



The Goldfinch

Newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club
A Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society
www.howardbirds.org



CLUB MEETINGS - BY [JANE GEUDER](#)

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Thursday, September 11, 2014 "*Extinction of the Passenger Pigeon: ecological and policy impacts a century later,*" by Dr. David Blockstein, senior scientist of the National Council for Science and one of the leaders of Project Passenger Pigeon. The Project is an effort to use the century mark of the extinction of the Passenger Pigeon as a teachable moment to advance science and conservation. On September 1, 1914, Martha, the last of her species died in the Cincinnati Zoo.

Thursday, October 9, 2014 "*Coming Home: Understanding the Causes and Consequences of Dispersal in a Migratory Bird, the American Redstart,*" by Clark Rushing. This research uses scientific advances for studying birds as they return to their breeding grounds. Clark's fieldwork for the project is carried out at Patuxent Research Refuge in Laurel.

Meetings are at the Robinson Nature Center, 6692 Cedar Lane, Columbia MD 21044. Hospitality 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 Robin Todd at 410-491-5333

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

What species comprise the five most recent new Howard County records?
(Answer on [page 8](#).)

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

BY ROBIN TODD

As we begin the 43rd year of the Club, I would like to thank Wes Earp for running the Club so ably over the last two years.

This year will present continued, as well as new, challenges to birds, the environment that they need to thrive in, and to the HCBC. Please make a commitment to help all three. I am confident that you will as I have been so impressed by the dedication of the many club members who serve in various capacities and how readily members volunteer for fresh duties.

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FALL FIELD TRIPS BY [JOE HANFMAN](#) & [BONNIE OTT](#)

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 Joe Hanfman at auk1844@gmail.com. HCBC members receive priority on trips that are limited by number of participants. No

BUTTERFLIES THROUGH BINOCULARS

August 30, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. (2-3 hours). *Meet at Elkhorn Garden Plots, Oakland Mills Road opposite Dasher Court.* Enjoy searching for late-summer butterflies, and receive expert instruction on their identification. Dick will add information about caterpillar host and adult nectar plants as we encounter various species. Easy walking in the garden plot and on paved paths near the right-of-way alongside open, flowery, wet meadows and brushy hillsides. Bring close-focus binoculars to view nectaring behavior, but Dick will also use net and jars to provide brief close-up examinations. *No facilities. Cancelled if raining or overcast.*
Leader—Dick Smith 410-997-7439

[ROCKBURN BRANCH PARK](#)

September 6, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. (half day). *Meet in parking lot on the left just past the restored schoolhouse. The park gate is just beyond Rockburn Elementary School.* Moderate walking through the woods and fields of our largest county park looking for migrants. Paths may be muddy. *Facilities available.*
Leaders - Allen Lewis, allenlewis@gmail.com

[MIDDLE PATUXENT ENVIRONMENTAL AREA](#)


September 11, 7:30 a.m., Thursday (half day) *Meet at the Clegg Meadow off South Wind Cir, Columbia, MD 21044.* Moderate walking through wooded trails and along the river. Great area for migrants of all species. Field edges and thickets provide sparrow habitat. If time and birds warrant, we will also do the Trotter Rd. Loop. Prepare for wet grass and mud on the trails. No facilities.
Leader - Joe Hanfman, auk1844@gmail.com or 410-772-8424

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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Howard Patterson, *Editor*
Joanne Solem, *Proofreader*

 **[MT. PLEASANT FARM—HOWARD COUNTY CONSERVANCY](#)** September 17, Wednesday, 7:30 a.m. (Half day)
Meet at parking lot. 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 - Warren Cummings, wcummings9@gmail.com, 410-925-1809*

FALL COUNT

September 20, Saturday. See page 10 for more details. Please go to the following link to sign up: <http://howardbirds.org/howard/counts.htm>

[HAWK WATCH AT MEADOWBROOK PARK](#)

September 21, Sunday, 9:30 a.m. (half day) *Meet at hawk watch site on hilltop on west side of park.* Bring a chair and sustenance for however long you plan to stay. Harry will provide tips on separating species in flight. The park provides paved path for walking. Ponds and great sparrow habitat should provide other birding opportunities. Sun protection is recommended. *Facilities available. Cancelled in inclement weather.* *Leader - Harry Fink, harry@mdphelp.com, 410-446-4747*

[WESTERN REGIONAL PARK](#)

September 28, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (half day) *Meet at first parking lot on left off Carr's Mill Road.* Moderate walking along field edges and woodland trails. Opportunity for warblers, sparrows, thrushes and flyovers. Small pond may host shorebirds. *Facilities available.* *Leader - Bonnie Ott, bonnieott@verizon.net, 443-285-3302*


FUNGI SEARCH

September 28, Sunday, afternoon
Explore local parkland for a variety of fall fungi. Site to be determined. May be cancelled if weather has been exceedingly dry. Register with Bob/Jo Solem at odenata@msn.com.

[LAKE ELKHORN](#)

October 4, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours.) *Meet at Dockside Parking lot.* Easy walking along the lake and to Forebay Pond. Migrants will be moving through. Warblers are generally in abundance. The lake can turn up interesting surprises. Hawks are also possible flying over. *No facilities.*
Leader - Allen Lewis, allenlewis@gmail.com

(Field Trips continued from page 2)

 **MT. PLEASANT FARM**—HOWARD COUNTY CONSERVANCY October 5, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours) Meet at parking lot. Easy walking through the fields of Mt. Pleasant Farm. Tree lines, hedgerows, and streams provide opportunity for non-meadow species. Prime time for sparrows. Great opportunity for flyovers. Facilities available.

Leader – Russ Ruffing, ruff2@verizon.net

SPARROW BIG DAY

October 11, Saturday (all day) Limit: 12 people.

Search the wetlands and dry fields in this intensive search for as many sparrows as possible. Going for 12 species! Previous years have turned up non-sparrow rarities. Expect difficult walking for most of the day. Knee boots a must. Facilities at some spots.

Contact Bonnie Ott, bonnieott@verizon.net, 443-285-3302 to sign up and get info.

ELKHORN GARDEN PLOTS

October 13, Monday 8:30 a.m. (2 hours) The plots are on the east side of Oakland Mills Road opposite Dasher Ct. The Garden Plots offer excellent opportunities for unusual sparrows, migrant passerines, and interesting late season butterflies. No facilities.

Leader – Jim Wilkinson, lakekoshare@gmail.com, 410-381-9250

WEST FRIENDSHIP PARK

October 19, Sunday, 7:45 a.m. (half day) Meet at shopping center just west of Rt. 32 and Rt. 144. Will carpool to nearby park. Moderate walking along field edges and through stream valleys. Small ponds may have some surprises. Expect wet areas. Rustic facilities. Leader - Jeff Culler, cullersfuls@hotmail.com, 410-465-9006

CENTENNIAL PARK

November 2, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours) (Note: Daylight Saving Time ends.) Meet at west end parking lot off Centennial Lane. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodland, field, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Early waterfowl, lingering migrants likely. Facilities available.

Leaders - Kevin & Karen Heffernan, KJHeff@aol.com, 410-418-8731

SHARPS AT WATERFORD FARM


November 8, Saturday 8:00 a.m. (half day). Meet at farm parking area, between barns on right. Rte. 97 S. to right on Jennings Chapel Rd., 1 mile to right into farm at sign. Moderate walking over crop stubble, farm roads and paths on this working farm. Fields with crop residue, extensive woodlands, Cattail Creek and floodplain, three ponds, and five shallow waterfowl impoundments make for diverse habitats and good birding oppor-

tunities. Port-a-pots available. Knee-high waterproof footwear is advisable for part of hike.

Leader – Wes Earp, the_earps@verizon.net, 410-531-3197

CENTENNIAL PARK

November 9, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours) Meet at west end parking lot off Centennial Lane. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodland, field, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Early waterfowl, lingering migrants likely. Facilities available. Leader - [Mike Kerwin](mailto:m63kerwin@verizon.net), m63kerwin@verizon.net, 410-461-2408

 = Great for beginning birders

(President's Welcome continued from page 1)

I have three things to ask of you during my presidency.

- Tell me if there are any particular activities which the Club is not doing that you would like us to do. Or, if there are any activities that we should be doing differently.
- Do introduce yourselves to me at Club activities (or elsewhere – the supermarket checkout counter or the gas pump would be fine). Although I have been a Club member for several decades, I do not know everyone by name.
- Encourage a friend who is not (yet) a birder to come on one of our walks or to attend a meeting. They may well become new members.

Watch for Newsgrams and the Goldfinch to keep abreast of upcoming HCBC events.

New this year for those of you wishing to donate to MOS, you can now do this when you renew your Howard County Bird Club membership. Use the line marked “Special contributions to the HCBC AND the Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS)”. Put in the amount that you want to give, in addition to your dues, and include this extra amount in your check. This is the first year that a blank for the MOS special contributions is included, and it is especially important now since MOS no longer participates in the workplace giving campaign. Your donation will be tax deductible.

Finally, I hope to see you on Sept 11th for the first club meeting of the new season when we have an excellent, if poignant, talk lined up.



SPRING BIRD RECORDS: MARCH 1 – MAY 31, 2014

BY [JOANNE SOLEM](#)

Little Gull, a new county species, and Swallow-tailed Kite, a species not seen for more than 125 years, headlined an excellent spring season. Ross's Goose, Tricolored Heron, Eastern Whip-poor-will, and Brewer's Blackbird, plus one of the best flights of Red-necked Grebes on record added up to a memorable season despite wet, chilly conditions that delayed many migrants.

Snow Geese were scarce with one blue phase at Daisy Rd/Bushy Park Rd 3/21 (**JW**) and one white ph. at Waterford 3/22 (**WE+**, **HPt**, ph.). The last one was at Jessup 4/6 (**RPt**). A **Ross's Goose**, third county record, appeared at Fulton Pond 3/2 (**JW**) and was reported occasionally until 3/10 (**KS**). One seen at Daisy Rd/MD144 on 3/5 (**JHf**) is presumed to be the same bird, although it raises the question of whether this was one of four seen at the latter location in early January. A **Cackling Goose** at Fulton 3/24 (**DCm**) was late. The first **Canada Goose** goslings were noted 4/29 at Gateway (**SN**). Peak **Tundra Swan** migration occurred on 3/10: 170 (**KS**), 150 (**KDy**, **HPt**); 117 (**MW**), 57 (**BO**), 40 (**LCg**), with a flock of 250 on 3/11 (**JCu**).

Twenty-seven **Gadwalls** were present at Race Road 3/16 (**KS**) and 3/21 (**POs**), the second highest record. Five **American Black Ducks** at Waterford 3/22 (**WE+**) were the second latest, a record which was soon surpassed at Wilde Lake on 4/3 (**RHI**) for a new late date [3/28/09 N. Magnusson, J. Solem]. **Blue-winged Teal** at Fulton 3/26 (**KS-4**) stayed until 4/12 (**JGr-2**). **Northern Shovelers** peaked at seven at Waterford 3/22 (**WE+**). Six **Northern Pintails** at Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS) 3/19 (**JW**) were the seasonal high. **Redheads** turned up in small groups with three at Sewells Orchard Pk 3/24 the most interesting location (**EHs**). The last **Ring-necked Ducks** appeared at two locations the first week of May (**KLz**; **JS**). **Greater Scaup** were identified at four sites from 3/13 at Centennial Park (**KS-1**) to 4/9 at Fulton (**JW-1**). A flock of 35 **Lesser Scaup** at a Jennings Chapel Rd pond 3/16 was the season's high (**KS**). Three **Long-tailed Ducks** at TRIRS 4/3 (**TFe**) were a fine sighting. A **Common Goldeneye** was spotted from Brighton Dam 3/9 (**TFe**); it was last reported 3/22 (**DCm**). Because **Ruddy Ducks** were few during spring migration, it was surprising to have one turn up at Lake Elkhorn on 5/19 (**ALw**), the third latest record.

Wild Turkey sightings were numerous. Turkeys are now so widely distributed in the county that they could turn up anywhere, as evidenced by the following sightings: Manahan Dr (**BO**), Gateway (**JW**), McGaw Ct (**SN**), High Ridge Pk (**LBr**), Carrs Mill Landfill (**LBr**), and MD108/Centennial La at Elioak Farm (seen while she was sitting at the traffic light) (**LCg**). The season's only **Red-throated Loon** was spotted at TRIRS 4/3 (**TFe**). **Common Loon** numbers were strangely low with no large flocks noted. Forty-four **Horned Grebes** were counted at TRIRS 4/3 (**JHf**), the second highest record. **Red-necked Grebe** migration was truly astonishing. Sustained cold in the Midwest, which froze a substantial portion of the Great Lakes, may have been a major factor in moving large numbers of this species east during the winter. Beginning in early March, varying numbers were reported at both TRIRS and Centennial with 18 at TRIRS 3/21 marking the second highest number ever (**DCm**). This extraordinary flight was thought to have ended locally with the sighting of one on the Pigtail field trip 5/3 (**JHf+**, **JCu**, ph.) for the second latest record; however, recently one was reported to have been seen in the summer season! No large flocks of **Double-crested Cormorants** were detected either as flyovers or at lakes, with a modest 17 the high on 4/23 at Wilde Lake (**NM**).

American Bittern sightings spanned two months from 3/11 at Mt. Pleasant (**BO+**) to 5/10 at W. Friendship Pk (**JCu**). They were also reported from Fox Chase 4/13 (**JCu**), Centennial 4/19 (**KDy**, **KHf**, **JHr**), and Plumtree Path 4/30 (**MRg**). **Great Blue Herons** nested at both Vantage Point (**JS**; **NM**) and Waterford (**WE+**). **Great Egret** numbers peaked at a modest five on 4/10 at Centennial (**JHf**). One of the prize sightings of the spring was a **Tricolored Heron** spotted at Centennial 3/26 (**MRg**), the county's fourth record. Unfortunately, it did not stay long enough for photos; one other person arrived in time to see it fly (**RRf**). Five **Green Herons** were reported at both the Loyola Pond, E. Col. 4/29 (**SN**) and Centennial 5/10 (**MLm+**). As usual, **Black-crowned Night-Herons** could be counted on at Wilde Lake with the earliest 4/2 (**CSt**). Four were detected 4/22 (**JHr**) and 4/29 (**KS**) with one noted at Lake Kittamaqundi 5/9 (**CKc**). A **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** arrived at Lake Elkhorn 3/27 (**SMy**), second earliest record, and remained until 3/29 (**JCu**; **KDy**, **KHf**). An **Osprey** at Duckett Dam 3/12 was early (**JSh**) (a pair nested on the Prince George's Co. side of the dam on a relay tower). One of the season's outstanding sightings was a **Swallow-tailed Kite** slowly drifting north over Linden Church Rd. east of MD32, during the late afternoon of 4/22 (**HFk**). Since the only previous record dated to 1879, this sighting by an experienced raptor observer was exciting. **Bald Eagles** continued to be widely reported, with an active nest visible to passing motorists along Folly Quarter Rd. A **Northern Harrier** on 5/23 at Mt. Pleasant (**BO**) tied the late record. **Red-shouldered Hawk** nests were reported at a number of locations (**SN**; **JHr**; **HPt**). Normally, spring **Broad-winged Hawk** migration consists of a bird or two at widely separated locations over a six-week period. This year there were more sightings than usual beginning with one at Marriottsville 4/9 (**JCu**) to two at Deep Run 5/11 (**CGt**) with a definite peak on 4/22. On that date, 74 were counted over Cavey La (**RRf**) and 46 appeared in the late afternoon over Burleigh Manor (**MKw**). A rarely seen dark morph was observed at MPEA 4/24 (**JHf**).

Rails, as usual, were scarce as the only legal access to traditionally productive habitat at the U. of MD Farm is during official county counts. The **Virginia Rail** and **Sora** on May Count on 5/10, were, as anticipated, in the swale (**M&GMcC**). (A **Sora** reported to eBird on 5/9 was obtained by a trespassing birder - **THg**.) The high **American Coot** count was 13 at Centennial 3/24 (**HPt**, **KDy**); the last two departed from there on an early 4/9 (**RHI**).

Shorebird migration was generally unremarkable with a few exceptions. A **Solitary Sandpiper** on 3/24 at Fulton Pond set a new early date by a week (**KS**, ph.) [J. Culler 4/1/12]. On 5/1, after one of the season's heavy rains, the flooded front drainage area at Western Reg. Pk held 23 **Lesser Yellowlegs** (**BHi**); later that day 31 were counted (**NM**). That number set a new high count beating a record that had stood for more than 55 years [8/22/57 W. Booth - 25]. Although **Wilson's Snipe** numbers did not approach a record, 48 at Alpha Ridge Landfill 4/5 (**RCu**, **JHf+**) and 21 in the muddy short grass at Patrick's on Daisy Rd 3/19 (**JHf**) were good counts. **American Woodcock** were reported from Hipsley Mill, PRSP, beginning 3/10 (**ALw**, **DCm**). At least 10 to 15 were observed there by a number of people during the spring. Woodcock were also noted at MPEA (*vide* **CFr**), Gateway (**SMu**), Gorman Stream Valley NRA (**LHt**), So. Trotter Rd (**W&SE**), Gwynn Acres Path (**ROr**, **BO**), Jessup (**R&RnPt**), and Pump House Rd (**DKn**). Singles on

[\(Records continued on page 5\)](#)

(Records continued from page 4)

5/1 at River Hill (JHr) and 5/25 at W. Friendship (LCg), were well into the nesting season.

Gull and tern migration was unusually compressed with **Bonaparte's Gulls** 4/2 to 4/14 and **Caspian Terns** 4/2 to 4/9 with one laggard on 5/3 (ALw). Within this narrow window, however, a new county record was established. A **Little Gull** arrived with a flock of 92 Bonaparte's at Centennial on 4/6 (KDy, KHf, HPt). Fortunately for the birding community, the bird stayed from



Little Gull

photo by Bill Hill

10:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. when an Osprey spooked it (TFe). While the Bonies spent most of that gorgeous Sunday resting on the water, the diminutive but energetic Little Gull fed almost continuously. The local Rare Bird Alert and state listserves enabled dozens of birders to enjoy this singular event. A Ring-billed Gull count of 650 at U. of MD Farm (roadside) was one of the best counts since the active landfill closed (RRf).

Yellow-billed Cuckoos were few and arrived late in sharp contrast to **Black-billed Cuckoos**. After the numbers reported this spring, it is hard to believe that 2011 was the year without a Black-bill! Not only were they reported from seven locations (sometimes multiple times), but two were reported at Cavey La 5/7 (RRf), MPEA 5/11 (RHI), Henryton 5/4 (KDy, NM+), and Mt. Pleasant 5/24 (NM).

Northern Saw-whet Owls were few in number last winter. One at Annapolis Rock stayed into March: 3/16 (JSh) and 3/21 (MWI) for the second latest departure date. A nice group of 28 **Common Nighthawks** was detected over Plumtree Path 5/12 (MRg); the last one was 5/26 at MPEA (CSt). An **Eastern Whip-poor-will** calling the evening of 4/12 at Diversified La (KDy, KHf) was noteworthy because the last eight years recorded one Whip in four of those years, none in the other four. A high of 44 **Chimney Swifts** was counted over Fulton Pond 4/24 (KS). The **Red-headed Woodpecker** that wintered at Linden Church Rd was still being reported on 4/14 (MKw). On 3/26, a **Pileated Woodpecker** visited suet at Roxbury Mill Rd (KLI). At Lake Elkhorn, where Pileateds are relatively unusual, one was seen at a possible nest hole in a sycamore on 4/3 (JW).

American Kestrels were reported from half a dozen locations with a high of eight at the landfill 4/5 (RCu, JHf+). Although a **Merlin** at Fulton on 3/10 was early (KS), the last one departed on an early 4/9 from Gateway (JMcG).

The always challenging flycatchers provided more than their share of fine sightings. In addition to the third earliest **Olive-sided Flycatcher** 5/4 at Henryton (NM, JS+), there were an additional four (possibly five) individuals at four other locations: MPEA 5/7 (NM), Manahan Dr 5/12, 5/27 (BO), Rockburn Branch Pk 5/18 (KLz, ph.), and 5/31 landfill (JHf), the second latest record. An **Eastern Wood-Pewee** at Henryton 4/29 tied the third earliest record (NM). The eighth-ever spring **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** tied the late departure date on 5/22 at Forebay Pond (JW). **Alder Flycatchers** were one of the season's surprises. The six (all calling) reported from five sites in one week 5/21-5/28 were more



Olive-sided Flycatcher

photo by Bonnie Ott

than previously recorded for this species in any year! Reports included the Robinson Nature Center 5/21 (DRh), 5/23 Mt. Pleasant (BO+), 5/25 Schooley Mill Pk (NM-2) to 5/28 (FSh-1), 5/25 Covenant Soccer Fields (THg), 5/26 MPEA (KS), and 5/31 River Rd scrubland (KS). A sprinkling of **Least Flycatchers** completed their migration locally on 5/29 at MPEA (DRh), tying the late date. At Centennial, twelve **Eastern Phoebes** were counted on 3/25 (JW) and 10 **Great Crested Flycatchers** on 5/10 (MLm+). Near the end of May, a pair of Great Cresteds attempted to use a nest box at Timberleigh (DNg).

Seven **Yellow-throated Vireos** at Henryton 5/6 (RRf) set a second-high record. A **Blue-headed Vireo** detected at Mt. Pleasant 5/23 (HPt, KDy) was the second latest. Six **Warbling Vireos** at Centennial 5/8 (BO) tied the high count. A **Red-eyed Vireo** at Centennial 4/15 set a new early record (KS) [4/17/87 J. E. & J. K. Boone; '91 N. McClintock, J. Solem].

A crow with a white head was seen near Elkridge 3/4 (BBg). **Common Ravens** continued to nest on Duckett Dam (P. G. side in 2014) 3/12 (JSh, JS, KKx). Others were noted at River Rd 3/4 (MKw-2), TRIRS 3/15 (DCm-1), Long Corner-Mt. Airy 4/2 (WE, MW-1 flying north), later on 4/2 Windsor Forest Rd (WE, MW-1 on ground), and along MD 99 just west of Mt. Pleasant 5/31 (WWt, DBn-1). Generally, swallows were late and rather few; however, one **Cliff Swallow** at the landfill 4/5 was the third earliest (JHf). **Bank Swallows**, which normally peak well into May, not only were scarce in late April, but the only May records were at Waterford 5/5 (DCm, ALw-1) and at Waverly Pond 5/16 (RRf-1).

A **Black-capped Chickadee** at a Cavey La feeder was last seen 4/10, the second latest (RRf, ph.). Because the winter of 2013-14 saw few boreal species, a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** that appeared briefly at Hunt Ridge 3/11 was a pleasant surprise (CSt). A **Winter Wren** at MPEA on 5/11 set a new late date (ESt) [5/10/96 J. Solem]. The lone **Marsh Wren** detected was at Western RP on 5/2 (BO). The 30 **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** at MPEA 4/25 were a new high count breaking an old record (DRh) [5/2/59 C. S. Robbins+-29]. Twenty-two **Golden-crowned Kinglets** at Browns Bridge 4/2 was the second highest count (BO). A **Veery** at Hipsley, PRSP, 4/19 was the third earliest (JGr); the next one was not reported until 5/1 (NM). Of the few **Gray-cheeked Thrush** reports, the first at Waterford 5/5 (DCm, ALw) tied the third earliest date, while the latest on 5/26 at MPEA (NM) set a new late date [5/25/76 R. Munro; '03 J. Wilkinson; '81 M&G McClure, J. Solem]. That record stood for just two days until a Gray-cheeked was photographed in a yard at Stone Hill Dr 5/28 (KLz)! A **Swainson's Thrush** at MPEA 5/30 (KS), tied the third latest date.

The 76 **Gray Catbirds** tallied in w. HowCo 5/10 were the second highest number on record (JSh, MSz). Five **American Pipits** at Waterford

(Records continued on page 6)

(Records continued from page 5)

5/5 (**DCm, ALw**) were the last of the season. **Lapland Longspurs** on 3/4 at Underwood Rd/Old Frederick Rd established the third latest date. Initially, a male was reported (**JW**; later **JHf, CSt, HPt**). That same afternoon, less than one-half mile north along Underwood Rd, a female was seen (**POs, DCm**). These were probably the same two birds that had been present on 1/22 and 1/23. The longspurs were associating with ~50 **Horned Larks (JW)**.

Spring warbler migration was the best in years according to some observers, but was still far below migrations of two or three decades ago. A count of 15 **Ovenbirds** at MPEA 5/2 was good (**DRh**). Although most species were slow to arrive, a silent **Worm-eating Warbler** at Pigtail 4/18 was the third earliest (**M&GMcC**); it was early May before they were widely reported. A **Northern Waterthrush** at Lake Elkhorn 5/30 (**ALw**) tied the second latest date. A **Golden-winged Warbler** along the Patuxent Branch Trail 5/2 was a choice find (**KGw**). It was encouraging to see three **Blue-wingeds**, on 5/23 near River Rd in the Patapsco scrubland where they nest (**FLv**). Ten **Black-and-whites** at MPEA 5/2 were a good number (**DRh**). A **Prothonotary** (heard only) at Daniels 4/12 set a new early record (**KS**) [4/13/01 G. McClure]. Other reports were 5/2 at both Cavey La (**RRf**) and Pigtail (**JHf**), as well as 5/4 at Henryton (**DCm**). Spring **Tennessees**, as usual, were scarce. Among the few reported were two at Western RP 5/10 (**B&GHi**); one was also spotted 5/7 in a 10-species warbler flock that appeared at Martin Rd after a late afternoon shower (**JHf**). **Nashvilles** were in no rush to arrive; once here, one dallied into June. A **Mourning Warbler** at Henryton 5/7 (**CSt**) was the third earliest and lingered a day enabling other birders to enjoy it (**JHf+**). Another was reported from Marriottsville 5/15 (**RR, THg**). A count of 29 **Common Yellowthroats** in w. HowCo on 5/10 was excellent (**JSh, MSz**). Perhaps a few of the six **Hoodeds** at Pigtail 5/3 stayed to nest (**JHf, JCu+**). A singing **Cape May** at Meadowbrook Pk 4/26 set a new arrival date (**BO, ph.**) [4/29/94 B. Ott, J. Solem]. One, in an Ellicott City yard, on 5/20 tied the third latest (**RHI**). From 4/28, when a **Cerulean** was first detected at Henryton (**RRf, HfK, ALw**), one or two continued there until the end of the period. One was also present at Marriottsville both 5/15 (**RR, THg**) and 5/18 (**DRh**). **Northern Parulas** continue to do well along the Patuxent River judging from the 22 chalked up on 5/10 (**JSh, MSz**). Spring **Magnolias** were rather hard to come by. As usual, a few **Bay-breasted** were seen (**JCu; MKw; RRf**). Flashy **Blackburnians** were reported from at least seven sites. A **Yellow Warbler** at Centennial 4/13 (heard only) (**KS**) established a new arrival date [4/15/06 M. Stewart], with a good count of 15 there on 5/10 (**MLm+**). Although **Blackpolls** are routinely among the latest migrant warblers, none lingered into June; the last report was 5/31 at Vantage Point (**NM**). **Palms** (both eastern and western) moved through for six weeks; the high count of 12 at Daniels 4/24 (**NM**) was mediocre. The first **Pine** on 3/11 at Gateway (**JW**) was one of the few March records this year. Typically, Lake Elkhorn hosts high counts of **Yellow-rumped Warblers**; this spring it was a modest 53 on 4/29 (**ALw**). The first **Yellow-throated Warbler** finally arrived on 4/5 at Marriottsville, a traditional location (**RHI**). Nine **Prairies** were present at Mt. Pleasant 5/24 (**KDy**). Although **Canadas** are usually among the later waves of migrants, this year there was nothing remarkable about their 5/7 arrival at Cavey La (**RRf**) or 5/29 departure from MPEA (**DRh**). **Wilson's**, in contrast, made an excellent showing after their 5/1 arrival at Henryton (**HPt, KDy**). Between 5/5 and 5/11, they were detected at an additional seven sites (**DCm & ALw; RRf; BO** 3 sites; **NM; JS**). The last was at Cavey La 5/25 (**RRf**).

Despite chilly early spring weather, **American Tree Sparrows** did not linger with the last one noted at the Robinson Nature Center 3/23 (**JHr**).

Peak **Vesper** movement was obvious. On 4/11, one was reported at Blandair (**JW**); later that same day three were found at Meadowbrook Pk (**BO+**). On 4/12, two more were noted at Western RP (**BO**), while a late bird was reported from MPEA 5/2 (**RHI**). A **Savannah Sparrow** at Blandair 5/25 was well beyond most reports but not yet into safe nesting dates (**DLp**). A **Grasshopper** at Western RP 4/28 claimed a small patch of grass near soccer field no. 10 where it sang for weeks to the delight of many birders (**BHi**). **Lincoln's** are always scarce in spring. This year they were spotted at Mt. Pleasant 5/6 (**BO**), Henryton 5/8 (**JHf**), and Blandair on 5/25 (**DLp**), the second latest. One **Swamp** remained until 5/23 at Lake Elkhorn (**ALw**). **White-throated Sparrows** are well-known for being one of the last wintering birds to depart. This year one was seen at Henryton 5/24 (**KGw**); another stayed into June. Although most **Dark-eyed Juncos** leave by mid-April, the last one stayed until 5/7 at Orange Grove, PVSP (**KLz**). The initial **Blue Grosbeak** was reported on a rather late arrival date of 5/4 at Western RP (**RHI**).

The first **Bobolink** reports came on 5/1 with 13 at Western RP (**BHi**) and two at Wilde Lake (**EHS**). Thirty was the high on 5/3 at Fulton (**RHI**). A wintering pale **Red-winged Blackbird** female continued at feeders at Manahan Dr. until at least 3/3 (**BO**). More reports than usual of **Eastern Meadowlarks** were welcome, especially since they came from varied locations: Old Frederick Rd 3/18 (**JW-3**), Triadelphia Mill Rd just e. of Highland Rd 3/21 (**HMz-9**), Waterford 3/22 (**WE+-2**), landfill 4/5 (**RCu, JHf+-3**), Mt. Pleasant 4/23 (**KS-4**), and W. Friendship Pk 5/20 (**LCg-2**). Welcome also were multiple reports of **Rusty Blackbirds** which were noted at 11 locations from 3/1 at Mt. Pleasant (**BO+-1**) to 5/10 at PRSP (**TFe-1**). Of the unusual species this spring, **Brewer's Blackbird**, at least the sixth county record, probably ranks as the most difficult to identify. One male and one female were picked out of a moving blackbird flock in a muddy field at Daisy Rd/Bushy Pk Rd on a rainy 3/19 (**JW**). Because such flocks are rarely static, just one other birder managed to spot the same two birds later that day (**JHf**). Near the end of May two pairs of **Baltimore Orioles** were nesting at Timberleigh (**DNg**). Despite the scarcity of boreal species, there were scattered sightings of **Purple Finches**. From one to three visited Diversified La feeders from 3/24 to 4/16 (**KDy, KHf**); other reports came from **PKn, JHf, RRf, CSt**, and **M&GMcC**. Although technically not in HowCo, a **Pine Siskin** was seen and heard at Greenbridge, TRIRS 3/23, heading toward HowCo (**JW**).

Thanks to Joe Hanfman, Nancy Magnusson, and Howard Patterson for their assistance.

Abbreviations: **HowCo** – Howard County; **PRSP** – Patuxent River State Park, ph. – photograph, **PVSP** – Patapsco Valley State Park, **TRIRS** – Triadelphia Reservoir.

Observers: **BBg** – Bonnie Ballinger, **LBr** – Leonard Brady, **DBr** – Dave Brenneman, **LCg** – Lisa Colangelo, **JCu** – Jeff Culler, **RCu** – Ralph Cullison III, **DCm** – David Cummings, **KDy** – Karen Darcy, **SE** – Sue Earp, **WE** – Wes Earp, **CFr** – Cheryl Farfaras, **TFe** – Tom Feild, **HfK** – Harry Fink, **KGw** – Kathy Glyshaw, **JGr** – Jim Green, **CGt** – Carol Gutberlet, **JHf** – Joe Hanfman, **JHr** – John Harris, **KHf** – Kevin Heffernan, **BHi** – Bill Hill, **RHI** – Russell Hillsley, **THg** – Timothy Houghton, **EHS** – Ed Huestis, **LHt** – Linda Hunt, **DKn** – David Keane, **PKn** – Patsy Kennan, **MKw** – Mike Kerwin, **KKx** – Kim Knox, **CKc** – Clayton Koonce, **MLm** – Michael Leumas, **ALw** – Allen Lewis, **KLI** – Kathie Lillie, **DLp** – David Littlepage, **KLz** – Kathy Litzinger, **NM** – Nancy Magnusson, **GMcC** – Grazina McClure, **MMcC** – Mike McClure, **JMcG** – Jay McGann, **HMz** – Helen Metzmann, **SMy** – Susan Moody, **SMu** – Sue Muller, **DNg** – Diane Nagengast, **SN** – Sue Neri, **ROr** – Richard Orr, **POs** – Peter Osenton, **BO** – Bonnie Ott, **HPt** – Howard Patterson, **RnPt** – Renee Peters, **RPt** – Richard Peters, **DRh** – Derek Richardson, **RR** – Robert Ringler, **MRg** – Matt Rogosky, **RRf** – Russ Ruffing, **KS** – Kurt Schwarz, **JSh** – Jay Sheppard, **JS** – Jo Solem, **ESt** – Ed Stedman, **MSz** – Marcy Stutzman, **CSt** – Chuck Stirrat, **MW** – Mark Wallace, **WWt** – Winger West, **JW** – Jim Wilkinson, **MWI** – Max Wilson.

MOS 2015 SCHOLARSHIPS ANNOUNCED

BY: KATE TUFTS

If you are a teacher or naturalist involved with conservation and environmental education here is your chance to apply for a scholarship to the truly magical world of the Hog Island Audubon Camp in Bremen, Maine.



Atlantic Puffins

photo by Kate Tufts

The Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) annually awards a number of scholarships which include tuition, room and board and a five or six-day intensive course of study in ornithology, ecology, conservation and natural history. Travel arrangements and costs are the recipient's responsibility.

The Hog Island Audubon Camps are known for their high levels of instruction by top-notch educators such as Pete Dunne, Scott Weidensaul and Steve Kress. The location is stunning and the food is first rate healthy and comfort cuisine and totally delicious.

Courses offered for 2015 scholarships will be:

- Maine Seabird Biology & Conservation, May 31 – June 6, Sept. 6 – 11
- Joy of Birding, June 7 – 12
- Field Ornithology, June 14 – 19
- Sharing Nature: an Educator's Week, July 19 – 24

For details regarding the application process, please check the MOS web site: www.mdbirds.org and click on "Education."

Scholarships are also available for the Maryland Bird and Bird Habitats program co-sponsored with Washington College Center for Environment and Society, Chestertown, Maryland. Details to follow on www.mdbirds.org.

SEED SALE ANNOUNCEMENT

BY WARD EBERT

Kevin Cassidy, the owner of The Wildlife Authority, has agreed to again host our seed sale. The sale will be held on October 5th, but this year customers will have the option to pick up their orders **any day through the following Saturday** if they are unable to do so on the 5th.

Around the second week of September an order form will sent by mail, by email, and will be posted on the Howard County Bird Club website. Seed can be picked up from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday (see website for hours on other days) at the Wildlife Authority, 3275 Bethany Lane, Suite B, Ellicott City, MD 21042. Please visit their website, wildlifeauthority.com, for a map and more information.

As in the past, our net proceeds from the seed sale will be contributed to conservation causes. Over the years, the Howard County Bird Club has contributed more than \$68,000 to various conservation organizations. The vast majority of these funds have come from the seed sales. So please stock up on seed and help the birds.

We thank all of you who have supported the sale over the past years. We hope that you will support this year's sale as well. See you on Saturday, October 5th!

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.

September 25, 2014

Robin Todd
10174 Green Clover Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21042
Totnesman@aol.com, 410-491-5333

October 23, 2014

Karen Heffernan
9775 Diversified Lane
Ellicott City, MD 21042
Khdarcy4@aol.com, 410-418-8731

HOWARD COUNTY MAY COUNT RESULTS

BY [KEVIN HEFFERNAN](#)

Sixty-two birders participated in the 67th annual May Count which was held on May 10, 2014. The day was partly cloudy with periods of light rain and temperatures in the 70s. There was a heavy downpour in the afternoon. The 145 total species equaled the average number of species per year since 1990. The total number of birds (14,784), however, was the lowest in the last 10 years. A total of 230 species have been seen over the 41 years that the count has been run by the Howard County Bird Club. Seventy-seven species have been seen every year while 22 species have been seen only once. No species was seen for the first time this year.

Pied-billed Grebe was seen for the ninth time (four of the last six years). Sora was seen for the seventh time (five of the last seven years). Rusty Blackbird was also seen for the seventh time. Virginia Rail was seen for the fifth time (three of the last six years). The rarest bird of the count was Hooded Merganser seen only for the third time (two of the last three years).

Two species had all-time high counts: Hooded Merganser (3) and Red-headed Woodpecker (6). An additional 15 species had or tied 10-year high counts including Double-crested Cormorant, American Bittern, Greater Yellowlegs, Black-billed Cuckoo, Least Fly-

catcher, Purple Martin, Hermit Thrush, Nashville, Chestnut-sided, Cape May, Bay-breasted, and Wilson’s warblers, Swamp Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, and Rusty Blackbird. One species had an all-time low count, Field Sparrow with 45. An additional 16 species had 10-year low counts including Great Egret, Solitary Sandpiper, Barred Owl, Eastern Phoebe, White-eyed Vireo, Veery, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Yellow Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Blue Grosbeak, Common Grackle, and Orchard and Baltimore orioles. The most notable misses, including the number of years seen, were American Kestrel (39, missed two of the last three years), and Blue-headed Vireo (36).

Wild Turkey has been seen on 15 counts including nine of the last ten. Great Egret has been seen on 14 counts including the last 11 in a row. Bald Eagle has been seen on 24 counts including the last 23 in a row. Cooper's Hawk has been seen on 25 counts including the last 19 in a row.

Totals for each species are shown in the [table](#) on page 9. A [compilation spreadsheet](#) of the May Count data from 1974 through 2014 year can be found on the Howard County Bird Club website.

VOLUNTEER NEWS

The Howard County Bird Club is an all volunteer organization. We rely on our members to step up and pitch in when needed. We would like to thank one person, Amanda Witt, who has stepped up many times to help out. Recently, when the Club needed a new business card designed, it was Amanda who got the job done. Thanks Amanda and everyone else who pitches in.

Kate Tufts

I would like to thank President Wes Earp and HCBC members for my Distinguished Service Award presented at our May meeting. I took over as Program Chair from Mary Chestem who had set up speakers for many years. In those years we hand wrote letters and phoned possible speakers. Please pass along suggestions for speakers, as many club members do. Ideas also come from news articles, lectures, speaker lists of organizations and listings from other clubs. An attempt is made to keep a balance between trip talks and research findings. Most of the times things fall into place, but there are anxious moments when people don't get back to you and a newsletter deadline looms!

Jane Geuder

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE ANSWER:

[1.] Swallow-tailed Kite 4/22/14*

1. Little Gull 4/6/14
2. Black Rail 5/18/13
3. Sabine's Gull 9/8/12
4. Pink-footed Goose 2/20/12
5. Green Violetear 10/24/11

* Although this is officially the second record of Swallow-tailed Kite, the first is a historical record. According to Stewart and Robbins: "A specimen (USNM) was collected at Ellicott City, Howard County, August 7, 1879."



WEDDING



Karen Darcy and Kevin Heffernan were married June 19, 2014. Kevin is a former HCBC president and is the May Count coordinator. Karen currently is a delegate to the MOS board. They met more than a decade ago at Bird Club events. Congratulations! And may there be many birds in their future.

HOWARD COUNTY MAY COUNT RESULTS - MAY 10, 2014

Canada Goose	741
Wood Duck	28
Mallard	123
Hooded Merganser	6
Wild Turkey	4
Common Loon	1
Pied-billed Grebe	1
Double-crested Cormorant	39
American Bittern	1
Great Blue Heron	54
Great Egret	1
Green Heron	34
Black-crowned Night-Heron	1
Black Vulture	120
Turkey Vulture	160
Osprey	10
Bald Eagle	4
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2
Cooper's Hawk	13
Red-shouldered Hawk	43
Broad-winged Hawk	3
Red-tailed Hawk	21
Virginia Rail	1
Sora	1
Killdeer	21
Spotted Sandpiper	38
Solitary Sandpiper	50
Greater Yellowlegs	11
Lesser Yellowlegs	5
Least Sandpiper	31
Wilson's Snipe	1
American Woodcock	1
Ring-billed Gull	6
Rock Pigeon	114
Mourning Dove	330
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	33
Black-billed Cuckoo	8
Great Horned Owl	2
Barred Owl	10
Common Nighthawk	5
Chimney Swift	125
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	18
Belted Kingfisher	19
Red-headed Woodpecker	3
Red-bellied Woodpecker	247
Downy Woodpecker	114
Hairy Woodpecker	22
Northern(Yellow-shafted) Flicker	45
Pileated Woodpecker	44
Eastern Wood-Pewee	115

Acadian Flycatcher	169
Willow Flycatcher	3
Least Flycatcher	1
Eastern Phoebe	53
Great Crested Flycatcher	105
Eastern Kingbird	118
White-eyed Vireo	41
Yellow-throated Vireo	22
Warbling Vireo	36
Red-eyed Vireo	460
Blue Jay	519
American Crow	350
Fish Crow	51
<i>crow species</i>	130
Horned Lark	23
Purple Martin	89
Tree Swallow	169
N. Rough-winged Swallow	56
Cliff Swallow	83
Barn Swallow	304
Carolina Chickadee	259
Tufted Titmouse	365
White-breasted Nuthatch	59
House Wren	118
Carolina Wren	222
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	290
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2
Eastern Bluebird	145
Veery	10
Swainson's Thrush	29
Hermit Thrush	3
Wood Thrush	261
American Robin	583
Gray Catbird	497
Brown Thrasher	30
Northern Mockingbird	154
European Starling	610
Cedar Waxwing	157
Ovenbird	159
Worm-eating Warbler	11
Louisiana Waterthrush	55
Northern Waterthrush	16
Blue-winged Warbler	7
Black-&-white Warbler	63
Tennessee Warbler	2
Nashville Warbler	2
Kentucky Warbler	5
Common Yellowthroat	251
Hooded Warbler	10
American Redstart	110

Cape May Warbler	5
Cerulean Warbler	1
Northern Parula	173
Magnolia Warbler	42
Bay-breasted Warbler	4
Blackburnian Warbler	7
Yellow Warbler	70
Chestnut-sided Warbler	49
Blackpoll Warbler	50
Blk.-thrted. Blue Warbler	51
Palm Warbler	4
Pine Warbler	7
Yel.-rump'd (Myrtle) Warbler	76
Yellow-throated Warbler	1
Prairie Warbler	21
Blk.-thrted. Green Warbler	36
Canada Warbler	16
Wilson's Warbler	6
Yellow-breasted Chat	11
Eastern Towhee	184
Chipping Sparrow	319
Field Sparrow	45
Savannah Sparrow	34
Grasshopper Sparrow	28
Song Sparrow	175
Lincoln's Sparrow	1
Swamp Sparrow	15
White-throated Sparrow	37
White-crowned Sparrow	3
Dark-eyed Junco	1
Scarlet Tanager	171
Northern Cardinal	686
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	5
Blue Grosbeak	5
Indigo Bunting	209
Bobolink	194
Red-winged Blackbird	636
Eastern Meadowlark	12
Rusty Blackbird	1
Common Grackle	211
Brown-headed Cowbird	192
Orchard Oriole	63
Baltimore Oriole	153
House Finch	117
American Goldfinch	303
House Sparrow	257
Total Birds:	14,784
Total Species:	145



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

10970 Millbank Row
Columbia, MD 21044

September/October 2014 - Inside This Issue

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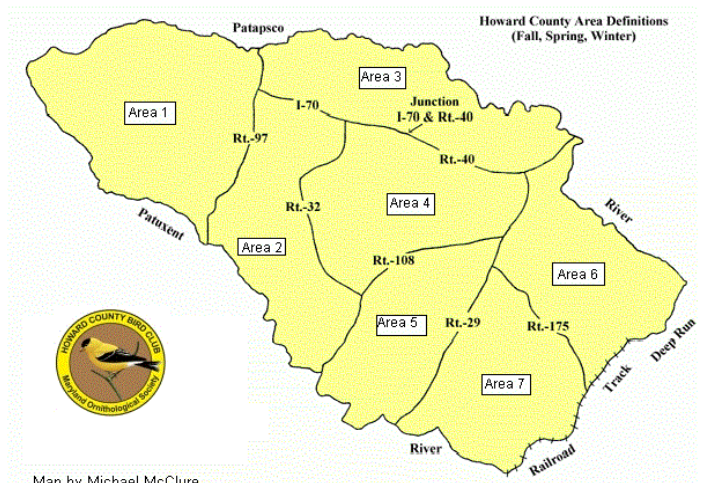
TWENTY-FIRST ANNUAL FALL COUNT

BY [MIKE MCCLURE](#)

The Howard County Bird Club's annual Fall Count, scheduled each year on the third Saturday of September, will be on September 20th. Mike McClure 410-531-2780 and Chuck Stirrat 410-531-2417 are the county co-coordinators. Prior years have set an average of 124 species of birds identified on the count. Spend the day birding with us and help raise the average! Birders of all skill levels are encouraged to participate. Ask to be put with an experienced individual if you do not wish to have your own territory. The county is divided into seven areas (shown below) which are used for all annual counts. A fall season field sheet for Howard County is available on the Club's website. Species that require a writeup include those identified with a double asterisk (**), as well as any writeins. Others that may require a writeup or oral amplification (*), as well as those that are early or late dates (@), are indicated. Also, plan on helping out with the butterfly, dragonfly, and damselfly count. Check sheets will be available on the web.

The following area coordinators have been named: Area 1) Mark Wallace 301-725-6370 and Wes Earp 410-531-3197; Area 2) Jeff Culler 410-465-9006; Area 3) Karen and Kevin Heffernan 410-418-8731; Area 4) Mike McClure 410-531-2780; Area 5) Kurt Schwarz 410-461-1643; Area 6) Bonnie Ott 443-285-3302; and Area 7) Allen Lewis 787-590-4501. You may call an area or county coordinator to

volunteer, or check at the September meeting. Eileen Clegg will host the tally rally at 6007 Flywheel Court, Columbia, MD. The potluck dinner will be served at approximately 7:00 pm, r.s.v.p with food category at 410-730-4362 or Eileen_Clegg@HCPSS.org by Sept. 18th, to reserve space and if necessary obtain directions. **Note:** 1) Eileen's office e-mail will be unavailable starting Friday Sept. 19th, and 2) Flywheel Court is short and narrow - ample parking is available on Watch Chain Way.



Map by Michael McClure