



# 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:

- [Club Meetings](#) .....1
- [Celebrating 50 Years](#).....1
- [Field Trips](#).....2
- [Membership Renewal](#) .....2
- [Breeding Bird Atlas 3](#) .....6
- [Mid-winter Count](#) .....7
- [Board Meetings](#) .....7
- [Western Kingbird Photo](#)..7
- [Appreciation](#).....8

## CLUB MEETINGS - BY MARY LOU CLARK

**Thursday, January 12, 2023** "The 2022 Howard County Butterfly Survey Results" by Kevin Heffernan. For the fifth year in a row, Kevin Heffernan will update us on the status of butterflies in Howard County.

Kevin is the Co-chair of the Howard County, Maryland, Butterfly Survey. He is a past president of the Howard County Bird Club and is encouraging the planting of native pollinator gardens as part of the Howard Bee City Pollinator Committee, and the Habitat Creation and Enhancement and Pesticide Reduction Subcommittees.

**Thursday, February 9, 2023** "Colombia, South America" by Allen R. Lewis. Allen has visited Colombia on three different trips since the mid 90's. He will introduce us to a country which is much more than one of the world's best bird-watching destinations.

Allen grew up in the Finger Lakes area of western New York State. Upon completing graduate school, he worked for 30 years as a professor of biology at the University of Puerto Rico in Mayaguez. Subsequent to retirement, Allen and wife, Laurie, moved to Maryland where their children and grandchildren settled. Also, they became active members of the Howard County Bird Club.

**Please note:** Beginning with the January 2023 meeting, club programs will be presented in a hybrid format; attendees may join either in person at the Robinson Nature Center, 6692 Cedar Lane, Columbia MD 21044, or online using Zoom. At 7:00 p.m., the in-person hospitality session begins and the Zoom portal opens. Meeting and announcements begin at 7:30 p.m. with the program beginning around 8:00. 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. If you are symptomatic of an illness, we encourage you to attend the program virtually. Although masks are no longer required, they will be available for those who would feel more comfortable wearing them.



Photo by Sue Muller

50th Anniversary Committee (Kelsey Wellons not pictured).

## Howard County Bird Club Celebrates 50 Years in 2022

The Howard County Bird Club's (HCBC) 50th Anniversary Committee (Mary Lou Clark, David Holmes, Mary Maxey, David Sandler, Kristin Trouton, Kelsey Wellons, Webmaster Bob Solem, and Chair Joanne Solem) began monthly meetings on March 30, 2021. Because the pandemic was still widespread, all meetings were held via Zoom.

(50th Anniversary continued on page 3)

# WINTER 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](mailto:auk1844@gmail.com). HCBC members receive priority on trips that are limited by number of participants. No pets.

## Start Your Year List

January 1, 2023, Sunday, start at 8:00 a.m. Half day. Meet at Mt Pleasant, Howard County Conservancy. Easy walking on woodland trails. May plan to bird several different locations to find as many species as possible. The one day of the year where every bird is new! Facilities available. Leader – Kurt Schwarz, [krschwal@verizon.net](mailto:krschwal@verizon.net)

## **B R** Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge

January 7, Saturday. All day trip. Plan to stop at the Chop-tank River Bridge for ducks and coffee. Bring lunch and drinks. Dress warmly, Entrance fee or Duck Stamp required. Email the leader to reserve a spot and get details. We will carpool. Facilities at some spots.

Leader – Kurt Schwarz, [krschwal@verizon.net](mailto:krschwal@verizon.net)

## **R** Alpha Ridge Landfill

January 14, Saturday. Half day. Reservations required. Carpooling is required. Moderate walking over hills and fields of the landfill. We will search for Short-eared Owls with no guarantee of finding one. Other possibilities are Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, Horned Lark, American Pipit, and Eastern Meadowlark. Email the leader to reserve a spot and get details. No facilities on the landfill. Limited to a maximum of five cars.

Leader – Joe Hanfman, [auk1844@gmail.com](mailto:auk1844@gmail.com)

## Winter Sparrows – [Mt Pleasant, Howard County Conservancy](#)

January 18, Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. Meet at the barn. Easy walking through the mown paths to look for wintering sparrows. Bonnie will give identification tips on how to separate our native sparrows.

Leader – Bonnie Ott, [sparrowdamsel@gmail.com](mailto:sparrowdamsel@gmail.com)

## **B** Cape Henlopen, Delaware

January 21, Saturday. Full day. Meet at the [Broken Land Park and Ride Lot West](#) at 6:00 a.m. and plan to carpool. All-day driving trip to the Delaware shore; stops to include Indian River Inlet, Cape Henlopen State Park, and Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge. Entry into Delaware State Parks is free from December through February. Target species include wintering seaducks, Great Cormorant, Northern Gannet, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Short-eared Owl, and maybe even a shot at Snowy Owl! Participants may pack a lunch, but we will also make a quick stop at Wawa. Be prepared for light to moderate hiking, especially at Cape Henlopen. There are restroom facilities at Indian River (portable toilets), Cape Henlopen, Cape May Ferry Terminal, and of course at Wawa.

Leader – Russell Kovach, [Russell.kovach@gmail.com](mailto:Russell.kovach@gmail.com)

## Mid-winter Count

February 4, Saturday. [See page 7](#) for details.

## **B W** Lake Elkhorn

February 10, Friday, 8:00 a.m. 2-3 hours. Meet at Dockside parking lot. Easy walking along the lake and to Forebay Pond. Waterfowl, sparrows, and winter finches are possible. The lake can turn up interesting surprises. No facilities.

Leader – Allen Lewis, [allenrlewis@gmail.com](mailto:allenrlewis@gmail.com)

## **R A** Search for Owls

February 18, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. Learn how to find owls by habitat and signs. Our target species are Long-eared, Saw-whet, and other owls. No facilities. Please email Gregg Petersen (email address below) by 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, Feb 15 to reserve a spot and get details.

Leaders – Gregg Petersen, [sig29@aol.com](mailto:sig29@aol.com); David Cummings, [wcummings9@gmail.com](mailto:wcummings9@gmail.com)

## **R** Signs of Spring at [Rockburn Branch Park](#)

February 27, Monday, 8:30 a.m. Meet at end of the parking lot off Landing Rd entrance. Walk through the woodlands to look for signs of spring. Limit 12. e-mail the leader to reserve a spot and get details.

Leader – Bonnie Ott, [sparrowdamsel@gmail.com](mailto:sparrowdamsel@gmail.com)

## **B** Woodcock Search

Late February or early March, exact date to be determined based on the weather. Let leader know of your interest.

Leader - Mary Lou Clark, [doctorfx\\_99@yahoo.com](mailto:doctorfx_99@yahoo.com)

**B** = Good for beginning birders

**W** = Wheelchair accessible

**R** = Reservations Required

## HCBC TREASURER POSITION

Howard County Bird Club is seeking a new Treasurer. The Treasurer position is an elected office. If interested, please contact Brian Moyer at 410-441-9901 or drop a note at [bmoyer0@gmail.com](mailto:bmoyer0@gmail.com) for a description of duties.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2022-23, go to the HCBC website: <https://www.howardbirds.website/> and click on "Join Us" at the top of the home page.

*(50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary continued from page 1)*

To raise funds for the 2022 celebration and to answer numerous HCBC member's requests, the committee decided to sell commemorative shirts. A shirt design contest was held during September 2021 with Sue Probst the winner. An excellent design by the runner-up, Pam Perna, was selected as the anniversary webpage logo. Shirts went on sale in November 2021 to take advantage of holiday gift-giving. A number of generous members also supported the festivities with monetary and in-kind donations.

Activities relating to the celebration began on or about January 1, 2022. Additions to the anniversary page on the club's website were frequent. HCBC members were encouraged to contribute Members' Memories, participate in the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Challenge, and submit photos to a Natural History 2022 seasonal grouping.



*Photo by Kelsey Wellons*

Club members Kurt Schwarz and Mary Lou Clark wearing the 25th and 50th anniversary shirts, respectively.



*Photo by Gregg Peterson*

Club members gather before beginning field trip.



*Photo by Mary Lou Clark*

Trip leader Kurt Schwarz leads a group on one of Saturday's birding walks.

Although special field trips and events were scheduled throughout the year in cooperation with Field Trip Chair Joe Hanfman and Potluck Coordinator Sherry Tomlinson, the major celebration was planned for the last weekend of October (near the November 1, 1972 founding date), at Mount Pleasant, Howard County Conservancy. The morning of Saturday, October 29, was designated as a field day, while Sunday, October 30, would be an event in the Gudelsky Environmental Education Center featuring a program, displays, prizes, awards, and, of course, a cake.

*(50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary continued on page 4)*



*Photo by Kristin Trouton*

Wes Earp with whiteboard at Skywatch.



*Photo by Mary Lou Clark*

Joe Hanfman addressing field trip group.

*(50th Anniversary continued from page 3)*

**Saturday, October 29, 2022 – Field Day, 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

The day included a bird walk, a habitat walk, and a staffed Skywatch. Joe Hanfman had requested reservations for the walks to gauge the number of leaders required. Everyone involved with the planning knew the weather would be the determining factor in turnout. Fortunately, skies were mostly sunny, the northeast breeze was light, and temperatures were mostly in the 50s and low 60s.

Prior to the beginning of the birding activities, President Kristin Trouton and Joe Hanfman welcomed the group, distributed souvenirs, and conducted drawings for half a dozen prizes. Bird walk attendees were divided into two groups, one led by Bonnie Ott and the other by Kurt Schwarz. The combined species trip list reached 47 with special sightings of one Lincoln's Sparrow and 26 Purple Finches (probably more than the total reported most of the previous winter). Both bird trips eventually ended at the Chandler Robbins' Skywatch where Wes and Sue Earp and Ralph Cullison, along with a few other enthusiasts, had been scanning for raptors. Wes had brought a whiteboard on which he kept a running total of species and numbers. There was no major flight, but six Bald Eagles were notable, as was a flock of 14 Eastern Meadowlarks. The most exciting sighting at the Skywatch was a loose group of 11 Common Ravens, one of the highest numbers ever seen in the county.

Sue Muller led a habitat walk at 10:00 a.m. The fields, woods, scrubby edges, and wetlands provided excellent variety within a limited area. In addition to surveying the beaver dam in the Davis Branch area, the group examined a dead ash tree killed by emerald ash borers, noted a fungus on that tree, looked at leafminers on oak leaves, and checked goldenrod galls.



*Photo by Bob Solem*

Saturday's Field Day attendees; a great turnout with some beautiful fall weather.

**Sunday, October 30, 2022 – Celebration at Gudelsky Environmental Education Center, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.**

Much of the success of this event was thanks to many enthusiastic volunteers. Although a core group had signed up ahead of time for specific tasks, an unanticipated number of people showed up early or stayed late simply asking, "How can I help?" Woody Merkle arrived early to assist staff member Heather Johannes hang photos. As chair of the physical arrangements, he capably directed setup and, later, cleanup. A registration table was placed in the lobby, tables for displays and prizes were distributed around the periphery of the large room, and rows of chairs were arranged for the program. Tables for food service were set up outside on the adjoining deck, along with tables and chairs. John McKitterick took charge of the audio and visual aspects of the program.



*Photo by Bob Solem*

Historical display at Sunday's celebration event.

*(50th Anniversary continued on page 5)*



Photo by Mary Maxey

Woody Merkle and Wes Earp taking in the view from the Gedulsky Environmental Education Center during Sunday's celebration.



Photo by Meg Harris

Club members enjoying the hospitality session during Sunday's celebration.

(50th Anniversary continued from page 4)

The hospitality session ran from 1:00 – 2:15 p.m. Sunny skies with a high in the mid-60s enabled food to be served and eaten on the covered deck where most people felt comfortable removing their masks.

The program began at 2:15 p.m. with introductory remarks by President Kristin Trouton. This was followed by Howard County Conservancy Executive Director Meg Boyd's warm welcome detailing the lengthy link between the two organizations. MOS President Bonnie Borsa's remarks noted the important contributions the chapter had made to the state organization. Kristin read a congratulatory message from Jane Robbins on behalf of the Chandler Robbins family. Special guests were Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks Director, Raul DeLerme, and Natural Resources Conservation Manager, Brenda Belensky, as well as MOS Vice-president Evelyn Ralston.

To illustrate some of the changes that have taken place in five decades, Founder Nanine Rhineland and Founding Committee member David Holmes reminisced about the early years of the club in a Zoom presentation, *The Early Years*. The interview had been conducted in person by David Sandler and recorded by Kelsey Wellons.

Another fifty-year member, Joanne Solem, narrated *The First Fifty Years*, a 30-minute PowerPoint of club highlights. As a part of this presentation, field trip leaders were recognized for their essential role in the club's history. At the end, the 50th Anniversary Committee members were introduced. Jo then acknowledged various groups of individuals who had provided significant leadership and support over the years including former presidents, all elected officers, individuals who had headed committees, seasonal counts, atlases, seed sales, or major research efforts, those who edited the newsletter or managed the bookstore, as well as those who had served on committees, atlas block captains, area count coordinators, hospitality contributors, or a host of others who had made quiet, but essential, contributions. The 35 individuals who had been members for more than 40 years were also recognized as were those who had been members for 25–39 years. Finally, those 35 individuals who had completed the 50th Anniversary Challenge received a round of applause.



Photo by Mary Maxey

Kristin Trouton presents David Holmes with the Valued Service Award.

Kristin Trouton presented a number of awards. Nanine Rhineland was recognized as the Founder of the Howard County Bird Club, while David Holmes received a Valued

(50th Anniversary continued on page 6)

(50th Anniversary continued from page 5)

Service Award for his varied and lengthy service. Kristin also gave Founders Awards to Joanne Solem and Bob Solem. Jo was surprised with a photo of two of the county's recent special birds, Anhinga and Western Kingbird, her 299<sup>th</sup> and 300<sup>th</sup> Howard County bird species.

Drawings for the major door prizes completed the indoor portion of the program. The final event was the anniversary cake-cutting by Nanine and Kristin, followed by additional time for eating, chatting, and looking at historical items, photo displays, and butterfly/pollinator material.

As Woody and his volunteers put the room and deck back in order, the sun set on a memorable celebratory weekend.

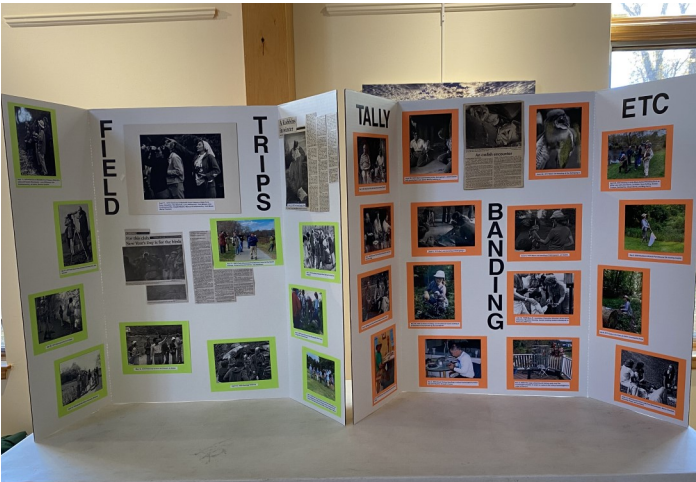


Photo by Mary Maxey

Display featuring past events of the Howard County Bird Club.



Photo by Meg Harris

Founder and first president Nanine Rhineland and current president Kristin Trouton cutting the cake.

## MARYLAND/DC BREEDING BIRD ATLAS 3, 2020-2024

BY SUE MULLER

It is hard to believe we are nearing the end of the third year of surveys for the Breeding Bird Atlas. The season though is not over by any means! In early November, Clayton Koonce documented a Bald Eagle flying north over Lake Kittamaquundi carrying nesting material. This is a great time to be watching what these birds are doing. If you are lucky, you will witness a courtship display where they lock talons in mid-air! We currently have six known nest locations in Howard County. If we locate a nest in the Columbia lakes area, that will be #7! Also remember to check cell towers for nesting activity, we do have one pair in Laurel nesting on a cell tower. Please let your County Coordinators know if you witness a bird carrying nest material or performing a courtship display ([howard@mdbirds.org](mailto:howard@mdbirds.org)).

I will also remind everyone that come December 15<sup>th</sup>, the Great Horned Owl will be in "safe dates" once again. This means if you hear one calling or a pair duetting, this should be entered into your eBird checklist with the appropriate breeding code. We have confirmed this species in nine of our 24 assigned blocks, many more to document. If you are reading this and you are not an atlaser but have owls nesting in your yard, let your County Coordinators ([howard@mdbirds.org](mailto:howard@mdbirds.org)) know and one of us will come over to document them. You can also send photos of baby owls for a confirmation.

Finally, thanks to all of you who have submitted breeding checklists into eBird. You are the people that make this study happen! If you are new and want to get involved, just email your County Coordinators and we will get you started!

## Annual Mid-winter Count

### By Joe Hanfman

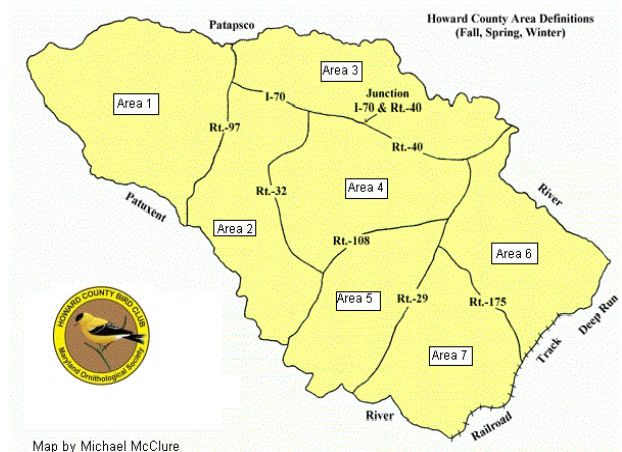
Join the Howard County Bird Club's Thirty-eighth Annual Mid-winter Count on Saturday, February 4, 2023. Joe Hanfman ([auk1844@gmail.com](mailto:auk1844@gmail.com)) is the count coordinator. You may volunteer to participate by contacting one of the area coordinators listed below:

Area 1	Wes Earp	<a href="mailto:wesandsue@gmail.com">wesandsue@gmail.com</a>
Area 2	open	
Area 3	Chuck Stirrat	<a href="mailto:Stirrcl@gmail.com">Stirrcl@gmail.com</a>
Area 4	Mike McClure	<a href="mailto:Michael.mcclure@jhuapl.edu">Michael.mcclure@jhuapl.edu</a>
Area 5	Allen Lewis	<a href="mailto:allenlewis@gmail.com">allenlewis@gmail.com</a>
Area 6	John Harris	<a href="mailto:Jaybee.harris@gmail.com">Jaybee.harris@gmail.com</a>
Area 7	Kurt Schwarz	<a href="mailto:krschwal@verizon.net">krschwal@verizon.net</a>

Beginning birders are always welcome, as are individuals who wish to count only for part of the day. If you wish to count only at your feeder email Joe H. and request a feeder form.

There will be no potluck tally due to COVID concerns.

If there is a question about the weather, we will try to make a decision the night before. Contact your area coordinator if you are unsure of the status of the count.



## New County Species



Photo by Allen Lewis

Allen Lewis spotted a Western Kingbird, a new Howard County species, at Mt Pleasant the morning of September 20, 2022. It stayed the remainder of the day.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

The January 26 and February 23 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](mailto:kristing4420@gmail.com).



## HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

*Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society*

**P.O. Box 1323**

**Columbia, MD 21044-1323**

### January/February 2023 - Inside this Issue

Club Meetings	Celebrating 50 Years
Field Trips	Membership Renewal
Treasurer Needed	Mid-winter Count
Breeding Bird Atlas	Appreciation
Board Meetings	Western Kingbird Photo

## APPRECIATION

As we enter a new calendar year, we would like to thank all the volunteers who support the Howard County Bird Club. The club members in leadership positions, those who lead field trips, contribute to the Breeding Bird Atlas, seasonal bird counts, butterfly surveys, provide technical support (and many other contributions) deserve our thanks for making HCBC membership such a rewarding experience.

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:

Megan Bolcar  
12136 Gray Star Way  
Columbia, MD 21044  
[megbolcar@gmail.com](mailto:megbolcar@gmail.com)

**The Goldfinch**, newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club, is published five times per year. Copy deadline for the March/April 2023 issue is January 25, 2023.

Megan Bolcar, *Editor*  
Joanne Solem, *Proofreader*