

# Howard County, Maryland

## May 15, 2004, Sixth Unofficial Big Day

Joanne Solem

**Big Day 6. May 15, 2004.** Leaders: Bonnie Ott, Daryl Olson, and Joanne Solem (also Recorder); Ralph Cullison carried a scope and camera all day; Kevin Heffernan and Kurt Schwarz carried their scopes for portions of the day. Total participants: 12. Joe Byrnes, J. B. Churchill, Karen Darcy Heffernan, Emmalyn Holdridge, John Maloney, Ray Kiddy. Weather: Mostly cloudy early with rapid clearing, high of 87 F. with light winds; sky becoming increasingly cloudy in evening; black cloud in west moved toward us while we listened for whips at Annapolis Rock Road. Returned to vehicles just as it began to rain. Time: 6:00 a.m. – 8:45 p.m. Total species: 103. Meeting site: Rockburn Branch Park. Notable species: Only 16 warbler species total; no major passerine flight the previous night. Northern Harrier – Race Road Wetlands; Virginia Rail - Race Road/Hanover Road marsh; Swamp Sparrow and a second Virginia Rail – UMDCF (a hot walk with best bird one we already had). Bald Eagle – Centennial Park; Ring-billed Gull – Lake Kittamaquidi; Mute Swan – Lake Elkhorn; Common Loon – Brighton Dam; Blue-winged Warbler, Common Nighthawk, and Eastern Whip-poor-will – Annapolis Rock Road.

Henryton yielded only four species while several regular species for this site stubbornly remained on the wrong side of the river. We struck out during the lunch break at Alpha Ridge Park; the few soaring birds were species we already had. Centennial Park yielded the usual nesting Willow Flycatcher on an island as well as a flyover Bald Eagle. The county's only free-flying Mute Swan was the single new species notched at Lake Elkhorn. A Common Loon remained at Brighton Dam. The evening at Annapolis Rock from 7:45 – 8:45 p.m. was a race with an arriving storm. We were able to add Blue-winged and Prairie warblers, Common Nighthawk, and whip-poor-will. The arrival of the storm put an end to thoughts of owling. The 103 species was the lowest total since the first year. The final comments from Joanne's summary: "It was a pleasant day even though it was less productive than we had hoped. We hope everyone recovered quickly with the more moderate pace Bonnie set. . . . Now to turn our attention to atlas!"