

March/April 2011

Volume 39, Number 4

The Goldfinch

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

CLUB MEETINGS - By Jane Geuder

Thursday, March 10, 2011 "Enhancing Maryland's Wood Duck Population One Nest Box at a Time," by Cliff Brown. Cliff founded the Maryland Wood Duck Initiative in 2004. He will review the activities of this all-volunteer conservation organization and discuss a "best practices" approach to managed nest programs. The organization has had over 19,000 volunteer hours invested in its mission and has involved more than 500 kids in its projects. The Maryland DNR named Cliff Brown Conservationist of the Year in 2008.

Thursday, April 14, 2011 "Understanding the Complex Singing and Social Behavior of Wood Thrushes," by Dr. Kim Derrickson. As associate professor of biology at Loyola University, he has published more than 20 scientific papers on several local species, most notably the Northern Mockingbird. In addition to evaluating parental care by male Wood Thrushes, he will update his findings on mockingbirds since he first shared information on their singing behavior with us 15 years ago.

Meetings are held at Howard County Recreation & Parks Headquarters 7120 Oakland Mills Road, Columbia, MD 21046. Hospitality and club bookstore at 7:30 p.m. Meeting with program begins at 8:00 p.m. For further information call Ward Ebert, 301-490-5807.

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The Goldfinch, newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club, is published five times per year.

Copy deadline for the May/June 2011 issue is March 25, 2011.

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

AUTUMN BIRD RECORDS: AUGUST 1 – NOVEMBER 30, 2010

BY JOANNE SOLEM

As usual, autumn produced many of the year's best records. LeConte's Sparrow, a new county species, led the list which included Black-bellied Plover, American Golden-Plover, American Avocet*, Ruddy Turnstone*, Western*, White-rumped, Baird's*, and Stilt* sandpipers, Short-billed Dowitcher, Red Phalarope*, Short-eared Owl*, Alder Flycatcher, Sedge Wren, and Nelson's Sparrow. (An asterisk indicates 10 or fewer county records; no asterisk 11 to 21.)

The earliest Cackling Goose report was 10/7 at Centennial (JC). A flock of ~40 Snow Geese flying south from the Patapsco at Woodbine 11/10 was noteworthy (RSu). Tundra Swan peak movement was 11/20-29. A m. Gadwall and a m. Redhead arrived at Lake Elkhorn 11/28 (JW); a f. Northern Shoveler appeared at Centennial 10/23 (MKw); 56 Green-winged Teal gathered at the north end of Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS) 11/3 (JHf, RR, new high count); and two Greater Scaup (1 f.) were

(Records continued on page 2)

(Records continued from page 1)
present at Centennial 11/29 (JCr,
ph.). Two Long-tailed Ducks and
three Common Goldeneyes were
spotted at TRIRS 11/24 (BHi). A
Common Merganser at Gateway
in f. or juv. plumage on the peculiar date of 9/18 raises the question
of whether it was a local bird
(ESu, RLb).

Wild Turkey sightings from nine sites were received; the high was 12 at Circle D, Carrs Mill Rd in midfall (SDw, ph.). Other reporters were LCo; NM; INg; DKn; FLv; RSm, CRb; fide PWf; and m. obs. (north TRIRS). The shrunken front pond at Western Regional Pk attracted 17 Great Egrets 8/5 (KTf, tied 2nd high). Bald Eagles were well-reported, especially near the central lakes and TRIRS. A peak day of Broad-winged Hawk migration, 9/18, found 568 over Centennial (MKw), 160 at Rockburn Branch Pk (**BO, EH**), and 92 at Schooley Mill Pk (NM). Merlins were seen at seven sites; Peregrine Falcons at four. A Virginia Rail at University of Maryland Central Farm (UMDCF) 10/18 was the lone 2010 record (**BO+**).

Shorebirds were exciting! Mudflats at the north end of TRIRS and a peninsula at Greenbridge enabled numerous observers to see species in two counties. Among the north end's best were Western Sandpiper 9/17 (**JSz**), 70 Leasts 9/17 (JHf, a new high), White-rumped 9/17 (**JHf**), **Baird's** 9/17 (**BHi**), 26 **Pectorals** 9/10 (**NM**, a new high with an additional 11 at Browns Bridge!), and 10 Stilts 9/30 (**BHi**, 2nd high). Greenbridge produced Black-bellied Plover 8/18 (BHb, JSz+), three American Avocets 8/17 (B&GHi, new high), Ruddy Turnstone 8/18

(RR, BCe), Baird's Sandpiper 9/12 (**JHb**), and eight **Short**billed Dowitchers 8/18 (RR, BCe, a new high). An American Golden-Plover appeared at Fulton Pond 9/18 (KS); three Western Sandpipers were tabulated appropriately at Western RP 8/29 (**JSz**); 32 Semipalmateds congregated at Big Branch 9/13 (JSz, 2nd high) with 22 at Browns Bridge 8/12 (BHi, 3rd high); and a Red Phalarope appeared at Western RP 8/23 (B&GHi). Single American Woodcocks were detected at Elliott Rd Pond 10/5 (MW) and at Mt. Pleasant 10/24 (**TEv**).

A lone **Bonaparte's Gull** showed up at TRIRS 11/26 (BHi); three Forster's Terns appeared there 8/4 (BHi). A Short-eared Owl sailed near the intersection of MD32/Pfefferkorn Rd the late afternoon of 11/21 (**ISz**). Single Black-billed Cuckoos were noted at the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA) 9/5 (**DHs**) and at Daniels 9/18 (CSt, RBt). A family of Eastern Screech-Owls lingered at River Rd, Sykesville in late Sept. (FLv). From 11/17 on, one roosted in a box at Talbots Landing (**R&JGu**). Two **Northern** Saw-whet Owls were detected 11/18 at Annapolis Rock Rd (JSh, JCu+). Red-headed Woodpeckers were reported by BO; JW (10/8, 10/22); and **SBg, WEb+.**

Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were noted from 8/20 Manahan Dr (BO, tied 2nd earliest) to 9/11 Schooley (NM). An Alder Flycatcher was spotted at Big Branch 8/24 (JSz) and one at Rockburn 8/28 (JHf). Least Flycatchers were seen from 8/22 MPEA (JHf, JCu) to 9/18 Daniels (CSt, RBt). Four prior early Nov. records for Blue-headed Vireo were upstaged

by two new late dates: 11/12 Allview (ES) and 11/14 Dunloggin (KS). Philadelphia Vireos were reported from 8/27 Rockburn (BO) to 9/19 Schooley (BHb); six on Howard Count Fall Count (HCFC) 9/18 tied the 1994 count high. A Common Raven was seen repeatedly in Sept. and Nov. at River Rd (FLv); other reports were from KS 8/1; BHb 9/19; ROr, JS 10/8; and TFe 11/1.

This was an invasion season for many northern species. Blackcapped Chickadees were identified at Centennial 10/24 (KS), Thornbrook Dr 11/2 (**ICu**, ph), MPEA 11/2 (JHf-2), Dunloggin 11/14 (KS), and Annapolis Rock Rd 11/18 (**RR, JSh**+-2). An early Red-breasted Nuthatch at Sharp Rd 9/4 (**RSm,CRo**) was the first of many reports. A Sedge Wren was found at W. Friendship 10/10 (BO; later that day JHf, JCu). Single Marsh Wrens were spotted at Hanover Rd 9/18 (BO) and UMDCF 10/16 (**BO**+). One **Gray** -cheeked Thrush was at the Alpha Ridge Landfill 9/18 (RC); two were detected at Henryton 9/21 (M&GMcC). A Gray-cheeked/ Bicknell's Thrush was noted 10/1 at MPEA (**IHf**). The description favored Bicknell's; the chip note was unfamiliar to the observer. Twenty-five Gray Catbirds were counted at Centennial 9/12 (MKw). A Brown Thrasher was still at MPEA 11/21 (**KS, WEb**). A rather early **American Pipit** was present at north TRIR 9/19 (CSt+). The high Cedar Waxwing count was 95 at Centennial 11/26 (MKw).

The only **Golden-winged Warbler** reported since 2008 was at MPEA 9/1 (**JHf**). A rather early (*Records continued on page 3*) (Records continued from page 2)

Tennessee was spotted at Rockburn 8/23 (BO). Four Nashvilles were at Schooley 9/24 (NM, tied high). Eight Chestnut-sideds at Rockburn 8/27 were nice (**BO**). A Magnolia was at the Elkhorn Garden Plots 11/1 (JW, 2nd latest). Cape Mays (up to six) were present at their usual elm tree at Wynfield Rd 9/18 to at least 10/13 (RC+). A f. Black-throated Blue at W. Friendship arrived 8/22 (**BO**, 2nd earliest). Two **Yellow**rumps were at Centennial 9/12 (MKw, tied 2nd earliest); 40 there on 10/7 was the season's modest high (J&TDC). Blackburnians were seen from 8/27 at Rockburn (**BO**) to 10/3 at Mt. Pleasant (KDy, JCu+). Palms were noted from 9/11 at Gateway (2) and Elkhorn Garden Plots (1 Western) to 11/2 at Meadowbrook (1 Eastern) (all JW). Bay-breasts were noted from 8/27 Rockburn (BO-2) to 9/24 Schooley (**ISz**-1). The lone **Blackpoll** was identified 10/9 at Mt. Pleasant (**SBg, BO**+). Six Black-and-whites were tallied at MPEA 8/29 (**KS**). Three **Con**necticut sightings were more than usual: MPEA 9/5 (JHf+, 3rd earliest), Mt. Pleasant 10/2 (BO), and Centennial 10/7 (J&TDC). The first Mourning since 2008 was at Schooley 9/24 (JSz). Four Wilson's were reported: SBg, HPt, SLv; BO; CSt, RBt; PWf.

The first American Tree Sparrow was not detected until 11/20 at Mt. Pleasant (KHf, KDy, JHf). High Chipping counts were 60 at W. Friendship 10/24 (JCu, JBy+) and 78 at Schooley 11/7 (NM, 3rd highest). The two Vesper reports were W. Friendship 10/24 (JCu, JBy+) and Meadowbrook Pk 10/29 (JW). LeConte's Sparrow, a new county record, was clearly

the star of the season. After decades of searching, it was fitting that the species would be found on Sparrow Big Day, 10/16. The irony was that not one, but two, were located—one in the morning at MPEA (BO + 10 obs.), the second in late afternoon at Waterford Farm (BO, JHf, KS, M&GMcC). Both birds were photographed and details submitted to the MD/ DCRC. At least one **Nelson's** was present at UMDCF from 10/16 (**BO**+) to 10/23 (**JHf, NM**+); the high was two on 10/18 (**BO**+). Lincoln's were well-reported from 9/18 M. Patuxent, Murray Hill (JMcK) to 10/28 Mt. Pleasant (JCu). The first White-throated Sparrow, M. Patuxent, Eden Brook (J&TDC), and an early Dark-eyed Junco, Daniels (CSt, **RBt**) both appeared on HCFC, 9/18.

The only Summer Tanager of the year was noted at Centennial 10/7 (TDC) breaking the previous 10/6/04 departure. A partly albinistic f. Northern Cardinal (white cheek patches) was seen at Dayton 11/25 (TJh). A Blue Grosbeak was still at Schooley 10/24 (NM, 2nd latest). The year's only Dickcissel was at Mt. Pleasant 10/9 (KHf, ph.). One to three Eastern Meadowlarks were reported from five sites. One or two Rusty Blackbirds were noted at four locations (NM; BO [2]; JW).

The first **Purple Finches** were a total of 12 on HCFC 9/18; seasonal reports came from at least 17 locations. **Pine Siskins** were first spotted 10/17 at Waterford (**BO**+-4); reports were from a minimum of 13 sites. Highs were ~20 Sandchain, E. Col 10/29 (**J&TDC**) and ~30 Manahan Dr 11/9 (**BO**). Sightings of both species dropped

after early Nov. About 60-70 **American Goldfinches** were counted at Mt. Pleasant 8/27 (**BO**); however, that number was low compared to the 300+ there 8/29 (**BO**, a new high).

Exotics: One **Black Swan** was at Barnes' Farm on MD94 in mid-Nov. (*fide* **WE**).

Observers: RBt - Randy Beaton, SBg -Scott Berglund, ECI - Ed Carlson, BCe -Brad Cernohorsky, LCo - Lisa Colangelo, JCr - Jon Corcoran, JC - Jane Coskren, TDC – T. Dennis Coskren, JCu – Jeff Culler, RC - Ralph Cullison, III, KDy -Karen Darcy, SDw - Sabrina Dowd, WE – Wes Earp, **WEb** - Ward Ebert, **TEv** – Tracy Eve, TFe - Tom Feild, JGu - Jane Geuder, RGu - Ralph Geuder, DHs -Dan Haas, JHf - Joe Hanfman, KHf -Kevin Heffernan, BHi - Bill Hill, GHi -Gayle Hill, EH - Emy Holdridge, IHb -John Hubbell, BHb - Bill Hubick, TJh -Tom Johnson, MKw - Mike Kerwin, **DKn** – Dave Keane, **FLv** – Felicia Lovelett, **SLv** – Stephanie Lovell, **RLb** – Rosa Lubitz, NM – Nancy Magnusson, GMcC - Grazina McClure, MMcC - Mike McClure, JMcK - John McKitterick, INg Ian Nagengast, ROr – Richard Orr, BO - Bonnie Ott, HPt - Helen Patton, RR -Robert Ringler, CRo - Clyde Robinette, **KS** – Kurt Schwarz, **JSh** – Jay Sheppard, **RSm** – Romayne Smith, **JS** – Jo Solem, JSz – Jim Stasz, CSt – Chuck Stirrat, ESu Eva Sunell, RSu – Rick Sussman, KTf – Kate Tufts, MW - Mark Wallace, JW -Jim Wilkinson, **PWf** – Paul Woodford.

NUISANCE WILDLIFE

Anyone with a wildlife
"problem" should contact
DNR's wildlife hotline at 1-877463-6497. This number is
staffed (under contract) by experts in resolving humanwildlife conflicts, who work for
the US Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health
Inspection Service, Wildlife
Services http://
www.aphis.usda.gov/
wildlife_damage/index.shtml.

SPRING FIELD TRIPS

BY BONNIE OTT & JOE HANFMAN

Field trips are a great way to improve birding skills, explore new places and meet other birders. Arrive at the meeting site ready to leave at the designated time with appropriate footwear and gear. Carpooling is strongly encouraged. The leader may cancel due to inclement weather/hazardous driving conditions. Directions for trips not on ADC maps are on the Club's website. Questions? Contact the trip leader or Field Trip Coordinator Bonnie Ott at bonnieott@verizon.net. HCBC members receive priority on trips that are limited by number of participants. No pets.

CENTENNIAL PARK

March 6, Sun, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours) Meet at west parking lot on Centennial Lane. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Facilities available. Leader - Jeff Culler, cullerfuls@ hotmail.com or 410-465-9006.

WATERFOWL SEARCH

March 12, Sat. (half day) Meet at Broken Land Parkway Park & Ride West Lot at 8:00 but make sure you contact the leader because dredging of Columbia lakes may change the meeting site. We'll carpool to search the Howard County waterways for ducks, grebes, mergansers, and loons. Chance of an early migrant. Leader - Kurt Schwarz, 410-461-1643 or krschwa1@verizon.net.

POTLUCK DINNER

March 12, Sat. (6:30 p.m.) Held at the Owen Brown Community Center. Contact Kathie Lillie by Friday, March 11 at 410-489-5262 or klillie3@verizon.net for reservations. Members' photos are the program.

CENTENNIAL PARK

March 13, Sun., 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours) Daylight Savings Time starts (set clocks ahead). Meet at west parking lot on Centennial Lane. See March 6 for description. Leader – Mike Kerwin, m63kerwin@verizon.net or 410-461-2408.

🚩 CENTENNIAL PARK

March 20, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours) *Meet at west parking lot on Centennial Lane.* See March 6 for description. *Leader - Joe Byrnes 410-730-5329 or LBRoller@verizon.net.*

CENTENNIAL PARK

March 27, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours. Meet at west parking lot on Centennial Lane. See March 6 for description. Leader - Bonnie Ott, bonnieott@verizon.net.

UNIVERSITY OF MARY-LAND CENTRAL FARM

April 10, Sunday (half day)
Limit: 12 people
Moderate to difficult walking
though the fields and wetlands of
this private property. Knee boots a
must and waterproof pants advisable. No facilities. *Email Bonnie*Ott, bonnieott@verizon.net to sign up.

SMITH ISLAND, SOMERSET COUNTY FROM POINT LOOKOUT

April 16, Saturday (full day)
Joint trip with Baltimore Bird
Club. Carpool from Broken Land
Parkway Park and Ride West lot, leaving by 6:00 a.m. or meet at the Point
Lookout boat launch at 9 a.m. All-day
trip to see the herons, egrets and
other birds on the island, plus gannets, sea ducks and possible pelagic
species up close during the boat
rides to and from the island. Bring
lunch, snacks, beverages and cash.
Golf cart rentals are available on
the island. The boat leaves at 9:30

a.m., arrives at the island about 11 a.m., and leaves the island at 2:30 p.m. As a precaution, some may want to take motion sickness medicine. THIS TRIP REQUIRES RESERVATIONS BY WED. APRIL 6 AND \$35-\$45 CASH FOR EACH PERSON depending on the # attending. Limit 30-40 persons. No credit cards or checks. The cash will be paid at the boat launch before boarding Saturday morning. Leaders - Joe Hanfman, 410-772-8424 or auk1844@comcast.net; and Kevin Graff, whitemarlin2001@yahoo.com.

BON SECOURS SPIRITUAL CENTER

April 20, Wed., 8:00 a.m. (2 hours) Meet at visitor lot at the top left of the entrance road. Easy walking through the grounds of this spiritual retreat. Woods, fields and hedgerows provide opportunities for a variety of birds. Facilities available. Leader - Michele Wright 410-465-6057 or WrightM_29067@msn.com.

HOWARD COUNTY CON-SERVANCY

April 23, Sat., 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours) Meet at parking lot near the barn. Earth Day Walk in conjunction with the Howard County Conservancy. Easy walking through the fields of Mt. Pleasant farm. Tree lines, hedgerows and streams provide opportunity for non-meadow species. Great opportunity for flyovers. Facilities available. Leader—Scott Berglund, 410-750-2568 or Business 250@yahoo.com.

MARYLAND/DC ATLAS PUBLISHED

The Second Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Maryland and the District of Columbia, edited by Walter Ellison and published by Johns Hopkins Press, is now in print. This gorgeous book, the result of almost a decade of work by hundreds of people, was coordinated by an MOS committee chaired by Jane Coskren.

Howard County birders contributed in many ways to the successful completion of this atlas. In addition to dozens of people who collected data, others ran mini-routes, submitted photographs, assembled initial packets, maintained computer updates and maps, provided financial support, attended meetings, and wrote species accounts. Each was vital to the success of the project.

Most of the block captains and many who assisted in the field went far beyond the requested minimum coverage. The extraordinary intensity of the data collection was acknowledged on p. 28 under the Effort heading: "Howard County is recognized for achieving the most effort hours, and along with that, the most atlas confirmations per block." Of particular interest to county birders is Appendix C - Quarterblock Results. Maps for 12 species compare results from the three atlases in which this county has participated.

Our special thanks to each of you for your individual and collective contributions. You can be proud of the results!

Jo Solem and Bonnie Ott Howard Co. Coordinators

2010 COUNTY ODONATE SURVEY

BY JOANNE SOLEM

The biggest odonate news of the year was the listing of the Appalachian Snaketail (Ophiogomphus incurvatus i.) as a State Endangered Animal. Richard Orr's studies of this handsome small black and yellow dragonfly, found primarily near Savage, led to its classification.

The fifth annual Howard County Dragonfly Count held June 5, 2010 was coordinated by June Tveekrem. It was the most successful to date with 32 observers reporting a new high of 52 species! (Refer to the Sept/Oct 2010 *Goldfinch* for results.) The next count is planned for August 20, 2011.

In 2010, date extensions were recorded for the following: American Rubyspot 6/5 (Richard Orr), Swamp Spreadwing 6/5 (Wes and Sue Earp, Mike and Grazina McClure), Cyrano Darner 5/30 (RO, Jo Solem, Nancy Magnusson), Mocha Emerald 6/5 (RO) and 7/12 (RO, Bob and JS, GM)), and Autumn Meadowhawk 6/5 (W&SE, M&GM). New locations for unusual species included Gray Petaltail and Rapids Clubtail 6/8 (Sue Muller, RO+), Tiger Spiketail 7/12 (RO, B&JS, GM), and Brown Spiketail 6/5 (JS, NM, Pat Caro).

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

B oard 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.

March 24, 2011

Ward Ebert 7366 Hallmark Road Clarksville, MD 21029 (301) 490-5807

April 28, 2011

Kurt Schwarz 9045 Dunloggin Court Ellicott City, MD 21042 (410) 461-1643



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

6007 Flywheel Court Columbia, MD 21044 ADDRESS SERVICE SUGGESTED

March/April 2011 - Inside This Issue:

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HOWARD COUNTY GREENFEST 2011

BY SUE MULLER

ounty Executive Ken Ulman County's third annual "GreenFest" on Saturday April 2nd from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Howard Community College. Sponsored by the Departments of Recreation & Parks and Planning and Zoning and the Bureau of Environmental Services, this free family event celebrates Earth Month. The theme for GreenFest is "Don't Waste Our Future: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" and features displays to provide citizens with practical information for making choices to lead a more ecologically sound lifestyle - both at home and at the office.

The festival will also feature exhibits from community groups that focus on environmental awareness,

including the Howard County Bird Club. Other exhibitors include: Howard Astronomical League, Howard County Forestry Board, Howard County Conservancy, Sierra Club, Growth Adventures, Middle Patuxent Environmental Area, Master Gardeners, and the Howard County Climate Change Initiative, just to name a few.

There will be a rain barrel workshop and you will be able to take home a FREE barrel (connecting parts sold separately). Sign up in advance with Sue Muller at smuller@howardcountymd.gov. Activities include a nature walk on the campus nature trail and a herp search as part of the MD Amphibian & Reptile Atlas. There will be sign-ups for tours of the Elkridge

recycling facility and many free giveaways. The Mid-Atlantic Turtle & Tortoise Society will have live reptiles and the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center will display live raptors. Several other children's activities are planned to help them learn more about the environment and nature. In addition, free document shredding will be available in the parking lot from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information on the event and the schedule of activities, visit the county's website at http://www.hcgreenfest.org.

Volunteers are needed to provide information about the bird club. Each shift is two hours in length. To sign-up, please contact Michael O'Sullivan at 410-598-0845 or fr84wrdr@yahoo.com.