

Howard County, Maryland

Sparrow Big Days

Bonnie Ott and Joanne Solem

Sparrow Big Day 4 October 21, 2006. Leader: Bonnie Ott. Total participants: 15. Ralph Cullison, Joanne Solem, Mark Wallace, + 11. Weather: Clear, crisp day, though no frost; little breeze; high in 60s. Time: 7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Total sparrow species: 11. Meeting site: UMDCF. Notable bird species: Sora, Wilson's Snipe, Marsh Wren – UMDCF. Rusty Blackbird and American Pipit – probably Alpha Ridge Landfill.

As usual, the meeting place was the UMDCF. The large group was delighted with the Sora and Marsh Wren in the swale, but disappointed that the farm produced no special sparrows. At Mt. Pleasant, most of the sparrows were concentrated in the vicinity of the east bridge and the field east of the house. Although four people claimed a Dark-eyed Junco, Bonnie did not see it. Alpha Ridge Park was unproductive, so we carpooled and went on to the landfill, thanks to Ralph who obtained permission. Several hours there netted Grasshopper and Vesper sparrows in one upper field that, over the years, had proven consistently productive. At 3:00 p.m. (there had been no lunch break), we headed to Waterford Farm. There, two more Marsh Wrens and two more Vesper Sparrows were added to the list. By 5:00 p.m., everyone had headed home except Mark, who crossed Cattail Creek and picked up a couple of shorebirds at the edge of a pond.