



THE GOLDFINCH



A CHAPTER OF THE MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

MAY - JUNE 2000

VOLUME 28, NUMBER 5

MAY COUNT IS SATURDAY, MAY 13, 2000 BY PAUL ZUCKER

SMITHSONIAN'S NEIGHBORHOOD NESTWATCH

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@hnap1.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 (listed by area, see map in the January Goldfinch): (1) Mike Kerwin 410-461-2408, (2) Paul Zucker 443-778-4971, (3) Chuck Stirat 410-531-2417, (4) Mike McClure 410 531-2780, (5) Doug Odenmatt 410-992-1812, (6) Bonnie Ott 410 461-3361, or (7) Jo Solem 301 726-6037.

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 1/2 hour, then the total is 1 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 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. Keep a separate count of the hours spent owling and watching feeders. This year the state coordinator has requested those who are interested to fill out a questionnaire about the habits in their individual count areas. This form is in the March/April Yellowthroat.

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 ex-

amples of what is considered unusual are: *Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, Little Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Glossy Ibis, Tundra Swan, Snow Goose, American Black Duck, Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Blue-winged Teal, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Greater or Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, Hooded Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Laughing Gull, Merlin, Wild Turkey, Virginia Rail, Sora, American Coot, Semipalmated Plover, Upland Sandpiper, 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, Chuck-will's-widow, Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, Marsh Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Gray-cheeked/Bicknell's 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, Rusty Blackbird or Purple Finch.*

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.

Have you ever wondered if the robin nesting in your front yard was there last year or if the phoebe nesting under your eave successfully raised young? Well, Dr. Peter P. Marra of the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC) in Edgewater, MD is launching a project that guides you and your family through your own scientific research project that will answer those very important questions. The Smithsonian Neighborhood Nestwatch will provide you with an incredible scientific learning opportunity while at the same time gather important scientific data on the biology of migratory birds in urban/suburban landscapes. Neighborhood Nestwatch enables you, a Smithsonian Observer, the opportunity to monitor the reproductive success and survival of a nesting pair of migratory or resident birds (such as Carolina wrens, robins, catbirds or phoebes) in your neighborhood or even in your own backyard. You (and your family) will select a bird species that is nesting in your neighborhood. A SERC scientist, along with your help, will then catch the pair of birds, measure and band them with a unique color band combination, and then release them. Each observer will receive specialized training that will enable him or her to observe the pair, find their nests and record important scientific data. The following year, you search your neighborhood to determine if your color-banded birds survived the long migration from the tropics or the wintering period. This experience will be like taking a course in field ornithology in your own backyard.

Don't miss this opportunity.

For more information on how to sign up Call 301-261-4190 (ext. 344) or e-mail: nestwatch@serc.si.edu.

Peter P. Marra Ph.D.
Smithsonian Environmental Research Center
P.O. Box 28
647 Contees Wharf Rd.
Edgewater, MD 21037
Phone: 301-261-4190 ext 224
Fax: 301-261-7954
E-mail: marra@serc.si.edu

INSIDE THIS ISSUE	PAGE
1999 HOWARD COUNTY LIST	2
WINTER BIRD RECORDS	3
POTLUCK THANKS	4
15TH MIDWINTER COUNT	5
WINTER TRIP HIGHLIGHTS	7
PROGRAMS AND FIELD TRIPS	7
CONSERVATION COLUMN	8

THE 21TH ANNUAL HOWARD COUNTY LIST - MUCH BETTER, BUT NOT A TERRIFIC YEAR BY JANE H. COSKREN

We are on a rebound from the dismal annual lists of 1998 and 1997. The 1999 Howard Year List total of 226 was the best total since 1996. We found the first Howard County Red-throated Loon since 1991. Some other good finds were a Snowy Egret, a Black Scoter, a Common Moorhen, Upland Sandpipers, a Phalarope, a Whip-poor-will, an Alder Flycatcher and a White-winged Crossbill. Two of the classiest birds—a Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow and a Dickcissel—cooperated by staying in accessible locations, so many birders got to see.

However, the dry summer meant no wet edges; so we had no unusual shorebirds. No landfill meant no unusual gulls.

Let's hope for a really productive 2000. Find some birds and report them! Have fun! Share your finds by activating the Howard County Rare Bird Alert: call Bob Solem at 301-725-5037 or Bonnie Ott at 410-461-3361.

Thanks to the following members who submitted their complete 1999 lists: Mary-Jo Betts, Dennis Coskren, Jane Coskren, Ward Ebert, Nancy Magnusson, Diane Nagengast, Doug Odermatt, Bonnie Ott, Kurt Schwarz, Jo Solem, Chuck Stirrat, and Paul Zucker. Jo Solem's reports for the seasons captured many sightings not reported on individual lists, as did Jo Solem's, Paul Zucker's, Chuck Stirrat's, and

Mike McClure's compilations from special counts. Dennis Coskren helped compile the annual list.

Individuals who submitted their 1999 annual lists will receive the 21-year compilation. Others may obtain it by sending a stamped, self-addressed, long envelope to Jane Coskren, 6324 Sandchain Road, Columbia, MD 21045.

ADDENDUM: 1998, add Evening Grosbeak for a total of 219. 1997, add Greater White-fronted Goose for a total of 218. 1994, add Mississippi Kite for a total of 237.

4TH OF JULY BUTTERFLY COUNT BY RONDIE REESER

The 26th annual North American Butterfly Association will hold their 4th of July Butterfly Count this summer. These counts are conducted to track the butterfly populations of North America. Volunteer groups around North America select a count area with a 15-mile diameter and conduct a one-day census of all butterflies sighted with that circle. These counts are conducted in designated butterfly habitats and areas open for public participation. They are usually held in the few weeks before or after the 4th of July. Counts have been held annually since 1975, when only 29 counts were held. In 1998, 346 counts were held in 44

states, 6 Canadian provinces, and 3 Mexican states.

The North American Butterfly Association (NABA) organizes the counts and publishes their annual reports. These reports provide important information about the geographical distributions and population sizes of the species counted. Comparisons of the results over the years monitor changes in butterfly populations and reveal effects of weather and habitat change on the different species.

We are looking for individuals eager to participate in butterfly counts in the Ellicott City/Columbia area. A training session on how to identify and record the butterflies will be offered before the counts are conducted. We hope to designate at least 2 sites, it depends on the number of volunteers. Each group will be led by an individual experienced in butterfly identification. The counts will be scheduled on a Saturday morning. Counts can also be done by individuals in their own backyard!

If you are interested in participating, or know of a nature center or butterfly club in the surrounding area already conducting counts, please let me know. We are in need of individuals to conduct the training sessions also.

Please check out the NABA web site at: www.naba.org. For more information please contact Rondie Reeser MG, Howard County 410-465-9472, E-mail: ronreaser@juno.com.

1999 HOWARD COUNTY LIST

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

WINTER BIRD RECORDS: DECEMBER 1, 1999 TO FEBRUARY 29, 2000

BY JOANNE SOLEM

Moderate December weather continued into the new year, however, the last two weeks of January brought a dramatic change. An extended period of below freezing temperatures froze most water surfaces. Heavy snowfall followed by a week of cold temperatures had a noticeable impact on the local bird population. For a detailed summary of the effect of the weather on the Howard County Midwinter Count (HCMC, February 5), see the article elsewhere in this newsletter. As always, the season brought pleasant surprises. A Dickcissel, spotted in early December, was detected until mid-January; a Yellow-headed Blackbird visited a yard for a few minutes in mid-December; a White-winged Crossbill made a cameo appearance at a feeder in early January; a Baltimore Oriole spent much of the winter eating fruit at a feeder, and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak established the county's first winter record. This was not a major flight year for northern irruptives, but there were a few present.

No loons or Horned Grebes were reported. Five Pied-billed Grebes at Lake Elkhorn (LKEK) 12/22 (J&TDC) marked the seasonal high.

Great Blue Herons returned to Vantage Point a few days later than last year, but by 2/29, 10 birds were standing on 7 nests (MC). Although some herons stayed in the county throughout the winter, the extensive ice forced the remaining birds to take advantage of all food sources. One heron appeared regularly from 1/17 through 1/27 at a small heated ornamental fish pond in Timberleigh (TIMBR). The owners estimated the bird's consumption during that period at one to two dozen large fish (DN). Turkey Vulture roosts of varying duration were reported for 12/9 (87) and 12/18 (68) at Hallmark (WEB) and 12/12 (72) at Wilde Lake (WILLK) (CN).

There were just two reports of Snow Geese: 11/27 at Meadowbrook (MDBERK) 1 w (BO) and 2/5 Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS) 1 b (NM). The first reports of migrating Canada Geese were of flocks on 2/21 and 2/23 over Allview (ES). Midwinter Count turned up 7588 Canada Geese counted mostly in the early morning at holes in the ice on major lakes and reservoirs before the large flocks dispersed. Small numbers of Tundra Swans were seen in all winter months from the 6 on 12/22 over Manahan Dr (MANHN) (BO) to those beginning to move north in late February: 2/27 River Rd, Patapsco Valley State Park (PV) 2 (R&JG) and a flock the night of 2/29 over Cissel's (CISSL) on Jennings Chapel Rd (CSp).

Although one male Wood Duck was seen at Brighton Dam (BRDAM) on 1/19 (HZ, EH), all other sightings were the last week in February reflecting spring movement with a high of 9 on 2/26 at the Walt-Ann pond (M&GM). A Gadwall (m) was spotted at Centennial Park (CENPK) on 12/31 (KS). There were reports from three other locations with a high of 11 on 2/5 at Rts 144/97 (POs). American Wigeon hit a high of 30 on 1/6 at Brendel's on Union Chapel Rd (MW). A seasonal high of 180 American Black Ducks was noted on TRIRS on 1/8 (J&TDC). Mallards built to peak num-

bers in February with 219 counted at TRIRS 2/5 (NM) and 250 at the University of Maryland Central Farm (UMDCF) 2/19 (M&GM). HCMC turned up a Blue-winged Teal (m) on the quarry (D&DHe), a nice bird for the Piedmont in winter. Northern Pintails wandered through in small numbers: one male on 1/22 at CENPK (KS), one on 2/6 at UMDCF (JMa), and a pair on 2/19 at LKEK (SN). Five were counted at TRIRS 2/5 (NM). A dozen Green-winged Teal (m) were at BRDAM 1/23 resting on the edge of the ice (JS, HZ, EH).

Canvasbacks were present at the central lakes with a high of 9 on 2/20 at CENPK (5 f) (KS). One at Warfield's Pond Park on 12/16 was nice (KT) and 2 f at UMDCF 2/26 were a first for that location (M&GM). There were scattered reports of Redheads with a high of 9 (4 f) on 1/19 at BRDAM (HZ, EH). Ring-necked Duck numbers began growing in early February with 51 on 2/5 at Rts 144/97 (POs) and a high of 55 at CENPK on 2/21 (KS). Lesser Scaup reached a modest high of 10 on 2/20 CENPK (9 m) (KS, KD, JF). Oldsquaws are always a special species. The only one this season was at TRIRS 12/18 (DM). Common Goldeneyes were present in HOWCO for 10 days during the winter from one on 12/31 at CENPK (1st yr m) (KS) to 2 on 1/9 CENPK (f & 1st yr m) (KS). Hooded Merganser numbers were low with a high of 10 on 2/5 at Rocky Gorge dam (RKYGD) (JC, JS). For at least part of the winter, Common Mergansers lived up to their name at TRIRS. The high of 381 was counted on 12/31 (NM). There were still 296 on 1/12 (JS), but freeze-up moved almost all of them out. HCMC recorded just 2! (JC, JS, NM). The only Red-breasted Merganser reported this season was a female on 2/5 RKYGD (JC, JS). Ruddy Ducks reached a peak seasonal high of 60 on 12/13 at LKEK (J&TDC).

In addition to the nesting pair of Bald Eagles on TRIRS, other eagle sightings were as follows: (some may have been the wandering TRIRS birds): 12/31, one ad. over Savage (DE), also 12/31 one ad. over Daniels, PV (DD, AA); 1/2, one flying from WILLK to Lake Kittamaquidi (G&CC); and 1/3, one at BRNBR (JMa). As usual, there were a few reports of Northern Harriers (M&GM; ES; BO; HCMC). Sharp-shinned Hawks and Cooper's Hawks were reported, most near lakes or in the vicinity of feeders. A Red-shouldered Hawk was depositing nesting material in a tree crotch on 2/27 in Dumloggin (KS, KD). A Rough-legged Hawk again wintered at or near the Alpha Ridge landfill. It was seen 2/5 (RC) and again 2/26 (RC+). Three Merlin sightings could have pertained to one bird: 12/4 and 1/28 MANHN (BO) and 1/23 Rt 108 (Columbia) (JMa). A Peregrine Falcon was spotted 12/5 at Rt. 103/Montgomery Rd

(E&JM); a second sighting was at LKEK 2/15 (J&TDC).

Fourteen American Coots at CENPK 1/30 marked the winter's high (KS). Killdeer were widespread until mid-January. HCMC turned up just 2 (JC, JS). The only winter Common Snipe was startled from a wet area at Zepp's on Roxbury Rd 12/18 (MW). American Woodcock were noted in two locations on 2/25: 2 at David Force Wildlife Management Area (KD) and 1 at Patuxent River State Park-Jennings Chapel Rd (PATRP-JC) (JSh).

Two Bonaparte's Gulls appeared briefly at LKEK 12/18 (JH). Two Lesser Black-backed Gulls were identified at BRDAM 1/1 (BO+); one was still at that location 1/8 (J&TDC).

Great Horned Owls were reported in all winter months (WEB; DN; KS). One Northern Saw-whet Owl was found in a pine stand on Rt. 97 and the Patuxent River on 12/15 (JSh, JS); 2 were there 12/18 (JSh).

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were present in good numbers with 4 on 12/18 at Schooley Mill Park (NM) and 20 on HCMC. One Eastern Phoebe on 2/5 in southern HOWCO was the only one reported for the season (JC, JS). A flock of 150+ Horned Larks was spotted 1/29 in a field at Old Frederick Rd/Underwood Rd (NM). A few Red-breasted Nuthatches stayed the winter. One in Kings Contrivance arrived in mid-autumn and was still present at a feeder the end of February (D&LS). Seven were found on HCMC. Carolina Wrens are usually heavily impacted by severe winter weather. This was certainly the case this year as the Triadelphia Christmas Count (12/18) tallied 522 for a record high, while the HCMC had 128, their third lowest total. Two Carolina Wrens weathered the cold and snow by spending nights in a garage in TIMBR. In the morning when the birds began chirping, the garage was opened so they could leave (DN).

Golden-crowned Kinglet numbers were low. There were three reports of Ruby-crowned Kinglets, a hard bird to find in the county in winter (NM; MSP; DK; JMa). Eastern Bluebird numbers held up well with 317 recorded on HCMC. An ample supply of fruit was a major factor in their presence. Thirty Hermit Thrushes on HCMC set a new high. There were 3 at CENPK on 1/12 (J&TDC). Large flocks of American Robins appeared in early February with at least 100 at Howard Community College stripping hawthorn or crabapple trees 2/6 (JW). Two Gray Catbirds were present at CENPK on 1/9 (KS). At least 1 of them was seen 1/8, 1/23, and 2/15 (J&TDC). HCMC turned up 3 Brown Thrashers, all in the southeastern part of the

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)
county (JC,ES;JMK).

The largest American Pipit flock of the season was 82 on 1/9 on Hardy Rd (POs). Large flocks of Cedar Waxwings were most often reported in February with 100+ on 2/27 WILLK (KS). Yellow-rumped Warblers were found in all three months in small numbers. The countywide total on 2/5 was 22.

Eastern Towhees wintered in small numbers. The high for American Tree Sparrows was 18 on 1/23 MDBRK (BO). The seasonal high count of Savannah Sparrows was 150+ at UMDCF 12/29 (NM). Enough of them stayed to reach a new high countywide total of 161 on 2/5. Two or three Fox Sparrows frequented a yard on Mt. Albert from at least 1/18 to 2/27 with birds of several different brown color variations present in differing combinations (M&GM). Five were spotted at MDBRK 1/9 (POs). Fox Sparrows are early migrants but are seldom detected in flocks of more than half a dozen. The 20 on 2/29 PATRP-HC was a one observer all-time county high (JSh). A year ago a partially albinistic White-throated Sparrow which appeared at WILLK was reported occasionally as a Snow Bunting because of its distinctive pattern. This winter the bird was spotted at WILLK again on 2/26 and 2/28 (HZ). It appears to have wintered in the same general area two successive years. Usually this kind of information can only be obtained by banding. White-crowned Sparrows wintered in good numbers, though in limited areas. Apparently Clark's on Roxbury Rd has excellent habitat with 80 counted on 12/10 and 120 on 2/5 (MW).

A Rose-breasted Grosbeak (m) that had been present at a West Friendship feeder since early November was last seen 1/16 (JMc). This was HOWCO's first winter record for the species.

A Dickcissel was present at LKELK for more than a month from 12/9 (SA) through 1/19 (JMa). Generally, it was not an easy bird to see, spending much of its time skulking in dense vegetation along the north side of the lake near the dam or in shrubbery surrounding the pool below. It associated, as is typical, with a flock of several dozen House Sparrows. Originally thought to be a female, examination in good light enabled some observers to detect some black on the upper breast which would make it a male. Because flocks of House Sparrows are frequently ignored by birders, it is possible that Dickcissels are not quite as unusual as infrequent records indicate. With the sighting of a Dickcissel in December as well as one on 5/8/99, 1999 became the first year since 1972 in which this species was recorded more than once in a year.

On 12/12 an adult male Yellow-headed Blackbird along with two Red-winged Blackbirds visited a feeder north of Gorman Rd, but stayed less than 10 minutes (C&DH). A search of the area was conducted during the remainder of the day by birders, but the blackbird was not seen again. Three out of the four Rusty Blackbird reports were in February: 1/24 UMDCF 2 (JMa), 2/3 WILLK 5 (CN), 2/12 Glenelg 6 (RSm), and PATRP-HC 10 (JSh). Usually if a Baltimore Oriole overwinters, it is a young male. This season an adult male ate fruit and posed for photographs at a

feeder in Dunloggin II from 1/9 to at least 2/29 (C&DB).

Almost every year we can count on a few winter Purple Finch sightings. This year was no exception. They were seen in each of the winter months, some (but not all) at feeders. HCMC registered a modest 15. White-winged Crossbill records are extremely few in HOWCO. One female was glimpsed at a feeder on Pine Ridge Dr on 1/9 (KD). Although the bird did not stay long, a photograph was obtained. Few people would appreciate the quality of the photo, but it may be valuable for identification purposes. When verifying the sighting of a rare or infrequently observed bird, do not be concerned about the beauty of the composition or the quality of the lens. Something is better than nothing.

Many observers submit records ranging from one to dozens. All are welcome and appreciated. Each date is useful in providing an accurate reflection of Howard County's seasonal birdlife. Those individuals cited in the article are identified by initials only. AA - Andy Aguilera, SA - Stan Arnold, C&DB - Carla & David Brezinski, MC - Martha Chestern, G&CC - George & Carole Cleland, J&TDC - Jane & T.Dennis Cosgrove, RC - Ralph Cullison III, KD - Karen Darcy, DD - Dianne Dupuy, WEB - Ward Ebert, DE - Darius Ecker, JF - John Fiedore, R&JG - Ralph & Jane Geuder, JH - Joe Hanlin, D&DH - David & Donald Henderson, EH - Emmahyn Holdridge, C&DH - Claire & David Horvath, DK - Dave Kubitsky, NM - Nancy Magnusson, JMa - John Maloney, DM - David Mazurkowitz, M&GM - Mike & Grazina McClure, JMc - Janet McKegg, JMK - John McGitterick, E&JM - Elaine & Jeff Metter, DN - Diane Nagengast, SN - Sue Neri, CN - Carol Newman, POs - Peter Osenton, BO - Bonnie Ott, MSP - M. Suzanne Probst, KS - Kurt Schwarz, CSn - Chuck Sharp, JS - Jay Sheppard, RSm - Romayne Smith, JS - Jo Solem, D&LS - Dan & Linda Southworth, ES - Eva Sunel, KT - Kate Tufts, MW - Mark Wallace, JW - Jim Wilkinson, HZ - Helen Zeichner, m - male, f - female, HOWCO - Howard County, + denotes trip leader. Observers not cited in the article: Maud Banks, Mary-Jo Betts, John & Martha Blaisdell, Marshall III, Frederick Kelley, Mike Loumas, John Oetting, Richard Orr, Jim Stasz, Jordan Wilkerson, Paul Zucker.

POTLUCK THANKS

BY MARY-JO BETTS

Once again, our Potluck Dinner was a great success. Thanks to everyone who brought such delicious dishes, as well as those who presented such outstanding slide programs. I want to give a special thank you to several members who every year, volunteer their services to make the dinner so enjoyable for the rest of us. Thanks to Marty Chestern, who every year produces her personalized birdy placemats. Thanks also to Monika and Rod Botsai, who always take care of bringing the sodas and ice. Thank you to Sue Probst who brought all the plates, utensils, napkins, etc. Many thanks to the many members who were kind enough to come early and help set up the room, as well as helping to clean up after, including Monika and Rod Botsai, Marty Chestern, Helen Zeichner, Bonnie Ott, Carol Garza, Emy Holdridge, Sue Probst, Kurt Schwarz, Dave and Maureen Harvey, Chuck Stirrat, Maud Banks, Karen Darcy, and Mike Kerwin. A very special thank you to Kathy and Tom Franklin of the Wildlife Authority who once again, generously donated their special "Shade Grown Coffee" for a door prize. With the great food, fabulous slides, fantastic company and conversation, I will look forward to joining all of you next year for another wonderful time.

CLUB'S MOUNTED BIRD SPECIMENS TRANSFERRED TO DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS

BY JOANNE SOLEM

In mid-February, Howard County Bird Club (HCBC) President Michael Kerwin signed a memo of understanding (MOU) with the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks (HCDR&P) transferring the club's mounted bird collection to the department. This significant step was precipitated by a federal change of policy. In mid-1999, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS) advised the bird club that it was no longer eligible to possess mounted birds. It would have to make arrangements to transfer them to an agency/organization where the public would have continuing access to them, with at least a portion of the collection on display.

When the collection was begun in the mid-1970s, the aim was to give the birds eventually to a Howard County nature center. When the USF&WS put its new policy into effect, HCDR&P proved receptive to receiving the collection and displaying a portion of it if the HCBC provided display cases. Fortunately, the county is working on plans to develop a nature center in the near future. Some HCBC members will continue to be able to borrow specimens for educational presentations (members who have presented programs in the past have been included on the list the USF&WS requires). The HCBC board approved the MOU, including the fact that the arrangement could be canceled by either party with 30 days notice.

Those members who underwrote the costs of mounting individual birds in the last two decades are to be commended for their significant contribution to the collection. The MOU provides that any specimen that the HCBC wants mounted will be paid for by the club (or a donor). Since mounting is expensive and storage space is always a consideration, neither party will mount duplicates of species already in the collection which are still in good condition.

We thank HCDR&P for their sensitivity and enthusiasm in handling this cooperative venture. Especially appreciated were the efforts of Mark Raab and Brenda Belensky who helped us find a workable solution on a tight schedule. Damon Butler is constructing rodent-proof shelving on which to store the boxes containing birds not on display. A number of bird club members deserve special thanks. Bob Solem made 10 new storage boxes for specimens that had had none and repaired and/or improved most of the existing boxes. Don Waugh examined the legal wording of the MOU. David Holmes verified the species of the two chickadee specimens using banding measurements. Jo Solem coordinated the project. We thank individuals who have stored specimens in the past (Michele Wright, Connie Bockstie, Mark Wallace and the Solems). We look forward to being able to see some of the fine specimens on display.

FIFTEENTH HOWARD COUNTY MIDWINTER COUNT, FEBRUARY 5, 2000

BY JOANNE K. SOLEM

More than 40 exhausted birders gathered at the Waugh's the evening of February 5, 2000 to tally the results of the Fifteenth Howard County Midwinter Count. Not since 1987 (the second year of the count) had counters faced a combination of crusted deep snow, brisk northwest winds, ice-covered lakes and rivers, and difficulty parking along roads. If there were an Order of Intrepid Birders, all 77 of the day's field birders would have qualified. Because it was impossible to cover most areas in the usual fashion, special attention was paid to roadside habitats, more time was spent in fewer locations, and everyone operated in slow motion husbanding energy. Fortunately, the challenging conditions were not as detrimental to the final total as was feared. The weary birders were exhilarated to learn that they had located 90 species. This tied the third highest total (1996) and was just four behind the all-time high of 94 (1994 and 1997). A superb effort!

The crusted snow averaged 6 to 12 inches, but in open areas drifts of several feet were common. Generally, in most locations the crust was not quite firm enough to hold a person for more than a second or two, but it was thick enough so that each step required an effort. Sue Probst (area 6) and Mark Wallace (area 1) used snowshoes to get around—an excellent idea! Especially in western Howard County, where much birding is always done from the roads, it was difficult or impossible to park or to pull off because of piles of plowed snow. Most ponds were completely frozen, and rivers were largely ice-covered except in rapids areas. There were a few openings on the two reservoirs, the quarry south of Brighton Dam Road was open, and there were holes of varying sizes on the county's three large central lakes. The 21 species of waterfowl found in the limited open water was an excellent number—a major factor in boosting the total. The frozen lakes and ponds proved to be an advantage in counting Canada Geese. The majority of goose numbers used were those tallied on the two reservoirs and on Centennial Lake by birders counting in the early morning before the huge nighttime flocks dispersed to feed. The best duck was a Blue-winged Teal, a species which is seldom present in the Piedmont in winter. It had been tallied on only one previous midwinter count. Although

there were no major flights of northern irruptives this past winter, a few Red-breasted Nuthatches and Purple Finches were welcome additions to the list, as was the Rough-legged Hawk wintering at the landfill.

Putting too much stock in all-time lows this year could be misleading. Pleasantly surprising, however, was the fact that this count set or tied (t) seven new highs: Pied-billed Grebe 7, Gadwall 16 (next highest was 4 in 1997 and 1999), Ruddy Duck 49, Hermit Thrush 30, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 20, Brown Thrasher 3 (t), and Savannah Sparrow 66. For some other species, the total was the second or third highest. Second highs included Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Coot, Fox Sparrow and White-crowned Sparrow; third highest were Mallard, Ring-necked Duck, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, and Field Sparrow.

Despite last year's drought, fruit was plentiful which probably explained good numbers of American Robins, Eastern Bluebirds, Hermit Thrushes, Brown Thrashers, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and perhaps others. The sapsucker high of 20 was particularly intriguing because the second highest total (18) occurred in 1987—the other snowy count! Redheads appeared for the fifth consecutive year after making their first appearance in 1996. The Horned Lark aggregate of 155 was the fourth highest. Since they are most easily seen against snow, that number is understandable, but where were the American Pipits? If their equally cryptic coloration is easier to spot against snow, why were just three located? The Savannah Sparrow high of 66 was substantially above the second highest 38 in 1998. Are our identification skills improving dramatically? Certainly favorable habitat is not increasing. Perhaps more of these sparrows than usual wintered locally as the Triadelphia Christmas Count (TCC) on December 18, 1999 had 120—a new high. One White-crowed Sparrow was reported at a feeder, but 167 others were found by field birders. This was second only to the 248 tallied in 1999 under much more favorable counting conditions.

A count in which birders are limited in their ability to cover areas is bound to produce new lows. Interestingly, a majority of the 12 species could not be linked to any one habitat: Common Merganser 2, American Kestrel 12 (t), Killdeer 2 (t),

Ring-billed Gull 616, Herring Gull 192, Rock Dove 452, Eastern Screech-Owl 1 (t), Great Horned Owl 1, Barred Owl 5 (t), Brown Creeper 6 (t), Golden-crowned Kinglet 10, and European Starling 3577.

Common Mergansers, which had numbered 296 on Triadelphia Reservoir as recently as January 12 (JS), plummeted to a countywide total of two on count day. Apparently, they moved out when the reservoirs froze almost completely. American Kestrels tied the low of 12 set in 1998 continuing their decline of the last four years. Killdeer apparently moved to areas where there was less snow cover. As expected, gulls continued their downward slide since 1997, now that Alpha Ridge landfill handles little trash. Although an all-time low count of Rock Doves and European Starlings could be a cause for rejoicing, it's too soon to be optimistic. Counting conditions were likely a major factor in the low totals. Depressed owl numbers can't be judged solely on the basis of limited owling efforts. One individual who did some owling noted that she did not have success rousing screech-owls in several favorite or historic locations. A week of crusted snow may well have had a negative impact on owl populations judging from an incident Sue Probst and Dave Kubitsky were involved in on count day.

At Belmont, in the eastern part of the county, Sue and Dave found a Barred Owl face down on the snow, weak but still alive. They immediately took it to rehabilitator Judy Holzman (All Creatures Great and Small Wildlife) who began heroic measures to save the emaciated bird. Unfortunately, it died less than 24 hours later. We applaud Sue, Dave, and Judy's efforts. How many other owls suffered a similar fate but were never found?

Three Swamp Sparrows was the second lowest total ever, just one above the two in 1996 and the four in 1987 (the best year for comparison). Carolina Wrens at 128 were at their third lowest point. In contrast, the TCC had a robust 522—an all-time high.

Numbers of Great Blue Herons and Belted Kingfishers were certainly influenced by the high percentage of ice-covered water, but the impact was not as dramatic as might have been expected. Totals for both of these species fell in the mid range. There were no blackbird roosts located, and the only large flock (about

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

3000) was spotted in the far southern part of the county on a course taking them into a neighboring county. Eastern Meadowlark was missed for just the third time in 15 years. House Finch numbers are beginning to recover (814) after their bout with conjunctivitis which dropped the total in 1998 to 636. It remains to be seen whether rising numbers should be looked on as a positive development.

A bird that was missed deserves special mention. The Dickcissel, which had been spotted at the west end of Lake Elkhorn on December 9, 1999 was still being seen in mid-January, so a special effort was mounted to try to locate the bird on count day. Five trips by three different parties searched the area during the day without success. Kudos to Maud, Eva, John and Dennis in area 7 for a valiant attempt!

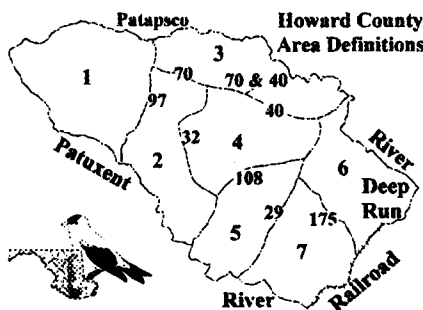
The 25 feeder reports contained a combined total of 46 species. Feeder watchers always prefer snow cover on count day. This year they got their wish, but many still complained that their "usual" birds did not appear. Feeder observers contributed 10 to 20% of the totals of 13 species. For Downy Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Common Grackle, and American Goldfinch, they added 21 to 28% of the total. In the case of Fox Sparrow, they spotted 8 of the 15 reported--53%! Who could claim feeder counters are not valuable?

In past summaries, comparing some numbers from the Triadelphia Christmas Count (T) and the Howard County Midwinter Count (H) have indicated obvious changes in bird populations in a given winter. Such comparisons are useful when counting conditions are roughly comparable. Unfortunately, coverage was not comparable this winter.

The number of observers was not too different with T - 68 and H - 77. Other comparisons show major disparities. Just

one feeder report was logged for T, 25 for H; miles on foot: T - 161.8, H - 122.9; miles by car: T - 392.7, H - 623.8; T - open water, 32 to 50 F., no snow cover; H - 70 to 100% frozen water, 28 to 36 F., 6 to 12 inches or more of crusted snow cover, several foot drifts in open areas. Waterfowl on the TCC were generally present in larger numbers with a few species that H did not have. Howard had a Rough-legged Hawk which T didn't have, and T had woodcock, snipe, Northern Saw-whet Owl and Long-eared Owl which H didn't have. Most surprising was that raptor numbers were very similar as the numbers in the table indicate. A few additional species comparison are shown.

The success of this count can be attributed to the cooperative efforts of many people. The area coordinators are the backbone of the survey: Mark Wallace, Nancy Magnusson, Maureen and Dave Harvey, Mike McClure, Doug Odermatt, Bonnie Ott, and Maud Banks. Chuck Stirrat efficiently and carefully computerizes the results--a major effort for which we are extremely grateful. Mike McClure deserves special thanks for summarizing raptor totals for the Raptor Society. The tally at the end of the day is always much anticipated. We appreciate immensely the gracious hospitality of Martha and Don Waugh who efficiently and cheerfully arrange a meal for the 40+ people who attend. Mary-Jo Betts, who organizes the count, and Jo Solem, who compiles the



results, thank the dozens of Howard County field birders and feeder watchers for a superior effort. We cannot overlook the fact that this count would not be as complete or as successful were it not for the enthusiastic and generous participation of individuals from Baltimore, Carroll, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties--and, this year, from Virginia. Some of these "friends of the Howard Chapter" have faithfully helped for more than a decade. We thank each and every one! Access to land is vital to a successful count. We gratefully acknowledge permission to survey the following parcels: WSSC land surrounding both reservoirs, Alpha Ridge landfill, Mt. Pleasant, Belmont, and many farms and individual parcels. Would you believe that of the 48 field people who participated in the snowy 1987 count, more than one-third (18) of them were still with us trudging through the snow for the 2000 count? Talk about intrepid! We look forward to next year's Sixteenth Howard County Midwinter Count on February 3, 2001. Resolve to help in the field or at a feeder. Help to census the county's wintering birds--share the agony and the ecstasy!

Participants during the 2000 Count were as follows: Area 1: Mark Wallace*, Anne Bradford (F), Lisa Colangelo, Paul Jung, Mike Kerwin, Diane Nagengast (F), Daryl Olson, Jay Sheppard, Kate Tufts, Dave Weaver, Bill and Sue Wendell, Area 2: Nancy Magnusson*, Ward Ebert, David Henderson, Donald Henderson, Bill Kidwell (F), Peter Osenton, Ron and Susan Polniaszek, Paul and Sherry Zucker, Area 3: Dave* and Maureen* Harvey, Ralph Cullison III, Karen Darcy, Darius and Paula Ecker, Lynn Holley, Elliott and Nancy Kirschbaum, Kurt Schwarz, Will and Robin Tress, Roxann Yeager, Area 4: Mike* and Grazina McClure, Andy Aguilera, James Blanchard (F), Bill and Karan Blum, Dennis Coskren, Marge Cullison (F), Dianne Depuy, Georgla Eacker (F), Patsy Kennan (F), Mike Leumas, Jim McGibney, Clyde Robinette, Phillip Smith, Romayne Smith, Chuck Stirrat, Area 5: Doug* and Jeanne Odermatt, John (F) and Martha Blaisdell (F), Ellen (F) and Hal Bryson (F), Marty Chestem, Jeff Friedhoffer, Emmalyn Holdridge, Tina Katsampis, Dennis Luck (F), Rosamond Munro (F), Carol Newman, Sherry Peruzzi (F), Chandler Robbins, Karen Salvini, Jordan Wilkerson, Helen Zeichner, Area 6: Bonnie Ott*, Mary-Jo Betts**, Connie Bockstie (F), Carol Garza, Jane and Ralph Geuder, Jane Heim (F), Dave Kubitsky, Brigitte Lund, Elayne and Jeff Metter, Anita Picco, Suzanne Probst, Dave Wilusz, Area 7: Maud Banks*, Bob Betts, George Chase (F), Jane Coskren, John Maloney, John McKitterick, Sue Neri (F), Richard L. Orr, Bob (F) and Jo Solem**, Linda Southworth (F), Eva Sunell, Don Waugh, Sally Wechsler. Martha Waugh served as hostess for the tally rally.

	T	H		T	H
Sharp-shinned Hawk	23	23	Yellow-rumped Warbler	99	22
Cooper's Hawk	4	9	Eastern Towhee	46	9
Red-shouldered Hawk	48	46	Fox Sparrow	53	15
Red-tailed Hawk	89	93	Chipping Sparrow	3	0
American Kestrel	9	12	Song Sparrow	1345	493
Eastern Bluebird	512	317	Swamp Sparrow	49	3
Hermit Thrush	50	30	Purple Finch	4	15
Gray Catbird	4	0	House Finch	824	814
Brown Thrasher	2	3			

(F) Feeder count (if also counted in field don't show the F)
 * Area Coordinator
 ** County Co-coordinator

CALENDAR OF PROGRAMS AND FIELD TRIPS

Programs are held at Longfellow Elementary School, 5470 Hesperus Dr., Columbia. Meeting is canceled 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.

Thursday, May 11. "When Birds Become Problems," by Bill Bridgeland, Environmental Consultant. Pigeons aren't the only culprits in urban settings.

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 or e-mail at bott@erols.com. Page numbers refer to *Birding Howard County, Maryland* by Joanne K. Solem.

May 2, Tuesday. Weekday Walk at Daniels (2 hours) Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Camels Den Lot. Walk this woodland gravel path along the river to look for warblers. Easy walking. No facilities. Pg. 32 Call Bonnie for info 410-461-3361

May 6, Saturday. Howard County Listers Trip (dawn to dusk) Leaders, Jo Solem and Bonnie Ott. Call to reserve your spot for our BIG DAY to search the county for as many species as possible. This will be a fast paced trip with emphasis on listing as many birds as possible. There will be one short break during mid-day so folks can quit if desired. Bring plenty of nourishment to carry yourself through the day. Bring boots! Call Bonnie for the details 410-461-3361

May 7, Sunday. Lake Elkhorn (3 hours) Leader: Darius Ecker. Meet at Cradlerock lot at 7:00 a.m. Migration will be in full swing and a variety of woodland and water birds possible. Easy walking on paved path. No facilities Pg. 43 Call Darius for info 410-312-9165

May 13, Saturday. May Count. Details are on Page 1 of this newsletter.

May 19-21, Friday-Sunday. MOS 2000 Annual Conference. Details were mailed to you by MOS.

May 25, Thursday. Weekday Walk at Alpha Ridge and Henryton (2 hours) Meet at Alpha Ridge park at 8:30 a.m. Possible Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Buntings and Bluebirds. Facilities available, moderate walking. Call Bonnie for info -410-461-4461.

May 28, Sunday. Rockburn Park (1/2 day) 7:00 a.m. at Park office lot. Leader: Bonnie Ott. Moderate walking through this varied habitat to look for the breeding birds of Howard county. Hooded and Kentucky possible. Facilities available, Pg. 5. Call Bonnie for info 410-461-3361

June 4, Sunday (Grasshopper Sparrow Search) 1/2 day. Leader: Bonnie Ott 7:00 a.m. Rt 100 Park and Ride. We will carpool to wherever there are local sparrows. Moderate to difficult walking, facilities doubtful. Call 410-461-3361 for info.

June 10, Saturday (Evening walk at Wilde Lake) 2 hours. Leader: TBA 7:00 p.m. meet at boat dock. Walk along the lake and woodland path for cool dusk birding. Night-Herons and thrushes likely. Easy walking, no facilities. flashlight recommended. Pg. 47, Call 410-461-3361.

June 25, Sunday (National Zoo) all day. Plan to carpool to the zoo to arrive just past dawn. We will spend the day touring the zoo and view the night heron colony. Club member Lisa Stevens has arranged a special private tour for us of behind the scenes activities in the bird house. This trip is limited to 20 people so call Bonnie to reserve a spot and get details. Call 410-461-3361.

July 15, Saturday (Evening walk at Daniels area of Patapsco) 2 hours. Leader: TBA 7:00 p.m. meet at large lot. Walk the gravel path along the river to listen to dusk sounds. Will try for Screech Owls. Easy walking, no facilities. Pg. 32 Call 410-461-3361.

July 29, Saturday (See What's around trip) 1/2 day. Leader: TBA 7:00 a.m. meet at Rt 100 park and ride. We will carpool to whatever spot in the county has goodies! Plan for heat! Call 410-461-3361.

August 12, Saturday (Odonate Search) 3 hours. Leader: Richard Orr. Meet at 9:00 at Centennial park-west end lot. Easy walking in search of dragonflies and other winged-wonders. Bring binoculars. Pg 5, facilities available Call 410-739-7290.

August 26, Saturday (Evening walk at Gwynn Acres) 2 hours. Leader: TBA Meet at Ram's Horn and Old Columbia at 7:00 p.m. Easy walking along the paved woodland path to listen for thrushes. Barred Owls possible. Bring flashlight, no facilities Pg 24 Call 410-461-3361.

September 3, Sunday (Butterflies through Binoculars) 2 hours, Leader: Dick Smith. Meet at 9:30 at west end of Centennial Park. Easy walking around the wildlife end of the lake to observe our local butterflies. Bring binoculars. Facilities available, Pg 5. Will cancel if raining or overcast 410-997-7439.

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 25, Thursday. Kurt Schwarz, 9045 Dunloggin Ct., Ellicott City, MD 21042, 410-461-1643. This will be a joint meeting of outgoing and incoming board members.

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2000 NEWSLETTER MATERIAL IS DUE JULY 28, 2000. 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 Web, at <http://pages.prodigy.net/eckerd/birding.htm>.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR 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 Paula Ecker at 410-312-9165 or e-mail at Paulae2156@aol.com.

WINTER FIELD TRIP HIGHLIGHTS BY BONNIE OTT

A full calendar of trips over the winter season garnered a variety of interesting sightings. The November Centennial Park walks were well attended by both birds and birders. The most interesting sightings were 5 PURPLE FINCHES feeding on berries, HERMIT THRUSH and YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER. Flyover AMERICAN PIPITS, 7 FOX SPARROWS and lingering COMMON YELLOWTHROAT were also notable.

Leaving the county and heading to Sandy Point we found some goodies, on the water were COMMON LOON, OLDSQUAW and COMMON GOLDENEYE. A RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH delighted the group. At Patuxent NWRC a NORTHERN PINTAIL and AMERICAN TREE SPARROWS were nice finds.

The New Years day walk yielded a nice

variety of waterfowl. GADWALL, GOLDENEYE, HOODED Merganser, CANVASBACK and BUFFLEHEAD were on Centennial. The AMERICAN TREE SPARROW search did find a few of that species along with singing FOX SPARROWS, WHITE-CROWN and FIELD. A cold blustery day at the landfill was worth braving the conditions to see the ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK perched in a tree. HORNED LARKS, SAVANNAH and WHITE CROWNED SPARROWS were scattered throughout the fields. Wilde Lake came through again with a RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH in the pines along the path. Topping it all off were a couple of flyover COMMON SNIPE, a dozen EASTERN MEADOWLARKS, NORTHERN HARRIER hunting low over the fields and AMERICAN KESTRELS at Mount Pleasant.

HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

6007 FLYWHEEL COURT
COLUMBIA, MD 21044

NON-PROFIT ORG
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
COLUMBIA, MD.
PERMIT NO. 452

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

MAY COUNT ANNOUNCED
SMITHSONIAN'S NEIGHBORHOOD NESTWATCH
21ST ANNUAL HOWARD COUNTY LIST
WINTER BIRD RECORDS
POTLUCK THANKS
15TH HOWARD COUNTY MIDWINTER COUNT
PROGRAMS AND FIELD TRIPS

CONSERVATION COLUMN BY BOB SOLEM

Has it been five years already? The legal notice in the newspaper says, "In 1995 The Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks ... developed a 20 year plan for the provision of public recreation and natural resource protection for Howard County." It is now time for a five year update, and the document, "1999 Draft Howard County Comprehensive Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan for the provision of leisure activities in balance with the conservation of resources" is available in the Howard County libraries. What has the Dept. of Rec. & Parks done in those five years that is noteworthy?

"The Department has created the Natural Resource Division whose mission is to manage, protect and enhance the natural resources on all County-owned park lands by using an adaptive management approach. A goal of the Division is to manage these areas in a way that conserves their ecological integrity, while making them available to the public for recreation and educational use." This Division has eight staff positions, and the Department has "upgraded positions to a professional level requiring technical background in Resource Management." In addition, they "added the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area to our inventory, and developed a unique relationship with the MPEA foundation for research and environmental education."

But what about guarding the current park and open spaces properties? "Although these lands are protected from development, the Department has strengthened Recreation and Parks regulations to ensure long term protec-

tion of these areas from other detrimental activities such as encroachment. As the County continues to develop, the enforcement of these regulations is imperative to the protection of natural resources within the County." In English, this means that a number of park employees have enforcement authority and can give citations with fines for infraction of the law.

Land acquisitions are proposed for the period 2000-2010, many of which are for the "Howard County Greenway System." Features of a greenway system "include, but are not limited to: wildlife and woodland corridors, migratory and nesting grounds, steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains, and other hydrologic features, areas of potential endangered plant and wildlife species, as well as areas that may provide archeological resources. These proposed land acquisitions are also included in the Department's twenty year Capital Improvement Program."

- Greenway acquisition - Deep Run, Hammond Branch, Little Patuxent, Middle Patuxent, Patuxent River Basin, Cattail, Cabin Branch, and Long Corner Connector.
- Schooley Mill Park expansion.
- Land for community parks in Elkridge, Jessup, North Laurel, Clarksville/Brighton Dam, Fulton South, Fulton North, Clarksville, Route 108/Central Farm, Harding Road, Lennox, and Route 29/70.

So there is a lot planned. The Recreation and Parks Advisory Board held a public meeting on April 19 for comments, but the Department still is working on the document.

BIRD FIELD CHECKLIST COMPLETED; BUTTERFLY CHECKLIST REVISED

In February 2000, two Howard County Bird Club (HCBC) checklists were completed. *The Field Checklist of the Birds of Howard County, Maryland* was mailed to all current members along with the 1999-2000 Directory in late February. It was compiled by the HCBC Records Committee and was based on 45 or more years of records. It is an update of the checklist compiled in 1993. All species currently accepted as Howard County records are included. Any species being considered by the state or county records committees will be added in future revisions. Besides showing seasonal occurrence and breeding records, field listers will be aided by a column which indicates which species are not recorded annually in the county. The checklist was compiled by Martha Chestem, Jane Coskren, David Holmes and Jo Solem.

An updated version of *The Butterflies of Howard County, Maryland* has been produced by Richard H. Smith who compiled the original attractive and informative brochure in 1993. His successful format has since been copied by several other jurisdictions. The Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks plans to enlarge its butterfly activities and will use this checklist in conjunction with its programs. If readers have a special interest in butterflies, Biologist Brenda Belensky of Rec. and Parks would like to hear from you. She can be contacted at her office at 410-313-4724 Monday through Friday. You can receive a copy of the revised butterfly checklist at any bird club meeting, or send a stamped, self-addressed 4x9 inch envelope to Jo Solem, 10617 Graeoch Rd., Laurel, MD 20723.