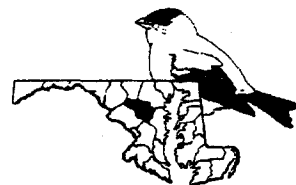




# THE GOLDFINCH



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## WINTER BIRD RECORDS: NOVEMBER 30 TO FEBRUARY 28, 2001 BY JOANNE SOLEM

**B**y late December ponds were frozen while the reservoirs and larger lakes had extensive ice cover. The ice did not melt until late February which meant limited options for waterfowl for several months. For example, on 1/22 a pond near Glenelg and Triadelphia Rds had an 8x8' patch of open water into which were crowded two pairs of Hooded Mergansers, one male Ring-necked Duck, and a pair of Mallards (LC). There were few unexpected wintering birds with Barn Owl and Wilson's Warbler the highlights of the season.

The only Horned Grebe was 12/2 at Centennial Park (CENPK) (HZ). A Double-crested Cormorant 2/3 at Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS) (RPO+) was one of the county's few winter records. Ice-covered water reduced feeding habitat so that 13 Great Blue Herons congregated at Brighton Dam (BRDAM) 12/28 (KS). The nesting Great Blue Herons at Lake Kittamaquundi (LKKTF) and Vantage Point were a little slow to begin breeding activity in 2001, but by the end of February several nests had adults standing on them (MC;HZ). The sidewalk behind the hotel at LKKIT is a good spot from which to watch at least two nests on the east side of the lake.

Snow Geese (both color phases) were seen between 12/1 and 2/3 with a total of seven sightings. The earliest Canada Goose migrants were spotted 2/20 over Lake Elkhorn (LKELK)—a flock of 300 flying high heading west (JC). On 1/27 there were 1200 Canada Geese at CENPK (J&TDC) and on 2/1 there were 2170 at Waterford Farm (WATFD) on Jennings Chapel Rd (MW). Twenty Tundra Swans were resting at Pigtail (PIGTL) on 12/10 (KS). The four spotted at BRDAM 2/25 were spring migrants (KS).

Three Gadwalls were seen 12/8 at Union Chapel Rd pond (KT). The species was not noted again until early February when Gadwalls were seen at CENPK and at Emmaus Rd pond (EMAUS). Early February also brought American Wigeon with a high of 12 on 2/4 at EMAUS (KS). American Black Duck numbers were modest this winter with a peak of 30 on 1/29: 14 at BRDAM and 16 at Brighton Dam quarry (JS,KT). Two Northern Shovelers were reported at CENPK 1/10 (KS). They were noted the following day; then there were no reports until 2/17 when two again appeared at CENPK (BO). Northern Pintails were seen intermittently at several locations from 1/27 CENPK (1 pr. J&TDC) through 2/25 BRDAM (14- KS). The only Green-winged Teal were

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.

December birds: 12/10 PIGTL 11 m (KS) and 12/18 Warfield's Pond Park (WARPP) 1 (KT). Canvasback numbers were low with a seasonal high of 23 at CENPK 1/28 (KS). Red-heads were present at CENPK from the 18' on 12/28 (KS) to 3 on 2/19 (KS) with a high of 24 on both 1/7 (J&TDC) and 1/28 (KS). The area near the boat ramp on the south side of the lake provided an excellent view of the hole in the ice where this species and other waterfowl could be observed. Ring-necked Ducks are usually present all winter and can be seen in good numbers in migration at many county locations. Among the high counts were 177 on 2/3 Howard County Midwinter Count (HCMC), 91 on 2/21 Larriland Farm on Rt. 94 (WE), 66 on 2/1 EMAUS (MW), 60 on 1/10 CENPK (KS), and 50 on 2/12 LKELK (JC). A few Lesser Scaup were noted from 12/1 LKELK (1-JC) to 2/15 EMAUS (1-KT) with a high of 4 on TRIRS 2/3 (NM). Buffleheads were scarce with a high of 8 on 2/22 CENPK (JS,KT). Single Common Goldeneyes were reported in each of the winter months. The latest fall Hooded Mergansers came through in mid-December; by late February they were moving in the other direction with 15 the modest high on 2/21 at CENPK (BO). Common Mergansers were not noted in numbers until February when HCMC turned up 307 on TRIRS (NM;DHe) and 20 on T.Duckett Reservoir (TDCKT) (J&TDC+). On 2/25, 348 were tallied at BRDAM (JS). Ruddy Ducks can usually be found at Wilde Lake (WILLK). There were 5

on 12/10 (ES,MW) and 7 on 2/23 (JS).

Bald Eagles returned to the nest on TRIRS, but there were many other sightings, not all of which can be detailed here: 12/16 Univ. of MD Central Farm (UMDCF) (BO), 1/6 Daniels, PVSP (NM), 1/24 CENPK (NP), 2/11 Font Hill Wetlands Park (MK), and 2/28 I-70/Rt 97 (MJB). One of the most tantalizing reports was from someone who walks a section of the Patapsco River east of Daniels who reported seeing an adult eagle a dozen times in late fall including one carrying a stick on 12/3 (CM). Anyone birding any section of the Patapsco should be alert for eagles nesting in Howard or an adjacent county. Northern Harrier numbers were low this winter with two on 12/21 at UMDCF (NM,JS,KT). The only one reported on HCMC was at Alpha Ridge landfill (RC). A Peregrine Falcon was reported at least four times in the Columbia area in late December and early January (BO+). The last sighting was 1/6 when it appeared in a WILLK yard where the bird stayed on the ground for about five minutes with a Red-bellied Woodpecker in its talons (JFr).

Wild Turkeys are increasingly widespread in the county: 1/29 Mission Rd (1-SAr), 2/3 Hugg-Thomas WMA (12-D&MH), Hipsley Mill Rd (1-JSh,RSu), and 2/26 Whiskey Bottom near I-95 (1-JM). American Coots were present all winter at CENPK and LKELK with a high of 17 on 2/24 at CENPK (KS). Killdeer wintered sparingly with a countywide high of three on HCMC (2-JC; 1-DHe). Single Common Snipe were detected on 12/10 at Brown's Bridge (KS), 12/16 at WATFD (MW), and 2/3 on Underwood Rd (D&MH). The first American Woodcock was reported from the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area 2/6 (JSc). Two were flushed 2/13 near Annapolis Rock Rd (JS,KT) and three were located 2/21 at CENPK (BO).

No unusual gulls were noted. The Ring-billed Gull high was 115 on 1/11 at CENPK (JS); the top Herring Gull number was 12 on 2/19 at BRDAM (KS); and Great Black-

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backed Gulls peaked at a low three on 1/31 (WILLK) (CN).

The Barn Owl found near Annapolis Rock Rd on HCMC (JSh,RSu) was the first reported since 1992. It was heard again on 2/8 (SAR) and 2/18 (NM).

The seven Eastern Phoebes reported on HCMC were the most in the 16 years of the count. On 12/21 Horned Larks were noted in two locations: Underwood Rd (41-NM) and UMDCF (40-NM,JS,KT).

Although Red-breasted Nuthatches wintered, numbers were low. One bird visited a Swansfield, Columbia feeder 12/20-2/28+ (JT); two were at TDCKT 1/10 (JS,KT); and HCMC tallied 10. A Winter Wren was spotted 12/8 at WARPP (KT); HCMC birders found 16; and one appeared intermittently in a Hallmark yard from late January to mid-February (WEb). There was a Gray Catbird at Schooley Mill Park 12/16 (NM); one was found on HCMC (ES,MB); and one was seen at CENPK 2/26 (BO). Two Brown Thrashers were reported on HCMC: one on Ilchester Rd (JL) and one in western HOWCO (JSh,RSu). The Cedar Waxwing high was 112 on 1/28 at Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab where they were feeding on crabapples (WE).

Other than the usual handful of Yellow-rumped Warblers, the most interesting warbler record was a male Wilson's Warbler that frequented an Ilchester Rd yard 12/5/00-1/20/01 (JL+). It was seen by several birders and photographed by RG. It survived some of winter's coldest weather feeding on blueberry suet, peanut butter suet, and natural food found in leaf litter and on the bark of oak trees. It was not seen near the mealworms which were available. The yard and adjoining area contained tangles, food, and excellent cover. The bird was last seen on a day of cold rain which changed to snow at night.

Chipping Sparrows made a surprising showing. One was in Longfellow, Columbia 11/30-12/2 (DOD) and three were spotted 2/28 at CENPK (JC). Quite astonishing were the 10 found on Turf Valley Rd on HCMC (KS,KD, KH). Careful documentation was provided. The 66 Savannah Sparrows on HCMC tied the count high. Troubling was the drop in Field Sparrows on HCMC to 39, a 16 year low.

There were few Purple Finch reports: a female was present at a Thunderhill, Columbia feeder in early January (MJB); a male appeared 12/2 and 12/6 on Duvall Rd (KT).

Thanks to all who submitted sightings. Individuals cited in the summary are identified by initials only: SAR - Stan Arnold, MB - Maud Banks, MJB - Mary-Jo Betts, MC - Martha Chestern, LC - Lisa Colangelo, JC - Jane Coskren, TDC - T. Dennis Coskren, RC - Ralph Cullison III, WE - Wes Earp, WEb - Ward Ebert, JFr - Jeff Friedhoffer, RG - Ralph Geuder, D&MH - Dave & Maureen Harvey, DHe - Donald Henderson, MK - Mike Kerwin, JL - Janet Lydon, NM - Nancy Magnusson, JM - John Maloney, CM - Chuck Mushinsky, CN - Carol Newman, DOD - Doug Odermatt, BO - Bonnie Ott, NP - Norma Petersen, RPo - Ron Polniaszek, KS - Kurt Schwarz, JSc - Jeff Schwierjohann, JSh - Jay Sheppard, JS - Jo Solem, ES - Eva Sunell, RSu - Rick Sussman, KT - Kate Tufts, JT - June Tveekrem, MW - Mark Wallace, MWf - Michele Wright, HZ - Helen Zeichner, HOWCO - Howard County, m-

## SIXTEENTH HOWARD COUNTY MIDWINTER COUNT, FEBRUARY 3, 2001 BY JOANNE SOLEM AND MARY-JO BETTS

What a great turnout for the annual Midwinter Count: 84 field observers and 24 feeder counters (some counted at both). About 45 people turned out for the tally at the Waugh's to enjoy an evening comparing sightings and checking the location of unusual species.

After last year's highly challenging field conditions, counters this year were met with more typical winter weather: no snow cover, overcast skies, temperatures of 22-34° F, 5-15 mph NW winds, and ice-covered ponds with some open areas on large lakes and reservoirs. Interestingly, the 90 species total was exactly the same as in 2000. Does this mean the results were identical? Far from it!

There was a good representation of water birds, although Tundra Swan was missed for only the third time in 16 years and Mute Swan was missed for the first time ever. The pair of Mute Swans that had been moving among Columbia lakes and Vantage Point could not be found on count day. Swans at several county sites are not free-flying birds. If you know where this species has been artificially placed (other than Fulton, Beaverbrook, Turf Valley, and possibly Crest Lawn Cemetery), please pass the information along to the compilers.

Snow cover in 2000 with its attendant parking and walking problems established 12 low counts, some of which were tentatively blamed on limited access, but that has proved too simplistic. Snow usually makes Horned Larks and American Pipits easier to spot. In 2000, both species were located; in 2001 neither was seen despite the efforts of experienced observers who searched diligently. In 2000, the 10 Golden-crowned Kinglets were the fewest ever; this year's 161 was a new high. The results with these three species could be attributed, at least in part, to weather conditions or to observers' ability to reach certain habitats. But how does one explain Killdeer which set an all-time low of two last year—and this year, under much improved conditions, barely beat that with three? European Starling dropped to a new low (3391) for the second year in a row. That raises a nagging question. Are starlings being counted carefully, or they being overlooked because they are abundant and, therefore, boring to tally? It would be good news for native cavity nesters if starling numbers were dropping, but it will take several more years of reduced totals before we can believe this hopeful trend.

A high point of any tally is the addition of a new species. This year it was a Barn Owl seen in far western Howard County by Jay Sheppard and Rick Sussman. There have been no Barn Owls reported in the county

since 1992, so this was an especially nice find. Double-crested Cormorant first appeared on the count in 1999; this year a second was logged. Once rare in the Piedmont at any season, they are now increasing rapidly. Red-heads, after not appearing for the first decade of the count, obliged for the sixth consecutive year. Anyone who visited Centennial Park during the month of January could not have failed to see the flock in the large hole in the ice. Last year's low of 12 American Kestrels continued a four year drop. This year 16 were found which shows a bit of stability, but is hardly a cause for celebration. Iriruptives were scarce with 10 Red-breasted Nuthatches the only northern birds located. Unfortunately, the Rough-legged Hawk, which had become almost a regular on the count, had been seen at the landfill late in the fall but did not winter.

It is always fun to rejoice in the new highs and speculate about causes for the lows. The 11 highs included Wood Duck 16, Bald Eagle 5, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 27, Hairy Woodpecker 47, Eastern Phoebe 7, Tufted Titmouse 779 tied (t), Golden-crowned Kinglet 162, Eastern Bluebird 419, Yellow-rumped Warbler 58, Chipping Sparrow 10, and White-throated Sparrow 1880. Second highs were Common Merganser 327, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 9, Brown Thrasher 2 (t), Eastern Towhee 53, Song Sparrow 628, and White-crowned Sparrow 170. Third highs included Wild Turkey 13, American Coot 18, Carolina Wren 269, Hermit Thrush 19, and Dark-eyed Junco 1618.

The five Bald Eagles are the best judgment the compiler could make on the basis of time and flight direction of birds reported. Originally, nine eagle sightings were listed on field sheets. Two seen together about 10:00 a.m. at Duckett Reservoir were an adult with an immature. These were not reported elsewhere. The breeding pair of adults was present at the nest on Triadelphia Reservoir early a.m. on count day (Nancy Magnusson). She then left for several hours to fulfill another commitment. Meanwhile, John McKitterick had a pair of adults along the Middle Patuxent River near Kindler Rd. at 12:15 p.m.; 10 minutes later Jeff Friedhoffer spotted a pair about a mile upstream on the same river adjacent to the Applied Physics Laboratory as they were heading west toward Triadelphia. The assumption was made that this was the breeding pair. When NM returned to Greenbridge to continue her reservoir watch, she noted the adult pair present near the nest from 2:20 p.m. until 2:35 p.m. at which time they disappeared, reappearing at 3:30 p.m. and staying

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near the nest until 4:00 p.m. at which time she departed. While the eagles were absent from the reservoir in mid-afternoon, Ward Ebert and Ron and Susan Polniaszek watched an adult pair over Hedgerow between 2:50-3:00 p.m. This was undoubtedly the nesting pair which had drifted slightly east of the reservoir. The other eagle sighting was a single adult seen in the northern section of Area 1 between 9 and 10:00 a.m. heading north. Since there have been reports of eagles along the Patapsco River, it seemed possible that this was a bird from that part of the county, although we have no way of being certain. Thanks to observers for noting time and direction with the eagle sightings.

Last year's 20 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers was the highest since the 18 in 1987. It was exceeded by this year's 27. Good spotting! Eastern Phoebes were not present four out of the first five years of the count; since then they have been tallied most years. Seven phoebes this year beat the previous high of five in 1999. A new bluebird high means there was probably a good food supply and a reasonably mild late winter, combined with the continued efforts of numerous bluebird enthusiasts who provide boxes, plantings, and supplemental food. The Chipping Sparrow total is nothing short of astonishing for a species that is found only sparingly in the Piedmont in winter. The write-up was passed along to experienced observers who concurred that bizarre as a flock of 10 might be, the identification appeared to be accurate. One never knows what will be found—which brings many counters back year after year!

The number of Canada Geese originally tabulated has been adjusted to prevent the most obvious double counting. This was done after consultation with area compilers and field observers. In some cases relatively few geese are shown in area totals despite high numbers originally reported. It means that there were no known overnight locations in those areas. Gulls and vultures present some of the same problems. Comments on the field sheets indicating vulture roosts make the compiler's job easier.

Fortunately, there were fewer new lows than highs: Gadwall 1 (t), Common Goldeneye 1, Northern Harrier 1 (t), Common Snipe 1 (t), Herring Gull 69, Barred Owl 2, Field Sparrow 39, Eastern Meadowlark 1, and European Starling 3391. Second lows were Killdeer 3 (t), Great Black-backed Gull 3, and House Finch 713. Mourning Doves at 748 were third low. The Herring Gull total dropped again from last year's low of 134 to 69. The reservoirs are not attracting large numbers and certainly Alpha Ridge landfill totals are only a fraction of what they used to be. Few Barred Owls may have arisen from little owling effort, windy conditions, and few accidental spottings during the day. For the

third time in 16 years no Eastern Screech-Owls were tallied. Field Sparrow numbers took a precipitous drop from 161 last year to 39. Interestingly, in both 1986 and 1992 totals were in the forties. In each case, over the succeeding two or three years, the numbers gradually rose. Since this field species has suffered a recent dramatic decline, it will be worth watching to see whether there is an upward trend again in the wintering population over the next few years. Although 713 House Finches countywide may seem quite sufficient if you feed birds, the total built to a peak of 2272 in 1994 and has been in a fairly stable 700-850 range since, after the conjunctivitis-caused crash to 636 in 1998.

Twenty-four feeder watchers turned in 20 feeder counts totaling 41 species. Without northern visitors there were few surprises. A wintering Brown Thrasher was an excellent bird at Janet Lydon's feeder. It was one of two on the count. Cooper's Hawks visited two feeders and one observer heard a Barred Owl, one of the two reported. Feeder reports contributed 10-50% of totals for the following species: Cooper's Hawk, Mourning Dove, Barred Owl, Downy Woodpecker, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Brown Thrasher, Brown-headed Cowbird, and House Finch. Feeder American Goldfinches were 43% of the county total of 403, influenced by the 80 at Bonnie Ott's six thistle feeders.

Carolina Wrens, which often suffer heavy fatalities by midwinter, held up well this year with 285 on the Triadelphia Christmas Count (December 16) and 269 on the Midwinter Count. Triadelphia tallied 18 Hermit Thrushes, 3 Gray Catbirds and no Brown Thrashers while Howard had 19 thrushes, 1 catbird and 2 thrashers.

Each year, during preparation of this article, it becomes obvious that this count is a major cooperative endeavor. The county coordinators are particularly grateful for the efforts of each area leader: Mark Wallace, Nancy Magnusson, Maureen and Dave Harvey, Mike McClure, Doug Odermatt (with help from Kurt Schwarz), Bonnie Ott, and Maud Banks (with help from Eva Sunell). This year a special thank you to Mike McClure for conducting the tally and adding a unique flavor to the evening while Jo was in the Midwest. Once again Chuck Stirrat deserves kudos for his meticulous and swift computer compilation—a much appreciated task. Martha and Don Waugh's gracious hospitality for the 45+ people who showed up for the tally was an integral part of the day.

Mary-Jo Betts, organizer, and Jo Solem, compiler, thank the dozens of field birders and feeder watchers who spend hours scouring the county for birds, usually under adverse weather conditions. Some of the faithful counters come from Baltimore, Carroll, Montgomery, Prince George's, and Anne

Arundel counties—many have participated for more than a decade!

The success of any count is largely dependent on the number and experience of people counting and their ability to obtain access to a variety of habitats. Many individuals graciously grant permission to survey private land which is much appreciated. We are also grateful for access to WSSC land surrounding both reservoirs, as well as to Alpha Ridge landfill, Mt. Pleasant, and Belmont.

Make a note to reserve February 2, 2002 for the Seventeenth Howard County Midwinter Count. Help to census winter birds either in the field or at your feeder.

Participants during the 2001 Count were as follows: *Area 1: Mark Wallace*, Stan Arnold, Jim and Marilyn Brinkley, Lisa Colangelo, Joan DeCarli, Paul Jung, Lynn P. Moore, Diane Nagengast (F), Daryl Olson, Jay Sheppard, Rick Sussman, Kate Tufts; *Area 2: Nancy Magnusson*, Ward Ebert, Donald D. Henderson, Bill Kidwell (F), Peter Osenton, Ron and Susan Polniaszek, Jay and Silvia Silverman, Tom Strikwerda, Susan Sullivan (F), Paul and Sherry Zucker; *Area 3: Dave and Maureen Harvey*, Ralph Cullison III, Karen Darcy, Kevin Heffernan, Linda and Lynn Holley, Elliott and Nancy Kirschbaum, Kurt Schwarz (also helped compile Area 5), Will and Robin Tress, Deborah Vigliotti (F); *Area 4: Mike McClure*, Andy Aguilera, Bill and Karan Blum, Marge Cullison (F), Dianne Depuy, Georgia Eacker (F), Dave Holyoke, Mike Leumas, Grazina McClure, Jim McGibney, Clyde Robinette, Philip Smith, Romaine Smith, Chuck Stirrat; *Area 5: Doug Odermatt*, Martha and Andrew Blaisdell (F), Ken Board, Hal and Ellen Bryson (F), Martha Chestem, Jeffrey A. Friedhoffer, Dennis Luck (F), Carol Newman, Jeremy Pearse, Sherry Peruzzi, Nanine Rhineland, Chandler Robbins, Craig Sholley, Lisa Stevens, June Tveekrem (F), Michele Wright, Helen Zeichner; *Area 6: Bonnie Ott, Mary-Jo Betts\**, Connie Bockstie (F), Aaron Haines, Jane Heim (F), Emy Holdridge, Dave Kubitsky, Kathleen LaGreca, Brigitte Lund, Janet Lydon (F), S. Diana Mecham, Elayne and Jeff Metter, Emily Miller (F), Richard L. Orr, Suzanne Probst, Hank and Jennifer Stanton; *Area 7: Maud Banks*, Eva Sunell, Dennis and Jane Coskren, Eleanor Kelley, John Maloney, John McKitterick, Sue Neri (F), and Don Waugh. Martha Waugh was the tally hostess and Mike McClure conducted the tally. *Jo Solem\** compiled the results.

Area Coordinators in boldface (F) Feeder Counter. If primarily a field counter but also counted at a feeder, the F is not shown. Field observers in more than one area listed just once.

\* County Coordinators in italics & boldface

Howard County Winter Bird Count - February 3, 2001									Howard County Winter Bird Count - February 3, 2001								
Species / Area No.:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals	Species / Area No.:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals
Pied-billed Grebe							3	3	White-breasted Nuthatch	28	5	28	22	44	36	20	183
Double-crested Cormorant		1						1	Brown Creeper		4		2		3	8	17
Great Blue Heron		2	2		3		1	8	Carolina Wren	30	27	36	33	33	55	55	269
Black Vulture	19	19	27	23	7	27	1	123	Winter Wren	3	2	3		1	1	6	16
Turkey Vulture	48	82	72	78	18	68	9	375	Golden-crowned Kinglet	21	11	16	13	14	58	29	162
Snow Goose	1	1					2	4	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	3	1	1	4				9
Canada Goose	3,107	3,337	92	1,509	60	58	384	8,547	Eastern Bluebird	116	66	37	51	30	89	30	419
Wood Duck	13			3				16	Hermit Thrush	6	2	2	2	2	3	4	19
Gadwall			1					1	American Robin	70	65	6	7	5	31	35	219
American Wigeon	18							18	Gray Catbird							1	1
American Black Duck	12	56	5	24	2	2	2	103	Northern Mockingbird	55	45	45	42	27	57	54	325
Mallard	219	120	22	55	63	46	138	663	Brown Thrasher	1					1		2
Northern Pintail							3	3	European Starling	700	488	583	700	67	363	490	3,391
Canvasback				5	11		1	17	Cedar Waxwing	139	30	13	39	38	54	58	371
Redhead				18				18	Yel.-rump'd (Myrtle) Warbler	9	1	17	11	11	7	2	58
Ring-necked Duck	69	8		36	2		62	177	Eastern Towhee	22	1	2	2	5	17	4	53
Lesser Scaup	3	4						7	American Tree Sparrow	3	1	55	5		3		67
Bufflehead		1		3				4	Chipping Sparrow				10				10
Common Goldeneye								1	Field Sparrow	4	3	10	1	3	13	5	39
Hooded Merganser	4	6		11	1		13	35	Savannah Sparrow			29	37				66
Common Merganser		307					20	327	Fox Sparrow		3		1	3	2	1	10
Red-breasted Merganser		1						1	Song Sparrow	157	94	128	93	15	62	79	628
Ruddy Duck		1		2				3	Swamp Sparrow	11	2	4	1	1	5	2	26
Bald Eagle [ad/im/unk]	1	2					2	5	White-throated Sparrow	457	187	354	170	160	315	237	1,880
Northern Harrier			1					1	White-crowned Sparrow	36	101	31				2	170
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	5	2	1		7	3	21	<i>sparrow species</i>				59			1	60
Cooper's Hawk		2		1	2			5	Dark-eyed Junco	324	145	300	177	134	384	154	1,618
<i>accipiter species</i>				1				1	Northern Cardinal	290	114	121	112	119	192	217	1,165
Red-shouldered Hawk	9	5	8	8	6	11	10	57	Red-winged Blackbird	2	9	18	357	8	529	15	938
Red-tailed Hawk	16	9	20	14	4	11		74	Eastern Meadowlark		1						1
<i>falco species</i>			1				2	3	Common Grackle	6			34	20	14209	150	14,419
American Kestrel	8	3	2		4	1	1	16	Brown-headed Cowbird		3	150	70				223
Wild Turkey	1		12					13	<i>american species</i>				500	220	50	770	
American Coot		3		10			5	18	House Finch	62	61	83	63	103	136	205	713
Killdeer		1					2	3	American Goldfinch	86	23	27	51	31	167	18	403
Common Snipe			1					1	House Sparrow	103	39	107	57	107	118	276	807
Ring-billed Gull	49	35	95	95	117	105	134	630	<b>Area Total Birds:</b>	<b>7,621</b>	<b>6,564</b>	<b>4,142</b>	<b>5,490</b>	<b>1,899</b>	<b>18732</b>	<b>4,054</b>	<b>48,502</b>
Herring Gull		13	47		7		2	69	<b>Area Total Species:</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>90</b>
Great Black-backed Gull					3			3	<b>Area No.:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Totals</b>
<i>gull species</i>	1	4	5	2	2	1	15	<b>Supplemental Data</b>									
Mourning Dove	10	50	49	47		92	34	282	<b>Time Start:</b>	5:30 a	5:35 a	6:50 a	7:00 a	7:00 a	7:15 a	7:00 a	5:30 a
Mourning Dove	140	121	96	74	34	143	140	748	<b>Time Stop:</b>	6:30 p	5:30 p	5:00 p	5:00 p	4:45 p	5:30 p	4:30 p	6:30 p
Barn Owl	1							1	<b>Hours on Foot:</b>	17.0	24.2	26.3	24.1	29.8	33.7	28.2	183.3
Great Horned Owl	7	2						9	<b>Hours by Car:</b>	23.5	7.0	10.0	4.2	.8	4.8	9.3	59.6
Barred Owl	1	1						2	<b>Miles on Foot:</b>	12.5	18.3	23.5	15.1	30.8	36.7	24.0	160.9
Belted Kingfisher	2				1	3	3	9	<b>Miles by Car:</b>	156.0	92.3	60.0	16.0	3.5	48.0	81.0	456.8
Red-bellied Woodpecker	42	23	33	29	46	66	31	270	<b>Hours Feeder Watching:</b>	2.7	3.6	6.5	4.3	17.0	14.7	3.0	51.8
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2	2	8	5	3	1	6	27	<b>Hours Stationary:</b>	3.0	3.0	5		5			7.0
Downy Woodpecker	25	21	34	39	35	77	24	255	<b>Hours "Owling":</b>	1.8	1.0		1				2.9
Hairy Woodpecker	6	3	3	6	20	9	47	97	<b>Miles "Owling":</b>	15.0	10.5						25.5
Northern (Yellow-sh'd) Flick	16	7	12	14	18	14	11	92	<b>Tot. Field Obs. in Area:</b>	12	13	12	15	12	15	8	84
Pileated Woodpecker	4	3	1	1	4	8	2	23	<b>Tot. Field Parties in Area:</b>	7	7	5	4	6	8	5	42
Eastern Phoebe	1		2	2			2	7	<b>Tot. Feederwatchers:</b>	1	3	1	3	9	8	1	25
Blue Jay	101	27	50	75	45	96	60	454	<b>Tot. Feederwatch Parties:</b>	1	3	1	3	6	7	1	22
American Crow	459	601	485	132	50	229	323	2,279	<b>Total Observers in Area:</b>	13	16	13	18	18	18	9	100
Fish Crow	8		11		1	1	2	23	<b>Total Party-Hrs (Reg.):</b>	40.5	31.2	36.3	26.3	30.6	38.5	37.5	242.9
<i>crow species</i>	242	50	566	252	90	117	118	1,436	<b>Total Party-Hrs (Feeder):</b>	2.7	3.6	6.5	4.3	17.0	14.7	3.0	51.8
Carolina Chickadee	112	60	92	91	138	179	148	820	<b>Total Party-Hrs (Stationary):</b>	3.0	3.0	5		5			7.0
Tufted Titmouse	97	38	67	101	136	212	128	779	<b>Total Party-Hrs (Owling):</b>	1.8	1.0		1				2.9
Red-breasted Nuthatch	2		3				5	10	<b>Total Party-Hours:</b>	48.0	38.8	43.3	32.7	48.1	53.2	40.5	304.6
<b>Area Code:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>Area Code:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Totals</b>

THE 22ND ANNUAL HOWARD LIST - A POOR YEAR  
BY JANE H. COSKREN

Last year's list of 226 species was a rebound from the dismal annual lists of 1998 and 1997. In 2000, we were again low, with only 220 species reported. Despite the low species count, there were exciting finds: the County's first Bicknell's Thrush (singing cooperatively); and a Greater White-fronted Goose which was viewed for over two weeks. Other really good finds were a Sandhill Crane, a Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, a Dickcissel, and a White-winged Crossbill. It was nice to see the Lesser Black-backed Gull on the list after a two year absence and the Dunlin was the high point in a dismal shorebird total. We missed Ring-necked Pheasant for the first time in 22 years.

Last year we were bemoaning the dry summer and hoping for rain and wet edges for shorebirds; in 2000 we had so much rain that we had no edges. Again we missed the shorebirds. No landfill meant no unusual gulls.

Let's hope for a really productive 2001. 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 2000 lists: **Mary-Jo Betts, Dennis Coskren, Jane Coskren, Ward Ebert, Jane Heim, Brigitte Lund, Nancy Magnusson, Bonnie Ott, Bob Schaefer, Kurt Schwarz, Jo Solem, and Kate Tufts.** Jo Solem's reports for the seasons captured many sightings not reported on individual lists, as did Paul Zucker's, Chuck Stirrat's, Jo Solem'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 22-year compilation. Others may obtain it by sending a stamped, self-addressed, long envelope to Jane Coskren, 6324 Sandcham Road, Columbia, MD 21045.

**ADDENDUM:** 1991, add Black-necked Stilt for a total of 226 species. 1993, add *Selasphorus* (sp) for a total of 225 species.

BIRD RECORDS WELCOME

County bird records are compiled for each season. A variety of records from many parts of the county help to establish an accurate picture of bird movement. If you keep bird records, you are welcome to submit early and late dates for migrating species as well as behavioral observations. Species that are unusual in the county, pose identification problems, or are wildly outside the expected dates require details. Anything that needs verification by the state records committee will be forwarded to that group along with accompanying documentation. Data may be submitted via e-mail or on a form. For more information, contact Jo Solem 301-725-5037 or odenata@msn.com.

2000 HOWARD COUNTY LIST

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



## BONNIE OTT WOWS THE PAPARAZZI

BY KATE TUFTS

Maryland Public Television's award winning program, *Outdoors Maryland* was in a quandary. They were looking for an articulate person with a small yard and lots of birds to be a part of a segment on the Backyard Wildlife Habitat Movement. The search was on and finally, early last summer, a name surfaced - Howard County's own Bonnie Ott. The trick was finding her.

Those of us in the Howard County Bird Club know to look where there are sparrows, but for MPT it was a little harder. Finally, in August of 2000, contact was made and a paparazzo was at her door with his camera at the ready. This was one story he did not want to miss.

Bonnie was ready for him and willing to cooperate even though it was taking up precious field time. She had scrubbed her feeders and arranged a display of seeds and new feeders that would put Don and Lillian Stokes to shame. She had also warned MPT that late August was not the best time to find birds at backyard feeders. As usual, the maven of all things feathered was correct - the birds did not show up.

Not one to be dissuaded, Bonnie dazzled the audience with good preparation and knowledge of her subject. "I was so nervous. It was horribly nerve racking," she quips. It seems she loosened up after the videographer helped her arrange her hidden microphone. But that's another story.

For that first shooting session, which took hours, Bonnie provided a good tutorial on how to attract birds to a backyard, regardless of the yard's size. For an oppor-

tunity to actually shoot birds, she recommended another interview in February when birds were guaranteed.

MPT took her advice and returned in February on the coldest day of the year. For that session, the wise birder used her kitchen as a blind. Bonnie and the videographer sat inside sipping shade-grown coffee and munching on homemade muffins. Word has it that next time she wants her own trailer.

The birds did come in numbers and many varieties were represented. The prized bluebirds made cameo appearances at the mealworm feeder to the delight of "The Avid Birdwatcher" and her captivated photographer.

The resulting program was top notch. The three to four hours of tape were cut down to about four minutes of quality information. Bonnie succinctly explained how to attract many birds to a backyard regardless of its size. While she described her yard as "the size of a postage stamp" it proved to be an oasis for the birds. The important elements she discussed were food, shelter, water and a place to raise young. Interestingly enough, she showed great restraint and only mentioned the word "sparrow" once.

While the program on the Backyard Wildlife Habitat Movement will have aired twice by the time this newsletter is printed, watch for it again in summer reruns. It is well done, informative and Bonnie did a terrific job.

## 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 whom every year, volunteer their services to make the dinner so enjoyable for the rest of us. Thanks to Marty Chestem, 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, and this year brought back the tradition of the beautiful forsythias as centerpieces on all the tables. Thank you to Dave Holyoke who brought the coffee maker, 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 Chestem, Helen Zeichner, Bonnie Ott, Carol Garza, ~~Emily Holdridge, Dave Holyoke,~~ Kurt Schwarz, the Harveys, Chuck Stirrat, Karen Darcy, the Tufts, Kathleen LaGreca, the Holleys, Sherry Peruzzi, Ken Board, the Coskrens, the Waughs, and the Eckers. A very special thank you to Kathy and Tom Franklin of the Wildlife Authority who once again, generously donated their special "Shade Grown Coffee" along with a birdy mug for our door prize. Other door prize donation thank you's go to Marty, Bonnie and myself. This year, not only was there a record number in attendance, but the dishes created by our many friends were more sensational than I can ever remember. Not to mention the dishes provided us all plenty of seconds and thirds. 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.



## 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 10 "Fall in Manitoba: Polar Bears and More," by Ralph Geuder**

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 [bott@erols.com](mailto:bott@erols.com).

**May 2, Wednesday - Trolley Line Walk (Baltimore Co) Leaders:** Michele Wright and Eva Sunell. Meet at Oella parking lot 8:30 a.m. Walk along the river and wooded hillside looking for warblers and wildflowers. No facilities, moderate walking. Call Bonnie for info 410-461-3361.

**May 5, Saturday - Howard County Listers BIG DAY (all day) Leaders:** Bonnie Ott and Jo Solem. Intensive all day search to list as many birds as possible in Howard County. Will move at a very fast pace. Bring food and drink to eat on the run. Be prepared to carpool and for extended walking. Bring multiple footwear for all conditions. Must commit to the entire day to participate (pre-dawn to dusk). Details will be sent to interested parties. Call Bonnie for info 410-461-3361.

**May 6, Sunday - Lake Elkhorn (7:30 a.m. 1/2 day) Leader:** Darius Ecker. Meet at Cradlerock parking lot. Walk the paved path around the lake. This is the height of migration and many warblers should be found. Baltimore and Orchard Orioles expected. No facilities. Pg. 43. Call Darius for info 410-321-9165.

**May 12, Saturday - May Count.** Details to be announced.

**May 19, Saturday - Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (7:15 a.m. 1/2 day) Leader:** Jeff Schwierjohann. Meet at Board of Education Bldg on Rt 108. Walk through the woodlands and stream valley to learn the history and upcoming plans of the MPEA. Breeding birds should be in good supply with some lingering migrants. Paths may be muddy. No facilities. Call Bonnie for info 410-461-3361.

**May 20, Sunday - Hugg Thomas Wildlife Mgmt. Area Breeding Birds/Cliff Swallows (7:00 a.m. 1/2 day) Leader:** Dave Harvey. Moderate/difficult walking through woodlands and along field edges for breeding warblers and wide variety of woodland birds. Hooded and Kentucky Warblers expected. Short side trip for nesting Cliff Swallows. No facilities. Pg. 41. Call Dave for info 410-795-3117.

**May 26, Saturday - Whip-poor-will Search (7:00 p.m. until dark) Leader:** Bonnie Ott. Meet at Rt 100 park-and-ride to carpool (A MUST). Short walk to stand and listen for Whip-poor-wills in western Howard County. Wear dark clothes and bring flashlight. Call Bonnie for info- 410-461-3361.

**May 27, Sunday - Schooley Mill (7:30 a.m. 1/2 day) Leader:** Daryl Olsen. Meet at upper lot. Moderate walking through woodland trails and fields in search of breeding birds. Indigo buntings, Bluebirds and Louisiana Waterthrushes likely. Paths may be muddy. Facilities available. Pg. 19. Call Daryl for info-301-421-0123.

**August 10-12, Friday-Sunday Annual MOS Conference.** Details will be mailed to you by MOS.

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 24, Thursday, Bonnie Ott, 8664 Manahan Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043, 410-461-3361**

**SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2001 NEWSLETTER MATERIAL IS DUE JULY 27, 2001.** 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](mailto:Paulae2156@aol.com). Also, please visit the club's site on the World Wide Web at <http://www.howardbirds.org>.

### MAY COUNT IS SATURDAY, MAY 12, 2001 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@huapl.edu](mailto:paul.zucker@huapl.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 Stirrat 410-531-2417, (4) Mike**

**McClure 410 531-2780, (5) Doug Odermatt 410-992-1812, (6) Bonnie Ott 410 461-3361, or (7) Jo Solem 301 725-5037.**

**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. 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

# HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

6007 FLYWHEEL COURT  
COLUMBIA, MD 21044

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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BONNIE OTT WOWS THE PAPAZZI  
MAY COUNT ANNOUNCEMENT  
PROGRAMS AND FIELD TRIPS

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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, American Bittern, Little Blue Heron, Cattle Egret, 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, 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, Whip-poor-will, 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.

JOHN C. CLEGG MEMORIAL MEADOW  
BY EILEEN CLEGG

**S**unday, May 20, 7:00 p.m., rain or shine, will be the dedication of the John C. Clegg Memorial Meadow Habitat, part of the Middle Patuxent Environmental Foundation. Parking will be available in the open field on South Wind Circle across from Misty Top Path. Proceed to the grassland area through the gate, where you see a Howard County Park and Rec truck parked. Wear sturdy shoes. If the weather is inclement, there will be a tent. Afterwards, light refreshments will be served at Eileen's house, 6007 Flywheel Ct. Anyone needing more information is welcome to call Eileen at 410-730-4362.

