



Howard County Bird Club
A Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society
Board of Directors Meeting - Minutes
Thursday, March 28, 2024

Attendance [In-person presence indicated by (√), virtual attendance by (#), Voting Member by (*)]

2023-2024 Club Officers:

President:* Gregg Petersen √
Vice-president:* Val Swan √
Secretary:* Chuck Stirrat √
Treasurer:* Tim Thompson √
Chap. Directors:* Lauren Crocker (1st yr.) √
Nancy McAllister (2nd yr.)
State Directors:* Donna Carollo
John McKitterick
David Sandler #
Sherry Tomlinson √
Past President:* Mary Maxey #

Standing Committees:

Records:* Jo Solem #
Publicity/Outreach:* Kelsey Wellons #
Programs:* Mary Lou Clark √
Newsletter:* Megan Bolcar √
Habitat:* Sue Probst
Butterflies:* Kevin Heffernan
Field Trips:* Joe Hanfman
Conservation:* Robin Todd

Working Groups

Webmaster/Membership: Bob Solem #
Potluck: Sherry Tomlinson/
Meghaan Lane
BBA3: Sue Muller #

Others:

General Notes

The meeting was held in a hybrid format with the in-person portion held at the home of Gregg Petersen. Total number in attendance was 14 (8 in person/6 Zoom). Attendance at the regular club meeting held March 14, 2024 was 84 (62 in person/22 Zoom). Bonnie Ott gave a program entitled “Explore the Macro World.” Lauren has legally changed her last name to her husband’s explaining the change to Crocker in the list of officers.

The attendance and program for the club meeting on December 14, 2023 was not recorded in the January minutes as the meeting happened after the December 7 Board meeting and the January 25 Board minutes only addressed the January 11 program and attendance. Attendance at the December 14 meeting was 61 (40 in person / 21 via Zoom). Will Hershberger gave a program entitled “Celebration of Bird Song.”

Officer’s Reports

President’s Remarks (Petersen): After his traditional remarks, Gregg reported that appreciation coins had been given to the following members since our last Board meeting: David Cummings, Mary Maxey, Woody Merkle, Terri Berkheimer, Cathy Hallam, Meghaan Lane, Sherry Tomlinson, and John Henri Rorabeck. He reported he plans to present awards for Valued Service, Co-rookies of the Year, and Blood, Sweat, and Tears at the April club meeting. Lastly, he reported that parking at Robinson Nature Center will be limited from April 1 to May 29 due to construction. As a result, we will need to make arrangements for carpooling or staging shuttle runs from nearby parking lots (Giant/Simpsonville?) for our April and May club meetings. Sherry observed that we could choose to forgo the hybrid format and only have a virtual meeting. This approach did not have much support. **ACTION** – Formulate plans to address limited parking. - Gregg

Vice-President’s Remarks (Swan): Val awarded Kelsey a virtual appreciation coin in recognition of the many functions she has been handling for the club (Zoom/IT support, Publicity chairperson, Facebook moderator, and photographer). This was done virtually since Kelsey had not been attending any recent club events in person. Kelsey indicated she intended to attend the Centennial walk on the coming Sunday and could get the real coin then. *Sec. Note: Chuck presented Kelsey with her physical coin at the Centennial walk on March 31.*

Review of Minutes/Secretary (Stirrat): Chuck summarized the corrections to the draft he had received. He corrected the spelling of Kelsey's name in the Potluck paragraph. In the opening Safe Skies paragraph Gregg proposed rewording the Sec. Note to reflect the meet-and-greet with HCC had been postponed. In the second paragraph Gregg provided a clause that made it clear Sue M.'s absence was due to him failing to include her email when he sent out the agenda. Lastly, he proposed adding the following - "*Pres. Note: At the March 2nd MOS meeting in Baltimore on March 2 Gabriel Foley stated the money would be given in some manner for mileage but in a manner for specific underserved areas that he would allocate in some manner.*" In the YMOS Backpack paragraph corrected Brittany's last name to "Parsons." Added a Sec. Note to the Butterfly Logo Design Approval indicating that as of March 11 the butterfly logo merchandise was available on the website. In the Black Birder's Week field trip paragraph capitalized the word "Black" consistent with currently accepted style guides. In the attachment list Gregg requested delete "(draft)" and add the following - "is an approved Waterford Flats procedure memo by the WF Committee. Mary Lou requested to review and discuss this at the March Meeting." The minutes were approved with these corrections incorporated.

Treasurer's Report/Treasurer (Thompson): Tim had provided the attached Treasure's Report. He reported that the checking account balance as of the end of February was \$21,201.28 and the Vanguard balance was \$540,834.72. He and Gregg reported that the two tax returns have been delayed until after the accountant's workload eases after April 15. Since the return asks if the club has a conflict-of-interest policy, Gregg asked if we have one. Tim replied that wording in the By-laws seem to be sufficient for us to make a positive response. The Board will be asked to review and approve the returns (possibly via a Zoom meeting after we receive them). In response to Chuck's query, Tim confirmed that he had sent \$300 to the YMOS, and the associated action item can be closed. His other action to transfer excess funds from the checking account to Vanguard money market fund is still pending. Gregg told Tim the bill for HCC Safe Skies window treatment should be received soon.

Standing Committee Reports

Records (Jo Solem): Jo had provided the attached report that covered through Monday, March 25. She reported that since then Great Egrets and Louisiana Waterthrush had been reported. The Caspian Tern reported on the recent Centennial walk was a new early date. Jo repeated the caution, against believing eBird reports that seem too good to be true. that she had included in her written report. Gregg and Meghaan both reported they had multiple Winter Wrens, some singing, at Pigtail earlier in the day.

Publicity/Outreach (Wellons): Kelsey reported she continues to work on finding ways to publicize our activities. Chuck had provided the information to add items to the Howard County Times (and Baltimore Sun) on-line calendar and provided evidence they sometimes publish these in the printed/electronic version (e.g., a couple of recent HCC events). She also mentioned that several council persons indicated willingness to include our items in their email newsletters. Councilperson Rigby expressed interest in attending a field trip. Mary Lou and Gregg have been working on a ½ sheet flyer to be posted on kiosks with info on the club. Sue Muller suggested contacting Erin Wilder (nee Eve) to ask if they can be posted on Rec and Parks kiosks. All Board members are asked to suggest potential kiosks (e.g., neighborhood centers) and help with posting them. **Sec. Note: Should this be an action item?**

Programs (Clark): Mary Lou reported that she has speakers lined up through 2025 (except for one she kept open as a contingency), She also reported that Gail Mackiernan has said she could fill in if a scheduled speaker must cancel. Mary Lou then described the City Nature Challenge organized by the National Aquarium for April 26-29. The intent is to observe and document on iNaturalist as many living creatures in the city and surrounding counties as possible. Sue Muller is also involved in this attempt to document biodiversity in the county. We anticipate there will be classes (learning material) on how to use iNaturalist made available. **Action:** Prepare the text for a NewsGram on the City Nature Challenge. – **Mary Lou Clark**

Newsletter (Bolcar): Megan reported that the deadline for the May/June issue was the prior Monday, but she was still expecting a wrap-up article on the Potluck from Sherry and if Sue M. had something on BBA3 she could accommodate that as well.

Habitat (Probst): Sue was not present as she was attending Holy Week Thursday services. Gregg reported that Sue P., Ralph Cullison, and he had met with Councilperson Deb Jung and Mark DeLuca of HoCo DPW on Mar 12 concerning Alpha Ridge best practices for grasslands mowing. He shared the slide he had used. The points made

were that they were exploring growing out some cells, it is hard to mow around pipe structures, and they are exploring having a pollinator plot. We requested the pond edges not be mowed so closely. They made the point that the mowers are worried about ticks being present in the long grass. Ms. Jung is in favor of the TNR legislation she has introduced and took the opportunity to discuss it with Gregg. He shared Kurt's draft testimony with her. She asked if we had alternative proposals. Gregg provided her and other Council reps with information on "catios." On other habitat issues Gregg reported that HCC had not received any new estimates yet on the requested "Meadow" project. In addition, we still expect a request from Woody Merkle for volunteers to supervise scouts helping haul mulch for the SkyWatch refurbishment in May. May 11 is out, as that Saturday is May Count.

Butterflies (Kevin Heffernan): No report.

Field Trips (Hanfman): Joe was not present. Gregg summarized that there are 13 field trips scheduled in the next two months with one being a butterfly walk. The new loaner binoculars have already been used for Beginner trips and these trips continue to generate new memberships. Lauren led a Brownie troop field trip using the new binoculars the previous weekend. So far, the property inventory tracking is working fine, and Gregg acknowledged the old laptop had been phased out of the inventory. In addition, Shashi Lengade and Gregg loaned their personal spares to participants who didn't have any at the latest Centennial Walk. Gregg pointed out that Belmont access changes as of April 1. *Sec. Note – Friday access is unavailable until November 30. Access on Monday-Thursday available all year.* Lastly Gregg stated that a Black Birder Week field trip at HCC has been scheduled. Leaders will be Kojo Baidoo, Teresa Spencer, and Desmond Johnson. Mary Lou and Val have agreed to provide support. Val asked if someone could provide her with bios of the leaders so she could provide it to HCC. **Action:** Provide Val with leader biographies – **Gregg, Mary Lou**

Conservation (Todd): Robin had sent the attached report that addresses the status of the PFAS pesticides bill that did not get out of committee and a request from Dan Small, founder of the Natural Lands Project for a letter of support for a grant they are requesting to support management of natural grasslands on the Upper Eastern Shore. Gregg mentioned that comments on the [Proposed National Wildlife Refuge](#) are due April 22. The refuge is to be called the [Southern Maryland Woodlands National Wildlife Refuge](#). The boundaries of the refuge encompass 577,420 acres, but the bill proposes to acquire 40,000 acres that would be formally managed as a refuge.

Gregg then summarized the status of the Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) bill to be voted on by the Howard County Council on April 1. The club and MOS have been providing information on the efficacy of TNR programs and the dangers to wildlife, humans, and the cats themselves that the programs engender. On March 13 Gregg proposed and the Board approved via an email vote the club offering the county a \$5,000 donation to support cat adoption costs, contingent on the bill not being approved, as part of our testimony. At the public testimony hearing, Kurt spoke for MOS and us. Councilpersons Jung and Rigby seemed to be in support of the bill. Also, the President of the Calvert County Chapter of MOS is supporting the bill. There is also a private offer to provide over \$400K for cats if the council passed the bill (or maybe found another way to stop the current trap and kill policy). Gregg proposed that a plan that required "catios" rather than release might be a compromise solution. Councilperson Walsh is the only member who has stated her plans to vote no, so Gregg has been proceeding presuming the bill would pass and he is drafting a letter to County Executive, Dr. Ball, describing his personal experience and possibly inviting Dr. Ball to visit "community cat" sites and see for himself. *Sec. Note – At the legislative session on April 1, in addition to the negative vote from Walsh, two others abstained so that the bill failed. Expect this will surface again. Presumably, we need to donate \$5K for cat adoption support or potentially cat enclosures (catios) as a pilot program. (Gregg needs to make contact with the Howard County Community Cat advocates to explore this option).*

Work Group Reports

Webmaster/Membership (Bob Solem): Bob had provided the attached historical histogram of membership levels with a limited analysis of retention. He noted the surge in membership in the mid-80s, followed by a tapering off followed by the more recent growth again. He reported that as of March 1 (date of record for membership) we had 361 adult members, with 23 additional affiliate members. Due to the benefit of 18 months of membership for those joining after March 1, he reports that we had 37 new members join since then. In answer to a question about lifetime memberships, he reported we have no one who has paid for the lifetime membership MOS offers, but we have grandfathered in the three members who have been members for 50 years as not having to pay annual dues. Lastly,

he discussed retention rates. He notes that there is a dramatic difference in retention between those who have been members more than one year (8.5%) and only one year (24.5%). We have always had difficulty finding the reasons people don't renew but he did look at those who had only been a member for one year this year and found that none of those who did not renew had attended a field trip or beginner workshop/field trip. He also notes that although the 24.5% seems very high it is in fact well below past experience. Given that many new members are beginning birders the improved retention rate is likely due to the increased outreach effort in the past couple of years. Lastly Bob said he will have generated a new membership list with contact information for Board use shortly and asked those who wanted to receive the link to send him an email. **Action:** Send Bob a request for the membership list if you want a copy – **Board Members**. *Sec. Note: Bob provided list to those who requested one on April 2.*

Potluck (Tomlinson/Lane): Sherry reported that the event was a great success. There were 54 attendees, including special guests, the Sharp's (Waterford) and Shannon Davis (RNC Director). Sherry and Meghaan reported a couple of lessons learned: 1) Invite VIPs earlier, 2) Have more "bird friendly" products (e.g., decaffeinated coffee), and 3) definitely continue the two-room setup (with music).

Breeding Bird Atlas 3 / Safe Skies (Muller): Gregg reported on the RNC Safe Skies window treatment. They have begun applying "dots" and he offered that we could find some volunteers if they need help with the "dot" application. The picture film has not yet been received from Feather Friendly. The HCC Safe Skies social/commemoration is scheduled for April 6 at 1 PM. *Sec. Note: Postponed again due to delay in completing installation, date TBD.* Sue M. had made a request for funding to support HCBC members participating in two "block busting" atlas weekends in Somerset County. Gregg reported he raised the issue with Gabriel Foley at the MOS Board meeting on March 2, as the MOS budget includes \$6K for such activities but he has made no decision yet. Sue moved the Board approve her request for up to \$2500 for lodging of up to 8 HCBC members participating in these BBA3 weekends (May 24-25 and June 8-9). The motion was seconded and approved.

State Board Director Reports

State Board Meeting (Petersen, Carollo, McKitterick, Sandler, Tomlinson, Todd, etc.): Gregg reported that the latest meeting was held on March 2 at Cylburn in Baltimore. Club attendees were Petersen, McKitterick, and Sandler. Gregg commented that John has been doing a great deal supporting MOS in this time of unexpected transition to a new President. In related efforts Gregg has been finalizing the documentation of State Director duties so it will be ready for orientation for the soon to be elected new State Directors. One function he is specific about is having them to take responsibility for submitting our club inputs to the Yellowthroat "Chapter Chatter" column. He also expressed thanks to getting the MOS liability insurance policy in place for use in submitting it to WSSC for the seasonal counts.

Old Business

Custom Imprint Update – Gregg reported that the new butterfly shirts and the North Face rain jacket are now available on the [Custom Imprints](#) site. He is still awaiting the embroidered patch for approval. The Women's embroidered V-neck shirts & sizes have not yet been added. *Sec. Note: Women's T-shirts have been added since the Board meeting.*

YMOS Committee Formation – Work on a formal committee has been tabled pending activity at the state level. Gregg already has an action item to put together a list of youth associated with our club.

YMOS Backpack Competition – Website page has the details. Brittany Parsons will run judging Apr 1-3. Other judges are Lauren, Guy DiRoma, Meghaan, and Brett Rowland. As of the meeting there were 7 entries, but more last-minute entries are expected. *Sec. Note: Ultimately we had 13 entries compared to six last year.*

Waterford Flats – Gregg reported for Russ Ruffing. The work plan for 2024 has been agreed to by Russ and Chuck Sharp. It was decided there was no need to disc or burn the flats as they look good. Kelsey developed/adapted a new shorter and awesome new PDF and video that provides the protocol for visiting the Flats that needs to be viewed by members before they visit. The Flats Committee has an existing action item to work on a new MOU starting September 1, 2024. The existing MOU expires July 15, 2025.

Carbon Footprint as a Birder – Gregg recommended closing this specific item. He proposed that first we should address a criteria for items to be added to the club website [Conservation](#) page. See New Business.

MOTUS Tower – This potential project is pending a need to have member(s) to research and formulate a recommendation. Gregg has broached the topic with HCC and is giving consideration to West Friendship Park and Western Regional Park as potential sites. Ideally the tower would have a decluttered 20 Km radio reception line of sight. Chuck urged publishing this idea to membership as it could tap members with experience and interest in it. *Sec. Note: At the end of meeting Tim Thompson said he is interested and after a short item in a NewsGram Chen Chiu, Russ Ruffing, and Gregg also volunteered.* **ACTION:** Solicit volunteers to research MOTUS as a club habitat project. – **Sue Probst**

Waterford Flats and Greater Sharp's at Waterford Farm Access Memo - Mary Lou had asked for time to discuss this memo at the prior meeting. She explained that the source of her concern was how access to the Flats was handled last New Year's Day. This is a day when birds that are not rarities can be of special interest to those listers focused on building their list quickly; If access is restricted to those acting as liaison or on the Flats Committee it would be unfair to other members. It was agreed the proper way to proceed was to ask Chuck Sharp if he was willing to open the Flats on January 1. **ACTION:** Ask Chuck Sharp about opening access on January 1 – **Val**
Sec. Note: Val subsequently asked Chuck Sharp whether allowing access on January 1 might be possible. His initial response was that there could be duck hunters on that date, and he would not want others on the farm if that were the case. He will confirm later.

Summary of Board Actions Taken between Regular Board Meetings (document as Old Business - if any)
See discussion of TNR above for action voted on March 13.

New Business

Purple Martin House for SAWF – Gregg explained that there is an existing Purple Martin colony at Sharps at Waterford Farm (SAWF) near the Sharp's home. The colony has used a very old box maintained and monitored by Mark Wallace for many years. It is old, on a bent pole, does not have starling guards, and requires Mark using a ladder to access the box. Russ Ruffing has proposed putting up a new generation box with a lift and starling and owl guards. He is willing to build the box, install the commercial parts, and erect the pole. He estimates the cost at \$2600. Mark insists that the old box not be disturbed while the colony is still using it but has agreed to the installation of a second box if Chuck Sharp agrees. After discussion it was moved, seconded, and approved that we approve the \$2600 for the new box and consult with Chuck to decide on the location of the second box. The funds would come from the Chestem Fund. **Action:** Contact Chuck Sharp and obtain his approval and choice of location for the 2nd PUMA box – **Val** *Sec. Note: Val spoke with Chuck, and he approved the project and recommended placing it 30 feet west of the current box location.*

Rec and Parks Advisory Board Position – Gregg had received the attached link from Russ Kovach. It is an announcement seeking two volunteers to serve on the Howard County Recreation and Parks Advisory Board. If anyone is interested the application deadline is April 16.

County Public Garden Focus Group – Gregg reported that he has been asked to join this group.

Howard County West Friendship Park Agricultural Programming Focus Group – This group formed by County Executive, Dr. Calvin Bell. This group will identify programs and uses at Howard County's Department of Recreation & Parks' West Friendship Park that will offer learning experiences for residents and visitors, while supporting Howard County agriculture. Lisa Colangelo has expressed interest in attending this group's meetings and can hopefully talk to members if issues arise that the club would like to monitor and possibly influence.

Meeting with WSSC Staff – Gregg reported that Jasper Sirk, Acting Watershed Manager for WSSC, asked to receive the club newsletter, as the copy we had been sending to the prior Watershed Manager had not been shared with other staff. Jasper indicates he plans to share it with the staff. He also asked if we could put together a bird presentation for his staff that would let them know some of what we are doing and seeing when we visit the watershed. Joe Hanfman is coordinating to include participants from the Montgomery Chapter in the meeting in late June. **Action:** Coordinate preparation of a presentation for and schedule the meeting with WSSC staff - Joe

Criteria for Inclusion on club website Conservation page – As mentioned above in Old Business Gregg proposed the Board consider establishing a criteria for approving new or updated submissions to be posted on the website Conservation page. In an earlier email Bob had proposed a set of criteria as follows:

1. They are specific to birds and naturally occurring species and their habitat.
2. The emphasis is on references that offer practical solutions and practical information.
3. They are available to the public without charge.
4. They are non-partisan.
5. Updates will be vetted by the Conservation Committee and approved by the HCBC Board.

After a discussion Val moved, Lauren seconded, and the Board voted to approve these criteria. Lauren stated she had several ideas that might be potential topics for consideration by the Conservation committee. There was discussion of forming a working group to work with Lauren, but nothing official was set up, but Lauren stated she would make a first cut.

Review of Prior Action Items

- Prepare a formal proposal on “Carbon footprint as a Birder” for consideration – Mary Maxey **CLOSED**
- Continue to develop a detailed implementation of the restructured organization – Gregg
- Draft new/updated MOU for Waterford Flats addressing MOS access - Gregg, Russ Ruffing, & Committee
- Find hosts for May Board Meetings – All **DONE**
- Coordinate the YMOS Backpack competition – Brittany Parsons, Gregg
- Transfer excess funds in checking account to Vanguard money market fund – Tim
- Send YMOS Birdathon our contribution of \$300 – Tim **DONE**
- Raise participant limit on Zoom subscription prior to March meeting & then cancel after meeting – Kelsey **DONE**
- Explore additional news outlets for club announcements (check with Allen Lewis, others) – Kelsey
- Provide Kelsey with contact information for Howard County Times calendar section – Chuck **DONE**
- Coordinate making arrangements to start March club meeting 15 minutes early – Gregg, Kelsey, Bob **DONE**
- Make arrangements with Deb Jung to meet with the Howard Department of Public Works to discuss potential best practices for mowing Alpha Ridge Landfill - Gregg **DONE**
- Provide Board members the member contact information after March 1 membership finalizes – Bob
- Purchase youth binoculars, hard cases, and carrying case/pack – Val **DONE**
- Develop a club “youth” list – Gregg
- Identify potential “leader(s)” for Black Birders Week bird walk at HCC – Joe, Gregg, **DONE**

New/Continuing Action Items:

- Continue to develop a detailed implementation of the restructured organization – Gregg
- Draft new/updated MOU for Waterford Flats addressing MOS access (start 9/1) - Russ Ruffing, & Committee
- Coordinate the YMOS Backpack competition – Brittany Parsons
- Transfer excess funds in checking account to Vanguard money market fund – Tim
- Explore additional news outlets for club announcements – Kelsey
- Provide Board members the member contact information after March 1 membership finalizes – Bob
- Develop a club “youth” list – Gregg
- Formulate plans to address limited parking – Gregg
- Prepare the text for a NewsGram on the City Nature Challenge – Mary Lou
- Provide Val with Black Birder Week field trip leader biographies – Gregg, Mary Lou
- Send Bob a request for membership list if you want a copy – Board Members
- Solicit volunteers to research MOTUS as a club habitat project – Sue Probst
- Ask Chuck Sharp about opening access on January 1 – Val
- Contact Chuck Sharp and obtain his approval and choice of location for 2nd PUMA box. – Val
- Coordinate preparation of a presentation for and schedule the meeting with WSSC staff - Joe

Around the Room

We were running overtime, so no one had any critical items to bring up.

Board Meeting Schedule

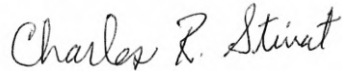
Board meetings are generally held 4th Thursday of month at 7:30 PM (hybrid)

September 28, 2023	- Gregg Petersen	
October 26, 2023	- Mary Maxey	
November 2023	- NO MEETING	(moved to the first Thursday of December to avoid
December 7, 2023	- Val Swan (Gregg absent)	Thanksgiving & even out time between meetings
January 25, 2024	- Gregg Petersen	
February 22, 2024	- Mary Lou Clark	
March 28, 2024	- Gregg Petersen	
April 25, 2024	- John McKitterick	
May 23, 2024	- Mary Lou Clark	(Joint meeting with new and old members)

Attachments (Copies of handouts provided at meeting and club correspondence filed with original minutes)

- Agenda – March 28, 2024
- Treasurer’s Report – Feb 1 - 29, 2024
- Records Committee Report – March 28, 2024 (Feb 20 – Mar 25, 2024 – Joanne Solem
- Conservation Report for 3/28/24 HCBC Board Meeting – Robin Todd
- Howard County Bird Club Membership History– Bob Solem

Minutes submitted by:



Charles R. Stirrat
Secretary, Howard County Bird Club

Howard County Bird Club Board Agenda
March 28, 2024

Topic: HCBC Board Meeting - March 28 @ 7:30

Time: Mar 28, 2024 07:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86243900708?pwd=bmxRVExwQWlTbWpZM2dFckcwQT09>

Meeting ID: 862 4390 0708

Passcode: 298013

Agenda

- **President's Remarks** –
 - Thanks for your continuing service!
 - 2 reminders: 9pm conclusion and no politics please.
 - **Appreciation Coins this month:** David Cummings, Mary Maxey, Woody Merkle, Terri Berkheimer, Cathy Hallam, Meghaan Lane, Sherry Tomlinson, and John Henri Rorabeck
 - Awards: Valued Service, Co-Rookie of the Year, and Blood, Sweat, and Tears
 - Robinson Nature Center parking limited April 1st-May 29 due to construction
 - Recommend carpool or stage from Giant parking lot....Shuttle?
- **Vice President's Remarks** – Val Swan
- **Review of Minutes** - Chuck Stirrat (Minutes enclosed-2)
- **Treasurer's Report**-Tim Thompson (February report enclosed-3)
 - 2021/2022 Filing correction update – final draft
 - Tax completion delayed until after April 15, followed by board review (zoom) and submission.
 - Drop \$7000 reserved for Robinson Nature Center windows (Petersen).
- **Standing Committee Reports**
 - Records-Jo Solem (enclosed-4)
 - Publicity/Outreach-Kelsey Wellons
 - County rep & Community newsletters update.
 - Draft ½ sheet flyer for kiosks/community center bulletin boards **ACTION:** Clark/Petersen
 - Programs 2024/2025 Schedule-Mary Lou Clark
 - City Nature Challenge April 26-29
 - Newsletter-Megan Bolcar
 - Apr/May submissions were due Mar 25
 - Habitat-Sue Probst
 - Sue, Ralph Cullison, and Gregg met w/Deb Jung & Mark DeLuca, HoCo DPW on Mar 12 concerning Alpha Ridge best practices for grasslands. (show slide extract)

- Exploring growing out some cells, hard to mow around pipe structures, possible pollinator plot, requested ponds not be mowed so closely. Mowers worried about ticks from long grass.
 - TNR came up and I handed Deb Kurt Schwarz's draft testimony.
 - Deb asked for alternatives, I later returned a note to her and other board reps with pictures and explanation of catios.
 - HCC
 - No new field estimates back yet.
 - Expect May request (not May 11) from Woody Merkel to mulch Skywatch.
- Butterflies-Kevin Heffernan
- Field Trips-Joe Hanfman
 - 13 field trips in next 2 months (includes a butterfly walk)
 - Loaner binoculars used for Beginner Bird Trips & generating new memberships. McDougale also led Brownie trip using bins last weekend.
 - Also, personal loaners used for Centennial (Lengade & Petersen)
 - Belmont is now closed on weekends until Nov. 1st.
 - Black Birder week trip for HCC Jun 1 is set-Kojo Baidoo, Teresa Spencer, & Desmond Johnson with Mary Lou and Val helping.
- Conservation-Robin Todd/Petersen – (Enclosed - 5)
 - HB1190 – PFAS pesticides bill
 - Natural Lands Project
 - [Proposed National Wildlife Refuge](#) comments due Apr 22 (Show Map)
 - TNR – Gregg
 - Councilman Walsh to vote against current bill form.
 - Possible private \$433,000 donation for cats-with our donation-would be \$438,000. Pending TNR results.
 - Drafting personal experience letter to Dr. Ball, will mail on or about Apr 1 (day of council vote). Possible community cat site visits with Sue Muller who knows Dr. Ball well.
- **Work Group Reports**
 - Webmaster/Membership – Bob Solem (Enclosed – 6)
 - New membership goal for 24-25 is 371 with a stretch goal of 400.
 - Potluck-Sherry Tomlinson w/Meghaan Lane @54 attendees, VIPs-Sharps and Davis (Robinson) attended.
 - Safe Skies/BBA3-Petersen/Muller
 - Robinson Nature Center – now applying dots, picture film still at Feather Friendly, Petersen offered volunteers if help needed applying dots.
 - HCC –
 - Safe Skies social/commemoration Apr 6, 1pm
 - BBA3 funding request for Somerset County Atlasing: Breeding Bird Atlas
 - Raised issue at March 2 MOS meeting with Gabriel Foley-he had not allocated \$6K of funds, still no decision 2 days ago.

- Sue requests approval of up to 8 birders' lodging for 2 days = up to \$2500? See January board enclosures. **REQUESTED ACTION: Approve up to \$2500 for Howard County BBA3 lodging costs for Blockbuster weekends: May 24/25 & June 8 & 9.**
- **State Board Director Reports** – Carollo, McKitterick, Sandler, Tomlinson
 - State Director Duties Final Review for new board member orientation.
 - MOS Certificate of Insurance in hand (thanks John!!) and WSSC Count Access letter has been requested for the 3 counts.
- **Old Business**
 - Custom Imprint Update
 - New butterfly shirts and windbreaker are available on [Custom Imprints](#) site.
 - Still awaiting embroidered patch for approval, Women's embroidered V-neck shirts & sizes not yet added.
 - YMOS Committee Formation-tabled.
 - Bob gave Gregg a household list to be developed into youth list. **ACTION:** Gregg
 - [YMOS Backpack Competition](#) – Brittany Parsons will run judging Apr 1-3.
 - Waterford Flats-(Petersen for Ruffing)
 - Work plan for 2024 – coordination complete between Russ Ruffing and Chuck Sharp for WF opening Apr 1– no need to disc or burn/flats look good.
 - Kelsey Wellons developed/adapted Flats awesome new PDF and video!!
 - **ACTION:** Ruffing Flats Committee work on new MOU Waterford Flats draft with Flats Committee starting September 1, 2024. MOU expires July 15, 2025.
 - “Carbon Footprint as a Birder”- recommend closeout.
 - For new or updated submissions, the recommended criteria for inclusion on Conservation website as follows (B. Solem email Oct 25, 23): **(ACTION: Possible vote on Conservation site criteria item for board)**
 1. They are specific to birds and naturally occurring species and their habitat.
 2. The emphasis is on references that offer practical solutions and practical information.
 3. They are available to the public without charge.
 4. They are non-partisan.
 5. Updates will be vetted by the Conservation Committee and approved by the HCBC Board.
- **New Business**
 - Purple Martin house for SAWF-\$2600 to replace PUMA house by Sharp's house.
 - Existing house is bent and old. **POTENTIAL ACTION: Approve \$2600 for replacement ASAP.**
 - [Parks and Rec Advisory Board Position](#)-seeking 2 volunteers-interest? How to announce? - Petersen

- County Public Garden Focus Group – Petersen
- [Howard County West Friendship Park Agricultural Focus Group](#) formed
- Look for May Skywatch mulching volunteer request from Woody Merkel.
- **Review of Prior Action Items**
 - Detailed implementation of board reorg for website – **ACTION:** Petersen –
 - Working on State Director description and orientation.
 - Reimbursement of BBA3 Atlasing lodging? **ACTION:** Muller requests approval.
 - MOTUS Tower – Pending time to research a recommendation.
 - West Friendship Park? Western Regional Park? Tower needs a decluttered 20k radio reception line of sight.-**DOES SOMEONE WANT TO RESEARCH?**
 - Updated MOU Waterford Flats MOU **ACTION:** Petersen work on new MOU with Russ Ruffing and Flats Committee to consider add of all MOS access.
 - Waterford Flats and Greater Sharp’s at Waterford Farm Access Memo **ACTION:** Board review and comment.
- **Around the Room**
- **Upcoming Schedule**
 - 2024 Board Meetings
 - Need hosts for March and May HCBC Board Meetings (attendance @7-9 people)
 - March 28, 2024 – Gregg Petersen
 - April 25, 2024 – John McKitterick
 - May 23, 2024 –Val Swan
 - September 26, 2024 – Gregg Petersen (social-board picture)
 - October 24, 2024 –
 - December 5, 2024 –

Howard County Bird Club - Treasurer Report

Printed: 3/25/24 1:04 PM

Financial information for period

Starting:

1-Feb-2024

Ending: 29-Feb-2024

Financial Account Balances

Account	Balance	Net Change	Comment	Date
PNC Bank	\$21,201.28	(\$1,286.83)	See sheet below	2/29
Vanguard	\$540,834.72	\$16,312.79	See Notes 3	2/29
Current Total	\$562,036.00	\$15,025.96		

Virtual Fund Balances

Operating Funds

Date (Latest Update)	Fund (Code)	Balance	Comment
1/31/24	Operations Fund (O)	\$15,378.55	Implied balance (Total Financial Accounts - Sum of 6 other virtual funds)
12/29/23	Habitat Fund (H)	\$7,896.92	no activity
12/29/23	Butterfly Fund (B)	\$587.63	no activity
1/31/24	Unrealized Vanguard Market Change (U)	\$90,092.39	virtual fund tracked in the right most columns of Vanguard tab

Gift Funds

7/17/23	Mountjoy Fund (M)	\$3,068.48	no activity
10/24/23	Chestem Estate Fund (C)	\$13,735.98	no activity
1/15/24	Ponce Estate Fund (P)	\$431,276.05	Received \$21,276.05 for final settlement of Ponce Estate

Income Activity

1-Feb-2024

to

29-Feb-2024

Description	Purpose	Method	Amount	Code
Total FY Income as of Prior Report			\$23,998.78	FYTD
No activity				
Income for this Period			\$0.00	
Total Income - Fiscal Year To Date			\$23,998.78	FYTD

Expense Activity

1-Feb-2024

to

29-Feb-2024

Description	Purpose	Method	Amount	Code
Total FY expenses as of prior report			\$4,858.85	FYTD
Meg Harris	Reimbursement for winter tally rally food	CK	\$61.83	O
USPS	Annual fee for post office box	Debit	\$200.00	O
Friedman, Saiyed, & Ellis CPAs	Payment for preparation of 2021 & 2022 taxes	Debit	\$1,025.00	O
Expenses for this Period			\$1,286.83	
Total Expenses - Fiscal Year To Date			\$6,145.68	FYTD

SEE note 1

Income over Expenses for Club Fiscal Year	5/1/23 - 4/30/24		\$17,853.10	FYTD
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Additional Remarks/Comments:

- 1. Club Fiscal Year is May 1 - Apr 30.
- 2. Net change of Vanguard account is net of \$16,312.79
 - o No dividend for VESGX
 - o Monthly dividend from VMFXX \$176.25
 - o Month **increase** in market value of VESGX (Global ESG Select Admiral Fund \$16,136.54
- 3. Vanguard Performance To Date
 - o Total Deposits since established \$ 440,000.00
 - o Total Account Balance as of 2/29/2024 \$ 540,834.72 (including unrealized market changes)

Note 2 & 3 is updated with Feb data

Gift Funds Activity	1-Feb-2024	to	29-Feb-2024
	<u>Month Activity</u>		<u>Current Balance</u>
Mountjoy Fund Transactions			
No Activity.			\$3,068.48
Chestem Fund Transactions			
No activity			\$13,735.98
Ponce Fund Transactions			
No activity			\$431,276.05

Records Committee Report March 28, 2024 (February 20 – March 25, 2024) – Joanne Solem

During this early migratory period, birders caught three major waves of Canada Goose and Tundra Swan movement: 2/26 – 2/27, 3/3 – 3/4; and 3/8. Each was marked by up to a dozen observations of multiple high-flying, northward-bound flocks.

Other waterfowl moved through, albeit in smaller numbers, with the most notable being Blue-winged Teal, Greater Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, and Red-breasted Merganser.

Shorebird sightings were dominated by American Woodcock. Their 2/22 arrival was rather delayed, but built rapidly with numerous reports through the first week of March. Few visits to Hipsley Mill after that made it impossible to draw any conclusions about resident numbers or continuing migration. A few Wilson's Snipe were logged and, as usual, there was an uptick in Killdeer. The most exciting record was a *Tringa* sp. individual seen at Meadowbrook Park 3/7. After a brief inadequate look as the bird took flight, it could not be re-found. It was most likely a yellowlegs, perhaps a Solitary Sandpiper. For any of three species, it would have been (or close to) a record early date. The first valid Greater Yellowlegs was recorded at Waterford 3/25, consistent with normal peak migration for that species.

Up to four Bonaparte's Gulls turned up in mid-March which is just the beginning of the spring movement normally peaking in early to mid-April. A Caspian Tern was present briefly at Centennial Park mid-morning of 3/24, a county early record for the species.

Ospreys returned and quickly began to build or refurbish nests, mainly on cell towers. Major movements of Turkey Vultures were also noted. At the Skywatch, a northward movement of seven Bald Eagles was an unusual treat during the late morning of 2/26.

By the second week of March, Eastern Phoebe numbers were swelling. Only a few other flycatchers arrive before late April or early May. Any Eastern Wood-Pewee reports prior to the end of April need a recognizable photo—not an audio—as this species is one of the most widely mimicked (and mistakenly identified) of the spring migrants. Various swallow species and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers have begun to filter in. By early April, almost every day will bring a new migrant species making for exciting time in the field!

Boreal species continue to be scarce, although mid to late March has produced a slight uptick in Pine Siskin reports, as well as a few Purple Finches. A Lapland Longspur at Alpha Ridge Landfill 3/12 was one of the notable birds of this period.

At least two of the three wintering Baltimore Orioles are still present; an oriole that appeared at Barberry Way was a new location. Rusty Blackbirds have continued to make scattered appearances; they should continue through much of April.

Please note: Each season there is at least one report posted on eBird or submitted by email of a rarity or a wildly out-of-season species, often with no documentation or very little. Obviously, not all such observations will be recognized as valid, but not all are quickly decided by the eBird editors or HC Records Committee. Do remain sceptical of such amazing sightings unless a species is extremely well-documented, you know and trust the observer, or you have personally heard that the bird exists at the listed site. As with all inadequately verified species, this is not to say that such reports are invalid. The identification may be correct, but without sufficient documentation, a record cannot be accepted, no matter how many years of birding experience an individual claims.

Conservation Report for 3/28/24 HCBC board mtg

Dear HCBC Board,

Greetings from the sun-drenched island of Cayman Brac. Here wintering warblers are getting ready for their northward journeys; some may arrive in Howard County a few weeks from now. I saw redstarts, a black throated blue, an ovenbird, a worm eating warbler, a parula and a Cape May this morning. Other days have been dominated by palm warblers, by far the commonest 'chip chip' down here. The resident vitelline warblers will soon be the only ones here.

I must apologize for the brevity of my report; will rely upon Gregg to update you on the TNR bill upon which our council will vote on April 1st. I must commend him, Kurt and Sue for their vigorous, yet reasoned, opposition to the bill as written. Thanks also to all of you who contacted our council members on this bill. Let us hope that sanity prevails. But, if it does not, let us continue to push for sensible, bird-friendly laws governing cats in the County.

1. HB1190 – PFAS pesticides bill

The clock ran out on us for this bill. There were so many bills before the Maryland General Assembly, that HB1190 did not emerge from committee. The SOPC group assures me that bills such as this usually take a few years to be passed. So we will return to battle stations next year. A lot of people put a lot of effort into this bill. I want to thank all of you who answered our call and contacted your delegates to express your support for the bill. Please be ready to answer the call again next year!

2. Natural Lands Project

Dan Small, founder of the Natural Lands Project and a researcher based at Washington College, has asked for a letter of support for a grant to fund the management of the natural grasslands, which his group has been creating on the Upper Eastern Shore. Grassland birds, such as bobwhite, thrive in disturbed grassland/shrub lands habitats. Therefore it is essential that these areas are actively managed after they have been planted with native grasses and wildflowers. Dan plans to use these funds to help primarily private landowners to maintain their properties for the benefit of bobwhite and other grassland specialist, such as field sparrows, grasshopper sparrows, and Eastern meadowlarks. MOS will be sending such a letter.

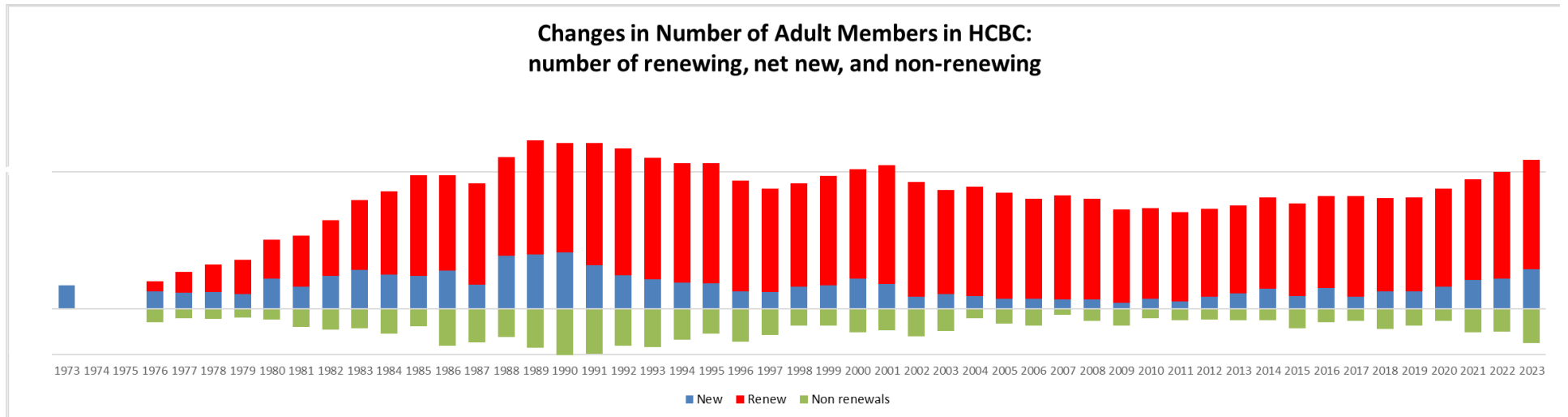
Respectfully submitted,



Robin G. Todd
Conservation Chair, HCBC

March 26, 2024

Howard County Bird Club Membership



Attrition rate of those who have been members for
more than one year **8.5%**
only one year **24.5%**

We have not found a way to reach these people and ask why they didn't renew.

The rate for those who have been members for more than one year is consistent with the pattern through the years. People get married and have children, find other interests, move out of the area, move out of their home to a retirement community less amenable to active birding, or in a few unfortunate cases—die. Even though the rate for those who have been members for only one year seems high, it is only about half the rate that has prevailed for many, many years. None of those who had been members for only one year were recorded as having attended a field trip or any of the beginning birder workshops/field trips. (We do not keep track of the names of those attending meetings).

Credit it to a concerted effort to reach out and provide instruction and contact to the beginning birders (and most of those joining for the first time are beginning birders). It is a credit to the outreach effort started and emphasized these last few years.