



The Goldfinch

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



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CLUB MEETINGS - BY MARY LOU CLARK

Thursday, November 11, 2021 "Birding in Alaska" by Joe Hanfman. Joe will describe his experiences birding in southeast Alaska, the Kenai Peninsula, Anchorage to Fairbanks, Nome and the Seward Peninsula, Gambell, St. Paul Island, and the Aleutians to Attu. Joe is a member of the Howard County Bird Club. He has visited Alaska nine times between 2000 and 2016.

Thursday, December 9, 2021 "The Wildlife of Uganda" by Bill Young. Bill visited Uganda for three weeks from 2016-2017. He will talk about the wonderful birds and other wildlife he saw there. Bill is a writer who lives in Arlington, Virginia. He is the co-creator of the MPNature website with Ashley Bradford. His book *The Fascination of Birds: From the Albatross to the Yellowthroat* was published by Dover Publications in 2014. He also wrote *Cuma's Voice: An Environmental Utopia*, which imagines a world based on principles of environmental sustainability.

Please note: Club programs will be held on-line using Google Meet. See the [Club Programs and Field Trips](#) page on the HCBC website for details and registration procedures.

SEEKING EDITOR FOR THE GOLDFINCH

Please help find the next editor for *The Goldfinch*. Consider taking this on, or suggest to your friends in the club that they do so. Contact Howard Patterson for more information: howard21042@verizon.net or 410-736-3064.

SUMMER BIRD RECORDS JUNE 1—JULY 31, 2021

BY JOANNE SOLEM

Our shortest season was marked by expected heat and humidity, but few record highs or extended heavy rain. Nineteen July days notched at least 90 F., not unusual for the hottest month of the year. Summer also brought peak Brood X periodical cicada activity—as well as blessed quiet eventually.

Noteworthy summer birds included Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Mississippi Kite, Summer Tanager, and Dickcissel. There were, of course, multiple fine nesting records turned up by atlasers, a few of which will be detailed below.


A pair of **Canada Geese** with small goslings at Loyola Pond 6/19 (SN) was a reminder that not all geese nest in late winter or early spring. **Wood Ducks** continued successful nesting with multiple broods reported into late July. The pond at Broken Land Pkwy/US29 held 32 Woodies on 7/5 (28 non-downy young) (JHf). Two tiny ducklings with a female were present at Centennial Park 7/19 (KTn, ph.). Although broods for this species are usually large, predators often reduce duckling numbers dramatically. On a pond east of Barberry Way, a female with eight tiny ducklings was seen on 6/3; fortunately, in late July there were still six/seven young (VSw).


Wild Turkeys can pop up almost anywhere in the county. Fifteen (three ad.) were counted at Carroll Mill Rd 7/1 (RTd). A sampling of other records included several with young at Gateway 7/2 (GMy), one along Pebble Beach Dr 7/11 (KTn), and an adult with five poults at Alpha Ridge Landfill (ALRGL) 7/15 (RCu). The high count was a flock of two adults and at least 21 poults


(Records continued on page 3)


FALL/WINTER FIELD TRIPS BY [JOE HANFMAN](#)


Because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, field trip leaders may limit the number of participants, require masks, or impose other conditions. For the latest information, please check with the leader or the [Club Programs and Field Trips](#) page on the Howard County Bird Club website shortly before the date of the trip.


 **HOWARD CO. CONSERVANCY C. S. ROBBINS SKYWATCH**
November 6, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. Half day. *Meet at parking lot.* This trip will be strictly a skywatch for late-migrating raptors and other potential goodies. Our main target will be Golden Eagle. While not expected, early November is the best time to catch one flying over Howard County. In a recent year a half-day sky watch less than a mile from this location produced an immature Golden Eagle and a Sandhill Crane, along with good numbers of Bald Eagles and Red-tailed Hawks, plus Northern Harriers, accipiters, and some waterfowl. We will watch the skies and tally the birds as long as conditions are productive. Hope for a north wind. Bring water, lunch, hat, sunscreen, light-colored sunglasses, comfortable lawn chair (recliners are best), binocular, scope (optional), and camera (optional). Participants can also walk the Conservancy trails if skywatching proves non-productive. Facilities available.
Leader – Russ Ruffing, russruffing@gmail.com

 **Centennial Park**
November 7, 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 paths 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.
Leader – David Ziolkowski, dziolkowski@usgs.gov


 **Centennial Park**
November 14, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours. *Meet at the west end parking lot off Centennial Lane.* Easy walking on paved paths around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Facilities available.
Leader – Mary Lou Clark, doctorfx_99@yahoo.com




 **Centennial Park**
November 21, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours. *Meet at the west end parking lot off Centennial Lane.* Easy walking on paved paths around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Facilities available.
Leader – David Holmes, musiclbndr@gmail.com

 **Centennial Park**
November 28, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours. *Meet at the west end parking lot off Centennial Lane.* Easy walking on paved paths around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Facilities available.
Leader – Mary Maxey, maximom11998@gmail.com

 **TRIADELPHIA CHRISTMAS COUNT**
December 18, Saturday. For information or to volunteer to participate, contact the compiler,

David Holmes, musiclbndr@gmail.com, 410-730-7083

 **Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge**
January 8, Saturday, All Day Trip, Plan to stop at the Chop-tank River Bridge for ducks and coffee. Bring lunch and drinks. Dress warmly, Entrance fee, Duck Stamp, or national park pass required, Email the leader to reserve a spot and get details. Facilities available at some locations.
Leader – Kurt Schwarz, krschwal@verizon.net, 410-461-1643

 = Reservations required
 = Great for beginning birders
 = Wheelchair accessible

MARYLAND/DC BREEDING BIRD ATLAS 3 BY SUE MULLER

At the end of the second year of this five-year atlas, Howard County has submitted more than 12,000 checklists into the BBA3 portal. Highlights include five Bald Eagle nest locations and three Red-headed Woodpecker nests! We are low on grassland bird confirmations as well as owls and warblers. Statistics show Howard County has confirmed 99 species. What species will be #100?

Four species have been confirmed in all blocks, Red-winged Blackbird, Chipping Sparrow, Eastern Bluebird and Northern Cardinal. We have several species that only have one or two blocks left to confirm, we should confirm these next year. Also in 2022, the hope is to conduct “Beginner Atlas-ing” field sessions and increase the number of atlasers.

If you are new to atlas-ing, it is never too late to get started, we have three more years of data collection ahead of us! Contact Sue and Dave, they are happy to get you started, Howard@mdbirds.org.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2021-22, go to the HCBC website at <https://www.howardbirds.org/> and click on “Join Us” at the top of the home page.

WINTER FINCH FORECAST

Unlike last winter, this will not be an irruption year for boreal forest birds, although some species will move south into the northeastern United States. Despite the limited expectations, Bonnie Ott saw the season’s first Pine Siskins in her Ellicott City neighborhood on October 3, matching the county’s earliest fall date (10/3/1955). See the complete forecast at [WINTER FINCH FORECAST 2021-2022 By Tyler Hoar – FINCH RESEARCH NETWORK \(finchnetwork.org\)](#) .

(Records continued from page 1)
in a Clarksville yard 7/15 (RO'C, ph.).

Pied-billed Grebes should be long gone by summer. One photographed on Lake Kittamaqundi 6/24 was just the seventh June record (CKe).

Two **Black-billed Cuckoos** were reported in the same general area in late July: Cavey La 7/24 (RRf) and Mount Pleasant (MTPLT) SkyWatch 7/27 (LGg).

Chimney Swifts were carefully documented using a chimney along River Rd, Sykesville. Breeding could be tracked by the sounds in the chimney. The family (two ad., four young) and a few friends were still in the area at the end of the season (FLv). Swifts also used either two or three flues at a home at Wynfield Rd but young were only heard in one flue (RCu). Two flues were used at a So. Trotter Rd home (W/SE).

Many people have feeders for **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds**; few provide nesting material. A gift of a "Hummingbird Helper" (a type of cotton batting in a wire cage) was hung near a feeder at Killingworth Way, W. Col. (SPb). After feeder visits, a female began leaving the yard with nesting material (multiple dates 6/15 -7/15).

Twenty **Killdeer** were counted at Folly Quarter Middle School. 7/24 (CKe). The first mid-July **Spotted Sandpipers** were noted at Wilde Lake 7/14 (MKw) and at MTPLT 7/15 (MKw). Since Spotteds are rare nesters locally, there is often a question as to whether some July birds are really migrants. **Solitary Sandpipers** do not nest locally. The first one appeared at Waverly Pond 7/28 (RRf), followed by one at Folly Quarter M.S. 7/30 (CKe).

One or two **Great Egrets** were noted at the central lakes and at many stormwater ponds including Cyprus Cedar La 7/5 (BO), Homespun Pond 7/5 (DSn), and Waverly Pond 7/25 (RRf). A flock of 12 over MTPLT 7/14 (MKw, HPt, MMx) was an unusual number. **Green Herons** continue to breed at many of the lakes, ponds, and wetlands where there are ample shrubby trees. **Black-crowned Night-Herons** at Wilde Lake are expected and were present in small numbers; one at MTPLT 6/20 (MKw) was more unusual. A juvenile **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** was picked out at LaKe Kittamaqundi 7/14 (CKe), but, after that date, it proved elusive with the last sighting there on 7/22 (PMg fide KWl).



Mississippi Kite

by Bonnie Ott

The cicada emergence brought **Mississippi Kites** in its wake. Three stayed in the vicinity of Summer Hill, W. Friendship

6/26-28 (R/MCu), often putting on a show as they captured flying cicadas. In addition, two perched at Cyprus Cedar La 6/28 (BO), and one was photographed over MTPLT 7/3 (SKg, MKw). Three downy **Red-shouldered Hawks** were in a Kerger Rd nest 6/2 (KLz). A juvenile **Broad-winged Hawk** flew over Driver Rd 6/2 (JW, ph.), in Patasco Valley State Park (PVSP). They were once regular breeders in the northern section of the park. In contrast, a juvenile, photographed at Lake Elkhorn (MKw), was a shocking summer record for that location, although the bird was not a dependent bird. Maybe there is hope for confirming this species in the county during the current atlas. An **Eastern Screech-Owl** was heard at MTPLT 7/30 (MKw), and one called in woods adjacent to Patasco scrubland along River Rd 7/31 (FLv).

In past atlases, attempts to confirm **Red-headed Woodpecker** in the county were consistently frustrated. Breeding was verified, but in parts of blocks in adjoining counties. BBA3 has proven to be different. One pair of Red-headeds nested along A.E. Mullinix Rd 7/4 (SMu); eventually, one fledgling was seen away from the nest cavity with two adults (SMu). A second nest was verified at Bon Secours Spiritual Center 6/23 (RCu), with at least one nestling observed. Sometimes history does seem to repeat itself. A third breeding pair was confirmed at Howard Chapel Rd in the Montgomery Co portion of a block 5/31 and 7/10 (KCK). More than 40 years ago (1980) Jay Sheppard watched a family group in the same general area on the Howard Co side of the river, at that time it was one of the county's only nesting records. A Red-headed was also heard along the Patuxent River at Mullinix Mill Rd 7/11 (MTb).

A **Great Crested Flycatcher** used a deck for sunbathing at Graeoch Rd, Hammond Village 6/30 (PSm). For more examples of this activity, see a recent *Maryland Birdlife* article: 69 (2):13-29.

If your birding experience in the county spans less than a decade, you have no recollection of a time when so-called **Common Ravens** were a rarity. Currently, atlasers continue to find new nests. An observation at ALRGL 7/7 did not verify a new nest, but was fascinating to watch (RCu). Six ravens (one ad.) perched on a communications tower with the youngsters loudly begging. The adult made one foray to the east, returned after 20 minutes, but did not feed any young. Soon the adult again headed east, this time with the young birds in tow. The young were parked in a wooded area near the food composting site making it convenient for the adult to make trips to a compost pile. Several times it extracted some morsel and disappeared into the woods with it, presumably feeding the noisy birds. Eventually, the adult left the whining youngsters and did not return.

Bank Swallows are the least reported of our swallows. The lone bird spotted at Lake Elkhorn 6/13 (GDg) hung around until 6/15 (HPt), almost certainly a late spring migrant. One photographed at Waterford 7/22 was the first of the fall (KCK). **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** nested at the ALRGL in a pipe with a 4-inch opening beneath a semi-trailer 6/7 (RCu). The **Purple Martin** colony at Miller's Grant was successful again this year. A total of 14 compartments in a house and six in nest gourds were monitored regularly (KTn, ESt). There were nine successful nests with 31 fledged young. **House Sparrows** are a continuing problem, but several nest sites were blocked after sparrows began nest-building.

(Records continued on page 4)

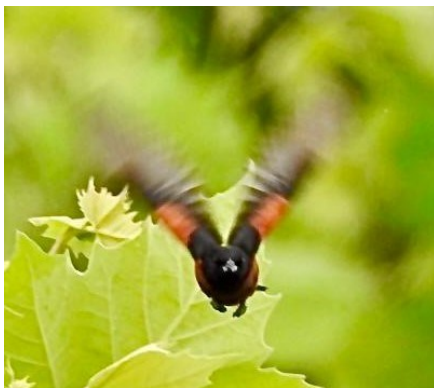
(Records continued from page 3)

Consistent monitoring is essential when the invasive sparrow is present. **Cliff Swallows** began building nests on a beam in an open shed at Waterford Farm, establishing what appeared to be a thriving small colony with as many as 12 nests on 6/15 (WE). (Owner Chuck Sharp verified the colony was new this year.) Unfortunately, all did not end well. Although, at one point, there were as many as three active swallow nests, House Sparrows moved in, occupying nests and filling the jug-like structures with their grassy nesting material; other nests fell down. The swallows tried moving to other beams, but the sparrows followed. After repeated attempts, by late July there was just one occupied swallow nest. There did not appear to have been any successful nestings (MLC, WE, JHr, GPs).

A **Veery** at Rockburn Branch Park 7/13 was a lovely find (BCt). **Cedar Waxwings** are rather uncommon county nesters. Perhaps because they don't begin nest building until the foliage is almost mature, they may be more difficult to track than many species. This year at least four nests were verified, all within a 10-day period. One waxwing was observed nest building at Centennial Pk in late May (HPt), but within a week expanding leaves rendered the nest virtually invisible. An incubating bird was photographed at Quarry Office Park 6/1 (KCK); a pair was seen going to a nest at Iager Blvd Ponds 6/5 (J/MHr), and the same observers photographed a nest near ponds at Montpelier 6/9. (Google maps erroneously label it "Montpeller.")

A healthy count of 19 **Grasshopper Sparrows** at ALRGL was a welcome surprise 6/26 (RCu). The landfill is potentially one of the best sites in the county for breeding grassland species, but each year many nests are destroyed and nesting attempts thwarted by an extremely efficient mowing crew. Occasionally, a **White-throated Sparrow** does not migrate. This summer two were recorded: Long Corner 7/10 (MPw) and Brightwood Ct, Ellicott City 6/3 to end of season (DMs). An **Eastern Meadowlark** nest with eggs at ALRGL 7/21 (RCu) is an example of another grassland species breeding at the landfill.

In the course of field birding in late spring and early summer, John and Meg Harris volunteered to assist Dr. Kevin Omland and his UMBC research team by pinpointing locations where **Orchard Orioles** were present, often breeding. They located the species at 25 different sites! Does that mean that every place they visited yielded the desired orioles? Certainly not. Another 14 sites produced none. All sites were visited at least once between June 5, 2020 and July 4, 2021. The vast majority of examined locations were in the central and southern portions of the county; almost all were near stormwater management ponds. This effort not only produced valuable data for the research team, but it led these two avid birders to an increased understanding of one species' habits and introduced them to new, productive birding sites. Definitely, a winning combination!



Orchard Oriole

by John Harris

For atlasers, spotting a fledgling **Brown-headed Cowbird** is a bittersweet experience. Because this parasitic species does not raise its own young, most juvenile cowbirds are seen following and begging from adults of another species. When that adult feeds the cowbird, the observer confirms two species. That's the good news. The bad news is, almost every fledgling cowbird likely represents a failed breeding attempt by the host. For a common species that is multi-brooded like a Northern Cardinal, raising a cowbird may not have much impact on the population. For a declining species or one listed as threatened or endangered, repeated cowbird parasitism can be disastrous. Among the species that hosted cowbirds in the county this summer were the following: **Acadian Flycatcher** (KCK), **Red-eyed Vireo** (KCK; JDb), **Carolina Wren** (JMCK), **Chipping Sparrow** (RTd), **Field Sparrow** (RCu), **Song Sparrow** (DHm; RCu), **Louisiana Waterthrush** (RRf), **Northern Parula** (J/MHr), and **Northern Cardinal** (RRf; PPn; BCs); **J/MHr**. A **Great Crested Flycatcher** was the sole cavity-nesting host (RCu).

A **Black-and-white Warbler** was noted at Marriottsville 6/7 (JW), a location which has nesting records. A **Prothonotary** was heard near the Thomas Viaduct, Avalon/Orange Grove, PVSP 6/20 (WCw). One or two individuals are reported almost annually in that section, but nesting is infrequent. An agitated **Kentucky Warbler** was seen at Schooley Mill Pk briefly on 7/2; it disappeared but soon returned with an insect (ALK). Nice confirmation of a species that has not been seen there during the breeding season for years. **American Redstarts** nested at Henryton with a female and three fledglings observed 6/25 (MKw). **Yellow-throated Warblers** were noted along the Cascade Trail, PVSP 6/16 (RHA) and west of Woodstock 6/24 (JW) and 7/5 (RCu).

The male **Summer Tanager** east of Marriottsville Rd continued from the last week of May. Multiple observers documented the bird until 6/13 (KS). Despite its ardent singing and enthusiastic attempt to establish a territory, it was not surprising that this male was unable to attract a mate. For birds at the edge of their breeding range, the odds are against them. A second Summer Tanager was observed eating a cicada at Alpha Ridge Pk 6/3 (DMh).

One male **Dickcissel** was singing at Underwood Rd 6/1 (KTn). Visits by many birders over the following two weeks established a single pair on territory including carrying nesting material 6/2 (GPs, VSw; RRF). A pair was still present 6/13 (GPs), but there were no reports after that. It appears that the small colony is slowly winking out.

Many thanks to Joe Hanfman, Howard Patterson, and Russ Ruffing who each cast a sharp eye over the above material.

Abbreviations: ALRGL – Alpha Ridge Landfill, MTPLT – Mount Pleasant, PVSP – Patapsco Valley State Park.

Observers: RHA – Rita Hawrot Allen, KCK – Ken Clark, BCs – Benjamin Costello, WCw – Wendy Crowe, MCu – Mark Cullison, RCu – Ralph Cullison, JDb – Jake Debby, GDg – Gabriel Diggs, SE – Sue Earp, WE – Wes Earp, LGg – Lynn Gregg, JHf – Joe Hanfman, JHr – John Harris, MHR – Meg Harris, DHm – David Holmes, MKw – Mike Kerwin, SKg – Sydney King, CKe – Clayton Koonce, KLz – Kathy Litzinger, ALK – Anne Looker, FLv – Felicia Lovelett, DMs – Dean Mahlstedt, MMx – Mary Maxey, JMCK – John McKitterick, GMy – Guy Moody, SMu – Sue Muller, PMg – Paul Mulligan, SN – Sue Neri, RO'C – Ryan O'Colman, BO – Bonnie Ott, HPt – Howard Patterson, PPn – Pam Perna, SPb – Sue Probst, RRF – Russ Ruffing, DSn – David Sandler, KS – Kurt Schwarz, PSm – Pam Smith, ESt – Eugene Streagle, VSw – Val Swan, MTh – Monte Tarbox, RTd – Robin Todd, KTn – Kristin Trouton, KWI – Kelsey Wellons, JW – Jim Wilkinson

SUMMARY OF THE 2021 HOWARD COUNTY FALL COUNT

BY MIKE MCCLURE AND CHUCK STIRRAT

The twenty-eighth annual Howard County Fall Count was conducted on Sept. 18, 2021, with the count data shown in the table below. This count has turned out to be below average with numbers for the total birds and warblers mostly down countywide. The total number of bird species was down 14 from last year while the number of individuals was down by 43 [$< 0.05\%$]. For the warblers, the species count was down eight while the number of individual warblers was down by 110.

The number of participants, parties, and the overall effort as measured by the hours and miles continued to remain strong despite the unusual circumstances imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the continuing difficulty experienced with fewer birds in the field.

2021 Count Data					
	Observed Birds Countywide		Observed Warblers Countywide		Statistics
	Species	Birds	Species	Birds	
Numbers	112	11,640	18	350	
Historical High:Low	140 : 108	26,651 : 9,293	30 : 13	1,004 : 130	
Year 's of High : Low	2010 : 2004	1994 : 2004	1994 : 2004	1994 : 2004	
Averages for Birds & Species	124.39	15,056.04	23.43	425.32	
Counters : Parties					54 : 50
Counters : Parties Averages					54.5 : 34.1
Counters Hours : Miles					211.5 : 531.8
Counters Hours : Miles Averages					195.8: 419.2

Saturday's temperature started at 66°F. [dew point 64°F.] at 6:00 a.m. with full cloud cover. The temperature rose to 84°F. [dew point 76°F.] in late afternoon. Winds were light to nonexistent from midmorning until early evening. Many areas had fog early and the sky was cloudy throughout the count. The temperature and dew point made for uncomfortable conditions. Imagine how much worse it would have been with full sun for the day.

Bird count participants were Jim & Marilyn Brinkley, Loree Charnigo, Ken Clark, **Mary Lou Clark (Area 6 Coordinator)**, Julia Cooper, Dennis Coskren, Jeff & Karen Culler, Ralph Cullison III, Susan & **Wes Earp (Area 1 Co-coordinator)**, Joe Hanfman, John & Meg Harris, Bill & Gayle Hill, Michael Kerwin, Clayton Koonce, Russell Kovach, Mike Leumas, **Allen Lewis (Area 7 Coordinator)**, Kathie Lillie, Felicia Lovelett, Rachael Mady, Mary Maxey, **Mike McClure (Area 4 & County Co-coordinator)**, John McKitterick, Kari McPartland, Karlyn McPartland, **Brian Moyer (Area 2 Coordinator)**, Sue Muller, Sue Neri, Ben Newton, Karen Osteen, Steve Parr, Howard Patterson, Pam Perna, **Gregg Petersen (Area 3 Co-coordinator)**, Suzanne Probst, Mary Prowell, Russ Ruffing, **Kurt Schwarz (Area 5 Coordinator)**, Jay Sheppard, Jo Solem, **Chuck Stirrat (County Co-coordinator)**, Marcy Stutzman, Valerie Swan, Robin Todd, Laura Van Faasen, **Mark Wallace (Area 1 Co-coordinator)**, Kelsey Wellons, Sarah Wiesbrock.

Plan now to join us on a future seasonal count and if possible attend the tally as well. Next year the 2022 Fall Count will be held on the 3rd Saturday of September which will be the 17th.

Individual species table is on page 6. A full report of the results will be available at the [Seasonal Counts Results](#) page on the club's web site.

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

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The Goldfinch, newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club, is published five times per year. Copy deadline for the January/February 2021 issue is November 25, 2021.

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

The November 18 board meeting will be held by teleconference or videoconference. There will be no board meeting in December. If you have input or questions, please send an email to Mary Maxey at maxeymom11998@gmail.com.

HOWARD COUNTY FALL COUNT RESULTS - SEPTEMBER 18, 2021

Canada Goose	844	Peregrine Falcon	1	House Finch	146
Wood Duck	30	Great Crested Flycatcher	3	American Goldfinch	354
Mallard	79	Eastern Kingbird	5	Grasshopper Sparrow	1
Wild Turkey	32	Eastern Wood-Pewee	81	Chipping Sparrow	127
Pied-billed Grebe	2	Acadian Flycatcher	9	Field Sparrow	19
Rock Pigeon	203	Trail's Flycatcher	2	Savannah Sparrow	3
Mourning Dove	764	Empidonax species	8	Song Sparrow	50
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	7	Eastern Phoebe	57	Eastern Towhee	66
Common Nighthawk	16	White-eyed Vireo	30	Eastern Meadowlark	3
Chimney Swift	60	Yellow-throated Vireo	11	Red-winged Blackbird	104
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	46	Blue-headed Vireo	2	Brown-headed Cowbird	225
Common Gallinule	1	Philadelphia Vireo	1	Common Grackle	102
Killdeer	7	Warbling Vireo	1	Ovenbird	20
Spotted Sandpiper	4	Red-eyed Vireo	110	Northern Waterthrush	1
Greater Yellowlegs	1	Blue Jay	762	Blue-winged Warbler	2
Double-crested Cormorant	12	American Crow	551	Black-&-white Warbler	43
Great Blue Heron	39	Fish Crow	87	Tennessee Warbler	1
Great Egret	2	crow species	316	Nashville Warbler	1
Green Heron	29	Common Raven	10	Common Yellowthroat	61
Black Vulture	70	Carolina Chickadee	278	American Redstart	89
Turkey Vulture	424	Tufted Titmouse	243	Northern Parula	37
Osprey	4	Horned Lark	54	Magnolia Warbler	24
Cooper's Hawk	8	Tree Swallow	8	Bay-breasted Warbler	2
accipiter species	2	Golden-crowned Kinglet	1	Blackburnian Warbler	2
Bald Eagle [ad/im/unk]	13	Cedar Waxwing	49	Chestnut-sided Warbler	10
Red-shouldered Hawk	88	White-breasted Nuthatch	224	Blk.-thrted. Blue Warbler	6
Broad-winged Hawk	58	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	10	Palm Warbler	3
Red-tailed Hawk	14	House Wren	49	Pine Warbler	4
Eastern Screech-Owl	6	Winter Wren	1	Prairie Warbler	2
Great Horned Owl	2	Carolina Wren	401	Blk.-thrted. Green Warbler	10
Barred Owl	5	Gray Catbird	370	unidentified warbler	32
Belted Kingfisher	27	Brown Thrasher	32	Scarlet Tanager	22
Red-headed Woodpecker	2	Northern Mockingbird	158	Northern Cardinal	447
Red-bellied Woodpecker	272	European Starling	882	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	5
Downy Woodpecker	183	Eastern Bluebird	396	Blue Grosbeak	8
Hairy Woodpecker	31	Veery	9	Indigo Bunting	29
Northern Flicker	108	Swainson's Thrush	6		
Pileated Woodpecker	71	Wood Thrush	15		
American Kestrel	7	American Robin	527		
Merlin	2	House Sparrow	244	Area Total Birds:	11,640
				Area Total Species:	112

PHONE AND COMPACT ZOOM CAMERA BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY

BY KEN CLARK

Are you ready for that next "Oh Wow!" or "What's that?" moment? Nothing beats a large camera with large lens, but they are heavy and expensive. Your cell phone camera may be good enough to document a rarity or capture an image for later identification. And a compact super-zoom camera can take excellent pictures.

The main advantage of large cameras is that the large lenses can bring in more light, and the larger image sensors can capture more light. High zoom levels require lots of light, and stopping action does it, too. But as long as lighting is good, and the target is not moving too fast, then a compact super-zoom camera can often do nearly as well as a large camera.

Here is some advice from my experience over the past year. I'll tell you what I used, but I'm not recommending any specific models, since there are lots of great options with similar capabilities.

Cell phones are always with you and they are somewhat waterproof, so, even if you have a better camera, you should still experiment with your cell phone's capabilities in order to be prepared for surprise sightings. The small size of cell phones can sometimes be an advantage. They are great at taking pictures of birds' nests from up close, where it may be hard to fit a larger camera, such as a phoebe nest that is just below a roof. The flash and lens are very close together, which comes in handy when taking pictures of the contents of a nest cavity. I even got a flash picture of a Northern Rough-Winged Swallow on a nest inside a bus tailpipe. For taking pictures of nests up to 7 feet above my head, I used a tripod phone clip (\$11) with a \$14 monopod, plus a \$7 swivel ball connector in-between, allowing me to hold the phone high with the camera swiveled to point down into a nest. Since the shutter button was unreachable, I used a shutter delay or the Bluetooth remote that came with the tripod clip.



Mourning Dove Young on Nest
Taken with a Galaxy Note 20 Ultra cell phone

Cell phones won't give quality bird pictures unless you are

very close, but high-end phones can provide better results using a high-resolution sensor and digital zoom, and some models also have a telephoto lens. My old Galaxy Note 8 with a 2x telephoto lens was just good enough to take lousy, but identifiable, pictures of birds from some distance. In September 2020, I upgraded to a Galaxy Note 20 Ultra, which has a better telephoto lens, making it a reasonably good camera for bird documentation. Clip-on extension lenses for phones are available, but don't expect them to give you high-quality pictures.

If you want to get quality bird pictures, then consider a compact super-zoom camera. They weigh about as much as a large cell phone, and some models can easily fit in a pocket. I recommend buying a used one, since many people buy one of these for a particular event like a graduation, then find that they never use it anymore. You can save as much as 50% on such nearly-new cameras on sites like eBay and Mercari.

I'm using a Canon PowerShot SX740, with a 40x zoom lens. This is a tiny camera which takes excellent pictures at 40x zoom as long as there is plenty of light, and quality is still good when using digital zoom to 80x. It can be hard to get the focus correct sometimes, particularly with birds flying overhead. This model supports remote control over WiFi or Bluetooth, so you could set the camera up by a bird feeder and trigger it remotely. If you want a stronger zoom to get pictures of those ducks on the other side of the lake, and you don't mind having something a bit larger and heavier, then there are a variety of other compact cameras with larger zooms. With any super-zoom camera, I suggest using a monopod to help you stabilize the camera.

The zoom multipliers are not directly comparable between models, because they are relative to the widest zoom of the zoom lens (or for a cell phone, the view of the standard camera vs. the telephoto camera). As a rough guideline you can think of them as feet from the target. For example, a standard (1x) lens will give you a high-quality picture of a sparrow-sized bird that is one foot from the lens, so 40x zoom would give you 40 feet. If you are farther from the bird, then use digital zoom, or crop the picture later. The advantage of digital zoom over cropping is that the camera can do a better job at focusing and exposing the target, and the files will be smaller to store and transfer. In either case, camera resolution is critical. However, higher-density pixels are smaller and collect less light each, so unless there is bright light, the camera may use "binning" to combine a square of four or nine sensor pixels into a single photo pixel, dividing the effective resolution by that factor.

As with any camera, it is critical to keep the lens clean. Cell phone lenses are exposed, so you need to check the lens often. Also try to avoid getting direct sunshine on the lens while taking a picture, perhaps by using a hand or hat to make a shadow over the lens.



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

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November/December 2021- Inside this Issue

Club Meeting	Summer Bird Records
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ARIZONA

Jeff Culler and Joe Hanfman participated in an Arizona birding tour this summer.

Jeff shares some of his photographs of birds, reptiles, mammals, and spiders.



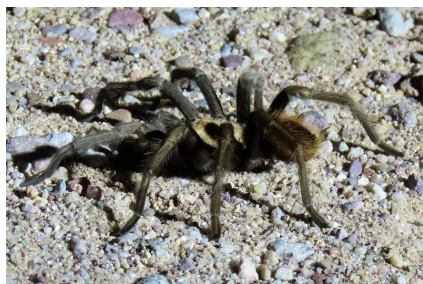
Five-striped Sparrow



Acorn Woodpecker



Elegant Trogon



Desert Blond Tarantula



White-nosed Coati



Mojave Rattlesnake