

# Howard County, Maryland Unofficial Half Day Big Day

John Harris and Joanne Solem

Leaderless trip. Recorder: John Harris. Total participants: 8. Dennis Coskren, Howard Patterson, David Sandler, Joanne Solem, Chuck Stirrat, Robin Todd, Tex Wilkins. Weather: Cloudy, mist early, clearing off later in a.m. for pleasant day; high in 60s. Time: 7:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Total species: 86. Meeting site: Mt. Pleasant. Notable species: 18 species of warblers. Swamp Sparrow, Bobolink – Mt. Pleasant; Veery, Swainson's Thrush, Northern Waterthrush, Hooded Warbler – Henryton; Blue-winged Warbler – Wilde Lake; Pine Warbler – Centennial Park.

After the group met, John Harris volunteered to be the recorder. Since there was no designated leader, it was agreed that any three birders hearing or seeing a bird would add the species to the list. Five minutes in the Mt. Pleasant parking lot started the list with 11 species. The carpools then headed for the Patapsco Valley. Henryton held a nice combination of residents and migrants. Unfortunately, Yellow-throated Warbler was missed both there and at Marriottsville. By 9:30 a.m., we had returned to cover Mt. Pleasant. The grassland and scrub produced most of the expected species. The day's most unfortunate miss was the Marsh Wren Bonnie Ott had had earlier in the day in the wetlands near Davis Branch.

After finishing Mt. Pleasant, people who anticipated leaving in late morning drove separately as we headed south toward Columbia. By noon, the remaining birders determined at each stop whether to try "just one more site." Wilde Lake unexpectedly produced a Blue-winged Warbler. Centennial Park was the final stop. The two Pine Warblers there were a nice bonus.

We finished at 2:30 p.m. which was longer than a true half day, but the pace was modest, weather pleasant, and, as expected for early May, there were enough birds to maintain everyone's interest.

This Half Day Big Day is the only one the Howard County Bird Club has run. Howard Patterson has suggested it may be time to revive them again.