



howard county  
**BIRD CLUB**  
50th ANNIVERSARY • 1972 – 2022

# MEMBERS' MEMORIES

## Allen Lewis

I grew up on what had been an 80-acre farm in the drumlin belt of the Finger Lakes region of western New York State. The property had a good-sized woodlot connected to adjacent woodlots, a good-sized marsh, a 1.3 acre pond, and acres of agricultural land. My family maintained an annual bird list on the refrigerator. There was minor competition to be the first to see a bird and get one's name next to that species on the year list. However, birding was an incomprehensible activity to most of my classmates, and certainly not something to bring up on the school bus.

Upon completion of graduate school in 1978, Laurie and I moved to Puerto Rico where we worked and lived until our move to Maryland. For most of the years in Puerto Rico, I was a member of the "Sociedad Ornitológica de Puerto Rico." I knew many members well, but the organization was not huge, and there were no regular meetings as members were scattered over the entire island. I participated annually in a few announced field trips, but, for me, birding in Puerto Rico was most often not a social activity.

Laurie and I purchased our townhouse by Lake Elkhorn in September 2010. We landed here because our two adult children had settled in this area. We were still completing our move in the fall of 2011 when we joined the bird club. I was immediately surprised by the number of regularly scheduled birding events, the number of participants, and the number of retired club members who went out nearly daily with friends looking for birds. Birding had flipped from being a relatively solitary activity to being a significantly social activity. When I did go out by myself, I would regularly encounter and join up with other birders I already knew. This was and remains a welcome, unanticipated aspect of my retirement.