



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 8, 2016 "The Impact of Buildings on Birds," by Lindsay Jacks, Director of Lights Out Baltimore. This Baltimore Bird Club non-profit organization strives to make the city safe for migrating birds. Lights Out Baltimore members walk a five mile loop downtown during migration to rescue injured birds and collect dead ones. Volunteers are welcome.

Thursday, October 13, 2016 "The Messenger," a 90 minute documentary that investigates the threats to bird life that have decimated populations worldwide. Amazing secrets of the bird world come to light for the first time in this acclaimed and visually thrilling film. *Please note that the business meeting will be brief and begin at 7:15 p.m. The film will begin at 7:30 p.m.*

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. (7:15 p.m. on October 13). There is no admission charge. For further information call John Harris, 240-755-0183

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

I would like to begin my welcome by thanking Robin Todd for his four years of service – two as Vice President followed by two as President. Robin's service to HCBC is greatly appreciated and his continued service as an MOS State Director is also appreciated!

Two years ago at this time, Robin mentioned that he had been a member of HCBC for decades before serving on the Board. Unlike Robin, I am relatively new to both birding and HCBC. So, having thanked Robin for his service, I would like to thank all of the members that have been so forthcoming with sharing their time and knowledge with Meg and me during the last several years. We are very lucky to have joined this club. I say that because when I travel I try to bird and I seek out organized birding activities. Based solely on my limited experiences, I find that HCBC's program of field trips, programs, and other activities make it stand out among similar organizations. There is not enough room here to thank everyone indi-

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May Count's Best Bird



Swallow-tailed Kite

by Joe Hanfman

Fall FIELD TRIPS BY JOE HANFMAN

Field trips are a great way to improve birding skills, explore new places and meet other birders. Arrive at the meeting site ready to leave at the designated time with appropriate footwear and gear. Carpooling is strongly encouraged. The leader may cancel due to inclement weather/hazardous driving conditions. Directions for trips not on ADC maps are on the Club's website. Questions? Contact the trip leader or Field Trip Coordinator Joe Hanfman at auk1844@gmail.com. HCBC members receive priority on trips that are limited by number of participants. No pets.

Butterflies through Binoculars – Lake Elkhorn Powerline Vegetation Management Study Tract

September 3, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. 2-3 hours. Meet at Elkhorn Garden Plots, Oakland Mills Rd opposite Dasher Ct. 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 and mowed areas 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 if requested. Cancelled if raining or overcast. No facilities. Leader – Dick Smith, Richard-Smith9070@verizon.net, 410-997-7439

Middle Patuxent Environmental Area

September 8, Thursday, 7:30 a.m., 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

Howard County Conservancy at Mt Pleasant Farm

September 10, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Two hour bird walk followed by a four hour hawkwatch. 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 – Mike Kerwin, m63kerwin@verizon.net, 410-461-2408

Rockburn Branch Park

September 11, Sunday, 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 on Montgomery Rd. Moderate walking through the woods and fields of our largest county park looking for migrants. Paths may be muddy. Facilities available. Leaders – Karen and Kevin Heffernan 410-418-8731 or KJHeff@aol.com

Howard County Conservancy at Mt Pleasant Farm

September 14, 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 oppor-

tunity for flyovers. Facilities available. Leader – Warren Cummings, wcummings9@gmail.com, 410-925-1809

Fall Count

September 17, Saturday. See [article](#) on page 10.

Please go to the following link to sign up.

<http://howardbirds.org/howard/counts.htm>

Lake Elkhorn

October 1, 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, allenrlewis@gmail.com

University of Maryland Open House Big Sit

October 8, Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Meet just outside of the front lawn tent on the University Farm on Folly Quarter Rd. The Club will once again hold an informal Big Sit. All are welcome to bring a chair and skywatch or interact with the farm's visitors at the Club booth. Stop by and participate anytime that is convenient. See the UMD announcement at: <http://agnr.umd.edu/openhouse>

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

Sparrow Identification Tips

October 15, Saturday, half day. Limit: 10 people. Search the wetland and dry fields in this intensive search for as many sparrows as possible. Going for twelve 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.

West Friendship Park

October 16, Sunday, 7:45 a.m. 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

Howard County Conservancy at Mt Pleasant Farm

October 23, Sunday, 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 op-

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portunity for non-meadow species. Great opportunity for flyovers. Facilities available.

Leader – Russ Ruffing, ruff2@verizon.net

Howard Conservancy at Mt Pleasant Farm Skywatch

November 5, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. Half day. Meet at parking lot. This trip will be strictly a skywatch 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. In 2014, a half-day skywatch 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 skywatching proves non-productive. Facilities available.

Leader – Russ Ruffing, ruff2@verizon.net

Centennial Park

November 6, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours. (Daylight Saving Time ends) Meet at west end parking lot. 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. Leaders – Karen and Kevin Hefner, KJHeff@aol.com, 410-418-8731

Sharps at Waterford Farm


November 12, 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

Centennial Park

November 13, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours. West end parking lot. 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

 = Great for beginning birders

BIRD SEED SALE

BY WARD EBERT

The sale will be held on Saturday, October 8th, at the Wildlife Authority on Bethany Lane, just off Route 40. You have the option to pick up your order any day through the following Saturday if you are unable to do so on the 8th. You must preorder using a Bird Club form to be eligible for the lower seed sale prices, but non-members are eligible to participate – so get the word out to your neighbors!

Net proceeds from the seed sale will be contributed to conservation causes. Over the years the Howard County Bird Club has contributed over \$84,000 to various conservation organizations. See our website for a list of locations and organizations benefited by your support. The vast majority of these funds have come from the seed sales, so please stock up on seed and help the birds!

Around the first or second week of September an order form will sent by mail and by email, and will be available on the Howard County Bird Club website. Please try to place your order as early as possible. 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. Visit their website, www.wildlifeauthority.com, for a map and more information.

SKYWATCH SITE FOR HOWARD COUNTY

The Howard County Bird Club and the Howard County Conservancy have agreed on a joint initiative to create a skywatch site at Mt. Pleasant Farm. Initially conceived as a hawkwatch area at a favorite location of Howard County raptor enthusiasts, the site can also be used for observation of other wildlife, astronomy, and HCC educational programs.

The site will be simple - a flat area with a wood chip surface that has 360° horizon views for good viewing during both spring and fall migration. Basic construction will be complete by early September. Benches and signage will follow.

HCBC will fund construction and maintenance of the site. Special thanks to Mike Kerwin, the HCBC lead, and to Woody Merkel, HCBC member and HCC volunteer, who acted as key liaison between the club and the conservancy throughout the planning and coordination processes.

SPRING BIRD RECORDS: MARCH 1 – MAY 31, 2016

BY [JOANNE SOLEM](#)

Birders are likely to remember spring 2016 not only for its array of unusual species, but for the seemingly endless soggy May days that produced an above-average warbler migration. Headlining the season were Trumpeter Swan and Swallow-tailed Kite. Also of note were Long-tailed Duck, Red-throated Loon, Little Blue Heron, Cattle Egret, Glossy Ibis, Mississippi Kite, Short-billed Dowitcher, Barn Owl, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Sedge Wren, Lawrence's Warbler, and Dickcissel.

The last **Cackling Goose** was spotted over Cavey La 3/10 (**RRf**). The vast majority of **Tundra Swans** moved north the first half of March with 3/1 being the most noticeable date: Alpha Ridge Pk 105 (**KS**), Mt. Pleasant (MTPLT) 500 in 20 minutes (**MKw**), Tawny Bloom, E. Col. 50 (**DCm**), and Meadowbrook Pk 95 (**BO**, **ROr**). A **Trumpeter Swan** (second record) was reported at Fulton 5/25 (**DCm**) and quickly verified (**JHf**). It remained beyond the end of the period moving among several southern ponds.



Trumpeter Swan

by Joe Hanfman

A female **Wood Duck** with downy young appeared at Centennial (CENPK) 5/5 (**HPt**). **Blue-winged Teal** accommodatingly appeared at four locations, mostly during mid-April. **Northern Shovelers** peaked at 12 at Race Rd Wetlands (RACRW) 3/3 (**JHf**), while two **Northern Pintails** at that site 3/2 were also a fine sighting (**AVS**). A lone **Canvasback** at CENPK 3/5 was the last of the season (**KS**). Single **Redheads** were noted at Gateway 3/4 (**KS**) and at Waterford (WATFD) 3/19 (**WE+**). A total of 322 **Ring-necked Ducks** at the Marriottsville Pond 3/3 was the season's high (**RRf**). Four **Greater Scaup** were at WATFD 3/19 (**WE+**). **Lesser Scaup** were more widespread, appearing at five locations with the last two birds at Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS) 4/11 (**DCm**). On 3/17, a male **Long-tailed Duck** was reported

at TRIRS (**DCm**, m. obs.); later that day a female was seen there (**K&KnHf**, **JHf**, **RRf**). The last five **Common Mergansers** departed from TRIRS 3/11 (**K&KnHf**). A few **Red-breasted Mergansers** were spotted in March at TRIRS with the last leaving on an early 4/11 (**DCm**).

Although the 41 **Wild Turkeys** at W. Friendship Pk 3/1 marked the season's high (**KS**), there were reports from at least a dozen other locations from Clarksville west. A **Red-throated Loon** on 3/30 at TRIRS established a new early date (**DCm**) [4/1/12 D. Cummings]. **Horned Grebes** were scarce with the first four at TRIRS 3/17 (**DCm**, m. obs.) and the last one at Wilde Lake 4/12 (**ALw**). Although **Double-crested Cormorants** never appeared in large numbers at any site, May Count on 5/14 tallied 63 countywide.

An **American Bittern** at RACRW 4/18 (**AVS**) was seen intermittently for at least three days. Two were at WATFD 5/14 (**MW**), the second latest record. Nesting **Great Blue Herons** at Vantage Point continued to be the largest, and perhaps the only, colony in the county. At least 20 of the 23 nests were occupied on 3/8. (**J&RS**, **GMcC**). An adult **Little Blue Heron** was found at RACRW 4/12 (**NM**; m. obs.), but was not seen at that site after that date. On 4/14, however, an adult was noted at a pond at the former Green Manor Turf Farm on Md 32, north of Md 99 (**WE**); it continued to 4/17 (**JHf**). Another notable seasonal sighting was a **Cattle Egret** seen briefly at the Marriottsville Pd 5/3 (**JW**, ph.). As usual, **Black-crowned Night-Herons** showed up first at Wilde Lake (**RHI**, 4/9). A young **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** appeared at CENPK 4/21 (**BO**; **JHf**; m. obs.). A **Glossy Ibis**, feeding in a pond at Clark's Farm, MD 108 on 4/27, was another notable spring species (**LCv**, ph.).

A pair of **Ospreys** began building a nest on a relay tower at Triadelphia Lake View Farm on Triadelphia Mill Rd (first noted 3/23, **MW**). A **Swallow-tailed Kite** at Alpha Ridge Landfill 5/14 was the star of May Count (**JHf**, **RCu**). It was the second modern record and the first supported by photos. Historically, many of the county's limited **Mississippi Kite** sightings have been in the late afternoon. One spotted over Oakland Mills Rd/Deer Pasture around 5:00 p.m. 4/28 (**DCm**) followed that pattern. The two **Bald Eagle** nests on reservoir property were both reported as active by WSSC rangers, while the nest adjacent to the Middle Patuxent River along Folly Quarter Rd produced three young (**FRy**; **GMcC**). The two **Northern Harriers** on May Count were fine sightings (**JHf**, **RCu**; **NM**). On 3/20, a **Cooper's Hawk** began visiting a platform feeder at Du-

(Records continued on page 5)

vall Rd several times a day picking off passerines, so on 4/14, the feeder was removed. As one might imagine, the hawks had a nest approximately one-half mile away (KTF). The first **Broad-winged Hawk** was spotted over Wilde Lake 4/10 (BO, ph.). Individuals drifted through until mid-May, with as many as six at Martin Rd, W. Col. 4/26 (JHf) and seven at CENPK 5/14 (MLm, MKw, JHr).

High water levels limited shorebird numbers and variety for a second consecutive spring. A calling flyover **Short-billed Dowitcher** at W. Friendship Pk 4/29 was easily the most notable spring shorebird (RRf). The season's high of 63 **Wilson's Snipe** on the Alpha Ridge Landfill field trip 4/9 was a fine count (JHf, RCu+). Most **American Woodcock** sightings were logged the first half of March. On 3/14, four were counted at Hipsley Mill (DCm) and three at River Rd, Sykesville (FLv). Although the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA) hosted a high of five on 2/28, numbers dropped to a lone bird on 3/11 (CFr). Males were still courting at Patuxent River State Park 5/14 (JSh, MSz; TFe, GKg).

A **Bonaparte's Gull** at CENPK 3/21 was the third earliest record (BO). A **Caspian Tern** at the same location 3/25 was a new early date (JHr) [3/26/07 B. & G. Hill, B. Ott; 3/26/08 J. Hanfman]. Although scattered reports of **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** began 4/27 at Daniels (NM) and **Black-billed Cuckoos** 5/8 at Cavey La (SCI, RRf), neither species lived up to the folk name "Rain Crow" during numerous rainy days.

A **Barn Owl** at Camp Ilchester, Landing Rd 3/16 (BHn; JHf, KS, RRf) was a pleasant surprise. It may have been attracted by a permanently injured Barn Owl in an outdoor flight cage. **Common Nighthawks** passed through mostly during the middle of May with a high of 24 at CENPK 5/15 (AVS+). A calling **Eastern Whip-poor-will** on 5/9 in a tiny wooded area along Falls Run Rd was an unexpected location for this scarce migrant (NM). **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** began arriving countywide in late April: 4/20 (JMCK), 4/22 (KTF), 4/23 (K&KnHf).

Red-headed Woodpeckers were widely reported from 3/3 at W. Friendship Pk (EHs) to 5/17 at Woodmark (JKy). An adult along the Patuxent Branch Trail 4/3 to 4/17 (ALw) was seen by many birders. **Merlins** were reported at Lake Elkhorn 4/10 (DMh) and at W. Friendship Pk 5/10 (KS). A **Peregrine Falcon** was photographed in flight at the same park 4/30 (K&KnHf).

An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** seen at MPEA 5/15 (JHf) cooperatively stayed until 5/17 (EHs). An **Alder Flycatcher** was calling at CENPK 5/14 (MLm, MKw, JHr). All **Least Flycatchers** reports were between 5/13 at MPEA (KS) and 5/20 at Patuxent River SP (JSh). A **Blue-**



Olive-sided Flycatcher by Kevin Heffernan

headed Vireo on 3/22 at Lake Elkhorn (PDw) established a record early date [3/23/07 P. Webb], while one at Kendall Ridge, E. Col. 5/30 (MEk) was a new late date breaking a more than 50 year old record [5/24/62 R. Munro].

Common Ravens were widely recorded. The nesting pair at Duckett Dam used the Prince George's County side in 2016 (TFy). Besides the usual multiple sightings at Brighton Dam and at Annapolis Rock, the most intriguing raven observations were of a pair in the Patapsco Valley from MTPLT east to Daniels. Several times birds were seen carrying nesting material and food (BO). Although no nest was located, the summer season produced additional evidence that the pair had nested successfully.

Tree Swallows were reported on 3/9 at both W. Friendship Pk (LCg) and MTPLT (HPt); however, a week elapsed before more were seen. **Bank Swallows** were noticed mostly over local lakes in small numbers from 4/17 at Wilde Lake (RRf-1) to 5/16 at CENPK (JHf-3). The lone **Red-breasted Nuthatch** this season was spotted at Gateway 3/24 (JW).

A **Sedge Wren** at Alpha Ridge Landfill 5/14 was an excellent sighting for this elusive species (JHf, RCu). A **Marsh Wren** at MTPLT 5/7 was the only spring report (BO). Three **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** at CENPK 3/27 were the third earliest ever (R&RnPr+). Although there were no major thrush fallouts, eight **Gray-checked Thrushes** were noted countywide on 5/14. A new late date for that species was established at MPEA on 5/31 (JHr) [5/28/14 K. Litzinger]. It's not always possible to tell early arriving **Brown Thrashers** from wintering birds, but one on 3/12 at the Florence Rd silage pit was a nice date (RHI).

Thanks to frequent showers and overcast skies on the majority of May days, birders enjoyed a better-than-

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average warbler migration. A **Golden-winged Warbler** at MTPLT 4/30 (CSt) and one heard at Daniels 5/3 (JW) were a taste of things to come. A **Lawrence's Warbler** (seventh record), a named hybrid, was photographed at Marriottsville 4/30 (RHm, VSg). **Prothonotaries** always attract attention. The bird at Henryton 4/22 (AVS) was the first of the three sites reported. **Tennessees** are usually few in spring, but 12 were tallied countywide on 5/14, and at least three were noted at Patuxent River SP 5/20 (JSh). Many **Mourning**s appear to have moved north together. On 5/23, single birds were reported from MPEA (KS, EHs), Western Regional Pk (HPT, KnHf), and Gwynn Acres Path (AVS). On May 25, singles were noted at Blandair (AVS, KS) and Brush Run (JW). **American Redstarts** did not seem as common as usual, but 151 were tallied on 5/14. **Ceruleans** returned to their usual locations at Henryton and Marriottsville (JHr, m. obs.); in addition, two were sighted along the upper reaches of the Patapsco River, west of MD 94 (W&SE) and one was at Patuxent River SP (M&JBr), both on 5/14. **Bay-breasted**s are usually scarce in spring, but there were scattered sightings during much of May with six on May Count. One on 5/2 at Daniels tied the second earliest date (DCm). A **Chestnut-sided** at MPEA 4/25 tied the third earliest record (DCm). **Yellow-throated**s are regular along some sections of the Patapsco, but this year they were also observed at Patuxent River SP on 5/20 (JSh). **Wilson's** are always a much-sought species. This year they were reported in a narrow window from 5/8 at MPEA (HPT, CSt) to 5/14 at Woodstock (RRf).

American Tree Sparrows departed early with the last two at MTPLT 3/8 (KS). **Vesper Sparrows** were detected for an extended period. The first, on 3/26 at WATFD, was the second earliest record (DCm), while the final two at the same site on 5/14 (BO) missed the earliest safe breeding date by just one day. **Lincoln's Sparrows** were spotted at four sites from 4/29 at WATFD (ALw) to 5/14 at Gorman Stream Valley NRA (BNw, JMCK). The last **White-throated Sparrow** was noted at Schooley Mill Pk 5/26 (BO). A **Dark-eyed Junco** tallied at MPEA 5/25 was more unusual for late May (DCm). It was photographed on 5/29 (JHr) and was still present at the end of the season, the second latest record.

Spring's first **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was spotted at MPEA 4/26 (JHf). Most of the many reported this season were present at feeders where they fed primarily on black oil sunflower and safflower seeds (AA, HFk, J&RGr, JHf, JHr, KLz, G&MMcC, BO [high of 8], R&RnPr, RRf, JS, MSt). The appearance of numerous grosbeaks and buntings at feeders has occurred several times in the past during extended periods of rainy weather. Reports of **Indigo Buntings** at feeders came from HFk, K&KnHf, and G&MMcC. Just one person reported a **Blue Grosbeak** (5/21) in addition to the above two species (HFk). What a treat to have hosted

all three species!

A lone **Dickcissel** was photographed at Blandair 5/26 (AVS). **Bobolink** numbers were mostly in the single digits with a high of 152 at Alpha Ridge Landfill 5/14 (JHf, RCu). The same location produced the season's **Eastern Meadowlark** high of 14 on 4/9 (JHf, RCu+). **Rusty Blackbirds** were reported mostly in March with a high of 17 at Florence Rd 3/15 (KS).

Occasionally, a color variant of the **House Finch** shows up. An orange bird was photographed in the Dorsey Hall area 4/10 (AA). Although relatively few **Purple Finches** wintered, there were spring reports, mostly from western county locations. The high was 22 at Duvall Rd on 3/3 (KTf). As usual, **Pine Siskins** tended to be erratic with most reported during March and the first week of April, all in the low single digits. A handful lingered into mid-May with five in the Thornbrook area of Mt. Hebron 5/11 (JCu) and one at Haley's Ct, Mt. Airy last seen 5/18 (BBz).

New County Species: Western Tanager was added to the county list recently after consultation with several experts. The bird was seen and photographed by Russ Ruffing at Cavey La on 8/22/15.

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

Abbreviations: CENPK – Centennial Park, MPEA – Middle Patuxent Environmental Area, MTPLT – Mount Pleasant, RACRW – Race Road Wetlands, TRIRS – Triadelphia Reservoir, WATFD – Waterford, m. obs. – many observers, ph. – photograph

Observers: AA – Annette Allor, BBz – Bonnie Bezila, JBr – Jim Brinkley, MBr – Marilyn Brinkley, LCv – Laura Cleveland, LCg – Lisa Colangelo, SCI – Steve Collins, JCu – Jeff Culler, RCu – Ralph Cullison, DCm – David Cummings, PDw – Paul Dowling, SE – Sue Earp, WE – Wes Earp, MEK – Mary Erickson, CFr – Cheryl Farfaras, TFe – Tom Feild, HFk – Harry Fink, TFy – Tony Frye, JGr – Jane Geuder, RGr – Ralph Geuder, RHm – Richard Hamilton, JHf – Joe Hanfman, JHr – John Harris, KnHf – Karen Heffernan, KHf – Kevin Heffernan, BHn – Billy Heinbuch, RHI – Russell Hillsley, EHs – Ed Huestis, JKy – Joyce Kelly, MKw – Mike Kerwin, GKg – Geraldine King, MLm – Mike Leumas, ALw – Allen Lewis, KLz – Kathy Litzinger, FLv – Felicia Lovelett, NM – Nancy Magnusson, DMh – Dean Mahlsteat, GMcC – Grazina McClure, MMcC – Mike McClure, JMCK – John McKitterick, BNw – Ben Newton, ROrr – Richard Orr, BO – Bonnie Ott, HPT – Howard Patterson, RnPr – Renee Peters, RPr – Richard Peters, FRy – Frank Reilly, RRf – Ruff Ruffing, KS – Kurt Schwarz, VSg – Valerie Segar, JSh – Jay Sheppard, JS – Jo Solem, RS – Robert Solem, MSt – Michelle Stewart, CSt – Chuck Stirrat, MSz – Marcy Stutzman, KTf – Kate Tufts, AVS – Anthony VanSchoor, MW – Mark Wallace, JW – Jim Wilkinson.

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vidually, but since I believe that our field trips, speaker series, and website are central to the HCBC “brand,” I’d like to mention those. Thanks to Joe Hanfman and the field trip leaders for their efforts to plan and conduct a very active schedule of field trips, Jane Geuder for her efforts to arrange for the continuing series of fascinating speakers during our club meetings, and Bob Solem for an excellent website. The first HCBC meeting that I attended was a May meeting, the weekend before the May Count. When I met Jo Solem, she suggested that I participate in the count, which I did and which proved to be somewhat overwhelming, but also thrilling. I mention this because it is an example of Jo’s tireless efforts to spread the appreciation of not just birds, but nature in general. My special thanks to Jo for her continuing service to HCBC.

If I have not met you, I look forward to meeting you at upcoming club meetings or field trips. Field trips are an excellent way to learn about birding and the birding hotspots in Howard County. If you are new to birding, they are a chance to learn from very accomplished birders. If you are an experienced birder, these trips are an opportunity to pass on some of your knowledge to new birders. Also, regardless of your level of birding expertise, please consider volunteering for one of the seasonal counts. The counts are important because they are a source of valuable data on birdlife in Howard County and the potluck dinners which follow the counts are a nice way to meet other birders in a social setting with great food!

Happy birding – John Harris



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

The **Goldfinch**, newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club, is published five times per year. Copy deadline for the November/December 2016 issue is September 25, 2016.

**THE HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB
WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS,
APRIL 1 - JULY 31 , 2016**

Annette Allor
Hugh David Fleischmann
Joseph Gentile
Daryl Hobbs
Sandra Levy

HOWARD COUNTY CONSERVANCY EXPANSION

The Howard County Conservancy (HCC) is expanding its Gudelsky Environmental Education Center to accommodate the increasing participation in educational programs and public events. Groundbreaking is scheduled for November 2016, and completion projected for Spring 2017.

In a letter to HCBC president Robin Todd, HCC executive director Meg Boyd noted the “long-standing relationship with the Howard County Bird Club” and the planned emphasis on educating students and other visitors about the importance of native plants, birds, and other pollinators. She requested that HCBC consider funding professionally-designed signage to be installed in the new outdoor classroom. The club’s board of directors agreed, with the provision that the club be involved in the selection of bird species and the design of the signs.

Additional information about the [HCC expansion](http://hccconservancy.org/expansion.html) can be found at: <http://hccconservancy.org/expansion.html>.

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. If directions are required, please call the hosting board member.

September 22, 2016
John and Meg Harris
6400 Ripe Apple Ln
Columbia, MD 21044
240-755-0183
jaybee.harris@gmail.com

October 27, 2016
Karen Heffernan
9775 Diversified Ln
Ellicott City, MD 21042
410-857-1789
kharcy@aol.com

HOWARD COUNTY MAY COUNT RESULTS

BY KEVIN HEFFERNAN

Seventy birders participated in the 69th annual May Count which was held on May 14, 2016. The day was cloudy with temperatures in the low 70's. There was a heavy shower mid-afternoon after which the temperature dropped. The 148 total species was the ninth highest total ever, but interestingly the total number of birds (14,732) was in 24th place. A total of 231 species have been seen over the 43 years that the count has been run by the Howard County Bird Club. Seventy-seven species have been seen every year while 21 species have been seen only once. One species was seen for the first time this year: Swallow-tailed Kite.

Nine species set or tied all-time high counts: Pied-billed Grebe (5), American Bittern (2), Osprey (26), Bald Eagle (13), Swallow-tailed Kite (1), Red-headed Woodpecker (3), Alder Flycatcher (1), Willow Flycatcher (17), and Sedge Wren (1). An additional ten species set or tied 10-year high counts: Double-crested Cormorant, Common Nighthawk, Least Flycatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, and Vesper Sparrow.

One species set an all-time low count, Field Sparrow (42). An additional 22 species had 10-year low counts: Killdeer, Least Sandpiper, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Kingbird, Warbling Vireo, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Pine Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Blue Grosbeak, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, and Baltimore Oriole.

Sedge Wren was seen for only the second time ever. Alder Flycatcher was seen for the first time in 35 years. Vesper Sparrow was last seen in 2005. The following species are trending upward: Wild Turkey (nine years in a row, 11 of the last 12), Great Egret (12 of the last 13 years), Red-headed Woodpecker (six of the last seven years), and Common Raven (five times ever, all in the last eight years). We tallied all 31 warbler species on the field checklist. Several shorebird species were missed (both species of yellowlegs, Semipalmated Sandpiper and Plover) as were Sora and Virginia Rail.

A [compilation spreadsheet](#) of the May Count data from 1974 through 2016 can be found on the Howard County Bird Club website.

Many thanks to our compiler, Chuck Stirrat. His tireless efforts and attention to detail make this task much easier than it would otherwise be. I also want to thank

the Area Coordinators: Wes Earp, Ward Ebert, Chuck Stirrat, Mike McClure, Karen Heffernan, and John McKitterick. Finally, I want to give a special thanks to Linda Hunt for volunteering to host the tally rally. Her hospitality was very much appreciated.

And to the following participants, a big thank you; without you, these counts cannot happen: Dena and Scott Berglund, Jim and Marilyn Brinkley, Mary Lou Clark, Lisa Colangelo, Annie Cross, Ralph Cullison, David Cummings, Andrew Davis, Sue Earp, **Wes Earp (Area 1 Coordinator)**, **Ward Ebert (Area 2 Coordinator)**, Mary and Loren Erickson, Tom Feild, John Finedor, Ralph Geuder, Eric Goldman, Joe Hanfman, John Harris, Meg Harris, **Karen Heffernan (Area 5 coordinator)**, **Kevin Heffernan (May Count coordinator; Area 6 Coordinator)**, Kate Henshaw, Robin Hessey, Ed Huestis, Alan Johnston, Mike Kerwin, Brenda Kidera, Geraldine King, Clayton Koonce, Shashi Lengade, Mike Leumas, Allen Lewis, Felicia Lovelett, Rosa Lubitz, Brigitte Lund, Janet Lydon, Nancy Magnusson, Grazina McClure, **Mike McClure (Area 4 coordinator)**, Kimberly McDowell, Ann McEvoy, **John McKitterick (Area 7 coordinator)**, Woody Merkle, Barry Miller, Sue Muller, Ben Newton, Sue Neri, Peter Osenton, Howard Patterson, Ron and Sue Polniaszek, Russ Ruffing, David Sandler, Kurt Schwarz, Jay Sheppard, Sharon Smith, Jo Solem, Michelle Stewart, **Chuck Stirrat (Area 3 Coordinator)**, Marcie Stutzman, Eva Sunell, Tim Thompson, Robin Todd, June Tveekrem, Mark Wallace, Jim Wilkinson, Sarah Willey, and Paul Zucker

World Series of Birding and Raffle Winner

Club President Robin Todd received a letter from Mike Irons thanking the club "for allowing my sons to attend the club meeting and sell raffle tickets to support their team's participation in the 2016 World Series of Birding. ... The "Marsh Giggler" team identified 188 species in 24 hours in the World Series of Birding. This was the third highest total of all teams including adults."

Congratulations to Club member Kathie Lillie, who won the raffle: a pair of binoculars!

Thanks!

Thanks to the following people for staffing the club exhibit at these events.

GreenFest, April 16: Robin Todd, Bob Solem, John Harris, Meg Harris, Albert Hohm, Anne McEvoy, and June Tveekrem.

Camp Ilchester (Girl Scout Camp), April 24: Bob Solem, Kurt Schwarz, Robin Todd, Megan Lu.



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

P. O. BOX 1323

COLUMBIA MD 21044-1323

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TWENTY-THIRD 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 17th. Mike McClure 410-531-2780 and Chuck Stirrat 410-531-2417 are the county co-coordinators. Prior years have set an average of 125 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 & Kevin Heffernan 410-418-8731; Area 4) Mike McClure

410-531-2780; Area 5) Kurt Schwarz 410-461-1643; Area 6) TBD; and Area 7) Allen Lewis 787-590-4501. You may call an area or county coordinator to volunteer, or check at the September meeting. June Tveekrem will host the tally at 10970 Millbank Row, Columbia, MD 21044. The potluck dinner will be served at approximately 7:00 pm, r.s.v.p with food category at 410-292-3267 by Sept. 15th, to reserve space and if necessary obtain directions.

