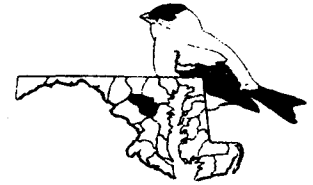




THE GOLDFINCH



A CHAPTER OF THE MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

MAY - JUNE 1998

VOLUME 26, NUMBER 5

MAY COUNT IS SATURDAY, MAY 9, 1998 BY PAUL ZUCKER

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 443-778-4971 (Office), e-mail paul.zucker@jhuapl.edu 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. Or, if you prefer, you may contact one of the following area coordinators: **Mike McClure 410 531-2780, Bonnie Ott 410 461-3361, Jo Solem 301 725-5037, or Chuck Stirrat 410 531-2417.** If you are interested in being an area coordinator, please contact Paul Zucker.

HOW IT WORKS: The county has been divided into seven areas (as for the Winter Count), each with an area coordinator. The area coordinators will assemble the parties and combine their results after the count. All parties however must make sure their day lists are delivered to the tally rally. 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 ½ hour, then the total is 1½ 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 coordinator 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. **Separate tally sheets and hours need to be kept for feeders and for owling.**

UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS: Any species not previously recorded in the county or listed on the enclosed 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, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Glossy Ibis, Tundra Swan, Snow Goose, Green-winged Teal, American Black Duck, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Greater or Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Hooded Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Merlin, Wild Turkey, Virginia Rail, Sora, American Coot, Semipalmated**

Plover, Upland Sandpiper, Sanderling, 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, Chuck-will's-widow, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, Winter Wren, Marsh Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Loggerhead Shrike, Philadelphia Vireo, Golden-winged Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Summer Tanager, Pine Siskin, Dickcissel, American Tree Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, 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 and 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 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; 6424 Lochridge Road.

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1997 - A 10 YEAR LOW BY JANE H. COSKREN

I knew it had to happen. We were bound to have a dismal annual list, but I did not expect it to be this dismal. The 1997 Howard County Year List of 216 species is not a record low, but it is our lowest total since 1987. The 1997 birding year certainly was lackluster; our telephones were not ringing off the hook with alerts from our faithful rare bird callers. Significant misses are Cattle Egret, Snowy Egret, non-breeding owls, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Marsh Wren, and Mourning Warbler. We missed Vesper Sparrow for the first time in 19 years.

There are some highlights: Whip-poor-will (missed the three previous years), White-rumped Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, and Red Crossbill. These unusual species were seen by very few people. In fact, most Howard County birders had to trek to neighboring Carroll County to see a Red Crossbill. White-winged Crossbills were not located in Howard County, but were present for months in Carroll County.

We again had no Barn Owl and no Black Tern.

Will 1998 be a good year? Get out there and find some birds! Have some fun! Share your finds by activating the Howard County Rare Bird Alert; call *Bea Newkirk* on (301) 498-1902.

Thanks to the following members who submitted their complete 1997 lists: *Dennis Coskren, Jane Coskren, Darius Ecker, Marcus James, Michael Kerwin, Brigitte Lund, Jo Solem, and Chuck Stirrat*. *Jo Solem's* season reports and special counts compiled by *David Holmes and Jo Solem, Paul Zucker, and Mike McClure and Chuck Stirrat* captured species not reported by individual contributors. *Bob Solem* provided computer expertise. Individuals who submitted their 1997 annual lists will receive this compilation. Others may obtain it by sending a stamped, self-addressed long envelope to Jane Coskren, 6324 Sandchain Road, Columbia, MD 21045.

ADDENDUM: 1996, remove Forster's Tern and add Dickcissel.

POTLUCK THANKS BY MARY-JO BETTS

Our 25th anniversary potluck dinner was a great success. Thanks to everyone who brought such delicious dishes and to those who presented the really outstanding slide programs. This year's event was especially fun. With the thoughtful planning of Marty Chestem, each of us was able to have our own history of the club in a beautifully informative placemat. Marty made all 60 of these by hand. She actually started working on them last summer. Other events included door prizes (donated by Marty and myself), bouquets of appreciation for Marty Chestem and Jo Solem (two of our hardest working club members), and our club's founder, Nanine Rhineland. Nanine spoke to us about the early years of our club, recognizing the early members who were there, noting their hard work that helped make the club what it is today.

Again this year we must note how many members helped to make the dinner the great success that it was. Many thanks to *Monika*

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1997 HOWARD COUNTY LIST

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| - COMMON LOON | - RED-SHOULDERED HAWK | - WHIP-POOR-WILL | - SWAINSON'S THRUSH | - NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH |
| - PIED-BILLED GREBE | - BROAD-WINGED HAWK | - CHIMNEY SWIFT | - HERMIT THRUSH | - LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH |
| - HORNED GREBE | - RED-TAILED HAWK | - RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD | - WOOD THRUSH | - KENTUCKY WARBLER |
| - DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT | - ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK | - BELTED KINGFISHER | - AMERICAN ROBIN | - CONNECTICUT WARBLER |
| - AMERICAN BITTERN | - AMERICAN KESTREL | - RED-HEADED WOODPECKER | - GRAY CATBIRD | - COMMON YELLOWTHROAT |
| - GREAT BLUE HERON | - MERLIN | - RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER | - NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD | - HOODED WARBLER |
| - GREAT EGRET | - PEREGRINE FALCON | - YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER | - BROWN THRASHER | - WILSON'S WARBLER |
| - LITTLE BLUE HERON | - RING-NECKED PHEASANT | - DOWNY WOODPECKER | - AMERICAN PIPIT | - CANADA WARBLER |
| - GREEN HERON | - WILD TURKEY | - HAIRY WOODPECKER | - CEDAR WAXWING | - YELLOW-BREADED CHAT |
| - BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON | - NORTHERN BOBWHITE | - NORTHERN FLICKER | - EUROPEAN STARLING | - SUMMER Tanager |
| - TUNDRA SWAN | - AMERICAN COOT | - PILEATED WOODPECKER | - WHITE-EYED VIREO | - SCARLET Tanager |
| - MUTE SWAN | - AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER | - OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER | - BLUE-HEADED VIREO | - NORTHERN CARDINAL |
| - SNOW GOOSE | - SEMIPALMATED PLOVER | - EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE | - YELLOW-THROATED VIREO | - ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK |
| - CANADA GOOSE | - KILLDEER | - ACADIAN FLYCATCHER | - WARBLING VIREO | - BLUE GROSBEAK |
| - WOOD DUCK | - GREATER YELLOWLEGS | - WILLOW FLYCATCHER | - PHILADELPHIA VIREO | - INDIGO BUNTING |
| - GREEN-WINGED TEAL | - LESSER YELLOWLEGS | - LEAST FLYCATCHER | - RED-EYED VIREO | - EASTERN TOWHEE |
| - AMERICAN BLACK DUCK | - SOLITARY SANDPIPER | - EASTERN PHOEBE | - BLUE-WINGED WARBLER | - AMERICAN TREE SPARROW |
| - MALLARD | - SPOTTED SANDPIPER | - GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER | - GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER | - CHIPPING SPARROW |
| - NORTHERN PINTAIL | - SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER | - EASTERN KINGBIRD | - TENNESSEE WARBLER | - FIELD SPARROW |
| - BLUE-WINGED TEAL | - WESTERN SANDPIPER | - HORNED LARK | - ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER | - SAVANNAH SPARROW |
| - NORTHERN SHOVELER | - LEAST SANDPIPER | - PURPLE MARTIN | - NASHVILLE WARBLER | - GRASSHOPPER SPARROW |
| - GADWALL | - WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER | - TREE SWALLOW | - NORTHERN PARULA | - FOX SPARROW |
| - AMERICAN WIGEON | - PECTORAL SANDPIPER | - NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW | - YELLOW WARBLER | - SONG SPARROW |
| - CANVASBACK | - STILT SANDPIPER | - BANK SWALLOW | - CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER | - LINCOLN'S SPARROW |
| - REDHEAD | - COMMON SNIPE | - CLIFF SWALLOW | - MAGNOLIA WARBLER | - SWAMP SPARROW |
| - RING-NECKED DUCK | - AMERICAN WOODCOCK | - BARN SWALLOW | - CAPE MAY WARBLER | - WHITE-THROATED SPARROW |
| - GREATER SCAUP | - LAUGHING GULL | - BLUE JAY | - BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER | - WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW |
| - LESSER SCAUP | - BONAPARTE'S GULL | - AMERICAN CROW | - YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER | - DARK-EYED JUNCO |
| - OLDSQUAW | - RING-BILLED GULL | - FISH CROW | - BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER | - BOBOLINK |
| - BLACK SCOTER | - HERRING GULL | - CAROLINA CHICKADEE | - BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER | - RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD |
| - SURF SCOTER | - ICELAND GULL | - TUFTED TITMOUSE | - YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER | - EASTERN MEADOWLARK |
| - COMMON GOLDENEYE | - LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL | - RED-BREADED NUTHATCH | - PINE WARBLER | - RUSTY BLACKBIRD |
| - BUFFLEHEAD | - GLAUCOUS GULL | - WHITE-BREADED NUTHATCH | - PRAIRIE WARBLER | - COMMON GRACKLE |
| - HOODED Merganser | - GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL | - BROWN CREEPER | - PALM WARBLER | - BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD |
| - COMMON Merganser | - CASPIAN TERN | - CAROLINA WREN | - BAY-BREADED WARBLER | - ORCHARD ORIOLE |
| - RED-BREADED Merganser | - COMMON TERN | - HOUSE WREN | - BLACKPOLL WARBLER | - BALTIMORE ORIOLE |
| - RUDDY DUCK | - ROCK DOVE | - WINTER WREN | - CERULEAN WARBLER | - PURPLE FINCH |
| - BLACK VULTURE | - MOURNING DOVE | - GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET | - BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER | - HOUSE FINCH |
| - TURKEY VULTURE | - BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO | - RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET | - AMERICAN REDSTART | - RED CROSSBILL |
| - OSPREY | - YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO | - BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER | - PROTHONOTARY WARBLER | - PINE SISKIN |
| - BALD EAGLE | - EASTERN SCREECH-OWL | - EASTERN BLUEBIRD | - WORM-EATING WARBLER | - AMERICAN GOLDFINCH |
| - NORTHERN HARRIER | - GREAT HORNED OWL | - VEERY | - OVENBIRD | - EVENING GROSBEAK |
| - SHARP-SHINNED HAWK | - BARRED OWL | - GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH | | - HOUSE SPARROW |
| - COOPER'S HAWK | - COMMON Nighthawk | | | |

WINTER BIRD RECORDS: DECEMBER 1, 1997 TO FEBRUARY 28, 1998 BY JOANNE SOLEM

The mild winter brought relatively few unexpected species. Despite open water, waterfowl seemed to be no more abundant than in many other years. Gull numbers were at a low point. The most dramatic drop in their numbers was at Alpha Ridge landfill (ALRGL) because the non-recyclable waste is being shipped out of the county. Finally, northern species (with the exception of Red-breasted Nuthatches) did not materialize in numbers—or at all.

No loons were reported. Pied-billed Grebes were seen throughout the period at Centennial Park (CENPK) (m. obs.) with a high of 4 at Lake Elkhorn (LKEK) 2/4 & 2/22 (JC). The only Horned Grebe was seen off Pigtail (PIGTL) on Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS) 12/1 (MW).

After successfully nesting last year at Vantage Point, three Great Blue Herons were back near the nests in late January (MC). There were scattered single Tundra Swans reported in Dec (MW, MK) and early Jan (JC, DN, DOD, J&RS). Midwinter Count (MWCT-2/7) tallied 44 countywide. Eighty were migrating over Wilde Lake (WILLK) 2/28 (HZ). As usual, a few Snow Geese wintered in company with Canadas. The high was 2 (1 blue) in a field in Fulton (DOD). The number of Canada Geese climbs every year. CENPK hosted 2,000 on 12/17 (JC), while the total for MWCT exceeded 8,000! It's an increasing challenge to pick out those that are migrating. Good candidates were the 300 in 3 high flocks headed north on 2/27 over Burleigh Manor (MK).

One female (f) Wood Duck was spotted at LKEK 1/12 (J&RS) & 2/22 (JC), while a male (m) Green-winged Teal made a brief appearance at WILLK 1/4 (HZ, DOD). High counts of Mallards were on farm ponds in the west: 1/8 Clark's 200 & 2/7 Waterford (WATFD) 150 (MW). One hundred American Black Ducks were on the Quarry Pond (QUARY) on Brighton Dam Rd. 12/20 (MC, HZ). A pair of Northern Pintails at WATFD on 2/7 (MW) may have been early migrants considering the mild winter. Three Northern Shovelers were spotted at CENPK 12/7 (KS). On the same date & on 12/13 KS had 3 m Gadwalls at CENPK. One was seen on MWCT on a pond on Old Frederick Road between Underwood & Forsythe Roads (D&MH). American Wigeon totaled 92 on MWCT; 89 were in western Howard County (HOWCO).

Once again, Canvasback numbers were modest: 8 at CENPK 2/15 (MK) & 6 at WILLK 1/3 (DOD) were high. The Redhead high was 7 at the QUARY 1/14 (HZ, MC). Ring-necked Ducks were seen in scattered locations all winter with a high of 25 at the Elliott Rd. Pond 1/24 (KS). A single Oldsquaw was present briefly at CENPK 1/10 (MK). Common Goldeneyes were seen at CENPK 12/28 5

EACH SEASON HOWARD COUNTY BIRD SIGHTINGS ARE COMPILED AND SUBMITTED TO *MARYLAND BIRDLIFE* AND *FIELD NOTES*. 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.

f (KS) & 1/1 at LKEK 5 (4 f) (DE, JS, m. obs.) Buffleheads were present at CENPK through the period with a high of 34 on 1/2 (MK). Most Hooded Merganser records were in Dec. MWCT turned up 33. Generally numbers of waterfowl on TRIRS were low, perhaps partly due to the extraordinarily low water levels needed for dam maintenance. Despite that situation, one species set a new record. Since 1990, 100 to 225 Common Mergansers have been found almost every winter on TRIRS with a previous high of 244 in 1993 (NM). On 1/5 near PIGTL, 447 were counted (JS, MW) of which 70% were estimated to be males. On 1/11, 268 were seen from Brighton Dam (JS). Interestingly, no Red-breasted Mergansers were seen in the flock on 1/5. By the third week in Feb, Red-breasteds were migrating with reports from CENPK 2/18 10 (1 f) (JC, R&NP), WILLK 2 on 2/21 (RO), LKEK 8 on 2/22 (JC) & Stanford Rd. Pond 2 on 2/26 (JC). Ruddy Ducks were present through the period with a high of 60 on 12/6 at CENPK (JC).

The vulture roost in the village of Wilde Lake was used throughout the winter. During much of Jan & Feb 225 to 230 birds could be seen each evening (MC). The high count was close to 300 on MWCT (DH). The Bald Eagles were sighted in the vicinity of the nest on TRIRS during Dec & over the dam area in Feb (sev. obs.) WSSC personnel reported that the birds were on the nest. Two adult Bald Eagles in a field along Old Scaggsville Rd. in southeastern HOWCO 1/25 (BN) were unexpected, but were probably feeding on a dead deer. A pair of Red-shouldered Hawks near a home in Fulton were courting and repairing last year's nest the first week of Jan (RM). A light phase Rough-legged Hawk was a treat at the ALRGL 2/7 (GS, RC, BOI). It was still present a week later during a field trip to that location (m. obs.). An imm. Northern Goshawk was spotted hunting along Stanford Rd. 2/3 (JC), the only one reported this season.

Wild Turkeys were seen twice along TRIRS: 1/5 PIGTL 5 (MW) & the first week of Jan at Big Branch 9 (HM). American Coots stayed at CENPK all winter with a high of 10 on 12/12 (JC) & again on 2/21 (KS). A high count of 24 Killdeer were present at the milk plant (MLKPL) on Leishear Rd. 12/20 (JC, JS). Common Snipe were found in two locations on MWCT: 2 at MLKPT (JC, JS) & 3 at Univ. Md Cent. Farm (M&GM, CR, RSm). Three or 4 American Woodcock were making courtship

flight at Gateway 2/26 (J&TDC).

Gulls were a major disappointment this season. With most of the county's non-recyclable trash now being shipped to Virginia, the gull numbers at ALRGL dropped dramatically. On MWCT, GS, RC, BOI counted 210 Ringed-billed Gulls, 387 Herring Gulls, and 6 Great Black-backed Gulls. This contrasts with the 5,000 to 10,000 usually seen in previous years. Often a group that large contained white-winged species and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Just one week later, on the club field trip to the landfill, the situation was even more depressing. The total for the three expected gull species had dropped below 100!

A single Red-headed Woodpecker was noted at a home on Rt. 108 near Schooley Mill Park (SLMLP) on 1/31 (CSH, LS). Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were seen now & then with the one in an e. Columbia yard by far the most consistent (SP). As usual, a few Eastern Phoebe's lingered. One was spotted at BRDAM 1/1 on the club field trip (DOI) & was still present on 1/25 (DE). One also appeared on New Year's Day in Timberleigh (DN). With the lack of snow, Horned Larks were not easy to come by. One was found in western HOWCO on MWCT (PJ, BW+).

Red-breasted Nuthatches were the most widespread northern species. They were noted all winter in most large pine stands (and some small ones) and occasionally at feeders. Good numbers included 16 on 12/28 Patuxent River State Park. (PATRP) Rt. 97 and 6 the same day on Jennings Chapel Rd. (PATRP-JC) (DE); 4 at Hugg-Thomas WMA on 12/14 (D&MH); & 10 near T. Duckett Res. 2/7 (JC, JS). The MWCT total was 93. Few Golden-crowned Kinglets were spotted and the only Ruby-crowned Kinglets were all seen on 1/14: CENPK 1 (JC) & HEDGEROW (HEGRW) 2 (HZ, MC). The same two observers had a Hermit Thrush at SLMLP on 2/28. A concentration of 50 to 100 American Robins on 1/4 in the Dunloggin area (KS) probably reflected the mild winter. A dense tangle along the transmission line near Hammond Branch produced both a Gray Catbird and a Brown Thrasher on 12/20 (JC, JS, JSO). A catbird was present at WILLK 1/3 eating multiflora rose hips (DOD). MWCT observers found 2 lingering thrashers: Alpha Ridge Park (D&PE, J&EM) & Rockburn Branch Park (BO, CG). The only Ameri-

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can Pipits were 2 counted at the landfill on 2/7 (GS, RC, Bol). Cedar Waxwings were found throughout the winter. MWCT tallied 863.

One of the nicest records of the season was a late Blue-headed Vireo at PATRP-JC (12/28) (DE). The observer documented this sighting with a careful description and a sketch. Yellow-rumped Warblers were not seen in any numbers or particular abundance with a high of 3 on 2/18 at CENPK (J&TDC). The most intriguing warbler sighting was a Yellow-breasted Chat which appeared in a protected yard in east Columbia during mild Feb weather (2/15) (MJB).

Eastern Towhees wintered successfully judging from the 12 on 12/20 & 10 on 2/7 in overlapping but not identical count territories in southeastern HOWCO (JC, JS).

On MWCT Savannah Sparrows were found at 3 sites in good numbers: ALRGL 16 (GS, RC, BOI), Mt. Pleasant 14 (KS), & MLKPT 6 (JC, JS). While Fox Sparrows lingered into Dec [12/20 5 in s.e. HOWCO (JC, JS)], there were only 2 found on MWCT: Carrs' Mill Rd.(MK) & e. Columbia (MJB). By mid-Feb, they were probably migrating with 1 on 2/13 at Talbot's Landing (TALLG) (RG). By 2/28 there were 2 at SLMLP (HZ,MC). Although some feeder watchers complained about few White-throated Sparrows, a lack of snow along with ample natural food may have kept them in fields and hedgerows. On 12/20 a s.e. count area had 169 White-throats (JC, JS). On 2/7 Clark's & WATFD in western HOWCO produced a combined total of more than 80 White-crowned Sparrows (MW).

A flock of a dozen Eastern Meadowlarks was seen at Belmont 2/7 (DK, SP). Purple Finch sightings were limited: 12/1 (TALLG) 1 (RG) & 1/2 & 2/10 in e. Columbia (MJB). The only flock of crossbills of any color were Red Crossbills at HEGRW on 1/12 when 20 were observed (HZ).

The one oddity reported was a Mallard/Wood Duck hybrid which this winter was seen at WILLK 1/17 (JB). Previous reports of this bird (since Oct 1994) had been at CENPK.

Observers: All sightings are appreciated. Those cited by initial in the above article are identified as follows: Mary-Jo Betts (MJB), John Blaisdell (JB), Martha Chestem (MC), Jane Coskren (JC), T. Dennis Coskren (TDC), Ralph Cullison (RC), Darius Ecker (DE), Paula Ecker (PE), David Holmes (DH), Carol Garza (CG), Ralph Goulder (RG), Dave & Maureen Harvey (D&M-H), Paul Jung (P-J), Mike Kerwin (MK), Dave Kubitsky (DK), Mike & Grazina McClure (M&GM), Nancy Magnusson (NM), Jeff & Elaine Metter (J&EM), Helen Metzner (HM), Rosemond Murray (RM), Diane Nagergast (DN), Bea Newkirk (BN), Doug Odernatt (DOd), Beth Olson (BO), Deryl Olson (DO), Richard Orr (RO), Bonnie Ott (BO), Norma & Ray Petersen (N&RP), Suzanne Probst (SP), Clyde Robinson (CR), Kurt Schwarz (KS), Geno Scarpulla (GS), Craig Sholley (CG), Rosemary Smith (RSm), Jo Solem (JS), Robert Solem (RS), Lisa Stevens (LS), Jamie St. Onge (JSO), Mark Wallace (MW), Bill Wendell (BW), Helen Zeichner (HZ), many observers (m.obs).

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and Rod Botsai who again as they have in all pass years brought the sodas and ice. Thanks also go to Maureen Harvey who greeted each of us with a name badge (which by the way, Marty dressed up with a bird on each badge), Kurt Schwarz for bringing and Dave Harvey for running the slide projector, Bob Solem for making up a poster for the wall with our club's time line, Brigitte Lund for coming early and arranging our forsythias in the bottles for our table centerpieces, Mike Kerwin for taking over Maud's responsibilities as president, Helen Zeichner, Diann Johns, Bob Lund, and all others mentioned above and anyone after whom I might have missed for coming early and setting up the tables and staying later to clean. A special thanks goes to Maud Banks, who unfortunately was unable to come due to a previous commitment. Maud still made sure to drop off all the containers filled with our plates, utensils, etc. However, more important, Maud is the reason we were able to have the dinner at the Owen Brown Community Center. This center could book our date well in advance so we could give everyone plenty of notice to set the date aside (this was something we were never able to do at our previous site). Yet, the best part of all, because Maud is a member of the Owen Brown Council, the club was able to get the facility free of charge! You cannot get any better than that. Everyone's efforts made this night great fun for all.

BIRD CLUB PRESENTS COPY OF BREEDING BIRD ATLAS TO WSSC

On Friday, March 6, 1998 members of the Howard County Bird Club presented a copy of the *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Maryland and the District of Columbia* to representatives of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC). Jane Coskren, co-chair of the Howard County Atlas effort, presented the book to Larry Lager, Watershed Protection Supervisor and Corporal Bart Pitts. Also present for WSSC was Dave Faison, Director of Security. In addition to Jane, the Bird Club was represented by President Maud Bank, Vice President Mike Kerwin, Bob and Jo Solem, and Martha Chestem. See photo below.

The completed statewide Atlas results were given in appreciation for permission to survey the land adjoining Triadelphia and T. Duckett reservoirs during the 1983-1987 period of field work. The cooperation and courtesy of the watershed enforcement officers was much appreciated by members of the Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's chapters of the Maryland Ornithological Society engaged in the project.



CALENDAR OF PROGRAMS AND FIELD TRIPS

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.

May 14, Thursday "Birding in England," by **Larry Hood**. Larry returns to join us for our 25th year celebration. Larry was an organizer of our chapter and was a local and state-wide field trip leader. He and his wife, Peg, will introduce us to hiking the English canal towpaths, a good way to see the English country side and the birds to be found there.

Field Trips meet as described for each trip. Carpooling is encouraged; riders share the cost of gas and tolls. Dress for the field trip with stout, reasonably waterproof footwear and layers of clothes. Trips do not always follow paths. NO pets. Leaders may cancel due to inclement weather or fewer than three participants. FOR INFORMATION, CALL **BONNIE OTT**, at 410-461-3361.

May 3, Sunday **Lake Elkhorn** - Meet at 8:00 am at the Broken Land Parkway parking lot. Leaders: **Darius and Paula Ecker**. Walk around the lake on a paved path in search of warblers, waterfowl and sparrows. Call leaders at 410-312-9165 for more information.

May 6, Wednesday **Gwynn Acres** - Meet at 8:30 am at Old Columbia Road and Rams Horn Row. Leader will be present. Join us on this easy walk on a paved path. Call Bonnie for more information. *Jo-lee*

May 9, Saturday **May Count** - Details are on the front page of this newsletter.

May 15-17, Friday - Sunday **Maryland Ornithological Society 1998 Annual Conference** - Details were mailed to you by the MOS.

May 24, Sunday **Middle Patuxent Environmental Area** - Meet at 7:30 am at the Howard County Board of Education Building on Route 108 to carpool to the site. Leader: **Tom Franklin**. Tom is a wildlife biologist who will introduce us to this unique and special area. Call Bonnie for more information.

June 7, Sunday **Rockburn Branch Park for Breeding Birds** - Meet at 7:30 am at the park office off Landing Road. Leader: **Bonnie Ott**. Hooded and Kentucky Warblers, Indigo Bunting and more possible. Paths may be muddy.

June 27, Saturday **25th Year Picnic Brunch** - See article below.

July 11, Saturday **Evening Walk at Gwynn Acres** - Meet at 7:00 pm at Old Columbia Rd. and Rams Horn Row. Leader: **Bonnie Ott**. Walk down a paved path to listen and look for thrushes, Barred Owls and other birds. Wear bug repellent and bring a flashlight.

August 8, Saturday **Dragonfly and Butterfly Walk at Centennial Park** - Meet at 9:00 am at the west end parking lot. Leader: **Richard Orr**. Don't forget your binoculars to observe these beauties. Call leader at 410-730-7290 for more information.

September 19, Saturday **Howard County Fall Count** - Reserve this date on your calendar. Details will be in the next issue of the newsletter.

September 26, Saturday **All Day Trip to Cape May** - Reserve this date on your calendar. Details will be in the next issue of the newsletter.

Board of Directors meetings are held the fourth Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm, unless otherwise noted, at the home of the board member listed. If directions are required, please call the hosting board member.

May 28, Thursday **Shiras Guion**, 8007 Martown Rd, Laurel, MD 20723, phone 301-490-0444. This will be a joint meeting of the incoming and outgoing board members.

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 1998 NEWSLETTER MATERIAL IS DUE JULY 24, 1998. Anyone is welcome to contribute articles or ideas which you think will be of interest to other birders. Call or mail to **Paula and Darius Ecker**, 9270 Crazyquilt Court, Columbia, MD 21045, Phone 410-312-9165 or e-mail to Paulae2156@aol.com. Also, please visit the club's site on the World Wide Web, at <http://www.abs.net/~darius/birding.html>.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO STAFF THE BIRD CLUB BOOTH AT THE HOWARD COUNTY FAIR

The Howard County Bird Club needs volunteers to staff our booth at the Howard County Fair in August. This is an opportunity to meet and greet many neighbors who stop by our booth to find out what the Howard County Bird Club is all about. You hear many interesting stories from people, and everyone is impressed with our many informative displays.

If you have a few hours during the day or evening that you can donate to this worthy cause, please call **Karla Pearce** at 410-740-8361 or e-mail her at karlap@altavista.net.

GREETERS NEEDED FOR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Do you want to get to know everyone who attends the bird club monthly meetings? Do you want to be the first to hear all the interesting bird news? Or, do you just want to be the first to hear all the latest gossip? If your answer to one or all of these questions is "yes" consider volunteering to be our official bird club monthly meeting greeter and greeter. Simply meet members and visitors at the door, hand them a name tag and ask them to fill it out, and be first to hear all the good information that everyone has to share. You can volunteer to take as many or as few monthly meetings as you wish. To volunteer, call **Paula Ecker** at 410-312-9165.

25TH YEAR PICNIC BRUNCH

The Howard County Bird Club will continue its 25th year celebration Saturday, June 27, from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm at a picnic brunch on the grounds of the Applied Physics Lab. Tables have been reserved in area C, which is next to the Middle Patuxent River. Meet at the ballfield at 8:00 am to bird our way down to the site. Parking is limited and later arrivals should follow the dirt road by the pavilion towards the woods down to the river. There are no grills or cover at the site, so consider that when planning your meal. Beer and wine, however, are allowed.

Featured birds from the last picnic include **Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Pileated Woodpecker, Acadian Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, and Northern Oriole.**

Call **Mary-Jo Betts** at 301-596-5859 if you are interested in attending.

HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

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CONSERVATION COLUMN

BY BOB SOLEM

Maryland Department of Natural Resources is sponsoring "A Conference on the Conservation of Biological Diversity: A Key to the Restoration of the Chesapeake Bay Ecosystem and Beyond" in Annapolis May 10-13, 1998. There is more information available on the Web site <<http://www.biodiversitynet.com>> Here are some of the papers that will be presented:

Social Ecology

- Integrating Wildlife Management and Agriculture: Conserving Biodiversity Through Long-term Partnerships
- An Interactive Atlas of Extended Gap Analysis for Biodiversity Conservation
- Wildlife Mapping: Linking Resource Management with the Public
- Maryland Partners in Flight: A Team Approach to Conserving Birds
- Economic and Environmental Benefits of Natural Biota to Society
- Biodiversity Projects

Public Policy

- Maryland's Endangered Species Law as a Tool for Biodiversity Conservation
- Maryland's Integrated Natural Resources Assessment: Establishing the Context for Biodiversity Conservation in Maryland
- Ancient Forest and Modern Day Perspectives
- Maryland's Heritage Conservation Fund: An overview of Biodiversity Protected through a Targeted Acquisition Approach
- Using Volunteers to Monitor Biodiversity in Central Maryland

- Funding for Water Quality: Stream Corridor Restoration Projects

Conservation Science

- Predicting Richness of Area - Sensitive Birds in Forests of Prince George's Co., MD
- Status and Trends of Biodiversity Protection in Maryland
- Benthic Biodiversity Hotspots in the Chesapeake Bay
- Freshwater Biodiversity Hotspots in Maryland
- Ongoing Projects to Conserve Endangered Butterfly Populations in Maryland and Other Eastern U.S. States
- Wetland Losses in Maryland's Coastal Bays Watershed
- Diversity of Maryland State Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Vascular Plants in Non-tidal Barrier Wetlands along the Chesapeake Bay
- Partnerships in Wetland Mitigation to Increase and Preserve Rare Species and Ecosystems
- Hart-Miller Island: An opportunity for Enhancement of Biological Diversity in the Chesapeake Bay
- The Chapman Forest and its Role in the Tidal Potomac River Ecosystem
- Preliminary Land Cover Map of Map: Mid-Atlantic Gap Analysis Project
- Examples of Wetland Creation/Enhancement in Maryland for Biodiversity

DRAGONFLY AND DAMSELFLY SURVEY

This is the third year of an ongoing Bird Club project surveying the dragonflies and damselflies (odonates) of Howard County to create a body of baseline data. If you have participated in any of the Bird Club's odonate field trips led by Richard Orr or attended any of his classes, you are aware of the attraction these insects can hold for birders.

For those who wish to pursue this interest, an information sheet is available. It includes a list of Howard County sites, references, and the current Howard County list with early and late sighting dates in Howard County.

For a copy, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to *Jo Solem, 10617 Graefloch Road, Laurel, MD 20723*, or see her at meetings.

THANK YOU

Many thanks to the following club members who assisted in the labeling and mailing of Maryland Birdlife: *Bill & Karan Blum, Marty Chestern, Fred & Joanne Firman, Mary Gold, Shiras Guion (our gracious hostess), Dave & Maureen Harvey, Nancy Magnusson, Norma Petersen, Bob & Jo Solem, and Don & Martha Waugh.*

Thanks also to *Lisa Colangelo* for providing the refreshments for our March monthly meeting.

