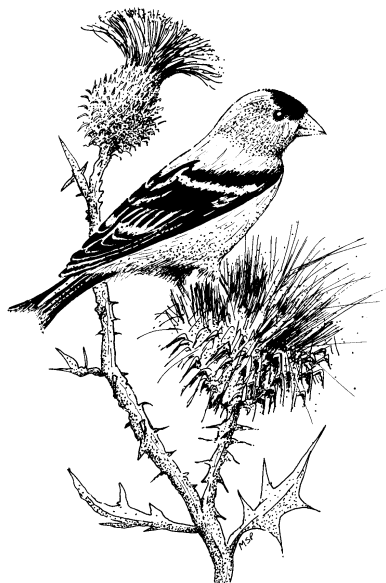


The Goldfinch

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 September/October 2007 issue is July 25, 2007.**

Amanda Witt, *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 sent to:
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Please visit the Club's website at www.howardbirds.org

WINTER BIRD RECORDS DECEMBER 1, 2006 TO FEBRUARY 28, 2007

BY JOANNE SOLEM

Winter was both unusually mild (until mid-January) and unusually cold (the month of February). Perhaps the odd weather patterns produced some of the noteworthy birds: Long-tailed Duck, Double-crested Cormorant, Bonaparte's Gull, Common Raven, Tree Swallow, Snow Bunting, and Baltimore Oriole.

Although there was open water well into January, waterfowl were not spectacular. **Snow Geese** were limited to two reports, both on 1/7: Waterford Farm 2 wh. (**WE,MW**) and Centennial Park 2 bl. (**J&CW**). **Cackling Geese** were reported at Centennial from two on 12/9 (**KS**) to one on 12/15 (**SSf,GFr,PNo**); also on 12/9, four were at Johns Hopkins APL and one at Brighton Dam (**BHb, TFe, FJ**). Normally scarce **Gadwalls** were reported in three locations from four on 12/4 at Triadelphia Reservoir (**BHi**) to one on 2/27 at Race Road wetlands (**SSw**). Occasionally, wild **Mallards** put in a brief appearance. On 12/5 there were 170 in a large flock on Triadelphia which spooked easily and did not linger (**EH,JS**). Four **Green-winged Teal** were recorded 1/4 at Race Rd (**EH,JS**); two were at Centennial 2/28 (**BO**). **Redheads** are a choice species

with two on 2/3 at Centennial (**ML**), one on 2/5 at Lake Elkhorn (**SN**), six on 2/10 at Brighton Dam quarry pond (**BHi**), and one on 2/13 at Centennial (**JS**). Good numbers of **Ring-necked Ducks** stayed in Triadelphia's coves until freeze-up--the 365 on 12/30 at Big Branch was the second highest number ever (**EH**). Single **Long-tailed Ducks** were noted 12/4 (1 m.) and 12/9 (1 f.) on Triadelphia (**BHi**); one on 2/11 was at the Brighton Dam quarry pond (**JS,EH**). Sixteen **Hooded Mergansers** at a Daisy Rd pond on 1/4 were a nice find (**KT**). **Common Merganser** numbers were slow to build with the first one at Lake Elkhorn on 12/2 (**J&RS**). By 2/3 Howard County Midwinter Count (HCMC), 550 were counted at Triadelphia (**WEb,RPo**) and 150 were present at Duckett Reservoir (**JC,JS**), a lower total than any of the previous three winters. As usual, **Red-breasted Mergansers** were scarce with one at Elkhorn 12/2 (**JTv**) to 12/9 (**MSt,BMi**) and one on 2/3 west of Rocky Gorge dam (**JC**).

Two **Wild Turkeys** were seen on 2/3: one along the Patuxent River north of MD 94 (**RR**) and a second at Bon Secours on Marriotts-
(Records continued on page 2)

(Records continued from page 1)
ville Rd (RC). Prior to this winter there was a single December **Double-crested Cormorant** record. This season one was reported 12/5 on Triadelphia (EH,JS) and one 12/18-29 at Wilde Lake (SPe). At the latter location, there were two juv. on 1/7 (JS) and one on 1/11 (SPe) for the first January records. On 2/3 there was one juv. at Rocky Gorge dam to complete sightings in each of the winter months (JC,JS).

On 2/3, the vulture roost near Oakland Mills High School held 326 **Turkey Vultures** and 26 **Blacks** (JMCK). An **Osprey** eating a fish near Lime Kiln Pond on 12/21 was the second latest date (KMr). The most exciting raptor news was the verification of a new **Bald Eagle's** nest on a farm south of Hardy Rd. In addition to the usual stout sticks, the nest featured a few corn stalks as nesting material (W&SE-ph 2/18). This brings to four the number of nests in the county—a total which would have been beyond anyone's wildest dreams even a few years ago! On 12/11, a **Cooper's Hawk** killed a squirrel in a Sandchain, E. Columbia yard, then spent almost two hours on the ground eating it in the shelter of a brush pile (JC). A **Merlin** on 12/24 along Old Frederick Rd (JW) and a **Peregrine Falcon** on 12/16 at the University of Maryland Central Farm (UMDCF) (W&SE) were excellent winter birds.

Snipe wintered in good numbers with seven on 2/3 HCMC: six at UMDCF (MMcC,RSm) and one at Mihm's on Morgan Station Rd (W&SE). **Bonaparte's Gulls** were scarce in 2006 so the lone bird on 12/7 at Brighton Dam was a real

treat (JS,EH). The **Great Black-backed Gull** spotted briefly at Centennial 12/4 was the only report this season (JTv). An **Eastern Screech-Owl** roosted in a nest box at Hallmark for most of the winter (WEb). A **Great Horned Owl** on a nest was noticed in a large oak tree on Snowden River Parkway on 2/14 (PNm). Other Great Horneds were reported by PB,SBg,JBy,KD/KHf,JW. A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** appeared at Talbot's Landing 12/1 (R&JG); one or two spent the season east of Fore Bay Pond (SN; JW). **Common Ravens** continued to catch the eye of local birders. One was counted over Bon Secours on Marriottsville Rd 2/3 (RC). The high count of **Horned Larks** was 28 on 12/12 at Western Regional Park (BHi).

One of the more bizarre records this winter was that of a **Tree Swallow** observed in flight over the milk plant in southern Howard County 2/3 (JTv). Autumn 2006 had just set a new late date of 11/23 for this species, but that's a far cry from a county winter record—altogether an astonishing report.

Red-breasted Nuthatch sightings could be counted on one hand: 12/14 (KHf,KD), 12/23 (WEb), 1/1 (B&GHi), and 2/20 (EMe). A **Brown Creeper** roosted on a tree trunk in a yard in Hammond Village from at least mid-January well into March (GC). A pair of **Carolina Wrens** spent most winter nights in a Hallmark garage, leaving when the door was raised each morning (WEb). **Golden-crowned Kinglet** numbers were low as evidenced by a countywide total of five on 2/3 HCMC. One **Gray Catbird** at Centennial 2/3

(ML) and a **Brown Thrasher** at Stone Hill 2/16 (KLz) reflected the mild and open early winter weather. February's ice and snow storms, however, brought strange birds to yards and feeders including an **American Pipit** photographed along a driveway east of Browns Bridge on 2/25 (GW). A **Pine Warbler** on 2/3 near Hipsley Mill Rd and Jones Rd was a pleasant surprise (JSh,MSz). Even more surprising was a Pine Warbler which spent the second consecutive winter at an Allview feeder (JMCK).

Chipping Sparrows are scarce winter birds. There were three on 12/2 at Western (JW), six on 2/3 HCMC (MW; CSt), and three/four at Wynfield much of the winter (RC). **Savannah Sparrows** wintered in good numbers with 97 on 2/3 HCMC. As usual, **Fox Sparrow** numbers jumped in mid-February; four to six were present at Crisscross Ct, E. Columbia 2/13-26 (MJB). The **Dark-eyed Junco** countywide total on 2/3 was a record-setting 2,199 for HCMC. The small flock (<10) of **Snow Buntings** seen at Alpha Ridge Landfill in November was spotted again on 1/8 (PNm).

Few large blackbird flocks were reported except for a mixed flock of mostly **Common Grackles** that streamed past the US 29/St. Johns Lane area for more than 15 minutes on 12/31 (JPM). **Eastern Meadowlarks** were almost missed with one on Union Chapel Rd 1/7 (WE,MW) and one on 2/3 HCMC (LC,KT). Single **Rusty Blackbirds** were noted 2/9 at Trotter Rd (W&SE) and 2/23 at Elkhorn (JW).

(Records continued from page 2)

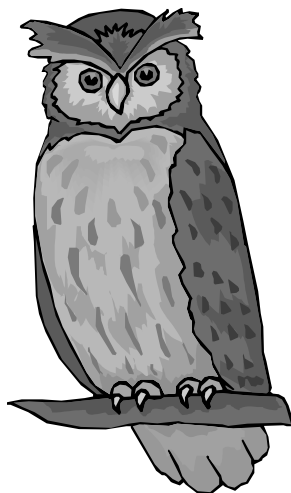
The number of wintering **Baltimore Orioles** was unprecedented. A male was present in a Wilde Lake yard 1/7-17 (**SPr-ph**); a male was seen 1/7-3/2 at Timberleigh (**DN-ph.**; **CFr**), a male was reported on 2/3 HCMC at Burleigh Manor (**JHp**), and a first year female showed up 2/13-20 at the same Wilde Lake location which had hosted the male earlier (**SPr-ph**). The males at Wilde Lake and Burleigh Manor may have been the same bird; because of overlapping dates and distance, the Timberleigh male could not have been the same bird. The Wilde Lake orioles feasted on peanut suet and sunflower chips; the Timberleigh bird dined on suet, hulled sunflower, and a suet/peanut butter mix. It also used a heated birdbath.

Northern invasives were hard to find. A **Purple Finch** 11/19 and a **Pine Siskin** 12/30 at a feeder on Duvall Rd (**KT**) were the only reports received.

Unfortunately, one of the nicest birds of the winter just missed being a seasonal highlight. On 12/16, a Greater White-fronted Goose was observed from Brighton Dam taking off with a flock of Canada Geese (**MHw,DZ**) and flying "towards Howard County or the upper section of the Reservoir." (Sheppard). Because it was not actually seen in the county, this record remains a Montgomery County bird only.

Observers: **PB** – Paul Bacich, **SBg** – Scott Berglund, **MJB** – Mary-Jo Betts, **JBy** – Joe Byrnes, **GC** – George Chase, **LC** – Lisa Colangelo, **JC** – Jane Coskren, **RC** – Ralph Cullison III, **KD** – Karen

Darcy, **SE** – Sue Earp, **WE** – Wes Earp, **Web** – Ward Ebert, **TFe** – Tom Feild, **CFr** – Cathy Franklin, **GFz** – Gail Frantz, **JG** – Jane Geuder, **RG** – Ralph Geuder, **JHp** – Jim Happel, **KHf** – Kevin Heffernan, **BHi** – Bill Hill, **GHi** – Gayle Hill, **EH** – Emmalyn Holdridge, **MHw** – Marshall Howe, **BHb** – Bill Hubick, **FJ** – Frode Jacobsen, **ML** – Mike Leumas, **KLz** – Kathy Litzinger, **KMr** – Kathy Mariano, **MMcC** – Mike McClure, **JMcK** – John McKittrick, **EMe** – Elayne Metter, **BMi** – Barry Miller, **JPM** – J. Phil Morgan, **DN** – Diane Nallengast, **SN** – Sue Neri, **PNo** – Paul Noell, **PNm** – Phil Norman, **BO** – Bonnie Ott, **SPe** – Sherry Peruzzi, **RPo** – Ron Polniaszek, **SPr** – Sue Probst, **RR** – Robert Ringler, **SSf** – Steve Sanford, **KS** – Kurt Schwarz, **SSw** – Steve Schwemmer, **JSh** – Jay Sheppard, **RSm** – Romayne Smith, **JS** – Jo Solem, **RS** – Robert Solem, **MSt** – Michelle Stewart, **CSt** – Chuck Stirrat, **MSz** – Marcy Stutzman, **KT** – Kate Tufts, **JTv** – June Tveekrem, **GW** – Ginny Walker, **MW** – Mark Wallace, **CW** – Carol Wilkinson, **JW** – Jim Wilkinson, **DZ** – Dick Zusi. ph. – photograph. HCMC – Howard County Midwinter Count.



POTLUCK THANKS

BY SUE PROBST

Thanks to everyone who helped to make this year's potluck dinner another great success! Once again, I had a lot of great volunteers, but I want to give a special "thank you" to several members who, year after year, have volunteered their services to help make it so much fun for the rest of us. Thanks to Marty Chestem, who produces those wonderful "bird cartoon" placemats, which have truly become a potluck tradition. I also want to thank Monika and Rod Botsai who always take care of the sodas and floral centerpieces. I especially want to thank Monika for the expert advice and support that she gives me! Finally, I am *extremely* grateful to Tom Miller for his technical expertise in running our slide show!

Many thanks also go to the many 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, Joe Byrnes, Marty Chestem, Karen Darcy, Wes and Sue Earp, Jeff Friedhoffer, Ralph and Jane Geuder, Dave and Maureen Harvey, Kevin Heffernan, Emy Holdridge, Tom and Peggy Miller, Sue Neri, Daryl Olson, Bonnie Ott, Phill Probst, Chuck Stirrat, and Sherry Tomlinson.

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

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 Kevin Heffernan, 410-418-8731.

Thursday, May 10, 2007

“Birding in Belize,” by Kevin Heffernan and Karen Darcy. Club members, Kevin and Karen recently took a birding tour to Belize which provided a fun, but not overwhelming introduction to tropical birding. Species included are birds whose names start with “ant” through trogons and toucans.

HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB SUMMER 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 howard-birds.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; 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.

BEGINNER'S BIRD WALK

May 6, Sunday 8:30 a.m. 2 hours
Meet at Meadowbrook Park. Park entrance is 1/4 mile west of MD 100 Park and Ride Lot. Meet in the southwest corner of parking lot (below hawk watch site). Walk the paved paths of this new county park. Learn basic bird identification skills and binocular use. Facilities available. *Leaders- Mike and Grazina McClure 410-531-2780.*

MAY COUNT

May 12, Saturday. (See page 8 for details.)

WEEKDAY WALK AT HENRYTON RD

May 18, Friday 8:00 a.m. 2 hours
Meet at the river at the end of Henryton Rd, north of MD 99. Easy walking along the river for nesting Worm-eating and Yellow-throated warblers. Wonderful area for a variety of woodland birds. No facilities. *Leaders- Joe Byrnes 410-730-5329 and Jeff Culler.*

ROCKBURN BRANCH PARK

May 19, Saturday half day
Meet at second lot on left just past gate. Moderate walking through the county's largest park. Woodlands, streams, ponds and fields should provide a wide variety of species.

Leader- Kevin Heffernan 410-418-8731.

MARRIOTSVILLE ROAD

May 20, Sunday 7:30 a.m. half day
Meet in gravel lot off Marriotsville Road on the left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks, before crossing the river. Joint trip with the Carroll County Bird Club. Moderate walking along the river. No facilities
Leader- Bob Ringler 410-549-6031.

HOT SPOTS FOR RED KNOTS, EPISODE II

May 26, Saturday 6:00 a.m. all day.
Meet at the Broken Land Parkway/ MD 32 Park and Ride West lot. Joint trip with the Montgomery
(Field Trips continued on page 5)

(Field Trips continued from page 4)
 County Bird Club. We will concentrate on the middle Delaware Bay shore, beginning at Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge with numerous accesses to the Bay, as well as the impoundments on Broadkill Rd. We will also visit Mispillion Light, a newly created state refuge for shorebirds. We will work our way north, visiting hotspots such as Ted Harvey Wildlife Management Area, and, time permitting, Bombay Hook NWR. Expect shorebirds, late waterfowl, and gulls. Facilities are available at Prime Hook and Bombay Hook. Short walks from the cars. Mud possible. Bring bug repellent, drinking water, bug repellent, food, bug repellent, sun screen, bug repellent. Note that the water at Bombay Hook continues to be unsuitable for drinking.

The trip will be limited to twelve persons/three cars per chapter. Reserve a spot with one of the leaders. Rendezvous: 9:00 a.m., Prime Hook NWR Visitor Center. Note times are subject to change based on scouting trips. Contact leaders for up-to-date scheduling info.

Leaders: *Cyndia Loeper (MontCo), Kurt Schwarz (HowCo): 410-461-1643 before 8 p.m., kerschwa1@comcast.net.*

PATAPSCO SHRUBLAND

June 2, Saturday, 7:30 a.m.
Meet at 735 River Road (1 mile from either end of River Rd), park by house (right-hand split up long drive). Moderate walking in fields & along mowed paths through brush. We'll be searching for shrubland warblers, vireos, thrushes and other edge species. The bluebird/swallow nest boxes should also be occupied. Bring bug repellent &

sunscreen. Facilities available.
 Leader - *Felicia Lovelett 410-489-7169.*

WEEKDAY WALK AT THE TROLLEY TRAIL

June 6, Wednesday, 8:00 a.m.
Go through Ellicott City on Main St. Immediately after crossing the Patapsco River into Baltimore County, turn left. Drive ~100 yards and turn right into the Oella lot. Easy walking on the paved path of this Baltimore County section of the Patapsco Valley State Park. Mature woodlands should be hosting many nesting species.
 Leader- *Michelle Wright 410-465-6057.*

DRAGONFLY WALK FOR BEGINNERS AT MOUNT PLEASANT

June 9, Sat., 10:00 a.m. 2 hours
Meet in the parking lot at Mt. Pleasant. Co-sponsored by Howard County Conservancy. Learn about these interesting insects and see the newly created wetland on the site, a natural location for dragonflies. Cancelled in case of rain. Facilities at Howard County Conservancy.
 Leaders - *Bob & Jo Solem 301-725-5037, June Treekrem.*

NEST WALK

June 9, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. 3 hours
Meet at West end parking lot on Centennial Lane. This trip will visit Centennial Lake (and perhaps a few other local areas as well) to watch nesting activities of a variety of bird species. We will be discreet so as not to disturb the nesters. Leader - *Tim Ray 410-300-3961.*

DRAGONFLY COUNT


June 16, Saturday. (See page 10 for details.)

DRAGONFLY WALK AT FONT HILL PARK

July 14, Sat., 9:30 a.m. half day.
Meet at the park sign on Font Hill Dr. Search the wetlands of this park for dragonflies and damselflies. Wading not required. No facilities.
 Leaders - *Bob & Jo Solem. 301-725-5037.*

POPLAR ISLAND

Friday, August 24, all day
 Take the boat to Poplar Island and board the bus for a tour of the island with frequent stops for birding. The boat will leave at 10:00 a.m. from Tilghman Island and the tour will last approximately three hours. This should be a great time for shorebirds. Scopes helpful. Reservations required. Information and directions will be supplied when you register. Leader: *Chrissy Ablanese.* Birding leader: *Paul Baicich* Coordinator: *Emy Holdridge.* *Make reservations with the Coordinator at 410-964-0196 or emyh608@verizon.net*

 = Great for beginning birders



SAVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

BY KURT SCHWARZ

The environment and native species are not the only things endangered in the state of Maryland.

Your right to participate in debate over environmental matters could be curtailed or even be taken away under legislation before the State legislature in the 2007 session.

Specifically, Senate Bill 566 (SB566) and House Bill 1072 (HB1072) seek to have proposed wind power projects exempted from obtaining a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity. In other words, no public or environmental review would be required, nor would adjacent property owners have to be advised. A wind power facility would have only to obtain the approval of the state's Public Service Commission, a body that recent events has shown to be subject to the winds

of the current administration. The public would lose all rights to voice concerns.

As I have written before, while wind power does not generate emissions, it is not necessarily green. The winds in Maryland drop off in the summer, as power demands peak. So traditional power-generating capacity, i.e. fossil fuel-burning, would be required to pick up the slack. There would likely be little net reduction in greenhouse gases and other pollutants in the warmer months.

In addition, land must be cleared for the site and access thereto. The best wind generating sites are on ridge tops in western Maryland, which are mostly forested. Habitat crucial for Neotropical migrants would be impacted. And they can

present a big, revolving bird-omatic in the sky, slicing and dicing migrating birds and bats, which migrate along ridge lines. This has been documented at such sites in West Virginia

Wind power sites should be carefully sited, to protect both the environment and the interests for property owners. The only way to ensure that is to allow for public participation. A politically appointed utilities commission cannot be counted on to protect the interests of the environment and individual property owners.

These bills should be opposed not just on environmental grounds, but to protect your rights as citizens as well. As I write this, the bills remain in committee.

DELAWARE BAY SHORE

BY KURT SCHWARZ

The Delmarva Ornithological Society is seeking to raise \$15,000 to purchase 10 acres of Delaware Bay shore adjacent to Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge. They are partnering with the Conservation

Fund, a national non-profit dedicated to purchasing vital wildlife habitat, which will make the actual purchase. The land will then be turned over to Prime Hook for management. The DOS is or-

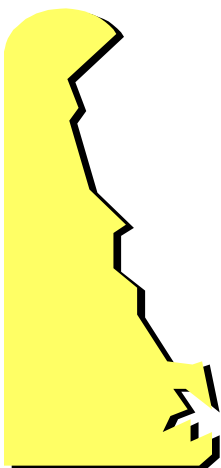
ganizing a bird-a-thon to raise funds for this project. They plan to make this an annual event, with the ultimate intent of purchasing four miles of bayshore.

The primary beneficiaries of this purchase would be the Horseshoe Crab that breeds there, and the shorebirds which feed on the eggs. The rufa subspecies of the Red Knot uses the Delaware Bay as a major staging and refueling stop on its trip to Canadian breeding grounds. The rufa subspecies has been in precipitous decline for some time and has been proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act. The petition was re-

jected, but numbers continue to decline nevertheless.

The Red Knot is also a Maryland bird, and, in fact, is on the Howard County list. This is a chance to benefit an endangered (albeit unofficially) subspecies that is one of our own.

If you wish to support this effort, you can make a check payable to "DOS Bird-A-Thon." Send it to P. O. Box 4247, Greenville DE, 19807. For further details see <http://www.dosbirds.org/bird-a-thon/bat.htm>.



ROOSTING BROWN CREEPER DISAPPEARS

BY GEORGE CHASE

Near sunset one mid-January evening, I watched a Brown Creeper climbing the trunk of a hawthorn tree in my Hammond Village front yard. Once the bird stopped moving it seemed to disappear, and I assumed I had missed its flight elsewhere. A few evenings later the bird once again climbed the tree and disappeared, but this time I searched the area with binoculars and eventually found it roosting in an area where a Downy Woodpecker had chipped away some pieces of bark earlier in the winter. The spot where it spent the night was about 5-6 ft. above the ground. From then until well into March, it returned to the same location almost every evening. I have no idea how long it had been present prior to the time I spotted it. The rust-colored area on its back helped camouflage the bird against the bark. *Photos by June Treekrem.*

Note: to see the photos in color, go to howardbirds.org and click on the photo page to search for Brown Creeper.



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 24, Thursday

Tom Miller
6404 Glasgow Circle
Eldersburg, MD 21784
(410) 795-7005

MAY COUNT IS SATURDAY, MAY 12, 2007

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, which is timed to coincide with the peak of the spring migration, is held on the second Saturday in May. This year it is on May 12th. This is by far the most exciting time of year for birding. The spring migrants are passing through on their way north. The summer residents are back. This is the time of year when you will see or hear the largest number of species. Countywide over the last 10 years, we have tallied an average of 147 species during the May Count.

For the count, Howard County is divided 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 want to see a particular species, give me a call (410-418-8731) and I will try to place you in a location where you might have a good chance of seeing that bird.

At the end of the day, all of the counters are invited to a tally rally at June Tveekrem's house to share what was seen and come up with the county totals. It is a great opportunity to relax, swap stories of the day, and find out what everyone else has seen. (Please note the change in location.) The tally has

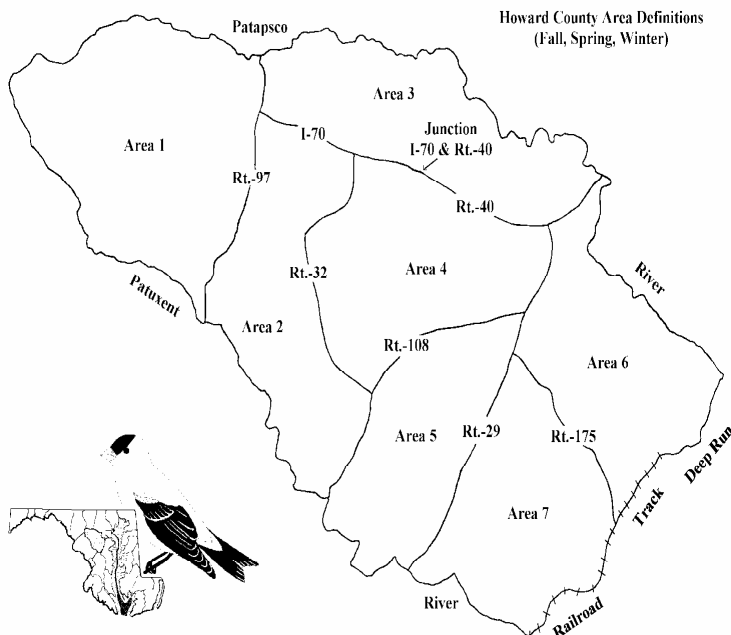
MAY COUNT AREA COORDINATORS

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

been held at Jan Randle's house for the last 23 years. We give a hearty thanks to Jan for hosting the tally for so many years and to June for taking it on this year. Directions to June's house will be provided by the area coordinators. Please call June in advance (410-715-3979) and let her know how many are coming from your party and your choice of food or beverage to bring. Dinner will begin at 7:00 p.m. and the tally will start at 8:00 p.m. 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 by 7:00 p.m. We will find out what rarities were seen and some birders will go out the next day to try to relocate them.

Come join us. We guarantee that you will end the day with sore feet, warbler neck (a condition resulting from looking straight up to the tops of trees looking for elusive warblers), and hat hair. You will be tired and grimy, but you will have seen dozens of beautiful species of birds.



TWENTY-SECOND HOWARD COUNTY MIDWINTER COUNT, FEBRUARY 3, 2007

BY JOANNE SOLEM AND JOSEPH BYRNES

Page 9

A crisp day (20-33°F.), nearly clear skies, little wind, light snow cover and partly open water combined for almost ideal conditions for a midwinter count—a welcome contrast to last year’s torrential rain. Unfortunately, improved conditions for birders did not produce more species. Waterfowl variety was low and irruptives utilized ample food supplies close to their northern breeding grounds. The mediocre 87 total, however, was balanced by the addition of three new species.

New high totals were set by the following: Bald Eagle 16, Wilson’s Snipe 7, White-breasted Nuthatch 226, Savannah Sparrow 97, Swamp Sparrow 50, and Dark-eyed Junco 2,199 (previous high was 1,740). The second highest totals were Common Merganser 700, Cooper’s Hawk 12, Pileated Woodpecker 51, Winter Wren 26, and Chipping Sparrow 6. Fortunately, the 11 species in those two categories outnumbered the nine at the other extreme. Lows were American Black Duck 10, Mallard 297, Red-head 2 (t), Ring-billed Gull 280, Herring Gull 3, Eastern Phoebe 1 (t), Golden-crowned Kinglet 5, and Eastern Meadowlark 1 (t); second lowest was Wild Turkey 2 (t). Common Loon (2) and Pine Warbler (1) were recorded for just the second time.

The addition of three species to the 22 year cumulative species total was perhaps the most significant aspect of this count. After more than two decades, it is a signal event to add one species; three is

exceptional. A Common Raven over Bon Secours followed the 2006 pattern of increased sightings, especially in the Patapsco Valley/I-70 corridor (RC). A Tree Swallow over the milk plant south of Gorman Rd and west of I-95 was unexpected to say the least. A swallow just west of the Fall Line in the middle of winter is unprecedented in this mostly Piedmont county (JTv). Baltimore Oriole was the third new species with reports of two males—one at Burleigh Manor (JHp) and one at Timberleigh (DN). The dates the birds had been present in January and the distances between sites eliminated the possibility that they were the same bird.

American Kestrel numbers continued in single digits with 6 this year, the third lowest total. Carolina Chickadees and Tufted Titmice numbers hit a low in 2004 of 257 and 251 respectively. Their numbers this year were up for the third consecutive winter to 576 and 574. A Gray Catbird and the third highest total of Carolina Wrens (348) substantiated the generally mild winter weather which lasted until mid-January. The House Finch total of 389 was the third lowest. Their numbers still have not returned to pre-2000 levels. As always, there was an attempt to reduce multiple counting of geese, but it is a “best guess” situation. The large vulture roost near Oakland Mills High School was counted in the evening. Most of the birds arrived from the south, east, and northeast under light winds so the only totals that were

impacted were those in the eastern part of the county. At the tally, we asked how many deer had been seen during the day and 14 were reported.

Sixty-five field observers (including welcome guests from Baltimore, Carroll, and Prince George’s counties) were joined by 19 at feeders. Feeder watchers were valuable for adding an E. Screech-Owl, several Red-shouldered, Red-tailed, and Cooper’s hawks, two Golden-crowned Kinglets, and those lovely Baltimore Orioles as well as expected feeder birds.

Count preparations involve much advance planning. Coordinator Joe Byrnes handled the details with diligence and organizational skill. This year he introduced e-mail feeder forms. Each area leader organizes coverage of his or her own area and compiles the field sheets. Their names are deservedly boldfaced in the list below. Results are given to Chuck Stirrat who, with infinite patience and great efficiency, produces tabular results. Karen and Jeff Culler were our gracious hosts for a second year. Our hats are off to them for providing a fitting ending to an exhausting, but always exhilarating, day.

We are grateful for access to many large land parcels including permission from Howard County Dept. of Recreation and Parks, the Howard County Conservancy, and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, as well as many private land-owners.

(Midwinter continued on page 10)

(Midwinter continued from page 9)

Be part of the fun next year! Save Saturday, February 2, 2008.

Twenty-second Midwinter Count Participants: *Area 1. Mark Wallace*, Jim Brinkley, Marilyn Brinkley, Lisa Colangelo, Susan Earp, Wes Earp, Bill Hill, Gayle Hill, Diane Nagengast (f), Robert Ringler, Robert Schaefer, Jay Sheppard, Marcy Stutzman, Robin Todd, Kate Tufts; *Area 2. Ward Ebert*, Bill Kidwell (f), Peter Osen-ton, Ron Polniaszek, Tom Strikwerda, Paul Zucker; *Area 3. Dave & Maureen Harvey, Joe Byrnes* (count co-compiler), Jeff Culler (f), Ralph Cullison III, Karen Darcy

(f), John Finedore, Linda Holley (f), Lynn Holley (f), Felicia Lovellett, Tom Miller, Sherry Tomlinson, Will Tress, Robin Tress; *Area 4. Mike McClure*, Bill Blum, Karan Blum, Jim Happel (f), Patsy Kennan (f), Mike Leumas, Jim McGibney, Romaine Smith, Chuck Stirrat. *Area 5. Kevin Hef-fernan*, John Blaisdell (f), Ellen Bryson (f), Hal Bryson (f), Marty Chestem, William Musser (f), Carol Newman, Chandler Robbins, Marie Skane, Ginny Walker, Michele Wright; *Area 6. Bonnie Ott*, Elaine Arnold, Stan Arnold, Monika Botsai, Susan Buswell (f), Jane Heim (f), Emy Holdridge, Brigitte Lund, Janet Lydon (f), Elayne Metter (f), Jeff Metter (f),

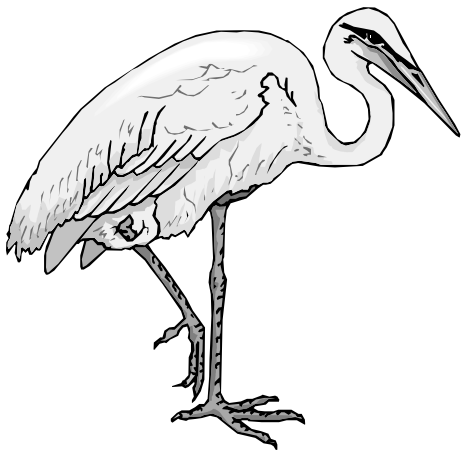
Emily Miller (f), Suzanne Probst; *Area 7. Kurt Schwarz*, Mary Ann Beverly (f), T. Dennis Coskren, Jane Coskren, Erin Eve, Tracy Eve, John McKit-terick, Barry Miller, Sue Neri, Bob Solem, **Jo Solem** (count co-compiler), Michelle Stewart, Ralph Stokes, Eva Sunell, June Tveekrem, Jim Wilkinson. Tally hosts: **Karen** and **Jeff Culler**.

(t) – tied

Area coordinators are in boldface. An (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.

CORRECTION

The number for **All Creatures Great & Small** listed on page 11 of the membership directory is incorrect. The correct number is 410-740-5096.



SECOND ANNUAL HOWARD COUNTY DRAGONFLY COUNT

Saturday June 16, 2007
(Note new date)

No experience needed!

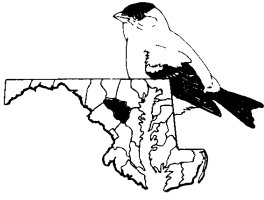
Come enjoy these colorful and interesting creatures.

Each group of observers (with an experienced leader) spends one day visiting ponds and rivers in an assigned region of the county. The group identifies and counts every dragonfly and damselfly seen.

Tally and light meal 4:00 pm
at June Tveekrem's.

To sign up or get more information, contact June at 410-715-3979 or June@SouthernSpreadwing.com

Howard County Winter Bird Count - February 3, 2007																	
Species / Area No.:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals	Species / Area No.:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals
Canada Goose	1,354	3,191	41	2,050	364	272	656	7,928	Carolina Wren	61	42	56	36	54	27	77	353
Mute Swan							1	1	Winter Wren	11	3	4	1		1	6	26
American Wigeon	13							13	Golden-crowned Kinglet				4			1	5
American Black Duck	2			8				10	Eastern Bluebird	128	27	54	29	30	12	37	317
Mallard	46	26	19	59	26	12	109	297	Hermit Thrush	4	2				1	1	8
Canvasback				3				3	American Robin	48		5	4	50	24	243	374
Redhead				2				2	Gray Catbird				1				1
Ring-necked Duck	48	3		48	1		24	124	Northern Mockingbird	66	30	64	25	17	23	43	268
Bufflehead	1						3	4	European Starling	952	397	825	727	64	382	813	4,160
Hooded Merganser	8	1	4	23	2	3	6	47	Cedar Waxwing	1	3	11	11		11	43	80
Common Merganser		550					150	700	Yel.-rump'd (Myrtle) Warbler	3	1		2				6
Red-breasted Merganser							1	1	Pine Warbler	1							1
Ruddy Duck	4							4	Eastern Towhee	8	3	9		1	2	17	40
Wild Turkey	1		1					2	American Tree Sparrow	2	1	14				1	18
Common Loon							2	2	Chipping Sparrow	5			1				6
Pied-billed Grebe		3					1	4	Field Sparrow	19	18	49	24	14		8	132
Double-crested Cormorant							1	1	Savannah Sparrow	3		46	48				97
Great Blue Heron	1	2	4	4	3	2	3	19	Fox Sparrow	9	7	4	1	1		4	26
Black Vulture	51	13	44	13	3	3	24	151	Song Sparrow	138	101	264	96	28	22	106	755
Turkey Vulture	64	17	72	34	10	4	322	523	Swamp Sparrow	30	1	13	3			3	50
Bald Eagle [ad/im/unk]	3	7	1				5	16	White-throated Sparrow	496	196	486	181	87	167	230	1,843
Northern Harrier	1						1	2	White-crowned Sparrow	24	20	7					51
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2		3	1		3	2	11	<i>sparrow species</i>		3	6	64			2	75
Cooper's Hawk	3	1	4				4	12	Dark-eyed Junco	620	103	414	306	74	212	470	2,199
<i>accipiter species</i>		2				1	1	4	Northern Cardinal	307	118	188	117	107	150	222	1,209
Red-shouldered Hawk	10	5	8	11	9	10	14	67	Red-winged Blackbird	139	327	218	77	21	362	144	1,288
Red-tailed Hawk	24	7	25	6		4	13	79	Eastern Meadowlark	1							1
<i>buteo species</i>	3		4			1	1	9	Common Grackle	1,883	1,641	1,255	157	829	1,282	22	7,069
American Kestrel	4		2					6	Brown-headed Cowbird	293	45	84	100		15	32	569
American Coot		1		1			1	3	<i>blackbird species</i>			1,652	416	2	6,043		8,113
Killdeer	7						1	8	Baltimore Oriole	1			1				2
Wilson's Snipe	1			6				7	House Finch	69	19	60	20	49	44	144	405
Ring-billed Gull	4	45	6	27	29	39	130	280	American Goldfinch	73	7	36	52	17	98	88	371
Herring Gull		2	1					3	House Sparrow	268	54	120	129	86	106	289	1,052
<i>gull species</i>						1	7	8	Area Total Birds:	10,402	7,605	7,476	5,962	2,440	9,802	5,402	49,089
Rock Pigeon	92	51	35	266	2	41	4	491	Area Total Species:	70	57	60	57	42	44	65	87
Mourning Dove	325	54	109	76	50	119	226	959	Area No.:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals
Eastern Screech-Owl			1		1	1		3	Supplemental Data								
Great Horned Owl		2	2					4	Time Start:	5:55 a	7:00 a	4:30 a	7:15 a	7:15 a	6:30 a	7:00 a	4:30 a
Barred Owl	1		2	1	1		1	6	Time Stop:	6:25 p	11:30 p	4:35 p	5:30 p	4:00 p	5:30 p	5:30 p	11:30 p
Belted Kingfisher	4	1	4	1		2	2	14	Hours on Foot:	26.0	18.3	28.5	24.3	26.5	15.7	32.4	171.7
Red-bellied Woodpecker	38	21	39	21	35	26	38	218	Hours by Car:	7.0	2.8	8.0	5.0	.5	4.8	6.7	34.8
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	3	1	6				6	16	Miles on Foot:	30.5	12.5	28.3	13.9	23.5	18.5	27.6	154.8
Downy Woodpecker	62	25	36	26	36	27	46	258	Miles by Car:	127.0		73.0	75.0	17.0	32.0	78.4	402.4
Hairy Woodpecker	13	6	7	1	4	5	5	41	Hours Feeder Watching:	4.0	3.0	10.5	4.5	8.3	21.0	5.8	57.1
Northern (Yellow-sh'd) Flicker	31	10	10	6	7	16	11	91	Hours Stationary:							2.5	2.5
Pileated Woodpecker	11	10	8	2	6	6	8	51	Hours "Owling":	2.5		1.3			.5		4.3
Eastern Phoebe		1						1	Miles "Owling":	2.3		5.0					7.3
Blue Jay	53	26	45	42	32	48	86	332	Area Code:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals
American Crow	1,270	216	529	100	39	42	76	2,272	Tot. Field Obs. in Area:	14	6	11	7	7	7	14	65
Fish Crow	68		3	4	1		5	81	Tot. Field Parties in Area:	7	4	5	4	5	4	8	37
<i>crow species</i>	815	17	252	366	40	17	23	1,530	Tot. Feederwatchers:	1	1	4	4	5	7	3	19
Common Raven			1					1	Tot. Feederwatch Parties:	1	1	3	3	4	6	2	22
Horned Lark	6		2					8	Total Observers in Area:	15	6	13	10	11	14	15	85
Tree Swallow							1	1	Tot. Field Pty-Hrs (Reg.):	33.0	21.1	36.5	29.3	27.0	20.5	39.1	206.5
Carolina Chickadee	119	54	91	54	82	43	133	576	Total Party-Hrs (Feeder):	4.0	3.0	10.5	4.5	8.3	21.0	5.8	57.1
Tufted Titmouse	118	48	73	49	83	53	150	574	Tot. Pty-Hrs (Stationary):							2.5	2.5
White-breasted Nuthatch	50	14	37	18	41	17	49	226	Total Party-Hrs (Owling):	2.5		1.3			.5		4.3
Brown Creeper	5	3	1		1	1	3	14	Total Party-Hours:	39.5	24.1	48.3	33.8	35.3	42.0	47.4	270.4
Area Code:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals	Area Code:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

6007 Flywheel Court

Columbia, MD 21044

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A CRUSH OF BLUE

BY BILL HILL

A few years ago Gayle and I found two dead Eastern Bluebirds in a nest box that had been cleaned out for the winter. In an attempt to prevent that from recurring, we bought a “roost” box, which is slightly larger than a nest box and built with thicker wood. The roost box came with perching pegs and a door that could be turned upside-down to position the entrance at the bottom. The bluebirds didn't seem interested in using it configured as designed, so I removed the pegs and put the entry hole at the top. I also shifted the door panel upward until it touched the roof of the box in order to eliminate as many drafts as possible.

Our back yard contains a nest box

and a roost box. In late fall we add several inches of pine needles to both boxes in order to provide some additional insulation. We compact the needles, but leave the fine-tuning to the birds. A couple of weeks after adding the needles the bluebirds have arranged the material into a nicely-shaped nest. This may not be the best insulating material, but the needles are dry and I feel they are better than bare wood. Near sunset bluebirds frequently check the nest box and, occasionally, go into it briefly, but they always end up spending the night in the roost box.

On February 7, we looked at the bluebird boxes to see if they were being used on that cold night. At

5:00 p.m. there were no bluebirds in the yard, but within a few minutes a number arrived and began to swarm around the area. Eventually, they went into the roost box. All were inside by 5:15 p.m. After watching them for a few days, we could distinguish two groups using the box. There were seven in the first group (five males and two females); on colder nights, a second group (four males) entered the box from five to 20 minutes later. It must have been pretty crowded inside because one night we even saw tail feathers sticking partially out of the entrance. We were happy to know that the box was helping local bluebirds to survive the coldest winter nights.