



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

# MEMBERS' MEMORIES

## Kevin Heffernan

- 1) The best sighting by far in 40+ years in the Bird Club was the woman I was lucky enough to sit next to at the Manja-Manja restaurant on Friday night of the 2000 Cape May weekend trip. She became my best friend, wife, birding and butterflying companion, and nature spotter for the last 21 years.
- 2) The many good friends that we have made over the years, including the ones that we lost.
- 3) Karen's amazing hearing
- 4) Emy's infectious laugh; Nancy's dry sense of humor; Marge's smile; Dick Smith's willingness to share his knowledge; the great job that Jane Geuder did getting speakers for so many years, getting to know Chan Robbins, etc.
- 5) Jo and Bob's leadership over the years
- 6) The fact that the Howard County Bird Club is more of a nature club with birding emphasis than a bird club. It has experts in butterflies, dragonflies, wildflowers, reptiles and amphibians, etc.
- 7) On the 1989 May Count, I heard a rail at the wildlife end of Centennial Lake. Mike Leumas briefly saw it and reported some white in the wing. I went to the tally rally at Don and Jan Randle's house (Mike couldn't go) and reported to Chan Robbins that we had seen a Yellow Rail, and that we looked it up in Peterson's field guide. Of course, it was then that I remembered that Chan wrote the Golden Guide. My rationale was that only the Yellow Rail had white in the wing. Chan was very patient and let me know that it was highly unlikely without totally embarrassing me. We went back the next day and found the Sora.
- 8) The too-many-to-count times that I heard the word "reaaaaalllly" from Jo Solem when what I was suggesting that I saw was highly unlikely.
- 9) Seeing the first raven on a Big Day and seeing Bonnie and Jo hugging each other and hopping around in circles.
- 10) The "out of county" trips including the weekend birding trips to Cape May and Ocean City and the 2003 pelagic trip
- 11) Birding at Centennial Lake when a flock of Bonaparte's Gulls flew in and Karen noticed that one of them had dark underwings. It was the first sighting of Little Gull in the county and hundreds of birders got to see it that day.
- 12) Russ Ruffing finding the King Eider at Brighten Dam and my helping Jo Solem get on it.

- 13) My nemesis bird in the county was Wild Turkey. It became a running joke among my friends. One year at the start of May Count at MPEA, Karen and I heard a turkey across the road from the parking area. I got it in the scope. It was sitting on an outbuilding so I dismissed it as being domestic. I didn't even mention it at the rally until the tally was completed. Jo asked me about it and thought that I should count it. I reluctantly added it to the tally list. The following week, Wes Earp made a couple of calls and found out that "my" turkey's name was Steve. I finally got my first turkey (a flock of 40) at West Friendship Park a few years later.
- 14) The crossbill and redpoll invasion years.
- 15) The year I saw 199.5 species in Howard County when trying for the 200 Club. The .5 was a hybrid goose. I already had Ross's Goose that year and needed Snow Goose. I went to the western half of the county on December 31 to try to find a Snow Goose. I found a white goose and thought I had the needed species. When I looked closer, it was clearly too small, so I thought I had another Ross's. I went home and examined the photos. Clearly, the bird was a hybrid Ross's/Snow Goose. I jokingly tried to get Jo to let me round up which she heartily rejected. That was a good thing because I ended up with a story—and it's all about the story.
- 16) The MOS Conventions. Getting to see the state birders that we would only see once a year. The camaraderie, good birding, the talks, the parties that Karen and I would host each year, etc. My first convention was 1989 at Frostburg. I remember an owling trip where the leader played a Barred Owl tape and a few minutes later one called 10 feet above our heads. We never heard it fly in.
- 17) The special birds: Snowy Owl, Painted Bunting, Green Violet-ear, Common Redpoll, Sabine's Gull, Short-eared Owl, Pink-footed Goose, Sandhill Crane, King Eider, Least Tern, and many more.
- 18) The Big Days and Little Big Days
- 19) Chan Robbins counting MPEA alone during Mid-winter Count in his upper-80s. I tried several times to assign someone to bird with him; he wanted more coverage in the county so always said no. Even in his eighties, he had the most miles and hours on the May Count.
- 20) The very lengthy "missed by five minutes" list including the Black Rail at University of Maryland Central Farm
- 21) Bonnie leading the Big Days, Sparrow Big Days and University of Maryland Central Farm trips.
- 22) The butterfly survey and butterflying with Dick Smith, Linda Hunt, Kathy Litzinger, and many more.
- 23) The huge seed sales that we would have twice a winter in the parking lot at the First Presbyterian Church at MD 108 and US 29.
- 24) The bird club meetings at Longfellow Elementary School, the Howard County Recreation and Parks building, and now at the Robinson Nature Center.