



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, March 12, 2015 "Argentina: Bird Studies and Related Wildlife," by Dr. Matthew Perry. His current research studies the migration patterns of seven species of ducks on a private ranch north of Buenos Aires. Dr. Perry worked at Patuxent Wildlife Refuge for forty years, retiring in 2011. He is presently an emeritus scientist there and active in several wildlife and conservation projects.

Thursday, April 9, 2015 "Saving the Sage-Grouse and the Sagebrush Sea," by Dr. Mark Salvo, Director, Federal Lands Conservation for Defenders of Wildlife. The sage-grouse is a flagship and umbrella species for this western landscape and its conservation would help preserve hundreds of other species that depend upon this habitat. Dr. Salvo is a recognized expert on sage-grouse. These birds have declined more than 90% from historical levels.

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, 410-491-5333.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Name all seven species of woodpeckers recorded in Howard County. Six of the seven nest here, at least rarely. Which one does not? ([Answer](#) on page 2.)

AUTUMN BIRD RECORDS:

AUGUST 1 – NOVEMBER 30, 2014

BY JOANNE SOLEM



Pileated Woodpecker

by Harry Fink

Autumn, as usual, produced a succession of highlights with Ross's Goose, Eared Grebe, White Ibis, and Sandhill Crane heading the list. Also vying for attention were Surf Scoter, Golden Eagle, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Sedge Wren, Nelson's Sparrow, and Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow.

Snow Geese (white phase) were spotted briefly twice: one on a pond at Folly Quarter Rd/Frederick Rd 10/11 (MRg) and eight flying over Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS) 11/28 (EHs). Unbelievably, another Ross's Goose appeared (three of the county's four records have been in 2014). This white ph. bird arrived at Centennial Park (CENPK) with a small flock of Canada Geese 11/16 during a field trip (R&RnPt+). Thanks to a persistent observer (WE) and excellent photographs (SE), this beautiful bird was correctly identified. It appeared almost daily until 11/24 (TFe) attracting dozens of Maryland birders to the park. While scanning goose flocks for the

[\(Records continued on page 4\)](#)

SPRING 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 Coordinators Joe Hanfman at auk1844@gmail.com or Bonnie Ott at bonnieott@verizon.net. HCBC members receive priority on trips that are limited by number of participants. No pets.

CENTENNIAL PARK

March 1, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., (2-3 hours). *Meet at west end parking lot off Centennial Lane.* Easy walking around the lake on paved path. Facilities available. Waterfowl expected, early migrant passerines possible.

Leader - Jeff Culler, cullerfuls@hotmail.com, 410-465-9006.

WATERFOWL SEARCH

March 7, Saturday (half day). *Meet at Broken Land Pkwy and Rt. 32 Park & Ride (WEST side) at 8:00.* 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, krschwal@verizon.net

CENTENNIAL PARK

March 8, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours). Daylight Savings Time starts (Set clocks ahead). *Meet at west end parking lot off Centennial Lane.* Easy walking around the lake on paved path. Facilities available. Waterfowl expected, early migrant passerines possible.

Leaders - Richard and Renee Peters, Richard@rrrrpeters.org

CENTENNIAL PARK

March 15, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours). *Meet at west end parking lot off Centennial Lane.* Easy walking around the lake on paved path. Waterfowl expected, woodland trails for passerines. Facilities available.

Leader - Allen Lewis, allenlewis@gmail.com

SHARPS AT WATERFORD FARM

March 21, Saturday 8:00 a.m. (half day). *Meet at farm parking area, through 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

Anyone is welcome to contribute articles or ideas which you think will be of interest to other birders. Copy may be sent to the following address:

Howard Patterson, Editor
4209 Hermitage Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21042-6235
howard21042@verizon.net

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impoundments make for diverse habitats and good birding opportunities. Port-a-pots available. Knee-high waterproof footwear required for part of walk.

Leader – Wes Earp, wesandsue@gmail.com, 410-531-3197

CENTENNIAL PARK

March 22, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours).

Meet at west end parking lot off Centennial Lane.

Easy walking around the lake on paved path. Facilities available. Waterfowl expected early migrant passerines possible.

Leader - Mike Kerwin, m63kerwin@verizon.net, 410-461-2408

ALPHA RIDGE LANDFILL

April 4, Saturday, (half day) **Reservations required.**

Meet at Alpha Ridge Park at 7:45 a.m. to carpool to landfill.

Carpooling required. Moderate walking over hills and fields of the landfill. Vesper Sparrow and other field birds possible.

Meadowlarks, kestrels and other open country birds expected.

Rarities possible. Facilities at Alpha Ridge Park.

Contact Joe Hanfman for reservations, auk1844@gmail.com, 410-772-8424.


Mt. Pleasant Farm - Howard County Conservancy

April 25, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours).

Earth Day Walk in conjunction with the Howard County Conservancy. *Meet at parking lot near the barn.*

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 – Mike Kerwin, m63kerwin@verizon.net, 410-461-2408

 = Great for beginning birders

Test Your Knowledge Answer

Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, and Pileated Woodpecker all occur in Howard County. All but the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker nest here.

Share Your Photos

The pre-meeting slide show on the television screen is a great opportunity to share your experiences with other club members. If you have bird and other natural history photos that you would like to share before a club meeting, please contact *Wes Earp*, wesandsue@gmail.com, 410-531-3197. He will outline number of images and technical requirements.

In Memoriam: Emmalyn Holdridge 1937-2015



We lost a much loved and respected club member when Emy Holdridge died on January 5th. Many of you will remember her primarily as our stalwart Treasurer from 2000 until her death, but she was also active in many other bird club activities. Since joining the Club in 1987, Emy was an active field birder who participated in all regular seasonal counts (typically she volunteered to co-chair the 2005 Mid-winter Count when someone was needed) and helped for the five years of the second Maryland Breeding Bird Atlas. Emy was proud of her Howard County bird list of 277 species (fourth highest all-time). Her last new species was the lovely Little Gull at Centennial Park last April. She made many contributions to county bird records, as reflected by the following examples for which she was the sole observer or with the initial group: Whimbrel (first county record), Least Tern (second), Long-billed Dowitcher (third), Sandhill Crane (fourth), American Avocet (fourth), and Surf Scoter (sixth and seventh). She also spotted a Common Gallinule at Centennial and an American Golden-Plover at Western Regional Park, both fine species. She frequented Brighton Dam in late summer and several times picked up the first Forster's Tern of the year.

Emy also served as MOS Treasurer from 2004 to 2010. She was an enthusiastic volunteer at the Patuxent Research Refuge, where she was named Volunteer of the Year for 2004.

Although birds were her primary focus, her interests were wide-ranging. Perhaps her childhood on a farm in northwestern Ohio helped stimulate her fascination with the natural world. Several years ago she helped conduct turtle surveys at Patuxent Refuge; at the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area in September of 2009, she spotted a group of small Cinnamon Polypores (*Coltricia perennis*) the only verified local record of this fungus; she was also acquainted with most of the spring wildflowers and eagerly anticipated their blooming season each year. Within the last few years, she acquired a digital camera and expanded her interests to caterpillars and butterflies (her Giant Swallowtail at Mt. Pleasant in 2014 verified one of the few county sightings of this species). Her knowledge and curiosity made her a welcome addition to any field trip or hike.

Emy will be greatly missed, but she will not be forgotten. Although Emy's wishes were firmly that she not be remembered with any specific artifact, the Club plans to donate money towards a project which will exemplify her love of the fragile natural world. Our first thought is the proposed pollinator plantings on plots at Centennial Park; these will encourage a variety of insect pollinators to breed in that park.

If you wish to make a contribution in Emy's memory, please send a check to Treasurer, Howard County Bird Club, 10363 Windstream Drive, Columbia, MD 21044, or bring a check to our March meeting.

(Records continued from page 1)

Ross's, birders also turned up more than one **Cackling Goose** with a peak of three on 11/22 (**CHR**). Two early Cacklers at a pond along So. Trotter Rd 10/12 were carefully identified (**WE**). Mid-November brought good numbers of **Tundra Swans**: 11/11 Duvall (**KTf-40**), 11/13 Alpha Ridge Pk (**JW-35**), and 11/15 Burleigh Manor (**MKw-42**).



Ross's Goose by Rodolpho Quinio

Ducks were rather slow to arrive. Fifty **Gadwalls** at TRIRS 11/7 (**DCm**) set a new high count [28 - N. Magnusson 2/27/08]. The location was significant because all previous counts of 20+ had been at Race Road Wetlands. Four **Blue-winged Teal** rested at CENPK 10/4 (**MKw**). **Northern Shovelers** made a fine showing with reports from Waterford, Jennings Chapel Rd, 10/20 (**MW-2**), Race Road Wetlands 11/16 (**RRf, HPt, ALw-12**), and TRIRS 11/16 (**BHi-1**). A male **Northern Pintail** was spotted at CENPK 11/19 (**RHt+**). Three **Redheads** were notched at



Redhead

by Bonnie Ott

Wilde Lake 11/20 (**KS**). A female **Greater Scaup** was picked out at CENPK 11/19 (**RHt+**), with four at Lake Kittamaquidi 11/30 (**JW**).

Two **Surf Scoters** (13th record) settled in at CENPK 11/19 (**RHt+**), where they remained until the end of the month. Elegant **Long-tailed Ducks** are favorites of many birders. This season at least one was present intermittently at TRIRS from 11/8 (**DSr**) to the end of the month. Autumn's high **Bufflehead** count was 73 at TRIRS 11/14 (**JHf, DCm, ALw**). Two **Common Goldeneyes** appeared at TRIRS 11/29 (**JHf**). The season's first **Common Mergansers**, at TRIRS 11/20 (**DCm-6**), built to 52 by 11/27 (**JHf**). **Ruddy Ducks**, which had been unusually scarce during spring migration, were reported from at least five sites this season.

Wild Turkeys are one of the major success stories of the last 30 years. A record high was set when 30 were photographed at Fox Chase 11/13 (**BO, ROr**) [25 - R. Ostrowski 3/6/11]. **Pied-billed Grebes** peaked at nine at Lake Kittamaquidi 10/6 (**CKc**). The first **Horned Grebe** was noted on a farm pond on Union Chapel Rd 10/15 (**MW**). Ironically, the season's best species was the one-that-got-away. An **Eared Grebe** (second record) in an interesting plumage was photographed at Lake

Elkhorn on 8/28 (**BLg**). Unfortunately, the observer was unaware of the excitement this species would generate, so a week passed before the photo was sent to Sue Muller for identification. Although she forwarded it promptly, the bird was gone. Twenty-two **Double-crested Cormorants** on Howard Co. Fall Count (HCFC) 9/20 were a new high for the count.

An accommodating **American Bittern** at Fox Chase 11/9 (**JCu**) was the second latest record. The bird fed in a well-vegetated pond until 11/11 (**JHf**). Although not quite into record territory, the last sighting of a **Great Egret** on 11/27 at CENPK was a fine date (**KRb**). A **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** at Meadowbrook Pk 10/3 was the second latest record (**BO**). One of the season's choice finds was a **White Ibis** (at least the seventh record) flying over Rockburn Branch Park 8/7 (**BO**).

Eighty-five **Black Vultures** were counted over the north end of TRIRS 10/4 (**RRf**). Again this season **Bald Eagles** were widely reported. All three county nests were known to have contained young in 2014. Nestlings (number unknown) at Duckett Reservoir and TRIRS were verified by a Wash. Sub. Sanitary Comm. ranger in November (*vide JS*). The third nest, visible from Folly Quarter Rd, contained two nestlings in mid to late spring (**K&KnHf**). Four **Northern Harriers** at Mt. Pleasant (MTPLT) 10/31 (**KS, HPt, KnHf**) set a new high [three prior records of three]. **Broad-winged Hawk** migration peaked on 9/15 when 400 were counted over Waterford (**BO**) and 254 over Cavey La (**RRf**). A juv. **Golden Eagle** (18th) was one of the exciting species over Cavey La 11/2 (**RRf, HFk**).

Although the county is not often considered a hot spot for raptor migration, time spent scanning the sky can be rewarding. High points from a few examples provide a flavor for what time and patience can produce: 10/11 - a Big Sit at the U. of MD Farm open house listed two Merlins, one Peregrine Falcon, two American Kestrels, and two Bald Eagles in six hours (**WE+**); 10/12 - a two-hour scan at So. Trotter Rd noted one harrier, five Cooper's, eight Broad-wings, and four Bald Eagles (**WE**); 11/2 - a Cavey La skywatch tallied nine Bald Eagles, 17 Red-tailed Hawks, one harrier, one Sandhill Crane, and one Golden Eagle in six hours (**RRf, HFk**); the same day two hours of viewing at Burleigh Manor produced three Bald Eagles, 11 Red-tails, and one Peregrine Falcon (**MKw**). It pays to look up!

Locally, November was a record-breaking month for **Sandhill Cranes** with three records—extraordinary for a species for which there had been fewer than 10 county records previously. Even more remarkable, all were documented with photos! On 11/2, one crane flew over Cavey La (**RRf, HFk**); on 11/15, a flock of eight (an unprecedented county number) was spotted high over Burleigh Manor (**MKw**), and, on 11/27, five rested at Pigtail, TRIRS (**DCm**). In his thorough fashion, David not only submitted a photo of the birds, but also one of their tracks in the mud!

(Records continued on page 5)

(Records continued from page 4)

High water levels during peak shorebird migration made for generally low numbers and little variety. A few **Semipalmated Plovers** were spotted at TRIRS locations for two months. The last one, on 10/4 at No. TRIRS, tied the late date (**RRf**). High sandpiper numbers included 38 **Leasts** at Waterford 8/3 (**JHf**), four **Pectorals** on the same mudflats 9/7 (**BHi**), and 12 **Semipalmateds** at Tarbay 8/18 (**KS**). Five **Wilson's Snipe** at Waterford 11/16 were the last of the season (**BO**). An **American Woodcock** at the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA) 8/15 may have been a local bird (**HPt, KnHf**), while the one at MTPLT on 11/27 was almost certainly a migrant (**BO**).

Beginning with four **Bonaparte's Gulls** at TRIRS 10/29 (**DCm**), this species was reported for much of November. A banded **Herring Gull** at Jessup 11/25 (**DCm**) had been banded as a nestling on Appledore Island, NH, July 17, 2014 (*vide MRg*). A first-cycle **Lesser Black-backed Gull** appeared at Jessup 11/24, the second earliest record (**JHf**). A high count of 43 **Great Black-backed Gulls** at the same site 11/27 (**DCm**) was one of the best totals since the decades-old landfill tallies. **Caspian Tern** sightings were few and, for the first time since 2000, no **Forster's Terns** were reported this season.

A leucistic **Mourning Dove** was present in a western county yard from late Oct to 11/2 (**SBI, ph.**). **Black-billed Cuckoos** were reported at CENPK 8/7 (**EHS**) and 8/24 (**MKw**), as well as at MTPLT 8/8 (**NDB**). **Great Horned Owls** announced their presence frequently at Duvall Rd this season (**KTf**), while a pair at Hallmark engaged in courtship vocalizations from 11/21 on (**Web**). **Common Nighthawks** began a leisurely migration with one on 8/24 at CENPK (**MKw**), a high of 20 over Owen Brown on 9/1 (**DCm**), and three stragglers on 10/1 at Schooley Mill Pk, tying the third latest record (**JHr**). Thirty **Chimney Swifts** at McNeal Rd 10/15 were the last of the season (**MW**). Three **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** were counted at Waterloo Pk on 9/21 (**S, A, & RWt**). No hummingbirds were detected after mid-October. **Red-headed Woodpeckers** made a fine showing. The bird at Linden Church Rd, which had wintered from December 2013, stayed the summer and was still being seen 9/18 (**HFk**). HCFC tallied eight, a new high for the count (**W&SE-5;TSt, PZ, R&SPo-3**). One also appeared at Cavey La 9/26 (**RRf**). **Northern Flickers** totaled 13 on a field trip at Western Regional Pk 9/28 (**JCu+**).



Red-headed Woodpecker by Bonnie Ott

Six **American Kestrels** were a nice total at the Alpha Ridge Landfill on HCFC (**RCu, JHf**). **Merlins** were reported from 10/3 at Wynfield Rd (**NM-1**) to 11/24 at CENPK (**BO-1**). **Peregrine Falcons** seen included

Martin Rd, W. Col. 9/19 (**JHf-2**), Cavey La 10/9 (**RRf-1**), UMDCF 10/11 (**WE+-1**), Fox Chase 10/11 (**BO+-1**), and Burleigh Manor 11/2 (**MKw-1**).

Surprisingly, the **Olive-sided Flycatcher** sighted at Manahan Dr 8/19 (**BO+**) was the lone report. **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** are notoriously difficult to identify by sight. Two documented reports were received. A



Yellow-bellied Flycatcher by Kevin Heffernan

bird at MTPLT from 8/29 (**JCu**) to 8/31 (**JCu**) was seen and photographed by many birders. A second was photographed 9/4 at Rockburn Branch Pk (**RHI**). **Least Flycatchers** were noted from 8/31 at MTPLT (**KS**) until 9/17 at Cavey La (**RRf**). A rather late **Eastern Kingbird** was still at Gateway on 9/18 (**JMcG**).

Blue-headed Vireos are the last of the vireos to depart. Although not always a late record, any November date is good. This year there were three: 11/2 CENPK (**K&KnHf, JHf+**), 11/7 MTPLT (**JCu**), and 11/7 Cavey La (**RRf**). Birders found more than the usual number of **Philadelphia Vireos** with the first ones spotted on the third earliest date of 8/24 at both MPEA (**HPt, DSn+**) and Fox Chase (**JCu**). Reports from seven sites ended with one at Cavey La 10/1 (**RRf**).

Blue Jay migration isn't always as dramatic as the 202 birds passing overhead, mostly in small flocks, during a field trip to Western Reg. Pk 9/28 (**JCu+**). **Common Ravens** continue to be seen occasionally. The three on HCFC were at locations along the Patapsco River (**W&SE**). Others were November records: Annapolis Rock 11/1 (**DCm**), a Jennings Chapel Rd farm where a deer carcass attracted a raven and four Bald Eagles 11/7 (**MKw**), and TRIRS 11/20 (**DCm, JHf**).

Tree Swallows are usually the last swallows to depart, but this year they were upstaged by **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** as singles were observed on 10/24 at two sites, Underwood Rd and Cavey La, (both **RRf**), establishing the second latest departure date. A **Red-breasted Nuthatch** at MPEA 9/5 was a nice date (**DCm**); one or two stayed at that site throughout the season. One was also reported at Blaindair 10/3 (**EHS**). The **Brown Creeper** at Swansfield, W. Col. 9/20 was at the very beginning of normal migration (**JTv**). One of the season's headline species was a **Sedge Wren** at MTPLT 10/10 (**HPt, KnHf**), which stayed at least until the afternoon of 10/11 (**TFe, BHi+**). A **Marsh Wren** in the same location was spotted 10/9 (**RRf**); it was last seen 10/13 (**NM; KS**). One was also reported from Lake Elkhorn 11/11 (**SCI**), a new late date [B. Ott 11/4/00]. Migrant thrush reports were meager with no unusual dates or numbers. **Gray-cheeked Thrushes**, all

(Records continued on page 6)

(Records continued from page 5)

single birds, were reported from four locations from HCFC at CENPK (MLm) to 10/12 at CENPK (MKw).

A few Mimic Thrushes normally linger into cold weather—or even stay the winter. The two **Gray Catbirds** at CENPK 11/23 (MKw+) and the **Brown Thrasher** at MPEA 11/30 (RRf) were nice sightings. The 33 **American Pipits** at MTPLT 10/3 were a fine count (KnHf, HPt, KS). By November, **Cedar Waxwing** flocks were taking advantage of abundant fruit (mainly grapes) at CENPK. On the 11/16 field trip, 253 were listed, a conservative total (R&RnPr+).

Prothonotary Warblers in the fall are usually even more scarce than in the spring. This year they were reported twice: MPEA 8/28 (DRh, EHs-1), the second earliest, and along the Patapsco River 9/20 (SE-1), which tied the late date. **Tennessees** dribbled through for two months from 8/29 at MPEA (JHf+) to 10/29 at Waterford (JHf)—the second latest departure date. **Orange-crowneds** are elusive and usually among our latest departing warblers. One was found at MTPLT 10/13 (KS), a cooperative one was spotted at Waterford 10/27 (DCm), and the final individual was noted at Lake Elkhorn 11/4 (SCI). **Connecticuts** were all clustered within a short period from one at Gorman Stream Valley NRA 9/20 (JMck) to a bird at Lake Elkhorn 9/24 (ALw) which stayed until 9/27 (DSn). No **Mourning**s were reported. For a normally common migrant, **American Redstarts** appeared in surprisingly low numbers. The three “yellow” ones at Rockburn 8/7 (BO) may have been local birds. As expected, **Cape Mays** were much easier to locate this season than in the spring with reports from 9/1 at Cavey La (RRf-1) to 10/19 at Rockburn (KS-4); the high was six at Western Reg. Pk 9/28 (JCu+). **Magnolias** were one of the most common migrants, although numbers were modest. **Bay-breasted**s are among the most sought-after species. Of a handful of records this season, an early bird at MPEA 8/29 was especially nice (JHf+). A **Blackpoll** at the Elkhorn Garden Plots 10/13 was a good sighting (JHf). **Black-throated Blues** can usually be found during much of migration. The last one appeared at Burleigh Manor on 11/15 (MKw, ph.), establishing a new late date [Romayne Smith 11/7/12]. **Palms** can normally be seen for a long period. The two west-erns at W. Friendship Pk 9/24 were the first this season (KS), while the last was an eastern at Fox Chase 11/10 (ALw, JS). The high count of 45 (30 w., 15 e.) at Waterford 10/11 was among the best in recent years (BO+). A **Pine** was still present at the Robinson Nature Center 11/12 (JS). Any **Yellow-throated** sighting away from their limited breeding grounds is noteworthy. One bird was spotted at Western Reg. Pk on 9/20, a fine addition to the park list (B&GHi); most interesting were those noted on 9/15, 9/17, 9/21-2, and 9/27 at Cavey La, a ridge just south of the Patapsco where they nest (RRf). The 9/27 sighting was a new late date [9/21/96: Two parties on HCFC]. **Black-throated Greens** usually are one of the most common fall warblers. The first was at MPEA on 8/29 (KS); they drifted through in low numbers until 10/13 at the Elkhorn Garden Plots (JHf+).

Sparrows moved in with fine diversity and some good counts. Although **American Tree Sparrows** may arrive in late October, this season they

did not appear until 11/27 at MTPLT (BO-12). Late October is usually the best time to locate large flocks of **Chippings**. The 100+ at Cavey La 10/21 (RRf) tied the second largest flock. This was an excellent season for **Vespers**. From 9/24 at W. Friendship Pk (KS-1) to 11/15 at MTPLT (BO-1), the second latest date, they were spotted at five sites with a high on 10/31 of at least eight at Waterford (BO) and two at Schooley (NM). **Grasshoppers** lingered long enough to produce a third latest date of 10/28 at Meadowbrook Pk (JW) and a second latest date of 10/31 at Waterford (BO). **Nelson’s** was the choice sparrow of the season. One was discovered at MTPLT 10/7 (BO). It hung around for at



Nelson’s Sparrow by Nancy Magnusson

least a week. Photographs revealed two different individuals; the one on 10/13 (NM) was a much brighter orange than the initial bird. A **Song Sparrow** at MTPLT 10/21 was found trapped among some seedheads; fortunately, it was rescued and appeared to suffer no ill effects (BO). Attractive

Lincoln’s are a special autumn species. From the first on 9/18 at MTPLT (BO-1) to the last on 10/29 also at MTPLT (NM, HPt, KnHf-2), they were reported from nine sites; many were multiple sightings. Forty **Swamps** at Waterford 10/11 were a fine count (BO+). The **White-throated** on 8/5 at Fox Chase (JCu) was probably the same individual seen there in July—a bird that never migrated! It takes a sharp eye to pick out a **Gambel’s White-crowned Sparrow**. This visitor from the far Northwest, the county’s third record of this race, was seen between 10/17 and 10/26 at MTPLT (JCu, ph.). For sparrow enthusiasts a day in which 11 or more species can be tallied brings a special joy. On 10/21, 11 species were chased down at MTPLT (BO), while 12 were checked off at Waterford 10/31 (BO).

The **Scarlet Tanager** at Alpha Ridge Landfill 10/9 was a nice late date (JHf). A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** on 8/21 at MPEA (JHf) was a new early date [8/22/71 unk. obs.; 8/22/92 D. & M. Harvey]; the final one at MTPLT 10/18 was late (THg). The 25 **Bobolinks** at Waterford 8/25 were both the first and the high count (BO, ROr). An **Eastern Meadowlark** at A. E. Mullinix Rd 8/27 was a good sighting (KTf); high counts were 13 at the landfill 9/20 (RCu, JHf) and eight at MTPLT 10/26 (KS, JCu, ROr+). No **Rusty Blackbirds** were reported.

Although the winter of 2014-15 is unlikely to see a major influx of boreal species, small numbers of **Purple Finches** were reported from 9/20 at Cavey La (RRf-2) into mid-November. High counts were 10 at Schooley 10/3 (NM), 12 at Cavey La 11/2 (RRf, HFk), 10 at Talbotts Ldg 11/8 (R&JGr); and one to nine (sometimes almost daily) at Diversified La from 10/19 to 11/30 (K&KnHf). **Pine Siskins** made scattered appearances beginning 10/12 at both Cavey La (RRf, MRg-1) and

(Records continued on page 7)

2014 ODONATE SUMMARY

BY JOANNE SOLEM

2014 was a quiet year for county odonates. The only date extension was an emerging **Band-winged Meadowhawk** photographed at the Beaverbrook settling pond on 6/13 (Richard Orr) which was six days earlier than the previous early date.

Two excellent species were found and, of course, photographed. **Appalachian Snaketail**, a Maryland listed species (S1) was found at the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area 6/3 and at Font Hill Wetland Park 6/5 (Bonnie Ott). A **Brown Spiketail** was noted at Rockburn Branch Park 6/4 with three at Mt. Pleasant 6/7 (Bonnie Ott). A third unusual species, **White-faced Meadowhawk**, on 9/18 was a new species for Alpha Ridge Park (Bonnie Ott).



Brown Spiketail

White-faced Meadowhawk

Photos by Bonnie Ott

The ninth annual dragonfly count, compiled by Beth Johnson and co-sponsored by Howard County Recreation and Parks, was held on August 16. The date rotates among the summer months in order to sample as many of the county's known or potential species as possible. The 2014 count completed three cycles. Results were published in the November/December issue of the Goldfinch. The day is an excellent introduction for those who have just discovered these fascinating insects. Beginners are always welcome and there are numerous opportunities to take photographs. Save Saturday, July 25, 2015, for the tenth annual count.

All new or unusual records are vetted by Richard Orr. For photos of county odes, check the Gallery on the club's website at http://www.howardbirds.org/odonates/HC_Odonate_identification.htm.

(Records continued from page 6)

MTPLT (**RRf**, **MRg**-1). At least 10 were feeding on hemlock cones at Crest Lawn Cemetery 10/25 (**RHI**). The high count was up to 25 at MTPLT 10/31 (**HPt**, **KnHf**; **KS**).

Thanks to Nancy Magnusson, Joe Hanfman, and Howard Patterson for careful proofing of this material.

Abbreviations: CENPK – Centennial Park, HCFC – Howard County Fall Count 9/20/14, MPEA – Middle Patuxent Environmental Area, MTPLT – Mt. Pleasant, ph. – photograph, TRIRS – Triadelphia Reservoir.

Observers: **SBI** – Sharyn Bolinger, **SCI** – Steve Collins, **JCu** – Jeff Culler, **RCu** – Ralph Cullison III, **DCm** – David Cummings, **NDB** – Nikki De Braccio, **SE** – Sue Earp, **WE** – Wes Earp, **WEb** – Ward Ebert, **TFe** – Tom Feild, **HFk** – Harry Fink, **JGr** – Jane Geuder, **RGr** – Ralph Geuder, **JHf** – Joe Hanfman, **CHr** – Clive Harris, **JHr** – John Harris, **KHf** – Kevin Heffernan, **KnHf** – Karen Heffernan, **BHi** – Bill Hill, **GHi** – Gayle Hill, **RHI** – Russell Hillsley, **RHt** – Robert Hilton, **THg** – Timothy Houghton, **EHS** – Ed Huestis, **MKw** – Mike Kerwin, **CKc** – Clayton Koonce, **MLm** – Mike Leumas, **ALw** – Allen Lewis, **BLg** – Brooks Longley, **NM** – Nancy Magnusson, **JMcG** – Joe McGann, **JMcK** – John McKitterick, **ROr** – Richard Orr, **BO** – Bonnie Ott, **HPt** – Howard Patterson, **RnPt** – Renee Peters, **RPt** – Richard Peters, **RPo** – Ron Polniaszek, **SPo** – Sue Polniaszek, **DRh** – Derek Richardson, **MRg** – Matt Rogosky, **KRb** – Ken Rosenberg, **RRf** – Russ Ruffing, **DSn** – David Sandler, **KS** – Kurt Schwarz, **JS** – Jo Solem, **DSr** – Duvall Solleers, **TSt** – Tom Strikwerda, **KTf** – Kate Tufts, **JTv** – June Tveekrem, **MW** – Mark Wallace, **JW** – Jim Wilkinson, **AWt** – Amanda Witt, **RWt** – Rachel Witt, **SWt** – Scott Witt, **PZ** – Paul Zucker.

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.

March 26, 2015

Howard Patterson
4209 Hermitage Drive
Ellicott City MD 21042
(410) 461-9686

howard21042@verizon.net

April 23, 2015

Kate Tufts
2830 Duvall Rd.
Woodbine, MD 21797
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HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

10970 Millbank Row
Columbia, MD 21044

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2015 GREENFEST

BY SUE MULLER

The 8th annual Howard County GreenFest will be Saturday, April 18th at the Howard Community College from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This year's theme will be "Living with Wildlife." Be sure to stop by the Howard County Bird Club exhibit! While you are doing spring cleaning, spend some time gathering those items to recycle for your one place to drop off so many items! Recycling opportunities this year will include old cell phones, eyeglasses, binoculars, denim jeans (recycled into insulation) and wornout sneakers for Nike Reuse a Shoe program. Goodwill trucks will be there once again to collect clothing and household goods, and electronic recycling will be back for Howard County residents only (old TVs, computers, stereos, etc.). "Bikes for the World" will be collecting bicycles including those that need minor repairs (tires, chains, etc.). Best of all, the festival is free and will have

many vendors and workshops including Birds & Coffee (with tasting), Venomous Snakes of Maryland, and the ever-popular free Rain Barrel workshop. Native plant sales will return just in time for your bird-themed garden. Outdoor activities will include a watershed walk and a Garlic Mustard pull, as well as a Sierra Club sponsored shrub planting. You can check out the website for updates on other recycling opportunities and workshops at www.hcgreenfest.org. Remember, save the date: April 18th!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR BIRD CLUB DISPLAY

If you would like to volunteer to help with the Bird Club display, please contact Kate Tufts at ktufts@verizon.net.