



The Goldfinch

Newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club
 A Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society
www.howardbirds.org



CLUB MEETING - BY JANE GEUDER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Club Meeting	1
Winter Bird Records	1
Field Trips	2
Managing a Rare Bird	2
May Count	6
Board of Directors Meeting ...	6
Mid-winter Count Summary ..	7
New Members	9
Potluck Thanks	10
Birding Basics Class	10

Thursday, May 9, 2019 “Mongolia: Birding in the Footsteps of Genghis Khan,” by Gail Mackiernan. To the naturalist, Gail’s June 2018 trip into immense grasslands, the vast Gobi Desert, wild mountains, and varied wetlands is of great interest. The group recorded about 175 of the planet’s most wanted birds. Gail and Barry are club members. They have traveled on seven continents and have seen more than 6,000 bird species.

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 at 410-465-4061. Website: <http://www.howardcountymd.gov/RobinsonNatureCenter>

WINTER BIRD RECORDS:

DECEMBER 1, 2018 – FEBRUARY 28, 2019

BY JOANNE SOLEM

Birding in Mongolia



by Gail Mackiernan



Oriental Plover

by Tony Quinn

The 2018-19 winter was typical for central Maryland with cold, snow, ice, sleet, fog, rain, a polar vortex, and record heat! And with those dramatic weather changes came a Greater White-fronted Goose, Trumpeter Swans, and Iceland Gulls. The predicted invasion of boreal species entertained many feeder watchers; special species included one Evening Grosbeak and one Common Redpoll.

Five **Snow Geese** were seen and heard over Jamina Downs, E. Col. on 2/19 (EHs). One dark form (blue phase) was spotted in a flock of ~300 Canadas at the Rhine farm, Old Frederick Rd the morning of 2/23 (FSh). Two of the other three reports (1/20; 2/3) were accompanied by photos which, unfortunately, revealed a domestic goose with some Snow characteristics. The third bird (2/4) was seen in flight. The sighting was accompanied by neither a photo nor a detailed description so species could not be determined. Gone are the days when any white goose with Canadas could automatically be considered a Snow. Now it is always necessary to eliminate Ross’s, as well as domestics, when reporting a white goose. A star of the season, a **Greater White-fronted Goose**, was picked out of a flock of ~1,000 **Canada Geese** in a Waterford field along Jennings Chapel Rd on Howard County Mid-winter Count (HCMC) 2/2 (TFe, ph., GKg). A few **Cackling Geese** can be expected each winter. Seven, possibly as many as ten, were at the Springdale Rd

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

SPRING 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.

WESTERN REGIONAL PARK

May 5, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours. Meet at first parking lot on left off Carr's Mill Road entrance. Moderate walking along field edges and woodland trails. Opportunity for warblers, sparrows, thrushes, and flyovers. Facilities available. Leader – Anthony VanSchoor, tonyvanschoor@gmail.com

MAY COUNT

May 11, Saturday. See [article](#) on p. 6.

PATAPSCO SCRUBLAND

May 25, Saturday, 7:30 a.m. (half day). Meet at 735 River Road (up long drive take right-hand split & park by house). Starting in the scrubland, we'll look for warblers, vireos, thrushes, and other edge species. Depending on conditions, we may continue into the woods. Moderate to possibly difficult walking: steep trails with several stream crossings, so wear appropriate footwear. Facilities available. Leader - Felicia Lovelett 301-802-1969 or c5nest@gmail.com

Wildflower Walk

Late April/early May. Date and location to be determined by weather and flowering. Check HCBC website during that period.

Leaders: Bob and Jo Solem, odenata@msn.com

Dick Smith Memorial Butterfly Walk

September 1, Sunday, 10:30 a.m. 2-3 hours. Meet at Elkhorn Garden Plots, Oakland Mills Rd opposite Dasher Ct. Enjoy searching for late-summer butterflies with instruction on their identification. Easy walking on mowed paths around the community garden plots and Elkhorn meadow. We will continue on paved paths and mowed areas near the right-of-way alongside open, flowering, wet meadows and brushy hillsides. Bring close-focus binoculars to view nectaring behavior. Cancelled if raining or overcast. No facilities.

Leader – Linda Hunt, raven10322@hotmail.com

Butterflies: Late spring/summer butterfly trips and workshops will be listed on the HCBC website under Natural History, Butterflies. Questions: Contact Linda Hunt raven10322@hotmail.com or Kevin Heffernan kjheff122@gmail.com

MANAGING A RARE BIRD – EVENING GROSBEAK

BY JOE HANFMAN

In January 2019 an Evening Grosbeak showed up at a private feeder in Howard County. Thanks to Sarah Romero working with the homeowner, the bird club was able to schedule seven visits to the home. The homeowner kept her dogs inside during our planned visits. The Evening Grosbeak was also photographed on the Mid-winter Count. On six of the seven trips the participants were successful in seeing the Evening Grosbeak.

In order to give the greatest number of birders a chance to see the bird and respect the homeowners' wishes, we conducted a slow release. The first step was to issue a Howard County Bird Club Rare Bird Alert. Field trips were scheduled and participants carpooled to the location. The second step was to issue an invitation to everyone on the MD Birding Listserv. Additional field trips were then scheduled. The procedure worked very well with minimal concerns. Thanks go to Bill Hubick for writing the original rare bird procedures, the field trip leaders Mary Lou Clark, John Harris and Kurt Schwarz, and to Sarah Romero for coordinating with the homeowner. We are especially grateful to the home-

owner for allowing us to visit multiple times.

The complete Managing a Rare Bird Procedures can be found at: <https://www.howardbirds.org/howard/>



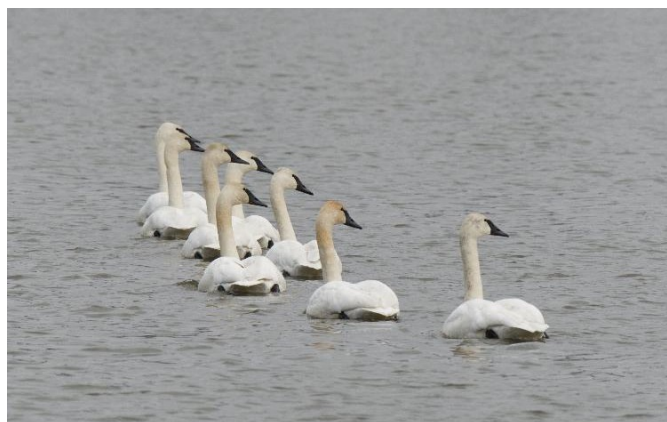
Evening Grosbeak

by Kristin Trouton

(Records continued from page 1)

Quarry (Quarry) 1/22 (**JHf**), one of the all-time high counts. Two were reported on HCMC: one in the same Jennings Chapel Rd field as above (**TFe, GKg**) and one at a pond just west of West Friendship Park (WFRDP) (**RRf**). One was also present at the Rhine farm, Old Frederick Rd 2/23 (**JHf**).

Eight **Trumpeter Swans**, the county's fourth record, were noted on Wilde Lake at 7:00 a.m. on 2/17 (**LGg**). Many birders enjoyed and photographed them that day. The same morning ~9:00 a.m., the fifth record Trumpeter was photographed at Stone Lake (Gorman/Stephens Rd) (**FCg**). On 2/18, just before 9:00 a.m., the Wilde Lake group lifted off, circled a few times, and departed toward the east (**HPt, MLC, BO, RTd, AAI+**). At 6:00 p.m. on 2/19, likely the same eight swans were noted flying over Tenthouse Ct, Anne Arundel Co (**JHw, KRn**). Five **Tundra Swans** were reported from WFRDP 1/2 (**AVS**).



Trumpeter Swans at Wilde Lake

by Kelsey Wellons

Open water at Race Road Wetlands produced a new all-time high of 23 **Northern Shovelers** on 12/18 (**SRm**) [12/26/16 R. Ruffing - 19]. Twenty-six **Gadwalls** were counted there on 2/18 (**MLC, MHR**), 2/22 (**SRm**), and 2/26 (**SRm, MLC**); the species was also reported from Centennial Pk (CENPK), Marriottsville Rd Pd, and the Quarry. Twenty-five **American Wigeon** at the Marriottsville Rd Pd 2/22 (**RRf**) was the season's maximum. **American Black Duck** numbers topped out at 25 at the Quarry 1/6 (**ALw**), often a favored winter location. A flock of 19 **Northern Pintails** over Underwood Rd was unexpected 2/23 (**FSh**). Seven **Green-winged Teal** were present at Race Rd 1/1 (**C&SPr**).

A flock of 23 **Canvasbacks** at the GE Pond, Gateway Business Pk 1/31 (**SRm**) was surprising for a species in which low single digits are the norm. In addition, the last few days of Jan and first week of Feb brought an influx of "Cans" to numerous lakes and ponds, 11 were



The Font Hill Canvasback

by Howard Patterson

counted at CENPK 2/19 (**J&MH**). One at Font Hill Wetland Pk 2/4 was the first for that site (**SMu**). **Red-heads** peaked at 12 at the Quarry 1/31 (**DSn**); one at Forebay Pd 2/19 was at an infrequent location (**JW**). **Greater** and **Lesser Scaup** were present sporadically on the central lakes and the Quarry. Photographs helped to sort out most records, sometimes after vigorous debate. One **Long-tailed Duck** was spotted at CENPK 12/9 (**FSh**); two were photographed there later that day (**HPt, JHf**). A female **Bufflehead** on the river at the



Long-tailed Duck at Centennial Park

by Anthony VanSchoor

Middle Patuxent Environmental Area 1/30 was a new species for that site (**JHr**). **Common Goldeneyes** surprised birders with their scattered presence on ponds and lakes for much of the winter, unlike their usual limited appearances. Wintering waterfowl are often suspected of moving among local bodies of water. This was clearly established by two goldeneyes in a distinctive plumage photographed in a pond behind Lincoln School on Snowden River Pkwy 1/11 (**DZk**). At some point they moved to the GE Pd where they were photographed again on 1/17 (**J&MHR**). The goldeneye high was eight at Lake Elkhorn 2/19 (**TSv**). **Hooded Mergansers** were counted in good numbers with 40 at Lake Elkhorn 12/9 (**KWn**) and 45 at Brighton Dam on HCMC (**BMy, TSt**). Triadelphia Reservoir often hosts

(Records continued on page 4)

(Records continued from page 3)

more **Common Mergansers** than any other state location. Triadelphia Christmas Count on 12/15 tallied 3,000 (**RM**s, **LEt**, **DGI**), eclipsing several previous 2,000+ totals. A verified record of 2,000 from 1/6/13 was established by counting birds in multiple overlapping photos, all taken from the dam (**MKw**) (on that date access to the main portion of the reservoir was not possible). A **Red-breasted Merganser** appeared at CENPK 1/29 (**EH**s). One **Horned Grebe** was spotted at the Quarry on HCMC (**BMy**, **TSt**).

Four **Wild Turkeys** were near a Larriland farm fenceline along Old Annapolis Rd 1/3 (**DNg**). Birders are used to seeing **Rock Pigeons** in the vicinity of barns or under highway overpasses. It was a surprise to find 200 in a parking lot at Gateway Overlook (northwest of MD 175/MD 108) on 1/15, feeding on seed someone had spread (**ESu**). Two **American Woodcock** were displaying at Blandair 2/15 (**AVS**). Two **Wilson's Snipe** were present at the U of MD Farm on HCMC (**MMcC**).

Some unusual gulls were reported from the Jessup area. Two different **Iceland Gulls** were among the noteworthy species: a second-winter bird 1/8 (**RRf**) and a first-winter bird 1/23 and 2/2 (**JHf**). A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** there on 12/12 (**FSh**) was a fine sighting. Even more interesting were two birds in different parts of the county on 1/23: one in second-winter plumage was seen at Jessup (**JHf**); the other was an adult on the ice at CENPK (**DFd**, sketch; **KWn**, ph). The latter bird was not only banded, but it also had a transmitter attached to its back. In March 2018, the Pennsylvania Game Commission had fitted transmitters to nine adult Lesser Black-backs to track them when they left their southeastern PA wintering grounds and moved north to breed. Two **Great Black-backed Gulls** were at Jessup 12/2 (**DCm**); one or two were seen intermittently during much of the season.

Although **Double-crested Cormorants** do not overwinter every year, this winter they were reported with some consistency at the central lakes with the last of the season at Centennial 2/27 (**SRm**, **MLC**). The highs were ~20 at Wilde Lake 12/5 (**SPb**) and 18 on 12/8 at Lake Kittamaquundi (**CKc**). A **Great Blue Heron** at Wilde Lake on 2/21 turned the tables on a gull. A first-winter **Ring-billed Gull** caught a small fish, but before it could swallow its prize the bird found itself being pursued by a Great Blue. Eventually, the gull dropped the fish in open water whereupon the heron dropped onto the water, grabbed the fish, and swallowed it (**J&MHR**). One

wonders if that would have been a successful maneuver had the gull been an adult. What is a **Green Heron** doing in the county in Dec—besides breaking records? Apparently one was still finding food at Lake Elkhorn on 12/17 (**SRm**; then **DSn**), a date more than three weeks beyond the previous late date [11/26/92 J. (Farrell) Coskren].

Several times during the winter **Black Vultures** were reported clustered at a dead deer. The high count was 44 at Mt. Hebron 1/26 (**JCu**). Their specialized bills enable them to efficiently open deer carcasses so other species may feed. Most **Ospreys** have left the state by mid-Nov so any Dec Piedmont sighting is good, though not necessarily a record. One was spotted at the Middle Patuxent Env. Area 12/7 (**JHr**) and again 12/8 (**J&MHR**). **Bald Eagles** were frequently reported with modest highs of nine at Brighton Dam 1/20 (**SRm**, **MLC**) and eight at Fulton 12/24 (**JHr**). After multiple reports since early Dec of one or two eagles near the nest at the U of MD Central Farm, two adults at and on the nest finally verified breeding on 2/19 (**MKw**, ph.). Feeders attract not only seed and suet-eating birds, but sometimes hawks looking for an easy meal. A yard at Stone Hill Dr had both a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** and a **Cooper's Hawk** at the same time on 12/4 (**KLz**)! Fortunately for the feeder birds, the hawks left with empty talons. Warm Dec days kept herps active as illustrated by a **Red-shouldered Hawk** photographed eating a Common Gartersnake at CENPK 12/11 (**HPT**, **KWn**; **BO**).



Red-shouldered Hawk with Garter Snake

by Bonne Ou

One or two **Northern Saw-whet Owls** wintered at Annapolis Rock, but were unusually elusive. Hearing a saw-whet call during the day on 12/11 was a rare treat (**JSh**, **SRm**). The “How to Find an Owl” workshop on 2/23 (**JSh**) attracted an enthusiastic group of searchers

(Records continued on page 5)

(Records continued from page 4)

both morning and afternoon. Although the rain mostly held off and pellets and whitewash were found, owl totals were zero for the a.m. group. The p.m. searchers, however, came up with a single saw-whet (**KGT**). For a summary of this annual trip, go to <https://howardbirds.org/records/fieldtrips/FindingOwls2019Report.pdf>.



Northern Saw-whet Owl pellet with shrew bones by Howard Patterson

After breeding successfully at Fox Chase Wetlands for the second consecutive year, one adult **Red-headed Woodpecker** spent much of the winter there (**JCu**); it was last reported 2/3 (**MO'S**). Four on HCMC tied the high for that count: three were noted in the Patapsco River floodplain west of MD 97 where they have been known to nest (**W&SE**, **KLL**, **BKn**); the fourth was the Fox Chase bird (**J&KCu**). A **Merlin** was photographed at Oakland Mills Middle School 1/5 (**EHs**); at least seven others were reported. Among the **Peregrine Falcons** spotted were singles at Mt. Pleasant 1/1 (**RRf**), Lake Elkhorn 1/3 (**ALw**), WFRDP 1/7 (**BSw**), and Hammond Branch, Fulton 2/24 (**J&MHR**); two were noted over LKELK 2/18 (**TSv**). Two **Eastern Phoebes** were present on HCMC: Fulton (**C&SPR**) and eastern county (**A&ESu**, **SN**).

Several flocks of 150-200 **Fish Crows** were reported, with a high of 400 along US 40 near Bethany La 12/29 (**BO**). This was second only to the 480 at the U of MD

Central Farm 10/20/11 (**BO**). **Common Ravens** are beginning to live up to their name locally as they can be expected in most parts of the county at any time of the year. They are early nesters so all cell towers deserve a second look.

The largest flock of **Horned Larks** was 150 at Underwood Rd 2/20 (**AVS**). One **House Wren** was spotted at the GE Pd 1/19 (**DZk**), and one was at David Force Wildlife Mgmt Area 2/9 (**SJn**). On HCMC, seven **Hermit Thrushes** were counted on a portion of Triadelphia Reservoir (**JWd**), while six were tallied in the Hipsley Mill Rd area (**TFe**, **GKg**). A few **Gray Catbirds** and **Brown Thrashers** managed to survive several cold spells. HCMC produced one catbird at Schooley Mill Pk (**K&KnHf**) and one thrasher at Blandair (**J&MHR**).

The winter finch forecast was largely correct; as a result, many feeder watchers were treated to visits from **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, **Purple Finches**, and **Pine Siskins**. Eight Red-breasted Nuthatches were in the vicinity of the GE Pd 1/19 (**DZk**), while 11 **White-breasted Nuthatches** at the Middle Patuxent Env. Area 2/2 were more than usual (**HPt**, **C&SPR**). The peak Purple Finch flock of 32 visited Duval Rd 1/3 (**KTf**), while a flock of



Purple Finch at Ellicott City Feeder

by Jeff Culler

24 descended suddenly on Hunt Ridge feeders on 2/6 (**CSt**). The siskin maximum was 47 at Mt. Hebron 12/1 (**JCu**). A special treat was a single **Common Redpoll** present briefly at a sunflower feeder in Hammond Village 1/31 (**KOs**). One female **Evening Grosbeak** appeared 1/4 at a Dayton property near Triadelphia Reservoir (**PIIm**). With the consent of the property owner, seven field trips were arranged (**JHf**; leaders **MLC** [5], **JHR**, **KS**), of which six were successful, enabling multiple people to see this occasional visitor (see article p. 2.) The bird was still present into April (**PIIm**).

(Records continued on page 9)

MAY COUNT IS SATURDAY, MAY 11, 2019

BY KEVIN HEFFERNAN

As I write this, we are in the early stages of migration, the time of year when more birds can be found than any other time. We will see more and more species in the coming weeks until the peak in early May. May Count, always the second Saturday in May, is on May 11th this year. For beginning birders, this is an excellent opportunity to be paired with more experienced birders and get to see and hear a number of both residents and spring migrants. Think warblers, vireos, thrushes, shorebirds, etc. The spring migrants are passing through headed north, the summer residents are back, and some of the winter migrants are still around. Over the last ten years across the county, we have tallied an average of 142 species during the May Count. Last year's total was 134.

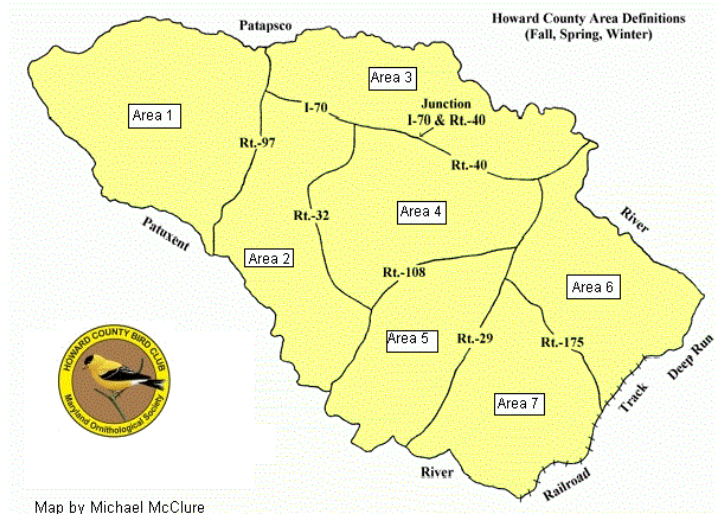
For the count, Howard County is divided into the seven areas shown on the map. Each area has an Area Coordinator (name and phone number listed below) who communicates with the counters, assigns territories, and compiles area results. If you are a beginner, ask to be paired with a more experienced birder. Since the point is to tally every individual bird, extra eyes and ears are helpful. If you want to see a particular species, give me a call (443-668-7618) and I will try to place you in a location where you would have a good chance of seeing that bird.

Area 1	Bill Hill	410-442-5512
Area 2	Steve Parr	301-943-3936
Area 3	Chuck Stirrat	410-531-2417
Area 4	Mike McClure	410-531-2780
Area 5	Karen Heffernan	443-857-1789
Area 6	John Harris	240-755-0183
Area 7	John McKitterick	410-997-3122

At the end of the day, all of the counters are invited to a tally rally at Kathie and Ralph Lillie's house (Note:

this is a change from last year) to share what was seen and come up with the county totals. It is a great opportunity to relax, swap stories of the day, and find out what everyone else has seen. (Directions to Kathie's house will be provided by the area coordinators.) Please call Kathie in advance (301-807-3785) and let her know how many are coming from your party and your choice of food or beverage to bring. Meet at 6:00 to 6:15, dinner will begin at 7 p.m. and the tally will start at 8 p.m.. The completed checklist must be turned in to the area coordinators at the tally rally. If you cannot make it, be sure that your checklist gets delivered or gets called in by 7 p.m. We will find out what rarities were seen and often go out the next day to try to relocate them.

Come join us. This is a great chance for beginning birder's to see many new and beautiful species of birds as they pass through in their spring plumage.



Map by Michael McClure

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 September/October 2019 issue is July 25, 2019.

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

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.

May 23, 2019
Mary Lou Clark
5153 Morningside Lane
Ellicott City, MD 21043
410-465-4061
doctorfx_99@yahoo.com

HOWARD COUNTY MID-WINTER COUNT - FEBRUARY 2, 2018

BY JOE HANFMAN

A cold and mostly sunny day with temperatures 8 to 34° F. The reservoir and ponds were 90% iced over and rivers were partially open. We recorded 96 species which is the highest total ever and seven above the average number of the last 33 years. That new high total bests the 94 species notched in five previous counts. The total number of individual birds was 24,066 which is 26,447 below the average and the second lowest number ever recorded. It is also 140,834 below the maximum number of birds recorded.

Notable birds seen were Greater White-fronted Goose for the second time, Iceland Gull for the fifth time and first time since 1997, and Evening Grosbeak for the seventh time and only the second time since 1991.

All-time high counts were recorded for Double-crested Cormorant (3), Bald Eagle (35), Red-headed Woodpecker (4), Common Raven (9), Pine Warbler (3), Song Sparrow (900), and White-throated Sparrow (2,316).

All-time low counts were recorded for Rock Pigeon (67), Red-tailed Hawk (27), American Crow (897), Carolina Chickadee (95), Tufted Titmouse (130), Northern Mockingbird (78), European Starling (1,203), House Sparrow (180), American Goldfinch (119), Yellow-rumped Warbler (3), and Common Grackle (7).

Fifty-one of the 96 species tallied have been seen on all 33 Mid-winter Counts. Eighty-five of the 96 species tallied have been seen on at least 50% of all 32 Mid-winter Counts.

The birds that have been seen on more than half of the counts but missed this year were Mute Swan (not expected), Tundra Swan, Wood Duck, Northern Pintail, Ruddy Duck, American Coot, Great Black-backed Gull, and Northern Harrier.

Two hundred White-tailed Deer and two Coyote were tallied on count day.

Many people contributed to the success of the day. Fifty-eight observers spent 176.5 hours and covered 132.6 miles on foot and 361.3 miles by car. Another 18.4 hours were spent feeder watching, plus 3.4 hours stationary and 5.0 hours of owling.

Chuck Stirrat updated the taxonomic order, summarized the area worksheets, and provided field and feeder checklists. Area leaders arrange coverage, do follow-up if necessary, and compile area totals. Their names are in boldface below (*anyone who counted in more than one area or also at a feeder is listed just once*). Once again, we thank Karen and Jeff Culler for generously serving as hosts for the tally and welcoming us to their home.

Land permission from Howard County Dept. of Recreation and Parks, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, and many private property owners assure good coverage—we are extremely grateful.

Observers: *Area 1.* **Mark Wallace, Wes Earp**, Jim & Marilyn Brinkley, Lisa Colangelo, Susan Earp, Tom Feild, Brenda Kidera, Geraldine King, Kathie Lillie, Woody Merkle, Mary Prowell, Jay Sheppard, Robin Todd, Lisa Troutman, Bruce Woodward; *Area 2.* **Brian Moyer**, Jeff & Karen Culler, Russell Hillsley, Sarah Romero, Tom Strikwerda; *Area 3.* **Chuck Stirrat**, Joe Hanfman, David Holmes, Steve Jones, Tom Miller, Russ Ruffing, David Sandler; *Area 4.* **Mike McClure**, Annette Allor, Mike Leumas; *Area 5.* **Karen & Kevin Heffernan**, John Greer, Clayton Koonce, Cyndy & Steve Parr, Howard Patterson; *Area 6.* **John Harris**, Mary Lou Clark, Meg Harris, Brigitte Lund, Janet Lydon, Bonnie Ott, Sue Probst, Tim Thompson, Kristin Trouton, Michelle Wright; *Area 7.* **Kurt Schwarz**, Ed Huestis, Anne Looker, John McKitterick, Barry Miller, Sue Muller, Sue Neri, Jo Solem, Michelle Stewart, Eva & August Sunell, Jim Wilkinson.



Great Horned Owl at Rockburn Branch Park on Mid-Winter Count

by Bonnie Ott

Howard County Mid-Winter Count - February 2, 2019

Totals		Totals		Totals	
Greater White-fronted Goose	1	Red-headed Woodpecker	4	Savannah Sparrow	34
Cackling Goose	2	Red-bellied Woodpecker	208	Fox Sparrow	19
Canada Goose	10,362	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	20	Song Sparrow	900
Gadwall	1	Downy Woodpecker	162	Swamp Sparrow	53
American Wigeon	1	Hairy Woodpecker	27	White-throated Sparrow	2,316
Mallard	254	Northern Flicker	78	White-crowned Sparrow	31
American Black Duck	16	Pileated Woodpecker	48	Dark-eyed Junco	1,038
Green-winged Teal	1	American Kestrel	3	Eastern Meadowlark	2
Canvasback	23	Eastern Phoebe	2	Red-winged Blackbird	270
Redhead	9	Blue Jay	411	Brown-headed Cowbird	73
Ring-necked Duck	75	American Crow	897	Rusty Blackbird	31
Lesser Scaup	1	Fish Crow	295	Common Grackle	7
Bufflehead	12	<i>crow species</i>	633	<i>blackbird species</i>	23
Common Goldeneye	5	Common Raven	9	Pine Warbler	3
Hooded Merganser	70	Horned Lark	51	Yel.-rump'd (Myrtle) Warbler	3
Common Merganser	5	Carolina Chickadee	95	Northern Cardinal	573
Wild Turkey	12	Tufted Titmouse	130	Area Total Birds:	24,066
Pied-billed Grebe	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	14	Area Total Species:	96
Horned Grebe	1	White-breasted Nuthatch	157	Supplemental Data	
Rock Pigeon	67	Brown Creeper	12	Time Start:	4:30 a.m
Mourning Dove	364	Winter Wren	15	Time Stop:	10:45 p.m
Killdeer	3	Carolina Wren	249	Hours on Foot:	132.6
Wilson's Snipe	2	Golden-crowned Kinglet	9	Hours by Car:	43.9
Ring-billed Gull	281	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	3	Miles on Foot:	164.6
Herring Gull	27	Eastern Bluebird	204	Miles by Car:	361.3
Iceland Gull	1	Hermit Thrush	19	Hours Feeder Watching:	18.4
Double-crested Cormorant	3	American Robin	710	Hours Stationary:	3.4
Great Blue Heron	17	Gray Catbird	1	Hours "Owling":	5.0
Black Vulture	284	Brown Thrasher	2	Miles "Owling":	11.3
Turkey Vulture	218	Northern Mockingbird	78	Deer Seen:	200
Bald Eagle	35	European Starling	1,203		
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	Cedar Waxwing	35	Tot. Field Obs. in Area:	58
Cooper's Hawk	12	House Sparrow	180	Tot. Field Parties in Area:	63
<i>accipiter species</i>	3	Evening Grosbeak	1	Tot. Feederwatches in Area:	2
Red-shouldered Hawk	73	House Finch	140	Tot. Feeder Parties in Area:	2
Red-tailed Hawk	27	Purple Finch	12	Total Observers in Area:	60
<i>buteo species</i>	2	Pine Siskin	8	Total Parties in Area:	65
Eastern Screech-Owl	1	American Goldfinch	119	Tot. Field Pty-Hrs (Reg.):	176.5
Great Horned Owl	6	Eastern Towhee	71	Total Party-Hrs (Feeder):	18.4
Barred Owl	3	American Tree Sparrow	5	Tot. Pty-Hrs (Stationary):	3.4
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1	Chipping Sparrow	16	Total Party-Hrs (Owling):	5.0
Belted Kingfisher	6	Field Sparrow	62	Total Party-Hours:	203.3

Yellow = birds not usually seen on Mid-Winter Count

(Records continued from page 5)

An **American Pipit** was present at Duvall Rd 2/21 (EHs), and one was noted at Underwood Rd 2/23 (FSh). A **Lapland Longspur**, potentially one of the season's special birds, was reported in a flock of 30 Horned Larks in a field at WFRDP 1/5 (AVS). Dim lighting precluded a photograph or the kind of views essential for a detailed description. On 1/12, one was reported along the same site's entrance lane, perhaps the same bird with slightly different details noted (MO'S). With a species seen as infrequently in the county as this one is, it is necessary to provide as complete a description as possible, especially if no photograph is obtained.

A few **American Tree Sparrows** wintered at Mt. Pleasant, as expected. More surprising were one east of Brighton Dam on HCMC (BMy, TSt) and one upstream from Marriottsville Rd at the Patapsco River 2/28 (JW). **Chipping Sparrows** were spotted at a minimum of six sites. Twenty-four **Field Sparrows** were tallied on the Jan 1st field trip at Mt. Pleasant (KS+) and 20 were counted at the GE Pd 1/19 (DZk). Twenty-eight **White-crowned Sparrows** at a farm on Roxbury Rd on HCMC were the winter's high (MW). A recognized variant of the **Dark-eyed Junco**, sporting white wing bars reminiscent of a **White-winged Junco**, was photographed at a Dark Hawk Cir, E. Col. feeder 12/20; it continued through 2/4-5 (MO'S, ID MHf; JHf). A leucistic junco (white head) was spotted at Lake Kittamaqundi 12/16 (JHr); it was last seen there 2/20 (CKc).

Eastern Meadowlarks did well with 18 at Western Reg. Pk 12/6 (SRm), 18 at WFRDP 1/17 (AVS), and 11 at Mt. Pleasant 1/19 (J&Mhr, SRm). An immature male **Baltimore Oriole** was present at Crest Lawn Memorial Gardens 1/8-1/22 (JCu, ph.). **Rusty Blackbirds** have traditionally been difficult to locate in the county in winter. HCMC, however, logged 31, the second highest total ever for that count. Thirty of them were at or near Waterford Farm (MW), while a single bird was west of MD 97 near the Patapsco River (W&SE, KLI, BKr).

Yellow-rumped Warblers were in short supply; on the other hand, up to four **Pine Warblers** spent most of the early winter at Crest Lawn (JCu, ph.), and one appeared intermittently much of the winter at feeders in the Brush Run/Lake Elkhorn area (JW; ALw+).

Thanks to Joe Hanfman and Nancy Magnusson for proofing assistance and to Russ Ruffing for verifying records.

Abbreviations: CENPK – Centennial Park, HCMC – Howard County Mid-winter Count, 2/2, ph. – photograph, Quarry - Springdale Rd Quarry, WFRDP - West Friendship Park.

Observers: AAl – Annette Allor, FCg – Fei Cheng, MLC – Mary Lou Clark, JCu – Jeff Culler, KCu – Karen Culler, DCm – David Cummings, SE – Sue Earp, WE – Wes Earp, LET – Lou Etgen, TFe – Tom Feild, DFd – Diane Ford, LGg – Lynn Monk Gallagher, DGI – Doug Gill, MHf – Matt Hafner, JHf – Joe Hanfman, JHr – John Harris, MHR – Meg Harris, KnHf – Karen Heffernan, KHf – Kevin Heffernan, JHw – Joanne Howl, EHs – Ed Huestis, PIm – Patty Immateo, SJn – Steven Jones, MKw – Mike Kerwin, BKr – Brenda Kidera, GKg – Geraldine King, CKc – Clayton Koonce, ALw – Allen Lewis, KLI – Kathie Lillie, KLz – Kathy Litzinger, RMs – Rich Mason, MMcC – Mike McClure, BMy – Brian Moyer, SMu – Sue Muller, DNg – Diane Nagengast, SN – Sue Neri, KOs – Karen Osteen, MO'S – Michael O'Sullivan, BO – Bonnie Ott, CPr – Cynthia Parr, SPr – Steve Parr, HPt – Howard Patterson, SPR – Suzanne Probst, KRn – Kenneth Ranson, SRm – Sarah Romero, RRF – Russ Ruffing, DSn – David Sandler, KS – Kurt Schwarz, FSh – Fred Shaffer, JSh – Jay Sheppard, CSt – Chuck Stirrat, TSt – Tom Strikwerda, TSv – Tim Sullivan, ASu – August Sunell, ESu – Eva Sunell, BSw – Byron Swift, RTd – Robin Todd, KGT – Kristin Gressitt Trouton, KTF – Kate Tufts, AVS – Anthony VanSchoor, MW – Mark Wallace, JWd – Josh Ward, KWn – Kelsey Wellons, JW – Jim Wilkinson, DZk – David Ziolkowski.



Pine Warbler at Crest Lawn Memorial Gardens

by Jeff Culler

THE HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS

Robyn Evans & Mark Kratz
Pam & Mike Perna
Bud Poole
Stan Smith
Jim Tomlin & Cindy Walczak
Kelsey Wellons
Jing Yen & Jia-xu Zhou



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

P. O. BOX 1323

COLUMBIA MD 21044-1323



May/June 2019 - Inside This Issue

Club Meetings	Winter Bird Records
Field Trips	Managing a Rare Bird
May Count	Board Meetings
Mid-Winter Count Summary	New Members
Potluck Thanks	Birding Basics Class

POTLUCK THANKS

BY KATHIE LILLIE

The weather was warm and the flowers were beginning to bloom in time for the 2019 Annual Potluck Dinner, held on March 30th in the auditorium of the Robinson Nature Center. We had 44 people in attendance, including several staff from the Nature Center, 13 photo presenters, and a veritable feast of food. We'd like to thank the RNC staff for arranging the tables and chairs for us, which is much appreciated. Many thanks to the people who generously assisted with set-up and take-down, and special thanks to John Harris, as laptop wrangler, for psychoanalyzing the audio-visual system in time for the important after-dinner slide show. Thank you all for the sharing and camaraderie!

BIRDING BASICS CLASS



by Audrey Suhr

On Saturday, March 9, 2019, a three-hour Birding Basics class was held at Mt. Pleasant. It was co-sponsored by the Howard County Bird Club and the Howard County Conservancy. Covering a variety of topics geared to the new or inexperienced birder were John Harris, Kevin Heffernan, Allen Lewis, Chuck Stirrat, and Jo Solem. Woody Merkle provided the introductions, transitions, and time-keeping. In the above photo, Allen presents material illustrating one aspect of identification. An optional field trip was held on Saturday, March 16, 2019 at Wilde Lake.