvasback	Dunlin	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Chestnut-sided Warbler	White-throated Sparrow
Redhead	Short-billed Dowitcher	Bank Swallow	Magnolia Warbler	White-crowned Sparrow
Ring-necked Duck	Common Snipe	Cliff Swallow	Cape May Warbler	Dark-eyed Junco
Greater Scaup	American Woodcock	Barn Swallow	Black-throated Blue Warbler	Lapland Longspur
Lesser Scaup	Laughing Gull	Blue Jay	Yellow-rumped Warbler	Bobolink
Oldsquaw	Bonaparte's Gull	American Crow	Black-throated Green Warbler	Red-winged Blackbird
White-winged Scoter	Ring-billed Gull	Fish Crow	Blackburnian Warbler	Eastern Meadowlark
Common Goldeneye	Herring Gull	Carolina Chickadee	Yellow-throated Warbler	Rusty Blackbird
Bufflehead	Iceland Gull	Tufted Titmouse	Pine Warbler	Common Grackle
Hooded Merganser	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Prairie Warbler	Brown-headed Cowbird
Common Merganser	Great Black-backed Gull	White-breasted Nuthatch	Palm Warbler	Orochard Oriole
Red-breasted Merganser	Caspian Tern	Brown Creeper	Bay-breasted Warbler	Northern Oriole
Ruddy Duck	Forster's Tern	Carolina Wren	Blackpoll Warbler	Purple Finch
Black Vulture	Rock Dove	House Wren	Cerulean Warbler	Rose Finch
Turkey Vulture	Mourning Dove	Winter Wren	Black-and-white Warbler	Pine Siskin
Osprey	Black-billed Cuckoo	Sedge Wren	American Redstart	American Goldfinch
Bald Eagle	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Marsh Wren	Prothonotary Warbler	House Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Barn Owl	Golden-crowned Kinglet		Brewster's Warbler
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Eastern Screech-Owl			

## BIRDING "HOT SPOTS" IN HOWARD COUNTY -

### Plum Tree Path by Joanne Solem & Bonnie Ott

**DIRECTIONS:** FROM U.S. 29 GO WEST ON MD. 108 0.3 MILE TO THE FIRST TRAFFIC LIGHT WHICH IS 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. (*Editor's note: A map for this area was provided in the "Hot Spot" feature of our March/April issue.*)

One of the advantages of birding in this area is that there are several paths and a variety of habitats within easy reach. In addition, Centennial Park with its large lake is less than a mile to the west (1.3 miles by car). Plum Tree Path begins on the south side of Columbia Road almost opposite the southern terminus of the Gwynn Acres Path. Plum Tree Path is a horseshoe-shaped paved trail about a half mile long which is adjacent to suburban backyards on one side and close to wetland habitats on the other. It is a mix that is both frustrating and rewarding. Unfortunately, one is almost certain to see aggregations of House Sparrows, European Starlings, and mixed blackbird flocks feasting at feeders in large numbers. On the other hand, the wetlands, containing both marsh and swamp, sometimes offer glimpses of species infrequently seen in this county. Nature is never stagnant, so some



of the choicest birding areas along Plum Tree Path may be temporary. Beavers enlarged and improved this wetland; they may well move on at some future time, but, for now, we can appreciate the special area that they have created. From the entrance described above, the path passes open areas that are rapidly returning to young second-growth, beyond them stand larger trees along the stream. There are always a variety of resident birds in this first section and, during spring and fall, one occasionally finds a few migrants but, generally, numbers and species are low. This path allows a reasonable view of the sky. Gulls are frequently visible flying east and west along some invisible highway from the Chesapeake Bay to local lakes or the landfill. Hawks, especially in the autumn, are likely to be noted; Red-shouldered Hawks are resident. During migration periods watch for loons in the morning; occasionally, cormorants or small flocks of herons are seen.

The most productive wetlands lie along the last third of the path. At any point where there is an opening, scan carefully. During the period when the leaves have dropped from the trees and shrubs, it is possible to see portions of beaver-chewed trees and dams. Here and there a tree leans at a precarious angle, trapped in the crotch of another, indicating a slight misjudgment by the furry engineer. Beaver dams hold for varying lengths of time depending on total rainfall, storm intensity, and the conscientiousness with which they are repaired. As a result, the water in some parts of this wetland may fluctuate dramatically. A several acre pond containing mature trees was created at one time which was particularly attractive to Wood Ducks, American Widgeon, and other puddle ducks. The water in it drained when a dam was breached; at some future time the dam may be repaired and it will refill. The grassy meadow and extensive patches of cattails have proven attractive to Soras, a Little Blue Heron, American Bitterns, ducks, and species such as Willow Flycatcher, Marsh Wren, and Lincoln's Sparrow. Swamp Sparrows are easily found in migration. Occasional emergent mud flats have been stopping places for Spotted, Solitary, and Least Sandpipers, Killdeer, and Common Snipe. Barred Owls have been heard and seen. Rusty Blackbirds sometimes can be found by the careful observer. Both orioles, Warbling Vireos, and Yellow Warblers are usually heard and seen in the spring. Belted Kingfishers and Great Blue Herons are resident year-round except when the area is completely frozen. When you have walked the entire loop and come out again on Columbia Road, be sure to walk a few feet east to the bridge and scan the wet area. In summer, families of Wood Ducks are often visible. Blue-winged Teal and Hooded Mergansers have been seen in migration. Cross the road and check the north side of the bridge.

If you wish to bird one more area, stay on the north side of the road and walk west perhaps 100 feet until you see a post marked by a trail symbol where a wood chip trail descends into the woods. This path leads along a stream providing welcome additional floodplain access, particularly during migration; by summer the path often becomes overgrown. In the spring, Northern Waterthrushes are often found on muddy expanses; look for Rusty Blackbirds in the leafy ooze beneath the trees. A Great Horned Owl was resident one year, while an American Bittern once found the marshy sections of this area to its liking. When you finish investigating this path and retrace your steps to Columbia Road, either continue west along the sidewalks to reach the point at which you started or return along the Plum Tree Path. Most birders choose to do the latter for there is a better chance of seeing something of interest. (*Our thanks to Phil Norman, Karan Repsher, and Susan Setterberg for their contributions to this feature*).

## **8th ANNUAL HOWARD COUNTY MIDWINTER COUNT** February 6, 1993

David Holmes & Joanne Solem, Co-compilers

If you asked most Howard County counters what they remember most about this year's midwinter count, they wouldn't say the species total of 91, a new high. They wouldn't say the 2 species new for the all time count list (Blue-winged Teal and Glaucous Gull). They wouldn't say the new high counts for 19 species with 4 high ties. They wouldn't even say the wonderful food at the tally rally. They'd all say "THE WEATHER!" You name it, we had it - almost. The day started mostly cloudy and foggy with a high temperature of 42°. About 8 am, the front hit. Four hours of snow, brisk northwest winds, and dropping

temperatures completed the day. The night brought clearing skies but continuing winds and temperatures decreasing from about 21° at 6 pm down to midnight readings of 10° to 13°. Hardly ideal! For much of the day, the birds found shelter and hunkered.

So, how did we do so well? We walked. Party hours on foot set a new record (186.5, previous high, 179). The winter was mild to that point (remember, this was 6 February). Water was open so waterfowl and semi-hardy lingerers were still here. The landfill produced 6 species of gulls. But, with all this help, the total of individuals was modest (53,942). Problem? How many of you think it's truly wonderful to have to count 50,000+ blackbirds? We only saw 16,000. What a relief!

High count species came in several categories. The permanent and seasonal residents included Great Horned Owl, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, Brown Creeper, Northern Cardinal, White-throated Sparrow, and Dark-eyed Junco. Their increases were generally modest and may have reflected easy living conditions and/or more efficient coverage. Land based semi-hardy and lingering species were Carolina Wren and Fox Sparrow. Their increases were dramatic. Water dependent lingerers included Great Blue Heron, Killdeer, Common Snipe, and American Woodcock, all with modest gains. Waterfowl Species were Pied-billed Grebe, Gadwall, Common Merganser, and Great Black-backed Gull. High ties were Bald Eagle, Wild Turkey, and Lesser Black-backed Gull with 2 individuals each, and the single Iceland Gull.

Since our party hour total has stayed within a 10% range for 5 consecutive years, once can begin to wonder if apparent long term declines are to be taken seriously. The following species may bear watching: Red-shouldered Hawk, Herring Gull, Rock Dove, American Tree Sparrow, and House Sparrow. Granted we may be gleefully watching the Rock Doves and House Sparrows disappear but the others are native. The number of Herring Gulls nesting on the small island in upper New England where I am banding seems to have declined substantially over the past 5 years and Herring Gull figures on the Triadelphia Christmas Bird Count peaked in 1988. Red-shouldered Hawk figures may reflect habitat destruction and Tree Sparrows just may not have needed to come so far south in these past several years of mild winters. Or, something else may be going on. ~~Jeff Hatfield at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center is doing a project on variability of results from fixed effort bird counts.~~ We are hoping his results can be applied to this count so perhaps we can better understand what we are seeing.

Meanwhile, to all the observers, CONGRATULATIONS for a job well done! Special thanks go to the Area Leaders, Mark Wallace, Nancy Magnusson, Dave and Maureen Harvey, Mike McClure, Greg Van Nostrand, Bonnie Ott, and Jo Solem. More thanks go to Hal and Zelda Simon for so graciously hosting the Tally Rally AGAIN! Mike McClure spent much time working up the raptor data for the Washington Area Raptor Society's area wide survey (and use in a possible Howard County research project). You're all just as wonderful as the birds. See you on the May Count, the Triadelphia Christmas Count and on this count next year!

**OBSERVERS:** AREA 1: MARK WALLACE, Joseph Byrnes, John H. Hoffman, Michael J. Derwin, Kevin Quinlan, Hank Stanton, Rick Sussman, Robin Todd; AREA 2: NANCY MAGNUSSON, Ward Ebert, Scott Harash, David Henderson, Don Henderson, Peter Osenton, Tom Strikwerda, Paul & Sherry Zucker, *Feeder watchers* - William A. Kidwill, Judy Proia, Skip Skipton, Romyne Smith; AREA 3: DAVE & MAUREEN HARVEY, Brent & Mary Byers, Ralph Cullison, Shiras Guilonn, Carol & Dan Haft, Dave & Maureen Harvey, Elliott Kirschbaum, Bruce Kirtley-Hodess, Daren Morley, Art Rogers, Steve Sanford, Gene Scarpulla, Nancy Smith, Debbie Terry, Will & Robin Tress, *Feeder watchers* - Janet Bushinsky, R.W. Handwork, Dave Kirkwood; AREA 4: MIKE MCCLURE, Bill Blum, Kim Gross, David Holmes, Mike Leumas, Grazina McClure, Karan Repsher, Susan Setterberg, Chuck Stirrat, *Feeder watchers* - Ralph Cullison, Georgia Eacker, Jim & Chris Resau, Gene Scarpulla, Steve Schrader, Dominic & Rae Weston; AREA 5: GREG VAN NOSTRAND, Burton Alexander, Guy Barnard, Paul Bowen, Greg Cameron, Doug Chamblin, George B. Chase, Marty Chestem, John & Eileen Clegg, Peggy Erbe, David Garfine, Marci Krishnamoorthy, Doug & Jeanne Odermatt, Pat Sturm, Michele Wright, Helen Zeichner, *Feeder watchers* - Ellen & Hal Bryson, Wes & Sue Earp, John Greer, Pat Hirt, Pat Jackson, Dennis Luck, Rosamond Munro; AREA 6: BONNIE OTT, Delos C. Dupree, Jane & Ralph Gauder, David Keck, Dave Kubitsky, Marjorie Kupiec, Brigitte B. & Robert E. Lund, David Mozurkevich, John Ott, Sue Probst, Charles D. Williams, Cathy Williamson, *Feeder watchers* - William Brandenstein, Steve Clarkson, Alex J. Donovan, Jr., Sharon Ferrite, Pamela Janesh, Robert B. Linder; AREA 7: JOANNE SOLEM, Maud Banks, Jane Farrell, Eva Sunell, (cont. on page 7)

Martha & Don Waugh, Jim & Carol Wilkinson, Feeder watchers - E.L. & J.R. Compton, Ron Cotterman, Judith Howe, Duncan MacDonald, Jim & Claudia Medwin, Bob Solem. (Area Leaders names are in CAPITALS.)

Feb 6, 1993

Following are the species and total counts for the day:

Pied-billed Grebe	3	accipter sp.	2	Northern Flicker	128	Northern Cardinal	1335
Great Blue Heron	16	Red-shouldered Hawk	46	Pileated Woodpecker	23	Rufous-sided Towhee	24
Tundra Swan	40	Red-tailed Hawk	47	Eastern Phoebe	2	American Tree Sparrow	10
Mute Swan	6	American Kestrel	23	Horned Lark	6	Field Sparrow	70
Canada Goose	5939	Wild Turkey	2	Blue Jay	499	Fox Sparrow	11
Wood Duck	2	Killdeer	20	American Crow	1564	Song Sparrow	388
American Black Duck	432	Common Snipe	4	Fish Crow	28	Swamp Sparrow	22
Hallard	722	American Woodcock	2	crow sp.	2155	White-throated Sparrow	1665
Northern Pintail	2	Ring-billed Gull	6101	Carolina Chickadee	710	White-crowned Sparrow	78
Blue-winged Teal	1	Herring Gull	1062	Tufted Titmouse	486	Dark-eyed Junco	1740
Gadwall	3	Iceland Gull	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	6	Red-winged Blackbird	5077
American Wigeon	18	Lesser Black-backed Gull	2	White-breasted Nuthatch	130	Eastern Meadowlark	31
Canvasback	12	Glaucous Gull	1	Brown Creeper	40	Common Grackle	9144
Ring-necked Duck	26	Great Bl.-backed Gull	112	Carolina Wren	358	Brown-headed Cowbird	459
Lesser Scaup	3	gull sp.	473	Winter Wren	10	blackbird sp.	1656
Bufflehead	13	Rock Dove	481	Golden-crowned Kinglet	72	Purple Finch	23
Hooded Merganser	20	Mourning Dove	1019	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	4	House Finch	1393
Common Merganser	257	Eastern Screech-Owl	2	Eastern Bluebird	150	Pine Siskin	2
Red-breasted Merganser	1	Great Horned Owl	18	Hermit Thrush	4	American Goldfinch	285
Black Vulture	107	Barred Owl	5	American Robin	83	House Sparrow	511
Turkey Vulture	268	Belted Kingfisher	35	Gray Catbird	1		
Bald Eagle	2	Red-bellied Woodpecker	196	Northern Mockingbird	234		
Northern Harrier	1	Yel-bellied Sapsucker	2	Cedar Waxwing	28		
Sharp-shinned Hawk	12	Downy Woodpecker	232	European Starling	5543		
Cooper's Hawk	2	Hairy Woodpecker	41	Yellow-rumped Warbler	4		

Total Species: 91 Total Individuals: 53,942

Party hours on foot - 186.5; Party hours by car - 65.5; Party hours at feeders - 79.25, Party hours owling - 9; TOTAL PARTY HOURS - 261. Party miles on foot - 158.25; Party miles by car - 743.7; Party miles owling - 32; TOTAL PARTY MILES - 933.95

### GREAT HORNED OWL'S NEST DESTROYED BY MARAUDING CROWS by Connie Bockstie

On the morning of January 19, 1993, Sue Probst and I, having just parked in the lot above the concession stand on the south side of Centennial Park, were planning to walk around the lake--birding as we went. Almost immediately our attention was drawn to the wooded area on the north side of the parking lot where a large number of American Crows were diving a very tall oak tree. Closer inspection revealed a Great Horned Owl on an abandoned hawk's nest about 60 feet up in the main crotch of the tree. The crows were creating so much commotion and diving so close to the nest that the owl was literally ducking to avoid being hit. Since we walk around the park about five times each week, we were able to keep a close check on the incubating bird. From the far side of the parking lot we could quickly determine if she was still on the nest. Most of the time it was not even necessary to go anywhere near the woods because so many crows were in the immediate area that we knew she must still be there. In the ensuing weeks, there were only a few times when we visited the park that crows were not harassing the owl. We affectionately, but respectfully, dubbed the owl, Mrs. Bubo. Bubo virginianis is the Latin name for Great Horned Owl.



It was not widely known the owl was nesting at the edge of the woods, directly adjacent to a much-used parking lot. Her presence was not advertised in an effort to protect her from over-zealous observers who might jeopardize the outcome of her nesting effort by too much attention to the area. On several occasions a few birders did report seeing the owl sitting up straight or standing in the nest, perhaps stretching or rearranging her eggs. Each time Sue and I saw her, however, she was settled down pretty low in the nest with only her head, or sometimes only the tufts of her "ears," showing. We speculated that this may have been the same owl, first discovered by Bill Van Horn, which successfully fledged one chick across the lake in an area known to local birders as the "duck pond."

On the afternoon of February 9, while talking to fellow club member Ron Dunwiddie, we noticed that there was more than the usual amount of noise around the nest tree. We walked up to the parking lot and counted 45 crows diving on the nest once again, with more arriving as we watched helplessly. We wondered how the owl could withstand such an onslaught. Some of the crows seemed to skim directly over the top of the nest; all we could see were her "ear" tufts as the owl hunkered far down into the nest.

The next day at about 3:00 pm the woods were strangely quiet. We first looked at the nest from afar but could see nothing. With a sinking feeling we walked closer. For the first time since we observed the owl on January 19, the nest was completely empty. It had been partially pulled from the crotch of the tree. At the foot of the tall oak, we found the center of the nest, sprinkled here and there with a few downy feathers. Poking around the leafy debris revealed two broken eggs, one contained a half-eaten embryo, the other was bloody and empty. There was a great deal of whitewash splattered on the tree trunk and on the ground on the south side of the nest tree. We could find no pellets. Happily, there was no evidence of the female owl on the ground so we could only speculate that she escaped unharmed. A day later, on February 11, Martha Chestem told me she had seen an owl standing on the nest that day.

All our efforts to protect the owl from human infringement were for naught! In the end it was nature herself, in the relentless and savage attacks of so many crows, that destroyed the nest and thwarted the attempt of the bird to reproduce at this location. We realize that the Great Horned Owl is not an endangered, or even a threatened, species; still, Sue and I were sick at heart to think that Mrs. Bubo was not able to successfully hatch her brood. Something very wonderful is now missing from Centennial Park.



#### ODDS AND ENDS



**MARYLAND BIRDLIFE MAILED:** Our chapter is responsible for mailing the MOS publication, *Maryland Birdlife*. Two issues were recently mailed. Helping out with the mailing of the Dec 1990, were Marty Chestem, Shiras Guion, Florence Saito, Don Waugh and Helen Zeichner. Jane Farrell provided her home for the work night. The March 1991 mailing was accomplished by Marty Chestem, Maud & Harry Banks (who hosted the event), Bill Van Horn and Susan Setterberg. Tom Strikwerda organized both work nights.

**SEED SALE SUCCESS:** Though rain, sleet and snow threatened, the winter seed sale came through with what turned out to be a lovely, sunny winter day. Many commented while picking up their seed that the birds just weren't eating as much at their feeders as usual. Even so, the club sold 21,000+ pounds of seed. Eileen Klegg did her usual tremendous job as the organizer of the sale. The flock of volunteers included: Maud Banks, Connie & Mike Bockstie, Paula Bullinger, John & Andrew Clegg, Mike Courbron, Bob Dettner, Barbara Doarnberger, Bruce Eberle, Marty Chestem, Steve Clarkson, Jane Farrell, Ralph Gauder, Tina Glorioso, Doris Hall, Pat Hirt, Tim Keller, Mary Keller, Steve Koziol, Mike Leumas, Dennis Luck, Connie Mace, Nancy Magnusson, Andree Neri, Sue Probst, Susan Setterberg, Joanne Solem, Mark Wallace, Jim Wilson, Michele Wright, and Helen Zeichner.

**NEWSLETTER STAFF:** Having finished my first year as Editor of the newsletter, I wanted to take just a tiny bit of space to thank all who have helped me. This publication is truly a team effort. Many club members compile information from the various counts and surveys. We never want for material as there are frequent interesting contributions from members. Major contributions for articles are routinely made by the Solems and Georgia Morris in particular. Bob Solem does all of the label production and puts them on the printed newsletter, plus he drafts many of the articles on computer before they get to me. Marty Chestem takes the finished product to the post office. *Thank you one and all for making this job, which is so much fun, easier.*



**FOUND! - BINOCULARS ...** A pair of binoculars was found in late March at the Patuxent River State Park. To claim them, call Jay Sheppard at (301) 725-5559, evenings.

## HOWARD COUNTY FIRST - BALD EAGLE NESTING

Bald Eagles have been found nesting in Howard County. Later in the Spring it may be possible for members in small parties to safely observe the birds from a distance. It is important that we not disturb the eagles. If you are interested in seeing them, call Jane Farrell at (410) 381-7344 (evenings) or Bonnie Ott at (410) 461-3361.



## May Count - Saturday, May 8, 1993

Since 1948, the Maryland Ornithological Society has conducted an annual May Count. Everyone is urged to join in; no matter your skill level. Identification is only part of being successful; you have to spot the bird first, so every pair of eyes helps. And, it is great fun. The compiler for Howard County is Paul Zucker. Call him at (301) 279-7896 (Home) or (301) 953-5000 x 4971 (Office) to participate in the count. Paul will pair you up with someone else if you'd like, based on your skill level, and assign you an area to cover. Special requests are honored whenever possible.

**HOW IT WORKS:** There are 18 regions in the county, each with a teamleader. Your counts will be reported to your teamleader who totals his or her section's results. Leaders are responsible for tracking party miles and time, names and addresses of the participants, and documentation for unusual sightings. Observers within talking or shouting distance of each other are considered one party. If two or more birders spend an hour together on foot, that constitutes one party hour; however, if one member is separated from the other for  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour, then the total is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  party hours. All birds (including, ugh, Starlings, and House Sparrows) must be counted. Large flocks can be estimated. If you see something exciting outside your assigned area, make a note of the time, direction of flight, and location. The sighting can be reported to the area leader for that sector at the tally; and the bird may be added to the count if we are assured double counting did not take place.

**UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS:** Any species not previously recorded in the county or listed on the checklist needs to be documented. Acceptable documentation includes the name of the person making the identification, names of all others who saw the bird, when and where it was seen, lighting conditions, optics used, behavior of the bird, time period observed, field marks, etc. Sometimes sketches help. Some examples of what is considered unusual are: Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Glossy Ibis, Tundra Swan, Snow Goose, Green-winged Teal, American Black Duck, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Greater or Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Hooded Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Bald Eagle, Merlin, Wild Turkey, Sora, American Coot, Upland Sandpiper, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Long-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Phalarope, Bonaparte's Gull, Herring Gull, Caspian Tern, Forster's Tern, Barn Owl, Common Nighthawk, Chuck-will's-widow, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Black-capped Chickadee, Winter Wren, Marsh Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Gray-cheeked Thrush, American Pipit, Loggerhead Shrike, Philadelphia Vireo, Mourning Warbler, Summer Tanager, Dickcissel, American Tree Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow or Rusty Blackbird.

**THE TALLY DINNER!!** Everyone who participates in the count is welcome to attend the tally pot luck. If you are unable to attend, please make arrangements with your area leader or the compiler to turn in or phone in results during the count day or early that evening. Call Jan Randle at (410) 531-6296 to let her know the number of people coming from your party and your choice of food to share. (Non-cooks & all day counters can ask Jan for alternative suggestions.) Dinner usually begins between 6:30 and 7:00 pm. The tally will begin at 8 pm. The Randles live in Braeburn which is on the west side of Cedar Lane (earthquake country???) in the section north of MD 32 and south of the stoplights at Owen Brown and Freetown Roads. The entrance road to the area is Braeburn Road, turn right on Lochridge and continue to first house on left after Hillbrook Drive (6426 Lochridge Road).

\*\*STATE-WIDE BIRD COUNT\*\*

MAY 8, 1993

County \_\_\_\_\_

- COMMON LOON \_\_\_\_\_
- PIED-BILLED GREBE \_\_\_\_\_
- HORNED GREBE \_\_\_\_\_
- DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT \_\_\_\_\_
- AMERICAN BITTERN \_\_\_\_\_
- LEAST BITTERN \_\_\_\_\_
- GREAT BLUE HERON \_\_\_\_\_
- GREAT EGRET \_\_\_\_\_
- SNOWY EGRET \_\_\_\_\_
- LITTLE BLUE HERON \_\_\_\_\_
- TRICOLORED HERON \_\_\_\_\_
- CATTLE EGRET \_\_\_\_\_
- GREEN-BACKED HERON \_\_\_\_\_
- BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON \_\_\_\_\_
- YEL.-CROWNED NIGHT HERON \_\_\_\_\_
- GLOSSY IBIS \_\_\_\_\_
- MUTE SWAN \_\_\_\_\_
- CANADA GOOSE \_\_\_\_\_
- WOOD DUCK \_\_\_\_\_
- AMERICAN BLACK DUCK \_\_\_\_\_
- MALLARD \_\_\_\_\_
- BLUE-WINGED TEAL \_\_\_\_\_
- GADWALL \_\_\_\_\_
- AMERICAN WIGEON \_\_\_\_\_
- GREATER SCAUP \_\_\_\_\_
- LESSER SCAUP \_\_\_\_\_
- BUFFLEHEAD \_\_\_\_\_
- HOODED Merganser \_\_\_\_\_
- COMMON Merganser \_\_\_\_\_
- RED-BREASTED Merganser \_\_\_\_\_
- RUDDY DUCK \_\_\_\_\_
- BLACK VULTURE \_\_\_\_\_
- TURKEY VULTURE \_\_\_\_\_
- OSPREY \_\_\_\_\_
- BALD EAGLE [ad/im/unk] / /
- NORTHERN HARRIER \_\_\_\_\_
- SHARP-SHINNED HAWK \_\_\_\_\_
- COOPER'S HAWK \_\_\_\_\_
- RED-SHOULDERED HAWK \_\_\_\_\_
- BROAD-WINGED HAWK \_\_\_\_\_
- RED-TAILED HAWK \_\_\_\_\_
- AMERICAN KESTREL \_\_\_\_\_
- MERLIN \_\_\_\_\_
- RING-NECKED PHEASANT \_\_\_\_\_
- RUFFED GROUSE \_\_\_\_\_
- WILD TURKEY \_\_\_\_\_
- NORTHERN BOB-WHITE \_\_\_\_\_
- CLAPPER RAIL \_\_\_\_\_
- KING RAIL \_\_\_\_\_
- VIRGINIA RAIL \_\_\_\_\_
- SORA \_\_\_\_\_
- COMMON MOORHEN \_\_\_\_\_
- AMERICAN COOT \_\_\_\_\_
- BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER \_\_\_\_\_
- SEMPALMATED PLOVER \_\_\_\_\_
- KILLDEER \_\_\_\_\_
- AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER \_\_\_\_\_
- GREATER YELLOWLEGS \_\_\_\_\_
- LESSER YELLOWLEGS \_\_\_\_\_
- SOLITARY SANDPIPER \_\_\_\_\_
- WILLET \_\_\_\_\_
- SPOTTED SANDPIPER \_\_\_\_\_
- UPLAND SANDPIPER \_\_\_\_\_
- RUDDY TURNSTONE \_\_\_\_\_
- SANDERLING \_\_\_\_\_
- SEMPALMATED SANDPIPER \_\_\_\_\_
- LEAST SANDPIPER \_\_\_\_\_
- PECTORAL SANDPIPER \_\_\_\_\_
- DUNLIN \_\_\_\_\_
- SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER \_\_\_\_\_
- COMMON SNIFE \_\_\_\_\_
- AMERICAN WOODCOCK \_\_\_\_\_

- LAUGHING GULL \_\_\_\_\_
- BONAPARTE'S GULL \_\_\_\_\_
- RING-BILLED GULL \_\_\_\_\_
- HERRING GULL \_\_\_\_\_
- GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL \_\_\_\_\_
- CASPIAN TERN \_\_\_\_\_
- ROYAL TERN \_\_\_\_\_
- COMMON TERN \_\_\_\_\_
- FORSTER'S TERN \_\_\_\_\_
- LEAST TERN \_\_\_\_\_
- BLACK SKIMMER \_\_\_\_\_
- ROCK DOVE \_\_\_\_\_
- MOURNING DOVE \_\_\_\_\_
- BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO \_\_\_\_\_
- YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO \_\_\_\_\_
- COMMON BARN OWL \_\_\_\_\_
- EASTERN SCREECH OWL \_\_\_\_\_
- GREAT HORNED OWL \_\_\_\_\_
- BARRED OWL \_\_\_\_\_
- COMMON NIGHTHAWK \_\_\_\_\_
- CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW \_\_\_\_\_
- WHIP-POOR-WILL \_\_\_\_\_
- CHIMNEY SWIFT \_\_\_\_\_
- RUBY-THRTD. HUMMINGBIRD \_\_\_\_\_
- BELTED KINGFISHER \_\_\_\_\_
- RED-HEADED WOODPECKER \_\_\_\_\_
- RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER \_\_\_\_\_
- YEL.-BELLIED SAPSUCKER \_\_\_\_\_
- DOWNY WOODPECKER \_\_\_\_\_
- Hairy WOODPECKER \_\_\_\_\_
- NORTHERN FLICKER \_\_\_\_\_
- PILEATED WOODPECKER \_\_\_\_\_
- EASTERN WOOD PEWEE \_\_\_\_\_
- ACADIAN FLYCATCHER \_\_\_\_\_
- LEAST FLYCATCHER \_\_\_\_\_
- EASTERN PHOEBE \_\_\_\_\_
- GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER \_\_\_\_\_
- EASTERN KINGBIRD \_\_\_\_\_
- HORNED LARK \_\_\_\_\_
- PURPLE MARTIN \_\_\_\_\_
- TREE SWALLOW \_\_\_\_\_
- N. ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW \_\_\_\_\_
- BANK SWALLOW \_\_\_\_\_
- CLIFF SWALLOW \_\_\_\_\_
- BARN SWALLOW \_\_\_\_\_
- BLUE JAY \_\_\_\_\_
- AMERICAN CROW \_\_\_\_\_
- FISH CROW \_\_\_\_\_
- CROW SP. \_\_\_\_\_
- BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE \_\_\_\_\_
- CAROLINA CHICKADEE \_\_\_\_\_
- TUFTED TITMOUSE \_\_\_\_\_
- WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH \_\_\_\_\_
- BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH \_\_\_\_\_
- BROWN CREEPER \_\_\_\_\_
- CAROLINA WREN \_\_\_\_\_
- HOUSE WREN \_\_\_\_\_
- MARSH WREN \_\_\_\_\_
- RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET \_\_\_\_\_
- BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER \_\_\_\_\_
- EASTERN BLUEBIRD \_\_\_\_\_
- VEERY \_\_\_\_\_
- GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH \_\_\_\_\_
- SWAINSON'S THRUSH \_\_\_\_\_
- HERMIT THRUSH \_\_\_\_\_
- WOOD THRUSH \_\_\_\_\_
- AMERICAN ROBIN \_\_\_\_\_
- GRAY CATBIRD \_\_\_\_\_
- NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD \_\_\_\_\_
- BROWN THRASHER \_\_\_\_\_
- WATER PIPIT \_\_\_\_\_
- CEDAR WAXWING \_\_\_\_\_
- EUROPEAN STARLING \_\_\_\_\_

- WHITE-EYED VIREO \_\_\_\_\_
- SOLITARY VIREO \_\_\_\_\_
- YELLOW-THROATED VIREO \_\_\_\_\_
- WARBLING VIREO \_\_\_\_\_
- RED-EYED VIREO \_\_\_\_\_
- BLUE-WINGED WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- TENNESSEE WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- NASHVILLE WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- NORTHERN PARULA \_\_\_\_\_
- YELLOW WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- MAGNOLIA WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- CAPE MAY WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- BLK.-THRTD. BLUE WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- MYRTLE WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- BLK.-THRTD. GREEN WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- PINE WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- PRAIRIE WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- PALM WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- BAY-BREASTED WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- BLACKPOLL WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- CERULEAN WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- BLACK & WHITE WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- AMERICAN REDSTART \_\_\_\_\_
- PROTHONOTARY WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- WORM-EATING WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- OVENBIRD \_\_\_\_\_
- NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH \_\_\_\_\_
- LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH \_\_\_\_\_
- KENTUCKY WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- COMMON YELLOWTHROAT \_\_\_\_\_
- HOODED WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- WILSON'S WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- CANADA WARBLER \_\_\_\_\_
- YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT \_\_\_\_\_
- SUMNER Tanager \_\_\_\_\_
- SCARLET Tanager \_\_\_\_\_
- NORTHERN CARDINAL \_\_\_\_\_
- ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK \_\_\_\_\_
- BLUE GROSBEAK \_\_\_\_\_
- INDIGO BUNTING \_\_\_\_\_
- RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEE \_\_\_\_\_
- CHIPPING SPARROW \_\_\_\_\_
- FIELD SPARROW \_\_\_\_\_
- VESPER SPARROW \_\_\_\_\_
- SAVANNAH SPARROW \_\_\_\_\_
- GRASSHOPPER SPARROW \_\_\_\_\_
- SHARP-TAILED SPARROW \_\_\_\_\_
- SEASIDE SPARROW \_\_\_\_\_
- SONG SPARROW \_\_\_\_\_
- SWAMP SPARROW \_\_\_\_\_
- WHITE-THROATED SPARROW \_\_\_\_\_
- WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW \_\_\_\_\_
- DARK-EYED JUNCO \_\_\_\_\_
- BOBOLINK \_\_\_\_\_
- RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD \_\_\_\_\_
- EASTERN MEADOWLARK \_\_\_\_\_
- RUSTY BLACKBIRD \_\_\_\_\_
- BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE \_\_\_\_\_
- COMMON GRACKLE \_\_\_\_\_
- BROWN-HEADED COBIRD \_\_\_\_\_
- ORCHARD ORIOLE \_\_\_\_\_
- BALTIMORE ORIOLE \_\_\_\_\_
- PURPLE FINCH \_\_\_\_\_
- HOUSE FINCH \_\_\_\_\_
- AMERICAN GOLDFINCH \_\_\_\_\_
- HOUSE SPARROW \_\_\_\_\_

Write-in species on Back! Many need DETAILS!

Time Start: \_\_\_\_\_ Hours on Foot: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Time Stop: \_\_\_\_\_ Hours by Car: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Hours by Boat: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Hours other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hours Feeder Watching: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hours "Stationary": \_\_\_\_\_

Miles on Foot: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Miles by Car: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Miles by Boat: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Miles other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hours "Owling": \_\_\_\_\_  
 Miles "Owling": \_\_\_\_\_

Weather:  
 Temp. %Clouds Wind\* Precip.  
 Dawn \_\_\_\_\_  
 AM \_\_\_\_\_  
 Noon \_\_\_\_\_  
 PM \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dusk \_\_\_\_\_  
 \*Speed and Direction (e.g. NW10, S5)



**ELECTION OF NEW OFFICERS:** At the April 11, 1993, meeting new club officers were elected for coming 1993-1994 year.

President: Joanne Solem, Vice President: David Harvey, Secretary: Peggy Erbe, Treasurer: Shiras Guion, Chapter Directors: Connie Bockstie and David Kubitsky, State Directors: Jane Farrell, Donald Waugh, Helen Zeichner, and Paul Zucker.

Thank you to the nominating committee of Tom Strikwerda (chair), Eva Sunell, and Chuck Dupree who came up with such a fine slate of candidates.

**COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS SOUGHT:** We are seeking volunteers who want to assist in club activities. We need a publicity chairperson who assists in getting the club into the news. We also need a co-chair for the conservation committee to

work with Bob Solem on conservation issues, assisting with letter writing and phoning.

Dave Kubitsky has volunteered to be the club representative to the new state MOS Education Committee.

**POTLUCK DINNER A FUN NIGHT:** There were a number of excellent slides shown by club members at the annual potluck dinner following a delicious meal. Bill Troutman, of the MD Dept. of Natural Resources, accepted a club donation for their program and announced they will be releasing a rehabilitated Great Horned Owl in Howard County. Value Service Awards were presented to Mike McClure and Rod Botsai for the many contributions they have made to the club. To Monika Botsai and Grazina McClure we give a big thank you for arranging another successful event.



## 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.

May 13 Northern Saw-whet Owl in Maryland - David Brinker, Wildfowl Biologist for the State Dept. of Natural Resources  
Thursday will talk about the behavior, breeding, migration and population status of Maryland's least understood owl.

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.

May 15 ROCKBURN PARK - Meet at 7:00 am, at park office (Landing Road entrance). Average of 80 species found each  
Saturday spring at this location. Leader: Jim Wilkenson, (410) 381-9250.

May 22 PLUM TREE - Meet at 7:00 am, Columbia Rd & Rams Horn Row. See the wetland habitat the beaver's have created.  
Saturday This area is featured in the hot spot for this issue. Leaders: Jo Solem and Bonnie Ott, (410) 416-3361.

June 27 GOLDFINCH AND ORIOLE WALK - Meet at 8:00 am, Centennial Concession Stand. Co-sponsored with Ho.Co. Rec. &  
Sunday Parks. See our county and state birds. Leader: Martha Chestam, (410) 730-1427.

Aug 14 CARDINAL FLOWERS AT GWYNN ACRES - Meet at 9:00 am, on Columbia Road at Rams Horn Row. See a large stand of  
Saturday these crimson flowers among other delights. Leader: Bob Solem, (301) 725-5037.

Sept 11 BUTTERFLY WALK - Meet at 10:30 am, Centennial Park, west end parking lot. Leader: Richard Smith, (410) 997-  
Saturday 7439. Call leader if overcast.

**Board of Directors Meeting:** May 27, 1993, at 7:30 pm, Longfellow Elementary School. The following board meeting will be in September. The May meeting will be a joint meeting of the incoming and outgoing board members.

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

# CONSERVATION REPORT by Bob Solem

Misunderstanding the effects of the Endangered Species Act causes some people to believe it is contrary to the best interests of the United States. This was answered by Michael Bean in the EDF Letter (Vol XXIV No. 2, March 1993):

"Five Key Facts About the Act: 1. The Endangered Species Act serves vital human needs. Some people seem to think that the Endangered Species Act puts the interests and welfare of plants and animals ahead of humans. It doesn't. Rather, the Act recognized that long-term human needs--for new medicines, improved agricultural production, healthy ecosystems, and an enjoyable and productive environment--can best be met if we don't destroy the fabulous diversity of life with which we share our world. 2. The Act has helped put many species back on the road to recovery. Citizens of every state can see and enjoy first-hand some of the Act's many conservation successes. 3. The Act's many successes have been achieved with few major conflicts. What is most surprising about the Endangered Species Act is not how many major conflicts it has spawned, but how few. Although the Act has been in place for twenty years and now protects more than 700 species of plants and animals, efforts to protect most of them have never created significant controversies. 4. The Act has succeeded because it is flexible and sensitive to economic concerns. The portrayal of the Act as rigid and incapable of accommodating competing social concerns is simply wrong. The Act requires that critical habitat designations be based in part on economic considerations. When projects threaten endangered species, the Act requires that reasonable and prudent alternatives be pursued that allow the project purposes to be fulfilled without jeopardizing the species' survival. 5. The Act's successes could be expanded with only modest funding increases. The core budget of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's endangered species program is about \$46 million, a minuscule fraction of the total Federal budget."

Locally there is another problem we must solve: Solid waste. Howard County has a recycling program that is beginning to make an impact, but Alpha Ridge Landfill has a limited remaining life for the rest of the trash. There will be a proposal for an integrated solution which may include an incinerator, possibly used as a cogeneration plant (which produces electricity and steam). Montgomery County had a petition drive in the early months of 1993 to put their new "trash tax" to referendum because the cost of solid waste treatment kept going up from one hearing to the next--from \$55 per household per year to \$180 per year--and that, too, was only an estimate. Howard County will soon face the problem of determining a solid waste plan for the future, but we must insist on accurate cost estimates and a full disclosure of the pros and cons of any of the alternatives.

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## HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

CHAPTER OF THE MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

6007 FLYWHEEL COURT  
COLUMBIA, MD 21044

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- ▶ HOT SPOT - PLUM TREE PATH

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