

The Goldfinch

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



WINTER BIRD RECORDS DECEMBER 1, 2005 TO FEBRUARY 28, 2006

BY JOANNE SOLEM

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By the last half of December, winter had arrived. Temperatures were cold enough to produce ice on ponds and lakes; precipitation was normal. Although warmer than usual January temperatures melted the ice, open water did not result in large numbers of waterfowl. The winter's single major snowstorm arrived in mid-February. Fruit and mast crops were good enabling some of the half-hardy species to spend the winter. The county's first Rufous Hummingbird stayed until late December; scattered northern irruptives visited the county; and a White-winged Scoter established the ninth county record. Cackling Goose, Ring-necked Pheasant, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Black-capped Chickadee, and Common Redpoll were good finds.

Snow Geese were few with one white phase 12/2 and 12/4 on Trotter Rd (WE). A blue phase was at Fulton 12/27 (JS) and at Centennial 1/1 (BO+). Five Cackling Geese were at Fulton 12/22 (HH) with two there 1/16 (EHn). Howard County Midwinter Count (HCMC) 2/4 produced two: Centennial (KGr,ML) and A.E. Mullinix Rd (DOI,RR). Six Tundra Swans were on Triadelphia Reservoir 12/9 (BHi).

The only winter Wood Ducks were one male at Centennial 2/7 (SLg) and a pair on the Patuxent River 2/22 (JSh). HCMC 2/4 tallied four Gadwalls (S&EA; MW). The American Wigeon high count was a mere 15 on Union Chapel Rd 2/25 (JS). Northern Pintails were present at Centennial for much of the period from one 12/24 (SN; GA) to a pair 2/26 (KS). Ring-necked

Ducks peaked at 80 on 12/30 at Centennial (EH). The male White-winged Scoter that dropped in at Centennial 12/4 was the ninth county record (RMu; EH,SPr). A male Long-tailed Duck stayed at the same lake from 12/11 (KS; RMu; WE) until 12/20 (KS). Although most waterfowl numbers were woefully low, Common Mergansers have increasingly lived up to their name. As recently as 1/5/02, the all-time high county count was 465 at Triadelphia (NM,RC). The last two winters have seen consistent counts of 1,000 or more at that reservoir; surprisingly, the water level does not seem to alter the numbers. Ice, of course, does. This season's high was 1,200 on 1/17 (RR), almost equaling the all-time high of 1200-1300 on 2/23/05 (JS).

Wild Turkeys continue to increase countywide. Eight were counted in Patapsco Valley SP southeast of Sykesville on 2/4 (FL). A hen appeared sporadically 1/9 to 1/17 for the second consecutive January in a tiny stream valley in eastern Howard County (SB). Most astonishing were reports of Ring-necked Pheasants seen in the vicinity of Warfield's Pond Park, a female on 12/2 (BHi) and a male on 1/5 (B&GHi;EGs).

Three Common Loons at Brighton Dam 2/10 were the only ones reported this season (RB).

Ospreys took advantage of a relatively mild winter by setting a new late date for departure—12/25 at Brighton Dam (EH,JS). Was the same bird wandering in February when one was

(Continued on page 2.)

seen 2/5 (EMe) and 2/6 (JTv) in the vicinity of Centennial, a month before any previous spring date? Based on plumages and counts of perched adults, either eight or nine **Bald Eagles** wintered in the vicinity of Triadelphia (NM; BPT; RR). One or two adults were seen with some regularity over the central lakes (m.obs.), while the eastern section of Patapsco Valley SP continued to produce reports of adults (S&EA). Eleven eagles on HCMC was not only a new high, but was more than double the previous high of five in 2001. The only **Northern Harrier** was noted on 2/4 in north-central Howard County (W&RTr). **Merlins** normally are an extremely unusual winter species. Multiple reports, however, were received this season: University of Maryland Central Farm (UMDCF) 12/17 (WE); Meadowbrook Park area 1/7 (J&CW) and 1/17 (BO); and east Columbia near the library 2/8 (JC) and east of Lake Elkhorn 2/20 (JW). At least two were present on HCMC 2/4: Sewell's Orchard (e. Col.) (JW) and Alpha Ridge landfill (RC). Either the landfill bird or a third bird was seen later the same morning at Green Clover Dr (no more than two miles as the Merlin flies) (W&RTr).

Wilson's Snipe sometimes winter over. One on 1/1 at UMDCF was the only report (BO+).

Gull counts at the landfill can no longer be anticipated to produce either high numbers or unusual species. The **Great Black-backed Gull** there on 2/4 may have been the same bird that was seen at Wilde Lake 12/27 (JFr) and 1/14 (EH), as well as at Brighton Dam 1/1 (RB,NM,KS,JS). The dam produced a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** 12/25 (S&EA).

Owling on 12/17 from Browns Bridge was successful with nine owls heard in Montgomery and Howard counties: four **Great Horneds**, four **Barreds**, and one **Eastern Screech-Owl** (NM). A screech-owl was reported from Duvall Rd 12/15 (KT); another occupied a cavity in Hammond Village from 12/8 to the end of February (B&RHm).

The county's first verified **Rufous Hummingbird** (a female banded 12/3 DHo,BPi) was last seen 12/24 (GR,SBr).

A few **Eastern Phoebes** remained through the season. Reports were from Meadowbrook (one-JW; KS), vicinity of Lake Elkhorn (two-J&CW; SN), and Alpha Ridge landfill (two-RC). A flock of 45 **Horned Larks** was present at the UMDCF 12/17 (WE). Although **Black-capped Chickadees** staged a minor movement elsewhere in the state, the only one reported locally was 12/23 in Owen Brown, e. Col. (HH). **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were widespread in low numbers with 25 people reporting them from 20 locations. A new high count of **Winter Wrens** was ~25 on 2/22 along the Patuxent River (JSh). **Golden-crowned Kinglets** are the common wintering species. Ten were tallied 12/17 in Patuxent River SP (B&GHi). A **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** stayed in Long Reach, e. Col. from mid-December through February (MO'S).

Hermit Thrushes winter in small numbers; a flock of eight along Trotter Rd 12/4 was unusual (WE). An ample fruit supply and rather mild weather kept many **American Robins** in the county. High numbers included reports of 150 on 12/30 at Brush Run, e. Col. (JW) and 471 on 2/4 HCMC. The winter presence of catbirds and thrashers also reflects weather conditions and food availability. A **Gray Catbird** was spotted at Centennial 12/5 (GA) and 1/14 (JS). Another was seen at Oakland Mills Garden Plots 12/26 (JW) and 1/8 (JS). Countywide, three were found on HCMC 2/4 (JSh; DOI,RR; JTv). On the same date, a **Brown Thrasher** was noted in Patuxent River SP (JSh).

American Tree Sparrows are uncommon but regular in winter. The 25+ at Alpha Ridge landfill 1/28 (RC) and eight or more at Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA) 2/8 (BO,JS) were seasonal highs. [Note to birders hiking at MPEA. American Woodcock habitat enhancement of both courting and feeding areas has been taking place. This has required

removal of shrubs, vines, and woody vegetation in several locations.] **Chipping Sparrows** are unusual in winter. One or two were present at Wynfield 1/28 to 2/13 (RC). High counts of **Field Sparrows** were 46 at Schooley 12/17 (NM), 30 at the landfill 1/28 (RC), and 26 at MPEA 2/8 (BO, JS). **Savannah Sparrow** numbers at the landfill dropped from eight on 12/24 to one on 2/25 (RC). As usual, small numbers of **Fox Sparrows** wintered. The first signs of spring movement came at feeders with single birds reported: 2/17 to 2/21 at Talbots Landing (R&JG) and 2/25 at Sandchain, e. Col. (J&TDC). Good sparrow numbers were present 12/17 at Schooley: 79 **Song Sparrows** marked the seasonal high; a **Lincoln's Sparrow** was just the second December record; and eight **Swamp Sparrows** were counted (NM). **White-throated Sparrows** peaked at 170 on 2/8 at MPEA, the second highest count ever (BO,JS). Fifty-five **White-crowned Sparrows** were the winter's high 2/4 on Roxbury Rd (MW). **Dark-eyed Juncos** were reported in large numbers at two sites: 100 at Meadowbrook 1/2 (JW) and 137 at Wynfield 2/11 (RC).

Eastern Meadowlarks have become a scarce wintering bird. The eight on 12/24 at the landfill rose to nine on 1/28 and then dwindled to two by 2/25 (RC). One was reported from Underwood Rd 1/10 (WE).

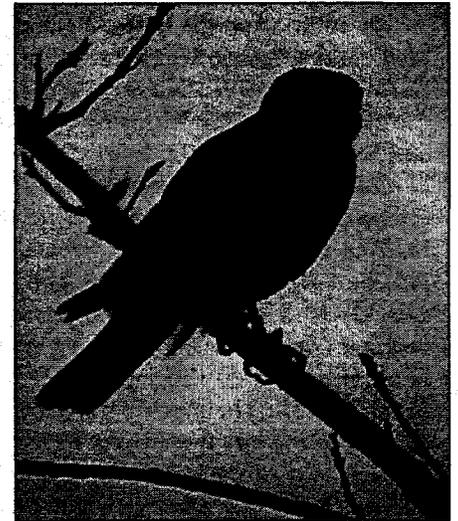
Purple Finches were present in scattered locations. The high was 20 on 2/5 at Hunt Ridge feeders (CSt). A yellow/orange **House Finch** turned up in Swansfield, w. Col. 1/13 (JTv). **Common Redpolls** made cameo appearances twice: two (one male) on 12/15 and 12/16 on Narrow Wind Way (T&EE) and two males on 2/13 and 2/15 on Sandchain (JC) (both locations e. Col.). **Three Pine Siskins** were reported in central Howard County 2/4 (M&GMcC). The peak **American Goldfinch** concentration was 66 on 2/11 at Wynfield (RC).

AUTUMN BIRD RECORDS (Continued from page 2.)

HCMC—Howard County Midwinter Count, February 4
 MPEA—Middle Patuxent Environmental Area
 UMDCF—University of Maryland Central Farm
 SP—State Park

Observers: **EAR**—Elaine Arnold, **SAR**—Stan Arnold, **GA**—Glenn Austin, **SBR**—Stephen Braude, **RB**—Rod Burley, **SB**—Sue Buswell, **JC**—Jane Coskren, **TDC**—T. Dennis Coskren, **RC**—Ralph Cullison III, **WE**—Wes Earp, **EE**—Erin Eve, **TE**—Tracy Eve, **JFr**—Jeff Friedhoffer, **JG**—Jane Geuder, **RG**—Ralph Geuder, **EGs**—Ed Goss, **KGr**—Kevin Graff, **BHm**—Beth Heimlich, **RHm**—Ralph Heimlich, **EHn**—Elaine Hendricks,

BHi—Bill Hill, **GHi**—Gayle Hill, **HH**—Hans Holbrook, **EH**—Emy Holdridge, **DHo**—David Holmes, **SLg**—Shashi Lengade, **ML**—Mike Leumas, **FL**—Felicia Lovelett, **NM**—Nancy Magnusson, **GMcC**—Grazina McClure, **MMcC**—Mike McClure, **EMe**—Elayne Metter, **RMu**—Rodney Mulchansingh, **SN**—Sue Neri, **DOI**—Daryl Olson, **MO'S**—Michael O'Sullivan, **BO**—Bonnie Ott, **BPj**—Bruce Peterjohn, **BPt**—Bart Pitts, **SPr**—Suzanne Probst, **RR**—Robert Ringler, **GR**—Gina Ruk, **KS**—Kurt Schwarz, **JSh**—Jay Sheppard, **JS**—Jo Solem, **CSt**—Chuck Stirrat, **RTr**—Robin Tress, **WTr**—Will Tress, **KT**—Kate Tufts, **JTv**—June Tveekrem, **MW**—Mark Wallace, **CW**—Carol Wilkinson, **JW**—Jim Wilkinson.



Merlin photo taken by Ralph Geuder February 4, 2006.

TWENTY-FIRST HOWARD COUNTY MIDWINTER COUNT, FEBRUARY 4, 2006

BY JOANNE SOLEM AND JOSEPH BYRNES

Twenty previous Midwinter Counts have produced most types of unpleasant winter weather: heavy snow, slippery roads, freezing rain, and blustery northwest winds. Heavy rain was a new twist. Foresighted observers started early. Lowering clouds and flying mist marked the early hours. By mid-morning, periods of drizzle and showers had begun; by early afternoon the low had overspread the county with downpours and wind. For the majority of field birders (including the compilers), it became a half day count (never let it be said birders don't know enough to come in out of the rain). Some counters took to their cars and managed to add species. A few intrepid souls slogged along on foot. Despite challenging weather conditions and a truncated day for most observers, the results were not disappointing. Field observers did an excellent job of pulling out species. Feeder watchers complained, however, that the rain did not bring an influx of birds to their feeders. They would have preferred snow.

The mast crop a year ago was poor and most non-running water was frozen in early February 2005. In contrast, this winter's mast crop was good, fruit was plentiful, and water was open. Did these conditions translate into record highs? Well, yes and no. The total species count was a respectable 89 (all-time high 94; low 78). Last year, new low species counts (eight) outnumbered new high counts (one). This year, there were seven new highs and eight new lows. We also added a new species, Cackling Goose at two locations (K. Graff, M. Leumas; D. Olson, R. Ringler).

The high counts were Bufflehead 22, Common Merganser 1,069, Bald Eagle 11, Merlin 2, Brown Creeper 59, Eastern Towhee 150, and White-throated Sparrow

2,206. Despite open water, waterfowl numbers were generally low. Common Mergansers, however, did benefit from open reservoirs as their total was more than twice the previous high of 430 in 2002. Bald Eagles wintered in unprecedented numbers in this Piedmont county. Near Triadelphia Reservoir alone, several observers in the course of the winter counted eight or nine individuals based on perched adults and plumage differences of immature birds. Eight were present on count day. Now that a nest has been discovered in the Halethorpe area of Baltimore County, the eagles seen along the Patapsco River are not necessarily wandering from distant locations. Merlin is such an unusual species in winter that just one previous count (2004) had logged one. This year, several wintered in the county and two were tallied (one photographed) on the count. The most intriguing sightings were in Area 3. A Merlin was seen initially at Alpha Ridge Park at 8:30 a.m., then was sighted three times at the adjoining landfill, and was last noted at 10:00 a.m. flying north (Cullison). At 11:00 a.m. it was found perched near Green Clover Dr and Rt. 99 (less than two miles away). Eventually, it took off in a northerly direction (W&R Tress). The second one was spotted at Sewell's Orchard, e. Columbia (Wilkinson). A new Brown Creeper high was interesting on a rainy day. An even more surprising high was that of Eastern Towhee. Last year's 64 was a new high; the 150 this year more than doubled that. Not easy to explain for a species that some people believe is in decline. The new high of 2,206 White-throated Sparrows was unanticipated since feeder watchers did not have significant numbers; in fact, the 14 feeders contributed only 30!

(Midwinter Count continues on page 4.)

In addition to the highs, eight species notched second-high counts: Lesser Scaup 11, Pileated Woodpecker 49, Carolina Wren 396, Winter Wren 25 (tied-[t]), Gray Catbird 3 (t), Cedar Waxwing 864, Field Sparrow 219, and Song Sparrow 792.

Balancing the new highs were eight lows: Pied-billed Grebe 1 (t), Northern Harrier 1 (t), Red-tailed Hawk 34, Herring Gull 7, Great Black-backed Gull 1 (t), Eastern Phoebe 1 (t), Northern Mockingbird 122, and Common Grackle 36. Hawk lows could probably be chalked off to weather conditions since nothing was soaring. Gull numbers continue their slide and unpredictability without an active landfill. The mockingbird low is curious. The totals of each of the last three years have been the lowest since the first year of the count. Last year had fewer party hours and miles, but the weather was more conducive to counting. This year's fruit crop was better and party miles and hours were up, but still the species hit an all-time low. Are we ignoring mockingbirds or are they truly in decline? There were no known blackbird roosts in the county and totals were minimal. A low count for any blackbird species is probably a cause for rejoicing, though the fluctuating nature of such totals cannot be considered indicative of any trends.

There were five next-to-lowest numbers: Green-winged Teal 2 (t), Ruddy Duck 2 (t), American Kestrel 3, Great Horned Owl 2 (t), and Eastern Meadowlark 4 (t). Two years ago American Kestrel hit an all-time low of one; last year they rebounded to 11. We hope this year's three is a weather-related blip involving coverage and visibility. Based on other reports during the winter, Great Horned Owls are in better shape than the reported two would indicate. Eastern Meadowlarks continue to suffer from loss of habitat which impacts wintering as well as breeding numbers. They were missed entirely three of the preceding five years; the other two years just one was found. Although meadowlarks are sensitive to severe winters, that's not likely to have been the problem for each of the last six years.

Although House Finch numbers are not yet approaching the heady numbers of a dozen years ago, the 456 this year is the highest since 2003, a slow rebound from the low of 266 in 2005. Canada Goose numbers have been adjusted to attempt to reduce multiple counting for these mobile birds, but there is no claim that the number is accurate. A roost of vultures in Long Reach, e. Columbia, from which birds departed in all directions, forced changes in reported numbers in Areas 5, 6 and 7. No species were missed that had been seen on all previous 20 counts.

Seventeen feeder watchers at 14 feeders were valuable. Substantial additions were the only 2 Great Horned Owls, 1 Eastern Screech-Owl, 1 Gray Catbird, 83 American Goldfinches, 1 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 5 Red-breasted Nuthatches, and 1 Purple Finch, plus additions to other species.

Despite less than optimal conditions, the number of participants was up along with foot and car miles and hours. What an intrepid group!

Organizing and executing a countywide event involving more than 80 participants, a compilation, and a tally dinner is no small task. Any number of people contributed to the success of this count. This year Joe Byrnes volunteered to become co-compiler and, under Emy Holdridge's tutelage, assumed the organizational responsibilities that are so essential to the smooth operation of the day. Each area captain (boldfaced on the list below) organized his or her field observers for maximum coverage and then compiled the data in a timely manner. Chuck Stirrat was a vital link in the publication of the results with his valuable data entry. Although the majority of participants are local birders, each year brings individuals from neighboring counties. We appreciate each and every one! Special thanks this year to Jeff and Karen Culler, our tally dinner hosts. Their warm hospitality was welcome after a cold, wet day. The presence of the *Washington Post* reporter and photographer at the tally added to the festivities. Everyone who spent time in the field deserves a hand. We are, of course, grateful to the many organizations and individuals who provided land permission. Thanks to the efforts of so many, a soggy day was a success and finished on a high note.

If you are ready to participate again, make a note to save **Saturday, February 3, 2007.**

Twenty-first Midwinter Count Participants: *Area 1. **Mark Wallace***, Lisa Colangelo, Susan Earp, Wes Earp, Tom Feild, Bill Hill, Gayle Hill, Diane Nagengast (f), Daryl Olson, Robert Ringler, Jay Sheppard; *Area 2. **Ward Ebert***, Nancy Magnusson, Bill Kidwell (f), Peter Osenton, Ron Polniaszek, Tom Strikwerda; *Area 3. **Dave & Maureen Harvey***, Joe Byrnes, Ralph Cullison III, John Finedore, Felicia Lovelett, Tom Miller, Robin Tress, Will Tress. *Area 4. **Mike McClure***, Randy Beaton, Bill Blum, Karan Blum, Marge Cullison (f), Kevin Graff, Patsy Kennan (f), Mike Leumas, Grazina McClure, Jim McGibney, Romayne Smith, Chuck Stirrat; *Area 5. **Kevin Heffernan***, Jack Anderson (f), Jane Anderson (f), John Blaisdell (f), Ellen Bryson (f), Hal Bryson (f), Marty Chestem, Karen Darcy, Jeffrey Friedhoffer, Shashi Lengade, Carol Newman, Chandler Robbins, Karen Salvini, Jacqueline Stanford (f), June Tveekrem (f), Ginny Walker, Jordan Wilkerson, Michele Wright; *Area 6. **Bonnie Ott***, Elaine Arnold, Stan Arnold, Monika Botsai, Susan Buswell (f), Jane Geuder, Ralph Geuder, Jane Heim (f), Dave Kubitsky, Brigitte Lund, Elayne Metter (f), Jeff Metter (f), Anita Picco, Suzanne Probst; *Area 7. **Kurt Schwarz***, Mary Ann Beverly (f), Dennis Coskren, Jane Coskren, Erin Eve, Tracy Eve, Beth Heimlich (f), John McKitterick, Sue Neri, Bob Solem, Jo Solem, Ralph Stokes, Eva Sunell, Jim Wilkinson. Tally hosts: **Jeff and Karen Culler.**

Area coordinators are in boldface; (f) is primarily a feeder watcher. Field observers who also counted their feeders are listed as field only; any counter who had responsibilities in more than one area is listed once.

Howard County Winter Bird Count - February 4, 2006								
Species / Area No.:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals
Canada Goose	2,439	2,500	406	781	158	106	151	6,541
Cackling Goose	1			1				2
Mute Swan							1	1
Wood Duck	1		3	1	1			6
Gadwall	1					3		4
American Wigeon	23	2						25
American Black Duck	17	9	4	51		4		85
Mallard	98	90	26	66	36	48	139	503
Green-winged Teal						2		2
Canvasback				2	4			6
Ring-necked Duck	48	9		11	18		54	140
Lesser Scaup	3			8				11
Bufflehead	18	1	1		1		1	22
Common Goldeneye			1					1
Hooded Merganser	10	4	10	18	1	5	4	52
Common Merganser		1,000					69	1,069
Ruddy Duck				2				2
Wild Turkey			8					8
Pied-billed Grebe							1	1
Great Blue Heron	1	1	4	3	5	1	10	25
Black Vulture	34	17	14	3	1	1	13	83
Turkey Vulture	78	24	45	19	2	13	19	200
Bald Eagle (ad/m/unk)		8			2	1		11
Northern Harrier			1					1
Sharp-shinned Hawk			1	1	1	3	1	7
Cooper's Hawk				1	1	1	2	5
Red-shouldered Hawk	8	5	2	6	7	8	8	44
Red-tailed Hawk	7	4	10	2	2	5	4	34
American Kestrel	3							3
Merlin			1				1	2
Killdeer	1				1		1	3
Ring-billed Gull	8	8	176	95	174	8	52	521
Herring Gull			6	1				7
Great Black-backed Gull			1					1
Rock Pigeon	9	3	99	101	1	87	6	306
Mourning Dove	709	47	85	69	56	91	199	1,256
Eastern Screech-Owl		2					1	4
Great Horned Owl	2							2
Barred Owl	5		1	1		1		8
Belted Kingfisher	6		4	1		3	3	17
Red-bellied Woodpecker	42	32	36	15	58	36	62	281
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker			5	2	2	2	5	16
Downy Woodpecker	34	21	36	20	27	45	37	220
Hairy Woodpecker	10	5	5	3	8	2	7	40
Northern Flicker	24	19	27	13	9	17	31	140
Pileated Woodpecker	12	7	9	1	6	8	6	49
Eastern Phoebe					1			1
Blue Jay	80	40	62	48	64	68	155	517
American Crow	1,363	76	242	32	75	62	97	1,947
Fish Crow	22	2	1	3		3		31
Horned Lark	8							8
Carolina Chickadee	86	52	84	68	94	57	119	560
Tufted Titmouse	68	28	65	43	74	82	74	434
Red-breasted Nuthatch	2	2	2	1	5	2	9	23
White-breasted Nuthatch	41	21	20	14	34	31	45	206
Brown Creeper	12	6	13	2	16	6	4	59
Area Code:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals
Carolina Wren	86	34	51	34	48	60	83	396
Winter Wren	10		2		8	1	4	25
Golden-crowned Kinglet	28	6	11	8	35	9	10	107
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1				5	1		7
Eastern Bluebird	50	40	45	33	22	34	4	228
Hermit Thrush	11	4						15
American Robin	41	12	89	57	96	84	92	471
Gray Catbird	2				1			3
Northern Mockingbird	29	14	26	12	12	10	19	122
Brown Thrasher	1							1
European Starling	1,531	211	1,080	433	484	787	490	5,016
Cedar Waxwing	168	98	69	227	167			135
Yellow-rumped Warbler	6	10	1	5	14			13
Eastern Towhee	35	18	17	4	17	31	28	150
American Tree Sparrow			13		17			30
Field Sparrow	38	2	83	39	26	23	8	219
Savannah Sparrow			27					27
Fox Sparrow	1	3		3		1		8
Song Sparrow	137	76	230	134	39	58	118	792
Swamp Sparrow	21	2	1	1	1	1	3	30
White-throated Sparrow	445	209	465	283	230	129	445	2,206
White-crowned Sparrow	5	57						63
Dark-eyed Junco	271	68	209	318	185	256	263	1,570
Northern Cardinal	199	150	137	176	117	87	200	1,066
Red-winged Blackbird	120	7	94	66	3	42	64	396
Eastern Meadowlark			4					4
Common Grackle	6	2			17	7	4	36
Brown-headed Cowbird	10	1			6	6	60	83
Purple Finch	28		1					29
House Finch	177	7	34	45	76	22	95	456
Pine Siskin				3				3
American Goldfinch	127	18	41	49	28	25	140	428
House Sparrow	190	69	98	27	98	48	254	784
Area Total Birds:	10,941	5,174	4,371	3,624	2,754	2,540	3,958	33,362
Area Total Species:	67	55	61	58	58	56	59	89
Area No.:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals
Supplemental Data								
Time Start:	6:45 a	6:50 a	7:00 a	6:50 a	4:45 a	5:00 a	6:00 a	4:45 a
Time Stop:	6:00 p	4:30 p	5:00 p	5:15 p	9:30 p	5:30 p	4:30 p	9:30 p
Hours on Foot:	40.7	17.8	24.5	17.8	30.0	15.0	28.0	173.7
Hours by Car:	10.7	4.8	6.8	7.7	5.2	4.0	8.5	47.7
Miles on Foot:	20.5	15.0	21.9	10.5	28.5	18.5	26.0	140.9
Miles by Car:	122.0	58.0	53.0	81.0	40.0	42.0	83.3	479.3
Hours Feeder Watching:	2.0	4.0		4.0	15.0	14.0	12.0	51.0
Hours Stationary:					.5			.5
Hours "Owling":	3.3				.5			3.8
Miles "Owling":	7.0							7.0
Area Code:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals
Tot. Field Obs. in Area:	10	6	10	10	11	10	11	68
Tot. Field Parties in Area:	8	4	5	4	8	5	8	42
Tot. Feederwatchers:	1	1		3	7	4	2	18
Tot. Feederwatch Parties:	1	1		2	5	3	2	14
Total Observers in Area:	11	7	10	13	18	14	13	84
Tot. Field Pty-Hrs (Reg.):	51.4	22.5	31.3	25.5	35.2	19.0	36.5	221.4
Total Party-Hrs (Feeder):	2.0	4.0		4.0	15.0	14.0	12.0	51.0
Tot. Pty-Hrs (Stationary):					.5			.5
Total Party-Hrs (Owling):	3.3				.5			3.8
Total Party-Hours:	56.7	26.5	31.3	29.5	51.2	33.0	48.5	276.7
Area Code:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals

IN SEARCH OF: NEW GOLDFINCH EDITOR AND ARTIST.

Imagine this on your resume; "Editor of the Howard County Bird Club newsletter." Sounds impressive, doesn't it? We can help make this happen for you if you have good writing skills, basic knowledge of *Microsoft Word*, and access to email. If you are interested in the job, we will provide training and work closely with you to get out your first edition at the end of August.

We are also looking for someone new to produce the newsletter. Sue has offered to create a template of the current newsletter design in either *QuarkXPress* or *Adobe InDesign*. Or, she can provide graphic files that could be imported into alternative publishing programs.

Please contact Kevin Heffernan if interested in either position. Kevin can be reached at 410-997-5366 or KJHeff@aol.com

MAY COUNT IS SATURDAY, MAY 13, 2006

BY KEVIN HEFFERNAN

The Howard County Bird Club holds three bird counts every year: the Fall Count, the Midwinter Count, and the May Count. The May Count is held the second Saturday in May, which is May 13 this year. It is timed to coincide with the peak of the spring migration. This is by far the most exciting time of year for birding. The spring migrants are passing through as they travel north. The summer residents are back. All of them are in their bright spring plumage and all of them seem to be singing particularly early in the morning. If you have never heard the dawn chorus, it is worth getting up early to experience! It only occurs for a few weeks from late April to the end of May. This is also the time of year when you will see or hear the largest number of species. For the past 10 years, we have tallied an average of 147 species in Howard County during the May Count.

For the count, Howard County is divided up into the seven areas shown on the map. Each area has an Area Coordinator (name and phone number listed below) who communicates with the counters, assigns territories, and compiles area results. If you are a beginner, ask to be paired with a more experienced birder. Since the point is to tally every individual bird, extra eyes and ears are helpful. If you desire to see a particular species, give me a call (Kevin Heffernan 410-418-8731) and I will try to place you in a location where you might have a good chance of seeing that bird.

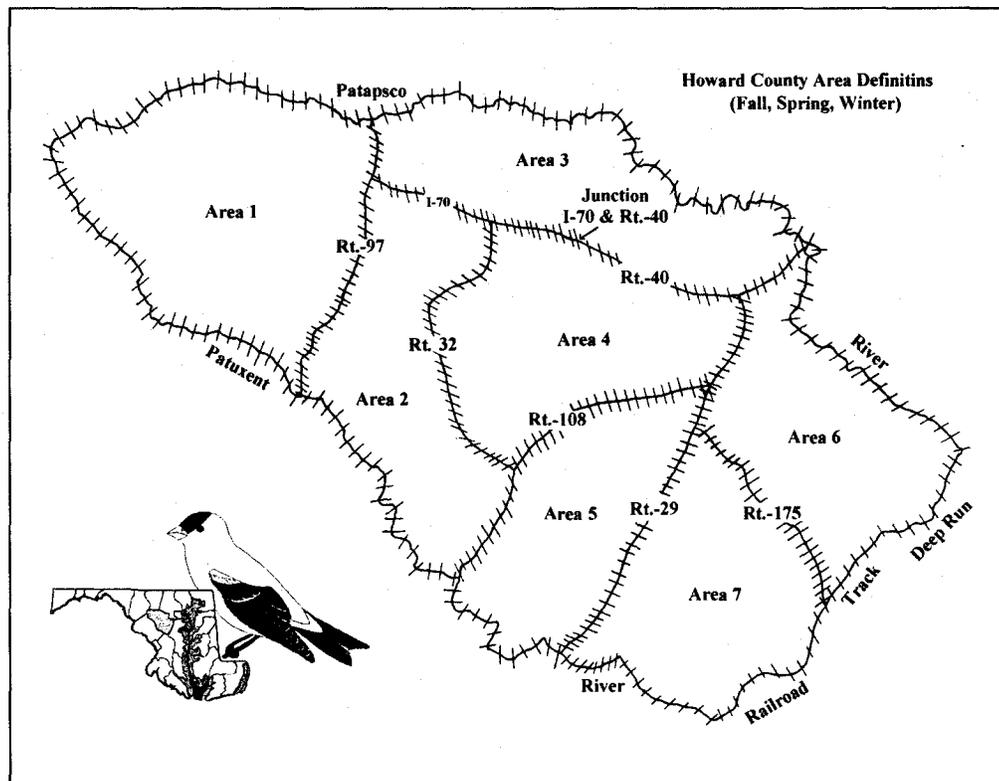
Area 1	Kate Tufts	410-489-7052
Area 2	Kevin Heffernan	410-418-8731
Area 3	Chuck Stirrat	410-531-2417
Area 4	Mike McClure	410-531-2780
Area 5	Karen Darcy	443-857-1789
Area 6	Bonnie Ott	410-461-3361
Area 7	Jo Solem	301-725-5037

A spring checklist is included in this newsletter. This year is the fifth and final season for the Maryland Breeding Bird Atlas. Those species that are within the "safe dates" are shown on the checklist with an asterisk. Even if you do not have an atlas block to survey, you can help by noting any kind of courtship or nesting behavior. Please write down the behavior and carefully note the precise location. All such data, as well as sightings of species that are within the safe dates, are useful for the atlas. This is an extremely important project for the MOS and for the

Howard chapter, and all support provided is immensely appreciated.

At the end of the day, all counters are invited to Jan Randle's house for a tally rally. It is a great opportunity to relax, swap stories of the day, and find out what everyone else has seen. Call Jan in advance (410-531-6296) and let her know how many are coming from your party and your choice of food or beverage to bring. Dinner will begin by 7 PM and the tally will start at 8 PM. The completed checklist must be turned in to the area coordinators at the tally rally. If you cannot make it, be sure that your checklist gets delivered or gets called in to Jan by 7 PM.

If you have thought of volunteering for a count, but haven't for some reason, this is the time to try it.



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, May 11 "Costa Rican Natural History," by Dennis and Jane Coskren. Costa Rica has a mix of northern and southern *biotas*, where many of our familiar birds mingle in winter with the more exotic denizens of rain and cloud forests. Club members Dennis and Jane will share slides and experiences from their latest excursion.

HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB SPRING 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.

BIG DAY

May 6, Saturday.

Big Day is back! All day listing extravaganza! Limit: 12 people. Plan to spend the day hiking around the county in search of as many species as possible. All types of footwear needed. Bring food and drinks. Brief lunch stop planned. Facilities available at certain locations.

Call Bonnie to sign up, 410-461-3361.

HENRYTON, BIRDS AND WILDFLOWERS

May 9, Tuesday, 8:30 a.m. (half day)

Meet at end of Henryton Rd.

Mostly flat trail along Patapsco River. Peak of migration and numerous wildflowers. Trail may be muddy in spots. No facilities. Leaders—Bob and Jo Solem 301-725-5037.

BLUE MASH TRAIL, MONTGOMERY COUNTY

May 20, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. (half day)

Meet at Broken Land Parkway WEST lot.

Visit this Mont. Co. park that holds the potential for a wide variety of species. Terrain is fairly level but trails may be very muddy. Waterproof footwear is encouraged. Plan on four hours at Blue Mash and another hour at Greenbridge and Brighton Dam on the way home. The latter have facilities. Plan to return to the park-and-ride by 12:30 p.m. We will be looking for late waterfowl, shorebirds, Northern Bobwhites, Cliff Swallows, and songbirds.

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.

May 25, Thursday

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

MAY COUNT

May 13, Saturday.

(See article on page 6.)



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB
Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society
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Columbia, MD 21044
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May/June 2006—Inside This Issue:

Winter Bird Records	Board Meetings Schedule
21 st Annual Midwinter Count	Potluck Thanks
Editor for Goldfinch	Dragonfly Count
May Count Announcement	May Count Checklist
Programs and Field Trips	

POTLUCK THANKS

BY SUZANNE PROBST

Thanks to everyone for making our potluck dinner such an enjoyable success! Personally, I always look forward to the yummy dishes and great slide presentations that are the highlight of the evening. And this year was no exception—thanks to all who brought lots of good food and fantastic slides.

“Many hands make light work,” but I want to give a special thank you to several members who, year after year, volunteer their services to help make it so much fun for the rest of us. Thanks to **Marty Chestem**, who produces those wonderful “bird cartoon” place mats. I also want to thank **Monika and Rod Botsai** for bringing the sodas and ice, and who continue to provide me with their much appreciated “technical advice.”

Many thanks also go to the members who were kind enough to come early to set up the room and/or stay late to clean up. They include: **Monika and Rod Botsai, Marty Chestem, Eileen Clegg, Karen Darcy, Wes and Sue Earp, Jeff Friedhoffer, Dave and Maureen Harvey, Kevin Heffernan, Emy Holdridge, Patsy Kennan, Tom Miller, Sue Neri, Bonnie Ott, Phill Probst, Kurt Schwarz, Bob and Jo Solem, Chuck Stirrat, Sheri Tomlinson, Kate Tufts, and Lilly Zuberi.** I also want to give a special “thank you” to **Tom Miller and Jeff Friedhoffer** who coordinated the digital slide presentations.

With such great food, fabulous slides, and wonderful company, I look forward to joining all of you at next year’s potluck dinner!

FIRST HOWARD COUNTY DRAGONFLY COUNT

Saturday July 29
(rain date August 5)

For odonate enthusiasts or those interested in learning about these fascinating insects. Format is similar to bird counts. Teams of observers (experienced matched with inexperienced) will cover representative habitats in many parts of the county.

Tally and dinner afterward at
June Tveekrem’s.

To sign up or for more information, contact June at
JuneTvee@toad.net or
410-715-3979.