Howard County Bird Club
A Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society
Board of Directors Meeting - Minutes
Thursday, May 23, 2019

Attendance [Presence indicated by check mark (√)]

2015-2016 Club Officers:
President: Mary Lou Clark √
Vice-president: Mary Maxey √
Secretary: Chuck Stirrat √
Treasurer: Brian Moyer
Interim Treasurer: Cindy Albright
Chap. Directors: Allen Lewis (1st yr.) √
                   David Sandler (2nd yr.) √
State Directors: Sarah Romero √
                   Vacant
Past President: John Harris √

Chapter Committees:
Field Trips: Joe Hanfman
Programs: Jane Geuder, Sue Muller
Conservation: Kurt Schwarz
Newsletter: Howard Patterson
Records: Jo Solem √
Webmaster: Bob Solem √
Potluck: Kathie Lillie √
Publicity: Allen Lewis
Butterflies: Kevin Heffernan
Others: Wes Earp √, Robin Todd √,
        Clayton Koonce √, Kelsey
        Wellons √, Russ Ruffing √,

General Notes
Meeting was held in home of Mary Lou Clark. Total number in attendance was 15. Attendance at the regular club meeting held May 9 was ~55 people. Gail Mackiernan gave a program entitled “Mongolia: Birding in the Footsteps of Genghis Kahn.” Newly elected Board members Clayton Koonce and Kelsey Wellons were attending their first meeting.

Officer’s Reports

Review of Minutes/Secretary (Stirrat): The minutes were accepted as distributed following the last meeting.

Treasurer’s Report/Treasurer (Albright): No Treasurer’s Report was received. Chuck stated he would contact Cindy and ask if she can generate a report as of the end of April.

President’s Remarks (Clark): Mary Lou deferred her comments to the Business portions of the meeting.

Vice-President’s Remarks (Maxey): Mary had no remarks.

Chapter Committee Reports

Field Trips (Hanfman): Mary Lou commented that Felicia Lovelett was considering cancelling the field trip scheduled for the coming Saturday due to a search for a missing person in her neighborhood. Subsequently the trip was held as the police had confirmed the risk to others was minimal.

Records (Jo Solem): Jo summarized the significant sightings since our last board meeting. These included: Hooded Merganser (1 female with 6 young) at MPEA; two reports of Whip-poor-will from Western Howard County on 4/23 & 5/4 (both were migrants heard only one night – it has been 3 years since last reported); Virginia Rail (1) recorded by Russ NFC equipment on 4/30; Dunlin (1) found by Russ Ruffing and seen by multiple observers on Old Frederick Road; American Bittern seen multiple days at Mt. Pleasant and 1 observed on 5/11 at Belmont; one Glossy Ibis was found on the Mihm Farm on 5/11 (1/4 mile east of Morgan Station Road bridge over Patapsco River); Osprey are nesting on relay tower on Murphy Road for second year (5/20); Mississippi Kite were observed on evening of 5/19 (1 at Blandair and 1 off US 29) and on morning of 5/20 at Font Hill Wetland Park (1). Fort
Smallwood hawk watch reported 24 Mississippi Kites on 5/20. Other sightings include two Barred Owl fledglings photographed at Gwynn Acres on 5/14 suggest unusually early egg date of early March; one Alder Flycatcher was at Waterford Farm on 5/6; a Brown Creeper found at Robinson Nature Center on 5/18 was late but not the latest and suggests nesting may be possible; late Pine Siskins were still being reported as of 5/21 at Thornbrook Road feeder; 1 Clay-colored Sparrow visited an Allview yard on 4/30; warbler highlights included Golden-winged on 5/1 at Gwynn Acres, Mourning on 5/17 at Blandair, and many reports of Yellow-throated; and Dickcissels were reported on Underwood Road on 5/14 and 5/16.

**Conservation** (Schwarz): No report.

**Newsletter** (Patterson): No report.

**Webmaster** (R. Solem): Bob reported that he is “making haste slowly on the conversion project” He has converted all past field trip reports to PDF format.

**Potluck** (Lillie): Kathie reported 44 people attended and the evening was a success. She then announced that the 2020 Potluck will be her last one as coordinator. She intends to write a “how-to” guide for coordinators that follow her. Mary Lou will have to seek a volunteer to replace Kathie, hopefully in time for them to work with her on the 2020 coordination.

**Butterflies** (Kevin Heffernan): No report.

**State Board Reports**

**State Board Meeting** (Clark, Romero, etc.): Annual MOS business meeting will be held at MOS Convention at Chestertown on Saturday evening June 1. A regular MOS Board meeting will be held in Frederick County on Saturday, June 8 at 10:00 AM. Sarah stated she won’t be able to attend as she will need to work. David and Clayton were told they were welcome to attend if they are able to.

**Old Business**

**Creation of Shorebird Habitat in County** – Mary Lou explained that a couple of members (Russ Ruffing, John Harris) had proposed the club pursue creating shorebird habitat, which continues to disappear, using funds from the Marty Chestem bequest. We have learned that it is almost impossible to influence the planning cycle for public (park) land in a manner that would allow for creating this unique type of habitat, e.g. disappearance of habitat at Western Regional Park,. Accordingly the discussion has focused on working with the private sector, e.g. farmers, as we did with the Dickcissel field lease. Russ explained that he had been motivated by a joint project between The Nature Conservancy and eBird (Cornell Lab of Ornithology). The concept was to use eBird data to identify when the peak shorebird migration occurs in the central valley of California and then have The Nature Conservancy pay rice farmers to flood their fields at those peak times (instead of attempting to purchase the land outright). The approach has been very successful and suggests a unique approach to creating habitat just when the birds need it most. *Sec. Note: Following the meeting Russ shared a link to a Washington Post article describing this project in detail.* Russ stated that at the right time if mud appears the birds will come, witness the recent muddy field on Old Frederick Road. Mary Lou then stated what she sees as the goals of this project. Primary goal is to develop habitat with a secondary goal of viewing the birds. Given his professional experience and knowledge of rural Howard County Wes Earp was asked and agreed to help with the project. Initial discussions quickly focused on working with Chuck Sharp and his property, Waterford Farm. A couple of meetings have been held with Chuck and he is interested in the project and wants to hear more. A portion of the Board toured the proposed site with Wes, Russ, and John H. on Sunday May 19 to discuss the issue in advance of this Board meeting.

Wes summarized what he saw as the three major elements to be pursued. 1) Come up with a conceptual design for how to manage water level. 2) Obtain the necessary permissions from government agencies – permits. 3) Present and reach an agreement with Chuck Sharp on responsibilities, management (simple), and access. Wes has already developed a first cut at item 1 which was included in last month’s minutes. As for the permitting process Wes proposes we will need a “state waterway construction permit” as the site is in the floodplain of Cattail Creek. During this process the proposal will be routed to multiple agencies. We may well have to respond to concerns...
rising from this project potentially releasing warm water into a stream theoretically being managed for cold-water fishing. It would be extremely beneficial to have contacts in these agencies that are supportive of our plan. MOS members that are DNR employees should be sought (Gwen Brewer, Lynn Davidson, others?) to aid in finding a proponent in DNR. Russ felt he might have a contact to approach in the Maryland Environmental Service. Someone suggested Tim Carney might be a contact to consider asking although his agency may not be directly involved. During the field visit we had concluded the next step would be to seek board approval to pursue this project with further approval of funds dependent on what that initial investigation revealed. Bob moved that the Board authorize pursuit of this shorebird habitat creation project (i.e., take exploratory actions). The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. Mary Lou then asked for volunteers to be on an Oversight Committee. The following committee members were named: Russ Ruffing, Wes Earp, John Harris, Sarah Romero, David Sandler, and Mary Lou Clark (ex-officio).

In follow-up discussion a number of points that the committee will want to address were mentioned. Need to develop a Water Management Timeline (when, depth, storm water control, pest weed control). Wes felt we might seek advice from others involved in “Moist Soil Management.” He mentioned we might want to speak with those at Blackwater WMA to better understand what works and what doesn’t. Seek contacts in agencies responsible for permitting. Wes also mentioned the potential of working through the Soil Conservation District office and the USDA Environmental Quality Incentive Plan (EQIP).

SkyWatch Refurbishment – During discussion of action items Mary Lou reported that in discussing plans with Woody Merkle he expressed belief that based on HCC experience this project would not qualify as an Eagle Scout project. He also stated that HCC experience and that of many gardeners is that putting plastic down under wood chips for weed control is no more effective than when no plastic is used. He recommended we should just obtain wood chips and have volunteers put down a new layer of chips. Mary Lou stated she has asked Woody to pursue this approach.

New Business

BioBlitz help needed at the Howard County Conservancy – Mary Lou had received a second request for the club to solicit volunteers to help with the Belmont BioBlitz on June 6 and 7. Bob reported that such an appeal had already been sent in a club NewsGram (April 6).

Audio-visuals help needed – Kathie has been helping John McKitterick but she is resigning. David Sandler has agreed to help but hasn’t really been active. Kevin Heffernan was also mentioned as having said he could help. It would be good to get another volunteer as all of these people occasionally travel together and could be gone. At last meeting we discussed issues with the equipment not left in a compatible configuration for our use requiring calling in Kevin Costen of RNC for assistance. David agreed to talk with John McKitterick to understand what the issues are and then contact Kevin Costen to discuss this issue.

Potluck Dinner Help Needed – See Potluck committee report above.

2019 Seed Sale Schedule Set – The seed sale schedule has been agreed to by Ward Ebert, Jeff Friedhoffer, Brian Moyer, Bob Solem, and The Wildlife Authority. The pickup dates will be October 5-12.

Chimney Swift Tower – Russ Ruffing had asked the Board to consider donating a Chimney Swift tower at Mt. Pleasant to the Howard County Conservancy. Russ stated he has decided to design and build a tower on his property and the Board might want to wait and see the results of his project before taking any action. The Board agreed this would make sense as if he doesn’t successfully get swifts it wouldn’t make sense for us to have one installed at Mt. Pleasant. Russ was reminded that Felicia Lovelett had a tower built on her property but is has not attracted swifts. It was suggested he might want to investigate her situation for any lessons learned.

Sustainability Concerns at General Meetings – Mary Lou reported that a member had approached her about the club’s use of plastic glasses with refreshments at regular meetings. They suggested we might want to set a better sustainability example. Paper cups are also available and we could propose people bring their own cup/glass/bottle. After a short discussion we chose to take no specific action on the matter.
Appeal for Atlas Howard County Coordinator – Robin Todd took the opportunity to encourage us to actively seek and find volunteer(s) to serve as county atlas coordinator. He promised Mary Lou he would provide her an updated job description and list of capabilities coordinators should possess.

Board Meeting Schedule for 2019-2020 Club Year – Hosts for the early dates spoke up as shown but we need volunteers for the last four meetings of the club year:

- September 26, 2019 - Mary Lou Clark
- October 24, 2019 - Clayton Koonce
- November 21, 2019 - Allen Lewis  (this is 3rd Thursday to avoid Thanksgiving)
- December - NO MEETING
- January 23, 2020  - Jo Solem
- February 27, 2020  - NEED VOLUNTEER
- March 26, 2020  - NEED VOLUNTEER
- April 23, 2020  - NEED VOLUNTEER
- May 28, 2020  - NEED VOLUNTEER  (Joint meeting with new and old members)

Around the Room –
- Sarah asked what we knew about development plans for Blandair Park (North). The general consensus was that the plans are to turn it into a more park like setting with amenities but mostly passive vice active (sports) activities. It will very likely be dramatically different habitat than currently.
- Kelsey – asked about a reference she had seen to MOS and/or Bill Hubick referring to a Woodcock habitat creation project in Howard County. She was told this was likely the ongoing efforts at MPEA.
- Clayton reported he responded to the appeal at last club meeting for someone to survey the bird life present around the MedStar building in Columbia for the Safe Skies Maryland project. They are considering extending their monitoring from Howard Community College and wanted a baseline of what is present in that area. He stated he has been doing this already and was able to send Carolyn Parsa his eBird lists to fulfill their needs.

Review of Prior Action Items:
- Develop annual financial report for FY 18-19 as template for future reports – Cindy, Brian & Ward Ebert
- Decide how to proceed with SkyWatch refurbishment – Mary Lou  SEE OLD BUSINESS
- Notify Wes & Mary Lou if want to attend shorebird project site – All  DONE
- Review shorebird project info attached and formulate/share questions before next Board meeting – All DONE
- Order reprint of butterfly pamphlet - Kevin

New/Continuing Action Substances
- Develop annual financial report for FY 18-19 as template for future reports – Cindy, Brian & Ward Ebert
- Order reprint of butterfly pamphlet – Kevin
- Investigate A/V issues at meetings and then speak to RNC staff to see if any corrective actions are available – David
- Solicit volunteer for Potluck Coordinator – Mary Lou
- Kick-off Shorebird Habitat Oversight Committee meetings – Mary Lou
- Contact Cindy and ask her to prepare a quarterly financial report as of April 30, 2019 - Chuck
Board Meeting Schedule

Board meetings are generally held 4th Thursday of month at 7:30 PM

September 27, 2018 - Mary Lou Clark
October 25, 2018 - David Sandler
November 15, 2018 - Allen Lewis (this is 3rd Thursday to avoid Thanksgiving)
December - NO MEETING
January 24, 2019 - Jo Solem
February 28, 2019 - Jo Solem
March 28, 2019 - Karen & Kevin Heffernan
April 25, 2019 - Kathie Lillie
May 23, 2019 - Mary Lou Clark (Joint meeting with new and old members)

Attachments (Copies of handouts provided at meeting and club correspondence filed with original minutes)

- Agenda - May 23, 2019

Minutes submitted by:

[Signature]

Charles R. Stirrat
Secretary, Howard County Bird Club
Howard County Bird Club  
Board of Directors Meeting 

Agenda

May 23, 2019

1. Additions?  
2. Review of Minutes Chuck Stirrat  
3. Old Business-Creation of shorebird habitat in the county  
4. President’s Remarks Mary Lou Clark  
5. Vice President’s Remarks Mary Maxey  

6. Chapter Committee Reports  
   - Field Trips Joe Hanfman  
   - Records Jo Solem  
   - Conservation Kurt Schwarz  
   - Newsletter Howard Patterson  
   - Webmaster Bob Solem  
   - Potluck Kathie Lillie  
   - Butterflies Kevin Heffernan  

7. New Business-  
   - BioBlitz help needed at The Howard County Conservancy  
   - Audio-visuals help needed  
   - Potluck Dinner help needed  
   - 2019 Seed Sale Schedule Set  
   - Chimney Swift Tower  
   - Sustainability concerns at general meetings  
   - Appeal for Atlas Howard County Coordinator – Robin Todd  

8. Action Items Chuck  

9. Around the room  

Meeting Location  
Mary Lou Clark  
5153 Morningside Lane  
Ellicott City, Md 2104