



# The Goldfinch

Newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club

A Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society



## CLUB MEETINGS - BY [JANE GEUDER](#)

### Inside this Issue:

<a href="#">Club Meetings</a> .....	1
<a href="#">Summer Bird Records</a> .....	1
<a href="#">Field Trips</a> .....	2
<a href="#">LeConte's Thrasher Book</a> .....	5
<a href="#">Hog Island Camp Reports</a> .....	6
<a href="#">Programs. Anyone?</a> .....	7
<a href="#">Photo Galleries</a> .....	7
<a href="#">New Members</a> .....	7
<a href="#">Winter Finch Forecast</a> .....	7
<a href="#">Fall Count Summary</a> .....	8
<a href="#">Board Meetings</a> .....	8
<a href="#">Winning Photo</a> .....	10

Thursday, November 8, 2018 “Nicaragua: Birds, Volcanos, and Cultural History,” by Joyce Kelly. This December 2017 trip focused on the west coast of this Central American country, highlighting several nature preserves. Our speaker is a founding member of the Howard County Conservancy. Joyce has worked for the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Environmental Protection Agency, and Defenders of Wildlife. She is currently president of the Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Council of Silver Spring.

Thursday, December 13, 2018 “Natural Wonders of Assateague Island,” by Mark Hendricks. Mark is an award-winning wildlife photographer and writer who uses his camera as a storytelling tool for conservation purposes. Current work focuses on the diverse habitats of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Mark is a former marine mammal biologist and animal rescuer. He will have copies of his book available for sale and signing.

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. There is no admission charge. For further information call Mary Lou Clark, 410-465-4061.

Website: <http://www.howardcountymd.gov/RobinsonNatureCenter>

### Wood Stork First Howard County Record



© Kevin J. Heffernan

by Kevin Heffernan

## SUMMER BIRD RECORDS: JUNE 1 – JULY 31, 2018

BY JOANNE SOLEM

Unusual weather patterns were instrumental in producing one of the county’s most memorable summer seasons ever. June’s rainfall measured 16.73 inches at BWI airport surpassing the 1889 record by more than 5 inches! Summer bird highlights were Wood Stork (new county record), Limpkin (2<sup>nd</sup>), Tricolored Heron (5<sup>th</sup>), and nesting Dickcissels (2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year).

As a pest species, there are no longer any known wild Mute Swans present and breeding in Maryland. All birds in collections are by permit and must be the same sex to prevent reproduction. Turf Valley has had two swans for many years. Birders assumed they were sterile/same sex; however this year they produced four cygnets 6/30 (JHf, ph.).

Single Wood Ducks appeared at Lake Kittamaqundi (LKKIT) 6/2 and 7/30 (CKc). Interestingly, the two Hooded Merganser reports were both females: one at Lime Kiln M.S. pond, Fulton and the other at Gateway (GATWY), both on 6/21 (SRm, MLC).

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

## 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 [aak1844@gmail.com](mailto:auk1844@gmail.com). HCBC members receive priority on trips that are limited by number of participants. No pets.

### HOWARD CONSERVANCY C. S. ROBBINS SKYWATCH

November 3, 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. In a recent 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 sunglasses, your own lawn chair (if you wish, there are benches on site), 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](mailto:ruff2@verizon.net)

### CENTENNIAL PARK

November 4, 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.

Leader - Richard and Renee Peters, [Richard@rrrrpeters.org](mailto:Richard@rrrrpeters.org)

### SHARPS AT WATERFORD FARM

November 10, 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](mailto:wesandsue@gmail.com), 410-531-3197

### CENTENNIAL PARK

November 11, 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 – Mary Lou Clark, [doctorfx\\_99@yahoo.com](mailto:doctorfx_99@yahoo.com)

### CENTENNIAL PARK

November 18, 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](mailto:Richard@rrrrpeters.org)

### CENTENNIAL PARK

November 25, 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 – Karen and Kevin Heffernan 410-418-8731 or

[KJHeff122@gmail.com](mailto:KJHeff122@gmail.com)

### HOWARD WATERFOWL SEARCH

December 1, 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 search for gulls, ducks, grebes, loons and other waterfowl Easy walking involved. Plan to carpool. Bring lunch and drinks. Scopes helpful. Facilities available.

Leader - Kurt Schwarz, [krschwal@verizon.net](mailto:krschwal@verizon.net), 410-461-1643

### START YOUR YEAR LIST

January 1, 2019, Start at 8:00 (half day). *Meet at the Howard Conservancy – Mount Pleasant Farm.* Easy walking on 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 - Kurt Schwarz, [krschwal@verizon.net](mailto:krschwal@verizon.net), 410-461-1643

### BLACKWATER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

January 12, Saturday (all day trip). Plan to stop at the Choptank River Bridge for ducks and coffee. Bring lunch and drinks. Dress warmly, Entrance fee, Duck Stamp, or national parks pass required. Email the leader to reserve a spot and get details. We will carpool. Facilities at some spots.

Leader - Kurt Schwarz, [krschwal@verizon.net](mailto:krschwal@verizon.net), 410-461-1643

 = Wheelchair accessible

 = Great for beginning birders

**Wild Turkeys** continued their erratic appearances with singles at Tuscany Dr 7/28 (SMu) and at Gorman Rd/Murray Hill Rd 7/31 (EBr). A **Pied-billed Grebe** at Wilde Lake (WILLK) 7/29 (JHr) was an odd summer record. As usual, **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** were widely scattered with a high of six at Howard Chapel Rd, Patuxent River State Park (PRSP) 7/20 (RDg). A **Black-billed Cuckoo** at Clemens Crossing 7/19 (MKw), and one calling consistently at Timberleigh in late June and through July (DNg) were among the few summer reports. At least 12 **Common Nighthawks** flew low over the Columbia Mall heading toward WILLK the evening of 6/19 (HFk), the latest-ever spring migrants. **Chimney Swifts** nested in chimneys at River Rd, Sykesville (FLv), Wynfield Rd, W. Friendship (RCu), and S. Trotter Rd (S/WE). There may have been as many as six nests in that Clarksville neighborhood (WE).

One of the season's stars was a **Tricolored Heron** (5<sup>th</sup> record) present at Forebay Pond, adjacent to Lake Elkhorn (LKELK) 7/27 (ALw). The bird primarily frequented the vicinity of the old beaver dam. By staying through 7/28, many birders were able to enjoy it.



Tri-colored Heron

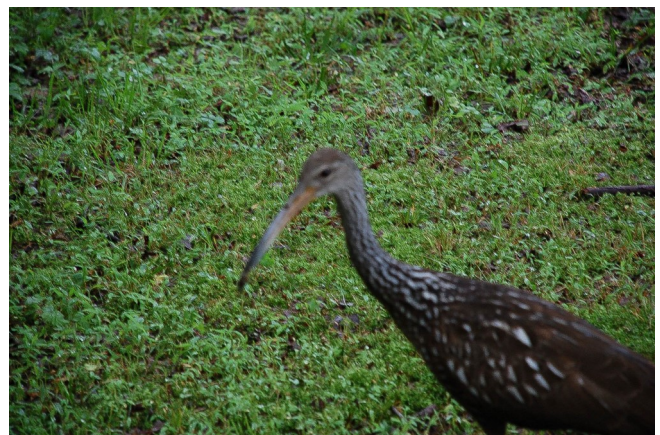
by Anthony VanSchoor

Shorebirds were few with the first **Spotted Sandpiper** at LKELK 7/7 (ALw). The first two post-breeding **Ring-billed Gulls** were photographed at LKKIT 7/22 (CKc). Two **Double-crested Cormorants** made a first-observed visit to the pond at Belmont 7/28 (SPr).

Long-legged waders were featured rarities this season. The county's second **Limpkin** was photographed on private property along Howard Rd, Dayton on 6/10 (GVi). Only the homeowner saw this rarity. Maryland's last accepted record was Howard County's 1985 bird in the Benson Branch watershed. **Green Herons** again nested at WILLK (HPt-5 on 6/8 and 4 on 6/17). One nest successfully produced a second brood of two 7/17 (HPt) for a total of at least five from the same nest. **Black-crowned Night-Herons**, as usual, were reported by multiple observers at WILLK. The only

Centennial Park report was 6/25 (JWd). A first year **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** was spotted at LKELK 6/8 (ALw).

A new county bird is always a special event. During the late afternoon of 6/2, as Matt Williams' flight was arriving at Reagan National Airport, he received photos from a friend in Howard County asking for help in identifying a bird on his property. Matt recognized the large white bird as a wildly out-of-place **Wood Stork** (see photo on p.1). As soon after landing as possible, he and his son, Silvester, and daughter, Zola, headed to Rosemary Lane in the rain and fog to see the bird and assess the situation for sharing the sighting with other birders. The stork was actively feeding, but light was fading fast. Matt posted a notice to MD Birding that anyone who could make it to the location before dark was welcome, and he was exploring the possibilities for visiting the site the following day. Only Joe Hanfman and Russ Ruffing made it that evening. Fortunately, the bird flew to a pine tree near the house to roost. With continued rain forecast, there was a high probability the bird would remain overnight. Homeowners, Dan and Misty Ellis, kindly agreed to allow birders to visit their property on Sunday. Matt posted on MD Birding directions and protocols for viewing the bird and managing the limited parking, coordinating with Joe Hanfman and the bird club's Rare Bird Alert. On 6/3, Matt and Silvester were on site at 5:45 a.m., staying most of the day through mist and rain as a steady stream of Maryland birders arrived, undeterred by the weather. Approximately 100 people were able to enjoy this rarity. Hats off to Matt and Silvester for their leadership roles, and to Dan and Misty for graciously sharing "their" bird! The night of 6/3 the skies cleared; on the morning of 6/4, there was no sign of the stork (MWm). (The Wood Stork, a first county record and the Limpkin, a second record were unprecedented rarities in an eight-day period in Howard County.)



Limpkin

by Gary Vienna

Two **Osprey** nests in or near the county were successful. The nest on a relay tower along Murphy Rd was used for the second year 5/12 (HMz); also on 5/12, the nest on the tower on the south side of Duckett Dam was occupied (JS, SMu, ALk). Those two nests don't necessarily explain the widespread and

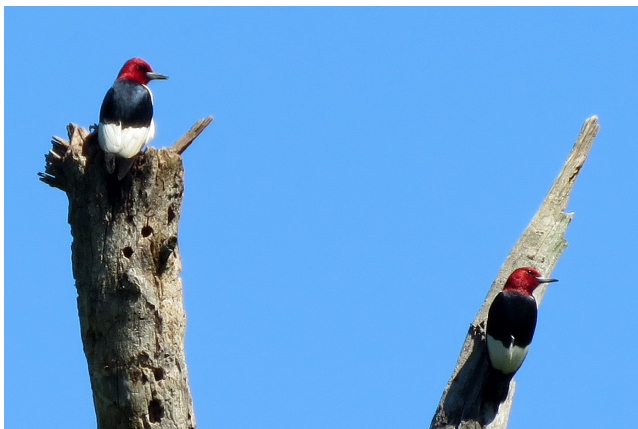
(Records continued on page 4)

*(Records continued from page 3)*

consistent summer reports at the central lakes, as well as at other locations. There could well be one or more undiscovered nests in the county.

Summer **Sharp-shinned Hawks** are unusual. Although most Maryland breeding records are from the far western part of the state, there are very occasional records east of Washington County. This summer one Sharpie was reported over Martin Rd, W. Col. 6/26 (**JHf**), and one was photographed at David Force Natural Resource Area 7/8 (**KGs**, ph.; ID by **WE**). On 7/23, a juvenile **Red-shouldered Hawk** was spotted in distress in the water at the edge of Woodmark Lake (**JKy**). With the help of Wes Earp, the hawk was captured and taken to the Owl Moon Raptor Center in Boyds, MD. The diagnosis was West Nile virus; unfortunately, the bird could not be saved. Cheers for Joyce and Wes who invested a good deal of time and effort in the attempt to save this beautiful female. **Broad-winged Hawks** have become rare county nesters with Patapsco Valley State Park (PVSP) near Woodstock the last known location. This year a pair may have been breeding near the Patuxent River in the vicinity of Mink Hollow Rd. One to two were seen/heard from mid-June to early July (**M/SWm**). Maybe next year will produce proof of nesting.

Because **Red-headed Woodpeckers** nest so sparingly in the county, any summer sightings are a positive sign. One visited Hobbs Rd briefly 6/2 (**B/GHi**), and one was seen at Mullinix Mill Rd, PRSP 6/12 (**RDg**). For the second consecutive year, the pair at Fox Chase Wetlands produced a successful brood. On 7/29, a nestling was seen at the nest entrance; at least two young fledged (**JCu**).



Red-headed Woodpeckers

by Jeff Culler

A report of a lone, calling **Least Flycatcher** on 6/27 south of Jennings Chapel Rd (JNCHR), PRSP (**AVS**) was odd both in location and timing. **Eastern Kingbirds** successfully raised a brood of three from a nest built on a high tension tower at Mt Hebron 6/24 (**JCu**). **Warbling Vireos** are an easily overlooked species unless one is attuned to their lengthy, aimless song. Four were at LKKIT on 6/2 (**CKc**).

Three **Common Ravens** at GATWY 6/11 (**BHb**) were undoubtedly a family group. Two flocks of **Horned Larks** totaling 45 were counted in a pumpkin patch at MD 94/A.E. Mullinix Rd 7/17 (**WE**). **Purple Martins** used the 12-room box at Belmont and were still present 7/28 (**SPr**). An actual nest count will be made when the box is removed at the end of the season. Two **Rough-winged Swallows** along the Patuxent Branch Trail 7/29 (**MO'S**) could represent breeders using the banks of the Little Patuxent River. **Cliff Swallows** continued to nest beneath the MD 32/Cedar La overpass 6/24 (**JHr-7**). They were first reported at that location in 2005 during the second statewide breeding bird atlas (**WEb**). Three over River Rd fields on 7/21 were likely wanderers from the MD 32/Sykesville bridge colony (**FLv**). Three at Brown's Bridge on 7/31 could have been birds from Brighton Dam or from the nearby bridge (there are previous records), but high water prevented examination of the bridge (**SRm**, **MLC**). A **Tufted Titmouse** nest in a box at Elioak Farm, MD 108, held six eggs on 7/3 (**MW**). This was the first active July nest for this species by this decades-long trail monitor.

A **Veery** at Howard Chapel Rd, PRSP 7/20 was present in a known breeding location (**RDg**). **Swainson's Thrushes** are unusual in summer with an occasional late migrant in early June. On 6/7, between midnight and dawn, 11 were heard over Cavey La. This was not only an unusually large number for the date, but a new spring late date (**RRf-NFC**). Eleven **Wood Thrushes** were in good voice along the Cascade Trail, PVSP 6/18 (**ALw**). On 7/27, an almost entirely leucistic (mostly white) **Gray Catbird** was photographed at Centennial (**MLC**, **SRm**). On 6/17, five **Brown Thrashers**, most likely a family group, were counted near the Meadowridge Business Park pond (**DMh**).

An **Ovenbird** was spotted at LKELK 7/8 (**BTw**). **Prothonotary Warblers** are rare county nesters. A silent male in the floodplain south of JNCHR, PRSP, collecting caterpillars and making multiple flights in the same direction, almost certainly was feeding young 6/27 (**AVS**). (This is a new county nesting location.) **Kentuckys** were present at the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area 6/17 (**JHr**), PRSP 6/21 (**JSh**) and 7/6 (**RDg**), and Hugg-Thomas Wildlife Management Area 7/30 (**RDg**). **Hoodeds** continued at PRSP 6/21 (**JSh-2**). **American Redstarts** were reported the first half of June in the Patapsco River Valley, where they are known nesters (**FLv**; **FSh**; **Bsw**; **JHf**; **RDg**). The individuals at LKKIT 6/4 (**EHs**) and at WILLK 6/12 (**EHs**) could have been late migrants. The redstart on 6/25 near Pushcart Way, Oakland Mills (**EHs**) was at an interesting location; no evidence of breeding was observed. Although **Cerulean Warblers** continued to be reported from Marriottsville, PVSP 6/21 (**MLC**, **SRm**) and 6/24 (**FSh**); a report also came from JNCHR, PRSP 6/21 (**JSh 1-2**). PRSP has been a historic nesting location for this species. A **Blackpoll** heard on 6/7 at GATWY (**BHb**) was the third latest spring departure record. **Pines**

*(Records continued on page 5)*

(Records continued from page 4)

continued at GATWY 7/5 (**JW**), a reliable nesting location. **Yellow-throateds** remained at Marriottsville, PVSP 6/24 (**FSh**). They were also noted at Howard Chapel Rd, PRSP 7/20 (**RDg**). **Prairies**, in addition to nesting at Mt. Pleasant, were also present at GATWY 6/2 and 6/25 (**BHb**) and at Schooley Mill Park 6/26 (**JHr**). **Yellow-breasted Chats** were reported by almost everyone who visited Mt. Pleasant. They were also noted at Schooley 6/17 (**JHr**) and LKELK 6/26 (**ALw**).

**Grasshopper Sparrow** nesting habitat has been in decline in the county for decades as farmland has gradually been developed. Underwood Rd continues to host a healthy population. Two of the three locations reported east of MD 32 were rather unexpected: GATWY, where a male sang from 6/15 through the period with no evidence of successful nesting (**BHb**) and Centennial La/MD 108 intersection (Elioak Farm) 6/5 (**SRm-2**). Because the latter site is not a location frequented by on-foot birders, it's possible the birds are present regularly on this farm. The third site, Mt. Pleasant, frequently produces reports of singing birds, including one heard from the parking lot on 7/15 (**KS**).



Grasshopper Sparrow

by Anthony VanSchoor

The last **Blue Grosbeak** at the Peters' feeders was a male on 6/18 (**RPr/RyPr**). **Dickcissels** were again one of the exciting summer species. For the second consecutive year, a small colony returned to one or more fields along Underwood Rd. Birders from throughout the state visited the location to see and hear these locally rare breeders. It was curious to note how dramatically the number of birds reported varied in the course of a single day. Throughout June no juveniles were spotted, although a female carrying food on 6/29 was a good sign (**SRm**). On 7/9, four adults, including a female with food, were noted, as well as multiple begging chips from several field locations (**AVS**). Finally, on 7/17, two juveniles and two adults were spotted (**JHf**) and three fledglings along with four adults were seen on 7/22 (**JHf**). Five were photographed in one large shrubby weed on 7/30 (**MKw**). The Jones family

again leased the field to the Howard County Bird Club during the nesting season. It was an environmentally sensitive action for which we—and the birds—are grateful. Kudos to the individuals who sent donations covering the cost of the lease, and to the birders who made multiple trips to the site to keep track of the breeding cycle (**JHf** and **MKw** were particularly notable).

**Bobolinks** are a continuing source of frustration. The species nests in Carroll Co and there are records close to “safe dates,” with occasional adults reported during the summer. Unfortunately, no evidence of breeding in this county has ever been established. Once again, the last Bobolinks of the spring were reported at Underwood Rd near the end of May (5/28) with no additional reports until 7/17 when four adults were photographed (**MKw**). They continued to be seen there in small numbers until the end of the season, but, again in 2018, there was no evidence of nesting.

**Orchard Orioles** are among the earliest of local breeding species to depart; by the end of July numbers have usually dropped dramatically. On 7/15, eight (including three adults) were seen together at LKELK (**ALw**). Such gatherings of pre-migratory groups are always interesting.

Thanks to Nancy Magnusson, Joe Hanfman, and Howard Patterson for editing assistance and to Russ Ruffing for verifying dates of rarities/records.

**Abbreviations:** GATWY – Gateway Business Park, JNCHR – Jennings Chapel Rd, LKELK – Lake Elkhorn, LKKIT – Lake Kittamaqundi, NFC – Nocturnal Flight Call equipment, ph. – photograph, PRSP – Patuxent River State Park, PVSP – Patapsco Valley State Park, WILLK – Wilde Lake.

**Observers:** **EBr** – Ellen Billiter, **MLC** – Mary Lou Clark, **JCu** – Jeff Culler, **RCu** – Ralph Cullison, III, **RDg** – Ryan Douglas, **SE** – Sue Earp, **WE** – Wes Earp, **WEb** – Ward Ebert, **HFk** – Harry Fink, **KGs** – Kathy Glyshaw, **JHf** – Joe Hanfman, **JHr** – John Harris, **BHi** – Bill Hill, **GHi** – Gayle Hill, **BHb** – Bill Hubick, **EHs** – Ed Huestis, **JKy** – Joyce Kelly, **MKw** – Mike Kerwin, **CKc** – Clayton Koonce, **ALw** – Allen Lewis, **ALk** – Anne Looker, **FLv** – Felicia Lovelett, **DMh** – Dean Mahlstedt, **HMz** – Helen Metzman, **SMu** – Sue Muller, **DNg** – Diane Nagengast, **MO'S** – Michael O'Sullivan, **HPt** – Howard Patterson, **RPr** – Richard Peters, **RyPr** – Ryan Peters, **SPr** – Suzanne Probst, **SRm** – Sarah Romero, **RRf** – Russ Ruffing, **KS** – Kurt Schwarz, **FSh** – Fred Shaffer, **JSh** – Jay Sheppard, **JS** – Jo Solem, **BSw** – Byron Swift, **BTw** – Bill Townsend, **AVS** – Anthony VanSchoor, **Gvi** – Gary Vienna, **MW** – Mark Wallace, **JWd** – Josh Ward, **JW** – Jim Wilkinson, **MWm** – Matt Williams, **SWm** – Silvester Williams.

### LECONTE'S THRASHER

Congratulations to club member Jay Sheppard, whose monograph “The Biology of a Desert Apparition: LeConte's Thrasher (*Toxostoma lecontei*)” has been published. This is the second book in the Western Field Ornithologists monograph series, Studies of Western Birds. For additional details, see:

<https://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/LThrasher/LThrasher.php>

## HOG ISLAND AUDUBON CAMP

Club members Heidi Osterman and Anna Schrad were awarded Maryland Ornithological Society scholarships to the 2018 Hog Island, Maine Audubon Camp. They report on their experiences below.

### Sharing Nature: An Educator's Week

by Heidi Osterman

Thanks to the Maryland Ornithological Society, I spent an informative week in Maine at the Hog Island Audubon Sanctuary. The educators on the island held workshops and field trips to give us their ideas about sharing nature with children, although the activities could be modified for adults.

Marta Campo, from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, shared several games with us to help students think about birds and their environment. "True or False" started with easy statements, such as "All birds lay eggs." Eventually, the questions became more challenging and less clear-cut, such as "Birds can use a small habitat just as well as a large one." The statements were designed to make students think about what birds need. For example, a small area might be OK for a migration stop-over, but birds may not have the resources to nest there. Marta also gave us online resources from Cornell's vast trove of materials.

We learned observational skills from Pete Salmonsohn's memory game. Sound mapping helped us teach students birdsong skills. Craig Newberger and Trudy Phillips led field trips to a tide pool, stream, and bog to identify animals and plants living in these environments.

As with any good sleep-away camp, we sang about nature at night and shared what we learned that day. Steve Kress joined us on Tuesday night to speak about the Puffin Project on Eastern Egg Rock Island. His perseverance inspired us all. A few days later, we had the opportunity to see the puffins for ourselves as we cruised past the island. In addition to the thrill of the puffins, we saw Double-crested Cormorants, Bald Eagles, Common Eiders, Great Blue Herons, Black Guillemots, and several species of terns and gulls. During one of our hikes, we spotted a family of Merlins, complete with noisy fledglings. A mother turkey and her four poults joined us for breakfast every day. Black-throated Green Warblers, Hermit Thrushes and Northern Parulas brightened our hikes with their distinctive songs.

I took home many new ideas to help children and adults learn more about the natural world. Cornell's Bird Sleuth Explorer Guidebook is a fabulous resource to use with children. Journaling, stream investigation, and sustainability workshops can benefit people of all ages. Games that encourage discussion about habitat are valuable tools to help everyone think about how we can ensure the survival of our native flora and fauna. I have already begun to apply some of these techniques at Robinson Nature Center's summer camps, and I look forward to sharing what I have learned with the children and adults of Howard County throughout the year.

### Field Ornithology

by Anna Schrad

First I would like to thank the Maryland Ornithological Society for the scholarship and opportunity to attend a Hog Island Audubon Camp of my choice. I would also like to thank the Howard County Bird Club and specific members, Sue Muller for bringing the scholarship to my attention and Kevin and Karen Heffernan for writing my letter of recommendation.

I attended the Field Ornithology Camp on Hog Island, June 17-22, 2018. What a special and welcoming place Hog Island and its instructors, staff, and volunteers are! I cannot believe how accessible, knowledgeable, friendly, and enthusiastic the instructors were. I was surprised to learn that the individuals who chauffeured us, helped carry our belongings, and welcomed us to the island were all professors and our humble instructors for the week: Angelika Nelson, Sara Morris, Drew Scott, and Scott Weidensaul. Scott was the Camp Director for the week and had planned a busy week of excursions, demonstrations, and evening programs for us.

We started our first evening with a very large round circle introduction as there were approximately 35 adult campers and 15 teen campers on the island that week. After the first of many lovely, locally-sourced meals, Tiffany Huenefeldt presented us with the history of Project Puffin, an effort that began in the 1970s to restore the puffin population on Eastern Egg Rock Island. It has been successful with more than 170 nesting pairs on the island this year. It was during Tiffany's presentation that I learned that many of the techniques that I have seen to attract birds for research and data were first tried on Eastern Egg Rock by Steve Kress! I also learned that seabirds are like the canaries in the coal mines for the oceans. For instance, this year's puffin chicks are developing slower than normal likely related to sea surface temperatures rising. Their main source of food, haddock, seeks out cooler waters, leaving the birds with fewer fish and less nutritional food to eat.

A couple of days after the Project Puffin presentation, we made the voyage to Eastern Egg Rock to see Atlantic Puffins and other seabirds. We stayed on the boat as not to disturb the nests. However, one puffin gave us a close-up as he flew right up to the boat trying to fight a strong wind before turning back to the island. We also saw a few Razorbills, Common Terns, Roseate Terns, Double-crested Cormorants, Black Guillemots, a Northern Gannet, and Common Eiders while on our voyage. I believe the puffins were a life bird and highlight for the majority of the campers.

The week consisted of many more life birds along with other "firsts" for me. Scott, along with one of the many wonderful

## PROGRAMS, ANYONE?

BY JANE GEUDER

The club's program chair position will need a volunteer by the end of this 2018-19 club year. I have enjoyed finding speakers since 1993 and appreciate the support of many club members who gave programs and suggested speakers. I will help make the transition a smooth one. Please contact HCBC President Mary Lou Clark at [doctorfx\\_99@yahoo.com](mailto:doctorfx_99@yahoo.com) or 410-465-4061 if interested.

---

## HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

### PHOTO GALLERIES

BY BOB SOLEM

Sometime in 2006, a group of us were sitting around and came up with the idea of a page on the Howard County Bird Club (HCBC) web site featuring pictures of birds seen and photographed in Howard County. We knew digital cameras were becoming popular among our birders and that some probably had good bird photos taken in Howard County. So we sent out an email to the club members (or at least to those we knew were active bird photographers) asking them to go through their photos and attach one photo (with identifying information: date, location, and photographer) to an email and mail it to the webmaster.

Two hundred responses within a month made us realize that we had enough photos to create a strong nucleus of what we have today. (Find the current photos on the drop-down menu for "Birds" in the "Natural History" section of the main web page. Click "[Photo Gallery](#)." ) The gallery currently has photos, taken in Howard County, for most of the birds seen since the founding of the Howard County Bird Club. The web page is not static, so if you have photos of birds taken in Howard County that you want considered for inclusion, attach them to an email and send them in. It's easy: open the HCBC web page and click "E-MAIL US." But the bird photo gallery was only the start.

The page from Howard County's efforts for the Maryland Amphibian and Reptile Atlas (MARA) was designed and activated in early 2010 (the first year of the atlas). When MARA ended in 2014, we replaced it with [HARA](#) (Howard Amphibian and Reptile Atlas), which continues the same effort and includes all of the previous information as well. As you can imagine, if we could have *two* photo galleries, we should have more.

The [butterfly gallery](#) was activated in November, 2011, prompted by the planning for the the current ongoing butterfly survey and the success of the previous two photo galleries. Then in 2012 the [odonate](#) and [fungi](#) galleries were designed and activated. Additions to all galleries are welcome.

(*Field Ornithology continued from page 6*)

FOHI (Friends of Hog Island) volunteers, provided a bird banding and mist net demonstration for us. We captured a Northern Parula (another life bird) and a Song Sparrow. We also got to listen to the Northern Parula's heartbeat! During a hike of the island, I heard the Winter Wren's beautiful song and saw a Merlin for the first time! Other firsts included Bobolinks, a Hooded Merganser, and a Black-billed Cuckoo at the beautiful Great Salt Bay Farm Wildlife Preserve in addition to a Scarlet Tanager, Black-and-white Warbler, and a Baltimore Oriole nest at Hidden Valley Nature Center, both on the mainland. I learned that not only do owls produce pellets, but so do flycatchers and other birds that cannot digest all of their diet. I also learned that goldfinches feed their young regurgitated seeds which prevents cowbirds from successfully parasitizing their nests. Incredible!



Great Salt Bay Farm Wildlife Preserve

by Anna Schrad

I have only shared the tip of the iceberg when it comes to what I saw, experienced, and learned. If you ever have the opportunity to attend one of the Hog Island Audubon Camps, I highly recommend it. The islands and mainland are beautiful and diverse, the programs are enlightening, the instructors are approachable, and the staff and volunteers do a phenomenal job!

### THE HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS

Andrea Bank  
Vicki Burt  
Stephanie & Michael Davis  
Kristen Gressett  
Daniel Law & Gina Palladina  
Martyn Noss  
Wendy Ormont and Jack Hemler  
Carla Reverse  
Cathy Staropoli  
Trudy Snope  
Matthew & Silvester Williams

### KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR BOREAL SPECIES THIS WINTER

Poor cone and seed crops in areas of Canada may force some finches and other boreal species to fly south for food. Read Ron Pittaway's Winter Finch Forecast at: <http://jeaniron.ca/2018/wff18.htm> .

## SUMMARY OF THE 2018 HOWARD COUNTY FALL COUNT

BY MIKE MCCLURE AND CHUCK STIRRAT

The twenty-fifth annual Howard County Fall Count was conducted on Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018 with the count data shown in the table below. This count has turned out to be below average countywide not only for the number of bird species but also for the number of birds. For the warblers, the species count was near average while the number of individual warblers continued their slow but sure decline.

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, as was the case this year

	Observed Birds Countywide		Observed Warblers Countywide		Statistics
	Species	Birds	Species	Birds	
2018 Numbers	119	10,340	21	366	
High:Low	140 : 108	26,651 : 9,293	30 : 13	1,004 : 130	
Year 's of High : Low	2010 : 2004	1994 : 2004	1994 : 2004	1994 : 2004	
Averages for Birds & Species	124.8	15,525.24	23.44	430.08	
2018 Counters : Parties					51 : 44
Counters : Parties Averages					54.6 : 33.3
2018 Counters Hours : Miles					190.1 : 411.8
Counters Hours : Miles Averages					195.4 : 404.9

Saturday's temperature started at 73° F at 6:00 a.m. with scattered clouds, rising to 87° F in late afternoon. The morning was comfortable-ish (dewpoint: 73° F) at 6:00 a.m. becoming marginally uncomfortable in the late morning and afternoon with the dewpoint rising to 78° F by late afternoon. Winds were calm during the early morning but slowly changed to intermittent 3-6 mph accompanied with the occasional gusts ranging from 8-15 mph.

Plan now to join us on a future seasonal count and, if possible, attend the tally as well. Next year the 2019 Fall Count will be held on the third Saturday of September which will be the 21<sup>st</sup>.

See the table on page 9 for greater detail. A full report of the results can be found at the Seasonal Counts Results page on the club's web site, <http://www.howardbirds.org/howard/counts.htm> .

### 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 15, 2018  
 Allen Lewis  
 7226 Lasting Light Way  
 Columbia, MD 21045  
[allenlewis@gmail.com](mailto:allenlewis@gmail.com)  
 787-590-4501

December 2018 - No meeting

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](mailto:howard21042@verizon.net)

**The Goldfinch**, newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club, is published five times per year. Copy deadline for the January/February 2018 issue is November 25, 2017.

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



## HOWARD COUNTY FALL COUNT RESULTS - SEPTEMBER 15, 2018

Canada Goose	1,526
Wood Duck	40
Mallard	162
Wild Turkey	2
Rock Pigeon	144
Mourning Dove	506
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	4
Black-billed Cuckoo	1
Common Nighthawk	27
Chimney Swift	236
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	34
Killdeer	57
Spotted Sandpiper	4
Solitary Sandpiper	1
Greater Yellowlegs	4
Double-crested Cormorant	12
Great Blue Heron	36
Great Egret	6
Green Heron	28
Black Vulture	173
Turkey Vulture	261
Osprey	14
Bald Eagle [ad/im/unk]	19
Northern Harrier	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3
Cooper's Hawk	5
<i>accipiter species</i>	2
Red-shouldered Hawk	71
Broad-winged Hawk	13
Red-tailed Hawk	18
Eastern Screech-Owl	1
Great Horned Owl	3
Barred Owl	9
Belted Kingfisher	23
Red-headed Woodpecker	11
Red-bellied Woodpecker	178
Downy Woodpecker	107
Hairy Woodpecker	22
Northern Flicker	48
Pileated Woodpecker	44
American Kestrel	9
Merlin	2
Peregrine Falcon	1

Olive-sided Flycatcher	3
Eastern Wood-Pewee	92
Acadian Flycatcher	6
<i>Trail's Flycatcher</i>	1
Least Flycatcher	1
<i>Empidonax species</i>	7
Eastern Phoebe	26
Great Crested Flycatcher	7
Eastern Kingbird	9
White-eyed Vireo	24
Yellow-throated Vireo	5
Blue-headed Vireo	2
Philadelphia Vireo	25
Red-eyed Vireo	96
Blue Jay	512
American Crow	303
Fish Crow	45
<i>crow species</i>	193
Common Raven	7
Horned Lark	32
Carolina Chickadee	114
Tufted Titmouse	109
Red-breasted Nuthatch	7
White-breasted Nuthatch	106
House Wren	17
Winter Wren	1
Carolina Wren	354
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	16
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
Eastern Bluebird	150
Veery	4
Gray-cheeked Thrush	1
Swainson's Thrush	9
Wood Thrush	14
American Robin	204
Gray Catbird	313
Brown Thrasher	19
Northern Mockingbird	81
European Starling	1,557
Cedar Waxwing	65
House Sparrow	308
House Finch	103
American Goldfinch	286

Eastern Towhee	39
Chipping Sparrow	122
Field Sparrow	4
Savannah Sparrow	20
Song Sparrow	42
Lincoln's Sparrow	1
<i>unidentified sparrow</i>	2
Yellow-breasted Chat	2
Bobolink	32
Baltimore Oriole	7
Red-winged Blackbird	37
Brown-headed Cowbird	65
Common Grackle	3
Ovenbird	18
Worm-eating Warbler	2
Blue-winged Warbler	3
Black-&-white Warbler	44
Tennessee Warbler	2
Nashville Warbler	1
Kentucky Warbler	1
Common Yellowthroat	119
American Redstart	51
Northern Parula	8
Magnolia Warbler	16
Blackburnian Warbler	3
Chestnut-sided Warbler	19
Blk.-thrted. Blue Warbler	12
Palm Warbler	1
Pine Warbler	2
Prairie Warbler	4
Blk.-thrted. Green Warbler	7
Canada Warbler	6
Wilson's Warbler	1
<i>warbler species</i>	46
Scarlet Tanager	12
Northern Cardinal	441
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	9
Blue Grosbeak	8
Indigo Bunting	24
<b>Area Total Birds:</b>	<b>10,340</b>
<b>Area Total Species:</b>	<b>119</b>



## HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

*Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society*

**PO Box 1323**

**Columbia, MD 21044**

### **November/December 2018 - Inside This Issue**

Club Meeting	Summer Bird Records
Field Trips	New Member Welcome
LeConte's Thrasher Book	Hog Island Audubon Camp
Winter Finch Forecast	Board Meetings
Fall Count Summary	Winning Photo

**“Willet Fall Asleep”**



Congratulations to Anthony VanSchoor, whose photo “Willet Fall Asleep” won second prize in the Spring Category in the MD Department of Natural Resources photo contest. His photo will appear in a 2019 DNR calendar.