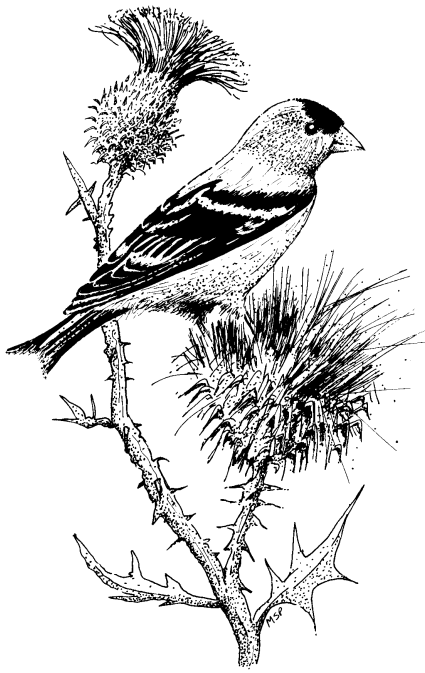


The Goldfinch

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



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The Goldfinch, newsletter of the *Howard County Bird Club*, is published five times per year. Copy deadline for the November/December 2005 issue is September 25, 2005.

Dave Holyoke, *Editor*
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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
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Please visit the Club's website at www.howardbirds.org

SPRING BIRD RECORDS MARCH 1 TO MAY 31, 2005

BY JOANNE SOLEM

Despite another cool, wet spring, a few species arrived unusually early; many more were delayed. As in 2004, warbler migration was poor, but some special species were reported. Highlights were Red-necked Grebe, Snowy Egret, Long-tailed Duck, Mississippi Kite, Rough-legged Hawk, Wild Turkey, Virginia Rail, Sora, Short-billed Dowitcher, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Bicknell's Thrush, and Orange-crowned Warbler.

A Red-necked Grebe 3/5 at Triadelphia (EH,JS) was the third earliest. The one at Centennial 4/1 (JS,JTv) stayed until 4/14 (GA). Common Loons were few. The Horned Grebe high was 27 on 3/29 at Triadelphia (HH). Double-crested Cormorants peaked at 40 at the same reservoir 4/23 (EH,JS).

Great Blue Heron nesting in the county is increasing. In addition to four active nests with seven young at Lake Kittamaquundi and a minimum of 16 nests at nearby Vantage Point (MC), for at least the second year there was a group of five occupied nests north of Carroll Mill Rd at the Middle Patuxent River (EH,JS;M&GMcC), plus a colony with 14 active nests along the Patuxent River north of Haviland Mill Rd (JSh).

The earliest-ever Great Egret was at Meadowbrook 3/16 (BO). A Snowy Egret put in a record early appearance 4/16 at Lake Elkhorn (MSt). The first Black-crowned Night-Heron of the year arrived 4/6 at Lake Kittamaquundi (MJa), with a high of three at Wilde Lake 4/17 (CN). A first year

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron showed up in an Allview yard 5/25 where it ate worms from a mulched area for about a week (MZ *vide* ES).

Tundra Swan migration was detected from 3/10 to 3/19. The peak was 3/12 when at least 800 in multiple flocks were seen over Triadelphia (EH). Nineteen American Wigeon rested on Triadelphia 4/23 (EH,JS). An American Black Duck female on the Patapsco at Daniels 5/14 was late (RBe,CSt). She was herding nine ducklings which was even more notable, for county nesting records are extremely unusual. Whether she mated with another black duck or just as possibly with a Mallard makes this a challenging sighting. Blue-winged Teal appeared briefly at Centennial with a high of nine on 3/24 (JS). Three males and one female Northern Pintail paused there 3/6 (KS) to 3/11 (BO). The quarry pond near Springdale held four Redheads 3/5 (JS); one stayed until 3/12, at which time there were also two Greater Scaup and six Lessers (SAr). As usual, Ring-necked Ducks were spotted on many lakes and ponds with 100+ on 3/11 at the Union Chapel Rd pond (SAr). A male, which had been present at Larriland since at least 6/27/04, was still present at the end of the season (KT). The lone Long-tailed Duck report was three on 3/27 at Triadelphia (HH). Spring Common Merganser numbers dropped from 1,204 on 3/8 at Triadelphia (EH,JS) to two over Belmont 5/14 (DK,SPr). Two Red-breasted Merganser males were present at Centennial 3/11 (BO;KS-1) to 3/27 (BO-3 f.). The high was 19 on 3/29 at Triadelphia (HH).

(Spring Bird Records continues on page 2.)

An **Osprey** at Triadelphia on 3/12 tied the third earliest arrival date (**SAR+**). A report of two late afternoon **Mississippi Kites** on 5/18 at Rt. 144 and Rt. 32 came from **D&MH**. This would be the county's fifth record. **Bald Eagles** were reported from half a dozen locations with five at Triadelphia 3/18 (**RSu**) and four countywide 5/14. A late **Sharp-shinned Hawk** was spotted at Centennial 5/22 (**JTv**). A **Cooper's Hawk** was nest building along Font Hill Dr 4/11 (**GA**). Two **Broad-winged Hawks** over Manahan Dr 4/7 were early (**BO**). A light phase **Rough-legged Hawk** cruised over Brighton Dam on 3/19 (**RB**). An early **Peregrine Falcon** visited a Wilde Lake backyard briefly 3/15 (**CN**).

Wild Turkeys continued their spread across the county. A hen spent most of March in a tiny stream valley behind Branch Woods Ct. She disappeared for all of April, reappeared 5/4 and was last seen 5/18 (**SB**). A tom displaying along Rt 40 near Bethany La on 4/9 astonished **KM** as she sat waiting for a traffic light to change. The bird seen west of Daniels 4/8 was in a more expected location (**SHn**). A hen on a nest at Hugg-Thomas Wildlife Management Area was reported to **D&MH** 5/14 by the caretaker. A tom gobbled repeatedly at Rockburn 5/7 (**DOI,JS**). **Virginia Rails** were detected at two locations. The two birds at Hanover Rd 4/25 tied the county early date. They stayed well into May, but it was not possible to confirm breeding (**JMa**). One was heard at UMDCF 4/27 to at least 5/7 (**BO+**), but there was no evidence of breeding. The only **Sora** report was at UMDCF 5/4 (**BO,EH,JS**). Two **American Coots** were present 3/1 to 4/1 at Lake Elkhorn (**SN**). One could be distinguished by some partially white feathers.

Shorebird migration was generally late and light. With high water levels at the reservoirs, UMDCF and a pond at Western Regional Park proved the most productive. A **Short-billed Dowitcher** discovered 5/11 at Western was the first well-documented spring record (**B&GHi**). The bird stayed until 5/19 (**RR**). That location was attractive

to half a dozen other shorebird species including the season's only **Pectoral Sandpiper** 5/15 (**CSt,JCu**) and 48 **Least Sandpipers** 5/13 (**KS**). The UMDCF hosted 10 shorebird species with a high of 70 **Least Sandpipers** 5/11 (**BO,EH,RR,JS**) and 24 **Wilson's Snipe** 4/27 (**BO,EH**). **American Woodcock** peaked with 12 in courtship flight on 3/11 at Annapolis Rock Rd (**SAr**). Two were still displaying there 5/10 (**EH,JS**).

Bonaparte's Gulls were relatively few this year. The high was a flock of 20+ at Centennial 4/2 (**JTv**). The first four showed up at Lake Kittamaquundi 3/22 (**MJa**) and the last one was seen 4/7 at Wilde Lake (**BHi**). Those two lakes also played host to a **Great Black-backed Gull** between 3/12 (**SAR+**) and 4/8 (**B&GHi**). Smaller than usual numbers of **Caspian Terns** wandered through for a month, from 4/4 to 5/5. Eight was the unremarkable county high at Lake Kittamaquundi 4/6 (**SPr**).

Few **Black-billed Cuckoos** were detected. The earliest one was 5/3 at Rockburn (**JMa,DJo**); one was present at Duvall Rd. 5/10 (**KT**); and May Count turned up five (**KT,LC; W&SE; MW**).

Two **Great Horned Owl** nests with young were followed with great interest during April. One was south of Ellicott City (**CB**); the other was at Alpha Ridge landfill (**RC**).

A **Chimney Swift** over Manahan Dr 4/1 established a record early date (**BO**). **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** arrived in the county on 4/23: Talbot's Landing (**R&JG**), Clarksville (**BKd**), Hallmark (**WEb**), and Manahan Dr (**Jot**). The only **Red-headed Woodpecker** was one at UMDCF 5/4 (**BO,EH,JS**). Unlike some other areas of the country, there were no **Ivory-billed Woodpeckers** reported here following the astounding announcement that a species considered extinct had been observed in the wild in Arkansas.

A **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** was noted on May Count near the Middle Patuxent in southern Howard Co

(**JMcK**). The same day two **Least Flycatchers** were reported (**B&GHi; JMcK**). **Olive-sided Flycatchers** were spotted during three weeks in May: 5/8 (**D&LS**), 5/22 (**JW**), 5/28 (**RC**); 5/29 (**BO,EH**), and 5/30 (**BHu**). The last date established a new departure record.

A **White-eyed Vireo** on 4/12 at Centennial was a record early arrival (**GA**). Seven or eight **Rough-winged Swallows** were observed 5/28 in Patapsco Valley State Park near River Rd nesting in abandoned semi-trailers (**KS**). Two **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were at Swansfield 3/16 (**JTv**), one appeared at Manahan 4/27 (**BO**), and the last was noted on 5/12 along the Patuxent Branch Trail (**JS**). A **Brown Creeper** lingered until 5/14 (**MW**). The final **Winter Wren** report was 4/25 on Forsythe Rd (**DH**). Three **Marsh Wrens** were at UMDCF 5/4 (**BO,EH,JS**). The **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** on 5/14 tied the latest departure date (**B&GHi**).

Gray-cheeked Thrushes were present in a two week period from three on May Count (**WEb,R&SPo; JMcK; CSt,RBe**) to one on 5/25 at the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (**HH,BHu**). The latter two observers reported a likely **Bicknell's Thrush** (both heard and seen) on the same date at the same location. The two **Swainson's Thrushes** on 5/27 in different locations along the Middle Patuxent were the last reported (**KS; JS**). An early **Gray Catbird** showed up at Fore Bay Pond 4/10 (**SN**). The next report was 4/27 at Wilde Lake (**CN**). The 294 **American Pipits** at UMDCF 3/25 were a new high (**RC,EH,JS**).

For the second consecutive spring, warbler migration was poor. Many species were slow to arrive and numbers were generally low, but, as always, there were exceptions. The six **Chestnut-sided Warblers** at the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area set a new departure date of 5/25 (**HH,BHu**). A **Cape May Warbler** 5/9 at Lakeside Dr (**RPo**) and one at Wynfield on 5/15 (**RC**) were the only spring reports. "Hundreds" of **Yellow-rumped Warblers** at Lake Elkhorn

SPRING BIRD RECORDS (Continued from page 2.)

5/4 may not reflect an accurate count, but it does indicate that this lake continues to be a favored county location for this species in migration (MSt). An **Orange-crowned Warbler** 4/16 at Mt. Pleasant was the second earliest county record (BO,RC,EH,JS). A **Pine Warbler**, which had been visiting a feeder west of Ellicott City since 12/19/04, was last observed 3/7/05 (KH,KD). A western **Palm Warbler** on 5/11 at UMDCF was a new late date (BO,EH,RR,JS). **Prothonotary Warblers** were reported at Race Rd 5/6 (RR), Marriottsville Rd 5/7 (DOI,JS), and the Patuxent Branch Trail 5/9 (JS). The **Ovenbird** on 4/8 in Swansfield was one of the few warbler species arriving ahead of schedule (JTv). Another early arrival was a **Canada Warbler** on 4/25 at Wilde Lake (CN). A **Mourning Warbler** was noted 5/25 along Brush Run in east Columbia (J&CW). The most dramatic fallout of migrants occurred during the afternoon of 5/9 at a home on Lakeside Dr. For an account of this memorable experience, see **Ron Polniaszek's** article on page 7 of this newsletter.

Vesper Sparrows were found 4/9 at Mt. Pleasant (RC), 4/23 at Alpha Ridge landfill (RC), and 5/14 in western Howard Co (M&JBr). **Savannah Sparrow** numbers peaked at a modest

40 on 4/6 at UMDCF (BO,EH,JS). Half a dozen **Fox Sparrows** at Font Hill Park 3/7 was the high (JTv). **Lincoln's Sparrows** were reported from one at Middle Patuxent Environmental Area 4/21 (BO) to two at Alpha Ridge landfill 5/14 (RC). **White-throated Sparrows** seemed loath to leave with one still at Hallmark 5/26 (Web) and one at Talbots Landing 5/28 which set a new late date (R&JG).

A first year male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** 4/9 on Jennings Chapel Rd was the second earliest record (MW,JHo). The largest flock of **Bobolinks** this season was 120 at UMDCF 5/4 (BO,EH,JS). **Eastern Meadowlarks** were reported from the landfill (4-RC), UMDCF (10-RC,EH,JS), Schooley Mill Park (1-SE), and Centennial (1-BO). **Rusty Blackbirds** were few with two at Gwynn Acres Path 4/5 (JS), one at Race Rd 5/6 (RR), and one at Jennings Chapel Rd 5/14 (MW). A **Baltimore Oriole** on 3/4 in western Howard Co may have wintered (HH). Another early Baltimore, at Lake Elkhorn on 4/10, was in an odd plumage somewhere between a first fall male and a drab first year female (J&CW). **Purple Finches** were seen in small numbers from 3/6 (R&JG) to 5/19 (BO). Others reporting them were SB, DH, EMe, JS, KS, and KT.

Observers: SAr—Stan Arnold, GA—Glenn Austin, RBe—Randy Beaton, CB—Connie Bockstie, J&MBr—Jim & Marilyn Brinkley, RB—Rod Burley, SB—Sue Buswell, MC—Martha Chestem, LC—Lisa Colangelo, JCu—Jeff Culler, RC—Ralph Cullison III, KD—Karen Darcy, WE—Wes Earp, SE—Susan Earp, Web—Ward Ebert, J&RG—Jane & Ralph Geuder, DH—Dave Harvey, MH—Maureen Harvey, KH—Kevin Heffernan, BHi—Bill Hill, GHi—Gayle Hill, SHn—Steven Hein, HH—Hans Holbrook, EH—Emy Holdridge, JHo—Judy Holzman, BHu—Bill Hubick, MJa—Marcus James, DJo—Diane Johns, BKd—Bill Kidwell, DK—Dave Kubitsky, JMa—John Maloney, KM—Kathy Mariano, M&GMcC—Mike & Grazina McClure, JMck—John McKitterick, EMe—Elayne Metter, SN—Sue Neri, CN—Carol Newman, DOI—Daryl Olson, BO—Bonnie Ott, Jot—John Ott, RPo—Ron Polniaszek, SPo—Susan Polniaszek, SPr—Suzanne Probst, RR—Robert Ringler, KS—Kurt Schwarz, JSh—Jay Sheppard, JS—Jo Solem, D&LS—Dan & Linda Southworth, MSt—Michelle Stewart, CSt—Chuck Stirrat, ES—Eva Sunell, RSu—Rick Sussman, KT—Kate Tufts, JTv—June Tveekrem, MW—Mark Wallace, CW—Carol Wilkinson, JW—Jim Wilkinson, and MZ—Mary Ziemann

UMDCF—*University of Maryland Central Farm*
May Count—*May 14, 2005*

Banded Red-tailed Hawk By Jo Solem

On March 4, 2005, Phil Norman, Howard County Recreation & Parks, found a banded, dead adult Red-tailed Hawk at Alpha Ridge Landfill. The Bird Banding Laboratory provided the information that the hawk had been banded at Stillwater, New Jersey, on November 8, 1995 as a "young of the year" bird of unknown sex. Phil surmised that the decapitated bird had been predated by a Great Horned Owl. When he made that judgment he didn't know that Ralph Cullison had located a nest of Great Horned Owls on the landfill that eventually contained two young.

2005-2006 HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB OFFICERS

President:	Jeff Friedhoffer	410-997-5366
Vice-president:	Kevin Heffernan	410-418-8731
Secretary:	Chuck Stirrat	410-531-2417
Treasurer:	Emy Holdridge	410-964-0196
State Directors:	Mary-Jo Betts	301-596-5859
	Karen Darcy	410-552-9342
	Kate Tufts	410-489-7052
Chapter Directors:	Tracy Eve	410-381-3349
	Jeff Culler	410-465-9006
	I. Bill Woodpecker	800-IM-BACK

TWELFTH ANNUAL FALL COUNT SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2005

BY MIKE MCCLURE

The Howard County Bird Club's annual Fall Count, scheduled to be held each year on the third Saturday of September, will be on September 17. **Mike "Ivory Spotter" McClure** (410-531-2780) and **Chuck "Swamp Hunter" Stirrat** (410-531-2417) are the county co-coordinators. Prior years have set an average of 124 species of birds identified on the count. Spend the day birding with us and help raise the average! Birders of all skill levels are encouraged to participate. Ask to be put with an experienced individual if you do not wish to have your own territory. The county is divided into seven areas (shown below) which are used for all annual counts. A fall season field sheet for Howard County is included in this newsletter. Species that require a write-up include those identified with a double asterisk (**), as well as any write-ins. Others that may require a write-up or oral amplification (*), as

well as those that are early or late dates (@), are indicated.

The following area coordinators have been named:

Area 1	Mark Wallace	301-725-6370
Area 2	Jeff Culler	410-465-9006
Area 3	Karen Darcy & Kevin Heffernan	410-418-8731
Area 4	Bill & Karan Blum	410-489-9197
Area 5	Kurt Schwarz	410-461-1643
Area 6	Bonnie Ott	410-461-3361
Area 7	Michelle Stewart	410-309-6191

You may call an area or county coordinator to volunteer, or check at the September meeting. **Martha and Don Waugh** will host the tally rally at 9522 Angelina Circle, Columbia, MD, 410 381-8841. The pot luck dinner will be served at approximately 7:00 p.m.; call them by Sept. 16 to reserve space, choose a food to bring, and, if necessary, obtain directions.

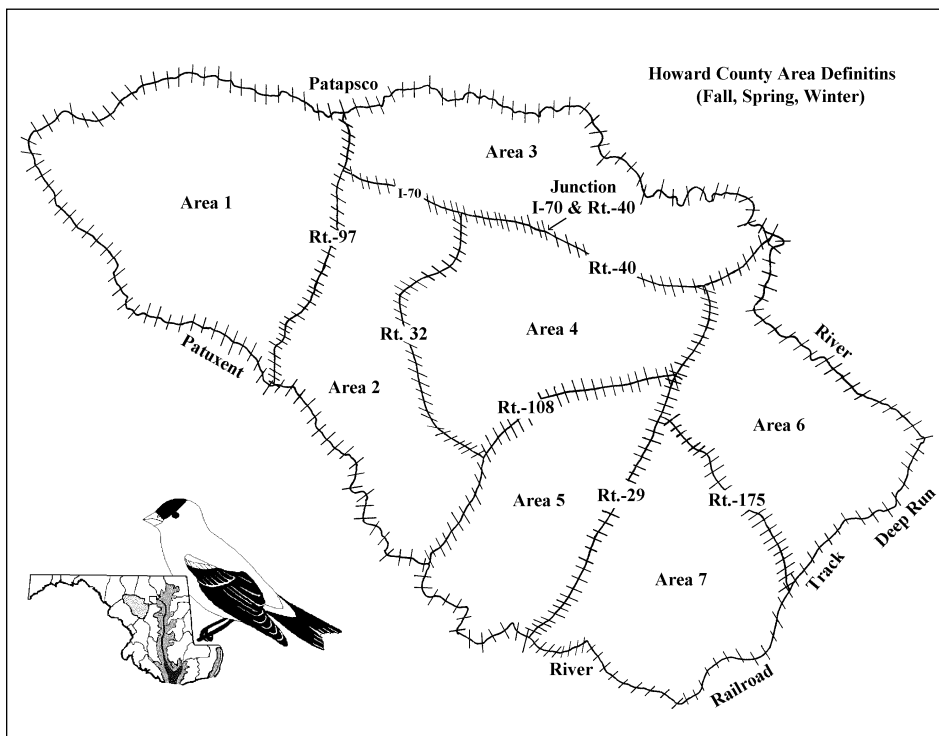
New and Improved Seed Sale: Extended Hours & New Location

By David Holyoke

We hope you will participate in the Howard County Bird Club's annual seed sale on **Saturday, October 8**. The sale will take place at a new location this year; **The Wildlife Authority** at 10281 Baltimore National Pike (Route 40) in Ellicott City (2 blocks west of Centennial Lane). We are also extending the hours for picking up your seed, running from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for those of you who would rather bird in the morning. We hope you will find the new location convenient and the longer hours helpful. Everything else about the sale will be the same, with proceeds supporting habitat preservation and conservation.

Look for a flier in the mail in September with an order form and seed prices (including prices for the newest product; Ivory-billed Woodpecker seed). You will also be able to download an order form from the club website (www.howardbirds.org). Once you have ordered your seed, all you need to do is show up at the Wildlife Authority on 10/08 between 9:00 and 5:00 and a friendly volunteer will load the seed into your car. Speaking of friendly volunteers, **Eileen Clegg**, who faithfully runs the sale, year after year, needs all the able-bodied helpers she can get. If you can lend a hand, even for an hour or two, please give her a call at 410-730-4362.

Finally, our thanks to **Cathy Franklin** of the Wildlife Authority for hosting this year's seed sale. This really makes things easier for all involved. Be sure to ask for your coupon for a total of 15% off any one item (except binoculars) you purchase in the store on seed sale day. All additional items purchased by bird club members will get the 10% discount the Wildlife Authority always extends to the club.



CLUB MEETINGS—BY JANE GEUDER

Club meetings are held at

**Howard County Recreation & Parks
Headquarters
7120 Oakland Mills Road
Columbia, MD 21046**

If schools are closed for the day or close early due to snow and/or ice, all indoor facilities are closed for the day. You can check on the status of programs and facilities by calling the recorded program status line at 410-313-4451.

Hospitality and club bookstore at 7:30 p.m. Meeting/Program begins at 8:00 p.m. For further information call Jeff Friedhoffer, 410-997-5366.

Thursday, September 8 "The Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program in Maryland and D.C.," by Dr. David Curson, Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon, MD-DC. Dr. Curson grew up in London, England, turning a childhood interest in wildlife into a career in conservation biology. The IBA program is part of a global initiative to identify sites that are essential habitats to sustain viable bird populations. An IBA map has been completed for most states. Learn how you can help with the current search for new sites.

Thursday, October 13 "Birding in Patterson Park, Baltimore," by Middleton Evans, author and photographer of Maryland natural areas. In the fall of 1998, local nature photographer, Middleton Evans, ventured to Patterson Park's Boat Lake to investigate a tip that wild Wood Ducks had taken up residence. Sure enough, several pairs were spotted amidst a flotilla of Mallards. Since the woodies readily accepted handouts of bread from park-goers, close-up photography was a snap. Over the next three years Mr. Evans took photos of baby woodies milling about the dense reeds and water lilies and numerous bird and insect species. Join us for highlights of the nearly seventy species (sorry, no Ivory-billed Woodpeckers) Mr. Evans discovered after countless hours on foot with a heavy telephoto lens and an open heart.

HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB FALL TRIPS—BY BONNIE OTT

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 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

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.



BUTTERFLIES THROUGH BINOCULARS

Sept. 3, Saturday. 9:30 a.m. (2-3 hrs)

Meet at Centennial Park west end parking lot. Enjoy expert instruction on butterfly identification. Dick will provide information on host and nectar plants for different species. Easy walking on paved path by the lakeside. We will study some butterflies in the hand. Binoculars helpful. Facilities available.
Leader—Dick Smith 410-997-7439.

WEEKDAY WALK AT CENTENNIAL PARK

Sept. 15, Thursday. 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hrs)

Meet at Centennial Park west end parking lot. Easy walking on paved path around the lake. Migrants of many species will be moving through. David Holmes is an expert on birding by ear and will provide tips on bird sound identification. Facilities available.
Leader—David Holmes.
Call Bonnie for info 410-461-3361.

DICKEY FARM (WITH CARROLL COUNTY CLUB)

Sept. 25, Sunday. 7:30 a.m. (half day)

Meet at Rts. 32 & I-70 park-and-ride. Moderate walking through the woodlands and field edges of this private farm. A couple of ponds provide chances for some water birds. Great habitat for warblers, sparrows and vireos during this peak migration time. Expect wet grass and primitive paths. No facilities.
Leaders—Dave and Maureen Harvey
410-795-3117.

FALL COUNT

Sept. 17, Saturday (See p. 4 for details.)

HENRYTON ROAD, PATAPSCO VALLEY STATE PARK

Sept. 24, Saturday. 8:00 a.m. (half day)

Meet at bottom of Henryton Rd. at the dead end. Join Ralph to walk along the Patapsco River looking for fall migrants. Mature woodlands provide excellent habitat for migrant thrushes. This is prime migration time and many species of forest birds expected. Plan for moderate walking and possible muddy trails areas. No facilities.
Leader—Ralph Cullison 410-442-2181.

WOODLAND WALK AT MPEA

Oct. 1, Sunday. 7:30 a.m. (half day)

Meet at the Trotter Rd. lot. Moderate walking through wooded trails and along the river. Great area for migrants of all species. Field edges and thickets provide sparrow habitat. Prepare for wet grass on the trails. No facilities. Leader—Stan Arnold
410-768-0155 or 410-428-7567 (cell)



BEGINNER'S BIRD WALK AT LAKE ELKHORN

Sept. 10, Saturday 8:30 a.m. (2-3 hrs)

Meet at Broken Land Parkway lot. Easy walking on paved path around the lake to learn tips on bird identification. Learn which species of birds are common to our area. Advice on binocular and field guide selection and use. Combination of water, woodland and fields should provide a wide variety of species. No facilities.
Leaders—Mike and Grazina McClure
410-531-2780.

(Field Trips continues on page 6.)



=Great for beginning birders

 MOUNT PLEASANT FARM**Oct. 8, Saturday. 8:00 a.m. (1-2 hrs)**

Meet at shed. Easy walking through the fields of Mt. Pleasant farm. Tree lines, hedgerows and streams provide opportunity for non-meadow species. Prime time for sparrows. Great opportunity for flyovers. Ivory-billed Woodpecker unlikely, but, who knows?! Facilities available.
Leader—Kurt Schwarz 410-461-1643.

SEED SALE

Oct. 8, Saturday. 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

(See page 4 for details.)

SPARROW BIG DAY

Oct. 16, Sunday (all day)

Search wetlands and dry fields in this intensive search for as many sparrows as possible. Going for 12 species! Previous years have turned up non-sparrow rarities! Expect difficult walking for most of the day. Knee boots a must. Facilities at some spots. Limit of 12—call Bonnie at 410-461-3361 to sign up and get details.

 WEEKDAY WALK AT DAVID FORCE PARK**Oct. 18, Tuesday. 8:00 a.m. (2 hrs)**

Meet at the sign on Pebble Beach Drive. Easy walking through the wooded trails and fields of this park. Streams and pond provide habitat for numerous bird species. Probable Pileated Woodpecker, Wood Ducks and Fox Sparrows. No facilities.
Leader—Jo Solem 301-725-5037.

WEST FRIENDSHIP PARK

Oct. 23, Sunday. 7:45 a.m. (half day)

Meet at strip mall lot at the intersection of Rts. 32 & 144. Explore these 200+ acres of Howard County parkland. Plan for easy, moderate walking along the road and mown grass areas. Extensive fields should host a wealth of sparrows. Woodlands and two ponds may hold some surprises. No facilities. Leaders—Bonnie Ott 410-461-3361 and Lisa Colangelo.

 HAWK WATCH AT MT. PLEASANT FARM**Oct. 29, Saturday. 9:30 a.m. (all day)**

Meet at shed. Join raptor aficionado Ralph Geuder to sit and watch the hawks fly. Bring a chair and sustenance for however long you plan to stay. Ralph will provide tips on separating species in flight. The farm provides walking trails and a nature center. Facilities available.
Leader—Ralph Geuder 410-788-3764.

ROCKBURN BRANCH PARK

Oct. 30, Sunday. 8:00 a.m. (half day)

Meet off the Montgomery Rd. entrance in the parking lot on the left, just past the restored schoolhouse. Moderate but lengthy walking through the woods and fields of our largest county park looking for migrants. Hawk migration will be in full swing and most of the day will offer open sky viewing. Possible owls and bats! Paths may be muddy. Facilities available.
Leaders—Karen Darcy 410-552-9342 and Kevin Heffernan 410-418-8731.

ALPHA RIDGE PARK AND LANDFILL

Nov. 5, Saturday. 8:00 a.m. (3 hrs)

Meet at parking lot on the right, just inside the gate to Alpha Ridge Park. Moderate to difficult walking through the fields looking for lingering sparrows and early winter arrivals. The landfill has the best possibility of hosting rarities. Possibility of walking through tall wet grasses. Boots recommended. Facilities at park.
Leader—Ralph Cullison 410-442-2181.

 CENTENNIAL PARK**Nov. 6, Sunday. 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours)**

Meet at Centennial Park west end parking lot. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Early waterfowl, lingering migrants likely. Facilities available. Leader—Joe Byrnes 410-730-5329.

 CENTENNIAL PARK**Nov. 13, Sunday. 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours)**

Meet at Centennial Park west end parking lot. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Facilities available. Leader—TBA.

HOWARD WATERFOWL SEARCH

Nov. 19, Saturday. 8:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

Meet at Broken Land Parkway parking lot at Lake Elkhorn. Plan to visit the Columbia lakes to search for gulls, ducks, grebes, loons and other waterfowl. Easy walking involved. Plan to carpool. Bring lunch and drinks. Scopes helpful. Facilities available.
Leader—Jane Coskren 410-381-7344.

 CENTENNIAL PARK**Nov. 20, Sunday. 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours)**

Meet at Centennial Park west end parking lot. Easy walking on paved path around

Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Facilities available. Leaders—Kevin Heffernan 410-418-8731 and Karen Darcy 410-552-9342.

 CENTENNIAL PARK**Nov. 27, Sunday. 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours)**

Meet at Centennial Park west end parking lot. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Facilities available. Leader—Jeff Friedhoffer 410-997-5366.

BLACKWATER WILDLIFE REFUGE

Dec. 3, Saturday. 6:30 a.m. (all day)

Meet at Rt. 32/Broken Land Parkway park-and-ride, north lot. We will bird the Choptank River Bridge before going to the refuge. Targeting waterfowl and wintering raptors with the likelihood of Rough-legged Hawk and Short-eared Owl. The spectacle of huge flocks of Snow and Canada Geese worth the trip! Facilities at some stops. Pack lunch, snacks and beverages. Scopes useful.
Leader—Stan Arnold 410-768-0155 or 410-428-7567 (cell).

START YOUR 2006 LIST

Jan. 1, 2006. Sunday. 8:00 a.m. (half day)

(Possibility of lunch stop and day trip depending on the weather.) Meet at boat ramp of Centennial Park. Plan to carpool to different locations to find as many species as possible. The one day of the year where every bird is new! Walking will be moderate. Facilities at some spots.
Leader—Bonnie Ott 410-461-3361.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Board 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.

September 22, Thursday

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

October 27, Thursday

I. Bill Woodpecker, 1 Swamp Close to You (Actual location to be announced.)

A Magical Afternoon of Birding and How We Created Our Own Wildlife Sanctuary

By RON POLNIASZEK

This “magical” afternoon occurred in our Clarksville backyard on Monday, May 9, 2005. A wave of migrants joined our resident bird species in re-fueling and refreshing themselves on their northward journey. All of the sightings occurred within a two-hour period while we were sitting alongside our two newly landscaped ponds.

The day was sunny, in the low 70’s, and breezes were light. Leaves were just emerging on our mature forest lot allowing clear sight lines along the entire height of the 60 to 80-foot trees. Our 8.5-acre property abuts Triadelphia Reservoir, and the surrounding forest is rich in plant diversity. The forest community includes all of the plant and animal life that you would expect to find in a Piedmont Plateau oak/hickory forest. We noted on this day that the trees were alive with swarms of insects and green worms. With our bird feeders filled with sunflower seeds, millet, thistle, and suet cakes, together with the clear, moving water of a spring-fed tributary stream and the two ponds, the backyard must have looked like a “Hampton Inn” to the birds. Would an errant Ivory-billed Woodpecker check in?

Before I get into the details of the fallout, let me tell you what we did to help make it possible. Our property has been enrolled in a Forest Conservation and Management Agreement with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources-Forest Service and is a National Wildlife Federation-Certified Backyard Wildlife Habitat.

The exploding deer population in recent years has become a problem. Herds of 20 to 30 deer have often been seen passing through the property at dawn and dusk on their daily neighborhood lawn-browsing rounds. The impact on the forest understory is very apparent. The over-browsing has caused the nature of the understory to change, with ferns and spicebush predominating in the shade, while in sunnier spots, Japanese stilt grass is becoming dominant. Although still present, ground-nesting and understory bird species such as Ovenbird and Wood Thrush are gradually being forced to find other, less impacted areas to raise their young.

We have attempted to fight back by encouraging “defensible” habitat for native bird species. It includes native plants which are deer-tolerant and close enough to our house to keep deer at a distance. We tried fencing planting beds, but it didn’t work. Deer managed to push down the fencing to get at “exotic” plantings, and the property began to look like a stockade.

We started creating the “refuge” by installing two major water features in our backyard to add movement and sound to the area. Large boulders covered with lichen and mosses add a natural touch to the new water features. Each pond contains two filtered bio-falls and a skimmer to keep the

pond clean and healthy for a balanced aquatic habitat for plants, fish and amphibians. The larger of the ponds features a mounded, four-foot high central double waterfall which serves as a visual focal point for the area. The smaller and shallower pond contains two separate streams which feed into two holding ponds. Rounded stones and gravel interspersed with marginal plantings give these ponds a natural look and feel. Shade tolerant water plants in the ponds include Lizard’s Tail, Parrot Feather, Cardinal Flower, Blue Flag Iris, Arrowhead and Creeping Jenny. The stream pond is a favorite place for birds to take a refreshing drink or bath. Plants and fish in the ponds work together to keep the water clean.

Because this area receives very little direct sunlight in the summer, the plant selections are limited; in addition, they have to be deer tolerant. The plants that were chosen meet both of these qualifications. They include American Holly, Sweet Bay Magnolia, Black Haw and Arrowwood Viburnum, Winterberry, Inkberry, Mahonia, Itea, Ligularia, Nandina, Wild Columbine, Solomon’s Seal, Virginia Bluebells, Wild Ginger, Summer Sweet, and seven species of ferns. These plants provide a nice mix of blossoms, seeds and berries to allow a healthy variety of food choices for the birds. They also offer some shelter as well as adding life and color to the backyard.

All the work paid off for us on May 9. In the two observation hours (2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.), we saw waves of resident and migratory birds working the forest around us and refreshing themselves in the ponds. We also saw six flyover species that seemed to be checking out the “action.” In all, we counted 426 birds including 21 resident, 30 migrant and 6 flyover species. Of the 17 warbler species seen, some were numerous including Ovenbird (10), Black-throated Blue Warbler (10), Hooded Warbler (12), Black-throated Green Warbler (20), Black-and-white Warbler (25), American Redstart (25), Blackpoll Warbler (30), and Yellow-rumped Warbler (35). Other highlights included: Veery, Blue-headed, Warbling and Red-eyed Vireos, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting and Baltimore Oriole. Excellent looks at male Cape May Warbler and Bay-breasted Warbler in full breeding plumage were a special treat. The moving water brought the birds right down to the ponds where they splashed and refreshed themselves in the cool water.

Just as suddenly as it had begun the wave moved on, and the forest around us was quiet except for the ubiquitous woodpeckers, titmice and chickadees. It was hard to believe that it had all happened. Without the ponds, I don’t think it would have happened at all. We can’t wait for autumn’s return flight.

In Memoriam

The Howard County Bird Club is saddened by the passing of three long-time members: Patricia Jackson, Rosamond Munro, and Donald Randle.

Pat Jackson was a member for more than 20 years. The property just north of Cricket Creek on Trotter Road, which she and her husband Dudley owned, was the scene of June bird club picnics from 1975 through 1977. Her feeders were an occasional stop on winter feeder field trips. She passed along interesting sightings seasonally, participated in the 1983-1987 atlas with breeding records from her property, and contributed to wild flower survey sightings.

Rosamond Munro, who died in March at the age of 94, was one of the county's most significant birders. She became a county resident in the late 1940's when she and her husband Colin moved to 11 acres on Reservoir Rd adjoining WSSC property. This piece of land enabled her to pursue her interest in birds, wild flowers, and anything else in the natural world that caught her eye.

For many years she was one of a mere handful of birders in this county. Although most of her birding was done on her property or in her neighborhood and she was unable to bird for the last decade, she still holds early records for a dozen species. Her sightings of Snowy Owl (on a post in her garden February or March 1947), Cattle Egret (May 18, 1961), and Summer Tanager (spring 1958) were first county records. American Woodcock were regulars on her property, and Whip-poor-wills called from their unpaved lane on summer evenings. A Lincoln's Sparrow was photographed at one of her feeders (April 20, 1965) and Chuck-will's-widows visited the property on at least three occasions. From 1954 through 1957 a Loggerhead Shrike returned each fall to the same Red Cedar tree on Reservoir Road.

Occasional field trips were made to her property, especially during the wild flower surveys, in the 1980's. She provided records for both of the previous county bird atlases. As a student of English as well as birds, she contributed to, as well as helped proof, *Birding Howard County, Maryland*. Thanks to almost daily rounds of her property for almost 40 years, we have a better idea of some of the specialties that once existed here. Sightings were passed to Chan Robbins long before there was a local bird group; as soon as the Howard County club was organized, she joined and remained a member until she entered an assisted living facility. One of Howard County's pioneer birders has passed from the scene, but her enthusiasm for the natural world and obvious delight in sharing her discoveries will inspire her friends and leave warm memories for years to come.

Don Randle, who died in May at the age of 74, was a club member for almost a quarter of a century. Many birders remember Don (and his wife Jan) primarily as hosts for the May Count tally. They have volunteered their home for this event since 1982! Others may recall that Don served the club as treasurer from 1982 through 1986, and was a chapter director for the 1986-87 year. Still others know that in the 1980's Jan and Don were responsible for the club bookstore at meetings and seed sales. It was this experience that led to their opening of The Nature Nook book and gift shop in Ellicott City which they owned until November, 1999. We appreciate and remember Don's many contributions.

—Joanne Solem

HOWARD COUNTY MAY COUNT, MAY 14, 2005

BY EMY HOLDRIDGE

Fifty-seven bird club members participated in this year's May Count by spending May 14, 2005 in the field counting migrating and resident birds in Howard County. Together we found a total of 147 species; 6 species fewer than last year but equal to the average found on the last 10 counts.

Only one new species was added to the list, a Short-billed Dowitcher that stayed for a time at the pond on Carrs Mill Road (alas, our quest for Ivory-billed Woodpecker was fruitless). Two other species of shorebirds, Lesser Yellowlegs and Semipalmated Sandpipers were present in high counts compared to the last 10 years. Other ten year high records were recorded for Eastern Phoebe, American Robin, Brown Thrasher, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Brown-headed Cowbird and Orchard and Baltimore Orioles. After a winter of finding very few Blue Jays, the number ballooned on the May Count. Blue Jays were migrating all day and our number, 1,178, was more than double the previous high of 527 in 1998. Yellow-billed Cuckoos tied our previous high at 18, and we saw our first Rusty Blackbird since 1996.

Ten year lows were recorded for several species including Carolina Chickadee and White-eyed Vireo. Last year we found 48 American Pipits and this year there were none. For the first time in ten years, there were no White-crowned Sparrows reported.

Many people commented at the tally rally about the low numbers of warblers. The jewels of the May Count were indeed hard to find. Had migration taken place a bit earlier? Are the numbers of migrating warblers declining at a rapid pace? Here's what we found in Howard County: There were no Blue-winged, Tennessee or Black-throated Greens for the first time in ten years, and Prairie, Black-and-white, Northern Waterthrush and Common Yellowthroat were recorded in the lowest numbers in ten years. Only in 2003 did we have a lower count than this year for Worm-eating Warblers. However, 10 year high counts were recorded for Pine Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush and Blackpoll.

All in all it was a great day. The weather cooperated and we found lots of good birds. Our compiler, **Chuck Stirrat** did a great job as always and **Jan Randle's** generous hospitality gave us a wonderful tally rally to end the day. A special thanks to both.

And to the following participants, a huge round of applause and a big thank you; you make it happen: Stan Arnold, Randy Beaton, **Mary-Jo Betts (Area 5 Coordinator)**, Karen & Bill Blum, Monika Botsai, Marilyn & Jim Brinkley, Lisa Colangelo, Jane & Dennis Coskren, **Jeff Culler (Area 2 Coordinator)**, Ralph Cullison, Susan & Wes Earp, Ward Ebert, Tom Feild, Maureen & Dave Harvey, Jane Heim, Gayle & Bill Hill, Emy Holdridge, Dave Kubitsky, Mike Leumas, Brigitte Lund, Grazina & **Mike McClure (Area 4 Coordinator)**, John McKitterick, Elayne & Jeff Metter, Barry Miller, Peter Osenton, **Bonnie Ott (Area 6 Coordinator)**, Karla Pearce, Susan & Ron Polniaszek, Suzanne Probst, Clyde Robinette, Kurt Schwarz, Philip Smith, Romayne Smith, Bob & **Jo Solem (Area 7 Coordinator)**, Michelle Stewart, **Chuck Stirrat (Area 3 Coordinator)**, Ralph Stokes, Eva & August Sunell, Robin Todd, **Kate Tufts (Area 1 Coordinator)**, June Tveekrem, Marilyn Veek, Ginny Walker, Mark Wallace, Michele Wright, Helen Zeichner.

Join us next year when May Count will be held on May 13, 2006.

HOWARD COUNTY MAY COUNT RESULTS—MAY 14, 2005

Common Loon	3
Double-crested Cormorant	7
Great Blue Heron	59
Great Egret	3
Green Heron	22
Black-crowned Night-Heron	2
Black Vulture	79
Turkey Vulture	143
Cackling Goose	
Canada Goose	704
Mute Swan	1
Wood Duck	52
American Black Duck	1
Mallard	156
Common Merganser	2
Osprey	8
Bald Eagle	4
Northern Harrier	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	8
Cooper's Hawk	10
Red-shouldered Hawk	59
Broad-winged Hawk	4
Red-tailed Hawk	44
American Kestrel	3
Ring-necked Pheasant	
Wild Turkey	1
Northern Bobwhite	
American Coot	
Semipalmated Plover	11
Killdeer	42
Greater Yellowlegs	7
Lesser Yellowlegs	12
Solitary Sandpiper	63
Spotted Sandpiper	21
Semipalmated Sandpiper	9
Least Sandpiper	85
Pectoral Sandpiper	
Short-billed Dowitcher	1
Wilson's Snipe	1
American Woodcock	1
Ring-billed Gull	12
Herring Gull	2
Rock Pigeon	162
Mourning Dove	385
Black-billed Cuckoo	5
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	18
Eastern Screech-Owl	3
Great Horned Owl	2
Barred Owl	14
Common Nighthawk	14
Whip-poor-Will	
Chimney Swift	236
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	19
Belted Kingfisher	18
Red-bellied Woodpecker	274
Downy Woodpecker	102

Hairy Woodpecker	31
Northern (Yellow-shafted) Flicker	56
Pileated Woodpecker	48
Ivory-billed Woodpecker	0
Eastern Wood-Pewee	123
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	1
Acadian Flycatcher	143
Willow Flycatcher	3
Least Flycatcher	1
<i>Empidonax species</i>	1
Eastern Phoebe	91
Great Crested Flycatcher	52
Eastern Kingbird	141
White-eyed Vireo	66
Blue-headed Vireo	3
Yellow-throated Vireo	14
Warbling Vireo	32
Red-eyed Vireo	501
Blue Jay	1178
American Crow	211
Fish Crow	25
<i>crow species</i>	152
Horned Lark	12
Purple Martin	40
Tree Swallow	150
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	31
Bank Swallow	2
Cliff Swallow	95
Barn Swallow	338
Carolina Chickadee	181
Tufted Titmouse	186
White-breasted Nuthatch	63
Brown Creeper	1
Carolina Wren	234
House Wren	130
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	300
Eastern Bluebird	139
Veery	18
Gray-cheeked Thrush	3
Swainson's Thrush	34
Hermit Thrush	
Wood Thrush	421
American Robin	611
Gray Catbird	631
Northern Mockingbird	218
Brown Thrasher	65
European Starling	649
American Pipit	
Cedar Waxwing	254
Blue-winged Warbler	
Tennessee Warbler	
Nashville Warbler	2
Northern Parula	168
Yellow Warbler	132
Chestnut-sided Warbler	9

Magnolia Warbler	13
Cape May Warbler	
Black-throated Blue Warbler	67
Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler	67
Black-throated Green Warbler	5
Blackburnian Warbler	4
Yellow-throated Warbler	2
Pine Warbler	11
Prairie Warbler	19
Palm Warbler	
Bay-breasted Warbler	1
Blackpoll Warbler	196
Cerulean Warbler	2
Black-&-white Warbler	35
American Redstart	111
Prothonotary Warbler	
Worm-eating Warbler	16
Ovenbird	190
Northern Waterthrush	5
Louisiana Waterthrush	63
Kentucky Warbler	13
Common Yellowthroat	271
Hooded Warbler	17
Wilson's Warbler	5
Canada Warbler	2
Yellow-breasted Chat	17
Scarlet Tanager	175
Eastern Towhee	194
Chipping Sparrow	202
Field Sparrow	102
Vesper Sparrow	1
Savannah Sparrow	20
Grasshopper Sparrow	24
Song Sparrow	280
Lincoln's Sparrow	2
Swamp Sparrow	2
White-throated Sparrow	19
White-crowned Sparrow	
Northern Cardinal	914
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	6
Blue Grosbeak	8
Indigo Bunting	263
Boblink	170
Red-winged Blackbird	765
Eastern Meadowlark	11
Rusty Blackbird	1
Common Grackle	577
Brown-headed Cowbird	292
Orchard Oriole	70
Baltimore Oriole	238
House Finch	128
American Goldfinch	431
House Sparrow	462

Note: Empty entry means that the total was zero.

**SUMMER
READING LIST
BY BONNIE OTT**

There are 3 new books out on the Ivory-Billed theme that are all great reading:

The Search for the Ivory Billed Woodpecker by Jerome Jackson

The Grail Bird by Peter Gallagher

The Search for the Lord God Bird by Phillip Hoose

Also, an older book: *Hope is the thing with Feathers* by Emily Dickinson



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BUY A DUCK STAMP, SAVE AN ENDANGERED WOODPECKER

BY KURT SCHWARZ

By now, virtually everybody has heard of the rediscovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in Arkansas. The species, that had not been undisputedly reported in the USA since 1944 (although some persisted in Cuba into the 1980s), was re-found in Cache River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in February 2004, and ultimately videotaped the following April. Official announcement of the discovery awaited its publication in the journal *Science* in April 2005.

What you may not know is the role Federal Duck Stamps played in preserving the habitat that the Ivory-billed survived in these last six decades. Cache River NWR was established only in 1988. Over three quarters of its 56,000 acres were purchased with funds raised by duck stamp sales. Likewise, Duck Stamp revenues helped finance the acquisition of over 10,000 acres at the nearby White River NWR.

As you can see, the funds from Duck Stamp do more than benefit ducks and other waterfowl. The habitat preserved is available for all species, to include non-game ones. So the next time you visit Blackwater, Bombay Hook, or the National Wildlife Visitor Center at Patuxent Research Refuge, consider plunking down \$15 for a Duck Stamp. It will give you free admission to the previously mentioned refuges, as well as others that charge a fee. In addition, the National Park Service honors them at Assateague National Seashore, as I discovered to my delight this past January. You won't have to scramble to find \$4 each time you go to one of the parks, and ducks, woodpeckers, deer, and any number of other species will benefit from additional habitat preserved.



Ivory-billed Woodpecker
Campephilus principalis