



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

# MEMBERS' MEMORIES

## Robin Hessey

About 20-25 years ago or so, when I started to be fascinated by birds, I joined a Howard County Bird Club walk led by Bonnie Ott at the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area. I thought it would be really cool to be out looking for birds with a group that would love them, too, and help me to identify what I was seeing.

However, I had two little issues. One was everyone called the birds by their nicknames. Sharpies, Red-bellies, White-throats, etc. I had to keep asking “Red-bellied *whats*”? Someone in the group invariably would answer my question, but I felt awkward having to ask so many times. They would also invariably open up their field guides and show me the bird in case I had missed it. I was so appreciative.

Also, I had a little itty bitty pair of binoculars that I thought were what binoculars were supposed to be. Bonnie kindly asked me if I wanted to try one of her extra pairs. I was delighted and saw a whole new world. She did not in any way hint that my optics were sub-par, but just gently offered me another way.

Over the years, I have learned so much from bird club members. They have kept me anchored in the natural world, helping me experience the many awesome delights all around me. Thank you very much Howard County Bird Club!