



The Goldfinch

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



CLUB MEETINGS - BY MARY LOU CLARK

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- [Club Meetings](#)1
- [Autumn Bird Records](#).....1
- [Spring Field Trips](#).....2
- [2021 Annual List](#).....2
- [50th Anniversary](#)6
- [Membership Renewal](#).....6
- [2021 Butterfly Year](#).....7
- [Seeking Goldfinch Editor](#)9
- [Board of Directors Meetings](#)9
- [2022 GreenFest](#).....10

Thursday, March 10, 2022 “Birding in Panama” by Gail Mackiernan. In 2019, Gail Mackiernan and Barry Cooper spent two weeks in Panama, including five days at the Canopy Tower near the Panama Canal and six days at the Canopy Camp in the far-eastern province of Darién. They tallied about 300 species of birds, as well as mammals such as sloths and howler monkeys. Birding highlights included views of a Harpy Eagle feeding a large chick at its nest, an encounter with a huge Crested Eagle, the Black-crowned Antpitta, Sapayoa, Ocellated and Bare-crowned Antbirds, and thousands of Mississippi Kites. Gail is by training a marine biological oceanographer. Her area of expertise is the Chesapeake Bay, and while with the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program she co-authored the two definitive reports on the health of the Bay and the necessary management actions needed to help it. She retired in 1997. She and her husband, Barry Cooper, have traveled to all seven continents in search of birds.

Thursday, April 14, 2022 "Expedition to the Kingdom of the Ice Bear" by former State Senator Gerald Winegrad. Explore the remote Svalbard Archipelago in the high Norwegian Arctic with him and see the wildlife wonders and amazing viewscapes through the pictures by his wife, Carol. With 60% of its land mass covered by glaciers, Svalbard is surrounded by the Arctic Ocean and Barents Sea. This expedition made it through the ice to within 560 miles of the North Pole. Carol's photos include polar bear, walrus, arctic fox, Barnacle, Pink-footed, and Graylag Geese, plus the rare bowhead whale along with beluga, humpback, minke, and fin whales. Former State Senator Gerald Winegrad has had a life-long fascination with wildlife. His first job out of law school in 1969 was with the National Wildlife Federation and one of his last jobs before retiring was with the American Bird Conservancy. He taught graduate courses at the University of Maryland on Wildlife Management and Chesapeake Bay Restoration and still writes a weekly environmental column in *The Capital* newspaper. His wife, Carol Swan, is an avid photographer with an interest in capturing images of wildlife in their natural habitats.

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



Shining Honeycreeper at Cerro Azul, Panama
 by Gail Mackiernan

AUTUMN BIRD RECORDS: AUGUST 1 – NOVEMBER 30, 2021

BY JOANNE SOLEM

August, October, and November notched above-average monthly temperatures, with October one of the warmest in history. Birders turned up Rufous Hummingbird, Common Gallinule, Least Bittern, Little Blue Heron, a possible Swallow-tailed Kite, Golden Eagle, and Lark Sparrow as headliners. Also of note were Sora, Golden-winged Warbler, two Orange-crowned Warblers, multiple well-documented Connecticut Warblers, two hybrid warblers, Summer

Tanager, and Dickcissels (yes, plural).

Cackling Geese were scarce. Several reports of “small geese” or “small geese with small bills” were not Cacklers, but Canada runts. **Tundra Swan** migration peaked in late Nov with several reports on 11/20: Cavey La (RRf-31), Mt. Pleasant-Skywatch (MTPLT-SW) (LGg-30; MKw-3); also 11/22

(Records continued on page 3)

SPRING FIELD TRIPS BY JOE HANFMAN

Field trips are a great way to improve birding skills, explore new places and meet other birders. Arrive at the meeting site ready to leave at the designated time with appropriate footwear and gear, **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.**

[CENTENNIAL PARK](#)

March 6, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours. *Meet at west end parking lot off Centennial Lane.* Easy walking around the lake on paved path. Waterfowl expected, early migrant passerines possible. Facilities available.

Leaders - Russell Kovach, Russell.kovach@gmail.com

[CENTENNIAL PARK](#)

March 13, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours. Daylight Saving Time starts (set clocks ahead). *Meet at west end parking lot off Centennial Lane.* Easy walking around the lake on paved path. Waterfowl expected, early migrant passerines possible. Facilities available.

Leader - David Ziolkowski, dziolkowski@usgs.gov

[CENTENNIAL PARK](#)

March 20, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours. *Meet at west end parking lot off Centennial Lane.* Easy walking around the lake on paved path. Waterfowl expected, woodland trails for passerines. Facilities available.

Leader - David Holmes, musiclbndr@gmail.com

[CENTENNIAL PARK](#)

March 27, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours. *Meet at west end parking lot off Centennial Lane.* Easy walking around the lake on paved path. Waterfowl expected, woodland trails for passerines. Facilities available.

Leaders - TBA

[ALPHA RIDGE LANDFILL](#)

April 9, Saturday, half day. *Reservations required.* This trip is limited to five vehicles and vaccination and masks are required. Let the leader know if you are willing to have someone else in your vehicle. Moderate walking over hills and fields of the landfill. Vesper Sparrow, meadowlarks, kestrels, and other open country birds expected. Rarities possible. Facilities at Alpha Ridge Park.

Contact Joe Hanfman, aukl844@gmail.com, 410-772-8424.

[SHARPS AT WATERFORD FARM](#)

April 10, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (half day). *Meet at farm parking area, through barns on right. Rte. 97 S. to right on Jennings Chapel Rd., one mile to right into farm at sign.* Moderate walking over crop stubble, farm roads, and paths on this working farm. Fields with crop residue, extensive woodlands, Cattail Creek and floodplain, three ponds, and five shallow waterfowl impoundments make for diverse habitats and good birding opportunities. Port-a-pots available. Knee-high waterproof footwear required for part of walk.

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

[MT. PLEASANT FARM - HOWARD COUNTY CONSERVANCY](#)

April 23, Saturday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours. Earth Day Walk in conjunction with the Howard County Conservancy. *Meet at parking lot near the barn.* Easy walking through the fields of Mt. Pleasant Farm. Treelines, hedgerows, and streams provide opportunity for non-meadow species. Great opportunity

for flyovers. Facilities available.

Leader - Gregg Petersen, sig29@aol.com

[Western Regional Park](#)

May 8, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours. Meet at Carr's Mill Road parking lot Moderate walking along field edges and woodland trails. Opportunity for warblers, sparrows, thrushes, and flyovers. Facilities available.


Leader - David Sandler, detour65@gmail.com

[SPRING WILDFLOWER WALK](#)


Weekday afternoon. Late April/mid-May. Date and location to be determined within a few days of the trip. If you would like to be contacted, send email to Bob and Jo Solem, odenata@msn.com.

[MAY COUNT](#)

May 14, Saturday. Details in May/June 2020 *Goldfinch*.

 = Reservations required

 = Wheelchair accessible

 = Great for beginning birders

2021 ANNUAL LIST FOR HOWARD COUNTY

Birders reported a total of 229 species for Howard County in 2021. This total was the 15th highest total in the last 43 years. An additional two species were only detected through Russ Ruffing's Night Flight Calls recordings. The top county bird of the year was a Western Tanager, only the second county record. 2021 was only the fourth year a Lark Sparrow was found. Rufous Hummingbird and Painted Bunting were seen for the fifth year. Trumpeter Swans have now been reported in each of the last seven years.

Other highlights included a photographed Northern Goshawk, Common Gallinule, Iceland Gull, Rough-legged Hawk, Evening Grosbeak, White-winged Crossbill, Lapland Longspur and an overwintering Baltimore Oriole eating globs of apple jelly. The biggest miss was Laughing Gull which has been seen in 37 of the last 43.

168 of the 310 species that have been seen in the county, have been seen in each of the last 43 years. 217 of the 310 species that have been recorded in the county, have been seen 22 or more times in the last 43 years.

Examine the complete list at <https://howardbirds.website/birding/howard-county-annual-bird-list/>

Thanks, and congratulations to all those who spent many hours scouring the county, finding birds, and sharing their sightings.

(Records continued from page 1)

Centennial Park (CENPK) (DSn, TWk-22) and 11/27 MTPLT-SW (LGg-30). Two swans appeared again at Turf Valley Resort. They are **Whooper Swans** that have been placed there and are not wild, countable birds (JHf).

A female **Blue-winged Teal** appeared at Waterford Farm (WATFD) 8/21 (DCm), with four at a pond behind Barberry Way (also visible from Underwood Rd) 10/21 (VSw). A **Northern Shoveler** at Daniels, Patapsco Valley State Park (PVSP) 10/11 (JBn) was at an infrequent location; one was also spotted at Lake Elkhorn (LKELK) 11/22 (KCK). On 11/22, a fine mix of waterfowl showed up on Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS) including two **Gadwall**, 11 **American Wigeon**, 11 **Northern Pintails**, two **Green-winged Teal**, 10 **Ring-necked Ducks**, 18 **Lesser Scaup**, 17 **Buffleheads**, and one **Common Goldeneye** (SLk, GPn). On 11/27, a **Redhead** was spotted at TRIRS (SLk).



Lynn Gregg spotted a flock of 16 Wood Ducks flying over Mount Pleasant on October 16, 2021.

TRIRS's first 18 **Common Mergansers** were detected on 11/12 (MKw); many more would arrive in Dec. A **Ruddy Duck** at LKELK 10/4 was the season's first (ALw).

Wild Turkeys turn up predominantly west of US 29. Some locations this season were Barberry Way 8/8 (VSw-13), Haley Ct 9/3 (BBz-7), Kingsbridge Rd 9/29 (DBc-8), Fulton Area South Pk 10/21 (JHr-6), Waverly Woods 11/29 (LGg-7), Gorman Farm 11/13 (KCK-7), and Schooley Mill Pk (SLMLP) (ALk-5).

An early **Pied-billed Grebe** arrived at Lake Kittamaqundi (LKKIT) 8/30 (CKc). The high **Rock Pigeon** count at Gateway Overlook was 115 on 8/9 (RSm). A late **Black-billed Cuckoo** lingered until 10/18 at a western HOWCO horse farm (LCg). A **Common Nighthawk** was spotted over Woodstock Rd/MD 99 the evening of 8/5 (MKw). At dusk on 8/23, 20+ were at Western Regional Pk (WSTRP). At least one was hawking dragonflies hunting over the fields. (LCg). The last was at Cyprus Cedar La 10/14 (BO).

At dusk on 8/1, 15 **Chimney Swifts** were at one of their favorite Vantage Point roosts (CKc). On 8/8, 20 were in a chimney along River Rd (FLv). On 8/30, 37 were seen funneling into the stack at Pointers Run E. S. (W/SE).

A **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** nested in a small deciduous

tree in a parking lot at Cyprus Cedar La 8/7 (BO). Positioned almost at eye level, it was easy to watch three nestlings being fed. After they fledged, the nest was examined for mites (ROr, see *The Goldfinch* 50(3):5). Migrant hummers continued into the second week of Oct: 10/8 (DMs), 10/9 (SJn), 10/10 (KOS). Several other hummers wandered through as late as 11/2 (Ellicott City) without definitive documentation. An adult female **Rufous Hummingbird** appeared at a Cavey La feeder 11/19 (RRf). It was banded successfully by Bruce Peterjohn on 11/20 and was still present at the end of the season

Sora sightings were "good news, bad news." The good news was one viewed at MTPLT 9/13 (BO) to 9/15 (ALx, ph.); the bad news was a dead juvenile on a sidewalk near REI, E. Col. early on 10/6 (BO). A **Common Gallinule** is always a choice sighting. One appeared on a pond behind Barberry Way 9/18 (VSw, CSt) — a one-day wonder for Fall Count. An **American Coot** was noted at LKKIT on 10/14 (CKc).

Arguably the best shorebird of the season, a **Black-bellied Plover**, was recorded the night of 9/19 over Cavey La on Night Flight Call (NFC) equipment (RRf), providing a hint of what birders miss during every migration. Although most shorebird records came from TRIRS, especially Pigtail, Alpha Ridge Landfill (ALRGL) produced an intriguing sighting. On 8/5, three adult **Spotted Sandpipers** and one juvenile were present at a pond edge (RCu). Because Ralph had found a nest with four eggs at the landfill during a previous atlas, this group was of special interest; however, this was more than a month beyond safe dates, the young bird was a strong flyer, and regular coverage during 2021 had not produced any indication of breeding. Better luck next year!

Autumn **American Woodcock** are usually found by almost stepping on them. At MTPLT on 10/20 (AAI, ph.) one was so close when it took off that a wing brushed the observer — truly a heart-stopping experience. Singles were present in a garden at Green Clover Dr on 10/23 and 10/28 (RTd) and at Hipsley Mill, Patuxent River State Park (PRSP) on 11/18 (JSh). The earliest **Wilson's Snipe** was caught over Cavey La on a NFC recording 9/30 (RRf); MTPLT hosted up to three for much of Oct.

Bonaparte's Gulls drifted through on two days at TRIRS with the first 22 on 11/21 (SLk) and a high of 39 on 11/22 (SLk, GPn). A white tern sp. was reported at CENPK 8/1 (MTw). Two **Caspians** at Brighton Dam 8/29 (JHr, KTn, RRf) and one at CENPK 9/24 (KPh) were the only reports.

Single **Least Bitterns** were detected over Cavey La while listening live on NFC equipment 9/10 and 9/29 (RRf). The last **Great Egret** of 2021 was noted at Meadowbrook Pk 11/18 (JW). An immature **Little Blue Heron** is always a good find. One was at Grace Church Pond, Fulton on 8/13 (TFy, ph.). The year's last **Green Herons** hung around until 10/14 with singles at both Warfield's Pond Pk (BHi) and at Meadowbrook Pk (BO). A **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** was a bonus at Jackson Pd 8/3 (MKz).

(Records continued on page 4)

(Records continued from page 3)



Immature Little Blue Heron

by Tim Frye

Birders tend to focus the majority of their field time in the morning hours, but there are surprises at other times of the day. At Cavey La on 10/28, 90 minutes of skywatching at 3:45 p.m. produced a variety of raptors despite a south wind. Most astonishing was a total of 433 high-soaring **Turkey Vultures** (RRf). Russ described the scene as “like watching Broad-wings in September as large kettles would appear and then at the top leave and stream south.” Perhaps a recent nor’easter across New England had triggered this significant movement; strangely, however, Pennsylvania hawkwatch sites that day did not reflect a major movement.

The last two **Ospreys** were those at Daniels, PVSP 11/11 (KrCk) and Martin Rd, W. Col. 11/12 (JHf). A **Swallow-tailed Kite** over Broken Land Pkwy near LKELK was reported to Joe Hanfman on 8/19 by an experienced, but anonymous HOWCO birder. Without written details or a photo, it remains Possible. The only **Golden Eagle** detected was over CENPK 11/26 (BO). A **Northern Harrier** was picked up at the ALRGL 8/7 (RCu) for the second earliest record; another early bird was spotted at WATFD 8/14 (GPn). High **Bald Eagle** numbers were counted during Nov with eight both at MTPLT-SW 11/6 (RRf+) and at Cavey La 11/26 (RRf, JHf). The peak occurred on 11/23 when six were notched at the MTPLT-SW (LGg) and 14 were at TRIRS (DSn),

Broad-winged Hawk numbers were significant. At Stone Hill Dr the morning of 9/19, at least 400 were tallied; after 5:00 p.m. another 120+ came through (KLz); also that day 37 passed over River Hill, W. Col. (J/MHr). On 9/20, at MTPLT-SW, 1,002 were notched in three morning hours (RCu, ALw, MKw), while 360 were counted over So. Trotter Rd (W/SE) and 85 drifted over the Middle Patux-



Sharp-shinned Hawk harassing a Red-shouldered Hawk above the skywatch at Mount Pleasant
by Lynn Gregg

ent Env. Area (MPEA) (J/MHr, HPt). At Bon Secours Spiritual Center on 8/8, three ravens were being harassed by crows and a Broad-winged Hawk (RCu). With a nearby nest site, ravens are regular at this location; the hawk was of more interest because the site was not far from one of the county’s last known nesting territories.

An **Eastern Screech-Owl** the evening of 10/28 (and frequently since) was a first for this Roxbury Mill Rd location (KLI). A screech-owl showed up to roost in a Hallmark Rd box on 11/3—within a day of last year’s arrival (WEb).

Red-headed Woodpeckers were reported from at least seven locations, most consistently at MTPLT. A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was spotted at SLMLP 9/29 (ALk); two were at Graeoch Rd 10/1 (KOS); by the end of the first week of Oct, they were widespread.



American Kestrel at Mount Pleasant

by Sydney King

Two **American Kestrels** appeared at West Friendship Pk (WFRDP) 10/8 (LCg). (One often winters at the park.) The number of **Merlins** was noteworthy. Not only was this small falcon reported more frequently than usual (often photo-documented), but the Big Day team (RRf, JHr, KTn) on 11/28 notched four; an additional bird that day perched and flew for Centennial Walk birders (MLC+).

Among the **Peregrine Falcon** sightings were birds over Cavey La 9/12, 9/14 (2 together), 11/25 (RRf); Woodbine 9/18 (PPn); River Hill, W. Col. 9/19 (J/MHr-2 together); MTPLT-SW 9/20 (RCu, ALw, MKw), 9/23 (RTd-2 together); MTPLT 10/9 (JGr/JHb) and 10/16 (VSw); Alpha Ridge Pk 10/19 (BO); and REI Pond, E. Col. 10/22 (BO). A Peregrine and a raven swooped and dove at each other for more than 10 minutes high over Cyprus Cedar La 10/14 (BO), proving once again that scanning the sky during migration can be exciting.

A **Great Crested Flycatcher** lingered at SLMLP until 9/25 (ALk). The season’s only **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was photographed at Cavey La 9/6 (RRf). **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** reports are among those most likely to be questioned unless accompanied by definitive photos. Validated sightings were one at WFRDP 9/10 (BO, ROr, ph.) and another at MPEA 9/11 (TFy, ph.). **Least Flycatchers** were spotted at six sites from 8/22 at MTPLT (SKg) to 9/24 at the same location (THg).

Blue-headed Vireos take their time moving through, typically into Nov. One was present at Wincopin Neck 11/3 (KCK). **Philadelphia Vireos** can be a tricky ID. Photographs AND a

(Records continued on page 5)

(Records continued from page 4)

written description of observed field marks can be crucial. The earliest was one at MTPLT 9/7 (KS). Others with adequate documentation were at Cavey La 9/8-26 (RRf), WSTRP 9/10-11 (B/GHi), Meadowbrook Pk 10/4 (BO+), and Alpha Ridge Pk 10/4-5 (JGn).

The first observation of a local nest of **Common Ravens** was on the Prince George's side of Duckett Dam in 2011. Since then, the number of nests has increased each year, along with sightings of substantial groups of birds. Eleven were counted at Gateway Business Pk on 11/23 (EBk) and eight were at MPEA on 11/7 (JHr).

A **Horned Lark** was nice, although not unknown, at CENPK 11/6 (DZk). Although a few **Tree Swallows** can be spotted into Nov, a flock of 31 at Cavey La 10/30 was unexpected (RRf). **Purple Martins** flock prior to migrating; 59 were on an electric tower at Mt Hebron 8/4 (JCu). A **Cliff Swallow** was seen in a nest at WATFD 8/2 (GPn); 17 were still at that site 8/29 (JHr, RRf, KTn).

Paying close attention to common birds may yield interesting observations. At MPEA on 10/13, a **Tufted Titmouse** was seen making several trips caching food (JHr, KTn). An influx of **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** yielded 38 at SLMLP 10/23 (TFy). A dozen scattered **Red-breasted Nuthatches** began with two at Plumtree Path 9/4 (HPt, DSn). Five were tallied at Mullinix Mill Rd, PRSP 10/7 and again 10/14 (MPw).

A **House Wren** hung on at Cavey La through the end of the season (RRf). Five **Marsh Wren** reports were unusual: Alpha Ridge Pk 10/5 (RHI), LKELK 10/11-13 (TFd, GKg), MTPLT 10/14 (BO) to 10/31 (KS), Blandair 10/23 (JW), and CENPK 10/30 (TFy). **Northern Mockingbirds** rarely make a seasonal report; however, 19 along Hammond Branch, Fulton 8/21 (J/MHr) was an unusual number.

A **Veery** at Font Hill Wetland Pk 8/3 was a post-breeding wanderer (DBc), as was the one in a River Hill yard 8/5 (SLk). At Warfield's Pond Pk 10/10, both a **Veery** and a **Gray-cheeked Thrush** were additions to the park list (BHi). Gray-cheeks were also reported from MPEA (J/MHr), Cavey La 9/19-10/11 (RRf), MTPLT (JHf), LKELK (ALw), Woodbine (PPn), and Long Corner (MPw). **Swainson's Thrushes** were notched at more than a dozen sites with a high of 12 at Linthicum Rd 9/19 (JGn). A peak night for migrating thrushes was 9/18 when hundreds of chips were heard live (NFC) near dawn over Cavey La (RRf). A flock of 731 **American Robins** was counted at MTPLT 10/31 (MKw). A few **American Pipits** were reported; the modest high was seven at ALRGL 11/4 (RCu).

One to three **Purple Finches** were noted at 15+ sites. The season's high was 25 (19 in flight and six in another group) at CENPK 11/6 (DZk). Despite few **Pine Siskin** reports, three at a feeder at Cyprus Cedar La 10/3 (BO) tied the early date of 10/3/55 [R. Munro]. Interestingly, three were also reported at

ALRGL 11/11 (RCu).

Usually, a few **Grasshopper Sparrows** linger into late Oct. This year one was still at ALRGL 10/28 (RCu); the last one was picked out at MTPLT 10/31 (KS). One of the season's star sightings was an immature **Lark Sparrow** at MTPLT 9/13 (BO), the fourth county record. The peak **Chipping Sparrow** count was 55 at Cavey La 10/24 (RRf). **Fox Sparrows** moved in the last two weeks of Nov. Two **American Tree Sparrows** were a great find at MTPLT 11/28 (RRf, JHr, KTn). The first **White-crowned** was spotted at MTPLT 10/1 (THg); 21 were there on 10/19 (GPn). A summer **White-throat** in the Brightfield Rd area hung around until 8/10, our second August record (DMs); fall migrants arrived on 9/29 at both Kingsbridge Rd (DBc-1) and MTPLT (JHf-1). The first **Vesper Sparrow** was spotted at MTPLT 10/17 (HPt, DSn); at least one was reported there for several weeks with a high of three on 10/25 (BO). Two were seen at ALRGL on 10/21 (RCu) and 10/28 (RCu; Lbf-biologist conducting a tick survey). The season's only **Nelson's** was present in the swale at MTPLT 10/17 (SLk, BO). During Oct, the **Savannah** count at ALRGL built to a peak of 53 on 10/28; by 11/4, the number had dropped back to seven (RCu). One or two **Lincoln's** were seen in half a dozen locations, most consistently at MTPLT. That sparrow haven produced 10 species in four hours on 10/25 (BO).

As expected, **Eastern Meadowlarks** were reported from WFRDP, ALRGL, and MTPLT. A late **Baltimore Oriole** at SLMLP 10/7 was well-described (ALK). On 11/30, for the third consecutive winter, a male appeared in a Mt Hebron yard (JCu). **Rusty Blackbirds** were scarce with two at MTPLT 10/19 (ELp) and five at Hipsley Mill, PRSP 11/18 (JSh). A flock of **Common Grackles** over Cavey La between 11/19 and 11/26 was reported in size from 7,500 (RRf) to 10,000 (JAK); 7,000 passed over nearby MTPLT-SW 11/27 (LGg).



Fall warblers can be difficult to identify, as shown by this Blackpoll Warbler that Bonnie Ott found during her HCBC Birding by Habitat field trip at Meadowbrook Park on October 17, 2021. The visible bright yellow feet are a distinguishing field mark.

(Records continued on page 6)

(Records continued from page 5)

Warblers started moving in mid-Aug; by the last week of the month, birders who could tolerate the 90°F. temperatures spotted a fine sampling of migrant species. A **Northern Waterthrush** at LKKIT 8/10 was the second earliest (**CKc**, ph.). Two **Golden-winged Warblers** were special finds: a female at MTPLT 9/3-4 (**JHf**) and a female at MPEA 9/15 (**EHn**). A **Blue-winged** in a Woodbine yard 9/16 was not only unexpected, but was a life bird (**PPn**). A **Black-and-white** was at MTPLT 8/8 (**SKg**), likely a wanderer from nearby PVSP. A well-described **Tennessee Warbler** hung around at MTPLT until 11/6 (**B/DFy**), one of the latest departure dates. Two **Orange-crowneds** were notable: MTPLT 10/3 (**THg**; later m. obs.) and Elkhorn Garden Plots 10/13 (**JW**). **Nashvilles** are among the latest migrants. This year two were still present in Nov: 11/6-7 **CENPK** (**DZk**) and **LKELK** 11/12-16 (**KCk**). Five sites held **Connecticuts** (photos or excellent details): Cavey La 9/10 (**RRf**, **GPn**, **KS**), MTPLT 9/11 (**ALw**) – 10/15 (likely multiple birds), MPEA 9/13 (**J/MHr**), Patuxent Branch Trail 10/1 (**KCk**), and David Force WMA 10/13 (**JHr**, **KTn**). A male **Mourning Warbler** at MTPLT 9/7 (**KS**) was the season's lone record. Two **Common Yellowthroats** were still present in Nov: MTPLT 11/1 (**GPn**) and **CENPK** 11/6 (**DZk**). Ten **Cape Mays** within 15 minutes near dawn were unexpected at Cavey La on 9/11 (**RRf**, **SLk**, **GPn**, **KS**). The last **Magnolia** was picked out at Green Clover Dr 11/7 (**RTd**), tying the second latest ever. Late **Palms** were reported from Blandair 11/3-4 (**JW**), **WFRDP** 11/3 (**J/MHr**), MTPLT 11/1-8 (**GPn-4**), and Mt Hebron 11/9 (**JCu**). Although a few **Pines** may winter, numbers are low after late Oct; Nov records included **LKELK** 11/19-24 (**ALw**) and Warfield's Pond Pk 11/22 (**VSw**). MTPLT hosted **Wilson's Warblers** from 8/29 (**BO**) – 9/13 (**BO**); the last was at **SLMLP** 9/25

(**ALk**). A **Blue-winged/Golden-winged** at Rockburn Branch Pk 9/13 (**ALw**, **HPt**, **DSn**) did not fall neatly into any of the named hybrids; another similarly-plumaged bird was spotted at MTPLT 9/19 (**ALw**). At **SLMLP** on 9/10, a seated observer identified 10 species of warblers passing a wood edge in 1.5 hours (**ALk**), proving once again patience and a good location can be extremely productive.



Blue-winged x Golden-winged Warbler
by H. Patterson

A **Summer Tanager** at MPEA 9/19 (**KS**) was the season's lone report. The first **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** appeared at a feeder on Graeoch Rd 9/7 (**KOS**). A late **Indigo Bunting** was present at **ALRGL** 10/21 (**RCu**). Four **Dickcissels** included Cavey La NFC, listening live, 10/2 (**RRf**); MTPLT 10/7-11 (**BO**); **ALRGL** 10/8 (**RCu**); and a female at a feeder at Sewell's Orchard Pds Pk 11/27-29 (**BMy**).

Bonus: Four River Otters were eating crayfish in the GE Retention Pd at **GATWY** 10/18 (**GPn**).

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The HCBC continues to celebrate its 50th anniversary with varied activities. The second open season for the sale of commemorative shirts ended on February 4. Another opportunity will be scheduled in the future. It will be announced on the club's website and in a **NEWSGRAM**.

Check the [50th anniversary page](#) on the website regularly for newly posted Members' Memories and additions to the black boxes. Each memory is highly individual; all are fascinating. If you have not already submitted yours, please follow the directions on that page so your treasured birding experiences can be added.

Watch for special field trips and activities. It's not too late to accept the 50th Anniversary Challenge. There are many choices available no matter your birding skills. Complete some now during cold winter days; anticipate completing others when the weather warms and spring migration begins.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2021-22, go to the HCBC website: <https://www.howardbirds.website/> and click on "Join Us" at the top of the home page. Then enjoy many of the 50th anniversary activities.

(Records continued from previous column)

Appreciation: Many thanks to Joe Hanfman and Russ Ruffing for checking this lengthy seasonal report.

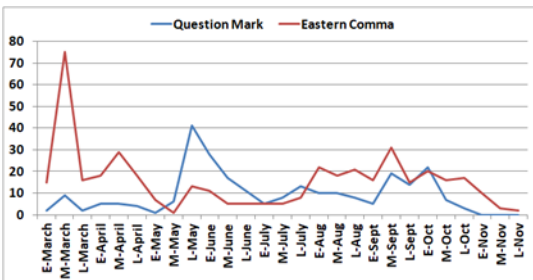
Observers: **AAI** – Annette Allor, **JAK** – Jessica Ameljanczyk, **LBF** – Laura Beinfuhr, **DBc** – Debbie Belchis, **BBz** – Bonnie Bezilla, **JBn** – Jim Brown, **EBk** – Evan Buck, **KCk** – Ken Clark, **KrCk** – Kristy Clark, **MLC** – Mary Lou Clark, **LCg** – Lisa Colangelo, **JCu** – Jeff Culler, **RCu** – Ralph Cullison, **DCm** – David Cummings, **SE** – Sue Earp, **WE** – Wes Earp, **WEb** – Ward Ebert, **TFd** – Tom Feild, **BFy** – Bernard Foy, **DFy** – Dawn Foy, **TFy** – Tim Frye, **JGn** – Jim Green, **LGg** – Lynn Gregg, **JHf** – Joe Hanfman, **JHr** – John Harris, **MHr** – Meg Harris, **EHn** – Elaine Hendricks, **BHi** – Bill Hill, **GHi** – Gayle Hill, **RHI** – Russell Hillsley, **THg** – Tim Houghton, **JHb** – John Hubbell, **SJn** – Steven Jones, **MKz** – Mara Kaminowicz, **MKw** – Mike Kerwin, **GKg** – Geraldine King, **SKg** – Sydney King, **CKc** – Clayton Koonce, **ALx** – Arnaud Lacroix, **ELp** – Ellen Lathrop, **ALw** – Allen Lewis, **KLI** – Kathie Lillie, **ALk** – Anne Looker, **FLv** – Felicia Lovelett, **SLk** – Steve Luke, **DMS** – Dean Mahlstedt, **BMy** – Brian Moyer, **ROr** – Richard Orr, **KOS** – Karen O'Steen, **BO** – Bonnie Ott, **HPt** – Howard Patterson, **PPn** – Pam Perna, **GPn** – Gregg Petersen, **KPh** – Kate Plough, **MPw** – Mary Prowell, **RRf** – Russ Ruffing, **RSm** – Ryan Salsman, **DSn** – David Sandler, **KS** – Kurt Schwarz, **JSh** – Jay Sheppard, **CSt** – Chuck Stirrat, **VSw** – Val Swan, **MTw** – Mark Tewell, **RTd** – Robin Todd, **KTn** – Kristin Trouton, **TWk** – Tex Wilkins, **JW** – Jim Wilkinson, **DZk** – Dave Ziolkowski.

2019 HOWARD COUNTY BUTTERFLY YEAR

BY KEVIN HEFFERNAN AND LINDA HUNT

This past year was the second year of the Covid-19 global pandemic. You would think that getting out in the fresh air and sunshine would be a great (and safe) way to spend time during these difficult days. Apparently, a lot of people thought the same thing. Of the eight years of the butterfly survey, 2021 had the highest number of participants (73), the highest number of surveys (1,144), and the highest number of hours in the field (61,027). Together, we reported 25,897 individual butterflies (second highest) of 69 species. We are amazed and very grateful at the level of participation that we are getting for this survey. Thank you, observers!

Early Season: The first date that butterflies were seen was March 9. Eric Metzman found and photographed a Question Mark at MPEA; Steve Luke saw an Eastern Comma at River Hill High School; and Bonnie Ott had an unidentified anglewing at Henryton. Thirteen additional Eastern Commas were seen over the next two days. On April 15, we equaled the 21 found for the entire year in 2020. The total for the 2021 year was 79. By April 6, we also exceeded the 2020 total of nine Mourning Cloaks, finding a total of 27 in 2021. We now have enough data



that we can plot the flight times of each species. We have learned that while some Question Marks overwinter as adults, many migrate south. Their totals tend to peak in late May to early June when the southern migrants return.

This is clearly shown on the anglewing flight times plot at left. So if you see an anglewing in March, chances are good that it is an Eastern Comma. Question Marks also had a good year. We saw 54 in 2021 compared to 28 in 2020. The first of the survey-record 6,032 Cabbage Whites in 2021 was seen by Kelsey Wellons

on March 10. The first Azure was seen by Kathy Kaberle on March 22. Kathy also saw the first Eastern Tiger Swallowtail on April 6. Other firsts for the year include Orange Sulphur (Kathy Litzinger, April 3), Falcate Orangetip (Linda Hunt, April 5), Juniper Hairstreak (Karen Heffernan, April 6), Juvenal's Duskywing and Eastern Tailed-Blue (both on April 6 by Linda Hunt), and Clouded Sulphur (Woody Merkle, April 7). Only seven of the difficult-to-identify Juvenal's Duskywings were reported this year. A single, spring brood White M Hairstreak was reported by Kathy Litzinger on April 26. For the second time in the survey, no Eastern Pine Elfins were reported.

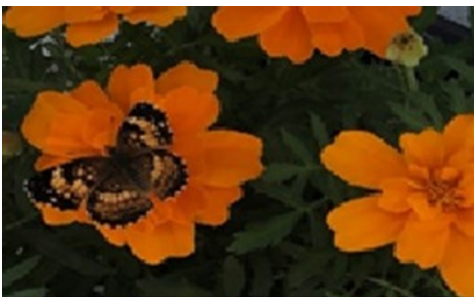


Question Mark (Linda Hunt)



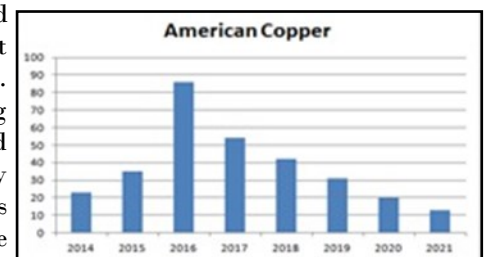
Mourning Cloak (Annette Allor)

Peak Years: The following 13 species had eight-year high counts: White M Hairstreak (24), Red-banded Hairstreak (166), Northern Broken-Dash (17), Little Glassywing (576), Hobomok (33), Zabulon (1,232) and Dun (50) Skippers, Black Swallowtail (200), Cabbage White (6,032), Silvery Checkerspot (246), Viceroy (36), Northern Pearly-eye (305), and Summer Azure (446). An additional 14 species had second highest counts. Overall, 39% of the 69 species logged peak or second highest count years. Silvery Checkerspot's peak count during the first six years of the survey was 13 in 2014. In 2020, 32 were found and that earned it the 2020 Butterfly of the Year. In 2021, an incredible 246 were counted with 215 of these at a single location at Ilchester Elementary School (Kathy Litzinger) on Jerusalem Artichoke. Unfortunately, that habitat was mowed and leaf-blown so the Silvery Checkerspot colony may not be back next year. There are certainly more pocket habitats like this for Silvery Checkerspot around the county. We just need to find them (and try to preserve them).



Silvery Checkerspot (Susan Tucker)

Low Counts: The following five species had eight-year low counts: Silver-spotted (776), Crossline (4), and Broad-winged Skipper (1), American Copper (13), and Great Spangled Fritillary (32). An additional seven species had their second lowest count. Overall, 17% of the 69 species found had their lowest or second lowest count during the survey. Silver-spotted Skipper numbers have dropped for three straight years and bear watching. Crossline Skipper numbers are never high and are probably grossly undercounted due to the difficult identification (ID). Broad-winged Skipper uses phragmites as a host plant which is unusual as it is a non-native plant. It had one main location where it was found in the county (Kathy Litzinger's backyard);



(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

however, another phragmites patch in the same neighborhood was removed and no Broad-winged Skippers have been found in that area since 2019. There are certainly other spots in the county with phragmites where Broad-winged Skippers should be; we just need to locate them. American Copper numbers have dropped every year since 2016 (see American Copper graph) which is very concerning and needs to be watched. In the last three years, the Great Spangled Fritillary numbers have been 20-25% of the 2018 count. These numbers reflect regional trends and could be global warming related (disrupted timing of caterpillars emerging from diapauses and violet emergence). Common Checkered-Skipper (second lowest count) numbers have dropped each year since 2017. Dusted Skipper was not found for the third year in a row; we fear that it has been extirpated from the county.



Tawny Emperor, Mt. Pleasant
(Annette Allor)

Of the 69 species found this year, 14 (~20%) had ≤ 10 individuals. These include Long-tailed Skipper (2), Juvenal's Duskywing (7), Common Sootywing (3), Swarthy Skipper (3), Clouded Skipper (5), Crossline Skipper (4), Broad-winged Skipper (1), Little Yellow (1), Harvester (3), Coral Hairstreak (9), Banded Hairstreak (8), American Snout (10), Tawny Emperor (8), and Common Wood-Nymph (5).

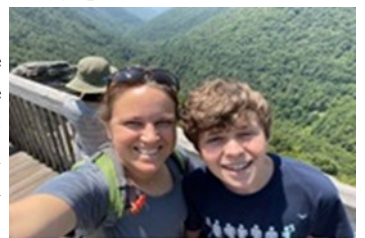
Notes from the Year

- No new species were seen this year leaving the species count for the survey at 80.
- Mt. Pleasant added a new species, Tawny Emperor, found by Annette Allor. This location has 67 species, the highest number of species in the county.
- Other locations with a high diversity of species include Gateway Business Park (55), Patapasco Valley State Park (55), Elkhorn Garden Plots (55), Rockburn Branch Park (54), Murray Hill powerline (53), Kathy Litzinger's garden (53), Robinson Nature Center (51), Lake Kittimaquundi (50), and Linda Hunt's garden (50).
- The Howard County Bird Club (HCBC) is working with Howard County Bee City to try to create habitat, to provide information on good pollinator habitat and practices, etc. This year, the HCBC helped finance talks by Doug Tallamy and Heather Holm. We also contributed funds toward the planting of a pollinator garden at Howard County Community College and donated \$300 to Bee City.
- Monarchs had an average year with 840 reported, almost identical to 2020.
- The last Banded Hairstreak of the year was found by the McClures on July 21, a new late date for this species.
- Maryland HB322 went into effect on October 1, 2021. This law codifies the right to have pollinator/habitat gardens and specifically encourages attracting wildlife and pollinators.
- The law says that HOAs cannot require homeowners to plant turfgrass and "may not impose or act to impose unreasonable limitations on low impact landscaping."
- Two new special projects, which are perfect examples of what we should be doing, were started this year:
 - ◊ MPEA Butterfly Survey had nine participants, 1,177 surveys, and 39 species. The goal is to determine what actions are necessary to provide habitat for a diversity of species at MPEA.
 - ◊ Robinson Nature Center Master Naturalist Survey had eight participants, 31 surveys, 1,153 butterflies and 34 species. Ally Rogan stated, "My goal was to help Robinson attract and support a greater diversity of butterflies... I put together a list of butterflies which could be encouraged at Robinson by adding specific additional host plants in suitable locations."



Banded Hairstreak (McClures)

Last Butterfly of the Year Contest: Annette Allor suggested that we have a "Last Butterfly of the Year" contest with the winner receiving a *Butterflies of the Mid-Atlantic* field guide that she would provide. That created some excitement in the waning days of the butterfly year. Three Orange Sulphurs were found in December. Pam Perna found one on December 1, Bonnie Ott on December 3, and Amy Fine-Dugas and her son Tyler Dugas found one on December 16 to claim the prize. Congratulations Amy and Tyler and thank you, Annette.



Amy Fine Dugas and Tyler Dugas



White M Hairstreak
(Clayton Koonce)

Butterfly of the Year: Each year we select a "Butterfly of the Year," naming a species that had an outstanding year. This year the award goes to the White M Hairstreak. In the first seven years of the survey, the peak count was seven individuals in 2016. This year we had 24, one in the spring brood and 23 in the fall. For a few weeks, it felt like someone was finding a White M every day. We hope this trend will continue for this difficult-to-find species.

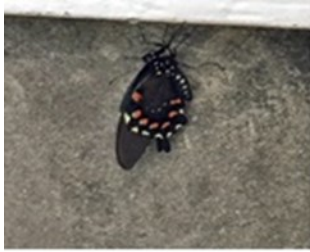


Gray Hairstreak (Bill Hill)

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

Photos and Videos from participants: This year surveyors submitted many excellent photos of butterflies. Some of the photos were proof of a sighting. Others requested help with an ID (which we enjoy receiving). Please do not hesitate to send us a request for an ID. Some of the photos we received were simply eye-popping. Many of them were included in the PowerPoint presentation given at the January HCBC meeting that is now on the website. This year we have also received several excellent videos. The one thing that was different this year was the number of caterpillar, chrysalis, and butterflies eclosing photos. Several of these are shown below.



Mourning Cloak eclosing (Kathy Litzinger)



Variegated Fritillary chrysalis (Kevin Heffernan)



Hackberry Emperor eggs and caterpillars (Bonnie Ott)

New Data / Tools for the Butterfly Survey: In the eight years that the butterfly survey has taken place, surveyors have reported over 170,000 butterflies. With this vast amount of data, we plan to make some tools available. In the winter of 2021-2022, we hope to publish flight times, early and late dates, overwintering strategies, and possibly host plant information for each of the 80 species found on the survey. With any luck, we will also attempt to update Dick Smith's latest version of "The Butterflies of Howard County." We will let people know when these tools are available.

What you can do to help butterflies:

- Provide a Pocket Habitat for butterflies.
- Plant a native plant pollinator garden and landscape for caterpillars.
- Leave the leaves.
- Reduce the size of your lawn (or mow less frequently).
- Reduce mosquito spray and insecticide usage.
- Get rid of invasive plants.
- Embrace the "wild" in your garden.

Again, thanks to all of you for another very successful year for the Howard County Butterfly Survey. Keep your eyes open. By the time the March/April newsletter is sent out, we may have already seen the first butterfly of 2022.

SEEKING NEXT EDITOR FOR *THE GOLDFINCH*

The May-June 2022 issue of *The Goldfinch* will be Howard Patterson's final issue as editor, after nine years in this role. The call for volunteers to be the next editor has been publicized regularly since the item in the September-October issue, but no replacement has yet come forward.

If you have a few hours every two months (no newsletter is issued for July-August), have basic computer skills, and are willing to contribute to the club in this way for at least a couple of years, please contact Howard at 410-736-3064 or via email at howard21042@verizon.net for more information. Likewise, please encourage your friends in the club to consider this need.

Howard will provide instructions and reference files. He will also assist with the first few issues until the new editor is comfortable working solo.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

The March 24 and April 28 board meetings will be held by teleconference or videoconference. If you have input or questions, please send an email to Mary Maxey at maxeymom-11998@gmail.com.

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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The Goldfinch, newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club, is published five times per year. Copy deadline for the May/June 2022 issue is March 25, 2022.

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



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

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March/April 2022 - Inside This Issue

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Club Meetings | Autumn Bird Records |
| Spring Field Trips | 2021 Annual List |
| 50th Anniversary | Membership Renewal |
| 2021 Butterfly Year | Seeking <i>Goldfinch</i> Editor |
| Board Meetings | GreenFest |

Howard County 2022 GreenFest

Save The Date!

Saturday, April 9 • 10:00am - 3:00pm
Howard Community College
HCGreenfest.org

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Native Plant Sale • Document Shredding
Rain Barrel Giveaway
Compost Bin Giveaway and MORE!