



The Goldfinch

Newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club

A Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society



CLUB MEETINGS - BY [JANE GEUDER](#)

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Thursday, January 11, 2018 “Bird Sex and Breeding,” by Murray R. Bakst. This talk will cover the biology of avian reproduction based on his career of nearly forty years at the USDA’s Beltsville Agricultural Research Service. As wild bird populations decline, genetic diversity is threatened. Artificial insemination technologies used by the poultry industry are being utilized in the breeding of endangered and other captive populations. Murray’s undergraduate degree is from Rutgers and his Ph. D in Animal and Poultry Sciences-Reproduction is from the University of Georgia. He and his wife, Jo-Anne, have lived in Columbia since 1977.

Thursday, February 8, 2018 “Common Sparrows of Central Maryland,” by Bonnie Ott. Learn how to identify common sparrow species of the Maryland Piedmont. Bonnie will explain habitat preferences and seasonal movement. She will provide tips on how to tell similar species apart by behavior. Bonnie has given a number of programs for the bird club. Her love of sparrows is well known. Bonnie says that she will (with great difficulty) whittle her 800 sparrow photos down to about 100 or so for the program.

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. There is no admission charge. For further information call John Harris at 240-755-0183. Website: <http://www.howardcountymd.gov/RobinsonNatureCenter>

Sparrow Photos by Bonnie Ott



Field Sparrow



Swamp Sparrow







White-throated Sparrow

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

START YOUR YEAR LIST

January 1, 2018, Start at 8:00 a.m. (half day). Meet at the Howard County Conservancy – Mount Pleasant Farm. 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 when every bird is new! Facilities available at some locations. Leader–Kurt Schwarz, krschwal@verizon.net, 410-461-1643

    **BLACKWATER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**
January 13, Saturday, all day trip. 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, krschwal@verizon.net, 410-461-1643

ALPHA RIDGE LANDFILL

January 20, Saturday, half day. Reservations required. Carpooling is required. Moderate walking over hills and fields of the landfill. We will search for Short-eared Owls with no guarantee of finding one. Other possibilities are Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, Horned Lark, American Pipit, and Eastern Meadowlark. If we finish early, we may go to Mount Pleasant and look for wintering sparrows. Facilities at Alpha Ridge Park. Limited to a maximum of five cars. Contact Joe Hanfman for reservations, auk1844@gmail.com, 410-772-8424.

   **MID-WINTER COUNT**

January 27, Saturday. See [page 6](#) for details.

MOS CONVENTION

February 2 – 4, Ocean City.

  **LAKE ELKHORN**

February 7, Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. 2-3 hours. Meet at Dockside parking lot. Easy walking along the lake and to Forebay Pond. Waterfowl, sparrows, and winter finches are possible. The lake can turn up interesting surprises. No facilities.

Leader – Allen Lewis, allenrlewis@gmail.com

BLANDAIR PARK NORTH

February 11, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. 2-3 hours. Meet at the south end of Summer Hollow Ln, Columbia. Walk the trails along scrubland and woods. Non-winter birds sometimes overwinter here. No facilities, boots recommended.

Leader - Anthony VanSchoor, tonyvanschoor@gmail.com

  **LAKE KITAMAQUONDI**

February 17, Saturday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours. Meet at the upper lakefront fountain that is near Whole Foods off Little Patuxent Pkwy. Easy walking around the newly paved path. Waterfowl, gulls, and sparrows expected. Facilities available.

Leader – Clayton Koonce, cg.koonce@verizon.net

  **CENTENNIAL PARK**

March 4, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours. Meet at the 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 11 Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours. Daylight Saving Time starts (set clocks ahead). Meet at the west end parking lot off Centennial Lane. Easy walking around the lake on paved path. Facilities available. Waterfowl expected, early migrant passerines possible.

Leader - Mary Lou Clark, doctorfx_99@yahoo.com

WINTER SPARROW SEARCH

March 17, Saturday, 7:30 a.m. Meet at the parking lot of the Howard County Conservancy. Search the wetlands and dry fields as we look for as many sparrows as possible while looking for signs of spring. This is the peak time for singing Fox Sparrows. Waterproof boots are recommended. Facilities at some spots.

Leader - BonnieOtt, sparrowdamsel@gmail.com, 443-285-3302.

-  = Reservations required
-  = Fee for this trip
-  = Great for beginning birders
-  = Wheelchair Accessible

2017 HOWARD COUNTY BUTTERFLY YEAR

BY LINDA HUNT

Some of us of a certain age are known to spend significant time looking for our keys, glasses, and such, often finding them in our pockets or even in our hands. The 2017 butterfly season reminded us that what we are looking for is often right in front of us. Hackberry butterflies, Coral, Juniper and White M hairstreaks, various skippers and even a Harvester confirmed that the Howard County Conservancy is the “go to” place for finding butterflies. Home gardens and meadows continued to document increasing numbers of both individuals and species. And a massive migration of Painted Ladies provided late season compensation for the absence of the Bronze Copper, Checkered White and Little Yellow causing excitement in 2016.

Initiated by Richard (Dick) Smith, Jo Solem, and Sue Muller in 2013 as a joint project of the Howard County Bird Club and the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, the Howard County five-year Butterfly Survey addresses a basic question: What is the status of butterfly species historic to Howard County? Dick, Jo, and Sue felt that with the increased interest in digital photography a butterfly survey might provide a framework for greater numbers of people to document butterflies from diverse countywide locations. Indeed, as the chart below indicates, the numbers of surveyors, counts, and geographically diverse locations continues to increase. More than 65 people spent over 812 hours completing 855 counts at 89 locations. More homeowners submitted reports of butterflies in their gardens. Attendance at butterfly counts continued strong (four counts at Western Regional Park with Sue Muller, one each month from June through September with additional counts at Meadowbrook Park with Kathy Litzinger in June; Howard County Conservancy with Kevin Heffernan in July; Alpha Ridge Park with Woody Merkle in August; and Elkhorn Garden Plots with Linda Hunt in September. The annual Howard County Dragonfly Count and Fall Count (bird) continued to include tallies of butterflies.

2013-2017 Howard County Butterfly Survey Totals						
Year	# Counts	Minutes/Hours	# Surveyors	# Locations	# Species	# Individuals
2017	855	48,757/>812	66	89	71	23,897
2016	569	31,422/>523	53	44	74	21,695
2015	>272	-----	35	21+	70	17,457
2014	175	-----	14	41	68	10,340
2013	>140	Prototype Year	5 + Fall Count	11	61	3,943

2017 Species Not Reported: Hayburst's Scallopwing, Checkered White, Little Yellow, Bronze Copper, Silvery Checkerspot
 Unknown Status: Hoary Edge, Dreamy Duskywing, Sleepy Duskywing, European Skipper, Mulberry Wing, Baltimore Checkerspot
 Extirpated: Leonard's Skipper, Delaware Skipper, Black Dash, Common Roadside-Skipper, Regal Fritillary, Silver-bordered Fritillary



Hackberry Emperor

by Kevin Heffernan

In 2013 surveyors documented only 61 species in the first trial survey. The status of many of the rarer butterflies was uncertain and they were not even included in the initial survey list. In 2016 surveyors documented a high of 74 species. This year surveyors documented 23,897 individual butterflies of 71 species, none new to the survey. Some of the species that had made cameo appearances in previous years did not appear. However, many common and uncommon species were found in now predictable locations and others randomly around the county but during predictable time periods. Others were found in locations new for the species.

After four years of Howard County Bird Club members looking for a good location with hackberry trees for hackberry butterflies, and after planting a dozen hackberry trees around the county in memory of Dick Smith, Kevin and Karen Heffernan and Bonnie Ott found multiple trees in hedgerows around the Howard County Conservancy fields. From mid-July to mid-August they documented 15 Hackberry Emperors. Also in mid-July a

(Butterfly Year continued on page 4)

(Butterfly Year continued from page 3)

Tawny Emperor returned to Kathy Litzinger's hackberry tree to lay eggs. By late September, Kathy had documented 34 Tawny Emperors. At the Conservancy in late June, Bonnie Ott, Kathy Litzinger, and others found 14 Coral Hairstreak butterflies. After an abundance of sightings of beech aphids, caterpillars, and Harvester butterflies in 2014, the Harvester lived up to its reputation and seemingly vanished from previous sites. This year, again at the Conservancy at the August BioBlitz, Carrie Harlow submitted a picture of a butterfly unknown to her; it turned out to be *the* single record of a Harvester in 2017 (and a new Harvester location).

Meadow and garden areas at Robinson Nature Center, Emy's Meadow at Centennial Park, and the Daisy Road Meadow continue to attract butterflies and other pollinators. In 2017, these areas and residential gardens supported successful broods of Monarch (milkweed), Fritillaries (violets), Tawny Emperor (Kathy Litzinger's hackberry tree), Pipevine Swallowtail (Barbara White's pipevine), Sleepy Orange and Cloudless Sulphur (Linda Hunt's Maryland senna) and Broad-winged Skipper (visiting from Kathy Litzinger's neighbor's phragmites). Three distinct Giant Swallowtail individuals stopped at Grazina McClure's, Linda Hunt's, and John McKitterick's gardens (lantana). Two Long-tailed Skippers showed up: one at Lake Kittamaquundi (Clayton Koonce) and one in Linda Hunt's garden. And Richard Orr saw this year's single American Snout in his yard.



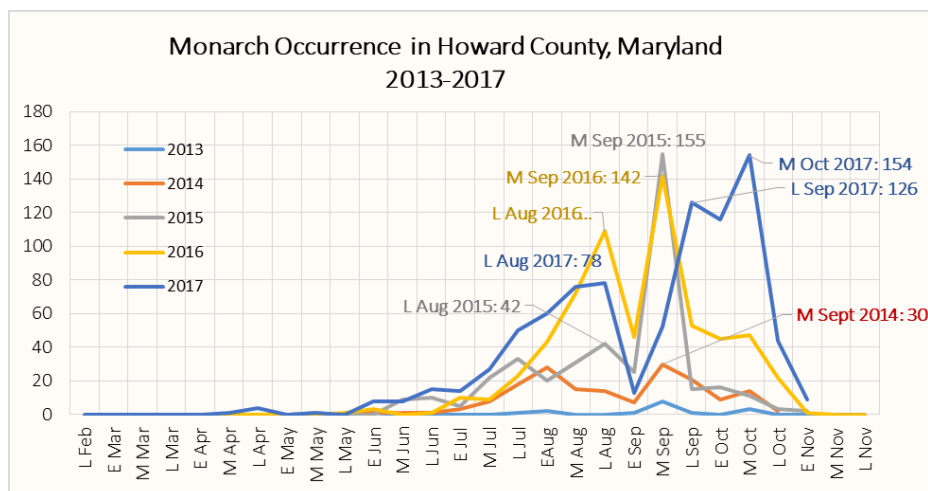
Long-tailed Skipper

by Clayton Koonce

While more people looking for butterflies and creating butterfly gardens probably account for increased numbers of common and easily recognizable butterfly species, totals of difficult to identify species, especially of skippers, have remained unchanged. For example, compare the numbers Eugene Scarpulla documented at the Howard County Conservancy BioBlitz with the totals documented for the entire survey (not counting Gene's): 17 (12) Swarthy Skippers, 6 (1) Crossline Skipper, and 3 (4) Dun Skippers. Total survey numbers of Clouded Skipper (3), Southern Broken-Dash (7), Northern Broken-Dash (2), and Hobomok Skipper (3) continue low, and the high numbers of Ocola Skipper in 2016 (63) were not seen this year (17).

Unfortunately, development this year has now encroached on most, if not all, of Howard County's sliver of Coastal Plain habitat along the Anne Arundel border, familiar to surveyors for Jim Wilkinson's sightings of Little Yellow and Checkered White. Neither these species nor the very rare, possibly stray, Bronze Copper, seen last year at Meadowbrook Park (these areas were sprayed with herbicide this year), were reported in 2016.

Of species known to migrate, in previous years only the Monarch has shown a distinct surge in Howard County survey numbers. The chart below compares 2013-2017 Monarch flight patterns. Note that we rarely see Monarchs heading north, though we find their caterpillars feasting on milkweed in our gardens. But we do see large numbers of adults in late summer and fall heading south, suggesting a need for abundant nectar plants such as goldenrod, heath, and other fall asters.



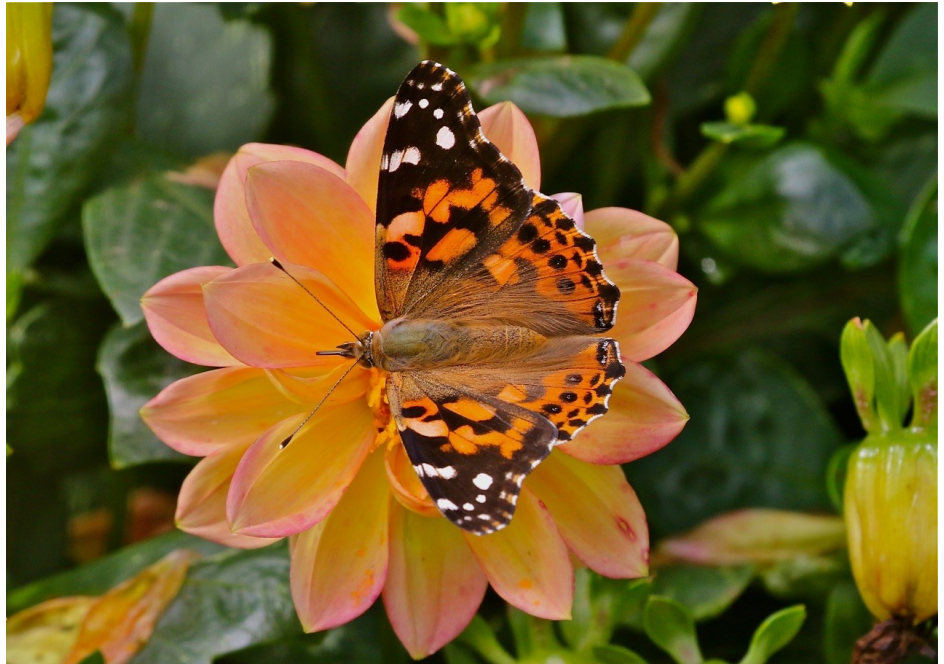
(Butterfly Year continued on page 5)

(Butterfly Year continued from page 4)

2013-2017 Painted Lady and American Lady Occurrence					
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Painted Lady	15	67	15	7	486
American Lady	6	48	38	52	53

This year marked a huge national, and possibly international, Painted Lady population surge. Normally we see very few Painted Ladies as compared to American Ladies. This year the Painted Lady migration extended from early July (19) through August (45) and September (84), peaking in October (313), to diminish with the cold weather in November (42).

The first and last butterflies of 2017 were both Eastern Commas: February 8 (Jim Wilkinson, Miller Library) and November 24 (Bonnie Ott, Centennial). Other “firsts” and “lasts” include Monarch – April 16 (Kathy Kabele, Clarksville) and November 6 (Kurt Schwarz, Howard County Conservancy); Painted Lady – April 30 (Gregg Petersen, Robinson Nature Center; David Gillum, Schooley Mill Park) and November 10 (Tim Thompson, Ellicott City); and Sleepy Orange – June 30 (Bonnie Ott, Howard County Conservancy) and November 2 (Jim Wilkinson, Howard County Conservancy).



Painted Lady

by Bill Hill

I want to thank Bob Solem for his continuing help creating and modifying data collection forms and streamlining the data compilation process. His technical expertise is essential. Thank you also to the field trip leaders and participants for their enthusiasm and eagle eyes. And special thanks to everyone who spent so many hours walking parks, searching utility easements, and checking their gardens and then taking the time to submit reports. 2017 participants: Annette Allor, Paul Bade, Kathy Baryl-ski, Gill Bentley, Jonathan Blithe, Karen Blum, Wes Earp, Sherry Fisher, John Fisher, Timothy Foard, Mary Fox, Jeff Friedhoffer, Ralph Geuder, David Gillum, Patricia Greenwald, Carrie Harlow, John Harris, John Hayes, Karen and Kevin Heffernan, Bill and Gayle Hill, Linda Hunt, Kathy Kaberle, Suzanne Klick, Clayton Koonce, Nancy Lawson, Jill Levin, Kathie Lillie, Kathy Litzinger, Emily Loghmani, Felicia Lovelett, Brigitte Lund, Janet Lydon, Nancy Magnusson, Joe Mankowski, Grazina and Mike McClure, John McKitterick, Woody Merkle, Sue Muller, Michael Osborne, Richard Orr, Bonnie Ott, Siobhan Percey, Gregg Petersen, Norma Petersen, Paul Petkus, Ann Phillips, Tim Reichard, Linda Roberts, Eugene Scarpulla, Kurt Schwarz, Gloria Smith, Sharon Smith, Warren Smith, Jo and Bob Solem, Jesse Standbridge, Elizabeth Starr, Tim Thompson, Robin Todd, Kate Tufts, Barbara White, Jim Wilkinson, Michele Wright.



Monarch on Aster

by Linda Hunt

In conclusion, as we complete the fourth full year of the five year survey, the cumulative data hints at year to year cycles of high and low occurrence of specific species but consistent year to year patterns in butterfly brood cycles. As years of surveys are completed, a picture of butterfly diversity is emerging. This may become useful in facilitating planning for habitat preservation, enhancement, or creation as development continues to reduce existing natural habitat.

THIRTY-THIRD ANNUAL MID-WINTER COUNT

BY JOE HANFMAN

Join the Howard County Bird Club's Thirty-third Annual Mid-winter Count on Saturday, January 27, 2018. Joe Hanfman (410-772-8424) / auk1844@gmail.com is the count coordinator. You may volunteer to participate by signing up at a meeting or by contacting one of the area coordinators.

Area 1	Mark Wallace Wes Earp	301-725-6370 410-531-3197	abcxyz5@verizon.net the_earps@verizon.net
Area 2	Position open		
Area 3	Chuck Stirat	443-462-8234	Stirre1@gmail.com
Area 4	Mike McClure	410-531-2780	michael.mcclure@jhuapl.edu
Area 5	Kevin and Karen Heffernan	410-418-8731	kjheff122@gmail.com khdarcy4@aol.com
Area 6	Bonnie Ott	443-285-3302	sparrowdamsel@gmail.com
Area 7	Kurt Schwarz	410-461-1643	krschwal@verizon.net

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

The evening potluck tally will be at Jeff and Karen Culler's at 2672 Thornbrook Rd, Ellicott City, MD. Please contact the Cullers at 410-465-9006 or cullerfuls@hotmail.com by Wednesday, January 24th, to sign up for a vegetable, salad, or dessert, and to obtain directions. Dinner will be served at 6:45 p.m. If you cannot make the meal, you are welcome to drop in about 7:30 p.m. for the tally.

If there is a question about the weather, we will try to make a decision the night before. Contact your area coordinator if you are unsure of the status of the count.



Site Guide

Included with this issue is the site guide for West Friendship Park. [Guides](#) to other birding spots are available on the club's website.

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.

January 25, 2018
Howard Patterson
4209 Hermitage Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21042
410-461-9686, howard21042@verizon.net

February 22, 2018
Jo & Bob Solem
10617 Graeoch Road
Laurel, MD 20723
301-725-5037, odenata@msn.com

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*
Joanne Solem, *Proofreader*

ANNUAL POTLUCK

BY KATHIE LILLIE

Time to mark next year's calendar for our annual potluck dinner, scheduled once again at the Robinson Nature Center, for March 17, 2018.

Annual Potluck Dinner: Saturday, March 17, 2018

Where: Robinson Nature Center

Time: 6-10 p.m.

Doors open 6:00 p.m. for room set-up

Snacks start at 6:30 p.m.

Dinner starts at 7:00 p.m.

All club members and their guests are invited to share in the fun, the food, and the program. There is no entrance fee charged by the RNC.

Those attending please bring a main dish, hors d'oeuvres, a salad, a vegetable or a dessert. (To assist those with food allergies, it is suggested that you include a list of ingredients along with your dish.) The bird club furnishes water and the various eating and drinking paraphernalia. You may bring wine and beer. (Also, you may want to mark your dishes and any accompanying serving implements with your name so we can make sure they return home with you!)

There will be an after-dinner "slide show," so bring your nature photos. Once again, please note that due to time limitations we limit images to no more than **15 photographs per person**. You can bring digital photos (or a PowerPoint presentation) on a CD or USB thumb drive, and the group will provide a laptop for projection of the photos.

Please let us know in advance you will be attending so we can arrange for enough chairs, beverages, etc. You may sign up at the January, February, March club meetings, or contact Kathie Lillie by Friday, March 16, 2018 at 301-807-3785 or klillie12@verizon.net.

Come 6:00-6:30 p.m. to help set up or stay a bit afterwards, 9:00-10:00 p.m., to help clean up. It doesn't take long and is much appreciated!

If you are a new member, or if you have not attended the potluck dinner before, we encourage you to come and get to know others who share your interests in birds, birding, nature, other creatures, and more.

So one and all, mark your calendars and come join the fun!

Directions: The Robinson Nature Center is located at 6692 Cedar Lane, Columbia, MD 21044 (410-313-0400). Route 32 Exit 17 takes you to Cedar Lane. There is ample parking.

**THE HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB
WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBER,
OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2017**

Laurel J. Flyer

SEED SALE AND HABITAT DONATIONS

BY WARD EBERT

We sold over three tons of bird seed in our annual seed sale – how many tons of birds does it take to eat all that?

Thanks once again to Kevin Cassidy and the staff of the Wildlife Authority for managing the buying and delivery process. Big thanks go to Cindy Albright, Jeff Friedhoffer, and Bob Solem who do all the handling of the order forms and money. With net proceeds plus the generous contributions of many folks we have about \$1,250 more to support our charitable efforts to support birds and birding.

Don't forget that discounts are offered to HCBC members at the Wildlife Authority and Mother Nature's year-round.

INVASIVE GARLIC MUSTARD

The white flowers of Garlic Mustard are familiar to many birders. Its ability to suppress vegetation in its vicinity is well-known. Something that may not be as widely understood is that it also has a negative impact on mycorrhizal relationships with trees. Many native trees have a mutually beneficial relationship in their root systems with specific fungi. Although dense stands of Garlic Mustard will not kill trees, their presence is likely to inhibit optimum growth. Removing this plant in spring before seeds form is doing a favor to both the trees and the spring ephemerals.

Thanks to Sue Buswell who, for years, has worked to remove this pest from along the woodland trails at Cedar Lane Park. The park continues to be an excellent location in which to find various spring wildflowers. Other Howard County Bird Club members participate in various weed warrior programs (at MPEA for instance) helping to remove a variety of invasive plant species. All these efforts are underpublicized, but valuable. Every little bit helps!

Thank You!

Thank you to all the club members who worked at Green-Fest, Robinson Nature Center Open House, and the University of Maryland Farm Open House. People who presented programs at schools and garden clubs about birds, butterflies, fungi, and other aspects of natural history also performed an invaluable service which was much appreciated.

And a special thank you also to everyone who led field trips, coordinated seasonal counts, and hosted tally rallies. The club would be unable to accomplish its primary purpose without your extra degree of commitment.



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

P.O. Box 1323

Columbia, MD 21044-1323

January/February 2018 - Inside This Issue

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Yellow-bellied Sapsucker



A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker greeted participants near the parking lot at several Centennial Lake field trips.
Photograph by Richard Orr at the final 2017 walk on November 26.