Join the Howard County Bird Club’s Twenty-First Annual Midwinter Count on Saturday, February 4, 2006. Joe Byrnes (410-730-5329 or joseph.byrnes@comcast.com) and Jo Solem (301-725-5037 or odena@msn.com) are the count coordinators. You may volunteer to participate by signing up at a meeting, by calling Joe Byrnes, or by contacting one of the area coordinators:

- **Area 1** Mark Wallace  301-725-6370
- **Area 2** Ward Ebert  301-490-5807
- **Area 3** Maureen & Dave Harvey  410-795-3117
- **Area 4** Mike McClure  410-531-2780
- **Area 5** Kevin Heffeman  410-418-8731
- **Area 6** Bonnie Ott  410-461-3361
- **Area 7** Kurt Schwarz  410-461-1643

If you have covered a particular location for many years, you may call the coordinator of the area and indicate your desire to cover it again. If you wish to be placed with a more experienced birder, be sure to let the coordinator know. Beginning birders are always welcome, as are individuals who wish to count only for part of the day. A checklist for the count is included with this newsletter. If you wish to count only at your feeder, call Joe or Jo and request a feeder form.

A fitting and much anticipated conclusion to the day is the evening potluck tally at Jeff and Karen Culler’s (2672 Thornbrook Rd, Ellicott City, MD, 410-465-9006, e-mail: cullerfuls@hotmail.com). It is an opportunity to compare your special birds with those other people sighted—or to commiserate about your misses. The club furnishes the main dish. Please call the Cullers by Wednesday, February 1 to reserve space, to sign up for a vegetable, salad, or dessert, and to obtain directions. If you cannot make it to the meal, you are welcome to drop in about 7:30 p.m. for the tally. Joe Byrnes or your area coordinator can also give you directions to the tally dinner.

Unfortunately, a count during this season may coincide with a major snow or ice storm. Safety is more important than counting birds. If there is a question about the weather, we will try to make a decision the night before. Do not hesitate to call your area coordinator, Joe or Jo (between 5:00 & 6:00 a.m.) if you are unsure of the status of the count.
ANNUAL POTLUCK DINNER
BY SUE PROBST

The annual potluck dinner will again be held at the Owen Brown Community Center on Saturday, March 4, 2006. The social hour starts at 6:30 p.m. and the dinner starts at 7:00 p.m. All club members and their guests are invited to share in the fun, the food and the program. The club furnishes beverages, social hour snacks, rolls and eating utensils. Those attending may bring a main dish, a salad, a vegetable or a dessert. Be sure to mark your dishes and any accompanying serving implements with your name so we can get them back to the right person. If you cannot cook, other arrangements can be made. Everyone is encouraged to participate in the “slide show,” so bring your nature slides or digital photo presentations. (The club will provide both a conventional slide projector and a multimedia projector. You must bring your own “notebook” computer. For more information contact Tom Miller (410-795-7005, or BirderTWM@verizon.net.)

You MUST reserve in advance so we can arrange for sufficient beverages, etc. You may sign up at either the January or February club meeting, or contact Sue Probst by Friday, March 3, 2006 at 410-992-3489, or sprost@comcast.net. You will need to specify the number of attendees and what food you are bringing. Let Sue know if you would like to come early to help set up, help clean up afterwards or help in any other way. If you are a new member, or if you have not attended our dinner before, we strongly encourage you to come and get to know others who share your passion for birds and birding. There will be many delicious dishes, great slide presentations and other surprises. So mark your calendars and come join the fun!

Directions: The Owen Brown Community Center is located on the east side of Columbia at 6800 Cradlerock Way, off Broken Land Parkway from Route 29. There is ample parking.

President's Letter

I hope that everyone had a pleasant holiday season and has started a 2006 list. I am looking forward to seeing all of you at our monthly meetings and on our walks.

We had another successful seed sale, which is our primary fundraiser for habitat preservation. Let's give Eileen Clegg a big hand for organizing and running this for another year! I am not sure what we would do without Eileen's dedication.

Last year the seed sale funded material that Brad Wood, a local Boy Scout in troop 555, used to build a birding blind at Mount Pleasant the Howard Conservancy farm on Rt. 99. The sale also provided funds for two projects with Howard Recreation and Parks at the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area: one for putting Purple Martin gourds in Clegg Meadow and the second for the removal of Russian Olive and replacement with native foliage.

I want to give special thanks to Cathy Franklin, proprietor of the Wildlife Authority who hosted this year's seed sale. Cathy went above and beyond what she had expected to do when she agreed to host the sale. When the seed was dropped off early in the morning on that very rainy day, she moved the seed into the store essentially by herself. We are so grateful for all she did. Please thank her next time you visit the store.

Howard County Department of Recreation & Parks
Offering National Wildlife Federation's Habitat Stewards™ Training
By Brenda Belensky

To help communities create and enhance wildlife habitat, Howard County Recreation & Parks, the National Wildlife Federation, and Wild Birds Unlimited will be offering Habitat Stewards™ training in Spring 2006.

A Habitat Stewards™ Volunteer is:
Someone who is interested in wildlife, ecology, gardening and habitat conservation, and believes in hands on, experiential learning. A Habitat Steward is also someone who is available to assist members of their community to create an environment that is beneficial for humans and for wildlife by helping others develop and restore wildlife habitat in backyards, schoolyards and other private and public areas.

Available to individuals 18 years and older, the training will be offered at Recreation & Parks Headquarters March 14—March 30. The program fee is $35.00. The application deadline is March 7.

Contact Brenda Belensky, Natural Resource Manager for Howard County Department of Recreation & Parks for additional information:
Howard County Recreation & Parks
Attn: Brenda Belensky
7120 Oakland Mills Road
Columbia, MD 21046
410-313-4724
e-mail bbelenisky@co.ho.md.us

I want to offer a belated thanks to all of the participants in the Fall Count; your work helps scientists track the changes in our bird population over the years. Thanks go to Chuck Stittar and Mike McClure for running the count again and to the Waugh's for hosting the tally rally. If you have not participated in a bird count, please consider joining us for Midwinter Count on February 4. (See page 1 for more details.) No experience is needed. We will match you with an experienced counter and guarantee that you will have a great time.

Next, I would like to thank Sue Probst for taking on the task of being our newsletter editor. Not only does Sue work full-time, she also creates the layout for the Yellowthroat. We are so appreciative to Sue for taking this on for us.

Finally, we have several volunteer opportunities to work as an intern with a board member on projects such as the Howard County Fair, Publicity, Seed Sale, Conservation, etc. We welcome interns of all ages.

If you have any questions or suggestions please contact me, jfried@ieee.org or 410-997-5366. The same goes for jumping on these once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to be an intern.

—Jeff Friedhoffer
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.

Howard County Bird Club Winter 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.

HOW TO FIND OWLS
Jan. 21, Saturday, 12:30 p.m. (half day)
Meet at the Patuxent River State Park lot off Rt. 97 (Montgomery side of bridge) to carpool to spots in Howard County.
Join owl expert Jay Sheppard to learn tips and techniques on how to find wintering owls. This half day trip will involve some difficult walking and possible interaction with bitter bushes and dense undergrowth. Please wear warm heavy clothing. Jay is likely to stay until pitch dark but people can leave earlier. Last year’s highlights were perched Northern Saw-whet Owls. Possible Long-eared, Barred, Great Horned and Eastern Screech-Owls. Snow date will be the following Saturday. No facilities.
Call Jay for information: 301-725-5559.

MICROWINTER COUNT
February 4, Saturday (See page 1.)

CENTENNIAL PARK
March 5, 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
Call Bonnie for information: 410-461-3361.

CENTENNIAL PARK
March 12, 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
Call Bonnie for information: 410-461-3361.

CENTENNIAL PARK
March 19, 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
Call Bonnie for information: 410-461-3361.

HOWARD WATERFOWL SEARCH
March 11, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. (half day)
Meet at Broken Land Parkway parking lot at Lake Elkhorn. Plan to visit the Columbia lakes and possibly western ponds and Triadelphia Reservoir to search for gulls, ducks, grebes, loons and other waterfowl. Easy walking involved. Plan to carpool. Bring lunch and drinks. Scopes helpful.
Facilities available at certain locations.
Leader—Stan Arnold 410-768-0155.

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.

January 26, Thursday
Kevin Heffernan
9775 Diversified Lane
Ellicott City, MD 21042 • 410-418-8731

February 23, Thursday
Jo Solem
10617 Graeaech Road
Laurel, MD 20723 • 301-725-5037

= Great for beginning birders
CONSERVATION COLUMN

“PUTTING A PIECE BACK INTO THE PUZZLE”

BY KURT SCHWARZ

Gray wolves were re-introduced in Yellowstone National Park in 1995. Fourteen Canadian wolves were released in that time. They now number 130, split among 13 packs. However, despite the fact that wolves now account for only thirteen percent of elk deaths, the return of the wolf to the park has resulted in a dramatic change in the landscape.

The elk had not dealt with wolves since the 1920s, when the wolves were extirpated. As a result, they moved into confined areas, that lacked a good all around view, allowing them to keep a watch out for wolves. Willow thickets, cottonwoods, and aspen stands were severely affected. For quite some time, cottonwoods younger than 70 years old could no longer be found.

The return of the wolf introduced an element of fear among the elk, resulting in a behavior change. The elk now spend their time in high country, and no longer consume the willows by the streams. Streamside vegetation has bounced back. Stream banks are stabilized, and the shade causes lower water temperatures, making better trout habitat, AND bringing about increased numbers of Yellow Warblers and Lincoln’s Sparrows. All this was reported in the Philadelphia INQUIRER, November 24, 2005.

So just think what one hundred wolves could do in Howard County? Deer collisions would go down, and Kentucky Warblers and Ovenbirds would rebound!