



The Goldfinch

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



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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The winter into spring of 2020 has presented the world with an event that it has not dealt with for 100 years: a pandemic. Called COVID-19, it began about November 2019 in China and eventually traveled around the world. Due to the presence of this easily transmittable virus in Howard County, and in an effort to keep HCBC members from contracting it, the HCBC Board made several changes to the spring calendar. Cancelled were the three general club meetings to be held in March, April, and May 2020, as well as the annual potluck dinner, all the field trips through May, and, finally, Howard County’s participation in the statewide May Count to be held on May 9, 2020. The Howard County Bird Club board meetings were changed from group meetings to conference calls.

Mary Lou Clark

WINTER BIRD RECORDS: DECEMBER 1, 2019 – FEBRUARY 29, 2020

BY JOANNE SOLEM

One of the half dozen warmest winters on record combined with open water produced a fine array of notable birds. The continuing Rufous Hummingbird, a February White-eyed Vireo, and the county’s fifth Painted Bunting were the stars of the season. Other species of note were Snow Goose, Long-tailed Duck, Common Goldeneye, Bonaparte’s Gull, Long-eared Owl, Lincoln’s Sparrow, Baltimore Oriole, and Rusty Blackbird.

A blue morph **Snow Goose**, in a field with **Canada Geese**, near the intersection of Brighton Dam Rd/Ten Oaks Rd on 12/14 (**JHf**) was the only one reported this season. Although winter **Cackling Goose** numbers fluctuated, they never approached the record-setting total of autumn 2019. Fifteen were still present at Scott’s Pond, So. Trotter Rd on 12/8 and 22 on 12/15 (both **JHf**); 25 were counted there on 2/16 (**WE**). During the winter, there were occasional sightings (mostly in the low single digits) from several other locations. **Canada Geese** were on the move on 2/23 when a high, loose skein of 135 flew over Alpha Ridge Park (**J/MHr**) heading north. An early evening flock of **Tundra Swans** was heard over Stone Hill Dr 12/3 (**KLz**), and a flock of 58 appeared over Catchfly Ct, E. Col. on 12/4 (**AVS**). One, spotted at a pond along Old Frederick Rd 1/8 (**JHf**), was seen there on several subsequent dates. The four calling over Blandair 2/15 (**AVS+**) and the night flock heard over Brush Run 2/17 (**JW**) were likely early migrants. Three swans flying low over the trees at CENPK 1/23 (**HPT**) were seen too briefly to determine the species. Likewise, a lone swan flying



Rufous Hummingbird in late March 2020 by Frank Witebsky

([Records](#) continued on page 2)

(Records continued from page 1)

over Little Patuxent Pkwy toward Lake Kittamaqundi 2/13 was unidentified (**BO**).

Open water most of the winter produced some nice duck numbers. The high count of **Northern Shovelers** was 21 at their favored Race Rd Wetlands (RACRW) on both 1/5 (**MKw**) and 1/19 (**JHf**). One at Wilde Lake (WILLK) 1/12 (**EHs**) and two at Lake Kittamaqundi 1/18 (**C/SPr**) appeared at less frequented locations. Identical counts of 22 **Gadwalls** were made at RACRW 1/26 (**SRm, MLC**) and at Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS) 2/1 (**RRf**). Five **American Wigeon** were at TRIRS on 2/1 (**RRf**), and one or two were present intermittently at RACRW and at TRIRS. **Mallard** numbers peaked at 175 on TRIRS 12/14 (**JHf**). Top **American Black Duck** numbers, also at TRIRS, were 30 on 12/14 (**JHf**) and 55 on 2/1 (**JHf**). **Northern Pintails** were noted twice: two at Brighton Dam (BRDAM) 12/14 (**AVS**) and 26 at TRIRS 2/1 (**RRf**). The seasonal high of 38 **Green-winged Teal** was notched at TRIRS 2/1 (**JHf**).

Canvasbacks were “no shows” this season. **Redheads** were spotted at six sites, all in the low single digits. The **Ring-necked Duck** high count was 175 at the pond at Marriottsville Rd/Willow Green Way 1/12 (**JHf**). A **Greater Scaup** at CENPK 12/13 was accompanied by an identifying photo (**SDa**). CENPK also hosted a **Lesser Scaup** on 1/12 (**HPt, ph., DSn**); an earlier one had been spotted at Springdale Dr Quarry on 12/24 (**JHf**). A **Long-tailed Duck** at WILLK 12/5 was a pleasant surprise (**SRm**). The two at TRIRS (one of each sex) 2/1 were seen at different times of the day (**JHf; RRf**). Two **Common Goldeneyes** appeared at CENPK on a foggy 12/17 (**HPt, ph.**), uncharacteristically remaining almost a month until 1/15 (**SRm**). Nineteen **Hooded Mergansers** on an old quarry pond (opposite the Pratt Bridge), Guilford Rd, 12/26 (**SRm**) were at a seldom reported location; BRDAM claimed the high count of 27 on 1/22 (**MLC, SRm**). **Common Merganser** numbers swelled quickly from 65 at BRDAM 12/4 (**SRm, MLC**) to 2,300 on 12/14 (**JHf**). As usual, a sprinkling of **Red-breasted Mergansers** appeared (mostly on TRIRS); one at WILLK 12/5 was a surprise (**CKe**).

Wild Turkeys are one of the state’s bird success stories. After being extirpated from much of central Maryland by the early 20th century, multiple unsuccessful attempts were made to reestablish viable populations by releasing pen-raised birds. Eventually, translocating wild birds from adjacent states proved effective. During the first statewide breeding bird atlas (1983-1987), birds were still being moved from Pennsylvania and released in Howard, as well as other counties. That methodology proved highly successful, so much so, that in mid-December 2019, Wes Earp was told of a recent photo of 75 birds in the Patapsco River floodplain east of Morgan Station Rd. On both the Triadelphia Christmas Ct (12/14/19) and the Howard Co Mid-winter Ct (HCMC, 2/1/20), flocks of 20 or more were reported at two sites (**SMu, ALk, JS; BMy**). Nineteen were counted in a cut cornfield on the east side of Shaffers Mill Rd on 1/10 (**DNg**).

The ever-present flock of **Rock Pigeons** at the Gateway Overlook parking lot numbered 200 on 1/20 (**KWl**). The continuing male **Rufous Hummingbird** at feeders south of Ellicott City received tender, loving care all winter and was

still present at the end of the season. (Photos on pp. 1 & 8.)

Although **American Woodcock** winter in the county occasionally, by early to mid-February migrants appear—a welcome sign of spring. This year’s unusually mild temperatures produced reports from three locations: 2/8 RACRW (**MLC, SRm-2; 2/12 JHf-4**), 2/11 Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA) (**Cfr, JHr-1**), and 2/12 Hipsley Mill Rd (**DCm-1; 2/22 JSh+-3**). The first **Great Black-backed Gull** of the season showed up at Annapolis Junction 12/2 (**FSh**). A **Bonaparte’s Gull**, unusual in winter, made a brief appearance at Lake Elkhorn 12/3 (**J/MHr**). Although **Double-crested Cormorants** winter only occasionally, they were reported in the low single digits at various sites throughout the season. **Great Blue Herons** at the Vantage Point heronry, began active nesting shortly after 2/16 (**CKe**). On 2/26, the same observer picked up a loose flock of 15 heading northwest beyond Lake Kittamaqundi.

The **Bald Eagle** population rises each autumn with the addition of wintering birds. Personnel at BRDAM on 12/14 indicated that 22 had been tallied recently near the dam when the gates were open (*fide* **AVS**). Not only were eagles reported consistently at reservoirs and lakes, but a number were noted in fields feeding on dead deer, typical activity for a scavenger. They are early nesters so it was not surprising some pairs were seen courting in December and early January (**SMu; JMCK**). Their tumbling locked-talon flight is neither easily overlooked nor quickly forgotten. On 2/11, an adult carrying a stick led to the discovery of a new nest in the Sykesville CW atlas block (**SRm, MLC**). On 2/28, another new nest was verified. This one was on a cell tower in the Savage SW block (**DZk**).

Red-shouldered Hawks occasionally reuse a nest, but most make a fresh start each year. A pair at CENPK was nest building on 1/29 (**BO, RO**). Since this species normally doesn’t start laying eggs here until at least early March, nest building may progress in fits and spurts depending on the pair and the weather.

Breeding Bird Atlas 3 activity was still in its initial phase as only a few species begin nesting in winter. **Great Horned Owls** are among the early nesters. A female on a nest in a pine was located near Duckett Dam (non-public land) 2/1 on HCMC. Fittingly, it was spotted by one of the county’s atlas co-coordinators (**SMu, ALk, JS**). This was not a good season for migrant owls with just a single **Long-eared** at Annapolis Rock 12/23 (**AVS**); no **Northern Saw-whets** were seen (a few pellets at Annapolis Rock 2/22-**JSh**).

Red-headed Woodpeckers were noticed along the Patuxent Branch Trail: a first-winter bird on 2/11 (**ALw**), and that one, plus an adult, on 2/12 (**JHf**). Both continued through the season. Eighteen **Red-bellied Woodpeckers** at MPEA 1/3 was an unusually high count (**JHr, SPr**). Continuing the trend of the last decade, winter **American Kestrel** numbers were low. **Merlins** were the most common falcon. They were reported from at least seven locations, sometimes multiple times, frequently with supporting photos. The only **Peregrine Falcon** was one detected flying over CENPK 1/26 (**BGz**).

(Records continued on page 3)

(Records continued from page 2)

Eastern Phoebe numbers often bear a strong relationship to the severity of the winter. With moderate temperatures this season, there were steady, scattered reports. Perhaps the presence of a **White-eyed Vireo** is the best illustration of how mild the season was. The bird turned up at the parking lot at Howard Chapel Rd and the Patuxent River on HCMC 2/1 (**GKg, PPn**). This is a Neotropical species that normally does not return in numbers until late April. According to Bob Ringler, there are only six Maryland January records (although three of those were in 2020!); there were *zero* records in February before this one. The few photos obtained established the bird's identity, underscoring the value of even partial images in verifying a rarity. It was still present in the area at the end of the season.

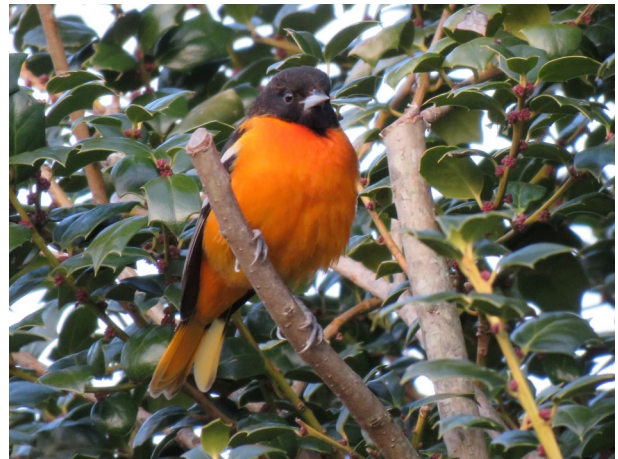
A **Fish Crow** flock of 90+ was noted on Murphy Rd 12/14 (**JHr**) and 105 were perched at CENPK 1/1 (**CSt, DHv**). **Common Ravens** continue to be reported countywide. Memorable was one that spent three weeks in the vicinity of Duval Rd, notching a new county species for the observer (**KTf**). For the third consecutive year, a pair nested barely into the Baltimore County portion of the Ellicott City CW block (**RRf**). Peak **Horned Lark** flocks were a modest 25 at Underwood Rd 12/12 (**MLC, SRm**) and 22 along A. E. Mullinix Rd 1/8 (**J/MHr**).

Consistent with the "winter finch" forecast, there were no **Red-breasted Nuthatch** reports. An unusually high 27 **Carolina Wrens** during 4.5 hours at MPEA 2/1 (**K/KuHf**) underscored a mild winter's effect on their population which can fluctuate dramatically depending on the severity of the weather. A leucistic **American Robin** turned up at Stone Hill Dr 12/4 (**KLz**). The winter was also kind to mimids: **Gray Catbirds** lingered at a minimum of eight sites with a high of three at Blandair 12/24 (**J/MHr**); at least six locations held **Brown Thrashers**. Fifteen **American Pipits** were counted at Alpha Ridge Landfill on HCMC (**RCu, JHf**). A **Purple Finch** at feeders at Morningside La 12/4 and 1/10 (**MLC, ph.**) and one at Meadowbrook Pk 1/11 (**JW**) were among the few validated irruptives this winter.

No **American Tree Sparrows** were verified. A flock of 25 **Chipping Sparrows** was counted at Alpha Ridge Pk 12/20 (**RRf**) with 22 at feeders at Cavey La 2/1 (**RRf**). The eight east of Murray Hill Rd along the Middle Patuxent River 2/1 (**JMcK**) were a nice count for that location. The peak **Savannah Sparrow** number was 20 at Alpha Ridge Landfill 2/1 (**RCu, JHf**). **Lincoln's Sparrows** winter rarely. One, detected at Alpha Ridge Pk 12/2 (**JHf**), was still present at the end of the season (**JHf**). A second, noted at well-birded Mt Pleasant 1/2 (**MKw, ph.**), was not reported again until March. A flock of 28 **Dark-eyed Juncos** at Oxford Square, Coca Cola Dr 2/8 included one leucistic bird (**JW, ph.**)

Twenty-two **Eastern Meadowlarks** at W. Friendship Pk 2/1 (**JCu**) and 19 along Old Frederick Rd .4 m. west of MD 32 on 1/18 (**MLC, SRm**) were among the highest winter counts in recent years. (This was potentially the same flock.) **Baltimore Orioles** winter occasionally. This season an adult male was present at Mt Hebron from 12/11 – 12/30 (**JCu, ph.**). On 1/30, an adult male appeared briefly in a Thornbrook Rd, Mt Hebron yard (**JCu**). Hoping to entice the bird to return for

the HCMC, a feeder with apple jelly, sugar solution, and half an orange was put out the same day. The bird returned 2/1 for the count and was still present into spring (**JCu**), showing a distinct preference for apple jelly. On 2/5, an adult male was photographed at Deepage Dr, E. Col. It was not only identified, but through distance and time comparisons with the Mt. Hebron bird, it was determined to be a different individual (**JHf**). At least one other oriole, a female, spent the winter at an undisclosed location. A **Rusty Blackbird** appeared in a Martin Rd, W. Col. yard 1/18 (**JHf**); three were noted at Lake Elkhorn 2/17 (**EHs**). A flock of ~10,000 **Common Grackles** settled in the fields and trees adjacent to Brighton Dam Rd/Ten Oaks Rd 12/4 (**SRm, ph., MLC**). The count was made by working with a series of photos taken within a short period.



Baltimore Oriole

by Jeff Culler

Pine Warblers are a scarce wintering species. Reported this season were birds at Mt Hebron, from one on 12/1 to a high of three on 12/12 (**JCu**); Crest Lawn Mem. Gardens, where they topped out at four on 12/22 (**JCu**); one at LKELK 12/31 (**ALw**), as well as at nearby Brush Run 1/22 (**JW**); one at Warfield's Pond Pk 1/16 (**SRm**) (where they are seldom recorded); and one at a suet feeder in Hammond Village (**KO'S**), where it was an intermittent visitor all winter.

A female **Painted Bunting**, one of the stars of the season and the fifth county record, visited Morningside La 1/24 and 1/25 (**MLC**). This visitor from the South appeared at feeders so the sighting could be shared with interested birders. After those two days, the bird disappeared. On 2/20, when a female appeared at a feeder barely half a mile from the original sighting, there was a strong likelihood it was the same bird. (Without banding or some obvious plumage difference, one can't be certain.) At first its brief visits were sporadic, but, after several days, it came more frequently and even took a bath. It was still being reported in the spring season.

Correction: Of the two unusual hummingbirds that appeared in November at a yard south of Ellicott City, the male was banded on 11/11. It was verified as a Rufous, and remained through the winter. The female was seen for a limited time. By examining Kurt Schwarz's photographs, bander Bruce Peterjohn narrowed the options to Rufous/Allen's, but no single species could be determined. This female should be referred to by its genus only: *Selasphorus* sp.

(Records continued on page 4)

(Records continued from page 3)



Painted Bunting

by John Harris

Many thanks to Joe Hanfman, Russ Ruffing, and Howard Patterson for editing material and checking the accuracy of records.

Abbreviations: BRDAM – Brighton Dam, CENPK – Centennial Park, HCMC- Howard County Mid-winter Count, ph. – photograph, RACRW – Race Road Wetlands, TRIRS – Triadelphia Reservoir, WILLK – Wilde Lake

Observers: MLC – Mary Lou Clark, JCu – Jeff Culler, RCu – Ralph Cullison III, DCm – David Cummings, SDa – Steven Davies, WE – Wes Earp, CFr – Cheryl Farfaras, BGz – Benjamin Gaetz, GKg – Geraldine King, JHf – Joe Hanfman, JHr – John Harris, MHR – Meg Harris, DHv – Dave Harvey, KnHf – Karen Heffernan, KHf – Kevin Heffernan, EHs – Ed Huestis, MKw – Mike Kerwin, CKc – Clayton Koonce, ALw – Allen Lewis, KLz – Kathy Litzinger, ALk – Anne Looker, JMCK – John McKitterick, BMy – Brian Moody, SMu – Sue Muller, DNg – Diane Nagengast, ROrr – Richard Orr, KO'S – Karen O'Steen, BO – Bonnie Ott, CPr – Cynthia Parr, SPrr – Steve Parr, HPt – Howard Patterson, PPn – Pam Perna, SRm – Sarah Romero, RRF – Russ Ruffing, DSn – David Sandler, FSh – Fred Shaffer, JSh – Jay Sheppard, JS – Jo Solem, CSt – Chuck Stirrat, KTF – Kate Tufts, AVS – Anthony VanSchoor, KWI – Kelsey Wellons, JW – Jim Wilkinson, DZk – Dave Ziolkowski.

MEMORABLE CENTENNIAL PARK WALK

BY JOANNE SOLEM

The Sunday morning walks at Centennial Park during March and November always draw a good crowd. One never knows what a circuit of the lake will produce. The March 8, 2020, walk, led by Sarah Romero, had at least two highlights.

Halfway through the walk the sky was clear, the breeze light, and the temperature brisk but rising. As the group strung out along the dam, a Great Blue Heron flew over heading west over the lake at perhaps twice the height of the trees. It quickly became apparent the bird was not alone. People began calling out numbers. The total rose to 14, 15...18, 19, 20. Meg Harris, the official counter, tallied 27 herons. And two of the birds were carrying sticks! The loose group continued to the middle of the lake where they made a sharp right turn and dropped out of sight into the cove or perhaps the adjacent pond.

Field trip participants had been walking clockwise around the lake. Barely 30 minutes earlier, they had visited the area where the herons disappeared. At that location, there was no evidence of nests or a new colony (as the stick-carrying birds might indicate). As the birders continued around the southeast corner of the dam and along the south side of the lake, they had gone only a few hundred yards when one of the herons was noted leaving the cove area. It flew across the lake heading south just above the treetops. Shortly, several more followed the same path; within 15 minutes, 18 had flown directly toward the Vantage Point heronry, little more than a mile away.

Initially, there appeared to be no ready explanation for what had been observed. Many of the herons at Vantage Point had begun nesting; at active nests, usually one of the pair remains at or near the nest when the other leaves. Why were so many together? And why were two carrying sticks? Was this their idea of a morning constitutional? Were they visiting a prime feeding site? The pond at the head of the cove had been worked during the last year so perhaps low water levels at

some point had made it so attractive that herons visited frequently. Currently, however, the west end of the lake is low, while the bridge near Centennial Lane is being replaced, so food should be more easily available there than in the small pond which is now at normal levels. The fact that they didn't stay long once they came down seemed to indicate they were not feeding, but anxious to return to the heronry.

There is a likely explanation. According to R. W. Butler, *The Birds of North America*, Great Blue Heron, No. 13, "Early in season, herons flush easily from nests with slightest disturbance; after eggs, they fly reluctantly and return quickly to nests..." Someone or something may have caused many of the herons to leave the heronry at about the same time. They flew in a large semi-circle, stopped at Centennial Park briefly, and quickly began returning to their nests. The two individuals carrying sticks may have been returning to the heronry as the group arose and simply joined the flying birds. Whatever the cause, It was a memorable experience.

The herons were only the first of the two noteworthy sightings. The second occurred at the west end of the lake on an island where a medium-sized brown, slender, furry animal was spotted making its way among the roots and branches on the ground. A few people offered suggestions—muskrat, otter, beaver. Good looks at the furry tail with its dark tip quickly eliminated beaver and muskrat. Several people obtained photos which verified a mink. Everyone present was able to enjoy excellent looks at this often elusive mammal. Although this was not a first record for this park, sightings of this attractive member of the weasel family are usually brief and partial. For all present to see it well and watch its behavior, was a real treat. ([Link to trip report/photo.](#))

My thanks for input from Meg Harris and Sarah Romero in summarizing this auspicious trip held, coincidentally, on International Women's Day.

HOWARD COUNTY MID-WINTER COUNT - FEBRUARY 1, 2020

BY JOE HANFMAN

Count day was cool and cloudy with temperatures 26° to 46° F. The reservoir and ponds were free of ice and rivers were flowing. We recorded 89 species which is the average number of the last 34 years. The total number of individual birds was 28,169 which is 21,687 below the average and the sixth lowest number ever recorded. It is also 136,731 below the maximum number of birds recorded. ([Table](#) on p. 6)

Three birds were seen for the first time ever on the count: Rufous Hummingbird, White-eyed Vireo, and Lincoln's Sparrow. A Baltimore Oriole was seen for only the third time on the count.

All-time high counts were recorded for Gadwall (30), Northern Pintail (23), Green-winged Teal (38), Long-tailed Duck (2), Great Blue Heron (33), Bald Eagle (37), Pileated Woodpecker (69), Common Raven (12), and Carolina Wren (487).

All-time low counts were recorded for Ring-billed Gull (137), Red-tailed Hawk (24), Brown Creeper (1), and Dark-eyed Junco (669)

Fifty-one of the 89 species tallied have been seen on all 34 Mid-winter Counts. Seventy-seven of the 89 species tallied have been seen on at least 50% of all 34 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), Wood Duck, Canvasback, Pied-billed Grebe, American Coot, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Purple Finch.

198 White-tailed Deer were tallied on count day.

Many people contributed to the success of the day. Sixty-six observers spent 200.0 hours and covered 134.7 miles on foot and 458.6 miles by car. Another 9.2 hours were spent feeder watching, plus 3.3 hours stationary and 4.8 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 into 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 and Marilyn Brinkley, Lisa Colangelo, Susan Earp, Geraldine King, Kathie Lillie, Woody Merkle, Pam Perna, Mary Powell, Jay Sheppard, Bruce Woodward; *Area 2. Brian Moyer*, Jeff and Karen Culler, Tom Strikwerda, Paul Zucker; *Area 3. Chuck Stirrat*, Mary Lou Clark, Ralph Cullison, Joe Hanfman, Dave and Maureen Harvey, Steven Jones, Sashi Lengade, Paul Litman, Felicia Lovelett, Tom Miller, Russ Ruffing; *Area 4. Mike McClure*, Mike Leumas; *Area 5. Karen and Kevin Heffernan*, John Greer, Clayton Koonce, Cyndy and Steve Parr, Sherry Tomlinson; *Area 6. John Harris*, Karan Blum, Meg Harris, Brigitte Lund, Richard Orr, Bonnie Ott, Sue Probst, Sarah Romero, Michele Wright; *Area 7. Kurt Schwarz*, Tracy Eve, Ed Huestis, Anne Looker, Rosa Lubitz, John McKitterick, Barry Miller, Sue Muller, Sue Neri, Jo Solem, Michelle Stewart, Eva Sunell, Jim Wilkinson, Lilly Zuberi.

MD-DC BREEDING BIRD ATLAS 3 IN HOWARD COUNTY

BY SUE MULLER

The third MD-DC Breeding Bird Atlas began January 1st and Howard County is off to a great start! Over the first three months of the survey we have recruited 69 atlasers and documented 23 confirmed species nesting. These numbers will only go up!

Most exciting is the first nesting pair of Osprey in the county during an atlas. They were nesting near the top of a cell tower. We also have a pair of Bald Eagles and a pair of Common Ravens nesting on cell towers.

It's not too late to participate. This survey continues through 2024. Check out the club website for all the information you need to get started: <https://howardbirds.website/birding/breeding-bird-atlases/bba3/>

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:

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

The April 23 and May 21 board meetings will be held by teleconference or videoconference. If you have input or questions, please send an email to Mary Lou Clark at doctorfx_99@yahoo.com.

Howard County Mid-winter Count — February 1, 2020					
Totals		Totals		Totals	
Canada Goose	6,231	Hairy Woodpecker	39	Swamp Sparrow	58
Northern Shoveler	4	Northern Flicker	98	Eastern Towhee	115
Gadwall	30	Pileated Woodpecker	69	Eastern Meadowlark	28
American Wigeon	5	American Kestrel	5	Baltimore Oriole	1
Mallard	319	Merlin	2	Red-winged Blackbird	2,580
American Black Duck	95	Eastern Phoebe	6	Brown-headed Cowbird	2,222
Northern Pintail	23	White-eyed Vireo	1	Common Grackle	2,647
Green-winged Teal	38	Blue Jay	673	<i>blackbird species</i>	163
Ring-necked Duck	257	American Crow	992	Pine Warbler	1
Tufted Duck		Fish Crow	330	Yel.-rump'd (Myrtle) Warbler	6
Long-tailed Duck	2	<i>crow species</i>	261	Northern Cardinal	764
Bufflehead	21	Common Raven	12	Total Birds:	28,169
Hooded Merganser	63	Horned Lark	6	Total Species:	89
Common Merganser	58	Carolina Chickadee	219	Deer Seen:	198
Red-breasted Merganser	1	Tufted Titmouse	240		
Ruddy Duck	3	White-breasted Nuthatch	180	Supplemental Data	
Wild Turkey	22	Brown Creeper	1	Time Start:	5:37 a.m.
Rock Pigeon	102	Winter Wren	11	Time Stop:	9:25 p.m.
Mourning Dove	364	Carolina Wren	487	Hours on Foot:	148.1
Rufous Hummingbird	1	Golden-crowned Kinglet	22	Hours by Car:	51.9
Killdeer	1	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	6	Hours by Boat:	.0
Wilson's Snipe	1	Eastern Bluebird	278	Hours Other:	.0
Ring-billed Gull	172	Hermit Thrush	12	Miles on Foot:	134.7
<i>gull species</i>	91	American Robin	655	Miles by Car:	458.6
Great Blue Heron	33	Gray Catbird	4	Miles by Boat:	.0
Black Vulture	194	Brown Thrasher	3	Miles Other:	.0
Turkey Vulture	206	Northern Mockingbird	107	Hours Feeder Watching:	9.2
Northern Harrier	2	European Starling	1,753	Hours Stationary:	3.3
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	Cedar Waxwing	119	Hours "Owling":	4.8
Cooper's Hawk	4	House Sparrow	317	Miles "Owling":	13.1
<i>accipiter species</i>	1	American Pipit	15		
Bald Eagle [ad/im/unk]	37	House Finch	229	Total Field Observers:	65
Red-shouldered Hawk	90	American Goldfinch	167	Total Field Parties:	53
Red-tailed Hawk	24	Chipping Sparrow	47	Total Feederwatchers:	1
<i>buteo species</i>	2	Field Sparrow	97	Total Feeder Parties:	1
Eastern Screech-Owl	2	Fox Sparrow	24	Total Observers:	66
Great Horned Owl	10	Dark-eyed Junco	669	Total Parties:	54
Barred Owl	6	White-crowned Sparrow	20	Tot. Field Pty-Hrs (Reg.):	200.0
Belted Kingfisher	15	White-throated Sparrow	1,713	Total Party-Hrs (Feeder):	9.2
Red-bellied Woodpecker	290	Savannah Sparrow	27	Tot. Pty-Hrs (Stationary):	3.3
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	15	Song Sparrow	613	Total Party-Hrs (Owling):	4.8
Downy Woodpecker	216	Lincoln's Sparrow	1	Total Party-Hours:	217.2

Northern Minnesota in Winter

David Sandler participated in an MOS-sponsored trip to northern Minnesota in January 2020. The participants were more than satisfied with great looks at Northern Hawk-Owl, Boreal Owl, Great Gray Owl, and other boreal specialties. David shares some of his photos below.



Boreal Owl



Northern Hawk-Owl



Great Gray Owl



Sharp-tailed Grouse



Snowy Owl



Spruce Grouse

eBirder of the Month

Club member Mary Prowell was selected as eBirder of the Month for January 2020. She received a new pair of ZEISS binoculars. Use this link to see the eBird article and read Mary's story about her birding experiences: <https://ebird.org/news/mary-prowell-january-2020-ebirder-of-the-month>

HCBC on Facebook

Are you bored and restless while sheltering in place? Stay connected to other local birders by visiting the [HCBC's Facebook page](#). Share what's happening in your yard and neighborhood during spring migration.

Appreciation

Many club members look forward to the annual spring potluck dinner. It is a time to share birding experiences with friends, see some outstanding photographs, and enjoy a meal together.

This year's potluck, planned for late March, was among the club's activities and events that were cancelled because of the COVID-19 epidemic. This was to be Kathie Lillie's last year as potluck chairperson. Unfortunately, now we will be unable to say thank you to her at the dinner.

Thank you, Kathie!



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

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Rufous Hummingbird in November 2019

by Kelsey Wellons



Male Rufous

by Bill Hill in November 2019



Female Selasphorus sp.