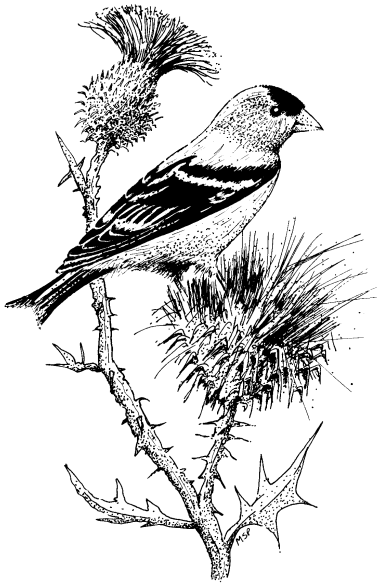


# The Goldfinch

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



## CLUB MEETINGS - BY [JANE GEUDER](#)

Thursday, January 12, 2012 “When Bad Things Happen to Good Birds: The Decline of the Rusty Blackbird,” by Dr. Russell Greenberg, head of the [Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center](#). He has conducted research on the ecology of migratory song birds for 40 years. His talk will describe what we know about the precipitous decline of this once fairly common bird. Dr. Greenberg is the Chair of the International Rusty Blackbird Working Group.

Thursday, February 9, 2012 “All You Need to Know About Herps!” by Sue Muller, Howard County Dept. of Recreation and Parks. Club member, Sue Muller, is our county’s coordinator for the [Maryland Amphibian and Reptile Atlas](#), a five year herpetology survey. She will provide an overview of the project and a look at statewide data collected during the first two years. Learn how easy it is to contribute to the project.

**Meetings are at the Robinson Nature Center**, 6692 Cedar Lane, Columbia MD 21044. Hospitality and club bookstore at 7:30 p.m. Meeting with program begins at 8:00 p.m. Nature Center doors unlocked at 7:15 p.m. and locked again at 8:15 p.m. There is no admission charge. For further information call Ward Ebert, 301-490-5807.

## Inside This Issue

<a href="#">Club Meetings</a> .....	1
<a href="#">Green Violetear</a> .....	1
<a href="#">Art Contest</a> .....	2
<a href="#">Midwinter Count</a> .....	3
<a href="#">Field Trips</a> .....	4
<a href="#">Board Meetings</a> .....	4
<a href="#">Help Wanted</a> .....	4
<a href="#">Great Backyard Bird Count</a> .....	5
<a href="#">Bird Strikes</a> .....	5
<a href="#">Correct Email Address</a> .....	5
<a href="#">Seed Sale</a> .....	6
<b>Schooley Mill Park Site Guide</b>	

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

**Copy deadline for the March/April 2012 issue is January 25, 2012**

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:  
Amanda Witt  
8865 Purple Iris Lane  
Elkridge, MD 21075  
[amanda.witt@yahoo.com](mailto:amanda.witt@yahoo.com)

Please visit the Club’s website at [www.howardbirds.org](http://www.howardbirds.org)

## GREEN VIOLETEAR IN HOWARD COUNTY

BY [JOE HANEMAN](#)

**O**n the afternoon of October 24, 2011 a Green Violetear was seen at a feeder in Clarksville. The homeowner contacted Mother Nature’s (formerly the Wild Bird Center) in Columbia. Later in the day the bird’s identity was confirmed. About ten people who lived nearby were able to see it before dark. The homeowner graciously allowed many birders to visit her home for an attempt to see it. The visits were delayed until the late morning of the following day, to allow for an attempt to

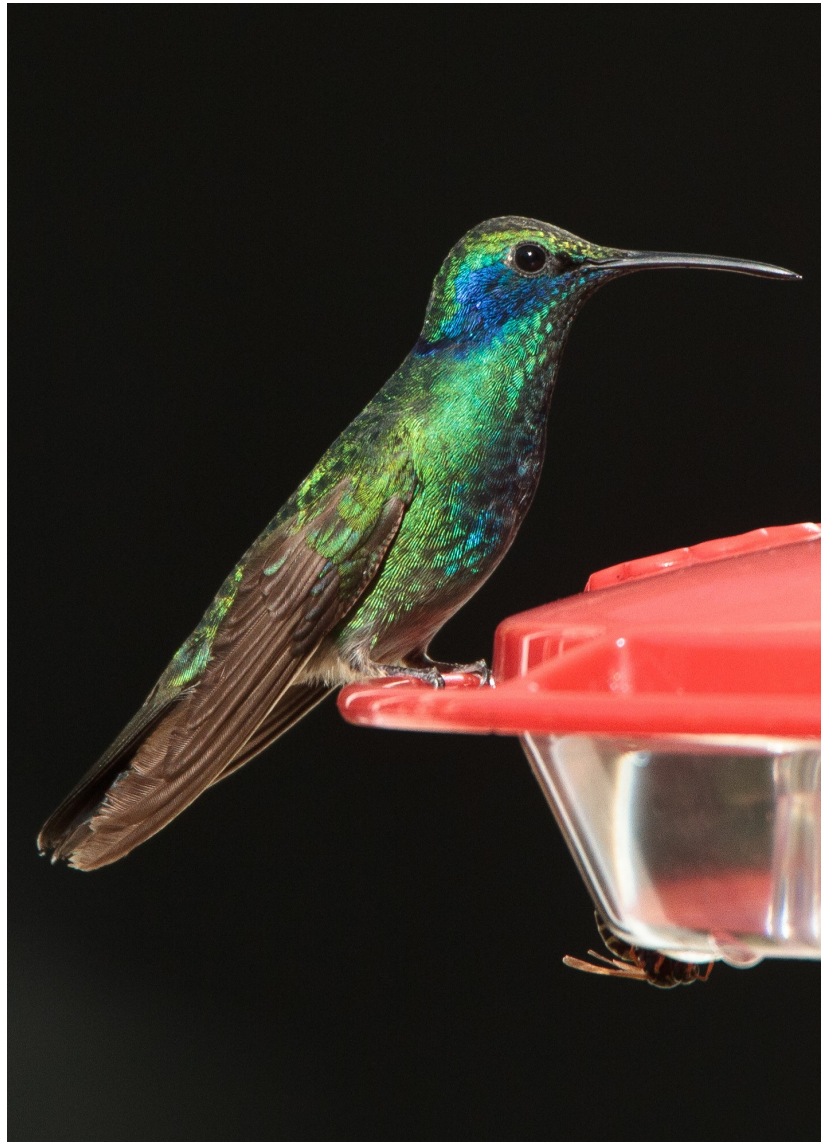
band the bird. The banding was unsuccessful. There was a slow release of the information so we didn’t overwhelm the homeowner and her neighbors. A Howard County Rare Bird Alert was sent out to the approximate 75 subscribers. The crowds were not overwhelming so we sent out an email to many Maryland listers. Dozens of birders were able to view the Green Violetear on the afternoon of 10/25 and early in the morning of 10/26. It was last seen

*(Green Violetear continued on page 2)*

*(Green Violetear continued from page 1)*  
about 7:19 a.m. on the morning of 10/26, spending a little less than two days at the home. A side benefit was that the homeowner's daughter was selling Girl Scout cookies and many boxes were sold to birders. We wish the bird had stayed around longer, but this is very typical of Green Violetears to only spend two to three days at a location, as has been observed by previous sightings in Elkton, Maryland; North Carolina, Kentucky, Indiana, and Missouri.

Among the questions that persist are the following: Is this the same Green Violetear that was in Elkton, Maryland a couple of weeks earlier? Is it the same bird that was briefly at a feeder in West River, Maryland on August 25, 2011? Were there one or three Green Violetears in Maryland this year? Where is it now and will your feeder be next?

*The accompanying photograph is available in color in the electronic version of the newsletter. You can see additional photographs of the bird by clicking [here](#).*



Photograph by [Kevin Heffernan](#)

## THIRD ANNUAL ART CONTEST BEGINS

BY [KATE TUFTS](#)

Last year's Student Art Contest revealed some amazing talent among the county's youth. More than 75 submissions made choosing the top 12 pictures difficult. Those paintings were exhibited at the Glenwood Library and the Robinson Nature Center.

Now it is time to start again and we hope to have even more works of art and more exhibits for the 2012 contest. The contest is open

to Howard County residents ages nine to thirteen. Any medium including graphite, oils, acrylics, watercolors and pastels may be used. Drawings and paintings should be no larger than 11" x 14". Drawings must be of birds that may be found in Maryland. Prior winners are not eligible.

The first place winners will receive a backpack containing a pair of Eagle Optics binoculars and a bird-

ing field guide plus a one-year membership in the Howard County Bird Club.

Please put the word out to family, friends, neighbors and art teachers. More info may be obtained on our website: [www.howardbirds.org](http://www.howardbirds.org).

# TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL MIDWINTER COUNT

BY [JOE BYRNES](#) AND [JOE HANFMAN](#)

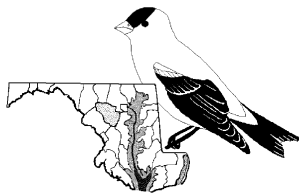
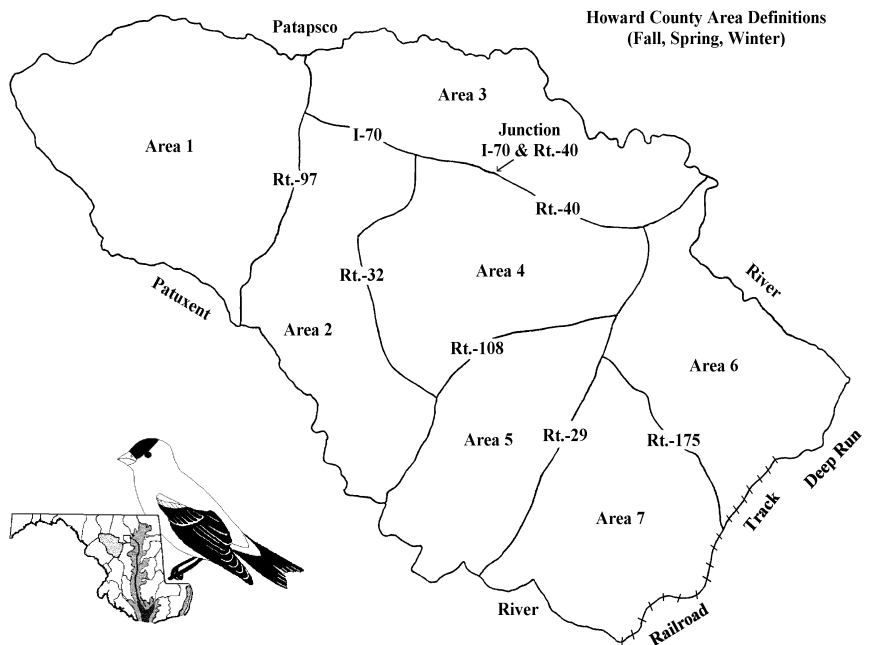
Join the Howard County Bird Club's Twenty-Seventh Annual Midwinter Count on Saturday, February 4, 2012. Joe Byrnes (410-730-5329 or [LBRoller@verizon.net](mailto:LBRoller@verizon.net)) and Joe Hanfman (Cell 443-745-7378 or [auk1844@comcast.net](mailto:auk1844@comcast.net)) are the count coordinators. You may volunteer to participate by signing up at a meeting, by calling Joe Byrnes, or by contacting one of the area coordinators shown on the table on the right.

Beginning birders are always welcome, as are individuals who wish to count only for part of the day. If you wish to count only at your feeder, call Joe B. or Joe H. and request a feeder form.

The evening potluck tally will be at Jeff and Karen Culler's house at 2672 Thornbrook Rd, Ellicott City, MD. Please contact the Cullers at 410-465-9006 or [cullerfuls@hotmail.com](mailto:cullerfuls@hotmail.com) by Wednesday, January 30<sup>th</sup>, to sign up for a vegetable, salad, or dessert, and to obtain directions. If you cannot make the meal, you are welcome to drop in about 7:30 p.m. for the tally.

If there is a question about the weather, we will try to make a decision the night before. Call your area coordinator, Joe B. or Joe H. (between 5:00 & 6:00 a.m. on the day of the count) if you are unsure of the status of the count.

- Area 1:** Mark Wallace 301-725-6370 or [abcxyz5@verizon.net](mailto:abcxyz5@verizon.net)  
Wes Earp 410-531-3197 or [the\\_carps@verizon.net](mailto:the_carps@verizon.net)
- Area 2:** Jeff Culler 410-465-9006 or [cullerfuls@hotmail.com](mailto:cullerfuls@hotmail.com)
- Area 3:** Maureen & Davy Harvey 410-795-3117 or [dahtangara@verizon.net](mailto:dahtangara@verizon.net)
- Area 4:** Mike McClure 410-531-2780 or [michael.mcclure@jhuapl.edu](mailto:michael.mcclure@jhuapl.edu)
- Area 5:** Michele Wright 410-465-6057 or [wrightm\\_29067@msn.com](mailto:wrightm_29067@msn.com)
- Area 6:** Bonnie Ott 443-285-3302 or [bonniecott@verizon.net](mailto:bonniecott@verizon.net)
- Area 7:** Kurt Schwarz 410-461-1643 or [krschwa1@verizon.net](mailto:krschwa1@verizon.net)



## WINTER 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](mailto:bonnieott@verizon.net). HCBC members receive priority on trips that are limited by number of participants. No pets.

### START YOUR YEAR LIST

January 1, Sunday (8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.) *Meet at the Centennial Park boat ramp off MD108.* Easy walking on paved paths and woodland trails. Plan to carpool to different locations to find as many species as possible. The one day of the year where every bird is new! Facilities available. Leader - Bonnie Ott, [bonnieott@verizon.net](mailto:bonnieott@verizon.net) or 443-285-3302.

### MIDWINTER COUNT

February 4, Saturday See page 3 for details.

### HOW TO FIND AN OWL

February 11, Saturday (1:00 p.m., possibility of birding till dusk) *Meet at Annapolis Rock Rd horse trailer parking lot, midway between Hip-sley Mill Rd and MD94.* Learn how to find owls by habitat and signs. Jay is an expert at finding owls and will share his skills and knowledge as to how to find different species. Contact him to sign up so participants can be advised of weather-related changes. Our target species are Long-eared, Northern Saw-whet, and other owls. No facilities. Leader: Jay Sheppard, [JMSheppard@aol.com](mailto:JMSheppard@aol.com) or 301-725-5559.

### WINTER SPARROW SEARCH

March 3, Saturday, (half day)  
Limit: 12 people  
Search the wetland and dry fields in this intensive search for as many sparrows as possible. Previous years have turned up non-sparrow rarities! Expect difficult walking for most of the morning. Knee boots a must. Facilities at some spots. Contact Bonnie Ott, [bonnieott@verizon.net](mailto:bonnieott@verizon.net) or 443-285-3302 to sign up and get more info.



### CENTENNIAL PARK

March 4, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours) *Meet at the west end parking lot on Centennial Lane.* Easy walking around the lake on paved path. Facilities available. Waterfowl expected, early migrant passerines possible. Leader - Jeff Culler, [cullerfuls@hotmail.com](mailto:cullerfuls@hotmail.com) or 410-465-9006.



= Great for beginning birders

## 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. Because of the MOS Convention, the February meeting is a week earlier. If directions are required, please call the hosting board member.

### January 26

Amanda Witt  
8865 Purple Iris Lane  
Elkridge, MD 21075  
410-312-0504

### February 16

Ward Ebert  
7366 Hallmark Rd  
Clarksville, MD 21029  
301-490-5807

## HELP WANTED— PUBLICITY

We are in need of a new publicity chairperson. The job entails developing and maintaining a list of contacts at local publications and providing them information on club meetings, field trips, and other events. The work can be done primarily via email.

If you are interested, please contact Ward Ebert at 301-490-5807 or [wardebort@verizon.net](mailto:wardebort@verizon.net).

## GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

BY AMANDA WITT

**D**id you miss the Midwinter Count or do you just want an excuse to do more birding? If so, the [Great Backyard Bird Count](#) (GBBC) is for you. The GBBC is sponsored by the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and will be held February 17-20, 2012. This is the fifteenth year for the count. Observers count the highest number of each species they see during at least 15 minutes on one or more of the count days. Observers then enter their tallies on the GBBC website, [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org).

This count continues to be a huge success. In 2011, there were 92,218 checklists submitted across the United States and Canada and 594 species were represented. For the past six years, Columbia and Ellicott City led the state with the most checklists submitted. The total number of checklists submitted in 2011 was 77 and 67 respectively. You can explore the results of prior years by visiting [www.birdsource.org/gbbc/](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/).

## CORRECT EMAIL ADDRESS

**I**f emails we send are returned because of delivery failure, we remove your email address from the system. We have expanded the number of notices and publications sent by email, so it is worthwhile keeping the club informed when you change your email address. When you change your email address, please go to the web page and send an email to the webmaster with the new address. (This is particularly important for those of you who receive *The Goldfinch* electronically: if we don't have your correct email address, we cannot send you the current copy and have no way to contact you.)

More benefits of email delivery: In this issue, there is a booklet-sized site guide to Schooley Mill Park. It is a PDF document that can be downloaded and printed. In addition, a section titled "Birding Howard County" has been added on the web page, so that you can download the three previous booklet-sized site guides (Western Regional Park, Middle Patuxent Environmental Area and Mount Pleasant).

## BIRD STRIKES

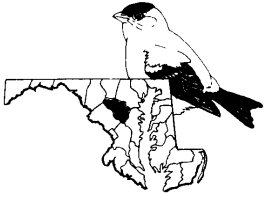
BY KURT SCHWARZ

**I**t has been postulated that the second most significant cause of human-induced bird mortality after habitat destruction is birds striking glass. Birds generally find glass invisible and fly into it. Many birds kill or severely injure themselves. If stunned, they are vulnerable to predators and scavengers. Since 1991, at my place of employment, I have recorded slightly more than 500 total bird hits of 70+ species, one fifth of which were Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. No doubt, many of you have had a Northern Cardinal or White-throated Sparrow bounce off of a sliding glass door or a picture window. What can you do?

The American Bird Conservancy is offering tape, which can be applied in squares or stripes to your windows, rendering them visible to birds, but still allowing you to see out. See [www.abcbirdtape.org](http://www.abcbirdtape.org). At the time the newsletter went to press, the website was not accepting orders due to a manufacturing delay. Hopefully, the site will be accepting orders soon!

## SITE GUIDE

Included in this issue is the site guide to [Schooley Mill Park](#). Guides to other birding spots are available on the club's website.



## HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

*Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society*

10970 Millbank Row

Columbia, MD 21044

ADDRESS SERVICE SUGGESTED

### January/February 2012 - Inside This Issue

Club Meetings	Green Violetear
Art Contest	Midwinter Count
Field Trips	Board of Directors Meetings
Help Wanted	Great Backyard Bird Count
Email Address	Bird Strikes
Seed Sale	Schooley Mill Park site guide

## BIRD CLUB SEED SALE A SUCCESS – PROFITS TO LIGHTS OUT BALTIMORE

BY WARD EBERT

**T**he Howard County Bird Club Seed Sale took place on October 1<sup>st</sup> at the recently relocated Wildlife Authority in Ellicott City, now on Bethany Lane immediately north of Route 40. Kevin Cassidy and his team welcomed us to the new store which is large, bright, and easy to find. He again provided discount cards for each of the customers to be used on the day of the sale and during the first week of December.

Kevin's contribution plus the do-

nations received from members enabled the board to allot \$1000 to [Lights Out Baltimore](#) for use at the new Cylburn Visitor Center to mitigate bird strikes. Collision with windows is reported to be the second largest man-made killer of birds behind habitat loss. Our money augments a larger contribution from the Baltimore Bird Club. Cylburn is the "home" of our state organization, MOS.

Thanks to all who bought seed, contributed money, and supported

this sale. Thanks particularly are due to Michael O'Sullivan who took all of the orders and worked the desk the day of the sale. It was a great pleasure to work with Kevin Cassidy and the staff of the Wildlife Authority – their handling of all the logistics has made this event much easier on our club members.