



The Goldfinch

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



CLUB MEETINGS - MARY LOU CLARK

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Program	1
Winter Bird Records	1
Waterford Flats	5
Shorebird Habitat Committee	5
Breeding Bird Atlas 3	6
COVID Impact on Activities	6
Mid-winter Count Summary ..	7
May Count	9
eBird Milestone	9
Board of Directors Meeting ...	9

Thursday, May 13, 2021 “Birding and Beyond in Cuba” by Paul Baicich will allow us to visit a number of key bird locations on the island—Viñales, Zapata, Guanahacabibes, Cayo Coco, Baracoa, Topes de Collantes, and Havana—as well as examine opportunities for connecting with our counterparts in Cuba. We will look at fascinating birds, places, and people in terms of advancing bird education, conservation, and responsible eco-tourism. Paul has been lucky enough to have visited the island nine times and hopes to convey to you some of the birds, natural history, and potential that can be found there, one of our country’s closest neighbors.

Paul J. Baicich (pronounced *base-itch*) has been an active birder since his early teens in New York City. His concerns include an abiding interest in bird conservation and policy, as well as studies in avian breeding biology, waterfowl, and the practice of bird feeding over the decades. Among his many activities, he worked for the American Birding Association in multiple roles, has worked for the National Wildlife Refuge System on a consultant basis on issues of popular birding and parallel refuge receptiveness, and has led (or co-led) trips from Alaska to Cuba. In addition, Paul co-edits (with Wayne Petersen) the popular monthly *Birding Community E-bulletin* and writes a regular column, “Quick Takes,” for *Bird Watcher’s Digest*. In 2014, Paul received the Ducks Unlimited “Wetland Conservation Achievement Award” in the category of Communications.

Club programs will be presented online using Zoom. The portal will open at 7:00 p.m. At 7:30 p.m. there will be a few brief announcements and then the program will begin. On the HCBC website’s Home page, click on the “[Coming Events Details](#)” tab at the top of the page.

LEUCISTIC WHITE-THROATED SPARROW



Lynn Gregg photographed this bird on February 19 in the Font Hill neighborhood. Birders suggested several different species as potential identification, until Matt Rogosky emphasized the yellow lores, indicating White-throated Sparrow.

WINTER BIRD RECORDS: DECEMBER 1, 2020 – FEBRUARY 28, 2021 BY JOANNE SOLEM

Above average temperatures, open water, and a lack of snow marked early winter. Seasonal temperatures, snow, and ice arrived at the end of January continuing through most of February.

The bird of the season was an immature male Western Tanager seen by dozens of birders. Also notable were Iceland Gull, Rough-legged Hawk, Common Redpoll, and Painted Bunting.

Early on 1/12, a Snow Goose in a flock of Canada Geese was spotted over the
(Records continued on page 2)

(Records continued from page 1)

Robbins SkyWatch at Mt. Pleasant (MTPLT) (LGg); ~11:00 a.m. likely the same bird was flying west with Canadas along I-70 near the Mariottsville exit (J/MHr); by noon, it was at the Willow Green Pond along Mariottsville Rd (LGg). A family group of five Snows rested at Pigtail 2/20 (KMcP, SWb, ALx, ph.).

As usual the last few years, Scott's Pond, South Trotter Rd consistently attracted **Cackling Geese**. The season's high was noted there on 1/29 when ~25 were counted on the ground with 250 Canadas; later, a one-species flock of 28 was seen and heard leaving the pond (WE); six remained on 2/27 (WE). This small, short-necked, small-billed species was reported from at least 13 sites (most with photos) including less frequently reported Waverly Pond 12/12 (RRf), cemetery pond on Jennings Chapel Rd 12/26 (JHf), Iager Blvd ponds at Maple Lawn 12/28 (J/MHr), and Dawn Acres Pond, west of West Friendship Park (WFRDP) 2/13 (JCu).

Just as the Nov peak of southward **Tundra Swan** movement heralds the arrival of winter, so their northward push in late Feb is a sign of approaching spring. One bird, along Old Frederick Rd 2/19 (RRf), was a foretaste of more to come. The night of 2/25 found swans statewide heading north under an almost full moon. The morning of 2/26 at least 800 rested on Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS) (JHf), a significant number for this county. Most local records of 1,000 – 2,000 are multiple flocks of flyovers. Numerous swan flocks were reported countywide during this period.

Race Road Wetlands (RACRW) again proved attractive to **Northern Shovelers** and **Gadwalls** with a high of 18 on 1/3 for the former (RRf) and 32 on 2/15 for the latter (GPn). The **American Wigeon** high was 42 at TRIRS 2/26 (JHf). TRIRS occasionally produces wild **Mallards**—birds that are suspicious and easily frightened. Triadelphia Christmas Count on 12/19 tallied 110 on that reservoir (JHf). The **Northern Pintail** high was 85 at TRIRS 2/26 (JHf); the number at Browns Bridge on Duckett Reservoir peaked at 28 on 2/27 (KCK).

After a winter with no **Canvasbacks** in 2019-20, records from at least eight sites this winter were a welcome change. Movement was concentrated the last half of Feb. Two were spotted on Dawn Acres Pond on 2/13 (JCu); the high count was 60 at TRIRS 2/26 (MLC, MMx), and the last three were present on the Gorman Farm Pond 2/27 (KCK). **Redheads** are infrequent. A few appeared in late Jan through Feb; the high was a flock of 25 at CENPK on 1/29 (RHI). The high count of **Ring-necked Ducks** was 171 at the Willow Green Pond 1/17 (GPn). One **Long-tailed Duck** appeared at TRIRS 12/31 (KTn, ph.), two were there on 2/17 (KTn, ph.), and two rested at CENPK 2/13 (BTs). **Common Goldeneyes** are always notable. In addition to two at TRIRS 12/27 (AKr, SUB), singles were seen by many birders at Lake Elkhorn and at Gateway; individuals at Iager Blvd ponds 2/16 (J/MHr) and the Johns Hopkins APL Pond 2/27 (TFy) were at unexpected sites.

Hooded Merganser numbers peaked at 41 at Lake Elkhorn 2/23 (DMs). **Common Mergansers** are one of the few species of waterfowl wintering locally in significant numbers. The first six were reported at TRIRS 12/4 (ALw), a number that grew to at least 1,400 by 12/19 (JHf). Their presence elsewhere in the county is unpredictable. One made a brief appearance at Lake Kittamaquundi 1/5 (BMy). Among the many Common Mergs at TRIRS, sharp-eyed birders usually pick out a few **Red-breasted Mergansers**. Winter's high was 11 there on 12/31 (N/STe). One was reported from CENPK 12/3 (SLk)

At least 10 **Wild Turkey** sightings spanned much of the county with a high of 11 in the Patapsco scrubland near Sykesville 12/18 (FLv). The **Rock Pigeon** flock specializing in handouts at local shopping centers reached 91 at Long Gate 2/19 (DMs). The **Mourning Dove** high was 230 at WFRDP 1/5 (JHf)

The **Killdeer** peak of 25 was noted at the soggy area at Ten Oaks Rd/Brighton Dam Rd 2/25 (SLk). **American Woodcock** moved in late Feb with three reports the evening of 2/27: Gateway Business Pk (SMu), RACRW (KCK), and Cavey La (RRf). Occasionally, **Wilson's Snipe** are detected in winter. Two were noted at Iager Blvd ponds, Maple Lawn 12/28 (J/MHr); at least one remained all season. Other locations noted were Meadow Lake Dr/Clark's Meadow Dr 12/19 (MW), Folly Quarter Rd 1/2 (GPn), Cavey La 1/20 (RRf), and Ten Oaks Rd/BrightonDam Rd 2/25 (MKw).



Wilson's Snipe

by Tim Frye

Eight **Great Black-backed Gulls** at the Jessup Trash Transfer Station crossed the county line on 12/16 (JHf). A first-cycle **Iceland Gull** at the same location was one of winter's choice birds. It was reported initially on 12/30, eventually making its way into Howard Co (JHf, ALw, KS, KTn).

Of the two/three **Common Loons** reported from TRIRS during the fall season, one was still present on 12/1, with reports continuing until mid Feb. One or two **Double-crested Cormorants** were noted at the major lakes and reservoirs all winter. Likewise, a few **Great Blue Herons** found sufficient open

(Records continued on page 3)

(Records continued from page 2)

water to remain for the season. Oddly, one heron perched on the roof of a house at Stone Hill Dr 12/13 (KLz).

A wing-tagged **Turkey Vulture** was observed in both counties at Jessup 12/30 (KTn). The tag number, date, and location were reported to the USGS Bird Banding Lab; in return, a Certificate of Appreciation was sent to Kristin. The bird, hatched in 2018 or earlier, was banded in Allentown, PA on 10/1/20.

This winter's high **Bald Eagle** count was 18 at TRIRS 12/23 (KTn). This species is a major conservation success story reflected in local records. When the HCBC was founded in 1972, eagles were extremely unusual; in fact, 1979 was the last year in which ZERO Bald Eagles were reported in the county. Today, sightings can be expected countywide year-round, and the number of nesting pairs continues to rise.

A **Red-tailed Hawk**, carrying sticks to a nest on Crows Foot Rd 2/5, was beginning nest building unusually early (KTn). A light-phase **Rough-legged Hawk** sailed over Crows Foot Rd the afternoon of 2/4 (RHI, ph., MLC, GPn, DMs, MMx, TFy). At Alpha Ridge Pk the morning of 2/5, a light-phase Rough-leg was spotted over the adjoining landfill (JHf); it was last reported 2/9 (ALw). Although there are only about two dozen county records, a few birders may remember that this buteo was an annual species at the landfill in the 1990s.

A dead **Barn Owl** was found adjacent to a wet meadow at McNeal Rd 1/13 (MW). Two **Long-eared Owls** spent part of the winter on private property in the Clarksville area (EMk); they disappeared after mid-Feb. One/two **Eastern Screech-Owls** (usually a red phase, by mid-Feb sometimes a gray) roosted much of the winter in a box at Long Corner Rd (MPw); one gray appeared periodically in a cavity entrance along Shaffersville Rd (MPw). A red phase bird roosted daily from 11/2 through the winter in a box on Hallmark Rd. That in itself would be noteworthy; however, on 2/12, two red phase owls appeared in the opening and continued to be seen for several days (WEB). The anticipated flight of **Northern Saw-whet Owls** proved disappointing. Despite several searches at Annapolis Rock, the total was limited whitewash, a few pellets, and one bird that gave a few quick "toots" midday on 2/6 (JSh+).

A pair of **Red-bellied Woodpeckers** excavating a cavity at North Laurel Pk on 2/27 (KCK) were ahead of normal breeding activity for this species

Merlins are aggressive little falcons and are agile aerial predators. One demonstrated its technique along Murphy Rd on 12/19, when it "caught a passerine on the wing and flew off" (J/MHr). In late Feb, one took up residence on a favored perch near Pointers Run E.S. (W/SE). **Peregrine Falcons** were noted at seven sites including one that spent the winter at TRIRS (KTn+) and one seen perched along MD 32 just west of Dorsey Run Rd 1/25 (MLC).

Although **American Crows** are usually nest building during March, one carrying nesting material at Queen Maria Ct on 2/23 was starting a bit early (AKm). Significant numbers of calling **Fish Crows** were counted streaming over Carlee Run Ct 12/3 (KTn-600) and over Cavey La 2/24 (RRf-1,358). A variety of species are building nests on cell towers. A **Common Raven** nest on a cell tower in Kings Contrivance 1/17 (SMu) was taken over by a pair of Ospreys during the spring season (SMu). The Dorsey Search pair was nest building on 2/17 (AAI).

A flock of 65 **Horned Larks** was counted along Old Frederick Rd 2/6 (RRf). The well-verified **Black-capped Chickadee** continued at MTPLT through the season (JHf+). **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were widespread all winter. A **House Wren** was detected in company with a Winter Wren at RACRW 1/19 (RRf, ph.); it was still present 2/7 (KCK; GPn). An ear for the **Winter Wren's** double chip note along with a keen eye for its habitat enabled seven of these mouse-like birds to be tallied at the north end of TRIRS 12/19 (DZk).

At least 630 **American Robins** were flying over Hawthorne Rd 2/11 (KS). Well-camouflaged **Hermit Thrushes** are retiring by nature so counts on 12/19 of 17 in the central section of TRIRS (JWd) and 10 at the north end (DZk) were unusual numbers. In winter, fruit becomes a significant part of their diet. Observations of them eating holly fruit both at the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area 2/10 (CFr) and near Lake Kittamaqundi 2/12 (CKc) was a sign the hard, red fruit had softened.

Gray Catbirds sometimes overwinter in small numbers; they were reported from five sites this season.

American Pipits are drab, open-country birds that usually receive little attention. This winter was an exception. A peak movement coincided with days near the Triadelphia Christmas Ct on 12/19. At least eight parties that day reported them including No. TRIRS (DZk-45), Murray M.S. ballfields (KCK-45), and Fulton Pond (ALx, KMcP, SWb-20). Other good numbers were logged on 12/21 both at Rockburn Branch Pk (BO-22) and at Hopewell Pk, E. Col (CKc-60), 2/5 at So. Trotter Rd (W/SE-24), and 2/16 at Brighton Dam Rd near Ten Oaks Rd (KTn-30).

Evening Grosbeaks were scarce, but even a few records were a plus: 12/8 Sarasota Ct (K/ETn, ph.-1), 12/30 Scaggsville (JHg-1), and 2/28 Savage-Guilford Rd (SRh-3). **Purple Finches** were scattered with ~36 reports, usually five or fewer. The high of 25 was notched on 12/14 at Duvall Rd feeders where they were present all season (KTf); ten were counted at Hunt Ridge 1/24 (CSt). A star of the season was a lone **Common Redpoll** recorded calling as it flew over the north end of TRIRS 12/19 (DZk). **Pine Siskins** continued county-wide. A green form showed up in a flock of 22 at Hermitage Dr (HPT, ph.), with a high siskin count there of 60 on 1/8. The season's high was 85 at Triadelphia Mill Rd 12/16 (JWd).

(Records continued on page 4)

(Records continued from page 3)

After a snowfall, a **Lapland Longspur** was photo'd on 2/1 in a field along Old Frederick Rd, west of MD 32 (RRf); two were picked out at that site on 2/4 (TCr). One or two continued to be reported in this location and along nearby Underwood Rd by many observers until 2/19 (RRf).

Chipping Sparrows used to be considered unusual in winter, but are increasingly remaining during the season—this winter there were reports from ~24 sites, mostly five or fewer birds. Twenty-four were counted at High Ridge Pk 12/5 (KCK), while the Howard Co. Mid-winter Count on 2/13 notched 12 at MTPLT (KS, PLm) and eight at Merriweather Pk at Symphony Woods (J/SGr). Good numbers of **Field Sparrows** wintered with 26 at MTPLT 1/21 (JWd), 22 at WFRDP 12/26 (AGr), and 18 along the South Wind Trail, Mid. Pat. Env. Area 2/9 (BO). At least 10 sites held **American Tree Sparrows** with a high of six at MTPLT on 2/13 (KS, PLm). This was a welcome change from the winter of 2019-20 when not a single one was verified. A leucistic **Dark-eyed Junco** stood out from a flock of 60 at Oxford Square, Coca-Cola Dr 12/6 (JW). Thirty **White-crowned Sparrows** were at a Roxbury farm on 12/19 (MW). Two hours and almost three miles netted 212 **White-throated Sparrows** at Blandair 1/15 (KS). Twenty-five **Savannahs** at Underwood Rd on 2/3 (JHf) was a nice count. Overwintering **Lincoln's** are unusual. One lingered at WFRDP until 12/26 (AGr); it was last reported 1/21 (J/MHr).

Half a dozen **Eastern Meadowlarks** under a feeder were an odd sight at Dorsch Farm Rd 2/27 (*fide* Michele Wright, ph.). For the second consecutive winter, a male **Baltimore Oriole** hung out in the Thornbrook Rd area visiting an apple jelly/orange feeder (JCu). By season's end, it was increasingly battling two **Northern Mockingbirds** who also enjoyed the food options. Another oriole was reported at Swan Point Way, Lake Elkhorn, a bird that returns to a favorite location each winter (PBc, ph.; *fide* KS). **Rusty Blackbirds** appeared, as usual, in small numbers: WFRDP 1/5 (JHf-2), Sewell's Orchard 1/29 and 2/7 (BMy-1), RACRW 2/10 (GPn-1), and Cavey La 2/26 (RRf-2).

Very occasionally, a migrant warbler is noted long after the usual departure date. This season there were several. A **Tennessee Warbler** became the first winter county record (and one of the few state records) when it appeared at Sarasota Ct 12/18 (E/KTn, ph.). It was spotted in the same shrub again on 12/21 (ETn). Even more astonishing was a second Tennessee on 12/19 at Softwater Way, E. Col (D/LGs, ph.) One might assume it was the same bird; however, the two sites are 8.7 miles apart so it seems unlikely. (There were other Tennessee records as far north as New England during the same period.) A **Wilson's Warbler** was also late. It spent time at a St. Michael's Rd feeder 12/20 and 12/25, then from 1/2 sporadically until 1/24 (MSy). **Orange-crowneds** are among the latest warbler migrants and sometimes winter. One was present during late Dec/early Jan at a feeder at Savage-Guilford Rd (SRh). It was last reported 1/24 (S/CPr). Two yellow **Palms** were another oddity in winter: one at WFRDP 1/11 (LGn,

ph.), was the second Jan county record; another at So. Branch Pk, Sykesville 2/17 (D/RLp) was the second Feb record. **Pine Warblers** may overwinter in small numbers. One at Crest Lawn Memorial Gardens on 2/28 was at a regular site (JCu).

The star of the season was an immature male **Western Tanager**, the county's second record. A photo taken at a Howard Lodge Dr feeder was posted on social media 1/29 (CTr). A Baltimore birder recognized the species and requested permission to bring a few people to view it (BPI); it was seen early on 1/30. Although the homeowner (JTr) generously permitted additional birders to visit the site, the bird was not seen again that day. It was last noted about noon on 2/1 by residents. That same evening the HCBC webmaster received an email asking if Western Tanagers were possible here (PBs). When she submitted a photo to the Merlin app of a bird that arrived at her feeder that afternoon, the most likely ID was W. Tanager, but its western range was puzzling her. For birders, it was a lucky inquiry for the tanager appeared to have moved less than a mile from the initial site. The email was forwarded to Field Trip Chair Joe Hanfman who arranges rare bird visits. He contacted the homeowner, worked out details for viewing, and announcements were sent to the club's Rare Bird Alert and various social media as to how to secure a viewing time. From 2/4-6, small groups were given two-hour slots. Each day, Joe checked with the homeowner to arrange for another day's visits. During the three days, 68 people were scheduled; at least 52 saw the bird. There was still a waiting list when weather forced cancellation of all visits. After several ice/snowstorms, the bird's visits became increasingly erratic with the last sighting on 2/21 (PBs).



Western Tanager

by David Sandler

A female **Painted Bunting** appeared sporadically throughout the season in the east-central area where one had been seen the winter of 2019-20. Reports came from two sites (KLz; SEm). Although the bird's visits were maddeningly brief and unpredictable at a feeder in a fenced yard, an attempt was made to allow birders access. Arranged visits in early Jan

(Records continued on page 6)

WATERFORD FLATS

BY WES EARP



by Sue Earp

On April 1, the Howard County Bird Club (HCBC) and Sharps at Waterford Farm opened Waterford Flats. This shorebird habitat lies on a retired crop field in the Cattail Creek floodplain. Each spring and fall a three-acre pool will be slowly emptied creating a receding shoreline and fresh mudflats in an effort to attract shorebirds.

An interest in scaling-up the club's habitat endeavors grew out of the Dickcissel nesting effort. The spark came from learning of successful partnerships with California farmers managing for shorebirds. With the funds bequeathed by Martha Chestem, the club only needed a site with an enthusiastic owner. We were fortunate to find such a location at Sharps at Waterford Farm in Brookeville.

The history of Waterford Flat's creation includes designs, permits, contractors' bids, and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between HCBC and Sharps at Waterford Farm. In addition to a thousand-foot dike, the work required installation of water control pipelines, a drainage ditch, and diversion to exclude storm water. The design work was performed by the Howard Soil Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service

(NRCS). Sharps at Waterford handled soliciting bids but let the HCBC select the contractor. Mark D. Hereth Construction LLC was chosen as the builder and the work was performed in the fall of 2020. Funding was provided by the HCBC and NRCS – Environmental Quality Incentive Program.

The habitat will be co-managed with Sharps at Waterford Farm to include waterfowl. The facility compliments three nearby aquatic habitats – a three-acre pond, a quarter-acre non-tidal wetland, and a one-acre shallow waterfowl impoundment.

The pool began filling late last fall for the waterfowl season, but not too late to attract two Greater Yellowlegs and a flock of 45 Killdeer. Waterford Flats is open for viewing between April 1 to June 15 and July 15 to September 30. The current MOU is for five years and farm access is based on MOU guidelines. First time visitors first must view the training video, which can be accessed through the "[Announcements](#)" link on the club's website. Once you've learned the routine feel free to visit this unique Howard County shorebird habitat.

See note below regarding access rules.

SHOREBIRD HABITAT COMMITTEE

All who visit Waterford Flats during shorebird migration seasons should appreciate the hard work done by the Shorebird Habitat Committee. Members of the committee are

Wes Earp, Chair
John Harris
Russ Ruffing
Brian Moyer
Mary Maxey
Mary Lou Clark
Kristin Trouton
David Sandler

Russ Ruffing and John Harris developed the concept, briefed the HCBC board of directors (BOD), and were named to the committee when it was formed.

Wes Earp chaired the committee, coordinated with the owner of Sharps at Waterford Farm, and did the engineering for the site.

John Harris developed the Memorandum of Understanding

in coordination with the farm owner and the BOD.

The committee, working with the farm owner, established protocols for accessing and managing the site.

On-site and virtual training sessions were conducted, per agreement with the farm owner to control access to the site. Thanks to Kelsey Wellons for providing technical support for the training video.

The committee will actively participate in the ongoing management of the site.

Thanks to John Harris for providing much of the material for this article.

NOTE: The farm owner is limiting visits to trained members of the Howard County Bird Club. The site is open during spring and fall shorebird migration: 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. April 1 to June 15 and July 15 to September 30. Access is to Waterford Flats only; birders do not have access to other areas of the farm.

MARYLAND/DC BREEDING BIRD ATLAS 3

BY SUE MULLER

The nesting season for the second year of the MD/DC BBA3 is well under way.

House Sparrows were documented carrying nest material in January! As common as this bird is, there are still six blocks that need this species confirmed as a breeder. Be looking in your neighborhood for these birds collecting nest material. You can also look for them in parking garages and building nests around light fixtures. Be sure to submit any breeding observations of this species via the MD/DC BBA(3) portal in eBird.

Canada Goose pairs can be seen at many sediment ponds getting ready for the nesting season. We still need to confirm this very common breeding bird in ten blocks! Be sure to check for nesting Canada Geese and submit your observations through the Atlas portal.

American Woodcock were documented migrating through the county starting in late February. Atlasers will need to return to areas where they were documented to see if any remained in the area to breed past the safe date of 4/15. We had no confirmed nests for this species in the last Atlas. Let's hope!

Migrants are returning every day! Be on the lookout for Osprey carrying sticks. We had three confirmed nests last year, all on cell towers! Be sure to check cell towers at every opportunity and enter any nest observations into the Atlas por-

tal in eBird. Last year we had Bald Eagles, Osprey, Common Ravens, and European Starlings nesting on cell towers.

Do you have a nest box in your yard? You can contribute nesting observations from the comfort and safety of your own home by submitting your nest box observations into the Atlas portal in eBird. We still need breeding confirmations for Eastern Bluebird, House Wren, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Tree Swallow, and Carolina Wren.

As the main nesting season is upon us, it is a good idea to brush up on "Atlasing Tips". Follow these links for some tips on birding from Dave Ziolkowski and Jo Solem:

<https://howardbirds.website/birding/breeding-bird-atlases/bba3/breeding-bird-atlas-tips-by-dave-ziolkowski/>.

<https://howardbirds.website/birding/breeding-bird-atlases/bba3/breeding-bird-atlas-tips-solem/>.

If you are not involved yet, no worries! It is not too late to contribute to this project. A good place to get started is the Howard County Bird Club MD-DC-BBA3 web page to review the resources available to you (maps, FAQ section, BBA3 handbook, observation tips, and more): <https://howardbirds.website/birding/breeding-bird-atlases/bba3/>. Contact information for your County Coordinators can be found there as well.

(Records continued from page 4)

were minimally successful and were canceled when the bird was a "no-show" for days. It did appear on 1/31 during a snowstorm accompanied by a male Purple Finch and was last seen 2/24 (KLz). Photo on p. 7.

Exotics: European Goldfinch. Mother Nature's, Oakland Mills, E. Col. A male appeared at their feeders 1/5. Although this eye-catching bird was likely an escaped caged bird, there are areas of the U.S. where populations have become established—not yet locally, however. In late Jan, the bird moved to the Lake Elkhorn area where it was still present at the end of the season (ALw). Photo on p. 7.

Abbreviations: CENPK – Centennial Park, MTPLT – Mount Pleasant, ph. – photograph, RACRW – Race Road Wetlands, TRIRS – Triadelphia Reservoir, WFRDP – West Friendship Park.

Appreciation: *Editing assistance from Joe Hanfman, Howard Patterson, and Ruff Ruffing was essential and much appreciated.*

Observers: AAI – Annette Allor, PBe – Paul Baicich, PBs – Przemek Bialas, TCr – Tim Carney, Kck – Ken Clark, MLC – Mary Lou Clark, JCu – Jeff Culler, SE – Sue Earp, WE – Wes Earp, WEb – Ward Ebert, SEM – Shannon Emmel, CFr – Cheryl Farfaras, TFy – Tim Frye, DGs – David Gottschlich, LGs – Linda Gottschlich, AGr – Aaron Graham, JGr – John Greer, SGr – Sue Greer, LGg – Lynn Gregg, LGn – Liz Guertin, JHf – Joe Hanfman, JHr – John Harris, MHR – Meg Harris, JHg – Jean Higgins, RHI – Russell Hillsley,

AKm – Anne Kaminowitz, MKw – Mike Kerwin, AKc – Acadia Kocher, CKc – Clayton Koonce, ALx – Arnold Lacroix, ALw – Allen Lewis, KLz – Kathy Litzinger, DLp – David Littlepage, RLp – Robert Littlepage, PLm – Paul Littman, FLv – Felicia Lovelett, SLk – Steve Luke, DMs – Dean Mahlstedt, EMk – Elaine Masker, MMx – Mary Maxey, KMcP – Karlyn McPartland, BMy – Brian Moyer, SMu – Sue Muller, BO – Bonnie Ott, CPrr – Cynthia Parr, SPrr – Steve Parr, HPt – Howard Patterson, GPn – Gregg Petersen, BPl – Bud Poole, MPw – Mary Prowell, SRh – Stephen Roth, RRf – Russ Ruffing, MSy – Michael Sayago, KS – Kurt Schwarz, JSh – Jay Sheppard, CSt – Chuck Stirrat, CTr – Christina Taylor, JTr – Jerry Taylor, NTe – Nathan Tea, STe – Stella Tea, BTs – Bill Townsend, ETn – Eric Trouton, KTr – Kristin Trouton, KTF – Kate Tufts, SUB – Severin Uebbing, MW – Mark Wallace, JWd – Josh Ward, SWb – Sarah Wiesbrock, JW – Jim Wilkinson, MWr – Michele Wright, DZk – Dave Ziolkowski.

COVID-19

HCBC field trips and other in-person activities have been canceled or changed to on-line events due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Any changes will be posted on the club website and/or via Newsgam.

HOWARD COUNTY MID-WINTER COUNT - FEBRUARY 13, 2021

BY JOE HANFMAN

A cold and cloudy day with temperatures 28 to 36° F. There was three inches of snow and sleet on the ground and roads making travel difficult in areas. The ponds were 95% frozen and rivers were flowing. Freezing rain started later in the morning causing many counters to get off the road. Triadelphia Reservoir had very limited coverage due to the weather conditions. We recorded 81 species which is the second lowest count in the last 35 years. The total number of individual birds was 16,168 which is the lowest number ever recorded. It is also 148,732 below the maximum number of birds recorded.

The top bird was a Western Tanager seen for the first time ever on the count. A Black-capped Chickadee was seen for only the third time on the count and a Baltimore Oriole was seen for only the fourth time on the count. A non-countable European Goldfinch was observed and is not included in the totals.

All time high counts were recorded for Bufflehead (33) and Fish Crow (868).

All-time low counts were recorded for Mallard (84), Rock Pigeon (21), Mourning Dove (205), Ring-billed Gull (157), Turkey Vulture (37), Red-tailed Hawk (11), Downy Woodpecker (104), American Kestrel (1), Carolina Chickadee (88), Tufted Titmouse (104), European Starling (757), Northern Mockingbird (52), Field Sparrow (25), Yellow-rumped Warbler (2), and Northern Cardinal (434).

Fifty of the 81 species tallied have been seen on all 35 Mid-winter Counts. 73 of the 81 species tallied have been seen on at least 50% of all 35 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, Northern Pintail, Common Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Wild Turkey, Pied-billed Grebe, American Coot, Herring

Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Northern Harrier, Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Brown Thrasher. This was the only count that Barred Owl and Golden-crowned Kinglet were missed. ([Count table](#) on p 8.)

94 White-tailed Deer were tallied on count day.

Many people contributed to the success of the day. 60 observers spent 89.2 hours and covered 104.2 miles on foot and 171.7 miles by car. Another 50.8 hours were spent feeder watching, plus 3.2 hours stationary and .3 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*). Due to COVID-19 protocols, the tally was done virtually with Zoom.

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, Tom Feild, Brenda Kidera, Geraldine King, Kathie Lillie, Woody Merkle, Kent Middlekuuff, Pam & Mike Perna, Mary Prowell, Robin Todd, Lisa Troutman, Bruce Woodward; *Area 2.* **Brian Moyer**, Karan Blum, Jeff and Karen Culler. *Area 3.* **Chuck Stirrat**, Przemek Bialas, Mary Lou Clark, Ralph Cullison, Joe Hanfman, Steven Jones, Paul Littman, Felicia Lovelett, Mary Maxey, Tom Miller, Russ Ruffing, Betsy Taylor. *Area 4.* **Mike McClure**. *Area 5.* **Allen Lewis**, Sue Earp, John & Sue Greer, Clayton Koonce, Howard Patterson, Sue Probst, David Sandler, Sherry Tomlinson; *Area 6.* **John Harris**, Meg Harris, Brigitte Lund, Janet Lydon. *Area 7.* **Kurt Schwarz**, Tracy Eve, Alyssa Hemler, Rentz Hilyer, Ed & Sylvia Huestis, Anne Looker, Rosa Lubitz, John McKitterick, Barry Miller, Sue Muller, Wendy Ormont, Jo Solem, Michelle Stewart, Eva Sunell, Jim Wilkinson, Lilly Zuberi.



Purple Finch and Painted Bunting

by Kathy Litzinger



European Goldfinch

by Allen Lewis

Howard County Mid-Winter Count - February 13, 2021					
	Totals		Totals		Totals
Cackling Goose	2	American Crow	952	Red-winged Blackbird	287
Canada Goose	5,572	Fish Crow	868	Brown-headed Cowbird	80
Gadwall	3	<i>crow species</i>	498	Common Grackle	206
American Wigeon	5	Common Raven	1	<i>black bird species</i>	31
Mallard	84	Horned Lark	62	Yel.-rump'd (Myrtle) Warbler	2
American Black Duck	30	Carolina Chickadee	88	Western Tanager	1
Canvasback	2	Black-capped Chickadee	1	Northern Cardinal	434
Ring-necked Duck	10	Tufted Titmouse	104	Total Birds:	16,168
Lesser Scaup	6	Red-breasted Nuthatch	8	Total Species:	81
Long-tailed Duck	2	White-breasted Nuthatch	66	Deer Seen:	83
Bufflehead	33	Brown Creeper	5		
Hooded Merganser	85	Winter Wren	6	Supplemental Data	
Rock Pigeon	21	Carolina Wren	110	Time Start:	6:45 a.m.
Mourning Dove	205	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	6	Time Stop:	5:30 p.m.
Killdeer	2	Eastern Bluebird	133	Hours on Foot:	62.1
Wilson's Snipe	1	Hermit Thrush	5	Hours by Car:	27.1
Ring-billed Gull	157	American Robin	166	Hours by Boat:	.0
<i>gull species</i>	1	Gray Catbird	2	Hours Other:	.0
Great Blue Heron	7	Northern Mockingbird	52	Miles on Foot:	104.2
Black Vulture	63	European Starling	797	Miles by Car:	171.7
Turkey Vulture	37	Cedar Waxwing	44	Miles by Boat:	.0
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	House Sparrow	245	Miles Other:	.0
Cooper's Hawk	14	House Finch	161	Hours Feeder Watching:	50.8
<i>accipiter species</i>	2	Purple Finch	24	Hours Stationary:	3.2
Bald Eagle [ad/im/unk]	7	Pine Siskin	31	Hours "Owling":	.3
Red-shouldered Hawk	49	American Goldfinch	162	Miles "Owling":	.5
Red-tailed Hawk	11	Chipping Sparrow	32		
Belted Kingfisher	9	Field Sparrow	25	Tot. Field Obs. in Area:	51
Red-bellied Woodpecker	119	Fox Sparrow	9	Tot. Field Parties in Area:	45
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	12	American Tree Sparrow	7	Tot. Feederwatchers in Area:	9
Downy Woodpecker	104	Dark-eyed Junco	1,208	Tot. Feeder Parties in Area:	9
Hairy Woodpecker	25	White-crowned Sparrow	24	Total Observers in Area:	60
Northern Flicker	47	White-throated Sparrow	1,902	Total Parties in Area:	54
Pileated Woodpecker	17	Savannah Sparrow	48	Tot. Field Pty-Hrs (Reg.):	89.2
American Kestrel	1	Song Sparrow	320	Total Party-Hrs (Feeder):	50.8
Merlin	1	Swamp Sparrow	23	Tot. Pty-Hrs (Stationary):	3.2
Peregrine Falcon	1	Eastern Towhee	26	Total Party-Hrs (Owling):	0.3
Eastern Phoebe	4	Eastern Meadowlark	4	Total Party-Hours:	143.5
Blue Jay	146	Baltimore Oriole	1	Totals	

MAY COUNT IS SATURDAY, MAY 8, 2021

BY AMY ANDERSON

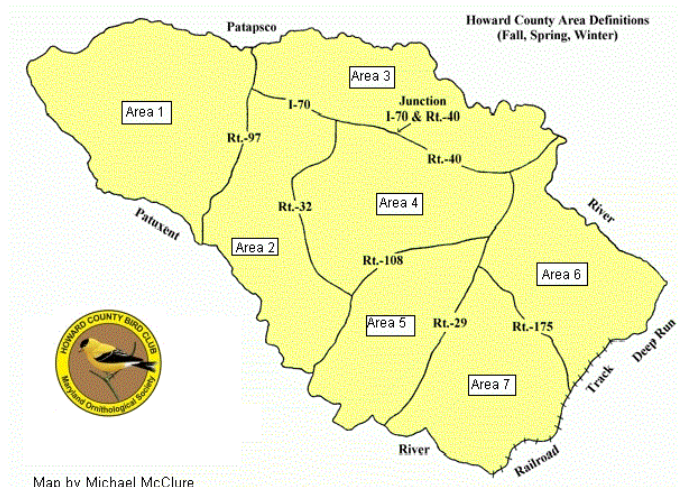
As I write this, we are in the early stages of migration, the time of year when more birds can be found than any other time. We will see more and more species in the coming weeks until the peak in early May. May Count, always the second Saturday in May, is on May 8th this year. Gregg Petersen and I are replacing Kevin Heffernan after his long and faithful leadership of this effort for 15 years! So, we say thanks so much, Kevin, and we will ask for your assistance as Gregg and I hope to carry on this effort that Kevin has done so well for so very long.

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. The total for 2019 was 138. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was no coordinated May Count for 2020. Individuals who participated sent their data to MOS and the total species for the county was 128.

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 (904-891-4458) and I will try to place you in a location where you would have a good chance of seeing that bird.

Area 1	Wes Earp	410-531-3197
Area 2	Brian Moyer	410-441-9901
Area 3	Chuck Stirrat	443-462-8234
Area 4	Mike McClure	410-531-2780
Area 5	Amy Anderson	904-891-4458
Area 6	Gregg Petersen	202-256-8166
Area 7	Allen Lewis	443-774-4210

At the end of the day, all of the counters are invited to phone in to a tally rally Zoom call to share what was seen and come up with the county totals. It is a great opportunity to swap stories of the day and find out what everyone else has seen. The Zoom will start at 6:30 p.m. The completed checklist must be turned in to the area coordinators by the tally rally. If you cannot make it, be sure that your checklist gets delivered or gets called in by 7:00 p.m. We will find out what rarities were seen and often go out the next day to try to relocate them.



eBird Milestone

Howard County's 100,000th eBird checklist was recorded on March 8, 2021. Unfortunately, eBird data did not allow precise identification of who submitted that specific list (so if you submitted a checklist on March 8, claim the record!). Thanks to Ken Clark for noticing that the milestone was imminent.

A total of 2,428 eBirders have reported 309 species in Howard County to eBird, from locations including 111 hotspots. Centennial Park is the top location, with 236 species reported. Note: the official HCBC list is 310 species. eBird includes the European Goldfinch, which is not countable, and does not include two species which the club does count.

For additional details, including recent visits, recent photos, top birders, and more, open eBird, then select Explore, Explore Regions, and enter Howard, Maryland or click on this link: [Howard, MD, US - eBird](#)

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 2021 issue is July 25, 2021.

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The May 27 board meeting will be held by teleconference or videoconference. If you have input or questions, please send an email to Mary Maxey at maxeymom11998@gmail.com.



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

P. O. BOX 1323

COLUMBIA MD 21044-1323

May/June 2021 - Inside This Issue

Programs	Winter Bird Records
Waterford Flats	Shorebird Habitat Committee
BBA3	COVID
Mid-Winter Count	May Count
eBird Milestone	BOD Meeting

Sign of Spring

This Northern Flicker found Bonnie Ott's first cicada of the year on 7 April at Centennial Park

