

# The Goldfinch

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



## TWENTY-FIRST ANNUAL MIDWINTER COUNT

BY JOE BYRNES AND JO SOLEM

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 odenata@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 Heffernan	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.

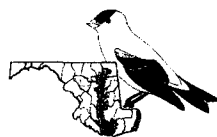
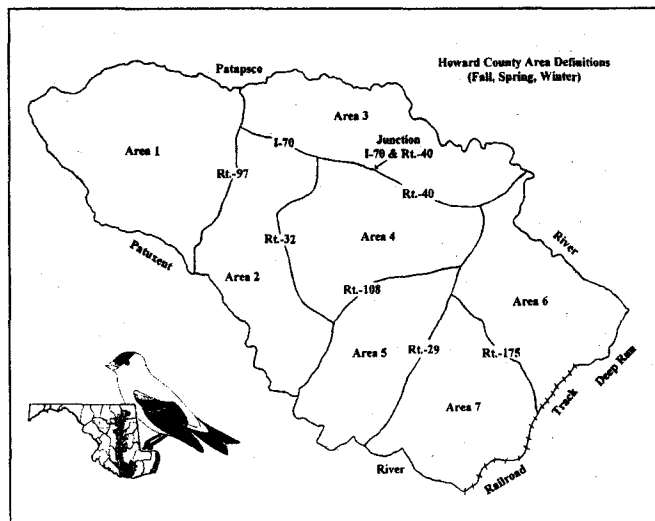
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Suzanne Probst, *Editor*  
Joanne Solem, *Proofreader*

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 Suzanne Probst  
5413 Killingworth Way  
Columbia, MD 21044  
sprobst@comcast.net  
**Please visit the Club's website at**  
[www.howardbirds.org](http://www.howardbirds.org)



## 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 sprobst@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.*

## 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 bbelensky@co.ho.md.us



## 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.

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 Stirrat and Mike McClure for running the count again and to the Waughs 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, jafried@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.

**Thursday, January 12 "More Adventures of an Intrepid Birder,"** by Hank Kaestner. Hank's travels in 2005 included trips to the Middle East, Brazil and Granada. We always look forward to Hank's entertaining and descriptive global itineraries in search of new birds. And he enjoys coming to our club as well.

**Thursday, February 9 "Contrasting Breeding Strategies of Two Species of Orioles: First Documentation of Double-breeding in Orchard Orioles,"** by Spring Ligi. Our speaker presented research at a poster session at the MOS Conference in May that detailed banding studies of Orchard and Baltimore Orioles in Maryland during the last two breeding seasons. Her work was part of a master's degree program at UMBC.

## 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](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.

### 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 sticker 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.*

### MIDWINTER 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.*

### 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.*

### 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.*

### CENTENNIAL PARK

**March 26, 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.*

### 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 Graeoch Road  
Laurel, MD 20723 • 301-725-5037

 = Great for beginning birders



**HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB**  
*Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society*  
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 Columbia, MD 21044  
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**CONSERVATION COLUMN**  
**"PUTTING A PIECE BACK INTO THE PUZZLE"**

BY KURT SCHWARZ

**G**ray 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!

**HOWARD COUNTY ANNUAL LISTS  
 DUE FEBRUARY 28, 2006**

A list of all the birds seen in the county during the 2005 calendar year is being compiled for the 26th consecutive year. Assemble your sightings for the year (even if the list was compiled in your neighborhood or your yard) and mail to Jane Coskren, 6324 Sandchain Road, Columbia MD 21045 by February 28, 2006.

**FONT HILL WETLAND  
 PARK BIRD LIST**

A bird list has been posted on the bulletin board nearest Centennial Lane at Font Hill Wetland Park. This is a preliminary list of species seen at the park during the last few years. If you have records of species that do not appear on the list or you observe additional species in the coming months, please forward the name of the species, the date observed, along with your name to Jane Coskren (Parks Checklist Coordinator) with a cc/to Bonnie Ott and Sue Muller.