



The Goldfinch

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



CLUB MEETINGS - BY SUE MULLER

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Thursday, September 12, 2019 “Farmland Raptor Nest Box Project in Montgomery and Frederick Counties” by Suzanne Shoemaker, Director, Owl Moon Raptor Center. Populations of farmland raptors have been declining nationwide in recent years due to habitat loss as farmland is developed. In an effort to stem the decline, Owl Moon Raptor Center initiated a nest box project in spring of 2011, installing American Kestrel and Barn Owl nest boxes in Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve. This presentation will discuss how the project got started, how it has grown over the years, and the rewarding results.

Thursday, October 10, 2019 “North on the Wing—Travels with the Songbird Migration of Spring” by Bruce M. Beehler, Ph.D. Naturalist and ornithologist Bruce Beehler will recount his hundred day 2015 field trip following the spring migration of songbirds from the coast of southeastern Texas up the Mississippi and into the boreal forests of northern Ontario. His presentation touches on wildlife, nature conservation, migration research, American history, and rural culture.

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>

Bay-breasted Warbler



Kristin Trouton photographed this stunning breeding-plumage bird at her home in Turf Valley on May 8th—and it was a life bird for her!

PRESIDENT’S WELCOME

Welcome to the beginning of the 48th year of the Howard County Bird Club. This birding year is going to be a special one as the state begins the data collection necessary for the Third Maryland and D.C. Breeding Bird Atlas. Beginning in 2020 and extending for the next five years, data will be collected on every bird which breeds in Maryland and D.C. Comparing this information to the preceding bird atlases, we will see where the changes in bird populations are occurring. This valuable data will help us evaluate the kinds of effects climate change is having on our state. Also, it will help the state to make informed decisions on which land to develop and where growth needs to be managed. I encourage all of you to participate in this important endeavor. You don’t have to be an expert birder in order to participate. The seasons when you will be collecting data will mostly be in the spring and summer as birds migrate back to our region, begin to make nests, and raise young. This is truly a citizen science effort.

Mary Lou Clark

FALL FIELD TRIPS BY JOE HANFMAN

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

DICK SMITH MEMORIAL BUTTERFLY WALK

September 1, Sunday, 10:30 a.m. 2-3 hours. *Meet at Elkhorn Garden Plots, Oakland Mills Rd opposite Dash-er 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, flowery, 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

MIDDLE PATUXENT ENVIRONMENTAL AREA

September 5, Thursday, 7:30 a.m. Half day. *Meet at the Clegg Meadow off South Wind Cir, Columbia, MD 21044.* Moderate walking on wooded trails and along the river. Great area for migrants of all species. Field edges and thickets provide sparrow habitat. If time and birds warrant, we will also do the Trotter Rd. Loop. Prepare for wet grass and mud on the trails. No facilities.

Leader – John Harris, jaybee.harris@gmail.com, 843-592-4051

ROCKBURN BRANCH PARK

September 8, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. Half day. *Meet in parking lot on the left just past the restored schoolhouse. The park gate is just beyond Rockburn Elementary School.* Moderate walking through the woods and fields of our largest county park looking for migrants. Paths may be muddy. Facilities available.

Leaders – Karen and Kevin Heffernan, KJHeff@aol.com, 410-418-8731

HOWARD COUNTY CONSERVANCY (HCC) AT MT. PLEASANT FARM

September 11, Wednesday, 7:30 a.m. Half day. *Meet at parking lot.* Easy walking through the fields of Mt. Pleasant Farm. Treelines, hedgerows, and streams provide opportunity for non-meadow species. Great opportunity for flyovers. Facilities available. Leader – Warren Cummings, wccummings9@gmail.com, 410-925-1809

HOWARD COUNTY CONSERVANCY (HCC) AT MT. PLEASANT SKYWATCH

September 19, Thursday, 9:30 a.m. Half day. *Meet at the Chandler S. Robbins SkyWatch which is just north-west of the barn.* This trip will be a hawkwatch for

migrating raptors. Bring water, lunch, hat, sunscreen, light-colored sunglasses, comfortable lawn chair (recliners are best; benches are available), binoculars, scope, and camera if you like. Participants can also walk the Conservancy trails if skywatching proves non-productive. Facilities available.

Leader – Russ Ruffing, ruff2@verizon.net

FALL COUNT

September 21, Saturday. See article on [page 10](#). Please go to the following link to sign up. <http://howardbirds.org/howard/counts.htm>

BLANDAIR PARK NORTH

September 28, Saturday, 7:30 a.m., 2-3 hours. *Meet at the south end of Summer Hollow Ln, Columbia.* Walk the trails along scrubland and woods looking for migrants. No facilities, boots recommended. Leader – Anthony VanSchoor, tonyvanschoor@gmail.com

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND OPEN HOUSE BIG SIT

October 5, Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. *Meet just outside of the front lawn tent on the University Farm on Folly Quarter Rd.* The club will once again hold an informal Big Sit. All are welcome to bring a chair and skywatch or interact with the farm's visitors at the club's booth. Stop by any time it is convenient. Leader – Mary Lou Clark, doctorfx_99@yahoo.com

LAKE ELKHORN

October 12, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. 2-3 hours. *Meet at Dockside parking lot.* Easy walking along the lake and to Forebay Pond. Late migrants will be moving through. The lake can turn up interesting surprises. Hawks are also possible flying over. No facilities.

Leader – Allen Lewis, allenlewis@gmail.com

WEST FRIENDSHIP PARK

October 13, Sunday, 7:45 a.m. *Meet at shopping center just west of Rt. 32 and Rt. 144.* Will carpool to nearby park. Moderate walking along field edges and through stream valleys. Small ponds may have some surprises. Expect wet areas. Rustic facilities. Leader – Jeff Culler, cullerfuls@hotmail.com, 410-465-9006

SPARROW IDENTIFICATION TIPS

October 19, Saturday, half day. Limit ten people. Search the wetland and dry fields in this intensive search for as many sparrows as possible. Going for 12

(Field Trips continued on page 3)

(Field Trips continued from page 2)

species! Previous years have turned up non-sparrow rarities! Expect difficult walking for most of the day. Knee boots a must. Facilities at some spots. Contact Bonnie Ott, sparrowdamsel@gmail.com, 443-285-3302 to sign up and get info.


CENTENNIAL PARK


November 3, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours. (Daylight Saving Time ends). *Meet at the west end parking lot off Centennial Lane.* Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Early waterfowl, lingering migrants likely. Facilities available. Leaders – Richard and Renee Peters, Richard@rrrrpeters.org

SHARPS AT WATERFORD FARM

November 9, Saturday 8:00 a.m. Half day. *Meet at farm parking area, through barns on right. Rte. 97 S. to right on Jennings Chapel Rd, 1 mile to right into farm at sign.* Moderate walking over crop stubble, farm roads, and paths on this working farm. Fields with crop residue, extensive woodlands, Cattail Creek and floodplain, three ponds, and five shallow waterfowl impoundments make for diverse habitats and good birding opportunities. Port-a-pots available. Knee-high waterproof footwear is advisable for part of hike.

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

 = Reservation required

 = Great for beginning birders

 = Wheelchair accessible

IN MEMORIAM

Nancy Magnusson, a forty year member of the Howard County Bird Club, died on July 26th after a long bout with cancer. Nancy was a birder, a naturalist, and an environmentalist and loved learning about nature.

In accordance with her wishes, there was no memorial service. If you wish to make a contribution in her memory, please consider the Maryland Biodiversity Project (www.marylandbiodiversity.com).

A more detailed tribute can be found on the Howard County Bird Club website at

<https://www.howardbirds.org/about-us/nancy-magnusson-memorial.pdf>.

BIRD SEED SALE

BY WARD EBERT

Our annual seed sale will be held on Saturday, October 5th, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Wildlife Authority at 3275 Bethany Lane, just off Route 40. You will have the option to pick up your order any day through the following Saturday if you are unable to do so on the 5th. Please visit their website, www.wildlifeauthority.com, for a map and more information.

Around the first or second week of September an order form will sent by email and will be available on the Howard County Bird Club website. You must prepay and use this form for the lower seed sale prices. Jeff Friedhoffer will be compiling the orders and for your convenience he can also take membership forms and payments as well as separate donations for habitat (tax deductible). Jeff will send an email acknowledgment upon receipt of your order if you include a legible email address. Non-members are eligible to participate as well – so get the word out to your neighbors!

Net proceeds from the seed sale will be contributed to conservation causes. See our website for a list of locations and organizations benefited by your support.

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.

September 26, 2019

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

October 24, 2019

Clayton Koonce
5587 Vantage Point Road
Columbia, MD 21044
410-992-1376
cg.koonce@verizon.net

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

Howard Patterson, Editor
4209 Hermitage Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21042-6235
howard21042@verizon.net

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

SPRING BIRD RECORDS: MARCH 1 – MAY 31, 2019

BY [JOANNE SOLEM](#)

Although lacking major migrant fallouts, spring 2019 produced an unusual variety of notable species. Trumpeter Swan, Eastern Whip-poor-will, King Rail, and Whimbrel were seasonal stars. Sandhill Crane, Dunlin, Short-billed Dowitcher, Least Bittern, Mississippi Kite, Clay-colored Sparrow, Golden-winged Warbler, and Dickcissel were other noteworthy species. Nesting by both Hooded Merganser and Barn Owl contributed to this standout season.

Canada Goose migration peaked on 3/13 with multiple high-flying flocks day and night. In an unusual arrangement, a Canada Goose and a **Mallard** built nests only six feet apart near a stream along Plumtree Path in early April (AAI). Eggs were laid in both nests, but the geese dominated the scene (one was even observed briefly on the Mallard nest). Because the nests were not far from a fox den, it was no surprise to find both nests predated on 4/13 (AAI). Large waterfowl clutches, however, help balance losses. Elsewhere, twelve ducklings accompanied a pair of Mallards at a pond on Stayton Dr 4/28 (SN).

Although **Trumpeter Swans** are neither regular nor predictable in the county, sightings have increased the last few years. Two arrived at Lake Kittamaquidi (LKKIT) the early morning of 4/6 (CKc) and stayed all day, the county's sixth record. At ~6:45 p.m., they took off, circled, and headed north (C/SPr, AVS, ph.). At 6:55 p.m., two swans dropped in at Centennial Pk (DZk, ph.). Time stamps on photos and texts made it possible to verify that the two arriving birds were the LKKIT swans. Good-sized flocks of **Tundra Swans** were counted at Fox Chase 3/8 (JCu-60) and at Brush Run, E. Col. 3/12 (JW-200).

Wood Ducks nested successfully including a female with 11 downy ducklings at MPEA 5/3 (JHr); a shy hen with five young was at Font Hill Wetland Pk 5/27 (HPT). **Blue-winged Teal** were noted intermittently from a male at a Triadelphia Mill Rd pond 3/9 (MKw) to two pairs at Lake Elkhorn (LKElk) 4/24 (ALw). A **Gadwall** count of 39 at Race Road Wetlands 3/9 (AVS) was the season's high. A male **Northern Pintail** was spotted at the same site 3/8 (RRf). A few **Greater Scaup** were carefully identified. Unexpected was one on a small pond at Crest Lawn Memorial Gardens 3/7 (JCu, JHf, ph.). Twelve **Redheads** rested on Waverly Pond 3/9 (RRf), a first for that location. A late Redhead, capable of flight, continued from April past the end of the spring season at a pond along Nichols Dr (MW). Local breeding records for **Hooded Mergansers** are few, so a female with six small young in the river at the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA) 4/26 (CSt, HPT, ALw, DSn, ph.) was exciting. A minimum of at least eight flocks of **Long-tailed Ducks** were picked up over Cavey La 4/4 (RRf-Night Flight Call [NFC] equipment). A late movement of **Buffleheads** included a female at

Wilde Lake 5/4 (KMk, ph.) (still present at end of spring season), a male at LKKIT 5/15 (CKc), and a female at Waterford Farm, Jennings Chapel Rd 5/19 (SRm, MLC+). Three **Red-breasted Mergansers** were tallied at Brighton Dam 3/7 (JSh); four spent time at LKELK 3/22 (DSn). A male **Ruddy Duck** on LKKIT 5/16 (CKc, ph.) showed up near the end of waterfowl migration.



Hooded Mergansers at MPEA

by David Sandler

Wild Turkeys wandered almost countywide. They were notched as a new yard bird at Martin Rd, W. Col. 4/13 (JHf), appeared at Roxbury Mill Rd 3/30 and 4/10 (KLI) after a 20-year absence, and were spotted in a Timberleigh yard 3/6 (DNg). The mystique of turkey-calling with a device may be overrated after hearing that Sarah Romero, using voice only, carried on a conversation with a bird at Schooley Mill Pk 5/22 (SRm, MLC).

A **Pied-billed Grebe** was noted on Fulton Pond 5/4 (SRm). (There are at least 18 May records.) A few **Horned Grebes** appeared in March on central lakes. One, on a pond at Howard Community College 4/6 (WMk), was at a new location. A **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** at Atholton Pk 5/5 (EHs) lived up to its folk name "Rain Crow," calling continuously on a dark, rainy day. **Black-billed Cuckoo** reports began with one at Cavey La 4/27 (RRf), but most arrived in late May. **Common Nighthawk** migration was disappointing with no major flights. **Eastern Whip-poor-wills** were once a scarce but regular nesting species; now they are detected only irregularly in migration. One called for 10 minutes at Duval Rd the evening of 4/23 (KtF, audio); another was heard along Hipsley Mill Rd 5/4 (BKr). Both birds were on private property. A **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** was on a nest at Marriottsville (MARPV), Patapsco Valley State Park (PVSP) 5/27 (MLt, ph.).

A nice variety of rail species flew over Cavey La at night: a **King** on 5/25 for the eighth county record, the season's only **Virginia** on 4/30, and a **Sora** on 4/20 (all RRf-NFC). One Sora

(Records continued on page 5)

was heard along Folly Quarter Rd 4/30 (RRf, JHr, SRm); the species was last noted there 5/8 (AVS). An **American Coot** on LKKIT 3/28 (LGg, ph.) was one of the few this season. A **Sandhill Crane** was spotted over 10002 Old Frederick Rd 4/4 (J/MHr). There are at least a dozen county records with an increasing number of sightings the last two years.

Birders found local shorebird migration relatively dull as high water levels reduced habitat. A flyover **Semipalmated Plover** was heard at Norris La the evening of 4/30 (DZk); three were at a muddy pond edge at Old Frederick Rd 5/16 (RRf, JHr, SRm). A **Dunlin** was also spotted at that site 5/14 (RRf); it was reported intermittently to 5/16 (DCm). A **Least Sandpiper** lingered until 5/30 at LKELK (DSn) for the second latest record. The high count for **Wilson's Snipe** was 30 at Alpha Ridge Landfill 4/30 (JHf, JHr+). **American Woodcock** displays continued into mid-March with a high of eight at Hip-sley Mill Rd 3/9 (RHI+); two were at Western Regional Park 3/11 and 12 (PPn). Eight **Solitary Sandpipers** at MARPV 4/29 (AVS) was an unusual number for the river. Most of the spring's outstanding shorebird records were established with NFC equipment at the Cavey La station (RRf): **Dunlin** 5/16, **Semipalmated Sandpiper** 5/17, the county's second and third **Whimbrel** records 5/23 and 5/25, and two **Short-billed Dowitchers** 5/16 (there are fewer than 20 records).

Nine **Bonaparte's Gulls** graced Duckett Reservoir at Supplee La 4/1 (DCm); the last one was seen over Coca-Cola Dr 4/10 (DSn). A **Caspian Tern** at Centennial 4/3 (MO'S) was the first of the season.

American Bitterns turned up at five locations beginning with one over Cavey La 3/5 (plus six other nights in March and April) (RRf-NFC). Singles were reported from MPEA 3/29 (JHr), Meadowbrook Park 4/2 (MLC, SRm), Mt. Pleasant 4/13 (DCm) with intermittent reports till 5/9 (JHf), and Belmont 5/11 (SPb). In normal wetland habitat, it may be years between **Least Bittern** records. NFC equipment at Cavey La, however, picked up one the night of 5/8 and another on 5/17 (RRf). At least 24 active **Great Blue Heron** nests were counted at Vantage Point 3/27 (JS, ALk). The sole **Glossy Ibis** of the season was present along the Patapsco River at a farm one-quarter mile east of Morgan Station Rd on 5/11 (W/SE, ph.).

On 4/24, 20+ **Black Vultures** were feeding on a deer carcass along Old Frederick Rd, just west of Underwood Rd. One had a red wingtag with C26 visible. The response from the Bird Banding Laboratory indicated that the bird had been banded 11/1/18 in Martinsburg, WV and was believed to have hatched in 2016 or before (KS). **Ospreys** were widely reported all season. It is possible that there were several pairs nesting in the county, although the only verified nest was on a relay tower along Murphy Rd 5/21 (HMz). An Osprey carrying nesting material was spotted at MD 216/Leishear Rd 4/5 (KCK); another with a stick was flying west over Fulton 5/17 (J/MHr). The last **Sharp-shinned Hawks** appeared at the end of their expected migration: Centennial Pk 5/14 (BO, HPT-1)

and Stansfield Rd 5/16 (DHs-1). Numerous **Bald Eagles** attracted attention. Last year's damaged nest at the U of MD Farm appeared to have been repaired; adults were seen on the nest 5/18 (SRm, MLC).

The county benefited from the movement of **Mississippi Kites** into Maryland during the last half of May. One was noted over Blandair at 6:45 p.m. on 5/19 (AVS, ph.); at 8:00 p.m.



Mississippi Kite at Blandair by Anthony VanSchoor

the same evening, one was flying over US 29/MD 108 (AVS). The following day at 10:45 a.m. a distant one was spotted at Font Hill Wetland Park (DSn). One was being chased across Guilford Rd in Kings Contrivance by two crows at 6:15 p.m. on 5/24 (TFe). The fifth and final bird flew over Atholton Pk at 9:20 a.m. on 5/27 (JHf). Nesting **Red-shouldered Hawks** are found countywide. Often, more than one nest is verified from sites such as Centennial Pk or LKELK; less frequently, people report them from their own or nearby yards as was the case at Timberleigh 3/14 (DNg) and at Dark Hawk Cir,



Red-Shouldered Hawk Nestlings

by Kristin Trouton

E. Col 4/8 (**MO'S**). An adult demonstrated an effective hunting technique in the wetland east of LKELK 4/28. The hawk flew low flushing a hen Mallard from her eight ducklings. "Moments later the hawk was seen flying with one of the ducklings in its talons" (**J/MHr**). There was no question when **Broad-winged Hawk** migration began. On 4/16, they were spotted over Cavey La (**RRf-37**, the season's high), Sky-Watch at Mt. Pleasant (**SRm-4**), Burleigh Manor (**MKw-2**), Centennial Pk (**JHf-1**), and MPEA (**JHr-1**). On 4/24 at the SkyWatch, 35+ streamed over (**BO**).

Barn Owls are a special species, not only because they are scarce in the county and nesting is rare, but, even when present, they are often hard to detect. Flyovers at Cavey La were picked up on 3/13 and 4/2 (**RRf-NFC**). A report was received in early June detailing a late winter/early spring nesting in which five young fledged in a decrepit shed (now demolished) along Old Hopkins Rd (*fide MW*). A **Great Horned Owl** was on a nest at High Ridge Pk 3/14 (**SMu**). A Great Horned at a distance of six feet in a small tree in a W. Friendship yard 3/23 was a closer-than-expected encounter (**LCg**). Two branching **Barred Owls** at Gwynn Acres Path 5/14 (**BO**, ph.) established one of the earliest county nesting records for this species; one of the fledglings was hissing along the same trail on 5/26 (**TRy**). Barred Owls also nested at Duval Rd with young heard 5/3 (**KTf**), and three recently fledged young were noted in Kings Contrivance 5/28 (**TRy**).



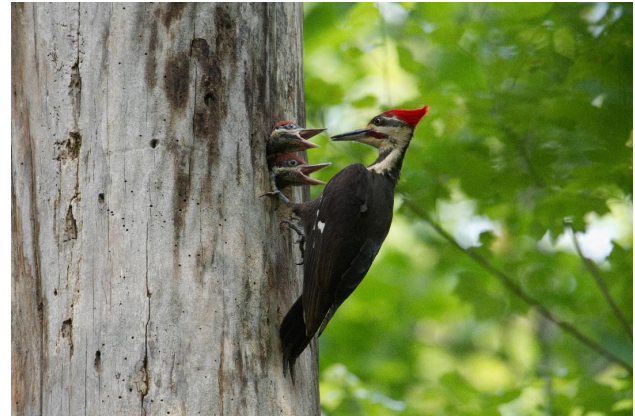
Juvenile Barred Owl

by Bonnie Ott

The last **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was at Annapolis Rock 3/2 (**CRM**).

Red-headed Woodpeckers were well-reported with sightings at Martin Rd, W. Col. (**JHf** 3/6-4/25), MPEA (**JHr**), Warfields Pond Pk (**BHi**), Waterford (**WE+**), and Western Regional. Pk (**KS**). Although two were spotted at Fox Chase on 3/20 (**MKw**), during the rest of the season just one was seen with no evidence of nesting (**JCu+**). The last **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was noted at LKELK 5/1 (**ALw**). Since **Northern Flickers** are all too often evicted from their nest cavities by **European Starlings**, a photo of both species nesting in the same snag at Font Hill Wetland Pk (**KWn**) was welcome. **Pileated Woodpeckers** again nested successfully in the floodplain at the Robinson Nature Center (**KWn**).

The last **Merlins** were present at Cavey La 5/9 (**RRf-1**) and at Blandiar 5/10 (**EHs-1**). Two **Peregrine Falcons** flew over Cavey La together on 3/10 (**RRf**, ph.). A Peregrine, reported from a tower at the east end of LKELK 1/3 (**ALw**), may have wintered undetected in the vicinity until 3/18 when one was noted on a tower near Oakland Mills Rd (**M/JHr**, ph.).



Pileated Woodpecker, feeding young

by Kelsey Wellons

The season's lone **Olive-sided Flycatcher** used a high perch along Daniels Rd 5/22 (**AVS**, ph.). Not all **Alder Flycatchers** can be identified. Even if they are heard clearly, there may be variations that sound much like **Willows**. Two calling Alders were picked out this spring: one at Waterford on 5/16 (**RRf**, audio, **JHr**, **SRm**) and one in the scrublands along River Rd, Sykesville, PVSP on 5/25 (**TDC**, **FLv+**). On 4/30, single **Least Flycatchers** at Mt. Pleasant (**RRf**, **JHr**, **SRm**) and at Waterford (**RRf**, **JHr**) tied the third earliest arrival date. The last one was at MPEA on 5/24 (**DSn+**).

The first **Yellow-throated Vireo** appeared at MPEA 4/20 (**C/SPr**, **JHf**) within a few days of the earliest record. A **Red-eyed Vireo** at Henryton, PVSP 4/17 (**MLC**, **SRm**) tied the second earliest date. A major movement of this species was caught at MPEA 5/7 when two birders separately counted 30 (**JHf**) and 28 (**JHr**).

At 6:50 p.m. on 4/28, three **Blue Jays** dropped onto a feeder in Hammond Village. Within minutes there were at least 33 crowded on and under the feeder and flying back and forth to nearby trees. The moving patch of blue and white was eye-catching—as was the fact they were wolfing white millet amicably. At some unseen signal at 7:00 p.m., most of them departed as quickly as they had arrived (**JS**). Interestingly, also on 4/28, a similar activity was reported at an Allview feeder (**ESu**) when 16 arrived at one time. To the observer's amazement, they were all "eating cracked corn and not squabbling." In both cases, the birds were hungry migrants. **Common Ravens** again nested successfully on Duckett Dam (Prince George's County side), although the number of young is not known.

A **Horned Lark**, perched on a new house opposite Fulton

(Records continued on page 7)

Pond 5/4 (**J/MHr**), was an indication it had probably nested near that site in 2018. Locally, diminishing habitat for field birds is nothing new. The author recalls seeing a slide by Dr. Aelred Geis almost 50 years ago of a lark perched on a recently constructed house sited on former farmland in a new Columbia village. **Bank Swallows** were few this season with the earliest on 4/28 at Brighton Dam (**RRf-1**). The first **Barn Swallow** was spotted at Morningside La 3/31 (**SRm**).

Sharp eyes found a late **Brown Creeper** on a tree trunk in the floodplain along the Middle Patuxent River at the Robinson Nature Center 5/18 (**KWn**). Although this bird may have been a late migrant, the date is within the safe breeding period for this species which meant the sighting was of particular interest. At least 400 **Cedar Waxwings** at Blandair 5/17 constituted one of the all-time high counts for this species (**AVS**).

Thirty **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** at Centennial 4/23 (**MLC, SRm**) tied the all-time high [4/25/14 D. Richardson]. In May, **Eastern Bluebirds** nested successfully in a mealworm feeder with transparent sides at Stone Hill Dr (**KLz**). Thrushes were still drifting through at the end of the season with a **Gray-checked** at Cavey La (**RRf-NFC**) 5/28 and a **Swainson's** at Norris La on 5/31 (**DZk**). Outside the breeding season five **Brown Thrashers** together at Grace Church, Fulton 4/6 (**JHr**) were unusual.

The female **Evening Grosbeak**, present at a Dayton feeder since 1/4, was last seen 4/4 (**Plm**) and last heard 4/10 (**SRm**). As usual, **Purple Finch** numbers peaked in April. Diversified La feeders notched the high count of 22 on 4/18, as well as the last one (brown) on 5/24 (**K/KnHf**). The high **Pine Siskin** count was 31 at Burleigh Manor 4/19 (**MKw**). After an invasion winter, a few may remain long after others have departed; therefore, one at a Thornbrook Rd feeder 5/31 (**JCu, ph**) was not surprising.

The last **American Tree Sparrow** was seen at Mt. Pleasant 4/12 (**FSh**). A **Clay-colored Sparrow** briefly appeared in Allview on 4/30, a new late date, surprising the observer who was used to seeing **Chipping Sparrows** in his yard (**JMcK**). A few **Vespers** were picked up; one at Meadowbrook Pk 4/17 was the last of the season (**BO**). A **Savannah Sparrow** at Ilchester E. S. 5/3 was at an unexpected location (**KLz**). Twelve **Fox Sparrows** were in the wooded areas of Mt Pleasant 3/26 (**AAI**); even more appealing, some were singing their melodious song. Spring **Lincoln's Sparrows** are detected occasionally. The earliest appeared at Blandair 4/30 (**AVS**). A leucistic **Dark-eyed Junco** with a white crown visited a Hermitage Dr feeder on 3/10 (**HPt, MLC**). Ten **White-crowned Sparrows** were counted at Grace Church, Fulton 3/28 (**J/MHr**)

Bobolink migration was modest. Although seldom seen at Belmont, 12 were there on 4/30 (**SPb**). Single **Eastern Meadowlarks** turned up at Gateway 4/9 (**BHb**) and at Clegg Meadow, MPEA 3/23 (**JHr**) in addition to more expected locations. Most **Rusty Blackbirds** appeared in March with a high of 10]

at LKKIT 3/20/(**JHl**). The last one was at Annapolis Rock 4/25 (**AVS**).

Warbler migration featured a nice variety, although the season lacked major fallouts. In a northern portion of PVSP, 22 **Ovenbirds** were counted on 5/11 (**FLv, KS**). **Golden-winged Warblers** are no longer reported annually. One at Gwynn Acres Path 5/1 (**MRg**) was a treat. **Prothonotary Warblers** made a nice showing with the first at Cavey La 4/27 (**RRf**), followed on 5/9 by individuals at both MPEA (**KS**) and LKELK (**ALw**, the latter bird continued through 5/31), Blandair 5/12 (**RHl**), Browns Bridge, 5/24 (**RSk**), and Race Rd 5/27 (**TCn**). A **Tennessee** at Race Road 5/27 (**TCn**) was the second latest departure date. One **Mourning** was detected at Blandair 5/17 (**AVS, ph**); the species was last reported there 5/25 (**AVS**). Based on differences in song and behavior, two different birds may have been present.



Mourning Warbler at Blandair

by Anthony VanSchoor

An early **Hooded** was spotted at Blandair 4/21 (**AVS**); a late one was noted at MPEA on 5/30 (**JHf**). By that date it could have been on territory so there is hope nesting might be attempted. An **American Redstart** at Norris La 4/13 (**DZk**) established a new early date [4/15/76 no details]. A new **Cerulean Warbler** arrival record was notched with two along the Cascade Trail, PVSP 4/21 (**MHd**) [4/22/95 J. Wilkinson; 4/22/01 G. Austin; 4/22/17 T. Doebel+]. Besides expected sightings at Henryton and MARPV, one stopped at Robinson Nature Center 5/4 (**EEv**). The last **Black-throated Blue** appeared at MARPV 5/29 (**J/MHr**). **Yellow-throated Warbler** migration was impressive. Beginning with the first two at MARPV on 3/30 (**J/MHr**), the species was reported at an unusually high 11 sites. Perhaps the unusual number of sightings will translate into more breeding locations. There were nine **Prairies** at Blandair 5/24 (**J/MHr**), a substantial number. A **Black-throated Green** arrived at Centennial on 4/15 (**KS**); the last one dawdled until 5/31 at Mt. Pleasant (**BO, ph**). The first **Wilson's** was noted at MPEA 4/30 (**RRf, JHr**), the last at Cavey La 5/17 (**RRf**).

The **Northern Cardinal** high count of 40 was logged twice: Rockburn Branch Pk 4/25 (**HPt**) and Blandair 5/11 (**J/MHr**).

(Records continued on page 8)

HOWARD COUNTY MAY COUNT RESULTS

BY KEVIN HEFFERNAN

In Howard County, 70 birders participated in Maryland's 72nd annual May Count on May 11, 2019. (The last 46 for this county have been compiled by the Howard County Bird Club.) The count day had light wind, no precipitation, cloud cover of 50 to 90%, and temperatures in the low 60s. The 138 total species tallied tied for 31st and the total number of birds (13,617) ranked 32nd in the last 46 years of the count. These low totals were not due to lack of counters as the 70 participants were the seventh highest ever on the count. A total of 231 species have been seen over the 46 years, 76 every year while 21 have been seen only once. No species was missed or seen for the first time this year.

Three species had greater than or tied all-time high counts: *Peregrine Falcon* (1), *Red-headed Woodpecker* (3), and *Great-crested Flycatcher* (155). An additional seven species had or tied 10-year high counts including: *Bufflehead*, *Glossy Ibis*, *Northern Harrier*, *House Wren*, *Yellow-throated and Pine Warblers* and *Eastern Meadowlark*. One species, *White-eyed Vireo* (27), had an all-time low count. An additional 13 species had 10-year low counts including: *Canada Goose*, *Hairy Woodpecker*, *American Crow*, *Carolina Chickadee*, *Tufted Titmouse*, *Wood Thrush*, *American Robin*, *Worm-eating Warbler*, *Louisiana Waterthrush*, *Common Yellowthroat*, *Eastern Towhee*, *White-throated Sparrow*, and *American Goldfinch*. The birds in italics were on last year's list as well.

Peregrine Falcon was seen for only the fourth time (three of last five years), *Glossy Ibis* for the eighth time (last three years in a row) and *Common Raven* also for the eighth time (all in the last 12 years). *Bufflehead* was seen for only the ninth time. After seeing *Bald Eagle* once in the first 18 years of the count, it has been seen 28 years in a row. *Purple Finch* was seen 13 of the first 14 years (when the count was the first weekend in May) but only in four of the last 32 years (after the count moved to the second weekend in May). We tallied 29 warbler species (average is 30). The numbers of warblers (949) however ranked 36th out of 46 and was the second lowest since the count moved to the second week in May in 1988.

A compilation spreadsheet of the May Count data from 1974 through this year can be found on the Howard County Bird Club website.

Many thanks to our compiler, Chuck Stirrat and the Area Coordinators, Bill Hill, Steve Parr, Chuck Stirrat, Mike McClure, Karen Heffernan, John Harris, and John McKitterick. Finally, I want to give a special thanks to Kathie and Ralph Lillie for hosting the tally rally. Their hospitality was very much appreciated.

And to the following participants, a big thank you; without you, these counts cannot happen: Debbie Belchis, Jim and Marilyn Brinkley, Lisa Colangelo, Dennis Coskren, Jeff and Karen Culler, Ralph Cullison, David Cummings, Sue and Wes Earp, Sean Fischer, Eric Goldman, John and Meg Harris, Karen and Kevin Heffernan, Bill and Gayle Hill, Mike Kerwin, Shashi Lengade, Mike Leumas, Allen Lewis, Kathie Lillie, Anne Looker, Felicia Lovelett, Rosa Lubitz, Brigitte Lund, Janet Lydon, Dean Mahlstedt, Mary Maxie, Mike McClure, John McKitterick, Barry Miller, Sue Muller, Sue Neri, Peter Osenton, Cyndy and Steve Parr, Howard Patterson, Mike and Pam Perna, Patricia Pitts, Suzanne Probst, Mary Prowell,

Christians Rivas, Matt Rogoski, Sarah Romero, Russ Ruffing, Kurt Schwarz, Jay Sheppard, Andy Smith, Jo Solem, Cathy Staropoli, Michelle Stewart, Chuck Stirrat, Tom Strikwerda, Eva Sunell, Tim Thompson, Robin Todd, Sherry Tomlinson, Lisa Troutman, Anthony VanSchoor, Ginny Walker, Mark Wallace, Kelsey Wellons, Jim Wilkinson, Michele Wright, Ariel Zane, and Paul Zucker.

(Records continued from page 7)

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were widespread at sunflower feeders, as were a few **Blue Grosbeaks** and **Indigo Buntings**. Both a male and a female Rose-breasted were reported eating suet on 5/4 at Timberleigh (**DNg**). A male Blue Grosbeak appeared at a Jessup feeder on 4/21 (**R/RnPr**, ph.) for the second earliest record. Again, the bird stayed for several weeks with no evidence of breeding. (Unless this individual had been banded or had distinctive markings, one cannot be certain that it was the 2018 bird; however, circumstantial evidence is strong....)

The Underwood Rd field leased by the Howard County Bird Club for the past two years to enhance **Dickeissel** nesting habitat was not available in 2019. Dickcissels briefly visited the location, however. Two were reported there on 5/14 (**MKw**); one was last seen 5/16 (**RRf, JHr, SRm**).

Bonus: Although not a bird, a significant sighting was a **River Otter** at Centennial on 3/9 (**HPT**).

Thanks to Joe Hanfman and Howard Patterson for editing and checking cited material; thanks also to Russ Ruffing for verifying records.

Appreciation: Like so many people who quietly contribute to the smooth operation of the bird club, Nancy Magnusson was a valuable link in the production of this newsletter. Her proofreading skills were excellent and consistent—saving this author on more than one occasion from a major blunder. Her dependable contributions season after season will be sorely missed.

Abbreviations: LKELK – Lake Elkhorn, LKKIT – Lake Kittamaqundi, MARPV – Marriottsville, PVSP, MPEA – Middle Patuxent Environmental Area, PVSP – Patapsco Valley State Park, ph. – photograph.

Observers: AAl – Annette Allor, TCn – Tim Carney, KCl – Ken Clark, MLC – Mary Lou Clark, LCg – Lisa Colangelo, TDC – T. Dennis Coskren, JCu – Jeff Culler, DCm – David Cummings, SE – Sue Earp, WE – Wes Earp, EEv – Erin Eve, TFe – Tom Feild, LGg – Lynn Gregg, DHs – Dan Haas, JHI – Jacob Hall, JHf – Joe Hanfman, JHr – John Harris, MHR – Meg Harris, KnHf – Karen Heffernan, KHf – Kevin Heffernan, BHi – Bill Hill, RHI – Russell Hillsley, BHB – Bill Hubick, Mhd – Mike Hudson, EHs – Ed Huestis, PIm – Patty Immateo, MKw – Mike Kerwin, BKr – Brenda Kidera, CKe – Clayton Koonce, MLt – Mike Lathroum, ALw – Allen Lewis, KLI – Kathie Lillie, KLz – Kathy Litzinger, ALk – Anne Looker, FLv – Felicia Lovelett, JMcK – John McKitterick, WMk – Woody Merkle, HMz – Helen Metzman, KMK – Kevin Mock, SMu – Sue Muller, DNg – Diane Nagengast, SN – Sue Neri, MO'S – Michael O'Sullivan, BO – Bonnie Ott, CPrr – Cynthia Parr, SPR – Steve Parr, HPT – Howard Patterson, PPN – Pam Perna, RnPr – Renee Peters, RPr – Richard Peters, SPB – Suzanne Probst, TRy – Tim Ray, CRM – Christians Rivas-Morales, MRg – Matt Rogoski, SRm – Sarah Romero, RRRf – Russ Ruffing, DSn – David Sandler, KS – Kurt Schwarz, FSh – Fred Shaeffer, JSh – Jay Sheppard, RSK – Robert Skinner, JS – Jo Solem, CSt – Chuck Stirrat, ESu – Eva Sunell, KTF – Kate Tufts, AVS – Anthony VanSchoor, MW – Mark Wallace, KWn – Kelsey Wellons, JW – Jim Wilkinson, DZk – David Ziolkowski.

HOWARD COUNTY MAY COUNT RESULTS - MAY 11, 2019

Canada Goose	532
Wood Duck	26
Mallard	102
Bufflehead	2
Wild Turkey	7
Rock Pigeon	42
Mourning Dove	304
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	6
Black-billed Cuckoo	1
Chimney Swift	176
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	19
Killdeer	24
Least Sandpiper	9
Spotted Sandpiper	17
Solitary Sandpiper	34
Ring-billed Gull	1
Common Loon	1
Double-crested Cormorant	9
American Bittern	1
Great Blue Heron	44
Great Egret	3
Green Heron	24
Black-crowned Night-Heron	1
Glossy Ibis	1
Black Vulture	124
Turkey Vulture	228
Osprey	8
Northern Harrier	4
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1
Cooper's Hawk	11
Bald Eagle [ad/im/unk]	11
Red-shouldered Hawk	55
Red-tailed Hawk	27
Great Horned Owl	1
Barred Owl	9
Belted Kingfisher	13
Red-headed Woodpecker	3
Red-bellied Woodpecker	270
Downy Woodpecker	79
Hairy Woodpecker	18
Northern Flicker	46
Pileated Woodpecker	45
Peregrine Falcon	1
Great Crested Flycatcher	155
Eastern Kingbird	103
Eastern Wood-Pewee	103
Acadian Flycatcher	99

Willow Flycatcher	5
Least Flycatcher	1
Eastern Phoebe	65
White-eyed Vireo	27
Yellow-throated Vireo	21
Blue-headed Vireo	2
Warbling Vireo	34
Red-eyed Vireo	372
Blue Jay	463
American Crow	261
Fish Crow	79
<i>crow species</i>	198
Common Raven	4
Horned Lark	18
Purple Martin	65
Tree Swallow	170
N. Rough-winged Swallow	69
Cliff Swallow	52
Barn Swallow	354
Carolina Chickadee	92
Tufted Titmouse	141
White-breasted Nuthatch	70
House Wren	140
Carolina Wren	333
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	190
Eastern Bluebird	202
Veery	6
Gray-cheeked Thrush	3
Swainson's Thrush	22
Hermit Thrush	1
Wood Thrush	185
American Robin	466
Gray Catbird	457
Brown Thrasher	31
Northern Mockingbird	151
European Starling	887
Cedar Waxwing	524
House Sparrow	271
House Finch	114
Purple Finch	2
Pine Siskin	1
American Goldfinch	217
Eastern Towhee	111
Chipping Sparrow	295
Field Sparrow	57
Savannah Sparrow	35
Grasshopper Sparrow	16

Song Sparrow	188
Lincoln's Sparrow	2
Swamp Sparrow	2
White-throated Sparrow	8
Yellow-breasted Chat	9
Bobolink	39
Eastern Meadowlark	18
Orchard Oriole	66
Baltimore Oriole	124
Red-winged Blackbird	632
Brown-headed Cowbird	153
Common Grackle	163
Ovenbird	147
Worm-eating Warbler	7
Louisiana Waterthrush	26
Northern Waterthrush	10
Blue-winged Warbler	2
Black-&-white Warbler	32
Tennessee Warbler	4
Kentucky Warbler	11
Common Yellowthroat	210
Hooded Warbler	2
American Redstart	69
Cape May Warbler	4
Cerulean Warbler	1
Northern Parula	122
Magnolia Warbler	7
Bay-breasted Warbler	8
Blackburnian Warbler	1
Yellow Warbler	97
Chestnut-sided Warbler	7
Blackpoll Warbler	24
Blk.-thrt'd. Blue Warbler	34
Palm Warbler	1
Pine Warbler	10
Yel.-rump'd (Myrtle) Warbler	60
Yellow-throated Warbler	4
Prairie Warbler	20
Blk.-thrt'd. Green Warbler	15
Canada Warbler	5
Scarlet Tanager	111
Northern Cardinal	821
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	5
Blue Grosbeak	12
Indigo Bunting	244
Total Birds:	13,617
Total Species:	138



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

P. O. BOX 1323
COLUMBIA MD 21044-1323



September/October 2019 - Inside This Issue

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TWENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL FALL COUNT

BY MIKE MCCLURE

Twenty-sixth Annual Fall Count - The Howard County Bird Club's annual Fall Count, scheduled each year on the third Saturday of September, will be on September 21st, 2019. Mike McClure 410-531-2780 and Chuck Stirrat 410-531-2417 are the county co-coordinators. Prior years have set an average of 125 species of birds identified on the count. Spend the day birding with us and help raise the average! Birders of all skill levels are encouraged to participate. Ask to be put with an experienced individual if you do not wish to have your own territory. The county is divided into seven areas (shown below) which are used for all annual counts. A fall season field sheet for Howard County will be available on the Club's website. Species that require a write-up include those identified with a double asterisk (**), as well as any write-ins. Others that may require a write-up or oral amplification (*), as well as those that are early or late dates (@), are indicated. Also, plan on helping out with the butterfly, dragonfly, and damselfly count. Check sheets will be available on the web.

The following area coordinators have been named: Area 1) Mark Wallace 301-725-6370 and Wes Earp 410-531-3197; Area 2) Brian Moyer 410-441-9901; Area 3) Karen & Kevin Heffernan 410-857-1789; Area 4) Mike McClure 410-531-2780; Area 5) Kurt Schwarz 410-461-1643; Area 6) TBD; and Area 7) Allen Lewis 787-590-4501. You may call an

area or county coordinator to volunteer, or check at the September meeting. Mary Lou Clark will host the tally rally at 5153 Morningside Lane, Columbia, MD 21043. The potluck dinner will be served at approximately 7:00 pm; r.s.v.p with food category at 410-465-4061 by Sept. 19th, to reserve space and if necessary obtain directions.

