



The Goldfinch

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



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CLUB MEETINGS - BY MARY LOU CLARK

Thursday, March 9, 2023 “Barn Owls in Maryland” by Andy Brown. The talk will focus on the evolution and taxonomy of Barn Owls worldwide, what we know about Barn Owl ecology, and past and future conservation efforts in Maryland.

Andy is retired from Calvert County Natural Resources Division where he worked for 34 years as a naturalist. He has a BS in Wildlife Management from Frostburg State University and a MS in Public Administration from Central Michigan University. Andy grew up in Prince George’s County, Md where he began birding as a teenager with Prince George’s Audubon and received his bird banding license at age 16. He currently serves on the Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership Farmland Raptor Committee as the Barn Owl coordinator and is on the Board of Directors for the Eastern Bird Banding Association.

Thursday, April 13, 2023 "South Africa: More than Birds" by Kurt Schwarz. Kurt, retired from the DOD, has been a Maryland resident since 1979. He has been birding since the mid 1990s and has observed 1301 birds worldwide. He is a semiretired Conservation Chair for the MOS and HCBC and is a former president of the HCBC.

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. There is a listing of all previous programs on the “Calendar” page titled [Previous programs](#). Those (with exceptions) starting December 2020, are available on the [HCBC channel on YouTube](#).

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 to 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.

AUTUMN BIRD RECORDS: AUGUST 1 – NOVEMBER 30, 2022

BY JOANNE SOLEM

A blue ribbon season! Can you believe a second new county species in 2022? As if April’s Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were not enough, on the morning of 20 September, Allen Lewis spotted a **Western Kingbird** in the northeast corner of Mount Pleasant. The bird was present just one day, initially in a hedgerow between two large fields, but then in a lone tree in the middle of one of the fields for most of the afternoon. It alternately perched at the top of tall trees with dead branches or sallied out to snatch a passing insect before becoming more reclusive in the canopy during the afternoon spending many minutes resting.

There were more heart-stopping seasonal moments including three Anhingas, two Rufous Hummingbirds, and a record-late Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Add in Snow Goose, Surf Scoter, Sora, American Bittern, Mississippi Kite, Sedge Wren, Evening Grosbeak, Vesper Sparrow, Golden-winged Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, late Nashville and Blackpoll warblers, Summer Tanager, early Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and a Dickcissel and you have a season to remember!

(Records continued on page 3)

SPRING FIELD TRIPS BY JOE HANFMAN

Field trips are a great way to improve birding skills, explore new places and meet other birders. Arrive at the meeting site ready to leave at the designated time with appropriate footwear and gear. 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. There is a listing of all previous field trips on the "Calendar" page titled [Previous Field Trips](#). The trips with links have results on a separate page.

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

B W Centennial Park

March 5, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours. *West end parking lot.* Easy walking around the lake on paved path. Facilities available. Waterfowl expected, early migrant passerines possible.

Leader - Richard Peters, Richard@rrrrpeters.org

B W Centennial Park

March 12, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours. Daylight Savings Time starts (set clocks ahead).

See March 5 entry.

Leader – Russell Kovach, Russell.kovach@gmail.com

B W Centennial Park

March 19, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours.

See March 5 entry.

Leader – Dave Ziolkowski, djziolkowski@yahoo.com

B W Centennial Park

March 26, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours.

See March 5 entry.

Leader – David Sandler, detour65@gmail.com

Beginning Birding by Ear at Rockburn Branch Park

March 29, Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. *Meet at end of the parking lot off Landing Rd entrance.* March is an excellent time to learn our resident species' songs before the migrants arrive. Walk along woodland edges to listen for spring singing. Limit 10; e-mail the leader to reserve a spot and get details.

Leader – Bonnie Ott, sparrowdamsel@gmail.com

Sharps at Waterford Farm

April 1, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. (half day). *Meet at farm parking area, through barns on right. Rte. 97 S. to right on Jennings Chapel Rd., 1 mile to right into farm at sign.* Moderate walking over crop stubble, farm roads, and paths on this working farm. Fields with crop residue, extensive woodlands, Cattail Creek and floodplain, three ponds, and five shallow waterfowl impoundments make for diverse habitats and good birding opportunities. Port-a-pots available. Knee-high waterproof footwear required for part of walk.

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

B = Good for beginning birders

W = Wheelchair accessible

R = Reservations Required

R Alpha Ridge Landfill

April 8, Saturday, (half day). Reservations and carpooling required. Moderate walking over hills and fields of the landfill. Vesper Sparrow and other field birds possible. Meadowlarks, kestrels, and other open country birds expected. Rareities possible. Facilities at Alpha Ridge Park.

Leader – Joe Hanfman, auk1844@gmail.com

Belmont Manor Historic Park

April 11, Tuesday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours

A walk around the fields looking for early migrants. This trip will have a special guest, Mike Bowen. Mike used to work at the property and will be able to show us around and tell stories about the history of this location.

Leader – Gregg Petersen, sig29@aol.com

Mt Pleasant, Howard County Conservancy

April 22, Saturday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours

Earth Day Walk in conjunction with the Howard County Conservancy. *Meet at parking lot near the barn.*

Easy walking through the fields of Mt Pleasant Farm. Tree lines, hedgerows, and streams provide opportunity for non-meadow species. Great opportunity for flyovers.

Facilities Available.

Leader – Gregg Petersen, sig29@aol.com

Spring Wildflower Walk

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

Western Regional Park

May 7, 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

May Count

May 13, Saturday. Details to come.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

The March 23 and April 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.

(Records continued from page 1)

A small white goose, in a flock of 81 **Tundra Swans** over Cavey La (Cavey) 11/19, was accepted as a **Snow Goose** (RRf, ph.); another Snow was in a flock of 183 **Canada Geese** over Barberry Way (Barberry) 11/23 (VSw). A **Cackling Goose** was at Lime Kiln Pd 11/23 (GPn, ph.); one also appeared at Centennial Park (CENPK) with a flock of 125 Canadas 11/27 (DZk). Most Tundra Swan flocks were clustered near the normal mid-Nov peak with 44 at the Mt Pleasant-Skywatch (MTPLT-SW) 11/13 (LGg, ph., MKw), 25 at CENPK 11/15 (DMs), while, on 11/19, 33 were counted at Mt Hebron (JCu), as well as the 81 cited above.

Ten **Northern Shovelers** returned to Race Road Wetlands 11/16 (VSw). A **Gadwall** was spotted at CENPK 10/26 (DSn); the high was 25 at Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS) 11/20 (JHf). An **American Wigeon** at Warfield's Pond Pk 11/7 was a fine species for that park (BHi). **American Black Ducks** topped out at a modest 17 at Springdale Quarry 11/21 (JWd). The quarry also hosted the season's only **Redhead** 11/20 (GPn). A **Surf Scoter** (16th county record) dropped in at CENPK 10/27 (SEm, ph.)—and was not reported by any other birder! It illustrates how quickly waterfowl can come and go during migration. Sixty **Buffleheads** at TRIRS 11/7 (VSw) were an indication of more to come. Eight **Common Mergansers** at TRIRS 11/20 (SLk) were the early birds; hundreds more would arrive by late Dec.



Gadwall

by Gregg Petersen

The season's waterbirds peaked from 11/19 to 11/22. At TRIRS, 14 species of swans, geese, and ducks were recorded, as well as loon, grebe, cormorant, and heron. For some birders, repeated trips, a willingness to brave unpleasant weather, and fortunate timing paid off.

The **Wild Turkey** flock at Alpha Ridge Landfill (ALRGL) peaked at 20 on 11/26 (RCu); ten wandered through a Woodbine yard on 10/29 (PPn). A **Ring-necked Pheasant** was seen along Long Corner Rd 10/15 (MPw), not far from a known release site. The species is not countable as wild.

Two **Common Nighthawks** over the Cattail Creek Country Club 8/19 (SKg) were the first migrants. Two nighthawk field trips (8/28 and 9/1) to the New Cut Landfill (DZk) were a great success. Attendees can attest to how much fun the evenings were. Two **Chimney Swifts** over Cavey on 10/22 (RRf) were the season's last; the high of 436 was also counted there on 9/23 (RRf). At nearby MTPLT, 380 were tallied on 9/1 (BO). An unforgettable hour in a field surrounded by 200+ low-flying swifts at MTPLT on 10/11 (AAI) is described at <https://howardbirds.website/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Annette-Allor.pdf>. After ignoring a swift tower along River Rd, Sykesville since 2007, swifts finally roosted in it in 2022 (a pair consistently nests in a nearby chimney). Ten were filmed emerging the morning of 8/4; the high there was 15 on 10/16 (FLv). On the inclement afternoon of 3 Oct, Vantage House in W. Col. hosted 50+ swifts in a chimney stack (CKc).

Very few **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** are seen in Maryland after

the first third of Nov. A male set a new late county record by showing up at a Dorseys Search feeder ~11/13 and staying until 11/21 (CSp, ph.) [11/8/08 Carter]. Eleven was a nice count at Western Regional Pk 8/24 (SKg).



Rufous Hummingbird

by Steve Luke

In mid-Nov, Joyce Kelly learned that two **Rufous Hummingbirds** had been frequenting a neighbor's feeder at Woodmark since ~mid-Oct. She put her own feeder back up and soon was also hosting the duo. An initial banding attempt 11/15 was unsuccessful, but an immature male was banded by Bruce Peterjohn on 12/14. It was last seen 12/15. By then, the second bird, an adult male, had departed on an unknown date. Thanks to Joyce for allowing Field Trip Chair Joe Hanfman to set up appointments for viewing the birds. These birds were the sixth and seventh definitive county records. Did you know this is the second time Joyce has hosted a Rufous? The first was in 2013; Bruce also banded that bird. He noted that there are several other locations in the mid-Atlantic that have hosted multiple rare hummers. Late-blooming flowers may be one of the key elements of these sites.

A **Sora** appeared at Tarbay Pd 9/14 (KCK, ph.); a second was present at MTPLT 10/14 (BO, ph., HPT). One or two **American Coots** are the usual number; 22 at TRIRS 11/7 garnered more attention (VSw).

Shorebird migration was unexciting; likely influenced by high water so there were few mudflats. One **Semipalmated Plover** and two **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were at Browns Bridge 9/8 (JHf). Two **American Woodcock** were still present in a boggy, wooded area of Alpha Ridge Pk on 11/18 (RCu).

A few **Bonaparte's Gulls** filtered through at TRIRS from one on 11/19 (SLk) to a high of six there on 11/20 (JHf); the last was noted on 11/24 (JHf; GPn).



American Wigeon

by Steve Luke

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The appearance of three **Anhingas** at Wilde Lake early on 9/18 (KS) may have seemed like a new county species, but there had been a somewhat sketchy historical 1805 specimen as well as one modern record of five im./

females over the Columbia Mall 4/22/06 (B. Klick). Although the record was accepted by the MD/DCRC, it was less than a definitive observation as it was made by the unaided eyes of a single observer who provided minimal details. In contrast, Kurt was leading a morning bird walk when he spotted two Anhingas in a tree and one in



Anhinga

by Kurt Schwarz

the water. That Sunday coincided with a series of community activities bringing crowds to the lake. Inevitably, the birds were flushed multiple times. Whenever they flew out of sight, it was feared they had permanently departed. Fortunately, they usually made a large circle and returned. By late afternoon, they settled in for the night. Birders anticipated a quiet Monday for observation. No such luck. The machine used to remove invasive vegetation was parked in the lake near the roost tree and, in the morning, promptly began patrolling. All three birds remained until mid-a.m. when two departed. One stayed over on 9/19 and was seen on 9/20 until mid-a.m. One was spotted again early on 9/24 in company with 27 **Double-crested Cormorants** (JHf); it was last reported at 1:25 p.m. (MO'S). During periods when the three flew off, the size of their circles could be judged by the fact that three were spotted mid-a.m. on 9/19 over Lake Kittamaquidi (LKKIT) (ELp), and one soared over the south side of the lake at CENPK at 8:30 a.m. on 9/20 (DVI, ph.).

An **American Bittern** was present in the Davis Branch wetland at MTPLT 10/6 (DSn, ph.); another was heard at nearby Cavey (NFC live) 10/28 (RRf). The last **Green Heron** hung on until 11/3 at LKKIT (CKc), definitely notable, as is any Nov sighting. A **Black-crowned Night-Heron** was heard live on Night Flight Call (NFC) equipment at Cavey 10/28 (RRf). A **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** was seen at LKKIT 8/18 (CKc); one was reported at ALRGL, an infrequent location, 9/7 (RCu); and one was heard live on NFC at Cavey 9/13 (RRf).

Coincidentally, observers at two locations (Dorseys Search 10/26 AAI; Woodbine 10/29 PPn) watched a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** chase and repeatedly attack one or two **Pileated Woodpeckers** unsuccessfully.

Fall raptors are usually of interest. The **Bald Eagle** high of seven was tallied at MTPLT-SW 9/13 (BO+). A lone **Mississippi Kite** was photographed over a Clarksville yard at 7:40 p.m. on 8/1 (SLk). Peak **Broad-winged Hawk** movement was mid to late Sept: 9/16 Cavey 153 (RRf, VSw, ph.) and Waverly Woods 120 (LGg); Fall Count on 9/17 listed a total of 823 reported by 11 parties including 490 during the a.m. at MTPLT-SW (LGg), 80 at Dickey Farm (CSt, VSw), 45 at Carrs Mill Pk (LCg), and 36 at David Force WMA (K/ETn). On 9/21, an a.m. hour at MTPLT-SW produced 170 (JHf) and 117 (MPw); while on 9/26, 226 were spotted in the a.m. at Rockburn Dr (RDv) and 300 in mid-p.m. in the 19300 block of Gorman Rd (MFp).

Among **Eastern Screech-Owl** reports was one at Larriland Farm, MD 94 in late morning of 11/15 (GPn). The box at Hallmark held a gray phase 10/22-10/28; an intermediate phase owl moved in on 10/29 and was still present 11/30 (Web). Five **Great Horned Owls** were notched in the Cattail Creek vicinity, TRIRS 9/17 (GPn). Two at Gateway 11/30 were near a substantial nest (JW). Although the date was too early for eggs, it will be interesting to see if owls use the nest in 2023. On 9/17, three **Barred Owls** were present at the Cattail Creek, TRIRS parking lot: "2 owls caterwauling while one flew over my head" (GPn).

The season's first **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** turned up at Crest Lawn Mem. Gardens 9/17 (RCu, JHf). **Red-headed Woodpecker** reports were scattered, mostly in the central and western parts of the county. Three were recorded on Fall Count 9/17 in three different areas.

Eight **American Kestrels** were present at ALRGL 9/30 (RCu); five were in the west section of MTPLT 10/10 (AAL, ph.). **Merlins** were reported at three sites on 9/17: MTPLT (BO), LKKIT (CKc), and ALRGL (RCu, JHf). Notes from a party north of I-70 (Area 1) on 9/17 describe a close encounter with a **Peregrine Falcon**:

"Approached at eye level and lit 50 feet away atop a dead snag in full view," (field marks added) (W/SE). A Peregrine, present initially at Big Branch 11/4 (SLk, ph.), may have settled at TRIRS for the winter.

There were no verified **Olive-sided Flycatcher** sightings which is unusual; fall normally produces one or two. An **Eastern Wood-Pewee** photo'd at Cavey 10/21-22 (RRf) extended the late date by a day [10/21/11 J. Culler]. Several flycatcher species pose identification challenges. As expected, more **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were reported than were accepted. Three had ample documentation: Cavey 8/31 (RRf), MTPLT 9/14 (WGr, ph.), Cavey 9/23 (RRf, GPn, SLk, ph.). The description, photos, and audio of an **Alder Flycatcher** at Cavey 10/6-14 (RRf) was unusually complete for this notoriously difficult-to-ID species. A review by several national experts unanimously agreed on the ID. This bird was easily the county's latest Empid record by a full week. **Least Flycatchers** were reported from half a dozen sites beginning with one at Cavey 8/14, the county's second earliest fall record (RRf, ph.) and other sightings continuing through Sept. Unfortunately, most lacked details. Since Empids are likely to be silent in fall and migrants may be frequenting atypical habitats, at least a brief description should be routine.

The last **White-eyed Vireo** turned up at Cavey 10/16 (RRf). A **Yellow-throated Vireo** was a nice addition to a Woodbine yard list on 8/10 (PPn). **Philadelphia Vireos** are not an easy species to identify. Accepted sightings were from four locations including individuals photo'd on seven separate days at Cavey in Sept (RRf); almost all others were accompanied by a photo or a description.



Philadelphia Vireo

by Steve Luke

A loose group of 11 **Common Ravens** spotted from the MTPLT-SW

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on 10/29 equaled one of the largest county totals ever (**WE, RCu, JHf+**). The appearance of a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** at Crest Lawn Mem. Gardens 8/29 (**RRf**) was the first of a nice fall flight. Twenty-three **White-breasted Nuthatches** were counted in the Cattail Creek section of TRIRS 9/17 (**GPn**). A **Sedge Wren** at MTPLT 9/24 (**VSw, ph., RDv**) was a great find. **Marsh Wrens** were observed near Davis Branch at MTPLT 9/17 (**BO**) to 10/8.



Sedge Wren

by Wendy Crowe

A male **Eastern Bluebird** was photographed at the Donleigh Pd 11/25 with a Northern Brownsnake in its bill (**CKc**). Although there are records of bluebirds eating snakes, it is a relatively rare occurrence. Thrush migration was unremarkable. **Gray Catbird** numbers peaked on 9/17 with 23 at Sewell's Orch Pk (**BMy**) and 25 at Middle Patuxent Env. Area (MPEA) 9/17 (**KS**). Consistent with their name, a flock of 80+ **Cedar Waxwings** gathered in the cedars near a barn at Rockburn Branch Pk 9/26 (**KLz**).

Three **Evening Grosbeaks** were verified this season: one female at a Dorseys Search feeder 10/22 (**AAI, ph.**), one male at a Roxbury Mill Rd feeder 10/31 (**KLI, ph.**); and a backlit bird at Barberry 11/15 (**VSw**) that was recorded for verification. **Purple Finches** were widely reported. The combined trip total of 26 at MTPLT 10/29 (**BO; KS**) was a welcome improvement over totals during the 2021-22 winter. There were a few scattered **Pine Siskins** sighted including singles on 10/28 and 11/16 at Barberry (**VSw, ph.**).

August produced young **Grasshopper Sparrows** at both ALRGL (**RCu**) and MTPLT (**BO**). A flock of 70 **Dark-eyed Juncos** turned up in a Long Corner yard 11/11 (**MPw**). **Vesper Sparrows** were identified at MTPLT 10/23 (**BO**), ALRGL 10/27 (**RCu-3**), and Barberry 11/8 (**VSw, ph.**). The first **Lincoln's Sparrow** was picked out at MTPLT 9/20 (**JHf**); one at Barberry 9/25 (**VSw**) was an unusual yard bird; one was also spotted at Rockburn Branch Pk 9/26 (**RDv**). The season's first **Swamp Sparrow** arrived at Barberry 9/18 (**VSw, ph.**)

Bobolink reports were few and numbers low. The high was a meager 11 at MTPLT 9/21 (**BO**). The **Eastern Meadowlark** flock at ALRGL reached 19 on 8/29 (**RCu**). Some **Brown-headed Cowbird** young were noted in August: on 8/2 Killingworth Way, W. Col. a fledgling was fed by a **Northern Cardinal** (**SPb**); on 8/15 at Brush Run, Lake Elkhorn, the host was a **Chipping Sparrow** (**JW**); and on 8/16 a **Wood Thrush** was feeding a fledgling cowbird at Bon Securus (**RCu**). All five **Rusty Blackbird** reports were one to three birds.

Warbler migration was good with some observers reporting 14 and 15 species days. Migrants began to pass through in mid-Aug when most local birders had not yet begun to focus on passerine migra-

tion. Peak movement occurred in mid-Sept.

A **Worm-eating Warbler** at Cavey 9/22 (**RRf, ph.**) was the third latest record. A **Louisiana Waterthrush** at Font Hill Wetland Pk on 8/23 (**BO**) is infrequently recorded there. A female **Golden-winged Warbler** at Cavey 8/18 was a special treat, as it was a new yard bird and tied the county's second earliest fall record (**RRf, GPn**). Four+ hours at Gorman Stream Valley NRA (Kindler) produced 15 **Black-and-whites** on 9/2 (**TFy**). The sighting of an adult and fledgling **Prothonotary** at Browns Bridge on 8/4 was detailed in the summer summary (**ALk**).

A **Tennessee Warbler** at Cavey 8/13 (**RRf**) was a new early date [three prior records on 8/17]; the season's last turned up at No. Laurel Pk 11/2 (**KCK**), one of only five Nov records. Four **Orange-crowned Warbler** reports had good details, most had photos: South Wind Trail, MPEA 10/12 (**Anon. eBirder**); MTPLT 10/12 (**BO, JHf, ROr, ph.**) to 10/27; Schooley Mill Pk 10/21-24 (**TFy, ph.**); Dorsey Run area, building 6841 10/26 (**DZk**). A male **Nashville** at CENPK on an 11/20 field trip (**DHm, JHr+**) was the fifth Nov record.

Elusive **Connecticuts** were noted at two sites: 1) Cavey 9/16 (one of 15 sp.) (**RRf, VSw**); then 10/8 and 10/11 ph./audio (**RRf**); 2) MTPLT 9/20 (**JHf**) and the 10/10 field trip (**BO, MMx+**). Four **Mourning**s were reported in just over two weeks: Elkhorn Garden Plots 9/13 (**JW**), Cascade Falls 9/24 (**KMcD/ACH**); MPEA 9/29 **J/MHr**, and MTPLT 9/29 (**VSw**).

A **Cape May** was photo'd at Cavey 8/24, just three days later than the county's previous early date. It was a banner season for the species at Cavey with 26 sightings in Sept and a seasonal high of 12. Many foraged in dead ash trees making them highly visible (**RRf**). One was eating pokeweed fruit in a Woodbine yard 9/14 (**PPn, ph.**); another seen at Elkhorn on 10/26 (**KS**) was very late. A **Cerulean** was picked out at LKKIT 8/21 (**TCr**). Sadly, it was the only report received in 2022. Two **Magnolias** at MPEA 8/19 were early arrivals (**KS, DSn, HPt**); 11 were counted at David Force WMA 9/17 (**HPt**). An im. male **Blackburnian** turned up at MPEA on 8/12 (**KS**), the second earliest record; one the following day at Cavey marked the third earliest record (**RRf**). The earliest **Chestnut-sided** was spotted at MTPLT 8/14, the county's third earliest fall record (**VSw, ph.**). A **Blackpoll Warbler** stuck around at LKKIT until 10/29 tying the county's late date (**CKc, ph.**). A few **Pine Warblers** can be counted on to visit feeders. For the second consecutive year, one visited suet at Lake Elkhorn 10/2 (**ALw**); one also visited suet at Mustang Path, Glenwood 10/13 (**DCr**); and one spent much of a morning at a tray feeder at Stone Hill Dr 10/17 (**KLz**). A **Prairie** at MTPLT 10/14 was the county's third latest record (**KS**). Three **Canadas** were at Gorman NRA (Kindler) 8/19 (**TFy**).

A **Summer Tanager** was photo'd at Cavey 9/26 (**RRf**); another made a brief appearance at a Burleigh Manor feeder 10/8 (**MKw, ph.**). A female **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** at Waterford 8/1 (**GPn, ph.**) was seen with a **Blue Grosbeak** on the new early date of 8/1 [8/2/14 J. Hanfman]. A late **Indigo Bunting** in Columbia 10/26 (**DZk**) was the county's third latest fall date. A **Dickeissel** called "dick, dick, dick" as it flew over MTPLT on 10/12 (**BO, JHf, ROr**).

Bonus: Two **River Otters** were a pleasant surprise at the GE Pond, Gateway, 11/9 (**GPn**).

Appreciation: Because the autumn season is the year's longest and usually the most complicated, special thanks are due to Russ Ruffing and Joe Hanfman for careful editing, continuing records oversight, and ongoing maintenance of county records.

(Records continued on page 6)

MARYLAND/DC BREEDING BIRD ATLAS 3, 2020-2024

BY SUE MULLER

The fourth year of the MD/DC Breeding Bird Atlas is well underway! The Great Horned Owl (GHOW) and Barred Owl (BAOW) are now in their breeding “safe dates.” If you see or hear either of these owls in your neighborhood, please let Sue and Dave know: howard@mdbirds.org. Knowing where they are is the first step in trying to confirm breeding. Do you have any photos of baby owls from last year? If you do, email them to Sue and Dave for identification and block confirmation. Team Howard has already confirmed two GHOW nests this year, both nests that were used last year which is not common for this species. One BAOW nest has been confirmed in a new block, Woodbine CW.



Great-horned Owl by Sue Muller

The House Sparrow came into “safe dates” on February 1st. This species is confirmed breeding in all blocks in Howard County but many blocks around the state need to confirm this species. Next time you are at a gas station from Garrett County to Caroline County, look for nesting House Sparrows!

Bald Eagles are not in their “safe dates” until April 15th. There are still many migrants in the area. The resident Bald Eagles are actively working on their nests and incubating. Obviously if you find a nest or see a bird carrying a stick, these are both breeding confirmations. These birds are not carrying sticks to Troy, NY. Remember to check any cell towers wherever you are around the state. You may be surprised and see a big nest up there!

If you are new to altasing and don't know where to start, just contact Sue and Dave, they will get you started!

(Records continued from page 5)

Observers: AAI - Annette Allor, TCr - Tim Carney, DCr - Donna Carollo, ACh - Alyssia Church, KCK - Ken Clark, LCg - Lisa Colangelo, WCr - Wendy Crowe, JCu - Jeff Culler, RCu - Ralph Cullison III, RDv - Robert Davis, SE - Sue Earp, WE - Wes Earp, WEb - Ward Ebert, SEm - Shannon Emmel, MFp - Matt Ferperin, TFy - Tim Frye, LGg - Lynn Gregg, JHf - Joe Hanfman, JHr - John Harris, MHR - Meg Harris, BHi - Bill Hill, DHm - David Holmes, MKw - Mike Kerwin, SKg - Sydney King, CKc - Clayton Koonce, ELp - Ellen Lathrop, KLI - Kathie Lillie, KLz - Kathy Litzinger, ALk - Anne Looker, FLv - Felicia Lovelett, SLk - Steve Luke, DMs - Dean Mahlstedt, MMx - Mary Maxey, KMcD - Kris McDaniel, BMy - Brian Moyer, ROr - Richard Orr, MO'S - Michael O'Sullivan, BO - Bonnie Ott, HPT - Howard Patterson, PPn - Pam Perna, GPn - Gregg Petersen, MPw - Mary Prowell, SPb - Sue Probst, RRf - Russ Ruffing, DSn - David Sandler, KS - Kurt Schwarz, CSP - Cathy Staropoli, CSt - Chuck Stirrat, VSw - Val Swan, ETn - Erik Trouton, KTN - Kristin Trouton, DVI - David Vierline, JWD - Josh Ward, JW - Jim Wilkinson, DZk - Dave Ziolkowski.

2022 ANNUAL LIST FOR HOWARD COUNTY

BY JOE HANFMAN

Birders reported a total of 227 species for Howard County in 2022. This total was the 21st highest total in the last 44 years. The top county birds of the year were a Western Kingbird and Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks which were both first county records. 2022 was only the second year where Whimbrels and Anhingas were seen, the latter seen by many folks. A Swallow-tailed Kite was seen for the fourth year. Rufous Hummingbird and Painted Bunting were seen for the sixth year. Trumpeter Swans have now been reported in each of the last eight years.

Other highlights included the first Upland Sandpipers seen since 2010, a few Evening Grosbeaks, and an overwintering Baltimore Oriole eating globs of apple jelly.

The biggest misses were Pectoral Sandpiper which has been seen in 42 of the last 44 years and Laughing Gull which has been seen in 37 of the last 44.

168 of the 312 species that have been seen in the county, have been seen in each of the last 44 years. 209 of the 312 species that have been seen in the county, have been seen 22 or more times in the last 44 years.

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

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

Addendum to the 2005 report – The observer retracted his Alder Flycatcher. This changed the 2005 year list to 232 species.

Howard County 2023
GreenFest
Save The Date!
Saturday, April 15 • 10:00am - 3:00pm
Howard Community College, SET Building
HCGreenfest.org
Native Plant Sale • Document Shredding
Rain Barrel Giveaway
Compost Bin Giveaway and MORE!

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

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

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

2022 HOWARD COUNTY BUTTERFLY YEAR

BY KEVIN HEFFERNAN

Last year we completed the ninth year of the Howard County Butterfly Survey. We had by far the highest number of observers (104) and the second highest in surveys submitted (1,044) and duration in the field (56,668 minutes). We found 23,083 butterflies of 70 species. This was the second year in a row that we exceeded 1,000 butterfly reports submitted. We have now seen 195,916 individual butterflies in the nine year survey and will easily break 200,000 next year. The 388,935 minutes in the field = 6,482 hours or 162 40-hour work weeks equivalent to 3+ years of effort.



Linda Hunt

One doesn't succeed in a project of this size without a lot of help and dedication. So, some big thank you's are in order. First thank you to Linda Hunt who ran this survey and kept it going for several years after Dick Smith passed away. She stepped away from the data gathering this year but still led walks, gave talks, and submitted the largest number of surveys. Another big thank you to Kathy Litzinger for assisting in the data gathering after Linda stepped away and for co-leading several butterfly walks. *Without her, the survey this year would not have happened.* Another thank you to Bob Solem for providing the tools to get the data from emails to a spreadsheet where it can be analyzed, the photo gallery, posted trip reports, and a host of other things. Also, thank you to Woody Merkle and Annette Allor for leading several butterfly walks this year. Also, a long overdue thank you to Clayton Koonce and Jim Wilkinson for their years of active participation in this survey. Finally, a thank you to all 104 participants in the survey this year.

Early Season: The first date that a butterfly was seen last spring was February 21st. Annette Allor found an Eastern Comma at Western Regional Park. Two days later, another Eastern Comma (see photo) was found at Henryton Area of PVSP again by Annette. On February 28th, Annette found a Mourning Cloak at Rockburn Park. Annette basically owned February. By the end of March, 62 butterflies of five species (Mourning Cloak (13), Eastern Comma (9), Question Mark (1), Azure species (13), and Cabbage White (26)) had been reported. For the second year in a row, the first Azure was reported by Kathy Kaberle; this year on March 7th.



Eastern Comma
Annette Allor

Sue Muller reported the first Cabbage White on March 11th. Question Mark numbers went from 28 in 2020, to 54 in 2021 and back down to 29 in 2022. The first was reported by Lisa Colangelo on March 15th. The first skipper of the year was a Juvenal's Duskywing reported by Linda Hunt on April 12th. Other early first of the year sightings included: Falcate Orange-tip (Bonnie Ott, April 8th), Clouded Sulphur (Linda Hunt, April 12th), Meadow Fritillary (Linda Hunt, April 13th), Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (Heidi Osterman), Gray Hairstreak (Karen Heffernan) and Orange Sulphur (Jim Wilkinson) all on April 14th, and Black Swallowtail (Kathy Kaberle, April 15th). No spring brood White M Hairstreak was reported and, for the second year in a row, no Eastern Pine Elfins were found.

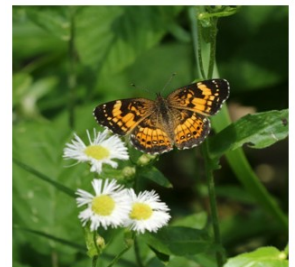
Peak Years: Twelve species had nine year high counts for the survey: Northern Cloudywing (22), Horace's Duskywing (131), Southern Broken-Dash (37), Little Glassywing (733), Hobomok (33) and Broad-winged (25) Skippers, Spicebush Swallowtail (500), Harvester (14), Banded Hairstreak (51), White M Hairstreak (24), Mourning Cloak (33), and Viceroy (45). An additional 12 species had second highest counts in the survey including Common Sootywing (7), Fiery Skipper (274), Dun Skipper (48), Black Swallowtail (192), Giant Swallowtail (3), and Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (1,780), Sleepy Orange (396), Meadow Fritillary (83), Silvery Checkerspot (170), Eastern Comma (84), Appalachian Brown (55), and Monarch (934). Overall, 34% of the 70 species found had peak or second highest count years.

In 2020, 32 Silvery Checkerspots were found and that earned it the 2020 Butterfly of the Year. In 2021, an incredible 246 were found with 215 of these at a single location at Illchester Elementary School (found by Kathy Litzinger) on Jerusalem artichoke. Unfortunately, that habitat was mowed and leaf blown so this time last year, we were concerned that the Silvery Checkerspots would not return in 2022.



Broad-winged Skipper
Linda Hunt

That concern was unfounded as 170 were reported this year, many of them from Illchester Elementary. A total of two Broad-winged Skippers were reported in 2020 and one in 2021. This year 25 were reported, more than double the previous peak. Many of those were found at a new site that had common milkweed next to phragmites at Meadowbrook Park. There are certainly more pocket habitats like this for Silvery Checkerspot and Broad-winged Skippers around the county. We just need to find them (and try to preserve them).



Silvery Checkerspot
Kathy Litzinger

Low counts: The following four species had nine year low counts for the survey: Common Checkered-Skipper (14), Tawny-edged Skipper (28), Great Spangled Fritillary (23), and Hackberry Emperor (1). An additional five species had their second lowest count during the survey. These include Long-tailed Skipper (1), Southern Cloudywing (13), Falcate Orange-tip (12), American Copper (16), and Pearl Crescent (640). Overall, 13% of the 70 species found had their lowest or second lowest count during the survey.

Howard County Watch List: Common Checkered-Skipper numbers have dropped for five years in a row from a peak of 331 in 2017 to 14 this year. These are found in higher numbers in the western part of the county where fewer people survey. Their conservation status is S5 (secure) in Maryland, but they are on the watch list in this county. American Copper numbers had also dropped for five years in a row. The 16 found in 2022 was slightly higher than the 13 found in 2021 stopping that streak but barely. The peak number for this species was 86 in



American Copper
Pam Perna

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2016. In the last four years, Great Spangled Fritillary numbers have dropped from 168 in 2018 to 39 (2019), 45 (2020), 32 (2021) and a low of 23 in 2022. These numbers reflect regional trends and could be global warming-related (disrupted timing of caterpillar emerging from diapause and violet emergence).

Of the 70 species found this year, 12 (~17%) had <10 individuals reported. These include *Crossline Skipper* (8), *Coral Hairstreak* (8), *Common Sootywing* (7), *Tawny Emperor* (7), *Swarthy Skipper* (6), *Clouded Skipper* (5), Northern Broken-Dash (3), **Giant Swallowtail** (3), *Common Wood-Nymph* (2), *Long-tailed Skipper* (1), **Mulberry Wing** (1), and Hackberry Emperor (1). Eight of these (italics) were also on last year's "<10 individuals" reported list. Two (bold) were not seen last year.

Notes from the year:

- No new species were seen this year leaving the species count for the survey at 80.
- Mt Pleasant added a new species, Zebra Swallowtail, found by Annette Allor. This location has 68 species, the highest number of species in the county.
- A new early date was established for Crossline Skipper (Annette Allor).
- New late dates were established for Appalachian Brown (Bill Hill), Hobomok Skipper (Annette Allor), and Broad-winged Skipper (Linda Hunt).
- This is the first year that Northern Cloudywing numbers exceeded Southern Cloudywing.
- The Giant Swallowtails seen this year were the first reported since 2019.
- The number of Pipevine Swallowtails has exceeded the number of Zebra Swallowtails during the survey.
- Monarchs had a good year with 934 reported, the second highest in the nine year survey.
- Appalachian Brown numbers this year exceeded the total of the last five years combined.
- We conducted seven butterfly walks last year, six at Mt Pleasant and one at the Elkhorn Garden Plots. We averaged 20 people and 23 species per walk. The walk on August 20th had 26 participants, 33 species and five leaders. The two walks in June successfully found both Coral and Banded Hairstreaks.
- The top six contributors in terms of number of surveys submitted accounted for >50% of the surveys submitted. They were Linda Hunt (186), Claytron Koonce (173), Kathy Litzinger (83), Jim Wilkinson (64), Annette Allor (53) and Woody Merkle (43).
- The Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks has established 12 pollinator meadows of over 65 acres in eight locations over the years. The list is on the bird club website.
- See the presentation given at the January bird club meeting for more information about the 2022 butterfly year.



Zebra Swallowtail
Annette Allor



Group photo from August 20th walk.

Last Butterfly of the Year Contest: We again had the "Last Butterfly of the Year" contest with the winner receiving a *Butterflies of the Mid-Atlantic* field guide. The winner this year was Bill Hill who sent in a photo of a Common Checkered-Skipper seen on November 12th. Congratulations Bill.

Butterfly of the Year: Each year we award a "Butterfly of the Year" to a species that had an outstanding year. This year the award goes to the Harvester. The seven Harvesters seen in 2014, the first year of the survey, were the first adult Harvesters seen in the county since 1996. In the seven years between 2015 and 2021, a total of only 11 Harvesters were reported. This year alone, 14 Harvesters were seen. In addition, we had photos from several photographers of female Harvester ovipositing, and photos from Bonnie Ott of Harvester caterpillars in amongst their aphid prey. Finally, after many hours of searching, **Bonnie found a Harvester chrysalis, a first ever sighting for the county.**



Common Checkered-Skipper
Bill Hill



Harvester – Annette Allor



Harvester ovipositing
Kevin Heffernan



Harvester chrysalis – Bonnie Ott

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Photos and Videos from participants: This year again we have received many excellent photos of butterflies. Some of the photos are proof of a sighting. Others are to request help with an ID which we enjoy receiving. Please do not hesitate to reach out with a request for an ID. Some of the photos we receive are simply eye-popping. Many of these photos are in the PowerPoint presentation given at the January Howard County Bird Club meeting and now on the website.

New Data / Tools for the Butterfly Survey: In the nine years that the butterfly survey has been taking place, you surveyors have reported over 195,000 butterflies. With this vast amount of data, last winter we were able to publish flight times, early and late dates, and overwintering strategies for each of the 80 species that we have found. These are all on the Howard County Bird Club website. They are in PDF format and can be downloaded to your phone for use in the field. This winter, we hope to publish host plant information and to update Dick Smith's latest version of "The Butterflies of Howard County."

What you can do to help butterflies:

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

Thank you all again for another very successful year for the Howard County Butterfly Survey. Keep your eyes open. By the time that this newsletter is sent out, we may have already seen the first butterfly of 2023.



Harvester caterpillars – Bonnie Ott



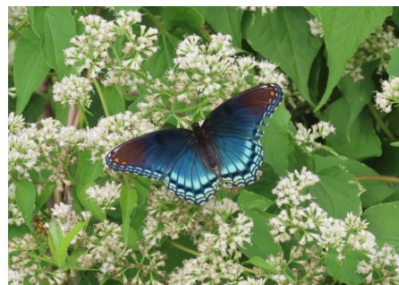
Tawny Emperor ovipositing
Kathy Litzinger



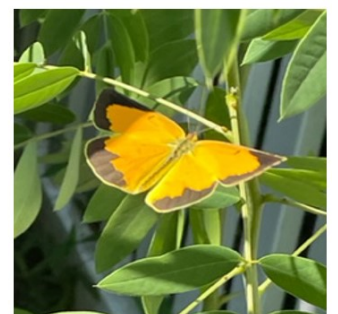
Giant Swallowtail - Linda Hunt



Cloudless Sulphurs – Kelsey Wellons



Red-spotted Purple – Clayton Koonce



Sleepy Orange – dorsal side
Barbara White

HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB'S ANNUAL POTLUCK DINNER

BY SHERRY TOMLINSON

The Howard County Bird Club's Annual Potluck Dinner is back and will take place on Saturday, March 25, 2023 from 6:00-10:00 p.m. at the Robinson Nature Center. To attend, please sign up at our monthly meeting or contact Sherry Tomlinson by e-mail at stbirder@yahoo.com or call or text at 425-214-6000. Dinner is 7:00 p.m. and doors open for set-up and snacks at 6:00 p.m. All club members and their guests are invited. There is no entrance fee charged by the RNC. Those attending please bring a main dish, hors d'oeuvres, a salad, a vegetable or a dessert. To assist those with food allergies, it is suggested that you include a list of ingredients along with your dish. The bird club furnishes water, coffee, tea, and eating utensils. You may bring wine and beer.

The highlight of the event is the after dinner "slide show." Please bring your digital photos on a USB thumb drive, as the club will provide a laptop for projection of the wonderful photos you wish to share. Please note that due to the time limitations we limit photos to no more than **15 photographs per person**.

This year there will be a drawing for two tickets to attend the 2023 Wine in the Garden, Beer in the Barn held at Mount Pleasant, Howard County Conservancy on a late September Saturday from late afternoon to early evening. They are valued at \$120.00. If this event is of interest to you and you would like to enter the drawing, please contact Sherry Tomlinson and your name will be entered for the drawing. Need not be present to win. Winner will be announced at the potluck.

If you are available to assist with setting up or cleaning up, arrive between 6:00-6:30 p.m. to help set up or stay a bit afterwards, 9:00-10:00 p.m., to help clean up. It doesn't take long and is much appreciated!



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

P.O. Box 1323

Columbia, MD 21044-1323

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Memorable Field Trip to the Delaware Shore

By Russell Kovach

On Saturday, January 21st, 2023 eight birders set out from Columbia to tour the lower Delaware shore in search of rarities and winter resident birds alike. After a slow start at the first stop (Fowler Beach), the group was not disappointed as a flock of 50 Snow Buntings along with a spattering of Horned Lark provided some late-morning fireworks, augmented by a fly-over Short-eared Owl!

On the drive from Fowler Beach to Lewes, picking through flocks of Snow Geese numbering in the tens of thousands yielded a pair of Ross's Geese (including a blue-morph Ross's Goose!), in addition to a perched Merlin. One of the stars of the day, however, surfaced in the town of Lewes where a young male King Eider put on a show. The eider was a life bird for several participants, and was an exciting and stunning find for all.

As amazing as the morning turned out to be, arguably the most stunning bird of the day was yet to come. While gazing at diving Northern Gannet and Forster's Terns (along with many Surf Scoters, and both Red-throated and Common Loons), the Lark Sparrow that has called Cape Henlopen State Park home this past month put on a show. The stark maroon and black coloration of the Lark Sparrow provided nearly an hour of viewing enjoyment, and capped a list including 68 species total.

Subsequent stops included Silver Lake in Rehoboth where Canvasback ducks numbered in the hundreds, and Indian River Inlet where Long-tailed Ducks, Black Scoters, Purple Sandpipers, and Ruddy Turnstones all took their turns as stars of the show. The group ended up at Prime Hook for sunset listening to a distant pair of Great Horned Owls duetting over the marsh.

At least four species were life birds for several participants (Snow Bunting, Northern Gannet, King Eider, and Lark Sparrow) in addition to numerous state and county birds for the listers in the group. Special thanks to Kurt Schwarz for tallying the day's birds on eBird!

For photos and trip lists: <https://howardbirds.website/birding/field-trip-reports/20230121capehenlopen/>