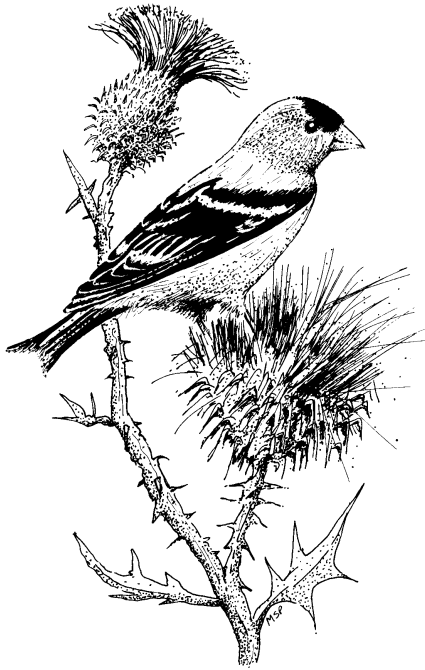


# The Goldfinch

Newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club • A Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society



## WINTER BIRD RECORDS

### DECEMBER 1, 2003 TO FEBRUARY 29, 2004

BY JOANNE SOLEM

#### Inside This Issue

Winter Bird Records . . . . .	1
Member Appreciation . . . . .	3
Potluck Thanks . . . . .	3
19 <sup>th</sup> Annual Midwinter Count . . . . .	4
Midwinter Count Totals . . . . .	5
Second Year Atlas Results . . . . .	6
Programs and Field Trips . . . . .	7
New Meeting Place and Call for Volunteers . . . . .	7
Conservation Column . . . . .	8

**The Goldfinch**, newsletter of the *Howard County Bird Club*, is published five times per year. Copy deadline for the September/October 2004 issue is July 25, 2004.

Dave Holyoke, *Editor*  
Suzanne Probst, *Graphic Artist*  
Joanne Solem, *Proofreader*

Anyone is welcome to contribute articles or ideas which you think will be of interest to other birders. Copy may be mailed, or e-mailed to: Dave Holyoke  
3557 Conchita Drive  
Ellicott City, MD 21042  
david.holyoke@ssa.gov

Please visit the Club's website at [www.howardbirds.org](http://www.howardbirds.org)

Barely five days into December, the county received a substantial snowfall. By mid-month ponds were ice-covered and lakes and reservoirs were freezing. Despite these conditions, a Painted Bunting wandered from the south late that month establishing a new county record. While total winter snowfall was not unusually heavy (and there were periods when there was no snow cover), precipitation generally arrived as snow or freezing rain. By early February, there was an ice crust atop the snow, open water was limited, and most paths and trails were treacherous. Fortunately, later in the month lakes and ponds started to thaw, waterfowl began to move, and spring once again was on the way.

The Great Blue Herons at Vantage Point had five active nests on 2/28 (MC). A Great Egret at Lake Elkhorn 12/25-27 established a new late date for the species (MSt,BM; SN,SLO; JMa). A blue phase Snow Goose appeared at Johns Hopkins APL 1/12 (KH), while a white phase bird settled in at Centennial 1/22 (EH) staying to the end of the period (m.obs). An interesting mix of Snows dropped in there 2/29: 1 white adult, 1 white immature, 3 blue ad., 2 blue im., and 2 intergrades (RR; JMr; S&PPr,CB).

The latest fall Tundra Swans were 4 at Brighton Dam 12/13 (KH,KD). Spring swan movement began the last week of February (WE; JSh; MW). Overall, waterfowl migration was unremarkable. Two Gadwalls on 2/7 at Centennial (ML) and a pair there on 2/29 (RR) were nice. One to 2 Northern Pintails moved between

Wilde Lake (SPe) and Centennial (m.obs.) with a high of 9 on a Roxbury Rd pond 2/7 (MW). Redheads are always choice. Single males were at Centennial 1/11 (EH) and at Lake Elkhorn 2/5 (SN). HCMC 2/7 turned up 3 (LC,KT,RHe,JMcKg,RR; RS,JTv). A Long-tailed Duck at Brighton Dam 12/19 was a treat (EH). Common Goldeneyes were reported intermittently all season from 2 at Centennial 12/3 (SPe,KBo) to 3 there 2/29 (RR; KS). The high was 5 at Lake Elkhorn 1/22 (SAR). Common Mergansers lived up to their name when 750 (a new high) were counted at Brighton Dam on 1/4 (EH). By HCMC, the number at Triadelphia dropped to 39 on the almost ice-bound reservoir (NM). Two female Red-breasted Mergansers were at the dam on 1/11 (NM,JS).

Bald Eagle numbers continued an upward trend (BO+; KS; RC,ES,MWr; KM; NM,JS; WEb,TSt). A Cooper's Hawk, which nested in a Font Hill Dr yard last year, returned 2/29 (GA). An interesting interaction was reported at a US 40 restaurant parking lot on 1/25. An im. Cooper's Hawk attacked a Ring-billed Gull. Both birds battled on the ground with much screaming and flapping of wings. Eventually the gull extricated itself and flew off (GMcC). Both a Merlin (NM) and a Peregrine Falcon (KG) were excellent finds on HCMC.

A pair of Wild Turkeys appeared in a Farside yard, not far from the Middle Patuxent in early December, again on 1/7 (PK). Four were counted on HCMC at Bon Secours in the Patapsco watershed (RC). Fresh

(Continued on page 2.)

WINTER BIRD RECORDS (Continued from page 1.)

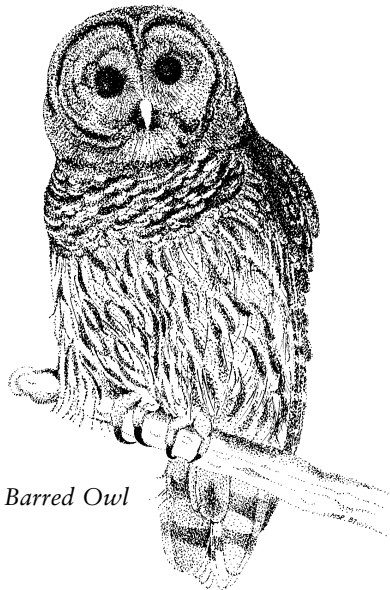
**Ring-necked Pheasant** tracks in the snow at a farm on Roxbury Rd 2/15 were a welcome observation (MW). **Killdeer** were unreported until mid-February when one was seen near Underwood Rd (JW). Although a **Common Snipe** was flushed 1/1 at the U of Md farm (BO+), one wonders if it survived the severe weather later in the winter.

**Great Black-backed Gulls** were present at Alpha Ridge landfill 12/31 (2) and 2/7 (1) (RC). In early February, a **Barred Owl** perched on a Morgan Ct deck railing providing a close look (R&MB). An adult **Red-headed Woodpecker** at Jennings Chapel Rd on HCMC was a good winter find (MW).

A flock of **Horned Larks** along Underwood Rd fluctuated from a low of 10 on 2/7 (D&MH) to 150+ on 2/12 (RC). There were scattered **Red-breasted Nuthatch** sightings: (GA, WE, TE, JTv, MW) including 5 on HCMC (JSh-4; TDC, JS-1). The 2 **Golden-crowned Kinglets** observed in King's Contrivance 2/3 (E&TE) were life birds for Erin—made even more special because it was her 14th birthday!

A **Gray Catbird** was spotted 1/22 at Lake Elkhorn (SAr), and a **Brown Thrasher** visited a feeder on Diversified La 1/18 through the end of the period (KH, KD). A high of five on HCMC was unexpected for this uncommon wintering species. On 1/3 a dozen **Cedar Waxwings**, 30-40 **American Robins**, a **Hermit Thrush**, and a **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** descended on an American holly on Killingworth Way, stripping the tree of fruit in a 1 1/2 hour feeding frenzy (S&PPr). A similar event took place near Lake Elkhorn on 1/16 with 30 waxwings in a fruit-bearing tree (SN).

**American Tree Sparrows** are choice winter feeder birds reported on 12/5 (JTv) & 12/7 (RC). On 12/31 Western Regional Pk had 7, and on 2/1 there were 14 at Alpha Ridge landfill (RC). Normally, **Chipping Sparrows** are extremely uncommon in winter, but not this season. Besides single birds on 12/9 (ES), 1/22 (SAr), and 2/6 (J&RS), 7 were tallied on HCMC. In



Barred Owl

addition, they visited a Wynfield Rd yard in numbers. From 2 on 12/6, the number climbed to 16 on 1/1 and gradually dropped back to 2 by 2/21 (RC). A few **Fox Sparrows** wintered with a maximum of 6 near Lake Elkhorn through most of the period (JW) and 3 on 1/13 at West Friendship (LC). Seventy **Song Sparrows** were present 12/14 on Roxbury Rd, while 125 **White-crowned Sparrows** were counted on HCMC at the same farm (MW). **Dark-eyed Juncos** flocked to Wynfield Rd where 160+ were noted 12/19 and 1/10 (RC). On 12/18 an Allview yard hosted a leucistic junco “white where it should be gray” (EG).

**Lapland Longspurs** are always notable. One was picked out of a flock of Horned Larks on Underwood Rd 1/24 and 2/14 (JW). Another sighting was a lone bird walking along Hardy Rd on HCMC. **Bob Ringler** videotaped the bird from inside his car and triumphantly produced the tape at the tally for all to view. It would be hard to beat that documentation!

An occasional **House Finch** varies from the usual rosy color to yellow or orange. A yellow version visited a Diversified La feeder 1/14 to early February (KH, KD). Although this was not a major invasion year for northern species, a few showed up. **Purple Finches** were reported: 12/14 (JS), 1/25 (JW), 1/26-27 (J&TDC), 1/25-2/1 (FD), 2/21-2/28 (K&DT). The lone **Pine Siskin** was at Timberleigh 2/7 (DN). **Common**

**Redpolls\*** are unusual visitors. One visited an Ilchester Rd feeder 1/21 (Jly), and 1 to 3 frequented feeders at Diversified La 1/22-2/5 (KH, KD). In two other cases, redpolls were ground-feeding on tree seeds: 1/2 Iron Pen Pl (maple, 1-DOd) and 1/22-29 Harness Ct (sweet gum, 8-EH).

Without doubt the best bird of the winter season was a **Painted Bunting\*** which came to the deck of a home east of Bethany La 12/15-12/24 (P&JK). The homeowners were unaware of the rarity of their visitor so the bird had disappeared by the time birders heard about it. Fortunately, a photograph was obtained so that it did not become the species “that might have been.” It is a new county record and unusual enough in Maryland that it must be submitted to the state records committee.

**Observers:** SAr-Stan Arnold, GA-Glenn Austin, KBo-Ken Board, CB-Connie Bockstie, M&RB-Monika & Rod Botsai, MC-Martha Chestem, LC-Lisa Colangelo, JC-Jane Coskren, TDC-T. Dennis Coskren, RC-Ralph Cullison, III, KD-Karen Darcy, FD-Frances Dawson, WE-Wes Earp, WEb-Ward Ebert, EE-Erin Eve, TE-Tracy Eve, EG-Ed Gould, KG-Kevin Graff, D&MH-Dave & Maureen Harvey, KH-Kevin Heffernan, RHe-Robin Hessey, EH-Emy Holdridge, P&JK-Pat & John Kominski, PK-Paul Kojzan, ML-Mike Leumas, SLo-Sue Lorentz, Jly-Janet Lydon, NM-Nancy Magnusson, JMa-John Maloney, KM-Kathy Mariano, JMr-Joel Martin, GMcC-Grazina McClure, JMCKg-Janet McKegg, BM-Barry Miller, DN-Diane Nagengast, SN-Sue Neri, DOd-Doug Odermatt, BO-Bonnie Ott, SPE-Sherry Peruzzi, S&PPr-Sue & Phill Probst, RR-Robert Ringler, KS-Kurt Schwarz, JSh-Jay Sheppard, JS-Jo Solem, RS-Robert Solem, MSt-Michelle Stewart, TSt-Tom Strikwerda, ES-Eva Sunell, DT-Dick Tufts, KT-Kate Tufts, JTv-June Tveekrem, MW-Mark Wallace, JW-Jim Wilkinson, MWr-Michele Wright.

HCMC—Howard County Midwinter Count, Feb. 7

\*photograph posted at [www.howardbirds.org](http://www.howardbirds.org)

## MEMBER APPRECIATION BY KURT SCHWARZ

As my term as president winds down, it occurs to me that I have not come CLOSE to thanking all who actually make this club work. So, I am going to try to list all who have made a contribution to the club over the past two years. Some I have already written about, but many have gone unrecognized. Those who I'd like to thank (in no particular order) are the following:

**George Alderson** for drafting eloquent letters for us on conservation topics.

**Mary-Jo Betts** for being state director, for assorted seasonal counts, and virtually any other task that has reared its head.

**Monica and Rod Botsai** for help at the pot luck.

**Marty Chestem** for the "free table," pot luck, mailings and other things I've overlooked.

**Eileen Clegg** for the seed sale and acres of habitat preservation.

**Karen Darcy** for being state director.

**Paula Ecker** for her five years editing *The Goldfinch*.

**Darius Ecker** for being state director.

**Jeff Friedhoffer** for being vice president and publicity chair.

**Ralph Geuder** for getting us use of the school.

**Jane Geuder** for her excellent programming.

**Kevin Heffernan** for being chapter director and filling in for the state director.

**Emy Holdridge** for serving as our treasurer.

**Dave Holyoke** for taking over *The Goldfinch*.

**Mike McClure** for seasonal counts.

**Tom Miller** for being chapter director and AV guru.

**Bonnie Ott**, field trip chair extraordinaire, and reigning "Sparrow Queen."

**Sue Probst** for the wonderful *Goldfinch* graphic design, and now, *The Maryland Yellowthroat*.

**Ann Marie Raterman**, for the book store.

**Jay Sheppard** for assistance on the atlas.

**Bob Solem**, conservation chair, website wonder, member directory, and a host of other services.

**Jo Solem** for seasonal counts, *Goldfinch* proofreading, Atlas, records, keeping me honest and much I cannot summon up at the moment.

**Chuck Stirrat**; one couldn't ask for a better secretary!

**Kate Tufts**, rejoining us as state director

**Don Waugh** for his advice

And thanks to everyone that has ever led a field trip, provided a snack for the meetings, stuffed an envelope, or made some other contribution I have overlooked. Volunteers make this organization. Thank you all!

## POTLUCK THANKS BY MARY-JO BETTS

Once again, our potluck dinner was a great success. My 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 Chestem**, who produces her personalized birdy place-mats. Thanks also to **Monika and Rod Botsai** who always take care of bringing the sodas and ice. Thank you to **Kurt Schwarz** 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. They include **Monika and Rod Botsai, Marty Chestem, John and Bonnie Ott, Sue Probst, Kurt and Patsy Schwarz, Dave and Maureen Harvey, Chuck Stirrat, Karen Darcy, Kevin Heffernan, Tom Miller, Jeff Friedhoffer, Susan and Ron Polniaszek, Eileen Clegg, Jane and Ralph Geuder, Jan and Don Randle, Dave and Roxy Holyoke, Sue Neri, Kate and Dick Tufts, Don and Martha Waugh and Sherry Zucker**. And two special *thank you's* to **Greg Futral** for joining us and bringing more wonderful slides, and to **Al McClintock** for serenading us with his interesting song. With the great food, fabulous slides, fantastic company and conversation, I look forward to joining all of you next year for another wonderful time.



# NINETEENTH HOWARD COUNTY MIDWINTER COUNT, FEBRUARY 7, 2004

BY JOANNE SOLEM AND MARY-JO BETTS

Of all the counts, Midwinter Count observers are most apt to encounter hazardous driving, parking, and walking conditions. This year, ice on roads and a crust atop snow challenged both drivers and field birders. In the past, a few people have used skis and snowshoes to get around. This year, Carol Newman strapped on cleats to negotiate icy sidewalks around Wilde Lake which proved to be an excellent idea. At the tally, everyone agreed it had been an extremely tiring day, but counters were successful in adding two new species to the 19-year total.

While last year's count produced eight all-time highs, 2004 set or tied 14 new lows. With hours on foot down to 146.3 (from 189.1 last year) and field parties at 37 (down from 44) resulting in an inability to reach many areas, some of the lows may not be accurate measures. A lone American Kestrel accentuated the slide of the last eight years. American Wigeon 5 and Belted Kingfisher 5 were species probably impacted by frozen waters. Ring-billed Gull 363, Herring Gull 61, Great Black-backed Gull 1 (t), and Fish Crow 18 numbers reflect landfill changes. (Surprisingly, American Crow numbers were up from 2003.) That 257 Carolina Chickadees hit an all-time low was hardly surprising to feeder watchers. Although Tufted Titmice numbers also plummeted, that total was just the third lowest in 19 years. Northern Flicker 67 and Northern Mockingbird 185 totals probably reflected our inability to cover areas. Blackbird numbers tend to fluctuate dramatically. After 19 years we hit the all-time low for Brown-headed Cowbirds at 29. If only that were truly a trend. . . . Purple Finch 2 and Pine Siskin 1 tied all-time lows. House Finches at 317 continued a decade-long decline.

Were there numerous highs to balance the lows? Sadly, no. The only new high was 5 Brown Thrashers, hard to explain with the snow, ice, and cold temperatures (only one was a feeder regular). A second-high total

of seven Chipping Sparrows was astonishing for a species that has been spotted on only five previous counts. We missed Tundra Swan which had been seen on 15 counts and Eastern Meadowlark which had appeared on 14. Canada Goose numbers, as always, were an educated guess with the overwhelming majority in the western part of the county.

The good news was that Merlin (N. Magnusson) and Lapland Longspur (R. Ringler) were new to the count, while Peregrine Falcon was seen for just the second time. Documentation for the longspur was the next best thing to having it in hand—a videotape of the bird walking along snow-bordered Hardy Rd. The countywide tally of 88 species was the fourth lowest in the 19 years of the count.

Nineteen feeder watchers at 14 feeders were valuable. They tallied the only Pine Siskin, one of the 5 Brown Thrashers, two of 7 Chipping Sparrows, one of 3 Eastern Screech-Owls (yard), and an assortment of hawks! The flock of 12 American Robins and 5 Cedar Waxwings which descended on a fruit-laden hawthorne tree in the morning stripped the tree by noon (S. Buswell). In similar fashion, 100 waxwings fed on crabapples at Patuxent Woods Business Park (C. & J. Wilkinson).

We regret to announce that co-compiler **Mary-Jo Betts**, who has organized the count so efficiently for five years, is retiring from this position. My gratitude is immense for the care and commitment she brought to the job! In typically conscientious fashion, she found someone else to take the position before resigning. With the 2005 count, we welcome **Emy Holdridge** as co-compiler. **Chuck Stirrat** is essential to the compilation of the count as he patiently enters (and re-enters) numbers and changes in his computer. Area captains, field counters, feeder watchers, and the many friends from other counties are all part of the web which together make the count an annual success.

Many birders come out in all kinds of weather in anticipation of a great party at the end of an exhausting day. As hosts, Martha and Don Waugh graciously and capably enable the rest of us to enjoy a pleasant tally. Our profound thanks!

It is not possible to list all those who provide land permission, but we gratefully acknowledge access to WSSC reservoirs, University of Maryland farm, Howard County Recreation and Parks land, Belmont, Mount Pleasant, Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory campus, and many private parcels.

Set aside **Saturday, February 5, 2005 for the Twentieth Howard County Midwinter Count**. Check [www.howardbirds.org](http://www.howardbirds.org) for a comparison of all Midwinter Counts.

Nineteenth Midwinter Count participants: *Area 1. **Mark Wallace***, Lisa Colangelo, Robin Hessey, Janet McKegg, Diane Nagengast (f), Robert Ringler, Jay Sheppard, Dick Tufts (f), Kate Tufts; *Area 2. **Emy Holdridge***, Ward Ebert, Donald D. Henderson, Nancy Magnusson, Peter Osenton, Tom Strikwerda; *Area 3. **Dave & Maureen Harvey***, Ralph Cullison, III, Karen Darcy, John Finedore, Kevin Graff, Elliott & Nancy Kirschbaum, Will & Robin Tress; *Area 4. **Michael McClure***, Bill & Karan Blum, Marge Cullison (f), Michael Leumas, Grazina McClure, Clyde Robinette, Susan Setterberg, Romayne Smith, Chuck Stirrat; *Area 5. **Kevin Heffernan***, Ellen & Hal Bryson (f), Karen Darcy, John McKitterick (f), Carol Newman, Doug Odermatt, Karla Pearce, Sherry Peruzzi, Ginny Walker, Michele Wright; *Area 6. **Bonnie Ott***, Stan Arnold, Susan Buswell (f), Jane & Ralph Geuder, Dave Kubitsky, Brigitte & Bob Lund, Janet Lydon (f), Elayne & Jeff Metter (f), Suzanne Probst; *Area 7. **Kurt Schwarz***, Susan Booth, T. Dennis Coskren, Erin & Tracy Eve, Barry Miller, Sue Neri, Chandler Robbins, Bob & Jo Solem, Michelle Stewart, Eva Sunell, June Tveekrem, Carol & Jim Wilkinson, Mary Ann Beverly. *Area coordinators are in boldface; (f) is primarily a feeder watcher. Field observers who also counted their feeders are listed as field only; any observer who counted in more than one area is listed once.*

Howard County Winter Bird Count - February 7, 2004								
Species / Area No.:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals
Great Blue Heron		1		1	2	1	1	6
Black Vulture	24	14	55	23	6	23	5	150
Turkey Vulture	47	31	72	25	19	33	33	260
Canada Goose	4,025	2,341	711	850	160	236	230	8,553
Mute Swan							1	1
Wood Duck	3			1				4
Gadwall	2							2
American Wigeon	5			5				
American Black Duck	20	57		26				103
Mallard	37	81	25	157	21	75	146	542
Northern Pintail		9			9			
Canvasback	1	2			4			10
Redhead	2			1				3
Ring-necked Duck	16	12		8	16			79
Bufflehead				3				5
Common Goldeneye	2			2				4
Hooded Merganser	4	9		1	5	2		21
Common Merganser		39	2	4				45
Ruddy Duck				2			2	
Bald Eagle [ad/im/unk]		2			1			3
Northern Harrier			2			1	1	4
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	1	4	2	1	5	4	19
Cooper's Hawk	1	1	3	3	1	1		10
accipiter species				2	3		1	6
Red-shouldered Hawk	5	6	5	4	3	6	8	37
Red-tailed Hawk	10	10	26	10	2	15	8	81
buteo species				1	1		1	3
American Kestrel			1			1		
Merlin		1			1			
Peregrine Falcon			1			1		
Wild Turkey			4			4		
American Coot				2			1	3
Ring-billed Gull	15	52	59	40	51	17	129	363
Herring Gull		3	55			3		61
Great Black-backed Gull			1			1		
gull species	2	6	4	8		6	53	79
Rock Pigeon	10	22	73	241		167	14	527
Mourning Dove	109	33	182	94	30	60	101	609
Eastern Screech-Owl		2			1			3
Great Horned Owl		1			1			2
Barred Owl	3		2					5
Belted Kingfisher	1		1		1		2	5
Red-headed Woodpecker	1			1				
Red-bellied Woodpecker	32	23	35	14	34	29	38	205
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	2	3		2		2	10
Downy Woodpecker	15	13	34	13	17	26	23	141
Hairy Woodpecker	9	1	7	1	5	6		29
Northern Flicker	18	7	8	7	8	4	15	67
Pileated Woodpecker	8	9	7		2	6	1	33
Blue Jay	110	52	89	50	67	66	46	480
American Crow	448	129	626	63	15	53	46	1,380
Fish Crow		3	8		1		6	18
crow species	23	30	378	539	10	35	26	1,041
Horned Lark	14		10					24
Carolina Chickadee	39	13	40	20	47	46	52	257
Tufted Titmouse	20	12	41	17	41	59	61	251
Red-breasted Nuthatch	4			1				5
White-breasted Nuthatch	32	11	23	6	22	25	14	133
Brown Creeper	4	2	2	2	1	6		17
Carolina Wren	27	14	20	18	30	26	47	182
Area Code:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals

Species / Area No.:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals	
Winter Wren		2	1				3	6	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	6	11		7	3	8	14	52	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet						3	1	6	
Eastern Bluebird	35	17	33		1	11	36	2	135
Hermit Thrush						1	1	1	3
American Robin	131	48	35	15	36	33	59	357	
Northern Mockingbird	19	37	39	18	14	35	23	185	
Brown Thrasher			2			1	1	1	5
European Starling	1,000	381	967	395	80	364	408	3,595	
Cedar Waxwing	10		33	7	73	41	210	374	
Yel.-rump'd (Myrtle) Warbler	2	1	1	2		4	4	14	
Eastern Towhee	17	4	5	2	2	10	5	45	
American Tree Sparrow	2	2	33	5		2		44	
Chipping Sparrow		2			2		3	7	
Field Sparrow	11	1	34			7	39	4	96
Savannah Sparrow					3			3	
Fox Sparrow	5	1	4	3		1	3	17	
Song Sparrow	97	49	81	26	18	14	43	328	
Swamp Sparrow		1	2		1			4	
White-throated Sparrow	337	130	389	102	85	174	147	1,364	
White-crowned Sparrow	10	136	13				1	160	
sparrow species			6	1				7	
Dark-eyed Junco	267	101	339	127	85	185	150	1,254	
Lapland Longspur	1			1					
Northern Cardinal	113	131	150	117	84	92	148	835	
Red-winged Blackbird		3	4		1	17	39	64	
Common Grackle		53		48	1	6	2	110	
Brown-headed Cowbird		21	5			3		29	
blackbird species			1	6	15			22	
Purple Finch	2			2					
House Finch	50	7	83	35	28	31	83	317	
Pine Siskin	1							1	
American Goldfinch	52	14	38	34	30	78	30	276	
House Sparrow	75	56	190	47	14	91	308	781	
Area Total Birds:	7,394	4,265	5,113	3,261	1,229	2,310	2,834	26,406	
Area Total Species:	60	61	58	52	53	52	58	88	
Area No.:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals	

Supplemental Data								
Time Start:	7:00 a	6:45 a	7:00 a	8:30 a	7:30 a	5:00 a	7:00 a	5:00 a
Time Stop:	6:30 p	4:40 p	4:30 p	5:00 p	5:00 p	6:00 p	5:30 p	6:30 p
Hours on Foot:	21.0	20.5	24.5	19.8	19.2	17.0	24.3	146.3
Hours by Car:	11.5	7.2	9.5	5.0	7.7	3.6	10.5	55.0
Miles on Foot:	12.0	17.0	19.0	13.0	12.8	15.5	19.5	108.8
Miles by Car:	97.0	122.7	111.0	50.0	14.6	39.0	72.0	506.3
Hours Feeder Watching:	4.0	.0	.0	3.5	3.8	12.3	2.5	26.1
Hours Stationary:	5.0	.0	.0	.0	2.5	.0	.0	7.5
Hours "Owling":	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	1.5	.0	1.5
Miles "Owling":	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.5	.0	.5
Area Code:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals
Tot. Field Obs. in Area:	7	6	10	9	10	9	15	62
Tot. Field Parties in Area:	4	5	6	4	6	5	7	37
Tot. Feederwatchers:	2		2	3	4	5	3	19
Tot. Feederwatch Parties:	2		1	2	3	4	2	14
Total Observers in Area:	9	6	12	12	13	13	16	75
Tot. Field Party-Hrs (Reg):	32.5	27.7	34.0	24.8	26.9	20.6	33.8	200.3
Total Party-Hrs (Feeder):	4.0	.0	.5	3.5	6.8	12.3	2.5	27.6
Tot. Party-Hrs (Station'y):	5.0				2.5			7.5
Total Party-Hrs (Owling):						1.5		1.5
Total Party-Hours:	41.5	27.7	34.5	28.3	36.2	34.4	36.3	236.9
Area Code:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals



Male and female Northern Pintails  
 photographed at The Cove at  
 Wilde Lake on February 8.  
 (Photo taken by Sue Probst.)

# SECOND YEAR ATLAS RESULTS

BY JOANNE SOLEM AND BONNIE OTT

During 2003, Howard County birders continued to cover the county searching for evidence of breeding birds. An unusual amount of precipitation proved challenging, but several special species were found despite adverse weather conditions. Highlights included a Bald Eagle's nest on Duckett Reservoir in Clarksville-SW, Red-headed Woodpeckers videotaped while raising a brood in Damascus-CE, and a thriving Bank Swallow colony utilizing an eroded industrial site in Relay-CW. Savannah Sparrows in Woodbine-CW and Vesper Sparrows in Damascus-SE were not confirmed, but were observed on several occasions. Both Least Bittern and Virginia Rail were present in a Sykesville-SE wetland at least once during safe dates.

By the end of the second year, total species per block ranged from 66 to 101 (Relay-NW), with an average of just over 81 species per block. The

all-important *Confirmed* plus *Probable* percentage was again headed by Clarksville-CW (94%), closely followed by Damascus-CE (93%), and Woodbine-SW (93%). An additional 16 blocks reached 80% or more. What a tremendous effort that represents!

Because the county is being mapped by quarterblocks, it is necessary to locate species in all four quarterblocks. Clarksville-CW (67%), Clarksville-SW (66%), and Savage-CE (61%) exceeded 60%, while another 11 blocks reached 50% or more. Those are numbers to be proud of.

After two years, we continue to see a dramatic increase in Canada Geese, Cooper's Hawks, and Tree Swallows compared with the 1983-87 atlas. Unfortunately, grassland birds continue their decline and Broad-winged Hawks are undetected as breeders despite extensive woodlands where they once nested. Ground or low-nesting warblers are also increasingly

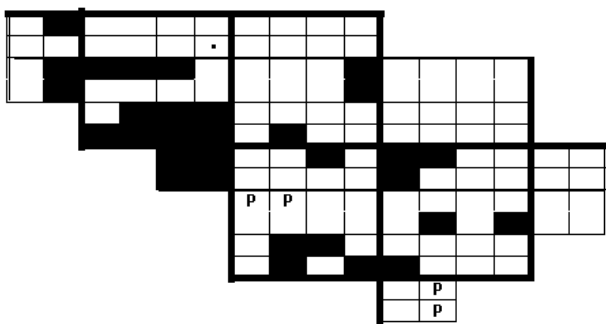
difficult to find breeding successfully because white-tailed deer have destroyed the understory in most of the woodlands in the county.

There have been a few personnel changes. We thank **Ginny Walker** (Clarksville-SW), **Joe Byrnes** (Woodbine-NE), and **Jeff Culler** (Woodbine-NW) for being willing to assume responsibility for a block for the coming year. Dozens of Howard County birders continue to provide data for the county's 34 blocks. Their effort, enthusiasm, and success are a model for the state.

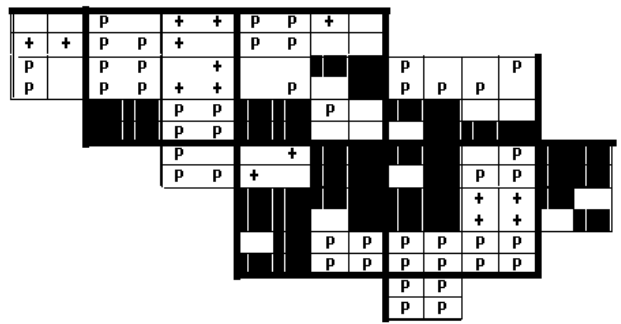
County results can be tracked by visiting the bird club's website at [www.howardbirds.org](http://www.howardbirds.org). Species sightings are welcome even if you do not have an assigned area. Especially let us know the location of breeding vultures, Chimney Swifts, owls, cuckoos, pheasants, turkeys, bobwhites, and whip-poor-wills. Leave a message on Bonnie's tape at 410-461-3361 or e-mail Jo at [odenata@msn.com](mailto:odenata@msn.com).

## Two Species Whose Howard County Presence Varied Widely from the Last Atlas

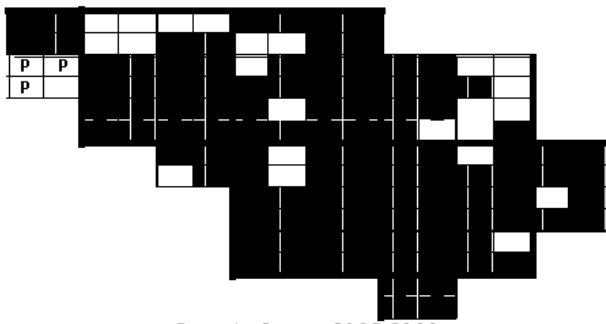
■ Confirmed    P Probable    + Possible    O Observed



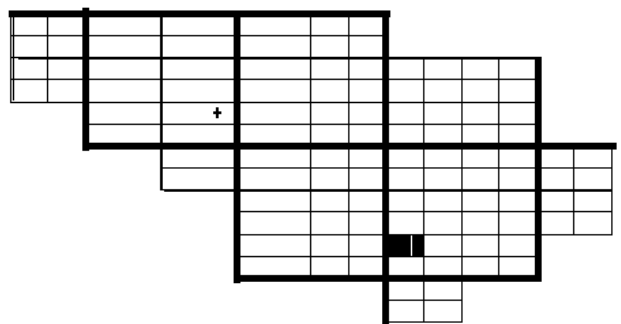
Canada Goose 1983-1987



Northern Bobwhite 1983-1987



Canada Goose 2002-2003



Northern Bobwhite 2002-2003

## CALENDAR OF PROGRAMS AND FIELD TRIPS

**PROGRAMS** are held at **Longfellow Elementary School**, 5470 Hesperus Drive, Columbia. Meeting is cancelled if schools are closed for any reason. Hospitality session and bookstore begin at 7:30 p.m. Meeting/program begins at 8:00 p.m. For further information, call Kurt Schwarz at 410-461-1643.

**Thursday, May 13 "Tex-Mex Raptors (and their Prey); Looking for Birds of Prey in Texas and Mexico, 2003,"** by Ralph Geuder. Ralph is a long time member of the Howard County Bird Club with a strong interest in birds of prey. A spring visit to the Rio Grande Valley and a fall trip to Veracruz, Mexico presented opportunities to watch raptors at work. Ralph could not pass up these trips led by experts. Lots of non-raptors will also be on the agenda.

**FIELD TRIPS** are a great way to improve birding skills, explore new places and meet other birders. Plan to arrive at the meeting area with enough time to be prepared to begin birding at the designated time. Carpooling is encouraged. Come prepared with appropriate footwear and gear (the trip description will offer advice). The leader has the option to cancel due to inclement weather. Directions for trips not on ADC maps may be found on the [howardbirds.org](http://howardbirds.org) website. If you have questions, call or e-mail the trip leader at the number/ address listed in the trip description, or field trip coordinator, **Bonnie Ott**, 410-461-3361 or [bonnieott@verizon.net](mailto:bonnieott@verizon.net)

To help make trips successful please stay behind the leader, keep talking to a minimum and stay with the group. Don't hesitate to ask questions or alert the leader to something you've spotted. Howard Bird Club members will be given priority on trips that are limited by number of participants. No pets.

### MAY COUNT

**May 8, Saturday**

*(See March-April issue.)*

### BIG DAY

**May 15, Saturday (dawn to dusk)**

Sign up for an intense all day trip to list as many species in the county as possible. Plan to walk 5-10 miles at a good pace. A 30-minute break for lunch is planned. Footwear for all conditions will be needed. *Call Bonnie to register (410-461-3361)*  
*Limit of 12 people, must commit to the entire day.*

### WEEKDAY WALK "FLYING CREATURES"

**May 20, Thursday. 2 hours. 8:00 a.m.**

*Meet at Font Hill Wetlands Park off Font Hill Drive. Leader: Jo Solem (301-725-5037)*  
Easy walking on paved paths to search for dragonflies, butterflies and birds.  
No facilities.

### MOS CONVENTION

**Chestertown, Maryland**

**June 11-12-13**

### DRAGONFLIES FOR BEGINNERS

**July 24, Saturday. 2 Hours. 9:30 a.m.**

*Meet at park sign off Font Hill Drive*  
Bring your binoculars to learn the basics of odonate identification. Very easy walking on paved paths around the ponds of this little wetland park.  
*Leaders—Bob and Jo Solem 301-725-5037.*  
No facilities.

### DRAGONFLIES WITH RICHARD ORR

**August 15, Sunday. 2-3 hours. 9:00 a.m.**

*Meet at west end parking lot off Centennial Lane.*  
Easy walking on paved paths to search for odonates. Binoculars useful.  
*Leader—Richard Orr 410-730-7290.*  
Facilities available.

## NEW MEETING PLACE AND CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

BY KURT SCHWARZ

**B**eginning with the September 2004 meeting, we will be meeting at a new place; the **Howard County Recreation and Parks Headquarters**, located at 7120 Oakland Mills Road, just east of Snowden River Parkway. The Recreation and Parks Headquarters building has several advantages. It is much easier to find, there will be no parking competition with basketball games, the chairs are padded and they heat the place after 3 p.m. In addition, our use of the facility will be cost-free.

Alas, there is no free lunch. To get free use of the facility, we will be required to run three classes a year for Recreation and Parks. A fee will be charged for these classes, which will reimburse Recreation and Parks for the costs of providing the meeting space. To that end, we need volunteers willing to lead birding programs. These programs should be for 10–20 people and at least one-and-a-half hours duration. Programs will be published in the Recreation and Parks brochure. If you would like to lead a program, and save the club precious funds, call me at 410-461-1643 or email me at [krschwa1@comcast.net](mailto:krschwa1@comcast.net).

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

**May 27, Thursday**

Jeff Friedhoffer, 10042 Mending Wall, Columbia, 21044 • 410-997-5366





**HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB**  
*Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society*  
6007 Flywheel Court  
Columbia, MD 21044  
ADDRESS SERVICE SUGGESTED

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

**Inside This Issue:**

Winter Bird Records	Second Year Atlas Results
Member Appreciation	Programs & Field Trips
Potluck Thanks	New Meeting Place and
Midwinter Count 2004	Call for Volunteers
Midwinter Count Totals	Conservation Column

## CONSERVATION COLUMN: "INVASIVE PLANTS SERIES" BY BOB SOLEM

An excellent source book, from which this column is taken, is *Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas* (J. Swearingen, K. Reschelittoff, B. Slattery, and S. Zwicker. 2002. National Park Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service).

### Japanese Stilt Grass

(*Microstegium vimineum*) Origin: Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia and India. Japanese stilt grass was first introduced into the United States in Tennessee around 1919 and likely escaped as a result of its use as a packing material for porcelain. Japanese stilt grass is currently established in 16 eastern states, from New York to Florida. It occurs on stream banks, river bluffs, floodplains, emergent and forested wetlands, moist woodlands, early successional fields, uplands, thickets, roadside ditches, gas and power-line corridors, lawns and gardens. Japanese stilt grass threatens native understory vegetation in full sun to deep shade. Stilt grass readily invades disturbed shaded areas, like floodplains, that are prone to natural scouring, and

areas subject to mowing, tilling and other soil-disturbing activities including white-tailed deer traffic. It spreads opportunistically following disturbance to form dense patches, displacing native wetland and forest vegetation as the patch expands. Japanese stilt grass appears to be associated with moist, acidic to neutral soils that are high in nitrogen.

*Description:* An annual in the grass family (*Poaceae*) resembling a small, delicate bamboo; mature plants are two feet high, but we usually see large patches no more than one foot high. Leaves are pale green, lance-shaped, about 3 inches in length, with a distinctive silvery stripe of reflective hairs down the middle of the upper leaf surface. The plant flowers in late summer and early fall. Fruits are produced shortly after flowering and then the entire plant dies. Japanese stilt grass spreads vegetatively by rooting at joints along the stem (a new plant can emerge from each node) and by seed. A single plant can produce 100 to 1,000 seeds that remain viable in the soil for

at least three years, ensuring its persistence. Stilt grass germinates readily following soil disturbance. Although dispersal is not fully understood, seeds are probably carried in surface runoff, streams, floodwaters, hay and soil. Seeds are also dispersed on the feet of animals and people.

*Prevention and Control:* Because it is similar in appearance to several native grasses, it is important to know how to recognize and differentiate stilt grass from look-alikes. The silver stripe of hairs on the midrib of stilt grass is a handy diagnostic character. Early attention to new infestations should be a priority. *Because it is shallow-rooted, stilt grass may be pulled by hand at any time.* Flowering plants can be cut back using a mower or weed whip prior to seed production. For extensive infestations, contact and systemic herbicides may be more practical and effective. Pre-emergent herbicides have also been successful. On bird club field trips, ask to have someone point out the plant; it has spread widely.