



Howard

A Chapter of the
Maryland Ornithological Society



Sept-Oct 1994, Vol 23, No. 1

President's Welcome - Dave Harvey

Welcome to the 22nd year of the Howard County Bird Club. I would like to invite everyone to join us by renewing your membership, or if a non-member, join us in this memorable year of the 50th Anniversary of the Maryland Ornithological Society. If you are willing to take a chance with us, we promise to provide a friendly atmosphere and the opportunity to learn about and enjoy birds and other facets of the natural world around us.

While our primary emphasis is on our own backyard here in Maryland, we can and will cover subjects relating to other areas of North America and the world. We support FUNDAECO in Guatemala where Chan Robbins's research covers both the tropical birds of that area and the neotropical migrants, some of which call Maryland home for part of each year. Programs such as FUNDAECO and our educational tools collection are supported in large measure by our very successful seed sales which occur twice yearly.

Education is a vital part of any organization. Thanks to the unselfish efforts of some members of our chapter, dozens of programs using slides and mounted specimens are presented each year to local schools and community organizations. Members receive our bimonthly newsletter, the bimonthly *MOS Yellowthroat*, and the quarterly *Maryland Birdlife*, which bring local bird and conservation news to your home.

At each meeting the Bird Club bookstore sets up shop at the back of the room. It provides an opportunity for people to browse, converse, and buy much desired material of concern to those of us who cherish the natural world around us and who would like to help in its preservation.

Many of our members are actively involved in various boards on the local and state levels. There are many opportunities to learn and help direct statewide policies which will protect and enhance the ecosystems around us that are so vital to our enjoyment and existence.

Even though many of us do share concerns over the condition of the natural world and our fellow inhabitants, most of us cannot deny that fun and enjoyment are high on our list of priorities. To this end, the Howard County Bird Club strives to provide a forum that is both educational and fun. Please join us at one or, hopefully, more of our monthly meetings, our many field trips and our varied bird counts. These events are open to individuals of all levels or experience, from the curious novice to the veteran birder.

We look forward to your company this year as we strive to add some pleasure, joy, comfort, gladness, and maybe even ecstasy to our lives through the various endeavors which we invite you to share with us.

Dave Harvey

1994-1995 Club Board Members

President: Dave Harvey
Vice-President: Maud Banks
Secretary: Peggy Erbe
Treasurer: Shiras Guion
Chapter Directors (two year term):
Hank Stanton (first year)
Connie Bockstie (second year)

State Directors:
Jane Farrell
Carol Newman
Donald Waugh
Helen Zeichner

Calendar of Programs, Events and Field Trips

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.**

- Sept 4
Sunday **BUTTERFLY WALK at CENTENNIAL PARK - 10:00 am.** Meet at west end parking lot off Centennial Lane. Monarch, Variegated Fritillary and Painted Lady possible. Leader: **Richard Smith (410) 997-7439.** Cancelled if overcast. *Co-sponsored with Howard County Recreation and Parks (HCRP).*
- Sept 13
Tuesday **WEEKDAY WALK AT GWYNN ACRES - 8:30 am.** Meet at Rams Horn and Old Columbia Rd. Warblers, vireos and thrushes. Leader: **Bonnie Ott (410) 461-3361.** Paved path.
- Sept 17
Saturday **FIRST ANNUAL FALL COUNT -** See details elsewhere in this newsletter. Mike McClure (410) 531-2780 and Chuck Stirrat (410) 531-2417, co-coordinators.
- Sept 24
Saturday **GOLDENRODS AT MARRIOTSVILLE ROAD - 9:30 am.** Meet at U.S. 29 and Md. 108 park and ride for a wildflower walk along the Patapsco River. Leader: **Bob Solem (301) 725-5037.**
- Sept 25
Sunday **FALL MIGRANTS AT ROCKBURN - 7:30 am, half day.** Meet at park office; Landing Road entrance. Migrants of all types possible; paths may be muddy. Leader: **Bonnie Ott (410) 461-3361.**
- Sept 28
Wednesday **WEEKDAY WALK AT DAVID FORCE - 8:30 am.** Meet at signpost off Pebble Beach Drive. Migrating hawks likely, field and woodland birds. Leader: ~~Bonnie Ott (410) 461-3361.~~
- Oct 2
Sunday **FALL WARBLERS AT SCHOOLEY MILL - 7:30 am.** Meet in upper lot. Along with warblers, sparrows and flyovers are likely. Paths may be muddy. Leader: **David Holmes.** Call **Bonnie** for info, (410) 461-3361.
- Oct 11
Tuesday **WEEKDAY WALK AT CENTENNIAL PARK - 8:30 am.** Meet at west end lot off Centennial Lane. Water birds, kinglets and warblers. Leader: **Bonnie Ott (410) 461-3361.**
- Oct 15
Saturday **HAWK WATCH AT ROCKBURN - 10:00 am.** Meet on hill behind tot lot near tennis courts; Montgomery Road entrance. Bring lawn chair, lunch and beverage to sit and watch the hawks fly. Leader: **Ralph Geuder.** Call Bonnie for info, (410) 461-3361.
- Oct 22
Saturday **FALL SEED SALE -** Look for details in the mail.
- Oct 23
Sunday **SPARROW SEARCH AT MOUNT PLEASANT - 7:30 am.** Meet at 29 and 108 park and ride. Eleven species of sparrows possible including Lincoln's, Vesper, Grasshopper and White-crowned Sparrows. Leader: **Bonnie Ott (410) 461-3361.**
- Oct 26
Wednesday **WEEKDAY WALK AT ROCKBURN - 8:30 am.** Meet at park office; Landing Road entrance. Flyover raptors, sparrows and warblers. Path may be muddy. Leader: **Bonnie Ott (410) 461-3361.**
- Nov 6
Sunday **CENTENNIAL PARK - 8:00 am.** Meet at west end lot of Centennial Lane. Walk around the lake for possible loons, Tundra Swans, grebes and hawks. *Jane Farnham leader*

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, September 21, 1994, 7:30 pm at Shiras Guion's. Contact her evenings at (301) 490-0444 for directions. There will be no board meeting in October.

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1994 NEWSLETTER MATERIAL is due October 1, 1994. Call or mail to Susan Setterberg, 9445 Clocktower Lane, Columbia, MD 21046; Phone (301) 498-4734. Anyone is welcome to contribute articles or ideas which you think will be of interest to other birders. *Note: This issue of the newsletter was co-edited by Bob Solem.*

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 pm. Meeting/program begins at 8:00 pm. Club bookstore opens at 7:30 pm.

Sept 8
Thursday

"Identification of Hawks in Flight" - Paul Engman. Paul is licensed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a master bander. He has 20 years experience banding birds of prey. Currently he has his own banding station in Pennsylvania to cover the ridge migration area and bands at Cape May covering the coastal routes. His talk will concentrate on migration flights in the eastern U.S. and identification of the hawks we might expect to see this fall. For this first fall meeting, wear a T-shirt or sweatshirt showing where you've birded or a favorite conservation cause.

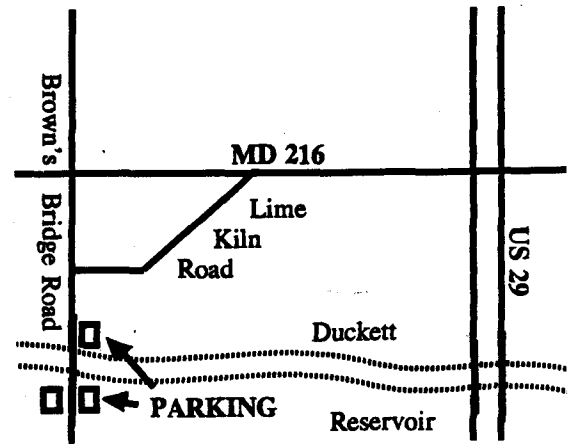
Oct 13
Thursday

"Loggerhead Shrikes of Maryland" - Laurie MacIvor. You may remember Laurie from the Maryland National Heritage Program who presented a very interesting talk for us on Piping Plovers three years ago. She is coming back to do another program--this time to discuss her work on the Loggerhead Shrike.

Birding Hot Spots:

Brown's Bridge, Duckett Reservoir
Joanne Solem, Nancy Magnusson, Jim Wilkinson

Directions: From U.S. 29, go west on Md. 216 1.3 miles to Fulton. In front of the church continue straight on Lime Kiln Road. Continue 1.9 miles to Brown's Bridge Road. Turn left on Brown's Bridge and continue 0.6 mile to a gravel parking lot on the left on the Howard County side. There are two additional parking areas after crossing the bridge. When coming from Md. 108, go southeast on Md. 216 1.2 miles to Brown's Bridge Road. Turn right and continue 1.8 miles to the reservoir.



This location is adjacent to Brown's Bridge Road at the Howard/Montgomery county line. There is a boat ramp on the Montgomery County side of the T. Howard Duckett Reservoir (known also as Rocky Gorge), so this area is often heavily used by boaters and fishermen during the March 1-December 15 period when the reservoir is open to the public. A Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) daily use or season permit is required outside the environs of the parking lot. That pass does NOT grant access to areas marked with *No Trespassing* signs. When you purchase a pass at the log cabin office on Brighton Dam Road (on the Montgomery County side of the dam), be sure to pick up a map. Numerous access points are shown. Passes are good for Triadelphia Reservoir as well as Duckett so it may make sense, if you are buying a daily pass, to plan to bird as many locations on the two reservoirs as possible. The pass allows boat as well as shore access.

Like many of the areas on local lakes and reservoirs, Brown's Bridge is most productive during migration. It is usually best in late summer and early autumn when the water level is receding. When that occurs, mud flats are exposed which can be attractive to a variety of shorebirds. Since Howard County has few choice shorebird viewing locales, any suggestion that the reservoir level is dropping is sufficient to bring birders on a regular basis. Occasionally, there are birds on muddy expanses above the bridge, but usually the best flats (and best birds) occur below the bridge. In addition to Killdeer, both yellowlegs, and Least, Spotted, and Solitary sandpipers which are all expected annually, other species have been found including Pectoral, and Semipalmated sandpipers, Semipalmated Plover, and Short-billed Dowitcher. Western Sandpipers in 1987 were a first for the county and were also present in a subsequent year. A Common Tern's visit one mid-August day in 1988 was one of the few county records. The late spring and summer of 1994 brought sightings of adult and immature Yellow-crowned Night-Herons, a species infrequently seen in this county.

It is possible to stand on the narrow sidewalk that runs along each side of the bridge to check the reservoir in both directions. Because the traffic is frequently heavy on this commuter road, caution is advisable. North of Brown's Bridge there are low-lying bottom lands until the reservoir narrows down into the Patuxent River. Downstream areas are similar to those visible from the bridge. The emerging stumps and fallen trees north of the bridge attracted five species of herons and egrets one July. Cliff and Barn swallows regularly can be found nesting beneath the bridge. Early morning or late evening may find Barred or Great Horned owls calling. Veerys and Worm-eating Warblers sing on the adjoining slopes north of the bridge in late spring and early summer. During the breeding season Wood Thrushes, Ovenbirds, and Red-eyed Vireos are legion on these hills. Yellow-throated Vireos, Scarlet Tanagers, Great Crested Flycatchers, Northern Parulas and Yellow Warblers are other species frequently heard. Indigo Buntings sing along the edge of the woods and fields. Nesting Prairie Warblers can be heard and seen in the fields below the bridge and a pair of Blue Grosbeaks

are usually present at the field edges. Pine Warblers are resident in the pine stands below the bridge. Hooded Warblers are heard most often on the Montgomery side.

When the water level is down and it is possible to walk along the shoreline south and east of the bridge on the Howard County side, be sure to check the shrubby vegetation and nearest trees for migrant passerines. Raptors can be seen at almost any time of the year. Cooper's Hawks have probably nested in the vicinity. In the fall they sometimes frequent the pine groves below the bridge. A Barred Owl often uses these pines for a winter roost. Ospreys are regularly seen, most often in migration. A Peregrine flew over one August. A resident nearly albino Red-tailed Hawk puts in an occasional appearance as do Bald Eagles.

In addition to walking along the shoreline if the water level permits (boots may be advisable when the mud is soft), be sure to bird the area in the vicinity of the parking lot. The willows may be partially submerged or well above the water at different seasons, but they are always worth examining. They have produced a variety of migrant and nesting species--the best were probably two Marsh Wrens on a late September day and an early October Connecticut Warbler. Black-crowned Night-Herons are seen occasionally and Black-billed Cuckoos have been noted. There is often activity visible in the mature trees on the north side of Brown's Bridge Road. Kudzu is the herbaceous plant covering the embankment.

Avoid weekends when the weather is most pleasant as well as long late spring evenings because boaters and fishermen have probably disturbed most of the water birds. Late winter/early spring and late fall may occasionally be productive for ducks, especially during periods of high winds or stormy weather. Because these conditions keep the number of boats down, the cove may be a temporary resting place for migrating waterfowl, especially on weekdays. Flocks of 300-400 Ring-necked Ducks have been observed. Canvasbacks, pintails, both species of teal, and Common Mergansers have been reported.

Spring Bird Records: Mar 1-May 31, 1994 - Joanne Solem

Each season Howard County bird sightings are compiled and submitted to *Maryland Birdlife* and *American Birds*. Because both publications provide overviews for large areas, only a fraction of Howard County sightings are published. The records are not lost, however, for they are the basis for county records. All records are welcomed and appreciated. Any individual who turns in seasonal sightings receives a copy of the county compilation. To request a form on which to log dates, please call (301) 725-5037. The Board has requested that a digest of the seasonal highlights appear in the newsletter. Observers are referred to by their initials (see the list at the end of the article). Locations are written out the first time cited; thereafter, abbreviations are used.

Common Loons staged a poor flight across Howard County (How Co) this spring. The McClures spotted the earliest migrant 3/3 in a pond at Walt-Ann Drive & Folly Quarter Road. The seasonal high was 45 over Rockburn Branch Park (RKBRP) 4/17 (BO). The last 2 reported were on Duckett Reservoir (DUKRS) 5/14 (JF,JS). Grebe variety was unusually high. Pled-billed Grebes were few with a high of 3 on Lake Elkhorn (LKEK) 4/21 (C&PN). Horned Grebes were widely seen with a high of 19 4/2 on Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS)(JF,JS). The evening of 3/30 Farrell discovered an Eared Grebe at Centennial Park (CENPK). It stayed until 4/4, was well seen by many observers (m.obs), and was photographed for a satisfyingly documented first county record. Three separate Red-necked Grebes were reported: TRIRS (3/26 RSU; 4/23 JF,JS) and DUKRS (4/8 DE).

Three Am. Bitterns were seen: PO had an early migrant 3/26 on Stevens Road; MW had 1 on Lime Kiln Road 5/9; and M&GMcC had 1 near Woodmark Lake 5/11. A Snowy Egret appeared intermittently for a month at CENPK after 5/3 (CB,BO). A single Cattle Egret was spotted in a barnyard on Roxbury Road 4/11 (MW). A few Great Egrets were seen after the first 4/26 at the U of Md Central Farm (UMDCF)(BO,JS). Two adult Black-crowned Night-Herons were located by MC at Lake Kittamaquidi 5/8, while a second year bird frequented the marsh end of CENPK 5/9-14 (CB,BO,m.obs). For the second consecutive year a pair of Great Blue Herons attempted to nest in the state park on the Patapsco River above Daniels (DANPV). This unusual Piedmont nester was observed reusing last year's nest 4/24 (RG). RC,JF,JS saw the adults at the site on a number of dates in May; sometimes one was incubating, but no young were ever seen. On 5/28 the nest was gone after storms and high winds (JF,JS).

The only large flock of Tundra Swans (95) was noted over Wilde Lake (WILLK) 3/9 (CB,BO). The single white and lone blue phase Snow Geese at Fulton & Lime Kiln ponds were last seen 3/22. An unusually large flock of 74 Wood Ducks flew out of a cove at Pigtail (PIGT) 3/19 (JF,JS). A late Green-winged Teal was spotted upstream at DANPV 5/1 (JB). A flock of 15 No. Pintails flying over Mt. Pleasant on MD 99 3/6 surprised the more than 30 participants on the field trip. The only Redheads noted were a pair seen on a pond off Elliott Road (ELLRD) 3/20 (MC,HZ). A Eurasian Wigeon, the second county record, was seen on TRIRS 3/27 (JF,JS,PDA). The same species (almost certainly the same male) appeared on a pond on

Roxbury Road 3/29, 4/10 & 11 (MW). **Ring-necked Ducks** were on numerous bodies of water during March, sometimes in impressive numbers for the Piedmont. On 3/6 PO & JS had 197 on TRIRS, 3/11 there were 380 (30 females) at Brown's Bridge (CB,BO,JS), and 3/18 CB & BO had 122 on ELLPD. A **Black Scoter** came down at CENPK 4/16 for the third county record (MJ&RB). **Red-breasted Mergansers** were present in higher than usual numbers this spring with 100 at PIGTL 3/28 (JW) and 31 at CENPK 3/29 (BO,JS).

The **Bald Eagle** again nested at TRIRS. The immature **No. Goshawk** which had wintered at CENPK was last reported 3/31 (JF). Ott reported a **Merlin** over WILLK 4/17. Two **Virginia Rails** were present at Plum Tree Path until mid-May which made nesting a likely possibility (BO,JS,HZ,H&MM). (The rails were still present in June.)

Spring shorebirds are not usually a cause for excitement among local birders, but this year was different. With the exposure of extensive mudflats at WILLK during repairs to the dam, birders were given an unusual opportunity to observe this attractive habitat. Even under these excellent conditions, persistence was necessary. The most exciting sighting was a first county record of the endangered **Piping Plover** (BO,JS) which spent less than one day (4/29) feeding. Thanks to Bea Newkirk and the Rare Bird Alert callers, numerous observers saw the bird which was also photographed. Three **Black-bellied Plovers** discovered by MK near sunset 5/6 were the county's second spring record. **Semipalmated Plovers** showed up at 3 locations this spring (WILLK,CENPK, & Fulton Pond [FULPD]). During one period young **Killdeer** were present on WILLK at the same time as the Semi Plovers which allowed an excellent opportunity to compare these 2 potentially confusing species. **Least Sandpipers** peaked the week of 5/8-15 with 33-34 on WILLK 5/8 (BO,PO,JS) and a high of 39 on FULPD 5/10 (PO,JS). There were 2 **Pectoral Sandpipers** on FULPD 5/9 (JW). The UMDCF produced a high of 48 **Common Snipe** 3/23 (M&GMcC).

Bonaparte's Gulls were frequently seen this season. The high was a flock of 90 resting on the flats at WILLK 4/11 (HZ); the last was 4/15 at the same location (C&PN). **Caspian Tern** numbers also peaked at WILLK when HZ had 38 4/18. A lone spring **Forster's Tern** was at CENPK briefly on the early date of 3/31 (BA).

Common Nighthawks were seen in small numbers during much of May, though MC & HZ had one on the remarkably early date of 4/10, a drizzly morning. Two **Least Flycatchers** were seen by BO at RKBRP 5/14 and JW reported a **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** at LKELK 5/20. A few **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were noted, the last 4/22 in southern How Co (PO). The last 2 **Am. Pipits** of the season were spotted at WILLK 5/1 (BO).

Most migrant warblers tended to be seen and heard in low numbers. **Blackpolls**, however, were an exception. **Prothonotarys** are always worth the search. This year they were seen at LKELK 4/18 (CB,MC,HZ), in southern How Co 5/3 (RM), and at DANPV during May (m.obs). An early **La. Waterthrush** was found at CENPK 3/11 (CB). A **Cerulean Warbler** appeared at Marriottsville 4/23 (RR). **Golden-wingeds** were seen at Ott's home 4/28 and at Schooley Mill Park (SLMLP) 5/7 (NM,JS). A hybrid **Brewster's Warbler** was watched 4/28 at CENPK as it sang both Blue-winged & Golden-winged songs (GA). On 5/1 the same observer had an early **Canada Warbler** in the same park.

A pair of **Summer Tanagers** were seen and heard 5/1 a mile upstream from Daniels Road (J&RS). **Savannah Sparrow** numbers were generally low this spring. Ott saw the only **Vesper Sparrow** of the season 4/15 at UMDCF. **Grasshopper Sparrows** were breeding in good numbers at Gateway Business Park on MD 175 where 32 were counted 5/10 (BO,JS). A late **Fox Sparrow** was seen and heard singing through 5/10 (RC) at DANPV. **Lincoln's Sparrows** are not as unusual in How Co as once thought. The first of the spring was noted at SLMLP 5/7 (NM,JS). The last were tallied 5/14 when JW had 1 in Owen Brown, BO had 1 at RKBRP and NM hit the jackpot with a seasonal high of 5 at SLMLP.

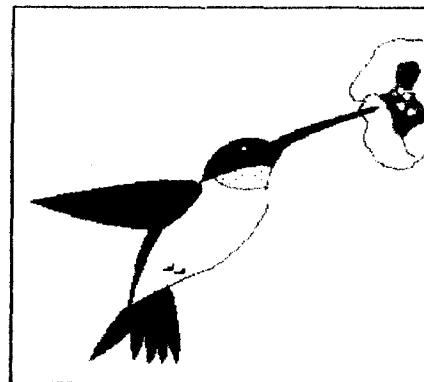
Bobolinks were not seen in large numbers with the exception of one flock of 80 at Belmont 5/14 (CB,DK,SP). The last 3 **Common Redpolls** at HZ's feeder on WILLK stayed through 4/2. **Purple Finches** began showing up in early March and were last reported 4/28 (JP). Ott had the only **Pine Siskins** on a few dates in April & May. **Evening Grosbeaks** were noted 4/28 (M&GMcC; RM,JS) and 4/29 (BO).

The following records have been submitted to the MDDCRC: Eared Grebe, Piping Plover, and a possible Pine Grosbeak 4/12. Records from the May Count compilation were not available.

Spring observers cited above: Burton Alexander (BA), Glenn Austin (GA), Mary Jo & Robert Betts (MJ&RB), Connie Bockstie (CB), Joe Byrnes (JB), Martha Chestem (MC), Randy Crook (RC), Phil Davis (PD), Darius Ecker (DE), Jane Farrell (JF), Ralph Geuder (RG), Mike Kerwin (MK), Dave Kubitsky (DK), Nancy Magnusson (NM), Mike & Grazina McClure (M&GMcC), Rosamond Munro (RM), Harvey & Marian Mudd (H&MM), Carol & Paul Newman (C&PN), Peter Osenton (PO), Bonnie Ott (BO), Joe Picard (JP), Suzanne Probst (SP), Robert Ringler (RR), Joanne Solem (JS), Robert Solem (RS), Rick Sussman (RSU), Jim Wilkinson (JW), Helen Zeichner (HZ), many observers (m.obs), Howard County (How Co).

SELASPHORUS HUMMINGBIRD IN HOWARD COUNTY by Phil Davis

On November 14, 1993, Barbara and I had returned to our store, the Columbia Wild Bird Center, after leading a morning birdwalk at Centennial Lake. We had been open only about 15 minutes when the phone rang. It was one of our customers, Ms. Jan Wilson who lives in a townhouse off of Vollmerhausen Road. She had just sighted a hummingbird (!) checking out her empty hummingbird feeder and she was wondering if she should fill it or not. We said, "Yes!!" We explained that a hummingbird showing up this late in the fall, has a strong possibility of being an unusual species, possibly a Rufous Hummingbird. I suggested that she fill it up and keep her eyes on it, looking carefully for any brown on the sides of the bird. While we were on the phone, the bird came back again. She ended the conversation so she could fill the feeder. She said she'd call us back with an update.



About 45 minutes later she called back; the bird had come to the feeder and tanked up, twice. I got directions and headed over there. At 1:15 pm, I parked myself on the patio about 15 feet from the feeder where I had a clear view, even though Jan said that the bird had been coming to the feeding port farthest from the house, although it had perched in the trees before and after feeding. At any other vantage point, I was afraid I would be too close to the bird. The bird came in to feed at 1:57 pm. I only saw it when it landed on the feeder, and sure enough, it was on the rear port. I could hardly see anything but the lower portion of its tail hanging down below the feeder.

I tried to note any features I could see from my blocked view. I could see that its wings were shorter than its tail, I estimated about a 1/4" shorter, and the tail had white spots in the corners. The tail was never flared open while I was observing. I could see the edges of flight feathers were thinly edged with a medium brown. One time, the bird peered over the feeding port at me, but all I saw was a green head with some white around the eyes. The bird flew directly away and did not perch. It had fed for about one minute.

I moved to another location with a better view of the rear feeding port, but I was only about 10 feet away and was concerned about being too close. I checked to make sure I was within the focusing range of my binoculars. Almost exactly an hour later, around 3 pm, the bird returned. This time I could see it appeared to be "washed" with brown on its wings (over the green) and on the sides (over the white). It definitely did not look like a Ruby-throated Hummingbird because of the brown coloring. Also, the feeder is one that is very familiar to me. I could tell that this bird was definitely larger than the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds I am accustomed to seeing on the feeder. I very slowly raised my binoculars, but the bird spooked. I never heard any sounds or vocalizations, even when I had been in the yard only 10 feet from the feeder, not even the characteristic "humming" sounds that Ruby-throats make as they fly.

Next, I opened the rear yard gate and walked out into the townhouse common area which had a number of large trees scattered about. I looked around for a few minutes, searching for the bird. As I started to go back into the yard, the bird flew out! I watched it fly to a nearby tree, where it perched. It was backlit; no detail was apparent. I walked closer and it flew into another tree, but I did not see where it landed. I left, went back to the store, and called then Howard County Bird Club President, Jo Solem, who had just returned from a birding trip to the Eastern Shore. We did not have much daylight left. We coordinated phone calls and logistics and about 30 minutes later, I met Jo, Nancy Magnusson, and Jane Farrell at the location. We stayed in the common area, but propped the gate to the yard open with my scope so we could get a clear view of the feeder. We set up Nancy's scope about 30 feet from the feeder. It now was approximately 4:00 pm and the sun was getting lower.

We located the bird in a tree. It was backlit; no details were visible. It flew and we followed its flight to another tree where it perched. It was tough to see it clearly due to the leaves. For almost the next hour it came to feeder several times and we also saw it in the trees on a number of different perches. I got one excellent view in full sun. The underparts appeared to be creamy, off-white. The flanks and sides were tan colored. The wings looked brown washed (over the green). I could not detect any color on the gorget. The bill seemed to be particularly long and straight. The overall "jizz"* did not seem like a Ruby-throated Hummingbird to me. Once when the bird flew straight at us after leaving feeder, the white spots in the corners of its tail were very visible.

* Jizz is originally a British term which refers to the total aspect of a species apart from any specific field marks; a gestalt of shape, behavior, and posture.

My part of the story ends here. Jo Solem made phone calls and arranged for a group of bird clubbers to try for the bird early the next morning. Also, plans were made with Kathy Klimkiewicz and David Holmes to trap, measure, and band the bird if it returned. Unfortunately, it never did. It was, as Jo described it, a "one day" wonder. The sighting records of the five observers (including the homeowner) will be submitted to the MD/DC Records Committee in the hope of establishing this as the first record of a *Selasphorus* (genus) hummingbird for Howard County.

AUTUMN COUNT - The Howard County Bird Club will hold its first Autumn Count on Saturday, September 17, 1994. Mike McClure (410) 531-2780 and Chuck Stirrat (410) 531-2417 are the county co-coordinators. Birders of all skill levels are welcome and invited to participate. Ask to be put with an experienced individual if you do not wish to have your own territory. Counts are a good way to learn and are great fun. The county is divided into the same seven sectors used for other annual counts. At the time the newsletter went to press, the following area coordinators had been named: 1. Mark Wallace (301) 725-6370; 2. Paul Zucker (301) 270 7896 (H), (410) 792-6000 x 4971 (O); 3. Richard & Randy Crook (410) 747-0399; 4. Susan Setterberg (301) 498-4734; 5. Martha Chestem (410) 730-1527; 6. Bonnie Ott (410) 461-3361; 7. To be announced. You may call an area or county coordinator to volunteer, or check at the September meeting. Martha and Don Waugh will host the tally at 9522 Angelina Circle (410) 381-8841. Call them to reserve space, make food choice, and obtain directions.

MOS PIN COMPETITION REPEAT - Connie Bockstie won the MOS pin competition at the state convention this year with a Marsh Wren. It's Connie's third win. Congratulations, Connie! Club members Bonnie Ott and Jane Farrell were field trip leaders. Next year's convention will be in the Catoctin Mountains and MOS will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary. It will be a special event.

CLUB'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

For a number of years, members of the club have played an important role in educating the community about birds. They frequently give talks in schools and to community groups. Eileen Clegg, one of our members who talks to school groups, received the letter to the right from a student this spring which nicely describes the service these club members bring to the community.

Other members of the club who participate in the program are Marty Chestem, Joanne Solem, Helen Zeichner, Connie Bockstie, Bonnie Ott, and Hank Stanton (bluebirds).

THANK YOUS - Another issue of *Maryland Birdlife* was mailed in the spring with the able assistance of the following club members: Marty Chestem, Shiras & Bill Guion, Ruth Leffler, Nancy Magnusson, Tom Strikwerda and Don Waugh.

Bob Solem put up and managed a bird club exhibit at the spring Conservation Discovery Day festivities.

Jo Solem, Jane Farrell and Susan Setterberg were responsible for the bird club exhibit at the Garden Fair at Howard Community College in May.

STATE MOS MAY PUBLISH STATEWIDE MEMBERSHIP LIST: The MOS is considering publishing a state-wide MOS membership list. You will notice on this year's membership form there is a section for you to elect if you want to be on the list or not, and whether you want your phone number published. Please be sure to check one of the options when completing the form.

MARYLAND BIRDLIFE ISSUES SOUGHT FOR COLLECTION - We are seeking a copy of each of the following *Maryland Birdlife* issues: Volume 43, No.4 (Dec 87) and Volume 46, No. 4 (Dec 90) for the club collection. Call Jo Solem at (301) 725-5037 if you can donate either of these issues.



April 28, 1994

Dear Eileen Clegg,

Thank you for coming to our school to present information to the fourth grade. You helped make Maryland Day very interesting. We learned a lot about what's going on in Maryland.

I didn't know a lot about birds and your presentation helped me learn more about different kinds of birds. The most interesting part of your career was when you showed us the birds and told some short stories about them and how and what they do also what they eat. I would like to learn more about birds, owls, eagles, etc. I'm sure the future 4th graders would enjoy hearing about your small career. Some day I would like to be in a bird club and, or be a bird watcher and study birds, eagles, owls and many other animals that fly.

Sincerely yours,
Stephanie Elliott

CONSERVATION REPORT — Bob Solem

Howard County has two new programs to help the homeowner cope with municipal solid waste and a reminder that can save us time and money.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTES will be collected at the Alpha Ridge Landfill at times convenient for the homeowner. *Watch local papers for dates and times for these collections.* What materials will be accepted? All-purpose cleaners, batteries, fungicides, furniture polishes, herbicides, insecticides, metal polishes & rust removers, mildew removers, mothballs, nail polish & polish removers, oven cleaners & drain cleaners, paint, paint thinners, pesticides, solvents & degreasers, swimming pool chemicals, unwanted fuels (gasoline & kerosene), used brake fluid & transmission fluid, and wood preservatives. **RECYCLE** mattresses, waste motor oil & transmission oil, antifreeze, automobile batteries, tires, and scrap metal (including old appliances).

COLLECTION OF GRASS & LEAVES will be started in the fall for those *in the Metropolitan District* (you know who you are) getting county trash & recycling collection. *Wait for an announcement flier from Howard County before trying to recycle grass & leaves.* Remember you can practice Grasscycling and save time, money, and effort. Leave the lawn clippings on the lawn when you mow and you will save 25-35 minutes each time you mow. You save money because the fertilizer you bought and put on the lawn is recycled back into the lawn through the clippings instead of being removed and thrown away. Nationally, **over 20% of solid waste in landfills is yard waste, and more than half of that is grass clippings.** (When Howard County collects grass & leaves, it will go to a composting facility, not to the landfill.)

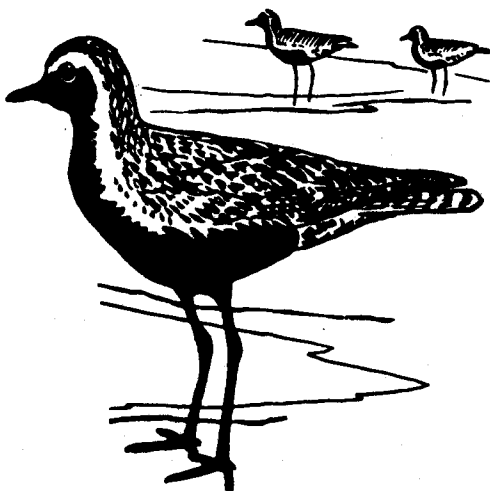
Finally, a clarification on the U.S. Supreme Court decision on ash generated by municipal solid waste incinerators. Chicago had been producing 130,000 tons of ash a year and disposing of it in an ordinary landfill although the ash had routinely failed federal tests for toxicity. (Such ash is routinely tested for toxicity.) The Supreme Court decision said that ash which fails federal tests for toxicity must be handled as toxic waste. It did NOT say that **ALL ASH FROM MUNICIPAL INCINERATORS MUST BE TREATED AS TOXIC.** Ash may be characterized as toxic if it has high leachable levels of lead or cadmium. Only ash that exhibits such toxicity is affected by this ruling.

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HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

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