



The Goldfinch

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



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CLUB MEETINGS - BY MARY LOU CLARK

Thursday, September 8, 2022 "Bird Colonization in a Restored Prairie in Maryland" by Dr. Douglas Gill. He will share the history and early results of restoring habitat for grassland birds, especially Grasshopper Sparrows.

Dr. Gill received his Ph.D. in Evolutionary Ecology from the University of Michigan. He has been on the faculty of the Department of Biology of the University of Maryland since 1971 and is now a Professor Emeritus there. He has led scientific expeditions all over the world from Alaska to Antarctica.

Thursday, October 13, 2022 "Gulls of North America" by Fred Shaffer. This talk will highlight the many common and rare species of gulls to be seen in North America. Fred will also discuss some of the varied features and natural history that make gulls such a distinctive group of birds.

Fred worked for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for over 30 years and became interested in gulls by observing them at Schoolhouse Pond in Upper Marlboro. His book *Gulls of North America* was published in March 2022.

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 for the most recent information.



Leucistic Chipping Sparrow by Gregg Petersen

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME BY KRISTIN TROUTON

I am excited and grateful to start my term during the Howard County Bird Club's 50th year. First of all, I want to thank Mary Maxey for her time and dedication to the club. Her expertise along with that of past presidents has provided me with invaluable knowledge coming into this presidency as a relatively new club member and birder.

The Howard County Bird Club benefits the community in so many ways, especially people who are new to the hobby. As someone who went on her first bird-watching field trip only four years ago, the members of this club are definitely what sparked my interest. I would like to send a big thank you to those who continue volunteering their time to this club. From leading field trips and participating in seasonal bird counts, to tallying up breeding bird codes for the MD-DC Breeding Bird Atlas and teaching individuals how to plant a pollinator garden (and the list goes on), the volunteers of this club make such a big impact on what we are able to achieve. I encourage those interested to join us!

Our 50th Anniversary Celebration will be held during the weekend of October 29th. Please check out the incredible page on the website (<https://howardbirds.website/fiftieth/>) created by Bob and Jo Solem, in addition to the details of the celebration in this newsletter.

With Covid-19 still lurking, we will continue holding our programs virtually the second Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. I am looking forward to seeing you all at some of our field trips, and be sure to tune into our first program on September 8th on restoring habitat for grassland birds in Maryland by Professor Douglas Gill. Hope to see you there!

FALL 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. **Depending on the COVID situation at the time, there may be restrictions imposed.** The leader may cancel due to inclement weather/hazardous driving conditions. Directions for trips not on ADC maps are on the Club's website. Questions? Contact the trip leader or Field Trip Coordinator Joe Hanfman at auk1844@gmail.com. HCBC members receive priority on trips that are limited by number of participants. No pets.

B “Non-alcohol Nighthawk Happy Hour” at Worthington Park/New Cut Landfill, late August or early September. Scan evening sky for Common Nighthawks. This is peak time for autumn nighthawk migration. Exact date not available for the newsletter. Check the club website for details. Leader – David Ziolkowski, djziolkowski@yahoo.com

Middle Patuxent Environmental Area

September 1, Thursday, 7:30 a.m. Half day. *Meet at the Trotter Road entrance.* Moderate walking on wooded trails and along the river. Great area for migrants of all species. Field edges and thickets provide sparrow habitat. Prepare for wet grass and mud on the trails.

Leader – John Harris, jaybee.harris@gmail.com

Rockburn Branch Park

September 3, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. Half day. *Meet in parking lot on the left just past the restored schoolhouse. The park gate is just beyond Rockburn Elementary School.* Moderate walking through the woods and fields of our largest county park looking for migrants. Paths may be muddy. Facilities available. Leader – Mary Lou Clark, doctorfx_99@yahoo.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

R Middle Patuxent Environmental Area/South Wind Circle

September 10, Saturday, 7:30 a.m., 3-4 hours. Meet at the South Wind Circle entrance. Fall migrants and other woodland birds. Possibly muddy paths. Limit 10 participants; to register, contact:

Leader – Kurt Schwarz, krschwal@verizon.net

Fall Count

September 17, Saturday. See [p.7](#). Please go to the following link to sign up. <http://howardbirds.org/howard/counts.htm>

West Friendship Park

September 24, Saturday, 7:30 a.m., 3-4 hours. Meet at the shopping center parking lot at Routes 32 and 144, then carpool to the park. Fall migrants and other woodland birds. Possibly muddy paths.

Leaders – Robin Todd, robintodd1948@gmail.com and Gregg Petersen, sig29@aol.com

~~**B-W** Skywatch, Mt. Pleasant, Howard County Conservancy September 26, Monday with a September 27, Tuesday rain date 9:30 a.m. **CANCELLED** *Meet in parking lot; later go directly to Skywatch. This trip will be a skywatch for migrating raptors and other potential flybys.* Leader – Ralph Ceuder, Oldhawk@aol.com~~

Middle Patuxent Environmental Area

October 1, Saturday, 7:30 a.m. Half day. Meet at the Trotter Road parking lot.

Leader: Gregg Petersen, sig29@aol.com

R Meadowbrook Park

October 22, Saturday, 8:00. a.m., 3-4 hours. Meet at the parking lot. Limit 10 participants; to register, contact: Leader – Kurt Schwarz, krschwal@verizon.net

50th Anniversary Field Day

October 29, Saturday. All activities will be held at Mount Pleasant, Howard County Conservancy.

B R Bird Walk. 8:00 a.m. 1 -2 hours. Various leaders depending on number of attendees.

B W Robbins' Skywatch. 8:00 a.m. through morning. Drop in at any time. Late raptors, especially Red-tailed Hawks and eagles. Leaders: Wes and Sue Earp.

B R Habitat Walk. 10:00 a.m. 1 -2 hours. Explore some of the varied habitats at this popular site. Leader: Sue Muller. Registration requested with Joe Hanfman Auk1844@gmail.com for Bird Walk and for Habitat Walk by 9:00 p.m. October 27, Thursday. Provide names of all in your party with trip choice. Skywatch registration not required. Yes, you may participate without pre-registering, but you cannot be advised of trip changes.

Additional fall field trips may be added. Check the HCBC website [field trips listing](#) for updates.

B W Skywatch, Mt. Pleasant, Howard County Conservancy

November 5, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. Half day. *At 9:30 a.m., meet in parking lot; later go directly to Skywatch.* 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. We will watch the skies and tally the birds as long as conditions are productive. Participants can also walk the Conservancy trails if skywatching proves non-productive. **Wheelchair accessible for skywatch only.** Facilities available.

Leader – Russ Ruffing, russruffing@gmail.com

B = Good for beginning birders

W = Wheelchair accessible

R = Reservations Required

SPRING BIRD RECORDS: MARCH 1 – MAY 31, 2022

BY [JOANNE SOLEM](#)

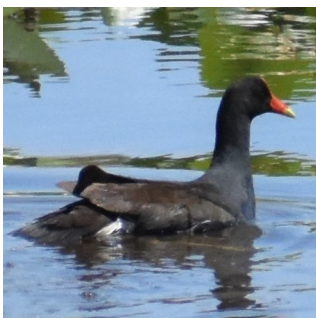
As if to celebrate the HCBC's 50th year, the spring season produced multiple highlights. One **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** would have been an exciting new county species. A flock of 13 of these stunning birds? Jaw-dropping! On Monday, April 25 at 6:30 a.m., a group of runners passed some waterfowl near the east gazebo at Wilde Lake. One person thought the birds were unfamiliar, but did not stop. How many other people made that same decision? At 8:25 a.m., Diane Eidelman and her husband, Nathan Baum, noticed the flock grazing on the lawn not far from the large barn. After photographing the birds, the couple posted the image to social media where it was spotted by Maryland birders. The birds remained at the lake the entire day eating, swimming, flying, and resting on a waterside log to the delight of at least 75 birders. To place a cherry on top, Michelle Stewart and Barry Miller spotted two at Lake Elkhorn (LKELK) at 6:30 a.m., Saturday, May 28; later, Lisa Orton Arge posted a photo to social media. Like the initial flock, these two stayed until dusk. At 8:45 p.m., Suzanne Hooley watched them depart from a tree near her deck.



Black-bellied Whistling-Duck

by Richard Orr

Other spring highlights were a female Hooded Merganser with ducklings, Virginia Rail, Sora, Common Gallinule, Upland Sandpiper, Whimbrel, Least Bittern, Little Blue Heron, Swallow-tailed Kite, Mississippi Kite, Nelson's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow with nesting material, and Painted Bunting.



Common Gallinule by Jim Wilkinson



Sora

by Val Swan

Peak **Canada Goose** migration was caught in four hours at the Mt. Pleasant Skywatch (MTPLT-SW) on 3/5 when 3,384 passed overhead (ASm). Most **Tundra Swans** were reported during the first half of March.

Birders enjoyed a nice diversity of waterfowl at Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS) on 3/3 when up to 14 species were counted including nine **American Wigeon**, 11 **Northern Pintails**, and one **Redhead** (GPn, SLk, VSw, ph.). Six members of the Shorebird Committee tallied the season's **Wood Duck** high of 40 on 3/27 at Waterford Farm (WATFD). Multiple broods of female Woodies with ducklings were reported countywide. Usually scarce **Blue-**

winged Teal were noted for more than a month at 10 sites, including at seldom-reported Hugg-Thomas WMA (LCg) and Scott's Cove, Rocky Gorge Res. (GPn). **Northern Shovelers**, in the low single digits, made brief visits to five locations. **Gadwalls** appeared at eight sites with totals topping out at 10 at Race Road Wetlands (RACRW) 3/13 (SPr). The Shorebird Committee tallied 70 **Green-winged Teal** at WATFD 3/27 for a new high count [47 - E. Holdridge 10/27/07].

Five/six **Canvasbacks** were present at the Elliott Rd Pond 3/5 (GPn) until 3/10. Both scap species made an appearance. The lone **Long-tailed Duck** report of one/two flyover flocks was from Night Flight Call (NFC) equipment at Cavey La 3/11 (RRf). A **Common Goldeneye** was noted at LKELK 3/3 (JW, ph.)

A rare county nester was one of the season's special sightings. A female **Hooded Merganser** with a brood of 12 downy young appeared in a stormwater management pond at MD 32/Cedar La on 4/23 (J/MHr). The pond lacked adequate edge vegetation to protect the young, so it was not surprising that, within a day, the female and her brood disappeared, presumably to the relative safety of the nearby Middle Patuxent River. By the last half of March, **Common Merganser** numbers dropped rapidly, with scattered reports in April. The last sighting was a male behind Duckett Dam 5/14 (KCK, ph., SMu, TSp). A female **Red-breasted Merganser** on the Patapsco River at Marriottsville (MARPV) 5/13-14 (RTd) was not only late but was well away from the species' more favored reservoirs and lakes.

This author was elated when a hen **Wild Turkey** strolled across the yard on 3/26, the first in 50+ years in Hammond Village (JS). It proved to be less noteworthy when spring reports exploded to close to four dozen sightings countywide including photos of displaying toms.

Birders enjoyed a **Horned Grebe** fallout on 3/12 – a day of cold temperatures, rain, snow, and high W/NW winds. Migrating birds dropped onto the nearest water to wait out the adverse weather. A few grebes were found on each of the local lakes with a high of 32 on TRIRS (JHf).

Mourning Doves nest early and often. They are not known for their nest-building prowess. A nest, positioned on a conifer branch at Centennial Park (CENPK), was admired for its unusually sturdy construction by field trip participants on 3/20 (DHm+). **Common Nighthawks** arrived later than usual. Oddly, the first two individuals were seen on the sunny afternoon of 5/9: one over the boat launch at CENPK at 1:00 p.m. (DMs) and one at Pigtail at 1:40 p.m. (RRf, JHr, GPn, KTn, VSw). The high was a loose group of 26 heading north over Sarasota Ct the evening of 5/15 (E/KTn).

An **Eastern Whip-poor-will** on a large rock in the Middle Patuxent River at the Gorman Stream Valley Natural Resource Area (NRA) the morning of 5/1 (KLz) was puzzling. After late-day storms soaked the bird, there was still no evidence of movement, although photos showed the nictitating membrane on one eye had changed slightly. When there was no change in position the following morning, it was assumed the bird was dead. Reaching the rock was risky so was not attempted. Without examination, there was no way to establish the timing or cause of death. It was a curious experience with no satisfactory ending.

The first **Chimney Swift** was spotted over CENPK 4/13 (RHI).

(Records continued on page 4)

(Records continued from page 3)

Flocks entering chimneys are seldom reported in spring. On 4/27, 36 were observed at Atholton E.S. at 7:14 p.m. (RSm). A pair of **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** appeared in a Thornbrook yard on 4/30. The species has bred nearby annually since 2001 (JCu).

A **Virginia Rail** was seen in low flight over cattails at Meadowbrook Park 5/9 (BO), spring's only record. A **Sora** was present in the flooded corner of a cornfield at WATFD 4/16 (VSw, GPn), with two on 4/17 (RRf). A **Common Gallinule** appeared briefly in open water at RACRW the late morning of 5/11 (JW). It disappeared into the dense aquatic vegetation and was not seen again (the same observer heard it on 5/14). An **American Coot** was reported at RACRW 3/14 (LMcD) and 3/17 (MLC, ph.). Was the same bird still present on 4/1 (VSw) and 4/13 (JW)?

Much of shorebird migration was unremarkable, but, as always, there were exceptions. Two **Upland Sandpipers** at Alpha Ridge Landfill (ALRGL) 4/29-30 (RCu+) were a notable find; a **Semi-palmated** was also tallied there on 5/20 (RCu). Another landfill sighting added to that location's reputation for producing special species. A "messy V" of 30 **Whimbrels** flying north on 5/24 was a thrilling sight (JHf-ID, RCu), nearly two decades after the county's first visual record. At 9:00 p.m. that same evening, two flocks were heard at Cavey La, the first while the birder was standing outside, the other heard live using NFC (RRf).

At least four sites produced **American Woodcock** in early to mid-March; the most frequently visited was Hipsley Mill Rd, Patuxent River State Pk (PRSP). Two successful woodcock walks were held at Hipsley after Gateway proved unproductive (MLC). Of particular interest, because they were within the "safe dates" for breeding, were birds at Pigtail 5/7 (MKw, heard/seen) and at MPEA 5/21 (RLd, no details). The stormy weather on 3/13 produced a **Wilson's Snipe** standing in snow at the edge of a St. Louis Church pond, Clarksville (SLk).

Birders enjoyed a good flight of **Bonaparte's Gulls** for a little over a month with the peak passage the first 10 days of April, primarily over both reservoirs, CENPK, and WATFD. The high of 220 was at Rocky Gorge Res. 4/4 (DRn), with the last one at CENPK 4/26 (BO). There were multiple **Caspian Tern** reports from almost a dozen sites during April into early May, a nice rebound from spring 2021. All numbers were single digits.

A **Least Bittern** near Davis Branch, MTPLT called briefly on 4/16 (RRf), the first county record for this species in the month of April; one was heard at the same location 4/24 (KS); one was also heard NFC-live at Cavey La on 5/2 (RRf). An **American Bittern** was also heard at Cavey La, NFC-live, the night of 4/11 (RRf). In an interesting juxtaposition of records after that night bird, two were spotted on 4/12, one at WATFD (GPn, VSw) and one at nearby MTPLT (MKw). The latter bird was present until the early morning of 4/27 (JHf). From the Skywatch, one was seen in flight the evening of 5/19 (JHf). One was also picked up by NFC at Cavey La 5/5 (RRf). The **Great Blue Heron** colony at Vantage Point continued to thrive. Twenty-two occupied nests, most with incubating birds, were counted on 3/21 (JS, SMu). A **Little Blue Heron**, described with scant details, was reported along the Gwynn Acres Path 5/14 (MKw). This year the first **Black-crowned Night-Heron** was spotted at Lake Kittamaquidi 4/9, instead of the usual WILLK (CKc); two at a Montgomery Run pond 4/10 were at an unusual location (RSm). An adult **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** appeared at CENPK 4/18 (RRf); one was also noted at RACRW 5/2 (JW).

The influx of **Ospreys** began with one at WILLK 3/11 (KWl). Within weeks pairs had begun to take up residence on cell towers. The number of nesting Ospreys has slowly increased each

year to the point that there were at least seven in 2022 (SMu). A mid-April observation of an Osprey with a two-foot section of black plastic trailing from its talons as it headed for the MD 216 nest was the strangest report (ASt). Quick reflexes verified one of the season's most arresting species. A **Swallow-tailed Kite**, pursued by crows, flew over birders stopped at a light at US 40/Frederick Rd the early afternoon of 5/23. A smartphone captured the drama to establish the county's fourth/fifth modern record (E/KTn). Quite possibly, the same bird may have been seen again. Around 9:00 a.m. on 5/26, a birder was driving north on Marriottsville Rd approaching MD 99, when a good-sized bird with outstretched wings and a dark forked tail swooped over the car below treetop level heading S/SE (MLC). **Bald Eagles** continue to thrive in the county. Five nests were built in trees and on cell towers (SMu). The TRIRS nest was lost when the dead tree it was in fell (HMz).

In the decades since the first county **Mississippi Kite** was recorded in 1993, sightings have increased so that, although scarce, the species now is annual. A perched adult was present in late afternoon at Warfield's Pond Park 5/15 (POs, ph.). Another sailed over MTPLT on 5/20 (HPt, ph., ALw, VSw). On 3/25, 10 **Red-shouldered Hawk** nest sites from previous years were visited; six nests were still present; and *all* were active. Even more fascinating was that one nest had been used for five successive years, one for four, three for three, and one for a second year (TRy, GCg)! This year's first **Broad-winged Hawk** was a treat for the participants on the ALRGL field trip 4/9 (RCu, JHf+). Spring counts of this species rarely approach those in autumn; the high was 13 in two late morning hours at the Skywatch 4/22 (LGg).

Red-headed Woodpeckers appeared both at feeders and on various snags, but, as yet, no nesting during 2022 has been verified. **Merlins** were reported from at least eight sites during the season; only three were accompanied by photos and five contained no descriptive details. In contrast, five of the six **Peregrine Falcons** sighted were photographed which is the best seasonal documentation for this species I can remember. Thanks to everyone who took the time and made the effort to obtain an image.

Although flycatchers pose some of the trickiest identification challenges, they are often treated much too casually by birders. Multiple field marks, including sound, should be used to make an identification. **Many silent individuals, especially *Empidonax*, are best left unidentified as to species.** Virtually every local flycatcher can have a degree of yellow on the underparts. **Olive-sided Flycatchers** are infrequent and, unless seen by multiple observers, are best verified with a photo and/or recording. One at Henryton 5/11 was present on both sides of the river (JCu, ph.); another, at MTPLT-SW 5/19 (JHf, ph.) was seen late in the day. Two **Acadians** were reported on 5/2: one at MPEA (VSw) and one at Henryton (HENPV) (MKw). Scarce **Alder Flycatchers** are late migrants, sometimes lingering into summer. One was present at MTPLT 5/19 (ASm, audio); its burry "free-beer" call was often heard in proximity to a **Willow's**, allowing for easy comparison. It was still present 5/31 (KS). **Leasts** were reported a minimum of six times. Most were silent. One report was accompanied by a photo; one had excellent details; half had none. The earliest was seen at Sewell's Orchard Ponds Pk 4/30 (BMy). Its appearance, call, and habitat were described. Fifteen **Eastern Phoebes** arrived at CENPK 3/28 (KS.), a dramatic increase from the three on the previous day's field trip (R/RnPr).

Eight **Yellow-throated Vireos** were a nice count in an hour at Mullinix Mill Rd, PRSP 5/9 (MPw). Fifty-six **Red-eyed Vireos** in two and one-half hours at the Middle Patuxent Environmental

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(Records continued from page 4)

Area (MPEA) 5/15 was a fine total (JHf). Family groups of **Common Ravens** were widely reported, but only the Dorsey's Search nest was verified as successful with three fledglings 5/9 (KS). Two hours at the MPEA 3/16 yielded 29 **Carolina Chickadees** and 32 **Tufted Titmice** (J/MHr). **Rough-winged, Tree,** and **Barn Swallows** drifted in during March. A Barn at CENPK 3/24 (JHf) was the earliest. **Purple Martins** were seen in the vicinity of the new box/gourds at MTPLT, but three pairs of Trees were the only species that nested. **Bank Swallows** are normally the last of the six local swallows to show up; this year, two finally appeared at CENPK 5/8 (BO). Overall, total sightings for that species were few and numbers low. Mid-April highs of 20 for both **Golden-crowned Kinglets** and **Ruby crowned Kinglets** may seem high, but those totals are far below record numbers.

Following a winter with few boreal species, there were a limited number of reports in spring. Three **Brown Creepers** were noted in the same area of a Woodbine yard 3/30 (PPn), while five were tallied at Gorman Stream Valley NRA-Kindler 4/8 (TFy). A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** at LaKe Kittamaquindi 3/31 (CKe) was the first. Within a few days, these energetic little birds were building their soft knot-like nests in floodplain trees countywide. Thrush migration was unremarkable. During the wintry mix on 3/12, in addition to grebes, **American Pipits** dropped in with 75 at TRIRS (JHf) and 11 at LKELK (ALw),

Five **Grasshopper Sparrows** at West Friendship Pk on 4/22 were the first (BO). The breeding colony at ALRGL numbered at least 16 on 5/20 (RCu). Although a few **Chipping Sparrows** wintered, an influx on 3/31 was apparent with five reports. One of the most beautiful birds of the season was a bright white Chippy with a few black wing and tail feathers at Cavey La 5/18 (GPn, ph.); it had been glimpsed a few days earlier (RRf). The last of the few **American Tree Sparrows** was logged at MTPLT 3/29 (ALw). **Vesper Sparrows** appeared at five locations: ALRGL 4/4 - 4/20 (RCu-2), MTPLT 4/12 (JHf) - 4/14 (CHm), WATFD 4/12 (GPn) - 4/22 (JHf), Clark's Elioak Farm, MD 108 4/15 (RBy), and W. Friendship Pk 4/22 (BO-2). A probable **Nelson's** (heard only) was present at ALRGL 5/23 (RCu). Spring **Lincoln's** are always scarce. There were three reports with the one at Sewell's Orchard 5/10 at an infrequently-reported location (BMy). A **Swamp Sparrow** with a long stalk of grass in its bill along the river at MPEA 5/4 (CSt) was astonishing. A second bird was observed in the same area by others in the party (DSn, ALw), but there have been no additional reports at this location of this extremely rare county nester.

High counts of **Bobolinks** were a rather modest 56 at ALRGL 5/9 (RCu) and 36 at Fulton Pd 5/7 (JW). Resident **Eastern Meadowlarks** at ALRGL on 5/20 numbered 10 (RCu). The Thornbrook Rd, Mt. Hebron male **Baltimore Oriole** completed its third winter there and was last seen on 4/17, the same date as last year (JCu). A male, most likely a wintering bird, appeared briefly at a Burleigh Manor feeder 3/14 (MKw). **Rusty Blackbirds** were reported from nearly a dozen sites; numbers were almost all one or two. The most unexpected were two wandering the athletic fields at Manor Woods E.S. on 3/6 (RTd).

The most notable aspect of warbler migration was how few species arrived early; most showed up on or near the average date - or later. The lone **Golden-winged Warbler** was bathing with a **Blue-winged** in the shallow water of a drainage area at US 29/ Broken Land Pkwy 5/5 (JMck). Single **Prothonotary Warblers** were seen and heard downstream from Woodstock Rd on 4/25 (RRf), at RACRW 5/2 (JHf), and at MPEA 5/2 (ALw, CSt). A **Mourning Warbler** was found east of the parking lot at MARPV 5/18 (JW); on 5/19, a second individual was found west of the parking lot while the first was still present (GPn, ph.). One was

also spotted at MTPLT 5/20 (VSw, ph.). **Kentuckys** and **Hoodeds** were reported at up to a dozen sites, most reports clustered in the extensive woodlands at MPEA and far western HOWCO. Both have become scarce county nesters. A **Palm** (Eastern/ Yellow population) was reported at MTPLT 5/19 (KS). (Because not all records list the form, this was a new late date for this type, based on limited data.). A **Yellow-rumped** at Mt. Airy on 5/27 was the third latest date, just three days shy of the late date (MPw, ph.) **Yellow-throateds** were slow to return with one reported at CENPK 4/4 (HDb), with the first northern Patapsco bird arriving at MARPV 4/5 (JHf). **Wilson's Warblers** seemed to be in a hurry. The first was spotted at MPEA 5/3 (ASm) with numbers quickly peaking on 5/5 with reports from five of the eight noted sites; the last was seen at CENPK 5/16 (GPn).

A male **Summer Tanager** visited a Mt. Airy feeder 5/7-9 (BBz, ph.). On the same dates, a well-described female visited both suet and peanut feeders in an Ellicott City yard (JSf, JnSf). A male was admired at Abbott's Park, WSSC property on 5/14 (Kck, audio, SMu, TSp). The last was heard at Schooley Mill Pk 5/21 (ALK). (Although the recording was not definitive, the bird was seen during the summer season.)

Numbers of common species sometimes change dramatically. On 3/17, 50 **Northern Cardinals** were recorded at CENPK: "Est. another few every 100-200 yards around the entire lake" (SUB).

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, **Blue Grosbeaks,** and **Indigo Buntings** appeared at feeders during late April and early May providing a splash of color during multiple rainy days. Eight Rose-breasts at once at Duvall 5/7 (Ktf) constituted the high with six at Long Corner 5/8 (MPw) and at Jessup 5/7 (plus a Blue around the same time) (R/RnPr).

The **Painted Bunting's** death was mentioned in the winter summary. On 4/9, when the bunting was transferred from Kathy Litzinger to Dave Ziolkowski, he was able to determine that it was at least three years old. Thanks to Dave, the Smithsonian Institution's bird division has agreed to accession it in their collection so it will be available for research purposes.

A **Dickcissel** at Bowling Green Farm, Underwood Rd 5/14 (CSt, VSw) was a hopeful sign that the small colony, present since 2017, was still viable, though the HCBC has not been able to lease land there since 2018. Late in May there were several reports of two birds, and one of three on 5/20 (SSm).

Big Days: Two Big Days were run during the spring season: April 29 and May 9. The teams for both consisted of Russ Ruffing, John Harris, Gregg Petersen, Kristin Trouton, and Val Swan. Neither attempt broke a record, but it's always fun to try!



Rose-breasted Grosbeak by Steve Luke

(Records continued on page 6)

HCBC'S FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Members! Join in celebrating the Howard County Bird Club's fiftieth anniversary the weekend of October 29 - 30, 2022. Activities will be held at Mount Pleasant, Howard County Consequancy.

Saturday, October 29. Field day 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. 3 activities. 1. *Bird Walk* at 8:00 a.m. (possibly multiple leaders depending on size of group). 2. *Robbins' Skywatch* will be staffed beginning at 8:00 a.m. with Wes and Sue Earp as leaders. Drop in any time during the morning. 3. For the late risers or those who want to better understand the multiple habitats at this location, Sue Muller will lead a *Habitat Walk* beginning at 10:00 a.m. Registration is requested for the Bird Walk and the Habitat Walk (see Field Trips, p. 2 to register) so you can be advised of weather-related or other changes. Registration will enable Field Trip Chair Joe Hanfman to judge the number of leaders needed.

There will be a drawing for several prizes including a signed copy of David Sibley's *Field Guide to Birds of the East* ("little Sibley").

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

Megan Bolcar
12136 Gray Star Way
Columbia, MD 21044
megbolcar@gmail.com

The Goldfinch, newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club, is published five times per year. Copy deadline for the November-December 2022 issue is September 25, 2022.

Megan Bolcar, *Editor*

MOS CONVENTION PIN

HCBC member Sue Probst won this year's MOS convention pin design contest with a Black-crowned Night-Heron. She and her mother, Connie Bockstie, have a family history of MOS convention pin designs. You can check out the story and see previous [winning designs](#) in one of the black boxes on the 50th Anniversary page of the HCBC website.



Pin Design by Sue Probst



Convention Pin

Sunday, October 30. Celebration at Gudelsky Environmental Education Center 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

1:00 – 2:15 p.m. Social hour. Examine displays and historical material.

2:15 – 4:00 p.m. Program, awards, recognition of leaders, prize drawings, cake cutting. Those who completed the 50th Anniversary Challenge will be able to pick up their prize. They will also be eligible for several special prize drawings.

Invitations. An email invitation will be sent to all members of record in early September with a reply requested. Your response will be essential to our planning for this event. If you have not received an invitation by September 15th or do not have an email address, contact Jo Solem odena-ta@msn.com; 301-725-5037. Members are welcome to attend even if they have not replied, but only those pre-registered by 9:00 p.m., Sunday, October 23 will be eligible for several special prizes.

Since we cannot predict the course of Covid-19, we ask that only those who have been vaccinated and boosted attend the indoor event. Masks are required.

—Fiftieth Anniversary Committee

(Records continued from page 5)

Bonus: On 3/4, Russ Ruffing watched a **coyote** swim from west of the pipeline at Greenbridge across TRIRS to Howard County, nearly one-half mile. The temperature was an invigorating 23 degrees!

On the afternoon of 5/17, a young **black bear** visited Mary Prowell's Long Corner Rd yard. Fortunately, it moved on after breaking a feeder pole and biting a small feeder.

Appreciation: *Joe Hanfman, Russ Ruffing, and Howard Patterson provided essential data and comments to enhance the accuracy of this summary for which I am deeply grateful.*

Observers: **BBz** – Bonnie Bezila, **RBy** – Rod Burley, **GCg** – Grace Cheng, **KCK** – Ken Clark, **MLC** – Mary Lou Clark, **LCg** – Lisa Colangelo, **JCu** – Jeff Culler, **RCu** – Ralph Cullison, **HDb** – Hartmut Doebel, **SE** – Sue Earp, **WE** – Wes Earp, **CfR** – Cheryl Farfaras, **MfR** – Martin Forrester, **TFy** – Tim Frye, **LGg** – Lynn Gregg, **CHm** – Catherine Hallam, **JHf** – Joe Hanfman, **JHr** – John Harris, **MHR** – Meg Harris, **RHI** – Russell Hillsley, **DHm** – David Holmes, **MKw** – Mike Kerwin, **CKc** – Clayton Koonce, **RLd** – Richard Ladley, **ALw** – Allen Lewis, **KLz** – Kathy Litzinger, **ALk** – Anne Looker, **SLk** – Steve Luke, **DMs** – Dean Mahlstedt, **LMcD** – Lauren McDougale, **JMcK** – John McKitterick, **HMz** – Helen Metzman, **BMy** – Brian Moyer, **SMu** – Sue Muller, **POs** – Peter Osenton, **BO** – Bonnie Ott, **SPr** – Steve Parr, **HPt** – Howard Patterson, **PPn** – Pam Perna, **RnPr** – Renee Peters, **RPr** – Richard Peters, **GPn** – Gregg Petersen, **MPw** – Mary Prowell, **TRy** – Tim Ray, **DRn** – Derek Richardson, **RRf** – Russ Ruffing, **RSm** – Ryan Salsman, **DSn** – David Sandler, **JSf** – John Schaeffer, **JnSf** – Justine Schaeffer, **KS** – Kurt Schwarz, **ASm** – Andy Smith, **SSm** – Stan Smith, **JS** – Jo Solem, **TSp** – Teresa Spencer, **CSt** – Chuck Stirrat, **ASk** – Arnie Strank, **VSw** – Val Swan, **RTd** – Robin Todd, **ETn** – Eric Trouton, **KTn** – Kristin Trouton, **KTf** – Kate Tufts, **Sub** – Severin Uebbing, **KWI** – Kelsey Wellons, **JW** – Jim Wilkinson.

TWENTY-NINTH ANNUAL FALL COUNT

BY MIKE MCCLURE

The Howard County Bird Club's annual Fall Count, scheduled each year on the third Saturday of September, will be on September 17, 2022. Mike McClure 410-531-2780 and Chuck Stirrat 410-531-2417 are the county co-coordinators. Holding the count in the presence of the novel coronavirus pandemic causes a few minor changes in how the count will proceed:

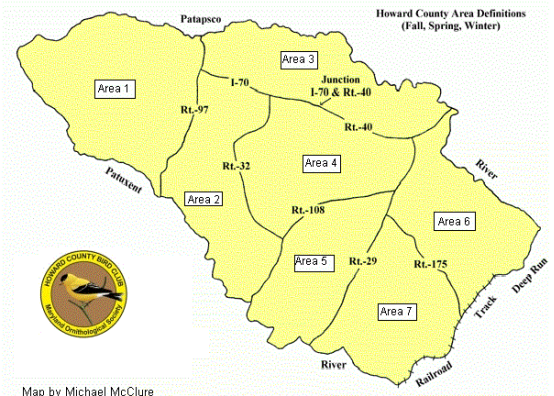
While the risk of contracting the novel coronavirus known as COVID-19 may or may not be remote, participation is at one's own risk and neither MOS, nor its chapters, can guarantee that attendance will not result in contracting this virus. You must agree to wear a mask and practice social distancing when anyone other than immediate family is present. Do not share binoculars or telescope, or in any manner endanger others in your field party or others met while counting by exposure to the novel coronavirus. Note, the latest Omicron BA.5 variant is out there and looking for you regardless of vaccination status. It is noted that Howard County is declared to be 'High Transmission' by the CDC at this time. Also, even higher case numbers are predicted during the fall/winter seasons. Prudence suggests that limited interaction are warranted.

1. Participants will be expected to obey current official guidance on Covid-19 practices present on count day.
2. Count parties should be kept to the minimum size, preferably one person. Two individuals are acceptable so long as they are already within your sphere of exposure (immediate family, etc.) If you choose to bird with someone else or a larger group please employ social distancing, wear masks, hand sanitizer, etc. Please be careful.
3. Parties will email electronic inputs to coordinators (eBird reports, scans or photos of completed field sheets, phone in results to coordinator). Send results directly to Chuck Stirrat if a coordinator is not available for your area **no later than 9/20**.
4. Coordinators will complete the coordinator area spreadsheet for their area. Both an Excel and PDF version of the coordinator input sheet will be available. If they complete the PDF version coordinators can provide a scan or photo of the form sheets. NLT 9/26.
5. There will be no in-person tally unless the COVID environment improves.

Prior years have set an average of 124 species. Spend the day, or how ever much time you have, birding with us and help raise the average! Birders of all skill levels are encouraged to participate and if you are a beginner or do not wish to have your own territory let coordinators know. Unfortunately the number of individuals that will be willing to have others join them will be less than normal due to the pandemic. We will attempt to find someone willing to bird with you. People counting in their neighborhoods or watching their feeders are welcome. The county is divided into seven areas (shown below) which are used for all annual counts. A **2022 fall season field sheet for Howard County is available on the Club's web-**

site. The field sheet is an interactive PDF form that can be opened and completed electronically (save it with a different name). If you prefer you can print the blank form and complete it manually and then scan or photograph it and send that to the coordinator. Species that require a writeup include those identified with a double asterisk (**), as well as any write-ins. Others that may require a writeup or oral amplification (*), as well as those that are early or late dates (@), are indicated.

The following area coordinators have been named: Area 1) Mark Wallace 301-725-6370 and Wes Earp 410-531-3197; Area 2) Russ Kovach 443-386-4787; Area 3) Gregg Petersen 202-256-8166; Area 4) Mike McClure 410-531-2780; Area 5) Kurt Schwarz 410-461-1643; Area 6) Mary Lou Clark 410-465-4061; and Area 7) Allen Lewis 443-774-4210. You may call an area or county coordinator to volunteer.



RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

It is time to renew your membership in the Maryland Ornithological Society and the Howard County Bird Club for the 2022-23 season. Click on the [Join Us](#) link at the top of the HCBC website home page for details.

HCBC TREASURER POSITION

Howard County Bird Club is seeking a new Treasurer. The Treasurer position is an elected office. Treasurer duties include keeping the books for the club, maintaining income and expense records, recording project statuses, reporting back on membership income, monitoring gift accounts and expenses, and filing tax returns annually. The Treasurer is a member of the Board of Directors and meets monthly with the Board to provide account balances and status of funds. They interact with the Maryland Ornithological Society as required. If you are interested in serving as the next HCBC Treasurer, please give Brian Moyer a call at 410-441-9901 or drop a note at bmoyer36@yahoo.com

HOWARD COUNTY MAY COUNT RESULTS, May 14, 2022

BY GREGG PETERSEN

Overall, the number of our participating birders was up, the number of hours we spent birding was up, the total number of birds we saw was up, but the key metric, the number of species we observed was down. Here are the details: Seventy-two birders participated in the May Count on May 14th. The event was the 75th statewide and 49th compiled by the Howard County Bird Club (HCBC). Overall, it was a comfortable day where temperatures stayed within a compact range of 64 degrees Fahrenheit in the morning and reached a high of 69 by sunset. The mostly overcast day started with many parts of Howard County shrouded in fog and we experienced occasional light rain for the rest of the day.

We tallied 132 total species which is tied for seventh lowest count in 49 years. However, the total number of birds observed (16,072) ranked 19th for that period, so the low species count wasn't for lack of birds overall. A total of 231 species have been seen in the years since 1974, 76 every year while 21 have been seen only once. No species was missed or seen for the first time this year. This year's top birds were a Little Blue Heron and a Dickcissel, both seen for just the fourth time ever on the count. In addition, Hooded Mergansers (3) and a Red-breasted Merganser were seen for just the sixth time.

Seven species had all-time high counts: Bald Eagle (19), Hairy Woodpecker (49), Pileated Woodpecker (66), Purple Martin (128), White-breasted Nuthatch (107), Eastern Bluebird (249), and Blue Grosbeak (25). In addition, the Wild Turkey (17) number was the second highest ever observed. After seeing a Bald Eagle just once prior to the 1992 count, it has been seen 31 years in a row with the highest all-time number this year by six! No species had an all-time low count, but 15 species had 10-year low counts as in they were not seen at all despite having been seen in the majority of the counts in the previous 10 years: Black-billed Cuckoo, Common Nighthawk, Wilson's Snipe, American Bittern, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Great Horned Owl, Least Flycatcher, White-crowned Sparrow, and the Blue-winged, Nashville, Bay-breasted, Palm, and Wilson's Warblers. All of these bird species had been seen in the county in recent days prior to the count, but just were not in evidence on May 14th. In addition, less than an hour was tallied by all birders owling, some of whom were deterred by the fog, that may have been the reason for missing the Great Horned Owl.

The five missing warbler species resulted in the fifth lowest total (25) observed in 49 years of the May Count (the average is 30) despite the total number of warblers observed (1405) ranking above average at 20th since 1974.

Next under this article is a table summary of our May Count. In addition, a table showing results by area for this count and a compilation spreadsheet of the May Count data from 1974 through this year can be found on the Howard County Bird Club website.

Many, many people contributed to the success of the day. Thanks especially to the long time HCBC compiler, Chuck Stirrat for doing the complex work to create, update, and

distribute checklists and spreadsheets, and to collect, correct, and compile the data in addition to being Area 3 Coordinator! Special thanks as well to our other Area Coordinators Bill Hill (Area 1), newcomer Russ Kovach (Area 2), Mike McClure (Area 4), Kristin Trouton (Area 5), John Harris (Area 6), and Allen Lewis (Area 7) who arranged their respective coverage, did follow-up, and compiled area totals.

Access permission from Howard County Dept. of Recreation and Parks, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, Howard County Conservancy, and many private property owners assured good coverage – we are extremely grateful for that support as well.

Most importantly, thanks to the rest of our 71 participants who spent 251.7 hours observing and covered 185.9 miles on foot and 342.3 miles by car. They spent another 14.2 hours feeder watching, plus 1.3 hours stationary and .3 hours of owling.

This year's hybrid Tally Rally at my house was a step toward returning to normalcy after two years of virtual events. My wife Shirley and I gladly welcomed 18 of our counters for the traditional potluck at our house with another three birders participating via Zoom. After the rally, Bonnie Ott, John Harris, and others made a determined effort to spot a Common Nighthawk at dusk from our deck, but we were unsuccessful.

Area leaders' names are in boldface below (*anyone who counted in more than one area or also at a feeder is listed just once*). Thanks to everyone!!

Observers: **Area 1. Hill**, Jim and Marilyn Brinkley, Lisa Colangelo, Wes Earp, Gayle Hill, Kathie Lillie, Pam Perna, Mary Prowell, Jay Sheppard, Lisa Troutman, and Mark Wallace; **Area 2. Kovach**, David Holmes, Gregg Petersen, and Kurt Schwarz; **Area 3. Stirrat**, Ralph Cullison III, Dan Gottuck, Joe Hanfman, Steve Jones, Felicia Lovelett, Karlyn McPartland, Woody Merkle, Bonnie Ott, Russ Ruffing, David Sandler, Kathy Souders, Val Swan, Robin and Hyacinth Todd, and Sarah Wiesbrock; **Area 4. McClure**, Mike Kerwin, and Grazina McClure; **Area 5. Trouton**, Dianne and Andy Aguilera, Mary Lou Clark, Jan and Bob Depuy, Clayton Koonce, Shashi Lengade, Steve Luke, Mary Maxey, Howard Patterson, and Sherry Tomlinson; **Area 6. Harris**, Karan Blum, Ralph and Andy Geuder, Meg Harris, Rob Keith, Brigitte Lund, Steve Parr, Suzanne Probst, Ryan Salsman, Clare Sebok, and Michele Wright; **Area 7. Lewis**, Ken Clark, Rosa Lubitz, John McKitterick, Barry Miller, Brian Moyer, Sue Muller, Sue Neri, Ben Newton, Jo Solem, Teresa Spencer, Michelle Stewart, and Eva Sunell.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

The September 22 and October 27 board meetings will be held by teleconference or videoconference. If you have input or questions, please send an email to Kristin Trouton at

kristing4420@gmail.com .

HOWARD COUNTY MAY COUNT RESULTS - MAY 14, 2022

Canada Goose	718	Acadian Flycatcher	105	Song Sparrow	232
Wood Duck	69	Willow Flycatcher	5	Swamp Sparrow	10
Mallard	66	Eastern Phoebe	67	Eastern Towhee	251
Hooded Merganser	3	White-eyed Vireo	33	Yellow-breasted Chat	9
Common Merganser	1	Yellow-throated Vireo	36	Bobolink	64
Red-breasted Merganser	1	Blue-headed Vireo	9	Eastern Meadowlark	22
Wild Turkey	17	Warbling Vireo	18	Orchard Oriole	73
Rock Pigeon	90	Red-eyed Vireo	455	Baltimore Oriole	158
Mourning Dove	399	Blue Jay	424	Red-winged Blackbird	760
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	8	American Crow	378	Brown-headed Cowbird	240
Chimney Swift	355	Fish Crow	75	Common Grackle	242
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	22	<i>crow species</i>	53	Ovenbird	159
Killdeer	20	Common Raven	4	Worm-eating Warbler	10
Least Sandpiper	23	Carolina Chickadee	161	Louisiana Waterthrush	23
Spotted Sandpiper	4	Tufted Titmouse	263	Northern Waterthrush	8
Solitary Sandpiper	8	Horned Lark	12	Black-and-white Warbler	74
Lesser Yellowlegs	3	Tree Swallow	169	Tennessee Warbler	10
Greater Yellowlegs	2	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	43	Kentucky Warbler	6
Ring-billed Gull	3	Purple Martin	128	Common Yellowthroat	384
Common Loon	1	Barn Swallow	329	Hooded Warbler	5
Double-crested Cormorant	22	Cliff Swallow	28	American Redstart	162
Great Blue Heron	40	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2	Cape May Warbler	2
Great Egret	1	Cedar Waxwing	285	Cerulean Warbler	2
Little Blue Heron	1	White-breasted Nuthatch	107	Northern Parula	249
Green Heron	26	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	203	Magnolia Warbler	20
Black Vulture	115	House Wren	155	Blackburnian Warbler	2
Turkey Vulture	109	Carolina Wren	433	Yellow Warbler	67
Osprey	11	Gray Catbird	646	Chestnut-sided Warbler	6
Cooper's Hawk	4	Brown Thrasher	55	Blackpoll Warbler	25
Bald Eagle [ad/im/unk]	19	Northern Mockingbird	174	Black-throated Blue Warbler	76
Red-shouldered Hawk	57	European Starling	511	Pine Warbler	9
Broad-winged Hawk	1	Eastern Bluebird	249	Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler	53
Red-tailed Hawk	15	Veery	10	Yellow-throated Warbler	3
Eastern Screech-Owl	1	Swainson's Thrush	11	Prairie Warbler	38
Barred Owl	11	Hermit Thrush	1	Black-throated Green Warbler	11
Belted Kingfisher	18	Wood Thrush	267	Canada Warbler	1
Red-headed Woodpecker	2	American Robin	681	Summer Tanager	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	349	House Sparrow	250	Scarlet Tanager	143
Downy Woodpecker	130	House Finch	177	Northern Cardinal	1,051
Hairy Woodpecker	49	American Goldfinch	339	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	10
Northern Flicker	59	Grasshopper Sparrow	19	Blue Grosbeak	25
Pileated Woodpecker	66	Chipping Sparrow	254	Indigo Bunting	296
Great Crested Flycatcher	154	Field Sparrow	70	Dickcissel	1
Eastern Kingbird	104	White-throated Sparrow	47	Total Birds:	16,072
Eastern Wood-Pewee	148	Savannah Sparrow	13	Total Species:	132



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

P.O Box 1323

COLUMBIA, MD 21044-1323

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Field Trips	Renew Membership
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Convention Pin Design	Fall Count
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MARYLAND/DC BREEDING BIRD ATLAS 3, 2020-2024

BY SUE MULLER

As we near the end of our third year of atlasing, we had some really good finds this year in Howard County. Back in July, the first Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in Howard County was confirmed several times carrying nest material! The last confirmation of this species in Howard County was July 29, 2014 when Bonnie Ott photographed a fledgling at Meadowbrook Park. Back in the spring, Meg and John Harris confirmed the first Hooded Merganser of the atlas with 12 newly hatched ducklings in the Clarksville CE block, and Mary Prowell's sharp eyes found the first Veery nest in Damascus CE. Overall, we have confirmed 101 species breeding in Howard County!

We continued to add confirmations of some of the larger birds too. For the first time ever in a Breeding Bird Atlas, Howard County has Osprey nests. In fact, we are up to seven nests and they are all on cell towers! If you see any nests on cell towers, be sure to report them to your County Coordinators.

We also added one Bald Eagle nest and several owl and vulture confirmations as well. Do you have any owl or vultures that nested on your property? If so, be sure to let your County Coordinators know!

Hooded Merganser with Young



Found by Meg and John Harris

photo by Sue Muller

If you are new to atlasing, it is never too late to get started, we have two more years ahead of us! We document our breeding observations using eBird. Contact County Coordinators Sue Muller and Dave Ziolkowski, they will get you started; they can be reached at: howard@mdbirds.org. You can also read more information about the atlas on the club website at <https://howardbirds.website/birding/>