



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, November 12, 2015 "Birding and Beyond...Howard County Diversity," by Bonnie Ott. Over her many years of leading field trips for our chapter (and walking her dog), Bonnie's camera has captured delightful local flora and fauna. And we all know about the specialty birds that show up in Bonnie's back yard.

Thursday, December 10, 2015 "From Alice to Uluru to Kakadu: Birding the Northern Territory of Australia," by Dave Harvey. This remote area is a less traveled part of the country. Dave is retired from Navy submarine service. Dave and Maureen Harvey are well-traveled club members who frequently present programs.

Meetings are at the Robinson Nature Center, 6692 Cedar Lane, Columbia MD 21044. Hospitality at 7:00 p.m. Meeting with program begins at 7:30 p.m. Nature Center doors unlocked at 6:45 p.m. and locked again at 7:45 p.m. There is no admission charge. For further information call Robin Todd at 410-491-5333

SUMMER BIRD RECORDS: JUNE 1-JULY 31, 2015

BY [JOANNE SOLEM](#)

Test Your Knowledge

What sound can easily be mistaken as a Black-billed Cuckoo? Extra credit for identifying the species!

- A. Insect
- B. Amphibian
- C. Mammal

[Answer](#) on page 5.

The shortest birding season sometimes lacks memorable birds or unusual weather. This was not true in 2015 as June will be remembered for more than 10 inches of rain. The resulting high water levels almost eliminated attractive shorebird habitat for July migrants. A successful Spotted Sandpiper nesting, as well as an active Osprey nest, were well-deserved stars of the season. A stray Ruddy Duck and a late Pine Siskin shared the top billing.

A brood of 12 **Mallard** ducklings at Dorsey Hall on 6/16 had dropped to nine by 6/10, a reality of large broods (**AA**). Although not unprecedented in summer, a **Ruddy Duck** at Centennial (CENPK) 7/5 was unusual (**KLz**, ph). It was last reported on 7/10 (**CKn**, ph; **BO**; **KS**).

A **Wild Turkey** visited a yard at Stallion Ct (near Meadowbrook Pk) 6/4 (**SFm**). One was seen at Henryton 6/16 (**DHg**). A hen and at least two small young were spotted near the intersection of Lime Kiln Rd/Brookwood Farm Rd 6/22 (**KMr**). A **Pied-billed Grebe** at

[\(Records continued on page 3\)](#)

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 or Bonnie Ott at bonnieott@verizon.net. HCBC members receive priority on trips that are limited by number of participants. No pets.

Centennial Park

November 1, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours). (Daylight Saving Time ends). *Meet at the west end parking lot off Centennial Lane.*

Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Early waterfowl, lingering migrants likely.

Facilities available.

Leaders - Karen and Kevin Heffernan 410-418-8731 or

KJHeff@aol.com

SHARPS AT WATERFORD FARM

November 7, 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 impoundments make for diverse habitats and good birding opportunities. Port-a-pots available. Knee-high waterproof footwear is advisable for part of hike.

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

Howard Conservancy at Mt Pleasant Farm Sky Watch

November 7, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. (half day). *Meet at parking lot.* This trip will be strictly a sky watch for late-migrating raptors and other potential goodies. Our main target will be Golden Eagle; while not expected, early November is the best time to catch one flying over Howard County. Last year a half-day sky watch less than a mile from this location produced an immature Golden Eagle and a Sandhill Crane, along with good numbers of Bald Eagles and Red-tailed Hawks, plus Northern Harriers, accipiters, and some waterfowl. We will watch the skies and tally the birds as long as conditions are productive. Hope for a north wind! Bring water, lunch, hat, sunscreen, light-colored sun glasses, comfortable lawn chair (recliners are best), binocular, scope, and camera if you like. Participants can also walk the Conservancy trails if sky-watching proves non-productive. Facilities available.

Leader - Russ Ruffing, ruff2@verizon.net

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

Howard Patterson

4209 Hermitage Drive

Ellicott City, MD 21042-6235

howard21042@verizon.net

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Howard Patterson, *Editor*

Centennial Park

November 8, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours). *Meet at the west end parking lot off Centennial Lane.* Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Facilities available.

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

Centennial Park

November 15, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours). *Meet at the west end parking lot off Centennial Lane.* Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Facilities available.

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

Howard Waterfowl Search

November 21, Saturday (8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.). *Meet at the Broken Land Parkway parking lot at Lake Elkhorn.* Plan to visit the Columbia lakes to search for gulls, ducks, grebes, loons and other waterfowl. Easy walking. Plan to carpool. Bring lunch and drinks. Scopes helpful. Facilities available at some locations.

Leader - Kurt Schwarz, krschwa1@verizon.net, 410-461-1643

Centennial Park

November 22, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours). *Meet at the west end parking lot off Centennial Lane.* Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Facilities available.

Leader - Darius Ecker, decker@jcc.org

Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge

December 5, Saturday (all day). Plan to stop at the Choptank River Bridge for ducks and coffee. Bring lunch and drinks. Dress warmly. Entrance fee or Duck Stamp required. Email the leader to reserve a spot and get details. We will carpool. Facilities at some spots.

Leader - Kurt Schwarz, krschwa1@verizon.net, 410-461-1643


Start Your Year List

January 1, 2016, Start at 8:00 a.m. (half day).

Meet at the Howard County Conservancy - Mount Pleasant Farm. (Entrance on the north side of MD 99, .5 mile east of Woodstock Rd.)

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, 443-285-3302

 = Great for beginning birders

(Records continued from page 1)

Lake Kittamaqundi 7/14 was a surprise (**JWm**). It is a species that only occasionally makes a summer appearance.

The summer high of four **Great Egrets** was noted at a U. of MD Farm pond visible from Folly Quarter Rd 7/27 (**POs**). **Green Herons** nested successfully at Wilde Lake 7/10 (**BO-4** yg.), at CENPK 7/10 (**BO-4** yg.), and at Loyola Pond, E. Col. 7/12 (**SN-3**). **Black-crowned Night-Herons** were reported from Lake Elkhorn 6/1 (**ALw-1**) and 7/21 (**K&KnHf-2**), and from Wilde Lake 6/12 (**RRf-1**) and 6/19 (**JHf-2**). **Yellow-crowneds** appeared at Elkhorn 7/7 (**ALw-2**) and again 7/8 (**ALw+-2**).

A pair of **Black Vultures** nested on the floor of a decrepit shed in Allview. An adult and two nestlings were present on 6/16 (*fide* **ESu**).

The **Osprey** nest continued on a grain storage tower visible from Michele Dr as previously reported on 5/20 (**WE**; **MW**), although position and distance made it difficult to discern activity. One evening in early July, an Osprey head of unknown age could be seen above the edge of the nest (**MW**). This is the first verified active nest in the county. An Osprey at High Ridge Park 7/10 was almost certainly associated with the nest near Duckett Dam in Prince George's County (**NM**, **JS**); on the same date one was reported at CENPK (**BO**). With the proliferation of relay towers, birders should be alert to the possibility of their use by nesting Ospreys. Although nests may not always be easily seen from a distance, nesting birds often perch prominently on the structures for long periods. Their distinctive silhouette should be identifiable.

A **Cooper's Hawk** demonstrated its impressive hunting technique by taking a **Mourning Dove** in mid-air at Timberleigh 6/23 (**DNg**). Cooper's were feeding young at Hallmark Rd 7/24 (**WEb**). The **Red-shouldered Hawk** nest at Forebay had three, not the previously reported two, nestlings on 6/10; by 6/19 they had fledged (**SN**). A pair of **Killdeer** with two chicks

was spotted at a pond at Mt. View M. S. 7/19 (**KLz**). A highlight of the season was the second verified nesting of **Spotted Sandpipers** in the county. Two downy chicks and an adult were photographed at Tarbay Pond, Jessup 7/25 (**MJh**). [The first record had been a nest with eggs photographed at the Alpha Ridge Landfill in 2002 (**RCu**).] The Spotted at Waterford 6/2 was consistent with late spring migrants lingering into the first week of June (**JHf**). The first autumn Spotted appeared at CENPK 7/10 (**BO**). Two **Solitary Sandpipers** at Waverly Pond 7/22 were the first southbound migrants of that species (**RRf**).



Spotted Sandpiper Chick by Mark Johnson

Two post-breeding **Ring-billed Gulls** showed up at Loyola Pond, E. Col. 7/16 (**SN**). A recently fledged **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** was spotted at Mt. Pleasant 7/21 (**K&KnHf**). Yellow-billeds spent the summer at Roxbury Mill Rd calling frequently (**KLI**). A calling **Black-billed**

Cuckoo was recorded at West Friendship Pk 7/26 (**JCu**).

An adult and two fledgling **Barred Owls** were seen in a yard at the east end of Elkhorn 6/19, a consistent nesting location for this species (**MSt**). An adult **Red-headed Woodpecker** visited a feeder at Timberleigh 6/5 (**DNg**). A **Great Crested Flycatcher** used a box at the Buxton property on Jennings Chapel Rd 6/30 (**JW**, **LHt**, ph.).

The **Common Raven** nest on the Howard County side of Duckett Dam fledged at least three, as five ravens were seen together at the dam on 6/6 (**TFy**).

Both the **Cliff Swallow** colony under the MD 32/Sykesville bridge and a River Rd **Barn Swallow** colony slightly more than a mile away were a concern for a long-time observer (**FLv**). Not only has the size of the Cliff Swallow colony been dwindling slowly over the last few years, but this year, after breeding, the flock departed earlier than usual. Barn Swallows in the barn normally number 10 – 15 pairs. This year only six birds returned in the spring. They built three nests, laid eggs in a single nest, and those eggs failed to hatch (chemicals were not a factor during the breeding season).

A fine count of 12 **Veerys** at Hipsley Mill Rd along the Patuxent River 6/25 must have been a treat to hear (**JSh**, **MSz**).

Two **Hooded Warblers** were counted at Hipsley Mill 6/2 (**JHf**); with one on 7/7 (**ALw**). Three **Ceruleans** were singing on territory in the Henryton to Marriottsville section of Patapsco Valley State Pk 6/7 (**THg**). Four **Yellow Warblers** were still present at CENPK 7/29 (**KS**). For this early migrating species, it was probably one of the last days they would be seen in any numbers. **Pines** were noted at Dorsey Woods 7/3 (**JW-1**) and at Belmont 7/19 (**JHf-1**). A **Yellow-throated Warbler** seen at the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area 6/19 was a choice summer find for that location (**JHr**).

A pair of **Grasshopper Sparrows** were feeding young near Roxbury Rd 6/9 (**MW**). **Blue Grosbeaks** were present at Gateway 6/16 (**JW**), Troy Hill Pk 6/30 (**JW**), and Elkhorn 7/8 (**KS**). Five **Bobolinks** at the fairgrounds, MD 144 on 6/3 were a nice late spring sighting (**AVS**). A flock of 150 – 200 **Common Grackles** flew over Dunloggin 7/31 (**KS**). Fortunate timing enabled an observer to watch a brood of **Orchard Orioles** fledge at CENPK 7/10 (**BO**). A **Baltimore Oriole** nest at Lake Kittamaqundi was photographed in early June (**CKn**, ph.)

Last, but definitely not least, a **Pine Siskin** visited a feeder at Thornbrook Dr for the final time on 6/9, setting a new second latest departure date (**JCu**).

Thanks to Nancy Magnusson and Joe Hanfman for editing assistance.

Abbreviations: CENPK – Centennial Park, ph. – photograph

Observers: **AA** – Annette Allor, **JCu** – Jeff Culler, **RCu** – Ralph Cullison III, **WEb** – Ward Ebert, **SFm** – Sharon Femrite, **TFy** – Tony Frye, **JHf** – Joe Hanfman, **JHr** – John Harris, **KnHf** – Karen Heffernan, **KHf** – Kevin Heffernan, **THg** – Timothy Houghton, **DHg** – Derek Hudgins, **LHt** – Linda Hunt, **MJh** – Mark Johnson, **CKn** – Clayton Koonce, **ALw** – Allen Lewis, **KLI** – Kathie Lillie, **KLz** – Kathy Litzinger, **FLv** – Felicia Lovelett, **NM** – Nancy Magnusson, **KMr** – Kathy Mariano, **DNg** – Diane Nagengast, **SN** – Sue Neri, **POs** – Peter Osenton, **BO** – Bonnie Ott, **RRf** – Russ Ruffing, **KS** – Kurt Schwarz, **JSh** – Jay Sheppard, **JS** – Jo Solem, **MSt** – Michelle Stewart, **MSz** – Marcy Stutzman, **ESu** – Eva Sunell, **AVS** – Anthony Van Schoor, **MW** – Mark Wallace, **JW** – Jim Wilkinson, **JWm** – John Williams.

SUMMARY OF THE 2015 HOWARD COUNTY FALL COUNT

BY MIKE MCCLURE AND CHUCK STIRRAT

The twenty-second annual Howard County Fall Count was conducted on September 19, 2015, resulting in the summarized count data shown in the table below. This count has turned out to be average countywide for the number of bird species but notably below average for the number of birds. For the warblers the species count was near average while the number of individual warblers was notably below average. The full data tables for birds, butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies will be posted on the Club’s website. (See link on page 5.)

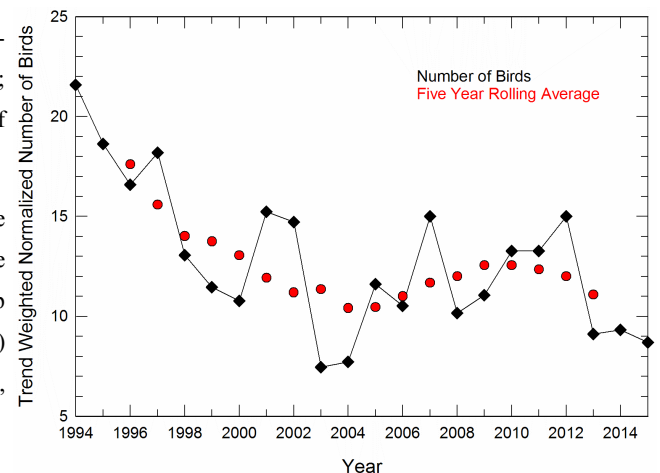
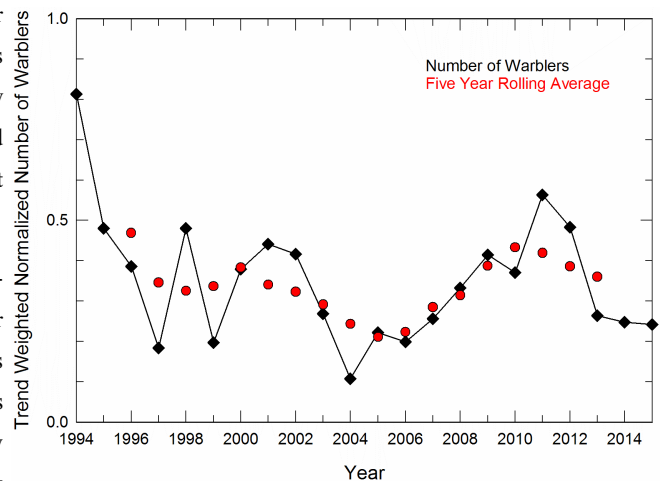
The number of participants, parties, and the overall effort as measured by the hours and miles continues to remain strong in spite of the occasional difficult season with few birds in the field.

	Observed Birds Countywide		Observed Warblers Countywide		Statistics
	Species	Birds	Species	Birds	
2015 Numbers	124	9,491	20	264	
High:Low	140 : 108	26,651 : 9,293	30 : 13	1,004 : 130	
Year 's of High : Low	1994 : 2004	1994 : 2004	1994 : 2004	1994 : 2004	
Averages for Birds & Species	125.23	16,062.00	23.68	441.55	
2015 Counters : Parties					58 : 41
Counters : Parties Averages					53.8 : 32.1
2015 Counters Hours : Miles					209.4 : 431.7
Counters Hours : Miles Averages					192.3 : 399.7

Saturday’s temperature started at 58°F at 6:00 a.m. with dense fog cover [visibility <100 feet], rising to 88°F in late afternoon with generally clear skies during the remainder of the day. The morning was comfortable-ish (dew point: 56°F) at 6:00 a.m. becoming uncomfortable in the late morning and afternoon with the dew point rising to 71°F by late morning. Winds were light [1-3 mph] from the south during the afternoon.

Counters continue to complain about the lack of birds. This problem is reflected in the data from 22 years of Fall Counts as shown on the graphics for the total number of individual birds and warblers observed countywide as shown by their Rolling Five Year Average [RFYA] data. The RFYAs seems to support that the numbers have reached their lows, began to rise and now seem to suggest decline is in progress. However, this apparent decline may just be the normal variation as the resident local population declines with several difficult winters in a row. Only additional data will answer the question; are we seeing the beginning of another precipitous decline similar to that of the early Fall Count years?

There were 19 species for which there was only one bird sighted countywide and 15 species for which there were only two birds sighted countywide. The single bird sighting remains high as in prior years while the two sighting is up from six noted last year. Species showing moderately high numbers (>500) are: Canada Goose, 1,022; Blue Jay, 559; Crows [American+Fish+species], 615; European Starling, 752.



Birds count participants: Brinkley, Jim & Marilyn; Colangelo, Lisa; Collins, Steve; Coskren, Dennis; **Culler, Jeff (Area 2 Coordinator)**; Cullison III, Ralph; **Earp, Susan & Wes (Area 1 Co-coordinators)**; Ebert, Ward; Feild, Tom; Feild-King, Geraldine; Friedhoffer, Jeffrey A.; Harris, John & Meg; **Heffernan, Karen & Kevin (Area 3 Co-coordinators)**; Hill, Bill & Gayle; Holmes, David; Huestis, Ed; Kennan, Patsy; Kerwin, Michael; Koonce, Clayton; Kraak, Margaret & Morgan; Lengade, Shashi; Leumas, Mike; **Lewis, Allen (Area 7 Coordinator)**; Lillie, Kathie; Lovelett, Felicia; Lubitz, Rosa; Magnusson, Nancy; McAllister, Nancy; **McClure, Grazina & Mike (County Co-coordinators)**; McEvoy, Anne; McKitterick, John; Neri, Sue; Newton, Ben; Orr, Richard L.; **Ott, Bonnie (Area 6 Coordinator)**; Patterson, Howard; Ruffing, Russ; Sandler, David; **Schwarz, Kurt (Area 5 Coordinator)**; Solem, Bob & Jo; **Stirrat, Chuck (County Co-coordinator)**; Strikwerda, Tom; Sunell, Eva; Todd, Robin; VanSchoor, Anthony; **Wallace, Mark (Area 1 Co-coordinator)**; Wilkins, Tex; Zucker, Paul. **Lastly, a very special thanks to June Tveekrem, who hosted the evening tally.**

For the fourth year counters were given the option to list the species of butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies seen as they were counting birds. A total of 13 people turned in a list. They are **Heffernan, Karen & Kevin (Area 3 Co-coordinators)**; Holmes, David; Hunt, Linda; McAllister, Nancy; **McClure, Grazina & Mike (Area 4 & County Co-coordinator)**; Orr, Richard; **Ott, Bonnie (Area 6 Coordinator)**; **Schwarz, Kurt (Area 5 Coordinator)**; Solem, Bob & Jo; and Sunell, Eva. Summarized count results are shown in the following table.

	Obs. Butterflies Countywide		Obs. Dragonflies Countywide		Statistics
	Species	Butterflies	Species	Dragonflies	
2015 Numbers	40	1,285	14	50	
High:Low	40 : 22	1,285: 305	15: 12	142 : 50	
Years of High : Low	2015 : 2013	2015 : 2013	2013 : 2014	2012 : 2015	
Averages for Individ. & Species	33.75	802.25	13.50	109.50	
2015 Counters : Parties					13 : 8
Counters : Parties Averages					15.7 : 8.3
2015 Counters Hours : Miles					43.5 : 10.6
Counters Hours : Miles Averages					32.8 : 101.2

The Butterfly Count set new highs for both the number of species and individuals, respectively. There were five species of butterflies with >100 individuals sighted. They are: Pearl Crescent, Sachem, Peck's Skipper, Clouded Sulfurs, and Cabbage White.

The Dragonfly Count had a high near the prior high [down one] but set a new record low that was down from the prior low of 120 set in 2014. For dragonflies, the most abundant species was the migrating Common Green Darner with a count of 19 individuals observed.

Special thanks go to Linda Hunt, who graciously helped with arranging and tallying the butterfly count..

Complete bird, butterfly, and dragonfly results are posted on the HCBC's website at <http://howardbirds.org/howard/counts.htm>

Plan now to join us on a future seasonal count and if possible attend the tally as well. Next year the 2016 Fall Count will be held on the 3rd Saturday of September which will be the 17th.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

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 Thanksgiving holiday, the November meeting is a week earlier. If directions are required, please call the hosting board member.

November 19, 2015

Cindy Albright
10363 Windstream Dr.
Columbia MD 21044
(302) 562-7082
cindy@cindyalbright.com

December, 2015

No Meeting

Test Your Knowledge Answer:

Mammal.

Species: Eastern Chipmunk

Thanks to Bill Hubick for posting the information below to the Maryland Birding Listserv in September 2015 and for permission to include it in the newsletter.

There have been a large number of recent reports of calling Black-billed Cuckoos at locations where Eastern Chipmunks are now vocal. Like most southbound migrants, cuckoos are not likely to be calling at length and throughout the day this late in the season. Eastern Chipmunks, on the other hand, are now quite vocal with their "chuck" or "cluck" calls. These can strongly resemble the calls of Black-billed Cuckoo. If one were only considering bird options, this would be a pretty close match. Here's a perfect recording from Cornell's Macaulay Library. Please give a listen: <http://macaulaylibrary.org/audio/126506>

HOWARD COUNTY FALL COUNT RESULTS - SEPTEMBER 19, 2015

Canada Goose	1,022
Wood Duck	15
American Black Duck	2
Mallard	81
Green-winged Teal	1
Pied-billed Grebe	3
Double-crested Cormorant	7
Great Blue Heron	37
Great Egret	2
Green Heron	8
Black-crowned Night-Heron	1
Black Vulture	139
Turkey Vulture	199
Osprey	5
Bald Eagle [ad/im/unk]	6
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4
Cooper's Hawk	7
Red-shouldered Hawk	48
Broad-winged Hawk	4
Red-tailed Hawk	17
Semipalmated Plover	1
Killdeer	66
Spotted Sandpiper	3
Solitary Sandpiper	2
Lesser Yellowlegs	3
Least Sandpiper	27
Pectoral Sandpiper	4
Semipalmated Sandpiper	4
Rock Pigeon	482
Mourning Dove	298
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	1
Eastern Screech-Owl	7
Great Horned Owl	2
Barred Owl	6
Common Nighthawk	4
Chimney Swift	168
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	50
Belted Kingfisher	16
Red-headed Woodpecker	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	211
Downy Woodpecker	119
Hairy Woodpecker	30
Northern Flicker	58

Pileated Woodpecker	43
American Kestrel	11
Merlin	1
Eastern Wood-Pewee	57
Acadian Flycatcher	2
Willow Flycatcher	2
Least Flycatcher	1
<i>Empidonax species</i>	10
Eastern Phoebe	50
Great Crested Flycatcher	3
Eastern Kingbird	2
White-eyed Vireo	15
Yellow-throated Vireo	1
Blue-headed Vireo	2
Warbling Vireo	2
Philadelphia Vireo	2
Red-eyed Vireo	19
Blue Jay	559
American Crow	486
Fish Crow	20
<i>crow species</i>	109
Common Raven	1
Horned Lark	20
Tree Swallow	4
Barn Swallow	13
Carolina Chickadee	316
Tufted Titmouse	228
White-breasted Nuthatch	120
Brown Creeper	1
House Wren	58
Carolina Wren	233
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	18
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
Eastern Bluebird	154
Veery	3
Swainson's Thrush	1
Wood Thrush	21
American Robin	231
Gray Catbird	449
Brown Thrasher	13
Northern Mockingbird	99
European Starling	752
Cedar Waxwing	177

Ovenbird	2
Black-&-white Warbler	12
Tennessee Warbler	1
Common Yellowthroat	121
Hooded Warbler	1
American Redstart	39
Cape May Warbler	3
Northern Parula	3
Magnolia Warbler	40
Bay-breasted Warbler	1
Blackburnian Warbler	2
Chestnut-sided Warbler	7
Blackpoll Warbler	1
Blk.-thrted. Blue Warbler	2
Palm Warbler	2
Pine Warbler	2
Yellow-throated Warbler	1
Blk.-thrted. Green Warbler	8
Canada Warbler	4
Yellow-breasted Chat	2
<i>warbler species</i>	10
Eastern Towhee	47
Chipping Sparrow	135
Field Sparrow	4
Savannah Sparrow	3
Song Sparrow	57
Swamp Sparrow	1
Scarlet Tanager	8
Northern Cardinal	432
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	11
Blue Grosbeak	3
Indigo Bunting	92
Bobolink	3
Red-winged Blackbird	5
Eastern Meadowlark	7
Common Grackle	12
Brown-headed Cowbird	223
Baltimore Oriole	1
House Finch	79
American Goldfinch	373
House Sparrow	250
Area Total Birds:	9,491
Area Total Species:	124

EMY'S MEADOW: A POLLINATOR AND BUTTERFLY MEADOW AT CENTENNIAL PARK

by Linda Hunt



Monarch chrysalis



Monarch

“Emy’s Meadow is really starting to look like a butterfly meadow now...” Richard Smith

“Emy’s Meadow” is an area of more than three acres in the southwest corner of Centennial Park designed to provide pollinator and butterfly habitat. According to Natural Resource Program Manager Brenda Belensky, the original Natural Resource Management Plan written for Centennial Park in 2001 identified several areas as meadow habitat. However, due to lack of funds, a majority of those areas were being maintained as early successional habitat by annual winter mowing. In 2014, several members of the Howard County Bird Club (HCBC) approached Natural Resource Division personnel about the possibility of planting some of these areas with herbaceous plant species beneficial to pollinators. The result of those conversations became Emy’s Meadow.

Last winter and spring Natural Resource Division personnel prepared the site. Brenda said this included brush hogging, cutting down invasive tree species like Callery (Bradford) Pear, chipping up debris, and grinding out the stumps. Richard Smith, a regional butterfly expert, worked with a native seed company to create a seed list designed to attract pollinators specific to Howard County. Money donated to the HCBC in memory of Emmalyn Holdridge, a long-time member and officer of the club, was used to purchase the wildflower seed. In May, a contractor with appropriate equipment was hired to do the final site preparation and establish a firm seed bed and seed was planted.

Throughout the summer small groups of volunteers, organized by Natural Resource Technician Sue Muller, pulled invasive weeds

such as “Mile-a-Minute” vine and Multiflora Rose. Plans for ongoing maintenance include winter mowing (Dec. – March, weather permitting) to keep woody plants controlled, and possibly



April 2015

selective spot spraying of invasive plant species, if warranted. Next year Sue hopes to work with an intern from Stevenson University who would help organize volunteer weed pulls in the meadow.

Despite the extremely heavy June rains that washed away some seeds just after planting, many late season plants matured. Heavy concentrations of blooming Grass-leaved Goldenrod and Blue



September 2015

Mistflower have become magnets for butterflies and other pollinators. In a brief visit one day in mid-September, Richard Smith counted at least 15 Monarchs among the Variegated Fritillaries, American Ladies, Clouded

and Orange Sulphur butterflies. “It’s like a Monarch migration fueling station,” he said.

The meadow habitat has already provided food, shelter, and nesting habitat for additional species of wildlife such as birds and turtles. Bee and biodiversity studies are planned for next summer.

Hopefully other perennials that are sparse or did not have time to mature, such as various milkweeds and Purple Coneflower, may appear next year. If funds are available, Brenda also plans to purchase additional milkweed plugs from MonarchWatch.org to supplement those seeded in the area. The HCBC hopes to contribute money for such purchases and to provide for explanatory signs.

Emy’s Meadow has established a precedent for partnership efforts between the HCBC and the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks for enhancing and developing pollinator habitat. Brenda noted that currently there are plans for additional meadow conversions at some identified areas at Centennial Park. In addition, at the request of several HCBC members, plans are underway to create an additional meadow in Woodbine in western Howard County. If all goes as planned, site preparation will be completed this fall/winter, with planting in the spring of 2016.

Partnership efforts such as Emy’s Meadow enhance not only an area’s biodiversity but also increase its beauty. You can help in the following ways: Visit the meadows; take photos and help monitor species diversity; pull weeds; and, most of all, share with others your enthusiasm and appreciation for meadows in Howard County parks.

(Photos by Linda Hunt)



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society
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Club Meetings	Summer Bird Records
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Board Meeting	Emy's Meadow

Fall Migration, 2015



*Black-throated Green Warbler by Bonnie Ott,
Mount Pleasant Farm/Howard County Conservancy, 9/28/15*



*Palm Warbler by Richard Orr
Mount Pleasant Farm/Howard County Conservancy, 9/28/15*



*Chestnut-sided Warbler by Bonnie Ott
Rockburn Branch Park, 8/24/15*



*Philadelphia Vireo by Bonnie Ott
Western Regional Park, 9/24/15*