



# The Goldfinch

Newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club  
A Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society  
[www.howardbirds.website](http://www.howardbirds.website)



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<a href="#">Program</a> .....	1
<a href="#">Winter Bird Records</a> .....	1
<a href="#">Field Trips</a> .....	2
<a href="#">Waterford Flats 2021</a> .....	2
<a href="#">Banded Peregrine Falcon</a> .....	4
<a href="#">Board of Directors Meeting</a> ...	4
<a href="#">50th Anniversary Celebration</a>	4
<a href="#">Gynandromorph Skipper</a> .....	5
<a href="#">Mid-winter Count Summary</a> ..	7
<a href="#">May Count</a> .....	9
<a href="#">Skywatch Maintenance</a> .....	9
<a href="#">Breeding Bird Atlas</a> .....	10

## CLUB MEETINGS - MARY LOU CLARK

Thursday, May 12, 2022 “The Kaleidoscope of Birds of the DMV” by Kurt Schwarz. This presentation will show the typical birds of the Delaware, Maryland, Virginia area by season. There will be a few rarities included.

Kurt is a retired employee of the DOD. He has been birding since 1994. He is a past president of the Howard County Bird Club and is the Conservation Chair for both the Maryland Ornithological Society and the Howard County Bird Club.

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

## WINTER BIRD RECORDS:

### DECEMBER 1, 2021 – FEBRUARY 28, 2022

BY JOANNE SOLEM

**H**eadline species this season were White-fronted Goose, Rufous Hummingbird, House Wren, Yellow-breasted Chat, Palm Warbler, and Painted Bunting. Also of note were Trumpeter Swan, Blue-winged Teal, Long-tailed Duck, Common Goldeneye, Bonaparte’s Gull, Long-eared Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Baltimore Oriole, and Ovenbird.

A **Snow Goose** showed up at Springdale Quarry (SPDQR) 1/10 (DSn, ph.). A **Greater White-fronted Goose**, a seasonal highlight, was picked out at Larriland Farm, MD 94, on 1/12 (GPn, ph.) to 1/13 (GRk). **Cackling Geese** posed the usual identification problems. Verified individuals were seen at Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS) 12/18 (SLk), a pond at MD 144/Folly Quarter Rd 1/1 (GPn), SPDQR 1/5 (JHf), with six there on 1/10 (KS), Centennial Park (CENPK) 1/5 (RHI), Larriland Farm 1/12 (KS-2), So. Trotter Rd Pd 2/21 (WE-6), and Broken Land/US 29 Pd 2/26 (JHf). The beginning of **Canada Goose** migration was detected with a high-flying flock of 80-100 heading north over US 29/MD 108 on 2/22 (ESu).

Unrecorded in the county until 2015, **Trumpeter Swans** are

now annual visitors. Three were present mid-morning at TRIRS 1/18 (ALw); sometime after 11:00 a.m. they took flight headed over Brighton Dam and soon dropped onto the SPDQR (GPn). Lake Elkhorn (LKELK) hosted two on 2/4 (ALw) with three on 2/9 (Anon. eBirder) and 2/10 (KCK). All were photographed. Four **Tundra Swans** appeared at LKELK 12/22 (ALw); one was calling as it flew over Race Road Wetlands (RACRW) 1/2 (GPn); five were seen and heard over a Woodbine yard 1/19 (PPn); five were counted at TRIRS 1/26 (JHf), with 14 lingering there from 2/21 (GPn, SLk) to the end of the season (RRf, JHr, GPn KTn).

Ponds and reservoirs were mostly ice-free much of the winter so there were intermittent sightings of dabbling ducks. A somewhat elusive male **Blue-winged Teal** turned up at SPDQR 1/10, the county’s first January record (CSt, BHi); it was last seen 1/27 (LGg). Seven **Northern Shovelers** were present at RACRW 12/2 (JW) with a high of 11 on 1/5 (RHI; DSn). **Gadwalls** were scattered at 10 locations with a high of 13 at TRIRS 1/22 (RRf). One **American Wigeon** was spotted at LKELK 12/22 (VSw; ALw) to 12/24; then none until one

([Records](#) continued on page 3)

## 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.**

### SMITH ISLAND (WAITING LIST ONLY FOR THIS TRIP)

April 30, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Departing from the Point Lookout State Park Marina. **Smith Island – back after five years!** In honor of the Howard Chapter's Anniversary, the Baltimore and Howard County Bird Clubs are excited to announce that we are arranging a special chartered trip to Smith Island, Saturday, April 30. Club members are being given the opportunity to pre-register before the general public. Expect to see a wide variety of birds-waterfowl, shorebirds, herons, egrets, ibis, sparrows, warblers, and others. We will leave Point Lookout at 9:30 sharp and return around 4:30 giving us a few hours on Smith Island. For the trip, pre-registration and pre-payment will be required by February 28, 2022. The cost will be \$50 per person. Trip and payment details will be sent to those who register. It will be on a first-come, first-serve basis to our current members. If you need to cancel after payment is made we will refund your money if we are able to fill the spot.

To register, Baltimore Bird Club members please contact Nancy O'Hara, [noh529@gmail.com](mailto:noh529@gmail.com) or 443-286-0922. For Howard County Bird Club members please contact Joe Hanfman, [Auk1844@gmail.com](mailto:Auk1844@gmail.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](mailto:detour65@gmail.com)

### MAY COUNT.

May 14, Saturday. See p.9.

### SPRING WILDFLOWER WALK


Weekday afternoon, mid-April. 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](mailto:odenata@msn.com)

### DICK SMITH MEMORIAL BUTTERFLY WALK

September 4, Sunday, 10:30 a.m. 2-3 hours. Meet at Elkhorn Garden Plots, Oakland Mills Rd opposite Dasher Ct. Enjoy searching for late-summer butterflies with instruction on their identification. Easy walking on mowed paths around the community garden plots and Elkhorn meadow. We will continue on paved paths and mowed areas near the right-of-way alongside open, flowery wet meadows and brushy hillsides. Bring close-focus binoculars to view nectaring behavior. Cancelled if raining or overcast. No facilities.

Leader – Linda Hunt, [raven10322@hotmail.com](mailto:raven10322@hotmail.com) and/or Kevin Heffernan, [kjheffl22@gmail.com](mailto:kjheffl22@gmail.com)

 = Reservations required

 = Good for beginning birders

## WATERFORD FLATS - THE 2021 SEASONS

BY WES EARP

**T**he first year of our venture into the creation and management of shorebird habitat was both rewarding and disappointing. Rewarding because we managed to attract ten species of shorebirds in the spring season and disappointing because Mother Nature had other plans for the site during the fall migration.

The year made a promising start with a Glossy Ibis on 4/8 and returning Killdeer on 4/22. While nine species were present on 5/14, shorebird numbers peaked earlier on 5/10 with 71 birds of six species. Species (max. # & date, first and last date) found were Semipalmated Plover (2, 5/14; 5/14, 5/22), Killdeer (6, 4/22; 3/25, 6/12), Greater Yellowlegs (9, 4/25; 4/11, 5/14) and Lesser Yellowlegs (11, 5/10; 4/25, 5/14), Solitary Sandpiper (16, 5/3; 4/11, 5/22), Spotted Sandpiper (9, 5/10; 4/21, 5/31), Semipalmated Sandpiper (1, 5/14; 5/14, 5/22), Least Sandpiper (43, 5/10; 4/21, 5/25), Pectoral Sandpiper (1, 5/14), Wilson's Snipe (5, 5/25; 4/7, 5/3).

The Flats committee of Wes Earp, Mary Maxey, Mary Lou Clark, John Harris, Brian Moyer, Russ Ruffing, David Sandler, and Kristen Trouton planned to slowly empty the Flats during the spring period. A repair of a portion of the original installation was to follow and the ability to refill for the fall season was questionable.

As the waterline dropped, our expectations were lowered as well. The exposed areas dried out which was an unanticipated but realistic outcome of the receding waterline. Fox-tails and other weedy volunteers began occupying the uncovered flats and we stopped draining the pool. This postponed the repair but made the site available for fall management.

The pool was partially refilled; however, the shallows and shoreline now reached into the portions of the site occupied by tall annuals and this proved unsuitable for shorebirds. The compromised habitat drew in Killdeer (1, 7/24; 7/24, 9/21), Lesser Yellowlegs (1, 8/4; 8/4, 8/7), Solitary

*(Flats continued on page 7)*

(Records continued from page 1)

at Willow Green Pd, Marriottsville Rd 2/17 (LGg) to the end of the season. They were also noted at various points at TRIRS from 2/18 (VSw-1) to 2/26 (HPT-2). **Mallard** numbers peaked at 292 at TRIRS on 1/25 (GPn). **American Black Ducks** topped out at 21 at TRIRS 1/25 (GPn). **Northern Pintails** were present at SPDQR 1/8 (RRf, SLk, GPn) to 1/11 (GPn); one at RACRW 2/17 (JW) was a pleasant surprise; the high was 12 at TRIRS 2/18 (JHf). A **Green-winged Teal** along the Patuxent Branch Trail 2/5 was at an unusual location (EHs); nine were counted at Waterford Flats 2/24 (WE). Diving ducks favor the reservoirs and lakes. **Canvasback**



Tundra Swans at TRIRS

by Gregg Petersen

numbers were limited with a high of five at TRIRS 2/27 (RHI). Three **Redheads** arrived at SPDQR 1/8 (SPr); seven were at CENPK briefly the late afternoon of 1/25 (MLm), the number at TRIRS topped out at 10 on 1/26 (JHf); with 13 at a Jennings Chapel Rd pond 2/28 (RRf, JHr, GPn, KTn). **Ring-neckeds** are one of the county's most common wintering ducks. This year their numbers hit 299 (a fine number, but not among the top few) at Willow Green Pd on 12/6 (RRf). Both scaup species were well-represented at half a dozen sites. Elegant **Long-tailed Ducks** always attract attention. No flocks were sighted, but there were singles at TRIRS 12/1 (SLk, GPn), CENPK 12/1 (HPT, DSn), LKELK 1/3 (glimpsed in flight) (ALw), and a final bird at TRIRS 2/26 (SLk). **Common Goldeneyes** were picked out at four locations with a high of 11 at TRIRS 1/24 (GPn). **Common Merganser** numbers at TRIRS built slowly: 50 on 12/9 (SLk), 300 - 12/14 (MLC), 486 - 12/22 (KS), 750 - 1/2 (JMHR), 1,200 - 1/11 (KS), and finally 2,379 on 1/20 (RRf). One or more **Red-breasted Mergansers** are normally present among the Commons rewarding the patient and sharp-eyed observer.

**Wild Turkeys** were widespread with close to a dozen sightings. Three records were east of US 29 including nine birds east of Murray Hill Rd/Vollmerhausen Rd 12/8 (ELp) and one at Bonnie Branch Rd 12/22 (FHd). TRIRS produced flocks of eight at Pigtail 12/24 (MKw) and 14 at Big Branch 2/4 (MKw).

**Pied-billed Grebes** hit a peak of 16 at TRIRS 1/23 (GPn). **Horned Grebes** were moving on 12/11 with singles at LKELK (JW) and at TRIRS (SLk). The **Rock Pigeon** flock at Long Gate Shopping Center reached 200 on 1/28 (CKc). The county's fifth **Rufous Hummingbird** was last seen at a Cavey La feeder early on 12/13 (RRf), a location it had been visiting since 11/19/2021. **American Coots** are scarce in winter: Brighton Dam 1/6 (MLC-1), Larriland 1/12 (GPn-1), RACRW 2/27 (RDv-1), and TRIRS (GPn-2).

The season's modest **Killdeer** high was 14 at the Gorman (Rd) Farm Pd 12/18 (KCK). Displaying **American Woodcock** are an early sign of spring. The first was present at Gwynn Acres Path 2/12 (MRg). Other sites included Gateway Business Pk 2/17 (MLC), Hipsley Mill Rd 2/19 (GPn) with six there on 2/28 (RRf, JHr, GPn, KTn), Jessup 2/23 (R/RyPr), and Cavey La 2/23 (RRf). A **Wilson's Snipe** was flushed at Mt. Pleasant (MTPLT) 12/27 (SKg); later in the season, individuals were spotted at Pigtail 1/28 (MKw), Iager Blvd Pds 1/29 (TFy) for at least 10 days, Waverly Pd 2/27 (MKw), and again at MTPLT 2/27 (WMk).

**Bonaparte's Gulls** are a special treat in winter. Five/six came through at TRIRS on 12/18 (JWd, m. obs.), followed by one there on 1/25 (KS), and a final bird on 1/28 (KRt). White-winged gulls were absent. Birders had to content themselves with a few **Great Black-backed Gulls** flying into the county from the Jessup Trash Transfer Station.

**Double-crested Cormorants** were few. One hung on at CENPK until 12/3 (KTn), one remained at LKELK until 1/8 (RHI), and one was noted at Brighton Dam 1/9 (JHf). Five on 2/23 at Wilde Lake (CKc) augured the return of spring. A scattering of **Great Blue Herons** could be found in the county all winter. By 2/23, at least nine nests were occupied at one of the county's two colonies (CKc).

A **Black Vulture** roost near a tot lot on Vollmerhausen Rd in Kings Contrivance reportedly held 130 birds on 12/28 (G/SMY); on 1/20, there were 140 at Early Spring Way (RzDv). Perhaps because **Red-shouldered Hawks** are not considered "bird hawks," it was startling to see an adult pick a junco from the ground at Hermitage Dr 2/22 (HPT). As usual, the winter **Bald Eagle** population swelled. The high count at TRIRS was 20 on 1/20 (GPn). A number of **Eastern Screech-Owls** were reported, most as "heard birds." Because there is limited public access to Alpha Ridge Landfill, an incubating **Great Horned Owl** on 1/25 had a secure location (RCu). Always of interest was a **Long-eared Owl** sighted not far from Rockburn Branch Pk 1/21 (*fide* BO; KIs, ph.). Several days later Bonnie checked the location with the observer, but the area was unsuitable roosting habitat. It's possible crows had chased the bird into the development. **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were almost no-shows. Despite several searches in the usual locations (JSh+), only a few pellets and limited white-wash were found. A birder reported hearing one at Annapolis Rock during the day which Jay noted would be highly unusual. A saw-whet was "tooting" at 3:00 a.m. outside a window at Martin Rd, W. Col. on 12/28 (JHf).

**American Kestrels** were tallied at a dozen locations during the season. **Merlins** (many photos) were as frequently reported as kestrels, a dramatic change from the ratio several decades ago. There were three or four wintering **Peregrine Falcons**. One at TRIRS was particularly consistent. The LKELK bird may not have been seen as often, but it produced an interesting observation. See p. 4,

**Common Ravens** are beginning to live up to their name. This season they were reported dozens of times in all parts of the county. The high was four over a Hickory Ridge yard on 2/6 (CFr). They now nest in multiple county locations. Be sure to check cell towers from several angles for previously unreported nests. A flock of 38 **Horned Larks** in an Old Frederick

(Records continued on page 6)

## BANDED PEREGRINE FALCON

BY STEVE LUKE

Club member Steve Luke first observed the Peregrine Falcon as it dove at an American Wigeon around 10:20 a.m. on December 24, 2021, at Lake Elkhorn. Steve relocated the falcon perched in a tree hanging over the west side of the lake near the American Wigeon. It flew toward the dam and perched for a brief time on a log at the lake shore and then repositioned to a tree near the entrance building and pier near the dam. Steve cautiously matched this progression from the nearby path, taking photos at every opportunity, and met Joe Hanfman at the falcon's final perch near the dam.



Peregrine Falcon

by Steve Luke

After continuing to patiently pose for photos, it flew over the dam, scattering the Ring-billed Gulls, before swooping back up the lake. Joe had decided to walk upstream to see the American Wigeon, and reported seeing the falcon eat the American Wigeon at about 11:40 a.m.



American Wigeon

by Steve Luke

After a more careful inspection of Steve's photos, he discovered the Peregrine was banded, and the band ID was legible. With advice from Dave Ziolkowski, Jr. about the band

code color and number system (<https://ccbbirds.org/what-we-do/research/species-of-concern/peregrine-falcon/report-sightings/>), Steve felt confident that the photos showed the full band ID, and submitted a report to The USGS North American Bird Banding Program website (<https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/bblretrv/>).

Within a few days, the USGS emailed Steve a digital Certificate of Appreciation for the report, along with interesting details about the bird. It was banded on May 21, 2021 in New Jersey with Band Number 1947-31935 BM71 Black over Green by the State of New Jersey – Nongame, Kathleen Clark. The Peregrine Falcon was too young to fly when banded. Since Peregrine Falcons fledge around 40 days, this individual must have been about 7-8 months old.



Band on Peregrine Falcon

by Steve Luke

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The May 26 board meeting will be held by teleconference or videoconference. If you have input or questions, please send an email to Mary Maxey at [maximom11998@gmail.com](mailto:maximom11998@gmail.com).

### FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

“SAVE THE DATE”

There will be a Celebration of the HCBC's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at the Gudelsky Center, Howard County Conservancy on Sunday, Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>. Details will follow closer to the date.

See more information about the history of the club and this year's events on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary page of the club's website at

[Fiftieth Anniversary | Howard County Bird Club \(howardbirds.website\)](#),

## ONE OF A KIND – MOSAIC GYNANDROMORPH ZABULON SKIPPER

BY ANNETTE ALLOR

On August 15, 2021, my plans for the day were the same as the prior several days: go to Rockburn Branch Park in Howard County, Maryland to search for the Harvester butterfly. My chances were better than average at finding at least one. The Beech Woolly Aphids were particularly plentiful this year, and the Harvester caterpillars and butterflies both feed on them.

Upon arrival at Rockburn, I hiked the trails and checked my favorite spots before venturing onto the Morning Choice Trail. The number of beech trees with aphids was incredible but I could not locate the Harvester.

I continued on the trail until I reached an opening. Walking along the forest edge, I found a few patches of thistles in peak bloom covered with Zabulon Skippers. I walked closer and saw a skipper that I did not recognize. It's funny how your brain tries to process what you are seeing for the first time. It took me a few seconds to figure out that this butterfly was, in fact, a Zabulon Skipper. But what a skipper it was! It had both male and female characteristics. I have seen gynandromorph photographs of butterflies with one side female and the other male, but this skipper showed a blending of traits throughout. The underside of a normal Zabulon male skipper is yellow-orange with several small reddish-brown spots, while the female is dark brown and purple-gray with frosting on the outer margins. This skipper showed the dark brown color and frosting of the female along with the



Mosaic Gynandromorph Zabulon Skipper nectaring on Thistle

yellow orange markings of the male. I have never seen anything quite like it. I started taking photos from all angles. The typical Zabulon males that also appeared in the frame were perfect for comparison purposes. There were no Zabulon females present or I would have asked them to partake in the fun. I left this beauty nectaring on the thistle and continued hiking.

Upon returning home, I emailed Harry Pavulaan, a world-renowned butterfly expert and friend, with photos of my find. Harry's response, "In a nutshell: WOW. Gynandromorphs, in this case a mosaic gynandromorph, usually are only noticed in Swallowtails and species where males and females look quite different. But what makes this one yet more significant is that it's a skipper. I have never seen or heard of a skipper with mosaic gynandromorph features. You may be the first to document this, though it's possible there are older reports of bilateral gynandromorphs out there."

After later investigations and subsequent emails, it turns out that this Zabulon Skipper is the only one ever documented with mosaic gynandromorphism. As per Harry: "I hear from others that there are only two known bilateral gynandromorph skippers, and only one documented in print (in the Clark & Clark Virginia book). Yours is yet more unique - a mosaic gynandromorph. The only one ever documented."

This news was very exciting and is important to show that anyone can make an important discovery. Harry Pavulaan, makes the point that "it used to be that a handful of academics would dominate natural science and there was no way for regular folks to break into the field and present their findings. We're learning so much these days, thanks to more eyes watching"



Typical male Zabulon Skipper (left) and Mosaic Gynandromorph Zabulon Skipper (right)

*Editor's Note: Annette began her butterflying obsession in 2011 working with her mentor Dick Smith. She quickly became one of, if not the most accomplished butterflyer in Howard County and in the state. She travels all over Maryland in search of butterflies and has put together an excellent photographic resource website at [marylandbutterflies.com](http://marylandbutterflies.com). She also volunteers for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to conduct surveys of rare and threatened wetland butterfly species.*

*(Records continued from page 3)*

Rd field 1/10 was the winter's high (**MKw**). **Cedar Waxwings** were mostly noted in small groups; however, in Dorsey's Search on 12/13, 100+ were feeding on the fruit of a tree "with black berries" (**AAI**).

**Red-breasted Nuthatches** were reported from at least ten sites. Two at the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA) from 12/5 (**J/MHr**) to 1/22 (**J/MHr**) were the most consistently reported. **House Wrens** linger sporadically into December; one at Cavey La was last counted with a flock of sparrows 12/11 (**RRf**). Midwinter individuals were at Western Regional Pk 1/30 (**JGn**) and at the north side of Nichols Cove, TRIRS 2/5 (**DHm**), both with good details; one without details was reported at MTPLT 2/25 (**MKw**). Ten **Carolina Wrens** at Alpha Ridge Landfill 1/19 (**RCu**) was a nice number. The 15 at LKELK 2/23 (**J/MHr**) were a solid indicator that the winter had not been severe enough to impact this species drastically.

**Gray Catbirds** were spotted at more than a dozen locations all winter. **Brown Thrashers** typically are less likely than catbirds to survive the winter, rarely are more than one or two reported. This winter, astonishingly, thrashers were seen at eight sites. One at MPEA was noted from 12/5 (**J/MHr**) to 2/17 (**J/MHr**) and one at MTPLT from 12/13 (**MKw**) to 2/10 (**JHf**). At least three records were accompanied by photos; most others were seen by experienced observers. Eleven **Hermit Thrushes** at Annapolis Rock 12/18 were an unusually high winter number (**SDv**). **American Pipits** are generally open country birds and tend to be found in western farm fields. From one to eight were teased out of half a dozen such sites, but a flock of ~50 on Dorsey Run Rd on 1/8 (**SPr**, ph.) in the far southeast was the high count.

Disease has depressed **House Finch** numbers for the last decade so a flock of 40 at Mt. Hebron on 1/28 was surprising (**JCu**). **Purple Finches** were extremely scarce after a small flight during November. Of nine winter reports (all singles), six were in December, two in January, and one in February. Birders can look forward to April when at least a few migrants should move through again.

Sparrows were generally unremarkable. Twelve **Field Sparrows** at Schooley Mill Pk 12/14 were nice (**J/MHr**), as were 21 in two flocks at MTPLT 1/15 (**RRf**). Seven **Fox Sparrows** were counted at Grace Church, Fulton 12/14 (**J/MHr**). As has become the norm, **American Tree Sparrows** were few with two consistently reported at MTPLT and one spotted at Hugg-Thomas WMA 2/7 (**CSt**). **White-crowned Sparrows** were scarce with a high of 15 at a favorite Roxbury Rd farm 2/5 (**MW**). A **Yellow-breasted Chat** visited a Stone Hill yard on 1/11, just the third January record (**KLz**, ph.).

**Eastern Meadowlarks** almost disappeared this season with a lone bird at West Friendship Pk 1/4 (**J/MHr**). Two male **Baltimore Orioles** spent the winter. One at Swan Point Way, LKELK returned to grape jelly and fresh orange halves for either the fifth or sixth winter 1/4 (*fide* **KS**, **GOv**, **PBe**) and was still present 2/7 (Anon. eBirder). The Mt. Hebron bird spent the third winter to the delight of numerous birders. It was still present 2/28 (**JCu**). This individual also had favorite foods. Apple jelly was the initial offering (an open jar); although grape has been offered, he strongly prefers apple. This oriole shows no interest in oranges or bananas, but does

occasionally indulge in split peanuts. Rarely, he'll drink a small amount of sugar water. When temperatures were lowest, a frozen sap drip on one of the trees attracted finches and the oriole. One could say that he had a sophisticated palate – or he was a picky eater . . .

A few out-of-season warblers lingered. An **Ovenbird** without a tail was present in the floodplain of MPEA 12/5 (**J/MHr**, ph.), just the second December record. A female **Common Yellowthroat** utilized a small, shallow pond in a yard in Glenwood 12/7 (**DCr**, ph.). A yellow **Palm Warbler** turned up in a Long Corner yard 1/5 (**MPw**, ph.), the county's third January record—all yellows. A few **Pine Warblers** typically overwinter. Feeder visitors were one at LKELK 12/16 (**ALw**) and one at Sewell's Orchard 12/21 (**BMy**).

The female **Painted Bunting** that appeared for the (presumed) third winter in east-central HOWCO didn't appear in a Stone Hill Dr yard until 1/7 (**KLz**). It was the seventh county record. The bird's visits were always erratic; add to that a fenced yard and excitable dog and scheduling visits was a challenge. This winter the bird also dealt with an aggressive **American Robin** and a **Northern Mockingbird** along with a flock of **House Sparrows**. After being seen at its favorite feeder early on 2/26, later that day the bunting was found dead outside the back door. Since the bird had previously fed frequently without incident at the deck location, it likely flew into the glass door when frightened, perhaps by a Cooper's Hawk that was present that morning.

**Big Day:** To finish on a cheerier note, a Big Day team of Russ Ruffing, John Harris, Greg Petersen, and Kristin Trouton chose 2/28, a lovely winter day, to try for a new February county record. They birded for 14 hours, from before dawn till after sunset, opening and closing the day with American Woodcock and setting a new February high of 80 species. If you'd like the vicarious experience of accompanying the team, see

<https://howardbirds.website/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2-28-2022-Big-Day-Summary.pdf> .

**Bonus:** Beaver at Meadowbrook Pk 2/1. "I had walked past the dam and heard a cracking and turned around to see it come up from the ice. It was munching away on branches" (**KLz**).

*Appreciation:* Many thanks to Joe Hanfman and Russ Ruffing for carefully checking the article, providing valuable data, corrections, and advice.

**Observers:** **AAI** – Annette Allor, **PBe** – Paul Bacich, **DCr** – Donna Carollo, **KCK** – Ken Clark, **MLC** – Mary Lou Clark, **JCu** – Jeff Culler, **RCu** – Ralph Cullison, **SDv** – Stephen Davies, **RzDv** – Raizel Davis, **RDv** – Robert Davis, **WE** – Wes Earp, **CFr** – Cheryl Farfaras, **TFy** – Tim Frye, **JGn** – Jim Green, **LGG** – Lynn Gregg, **FHd** – Faris Haddad, **JHf** – Joe Hanfman, **JHr** – John Harris, **MHr** – Meg Harris, **BHi** – Bill Hill, **RHI** – Russell Hillsley, **DHm** – David Holmes, **EHs** – Ed Huestis, **KIs** – Kerri Isenstadt, **MKw** – Mike Kerwin, **SKg** – Sidney King, **CKc** – Clayton Koonce, **ELp** – Ellen Lathrop, **MLm** – Mike Leumas, **ALw** – Allen Lewis, **KLz** – Kathy Litzinger, **SLk** – Steve Luke, **WMk** – Woody Merkle, **GMy** – Guy Moody, **SMY** – Susan Moody, **BMy** – Brian Moyer, **BO** – Bonnie Ott, **GOv** – Gretchen Overdurff, **SPr** – Steve Parr, **HPt** – Howard Patterson, **PPn** – Pam Perna, **RPr** – Richard Peters, **RyPr** – Ryan Peters, **GPn** – Gregg Petersen, **MPw** – Mary Prowell, **GRk** – Gene Ricks, **MRg** – Matt Rogosky, **RRf** – Russ Ruffing, **KRt** – Keith Rutter, **DSn** – David Sandler, **KS** – Kurt Schwarz, **JSh** – Jay Sheppard, **CSt** – Chuck Stirrat, **ESu** – Eva Sunell, **VSw** – Val Swan, **KTn** – Kristin Trouton, **MW** – Mark Wallace, **JWd** – Joshua Ward, **JW** – Jim Wilkinson

## HOWARD COUNTY MID-WINTER COUNT - FEBRUARY 5, 2022

BY JOE HANFMAN

A cold and partially cloudy day with temperatures 25 to 29° F. and no precipitation. The ponds were 50% frozen and rivers were flowing. We recorded 87 species which is close to the average of 88.4 species recorded in the last 36 years. The total number of individual birds was 23,724 which is 24,470 below the average number of birds recorded and 141,176 below the maximum number of birds recorded.

The top birds were a Painted Bunting and a House Wren which were seen for the first time ever on the count. A Baltimore Oriole was seen for only the fifth time on the count. Both the Painted Bunting and Baltimore Oriole returned to the same feeders for the third winter.

All-time high counts were recorded for Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (34), Common Raven (25), and Eastern Bluebird (519).

All-time low counts were recorded for Ring-billed Gull (153).

Forty-nine of the 87 species tallied have been seen on all 36 Mid-winter Counts. Seventy-nine of the 87 species tallied have been seen on at least 50% of all 36 Mid-winter Counts.

Birds that have been seen on more than half of the counts but missed this year were Mute Swan (not expected), Canvasback, Ruddy Duck, Wild Turkey, American Coot, Wilson's Snipe, Purple Finch, American Tree Sparrow, and Eastern Meadowlark.

Many people contributed to the success of the day. 70 observers spent 191.4 hours and covered 132.9 miles on foot and

519.3 miles by car. Another 20.5 hours were spent feeder watching, plus 5.0 hours stationary and 3.5 hours of owling. Chuck Stirrat updated the taxonomic order, summarized the area worksheets, and provided field and feeder checklists. Area leaders arrange coverage, do follow-up if necessary, and compile area totals. Their names are in boldface below (*anyone who counted in more than one area or also at a feeder is listed just once*). Due to Covid-19 protocols the tally was done virtually with Zoom.

Land permission from Howard County Dept. of Recreation and Parks, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, and many private property owners assure good coverage—we are extremely grateful.

Observers: *Area 1.* **Mark Wallace**, **Wes Earp**, Jim & Marilyn Brinkley, Lisa Colangelo, Sue Earp, Tom Feild, Bill & Gayle Hill, Brenda Kidera, Kathie Lillie, Woody Merkle, Mike & Pam Perna, Jay Sheppard, Lisa Troutman, Bruce Woodward; *Area 2.* **Brian Moyer**, Mary Lou Clark, Louis Colangelo, Jeff & Karen Culler, David Holmes, Patty Iammatteo, Mary Maxey; *Area 3.* **Chuck Stirrat**, Ralph Cullison, Joe Hanfman, Jocelyn Heatzman, Steve Jones, Yi-Ying Lee, Kari & Karlyn McPartland, Tom Miller, Valerie Swan, Hyacinth & Robin Todd, Sarah Wiesbrock; *Area 4.* **Mike McClure**, Mike Leumas, *Area 5.* **Allen Lewis**, David Cummings, John & Sue Greer, Sashi Lengade, Howard Patterson, Suzanne Probst, David Sandler, Sherry Tomlinson; *Area 6.* **John Harris**, Karan Blum, Meg Harris, Kathy Litzinger, Brigitte Lund, Janet Lydon, Ryan Salsman, Tim Thompson; *Area 7.* **Kurt Schwarz**, Debbie Belchis, Ken Clark, Derek & Tracy Eve, Ed Huestis, John McKitterick, Sue Muller, Sue Neri, Jo Solem, Eva Sunell, Kristin Trouton, Jim Wilkinson.

(Flats continued from page 2)

Sandpiper (3, 8/11; 8/11, 9/21) and Least Sandpiper (1, 8/11).

The Shorebird Committee met through the spring and summer. In addition to the management strategy, the committee developed protocols for farm visits, reporting of sightings, and gave the site its name.

Approximately, 35 birders made 290 visits to the Flats during both periods. Several impromptu presentations were made to Sharps at Waterford Farm groups and observations of other farm visitors viewing the site were not uncommon. Visitation went smoothly with no problems and birder-farm interactions were cordial and friendly.

Waterford Flats reopened on April 1, hopefully for another successful spring (4/1 to 6/15) and perhaps this year, fall (7/15 to 9/30) season.

### BALTIMORE ORIOLE



This handsome male Baltimore Oriole was seen in Mt. Hebron on Mid-winter Count, and continues.  
by Jeff Culler 3/15/2022

Howard County Mid-Winter Count - February 5, 2022					
	Totals		Totals		Totals
Canada Goose	7,496	Pileated Woodpecker	34	Swamp Sparrow	29
Wood Duck	2	American Kestrel	5	Eastern Towhee	43
Gadwall	3	Merlin	2	Baltimore Oriole	1
American Wigeon	2	Peregrine Falcon	1	Red-winged Blackbird	613
Mallard	428	Eastern Phoebe	6	Brown-headed Cowbird	78
American Black Duck	32	Blue Jay	206	Common Grackle	1
Green-winged Teal	1	American Crow	955	<i>unidentified blackbird</i>	10
Ring-necked Duck	91	Fish Crow	367	Yel.-rump'd (Myrtle) Warble	7
Lesser Scaup	6	<i>crow species</i>	1,089	Northern Cardinal	667
Bufflehead	7	Common Raven	25	Painted Bunting	1
Hooded Merganser	50	Carolina Chickadee	215	<b>Area Total Birds:</b>	<b>23,724</b>
Common Merganser	604	Tufted Titmouse	273	<b>Area Total Species:</b>	<b>87</b>
Ruddy Duck	6	Horned Lark	11		<b>Totals</b>
Pied-billed Grebe	5	Golden-crowned Kinglet	18		
Rock Pigeon	104	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	5	<b>Time Start:</b>	6:00 a
Mourning Dove	262	Cedar Waxwing	186	<b>Time Stop:</b>	11:34 p
Killdeer	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	3	<b>Hours on Foot:</b>	135.4
Ring-billed Gull	153	White-breasted Nuthatch	196	<b>Hours by Car:</b>	56.0
Herring Gull	60	Brown Creeper	14	<b>Hours by Boat:</b>	.0
Great Black-backed Gull	1	House Wren	1	<b>Hours Other:</b>	.0
<i>gull species</i>	5	Winter Wren	13	<b>Miles on Foot:</b>	132.9
Great Blue Heron	11	Carolina Wren	211	<b>Miles by Car:</b>	519.3
Black Vulture	240	Gray Catbird	2	<b>Miles by Boat:</b>	.0
Turkey Vulture	323	Brown Thrasher	1	<b>Miles Other:</b>	
Northern Harrier	4	Northern Mockingbird	124	<b>Hours Feeder Watching:</b>	20.5
Sharp-shinned Hawk	5	European Starling	2,116	<b>Hours Stationary:</b>	6.0
Cooper's Hawk	8	Eastern Bluebird	519	<b>Hours "Owling":</b>	3.5
<i>accipiter species</i>	1	Hermit Thrush	25	<b>Miles "Owling":</b>	6.3
Bald Eagle [ad/im/unk]	27	American Robin	650		<b>Totals</b>
Red-shouldered Hawk	70	House Sparrow	400	Tot. Field Obs. in Area:	69
Red-tailed Hawk	41	American Pipit	1	Tot. Field Parties in Area:	51
<i>buteo species</i>	3	House Finch	249	Tot. Feederwatchers in Area:	12
Eastern Screech-Owl	1	American Goldfinch	153	Tot. Feeder Parties in Area:	9
Great Horned Owl	5	Chipping Sparrow	7	<b>Total Observers in Area:</b>	<b>70</b>
Barred Owl	6	Field Sparrow	49	<b>Total Parties in Area:</b>	<b>60</b>
Belted Kingfisher	11	Fox Sparrow	15	Tot. Field Pty-Hrs (Reg.):	192
Red-bellied Woodpecker	223	Dark-eyed Junco	777	Total Party-Hrs (Feeder):	20
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	34	White-crowned Sparrow	16	Tot. Pty-Hrs (Stationary):	6
Downy Woodpecker	179	White-throated Sparrow	2,050	Total Party-Hrs (Owling):	4
Hairy Woodpecker	23	Savannah Sparrow	38	<b>Total Party-Hours:</b>	<b>221.5</b>
Northern Flicker	127	Song Sparrow	585		<b>Totals</b>



## MAY COUNT IS SATURDAY, MAY 14, 2022

BY GREGG PETERSEN

As I write this, we are in the early stages of migration, the time of year when more birds can be found than any other time. We will see more and more species in the coming weeks until the peak in early May. May Count, always the second Saturday in May, is on May 14<sup>th</sup> this year.

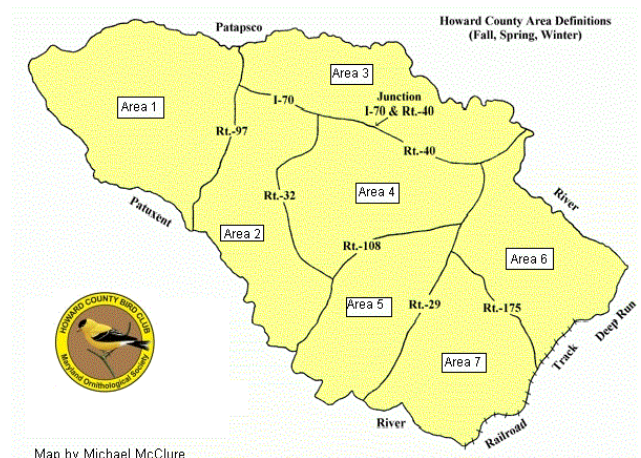
For beginning birders, this is an excellent opportunity to be paired with more experienced birders and get to see and hear many residents and spring migrants. Think warblers, vireos, thrushes, shorebirds, etc. The spring migrants are passing through headed north, the summer residents are back and some of the winter migrants are still around. Over the last 10 years across the county, we have tallied an average of 142 species during the May Count. The total for 2021 was 138.

For the count, Howard County is divided up into the seven areas shown on the map. Each area has an Area Coordinator (name and phone number listed below) who communicates with the counters, assigns territories, and compiles area results. If you are a beginner, ask to be paired with a more experienced birder. Since the point is to tally every individual bird, extra eyes and ears are helpful. If you want to see a particular species, call me or send an email (202-256-8166/[sig29@aol.com](mailto:sig29@aol.com)) and I will try to place you in a location where you would have a good chance of seeing that bird.

Area 1	Bill Hill	Contact Gregg Petersen (contact info above)
Area 2	Russ Kovach	443-386-4787/ <a href="mailto:russell.kovach@gmail.com">russell.kovach@gmail.com</a>
Area 3	Chuck Stirrat	443-462-8234/ <a href="mailto:stirrcl@gmail.com">stirrcl@gmail.com</a>
Area 4	Mike McClure	410-531-2780/ <a href="mailto:michael.mcclure@jhuapl.edu">michael.mcclure@jhuapl.edu</a>
Area 5	Kristin Trouton	410-299-3387/ <a href="mailto:kristing4420@gmail.com">kristing4420@gmail.com</a>
Area 6	John Harris	843-592-4051/ <a href="mailto:aybee.harris@gmail.com">aybee.harris@gmail.com</a>
Area 7	Allen Lewis	443-774-4210/ <a href="mailto:allenrlewis@gmail.com">allenrlewis@gmail.com</a>

At the end of the day, all the counters are invited to a tally rally to share what was seen and come up with the county totals. It is a great opportunity to swap stories of the day and find out what everyone else has seen. Ideally the completed checklists will be turned into area coordinators by the time of the tally. The tally rally will start at 7:00 p.m. If you cannot make it, be sure that your checklist gets delivered or gets called in by 7:00 p.m.. We will find out what rarities were seen and often go out the next day to try to relocate them. This year's tally rally may be preceded by an in-person potluck at 6:00 p.m. as was done before the pandemic. I will be conducting a survey with the counters prior to the May Count to determine whether we are ready to get back together or whether we will again do the tally rally by Zoom.

Join us. This is a great chance for beginning birders to see many new and beautiful species of birds as they pass through in their spring plumage.



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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Ellicott City, MD 21042-6235  
[howard21042@verizon.net](mailto:howard21042@verizon.net)

**The Goldfinch**, newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club, is published five times per year. Copy deadline for the September/October 2022 issue is July 25, 2022.

Editor's Note: There will be a new editor beginning with the September-October issue. Howard will assist as needed with the next few issues. Copy can still be sent to Howard.

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

### SKYWATCH MAINTENANCE

Led by Woody Merkle, the crew of Mary Lou Clark, Allen Lewis, Mary Maxey, David Sandler, Ryan Salsman, Bob Solem, and Chuck Stirrat, along with Boy Scouts and others weeded and mulched the Chandler S. Robbins Skywatch at Mt. Pleasant, April 2.



by Mary Maxey



## HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

*Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society*

P. O. BOX 1323

COLUMBIA MD 21044-1323

### May/June 2022 - Inside This Issue

Program	Winter Bird Records
Field Trips	Waterford Flats 2021
Banded Peregrine Falcon	BOD Meeting
50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	Gynandromorph
Mid-winter Count Summary	May Count
Skywatch Maintenance	BBA3

## Breeding Bird Atlas 3

by Sue Muller

Season three of the MD/DC BBA3 is well under way! New eagle and owl nests have been found already this year. Ospreys are back and adding sticks to their nests. Woodpeckers are busy excavating nest cavities, I could go on! Breeding activity is all around us and it is time to get outside and document breeding bird behavior in eBird. Remember to use the Maryland-DC Breeding Bird Atlas portal when collecting data in eBird.

Breeding behavior can be observed in many ways. Perhaps you see a bird collecting nest material or food, or maybe even see a bird feeding recently fledged young. You might see a large raptor carrying a stick in its talons. Also, this is a good time to be looking on cell towers for nests. So far we have four species nesting on cell towers: Bald Eagle, Osprey, Common Raven and European Starling.

There will be some group field trips planned this season to other counties where there are not as many people atlas-ing. There are many great birding places around the state waiting for us to explore!

If you are new to atlas-ing and wondering “what is she talking about?” visit the Howard County Bird Club website for information on getting started, <https://howardbirds.website/birding/breeding-bird-atlases/bba3/>. Feel free to email the coordinators (Sue & Dave) with questions, [howard@mdbirds.org](mailto:howard@mdbirds.org). If you would like to attend a field class for beginning atlasers, email your coordinators!