

# The Goldfinch

Newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club  
A Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society  
[www.howardbirds.website](http://www.howardbirds.website)



Founded 1972

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## CLUB MEETINGS

BY MARY LOU CLARK



**Thursday, September 11, 2025** "Conservation Biology of the Endemic Puerto Rican Oriole" by Kevin Omland and Michael Ocasio. Although Puerto Rican Orioles use a wide range of habitats, they can be surprisingly difficult to find, and locals feel that their numbers have been declining. Kevin Omland and his PhD student Michael Ocasio will present evidence of the dramatic impact that invasive Shiny Cowbirds are having on the Puerto Rican Oriole.

Kevin is a professor in the UMBC Department of Biological Sciences, where he has worked for 25 years. He and his PhD students have focused much of their research on orioles, including species in Maryland, Mexico, The Bahamas and Puerto Rico. He has just completed his first book entitled: "Understanding the Tree of Life", which will be published by Cambridge University Press in October 2025. Michael is a fourth year PhD student in Biological Sciences at UMBC. Michael obtained his BS in Wildlife Biology at the University of Minnesota. He spent two years in the Peace Corps in Paraguay. Among the wide range of conservation projects he has worked on are endangered sea turtles in Texas, wildlife surveys in Iowa, and helping with tiger camera trapping in Thailand.



**Thursday, October 9, 2025** "The Birds of Schoolhouse Pond" by Fred Shaffer. Schoolhouse Pond is a small pond in Upper Marlboro, PG County. Fred worked for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for over 30 years in the County Administration Building across the street from this pond. Over the 30 years, Fred saw more than 230 species of birds at the pond. Fred's talk will cover the highlights seen at the pond, the breeding birds and wintering birds seen there, and some of the extremes in weather experienced there. Fred is a life-long Maryland birder, one of the top eBird listers and one of the top Breeding Bird Atlassers in Maryland. He has a passion for gulls and has studied gulls in Maryland and across North America with a goal of photographing all ages and plumages of North American gulls. His first book was *Gulls of North America*. He is currently working on a book about

the birds of Schoolhouse Pond.

*All programs are presented in a hybrid format and include a brief business meeting, club announcements, and guest speaker presentation. Attendees may join either in person at the Robinson Nature Center, 6692 Cedar Lane, Columbia MD 21044, or online using Zoom. The in-person hospitality session begins, and the Zoom portal opens, at 7:00 p.m., with the meeting beginning at 7:30 p.m.. Click on the [Calendar](#) tab at the HCBC website's Home page at the top of the page for the most recent information.*

## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE: CHIRPS TO THE FLOCK

BY VAL SWAN



First, thank you to outgoing President Gregg Petersen. His enthusiasm and ambition were once described as "a shot in the arm." Under his vision and leadership, along with the contributions of many volunteers, efforts such as promoting the sharing of redesigned business cards, rack cards, and magnets resulted in a membership growth of over 66%!

Wearing logo gear and advertising events on social media, news outlets, and list servers, were also vital to the membership success. Along with others, Gregg updated and revised the club's constitution, organization, record-keeping, and website. Through his expansive networking and perseverance, Gregg

obtained MOS restricted access to WSSC trails, and HCBC restricted field trip access to the Howard County Public Garden, as well as several other private properties.

(Continued on page 3)

# FALL FIELD TRIPS

BY JOE HANFMAN

Field trips are a great way to improve birding skills, explore new places and meet other birders. Arrive at the meeting site ready to leave at the designated time with appropriate footwear and gear. Depending on the COVID situation at the time, there may be restrictions imposed. The leader may cancel due to inclement weather/hazardous driving conditions. Directions for trips not on ADC maps are on the Club's website. Questions? Contact the trip leader or Field Trip Coordinator Joe Hanfman at [auk1844@gmail.com](mailto:auk1844@gmail.com). HCBC members receive priority on trips that are limited by number of participants. No pets. There is a listing of all previous field trips on the "Calendar" page titled [Previous Field Trips](#). The trips with links have results on a separate page.

## Middle Patuxent Environmental Area

August 23, Saturday, 7:30 a.m. Half day.

*Meet at the Trotter Road entrance.*

Moderate walking on wooded trails and along the river. Great area for migrants of all species. Field edges and thickets provide sparrow habitat. Prepare for wet grass and mud on the trails. Leaders – John and Meg Harris, [jaybee.harris@gmail.com](mailto:jaybee.harris@gmail.com)

## **Dick Smith Memorial Butterfly Walk**

August 30, Saturday, 10:30 a.m. 2-3 hours

*Meet at Elkhorn Garden Plots, Oakland Mills Rd opposite Dasher Ct.*

Enjoy searching for late-summer butterflies with instruction on their identification. Easy walking on mowed paths around the community garden plots and Elkhorn meadow. We will continue on paved paths and mowed areas near the right-of-way alongside open, flowery wet meadows and brushy hillsides. Bring close-focus binoculars to view nectaring behavior. Cancelled if raining or overcast. No facilities.

Leader – Linda Hunt, [raven10322@hotmail.com](mailto:raven10322@hotmail.com)

## **B Nighthawks at New Cut Landfill**

September 4, Thursday, 6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

*Park in Worthington Elementary School parking lot.*

Non-alcohol Nighthawk Happy Hour at Worthington Park/New Cut Landfill. The nighthawk model will fly again.

Leader- David Ziolkowski, [djziolkowski@yahoo.com](mailto:djziolkowski@yahoo.com)

## **B Rockburn Branch Park**

September 7, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Half day.

*Meet in the parking lot on the left just past the restored schoolhouse. The park gate is just beyond Rockburn Elementary School.*

Moderate walking through the woods and fields of our largest county park looking for migrants. Paths may be muddy. Facilities available.

Leader – Mary Lou Clark, [doctorfx\\_99@yahoo.com](mailto:doctorfx_99@yahoo.com)

## **B Howard County Public Garden Field Trip**

September 9, Tuesday, 7:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m.

3188 Route 97, Glenwood, MD

*Park by the main building.*

A return to the site during migration. Slow walk along two streams, past a pond, and in fields in the 98-acre planned location of our county's first public garden. Mostly mowed paths. Boots recommended for dewy grass and tick barrier. All experience levels welcome.

Leader – Gregg Petersen, [sig29@aol.com](mailto:sig29@aol.com)

## **B R Beginning Birder Trip: "Fall Migrants at Dunloggin Wetlands"**

September 14, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

*Park at Dunloggin Middle School*

Opportunity to see early fall migrants (especially warblers) and to learn the details of local woodpeckers. Limit 8 people.

Register with leader Ben Costello, [bcostel3@gmail.com](mailto:bcostel3@gmail.com)

## **B W Fall Count**

September 20, Saturday

Please go to the following link to sign up:

<https://howardbirds.website/event/fall-count/>

## **B W R Font Hill Wetland Park**

September 22, Monday, 8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Diverse wetland habitats include two ponds with emergent vegetation, a tributary of the Little Patuxent River, a wet area dominated by phragmites and cattails, and some small stands of deciduous floodplain forest. Limited to 10 people. Contact the leader for a spot.

Leader - Lilian Saul, [ljsaul604@gmail.com](mailto:ljsaul604@gmail.com)

## **W Skywatch, Mt Pleasant, Howard County Conservancy**

September 23, Tuesday, Half day

*Meet at the parking lot or go directly to the Skywatch site.* This trip will be a skywatch for migrating raptors and other potential flybys.

Leader – This is a leaderless trip and open to anyone who shows up.

## **B W R MOS Convention, September 26 – 28**

<https://mosconvention.org>

## **R Sparrows and Spiders at the Howard County Conservancy**

October 8, Wednesday, 8:00 a.m Half day.

*Meet at the Montjoy Barn at Mt Pleasant.*

Join Bonnie for an advanced sparrow search and learn more about our common spider species. Hoping for some of the sparrow rarities and Bolas Spider. Gaiters or waterproof pants recommended as we will go into tall grass. Limit 8 people.

Register with the leader – Bonnie Ott, [sparrowdamsel@gmail.com](mailto:sparrowdamsel@gmail.com)

## **B R Beginning Birder Trip: Schooley Mill Park**

October 11, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

*Park in the upper lot near the playground and restrooms.*

Moderate walking through a variety of habitats-along meadow and woodland edges and through stream valleys. Expect wet conditions.

Please register in advance and let us know if you will need loaner binoculars. Limit 10 people.

Leaders - Megan Bolcar and Terri Berkheimer, [tgtberk@gmail.com](mailto:tgtberk@gmail.com)

## **B R Alpha Ridge Park**

October 13, Monday, 8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Central open areas provide good views of the sky. The wet meadow continues to transition into a deciduous floodplain forest as a result of past tree planting, while remnants of an old beaver pond provide a small pool of standing water. Other areas include a stormwater management pond with cattails and some brushy edges. Limit 10 people. Contact the leader for a spot.

Leader - Lilian Saul, [ljsaul604@gmail.com](mailto:ljsaul604@gmail.com)

## **B W Skywatch, Mt Pleasant, Howard County Conservancy**

October 18, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. Half day.

*Meet at the parking lot or go directly to the Skywatch site.*

This trip will be a skywatch for migrating raptors and other potential flybys. Join friends during the late migratory period.

Leader – Lynn Gregg, [lhg5037@gmail.com](mailto:lhg5037@gmail.com)

## **B W Skywatch, Mt Pleasant, Howard County Conservancy**

October 27, Monday, 9:30 a.m. Half day.

*Meet at the parking lot or go directly to the Skywatch site.* This trip will be a skywatch for migrating raptors and other potential flybys.

Leader – Lynn Gregg, [lhg5037@gmail.com](mailto:lhg5037@gmail.com)

### **B R Beginning Birder Trip, Mt Pleasant, Howard County Conservancy**

November 1, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Join Mary Maxey for a beginner birder field trip at Mt Pleasant. We will go over the basics of birding, then walk around the farm and down to the wetland. The trip will finish at the Skywatch. Limit 10 people.

Register with leader Mary Maxey, [maximom11998@gmail.com](mailto:maximom11998@gmail.com)

### **W Skywatch, Mt Pleasant, Howard County Conservancy**

November 1, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. Half day.

*Meet at the parking lot.*

This trip will be strictly a skywatch for late-migrating raptors and other potential goodies. Our main target will be Golden Eagle; while not expected, early November is the best time to catch one flying over Howard County. We will watch the sky and tally the birds as long as conditions are productive. Hope for a north wind! Bring water, lunch, hat, sunscreen, light-colored sunglasses, comfortable lawn chair (recliners are best), binoculars, scope, and camera if you like. Participants can also walk the conservancy trails if skywatching proves non-productive. Facilities available. Leader - Russ Ruffling, [russruffling@gmail.com](mailto:russruffling@gmail.com)

### **B W Centennial Park**

November 2, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours. (Daylight Saving Time ends).

*West end parking lot.*

Easy walking on paved paths around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Early waterfowl, lingering migrants likely.

Facilities available.

Leader – Richard and Renee Peters, [Richard@rrrrpeters.org](mailto:Richard@rrrrpeters.org)

**B = Good for beginning birders**

**W = Wheelchair accessible**

**R = Reservations required**

### **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!**

Benjamin Andrea	Mary Migliorina
Alan Christian	Johathan Pressimore
Tom & Linda Conover	Sarah Richards
Levy Crane	Laura & Paul Riger
Joyce Glass	Schmers Robin
Thaddeaus Foster	Hector Santiago
Tina & Jim Heble	Andrew Smith
Gregory Henigman	Glen Spangler
Julie Higgins	Doron Straus
Sophia, Jun & Aaron Hua	Sara Taylor
Nathaniel Hung	Samantha Travis
Kathy & Scott Jackson	Sara Tyler
Jennifer Kanera	McHenna Whalen
Qualkenbush Lewis	Nailing Zhang

### **Presidents Message (continued from page 1)**

Unwavering enthusiasm for placing a county Motus tower has resulted in a planned installation by the time of this publication. Fingers crossed. Creating a Beginning Birder and Young Birder program also came to fruition under his tenure. Gregg's accomplishments are too numerous to list here, but I encourage you to read the [Annual Report](#).

Initiating the use of Appreciation Coins to thank those who helped the club, Gregg and the other officers gifted 144 recipients. Now it's our turn to thank him! I would also like to personally thank Gregg for his mentorship and guidance. Please give him a well-deserved pat on the back when you see him.

Expressions of thanks are also due to continuing board members and those who are rotating off: Mary Maxey, Sherry Tomlinson, Lauren McDougale, and Megan Bolcar. Your volunteer hours were appreciated! A warm welcome to our newest board member volunteers Chen Chiu (Chapter Director/Young Birder Working Group Chair), Wen and Mei Shyong (State Directors), and Jamie Lynch (Newsletter Editor).

“Volunteering” is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.” (unknown author). Now in our 54th year as a community, all volunteer club of like-minded individuals, we continue to advance our goals: to promote the knowledge, development, protection, and conservation of bird life and other naturally occurring species and their habitats.... And have fun while we are doing it. And I would describe us as a fun club. Whether you are a backyard birder, new enthusiast, or seasoned lister, we have something for everyone.

Enjoy our newsletter or informative website. Attend our monthly general meetings, the second Thursday of the month at the Robinson Nature Center September through May.

Learn about club initiatives such as pollinator meadow creation or Purple Martin box installations. Join us for butterfly, wildflower, young birder, beginner, or regular field trip walks. Participate in one of our tech workshops, explaining the use of various nature apps. Come play Wingspan. Or volunteer for one of our seasonal counts. The Fall Count is Saturday, September 20th. All skill levels are welcome! Stay tuned. Details will be available on the website in early September.

Many thanks to all of our volunteers who graciously offer their energy and dedication to our club. I am grateful and proud to be surrounded by such generous people. I look forward to seeing you either out on the trails or at one of our many functions.

Until then, enjoy Fall migration!

Val Swan

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

The September 25 board meeting will be held in hybrid format. All members are welcome to attend in person or virtually. If you have input, questions or would like to attend, please email Val Swan at [valnjeff55@gmail.com](mailto:valnjeff55@gmail.com).



# SPRING BIRD RECORDS: MARCH 1 –MAY 31, 2025

BY JOANNE SOLEM

On 3/1, one white **Snow Goose** in a flock of **Canada Geese** near I-95/MD 216 heading NW was posted to a Group Me site at 9:30 a.m. (MLn); it was photog'd over Waverly Woods/MD 99 at 9:51 a.m. (LGg)! Two Snows were in a flock of 300 Canadas over Old Frederick Rd 3/4 (MHs, WSy, ph.). A **Greater White-fronted Goose** at Waterford Farm (WATFD) 3/1 was a pleasant surprise (RRf, VSw). A record-setting 54 **Cackling Geese** were counted at Springdale Quarry 3/6 (RVg, ph.) [11/27/19 J. Hanfman, 52 at S. Trotter Rd Pd]. Canada migration peaked on 3/10: 1,533 in 30 minutes at 7:15 a.m. at Cavey La (RRf); 2,546 in 34 a.m. flocks at the nearby Skywatch (LGg); and 900 high-flying migrants in 30 a.m. minutes at Centennial Pk (CENPK) (BO; HPT).

**Tundra Swans** were notched a handful of times at expected Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS); a pair also appeared at the Elliott Dr Pd 3/2 (SLk).

The last **Blue-winged Teal** was at WATFD 4/14 (GPn). A **Common Teal** (Eurasian subspecies of **Green-winged Teal**) was picked out at Race Road Wetlands (RACRW) 3/30 (RVg, VLi) for the second county record. Special waterfowl at multiple sites were **Gadwall**, **Northern Pintail**, **Canvasback**, and **Greater Scaup**. The **Redhead** photog'd at WATFD 5/3 (RVg, VLi) is one of only three/four May records. At least 10 flocks of **Long-tailed Ducks** flew over Cavey La the evening of 3/19 (RRf-NFC live); other night reports: 3/27, 4/1 (RRf) and Starward Farm 3/30 (JWd). Of two **Common Goldeneyes** in early March, one was dependable at Lake Kittamaquundi (LKKIT) 2/26 (CKc) to 3/8. TRIRS's peak **Common Merganser** total of 2,000 on 2/27 (JHf) was unusually late; 1,400 were still present on 3/10 (B/MRk). The **Red-breasted Merganser** high was eight at Brighton Dam (BRDAM) 3/9 (RVg, VLi).

The peak **Wild Turkey** count was 21 at Alpha Ridge Landfill (ALRGL) on 3/25 (RCu). A **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** at the Middle Patuxent Env. Area (MPEA) 4/26 (VLi, ph.) tied the second earliest date. Several spring **Chimney Swift** roosts were noted. A **Sandhill Crane** flying over Underwood Rd at 5:40 p.m. on 5/10 (VSw, ph.), was a May Count bonus and the new latest spring date for this species.

The three **Killdeer** young spotted at WATFD 4/16 (LCK), indicated an early egg date of mid March. A **Semipalmated Plover** appeared at the Cattail Creek area, TRIRS (north end) on 5/3 (RVg, VLi, ph.). **American Woodcock** are regular at Hipsley Mill Rd; kudos to birders who found them elsewhere: Bon Secours (RCu), Maple Lawn (Fulton) (TFy), Schooley Mill Pk (SLk), RACRW (MLC), Indian Summer Dr (SLk), Fulton South Area Pk (KCK), and Cavey La (RRf). Special thanks to the birders who braved unpleasant weather conducting surveys of this iconic species at MPEA mid-Feb to mid March, with no displaying birds for their efforts (TSv+). Twenty-two **Wilson's Snipe** at ALRGL 4/5 (RCu, JHf+) was the high count; the last snipe was at CENPK 5/29 (J/MHR).

No unusual shorebirds showed up in the county this season; however, the habitat created at WATFD was a productive site for several weeks.

**Bonaparte's Gull** migration got underway with 15 at Scott's Cove, Duckett Reservoir 3/24 (SGo). A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at BRDAM 3/5 (MHs, WSy, ph.), was a fine record as the

species is not recorded annually. A **Least Tern** visited RACRW briefly 5/22 (BO). Of the county's six records, half have been at that site, the last in July 2019 (MLC, SRm). The first **Caspian Tern** appeared at Gorman Pd, east of Murray Hill Rd 3/31 (LCK); the last was at LKKIT 4/19 (CKc). **Forster's Terns** are scarce migrants. One, resting on a buoy at BRDAM 5/4 (RVg, VLi), was the first record since 5/10/21.

A single, of the two **Red-necked Grebes** found on 2/25 (RVg, VLi), lingered at TRIRS until 3/14 (VSw). Ninety-two **Double-crested Cormorants** at Scott's Cove 4/6 (RVg, VLi, MLC) were the second highest record. Six **Glossy Ibis** flew over Alpha Ridge Pk 4/5 (RCu, JHf+), the county's earliest spring record [4/6/93 UMCF J. Solem, C. Bockstie]. Single **American Bitterns** were present at Meadowbrook Pk 3/19 (BO, ph.) and in the Plumtree Branch floodplain at Joey Dr 3/27 (J/MCh, ph.). Nocturnal birds on 3/30 were at Cavey La (RRf) and at Norris La (DZk). A **Yellow-crowned Night Heron** was heard live on NFC, Cavey 3/19 (RRf). One also made several appearances in the Dorseys Search wetlands from 4/26 (AAI, ph.) to 5/11 (MRg). A **Black-crowned Night Heron** at Wilde Lake on 3/14 (SSb, ph.) was a week earlier than the previous arrival record [3/21/12 Warfields Pd Pk B. Kidwell]. A **Green Heron** at CENPK 3/20 (BO) was only the fourth March record. The Vantage Point **Great Blue Heron** colony remains healthy with 21 active nests on 3/28 (SMu, JS).



*Red Necked Grebe, March 2025, Tridelphia Reservoir, by Val Swan*

An **Osprey** pair built a nest on a lamppost in a parking lot near LKKIT 3/31(CKc). Nesting **Bald Eagle** numbers continue to climb with a new nest spotted in early March on private property within one-half mile of TRIRS (HMz, ph.). The year's first **Mississippi Kite** sailed over Joey Dr 5/26 (J/MCh), the same location where one was photog'd on 5/14/24 (JCh).

An **Am. Barn Owl**, always a seasonal highlight, visited a Cavey yard at 7:45 a.m. 4/20 (RRf). Once again ALRGL came through with nesting **Great Horned Owls** (RCu). **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were well reported; the high was a group of six near the parking lot at Henryton, PVSP (HENPV) 5/2 (JWd). An imm. **Peregrine Falcon** at Meadowridge Bus. Pk Pd 5/17 (SWg, BLn, YYL, ph.) was the latest spring departure [5/15/08 UMCF B. Ott, J. Solem].

Spring flycatchers attracted more attention than usual. An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** appeared at Mt Peasant (MTPLT) 5/9 (KMg, ph.), staying for May Count 5/10. Surprisingly, four more were notched: HENPV 5/18 (VLi, RVg), Schooley 5/19-20 (LCK, MLn), Patuxent Branch Trail 5/20 (LCK), MTPLT 5/20 (MKw), and Patapsco scrubland 5/24+ - 5/29 (FLv).



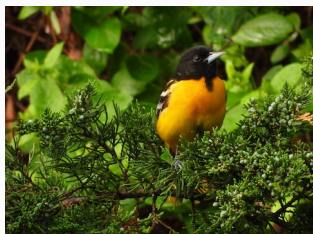
*Olive-sided Flycatcher, May 2025, Mt Pleasant Farm, by Meghaan Lane*

**Yellow-bellieds** are always a highlight. This year there were two reported with good supporting details: Gorman-Kindler 5/19-20 (**GPn**, ph., audio) and HENPV 5/23 (**JHf**, desc.). At least eight **Alders** were noted, the most ever: MTPLT 5/17 (**RVg**, **VLi**), 5/27 (**LCK**), Sucker Branch 5/22 (**VLi**), 5/23 Schooley (**TFy**-3), 5/25 MPEA (**J/MHr**), 5/26 Cavey Cemetery trail (**JMM**), 5/29 Patapsco Scrubland (**FLv**), and 5/30 Blandair (**LWf**). Accepting so many was possible thanks to accompanying photos AND audio for almost all sightings! A **Willow Flycatcher** at Western Reg. Pk 5/3 (**DSn+**) was the second earliest date. Eight **Leasts** were noted from 4/22 at MPEA (**COI**) to 5/20 at Sucker Branch (**VLi**). An Ellicott City **Eastern Kingbird** on 4/6 (**RBy**) was the second earliest arrival date.

The season's first **Purple Martins** showed up at Starting Gate 3/16 (*fide* **JSh**), just two days later than the early record; many birds, however, dawdled until mid-May or June. One of the recently-installed boxes at ALRGL was occupied by multiple pairs of martins (**RCu**), as were both boxes at WATFD (**RRf**).

A **Gray-cheeked Thrush** at Sucker Branch 5/4 (**VLi**, ph.) was the season's first and tied the earliest spring date. A flock of 42 **American Pipits** at Browns Bridge 4/6 (**RVg**, **VLi**, **MLC**) took advantage of the mudflats and short grass. The few dozen **Purple Finch** records clustered, as usual, in April. In a year when **Pine Siskins** were scarce, only two were described or photog'd.

A **Grasshopper Sparrow** at the Cattail Creek area of TRIRS on 3/22 (**VLi**, ph.) broke a long-standing arrival date [3/27/79 M. Wallace]. The peak count for that species was 21 at ALRGL 4/29, a known nesting area (**RCu**). Thirty-one **Field Sparrows** at West Friendship Pk 3/18 was a nice count (**KS**). The last **Dark-eyed Junco** was present at Belmont 5/10 (**SPb**, **LWf**). A slight uptick in mid-spring **White-crowned Sparrows** continued into mid-May, as usual. **Vespers** arrived in late March with four at WATFD 3/29 (**WE+**) and four at a Long Corner field 3/30 (**MPw**). Eight at ALRGL 4/5 (**RCu**, **JHf+**) was a total not recorded since 10 on 4/27/90 (**SAt**). On 5/2, **Lincoln's** appeared at both Sewell's Orchard Pk (**BMy**) and HENPV (**KS**).



*Baltimore Oriole, May 2025, Backyard, by Val Swan*

The Mt. Hebron bird was last reported on 4/20 (**JCu**); the homeowner verified this was the eighth winter for the Lake Elkhorn bird (**KS**).

Eight **Yellow breasted Chats** at Driver Rd 5/8 were a fine total (**DRs**). **Bobolinks** were noted at more than a dozen sites with numbers reaching 60 on 5/3 at a MD 97 field (**VLi**, **RVg**). Wintering **Baltimore Orioles** stayed into April.

The dozen **Rusty Blackbird** records (all were five or fewer) were mostly in late March and April.

A **Black-and-white Warbler** in an Elkridge yard 3/31 (Drew Anon.) moved the early date by one day [4/1/91 Lake Elkhorn, K. Mariano]. **Prothonotaries** appeared briefly in the usual small numbers between 4/22 and 5/20 at eight sites. Again, a male was present at LKKIT for two weeks in mid-May, but was unsuccessful in attracting a mate. A **Tennessee** at MPEA 4/24 (**KS**) missed the early record by one day! The wintering Elkridge **Orange-crowned Warbler** was last seen 3/23 (**M/WCw**). A **Nashville** showed up at So. Trotter Rd 3/7 staying until 4/9 (**W/SE**, ph.) eating peanut bits in a feeder. (There are only three previous MD records for Feb/March.) Thanks to both couples for hosting multiple birders! Late-migrating **Mourning**s made their presence known vocally at six sites in a 5/19 – 5/30 window. The last **Bay-breasted** was present at Martin Rd 5/26 (**JHf**). The first **Palm** (**Y**) was counted at David Force WMA 3/25 (**GKg**, **TFd**). A singing **Yellow-throated** at Woodstock 3/30 (**RRf**) maintained its usual late March arrival. A male **Western Tanager** appeared at a Kings Contrivance feeder 4/20 (**NSr**, ph.), the fourth county record.



*Mourning Warbler, May 2025, Gorman-Eden Brook, by Tim Frye*

*Acknowledgements. For editing and records advice, continuing thanks are due to fellow HC Records Committee members Joe Hanfman and Russ Ruffing (who deserves special credit for substantial additions). Input from county eBird reviewer, TimCarney, was also appreciated.*

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# BIRDERS TRAVEL TO 15<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL “BIGGEST WEEK IN AMERICAN BIRDING”

BY MARY MAXEY

In May, Mary Maxey, Guy DiRoma and Yi-Ying Lee took part in the 15th Annual **Biggest Week in American Birding**, a 10-day birding festival held from **May 9–18, 2025**, in **Oak Harbor, Ohio**—known as the *Warbler Capital of the World*.

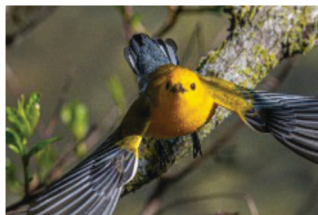
Organized by the **Black Swamp Bird Observatory**, the event draws birders from across the country to experience the peak of spring migration in northwest Ohio. Though the festival headquarters is located at the Maumee Bay Lodge and Conference Center, we opted to stay at the more budget-friendly **Days Inn in Fremont**, just 19 minutes from Oak Harbor.



The festival offers an abundance of programming including **bird ID workshops**, **guided walks**, **keynote talks**, a **Birder's Marketplace**, and nightly **social events with food and music** for registered participants.

We arrived late afternoon on **Friday, May 9**, and made a quick stop at the Lodge to check in, enjoy the evening festivities, and get our bearings. It was a warm welcome—literally and figuratively—with friendly faces, music, and a relaxed atmosphere. As the sun dipped toward the horizon, we made our way to the famed **Magee Marsh Boardwalk**, which, although known to be shoulder-to-shoulder with birders and photographers, was fairly manageable in the evening. Within 30 minutes, we had excellent views of **five warbler species**, fueling excitement for the days ahead.

Saturday morning, we intended to join one of the festival's free guided field trips, but the overwhelming crowd made it difficult to connect with the group. Instead, we birded independently—and successfully!



A highlight was an up-close view of a **Prothonotary Warbler** (pictured at left), lingering long enough for even a cell phone photo. Over 2.5 hours, we tallied **38 species**, a thrilling start.

Other memorable stops included **Howard Marsh**, where we spotted a **Neotropic Cormorant**, **two Common Gallinules**, a **Marsh Wren**, and over **50 Dunlin**. The **Blue Sky app**, provided by the festival for real-time bird alerts, proved invaluable.



One alert led us to the **Crane Creek Estuary Trail**, where after two attempts, we were rewarded with extended views of a **Kirtland's Warbler**, (pictured at left) a rare treat and a lifer for many. Another alert sent us to **Pearson Metropark** in search of a **Golden-winged**

**Warbler**. Though it felt like finding a needle in a haystack, persistence paid off. We were also treated to extended views of **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks**, **Black-throated Green and Blue Warblers**, and **Nashville Warblers**, among others.

A fun highlight of the trip was an unexpected reunion—we ran into **Roshan and Vitus from the Howard County Bird Club** while birding at Howard Marsh! It was a pleasure to reconnect and swap birding stories with fellow Marylanders so far from home (pictured from left to right Guy, FWS Blue Goose, Mary, Roshan, Vitus, Yi-Ying)

Birding in this part of Ohio is centered around rural areas—amid farmlands and wetlands—so we quickly learned to plan for gas and meals. A popular and charming lunch stop was **Barnside Creamery**, where we enjoyed sandwiches and ice cream by a peaceful river. There, we even spotted **four Wilson's Phalaropes** in the distance. In three days 91 species were observed with 16 [checklists](#).

Though we only spent **three days** exploring, we covered a lot of ground and learned the lay of the land. This year's trip was mostly exploratory, and we're already planning a return visit in **2026**. A few takeaways: while registration isn't required to bird, signing up gives you access to evening socials, tote bags with goodies, and some guided field trips. Next year, we'll likely go a little later in the week to align with the peak of migration and possibly look into a closer **Airbnb** for a more convenient and comfortable stay.

All in all, the experience was inspiring, filled with incredible sightings and a sense of community among fellow birders. We left with full species lists, fuller hearts, and excitement to return again next year.

*All photos courtesy of Guy DiRoma*



## IN APPRECIATION

*Thank you to the Moynihan family for their generous donation to purchase HCBC binocular lens cleaning cloths!*

## RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

It is time to renew your membership in the Maryland Ornithological Society and the Howard County Bird Club for the 2025-2026 season. Click on the [Join Us](#) link at the top of the HCBC website home page for details.

## THIRTY-SECOND ANNUAL FALL COUNT, SEPTEMBER 20, 2025

BY CHUCK STIRRAT

The Howard County Bird Club's annual Fall Count, scheduled each year on the third Saturday of September, will be on September 20, 2025. Chuck Stirrat 443-462-8234 / [stirrcl1@gmail.com](mailto:stirrcl1@gmail.com) and Lilian Saul 813-758-6194 / [ljsaul604@gmail.com](mailto:ljsaul604@gmail.com) are the county co-coordinators.

Prior years have set an average of 124 species. Spend the day, or however much time you have, birding with us and help raise the average! Birders of all skill levels are encouraged to participate, and if you are a beginner or do not wish to have your own territory, let coordinators know. People who count in their neighborhoods or watch their feeders are welcome. The county is divided into seven areas (shown below) which are used for all annual counts. **A 2025 fall season field sheet for Howard County is available on the Club's website.** The field sheet is an interactive PDF form that can be opened and completed electronically (save it with a different name). If you prefer, you can print the blank form and complete it manually and then scan or photograph it and send that to the area coordinator. Species that require a writeup include those identified with a double asterisk (\*\*), as well as any write-ins. Others that may require a short writeup or oral amplification (\*), as well as those that are early or late dates (@), are indicated. An alternative method is to do an eBird checklist or an eBird Trip Report if you count in multiple locations in your assigned sub-area. Provide your area coordinator with links to your eBird inputs. No matter which of these methods you choose, be sure to provide **ALL** the information requested on the back of the field sheet. Species that are flagged by eBird will also need additional documentation.

An in-person tally will be graciously hosted by Cathy Hallam. If you have questions or are interested, please contact the county coordinators. Final details will be available from your area coordinator and on the club website in September.

The following area coordinators have volunteered:

Area 1) Wes Earp 410-531-3197 / [wesandsue@gmail.com](mailto:wesandsue@gmail.com)

Area 2) Russ Kovach 443-386-4787 / [russell.kovach@gmail.com](mailto:russell.kovach@gmail.com)

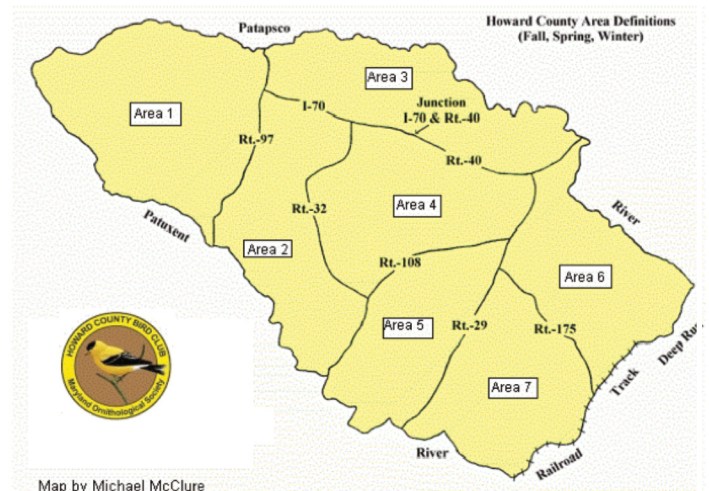
Area 3) Gregg Petersen 202-256-8166 / [sig29@aol.com](mailto:sig29@aol.com)

Area 4) Mike McClure 410-531-2780 / [McCluMD2@hotmail.com](mailto:McCluMD2@hotmail.com)

Area 5) Kurt Schwarz 410-461-1643 / [krschwal@verizon.net](mailto:krschwal@verizon.net)

Area 6) Tom Seivert 410-926-9237 / [tomseivert@verizon.net](mailto:tomseivert@verizon.net)

Area 7) Meghaan Lane 410-829-6192 / [meghaanlane@gmail.com](mailto:meghaanlane@gmail.com)



You may email/call an area or county coordinator to volunteer.

## HCBC PARTICIPATED IN THE FIRST-EVER HOWARD COUNTY INSECT PALOOZA

HARRIET TUBMAN CENTER, AUGUST 2, 2025



*All photos courtesy of Val Swan*



# HOWARD COUNTY MAY COUNT RESULTS, MAY 10, 2025

BY GREGG PETERSEN

Ninety-nine birders participated in the May Count on May 10<sup>th</sup>, our second highest number of observers for any May Count—following up on last year's record number of 101! In the 41 years that the number of counters was recorded, we have averaged 66 observers per year, so our participation has significantly spiked up in the last two years by around 24% from the previous recorded May Count high of 76 in 2018. I find this trend heartening and an indication of an evolving perspective by our membership that our counts are not just for very experienced birders but a great opportunity for members of all experience levels to join, learn, and enjoy the count on larger teams.

This event was the 78th statewide and 52nd compiled by the Howard County Bird Club (HCBC). It was a pleasant, rain-free day. At dawn, the morning started out with clear skies with a cool temperature of 46° and winds at 9 mph and increasing. The temperature rapidly rose to a comfortable 59° at mid-morning with mostly clear skies and winds rising into the double digits at 14 to 15 mph. The temperature steadily rose to 73° in the afternoon with 50-75% clouds with the winds abating slightly to 12 mph. By dusk, the temperature was 71° with the winds finally dropping to 5 mph.

We tallied 143 total species for the second year in a row, three more than our overall recorded average, and tying the highest number in the last eight years. But it was only the 26th highest species count in our 52-year records. The total number of birds observed (15,222) ranked third highest for the last 10 years. A total of 233 species has been recorded in the history of our Howard County May Count. Seventy-six species have been seen every year while 21 have been seen only once. No species was missed for the first time this year.

This year's write-in birds were a Hooded Merganser (seen seven of the recorded years), an Olive-sided Flycatcher (seen 13 of the years), a Dark-eyed Junco (seen 16 of the years), and for the second year in a row, a Prothonotary Warbler (seen 29 of the years). The prize of the day was a Sandhill Crane spotted by Val Swan for only the second time ever (2008) as it flew over the Underwood Road area just as the Tally Rally was about to start.

We had six species with all-time high May Count numbers: in addition to the one Sandhill Crane; Wild Turkey (28), Ruby-throated Hummingbird (58), Cooper's Hawk (17), Red-headed Woodpecker (13), and Warbling Vireo (50) all hit highs. The Wild Turkey number was ten more than our previous recorded high of 18 from 2012 and last year. The Wild Turkey count number has been in the double figures for the last four years after rarely being spotted or being seen in low single-digit numbers for the first 37 years of our recorded counts.

Sixteen species hit high observed numbers for the last 10 years. That number included four Merlin's, two Sharp-shinned Hawks (first time seen in the last five counts), 9 Hermit Thrushes, 23 Barred Owls, and 193 Baltimore Orioles.

As for warbler species, we observed 28 total for the second year in a row which is equal to our average number of warblers observed annually for our 52 recorded years.

Following this article is a table summarizing this year's results. In addition, a table showing results by area for this count and a compilation spreadsheet of the May Count data from 1974 through this year can be found on the Howard County Bird Club's website.

Many many people contributed to the success of the day. Special thanks especially to our indefatigable HCBC compiler, Chuck Stirrat for helping Area Coordinators to recruit for teams before the count and doing the complex work to create, update, and distribute count checklists and spreadsheets, and to collect, correct, and compile the data in addition to being Area 3 Coordinator! By my best estimate, since 1994, Chuck has compiled the totals for over 110 counts for our club and for our parent Maryland Ornithological Society. Incredible!

My heartfelt thanks as well to our other Area Coordinators Bill Hill (Area 1), Russ Kovach (Area 2), Mike McClure (Area 4), Tom Seivert (Area 5), Brian Moyer (Area 6), and Meghaan Lane (Area 7) who arranged their respective coverage, did follow-up, and compiled area totals. Thanks as well to former Area 6 Coordinator John Harris who continues to do great things for the club in other areas and still participated in the count.

We are also grateful to the Howard County Dept. of Recreation and Parks, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, Howard County Conservancy, and many private property owners for access to their respective properties which helped assure more complete coverage of our county.

Most importantly, thanks to every one of our 99 participants who spent 227.5 hours observing and covering 191.4 miles on foot and 359.7 miles by car. They spent another 16.2 hours feeder watching, plus 9.3 hours stationary and 6.5 hours owling. I highly encouraged our count leaders and teams to continue to increase their time spent owling. Our observed numbers this year were again rewarded by a reasonable effort to get out early.

At the end of the day, my wife, Shirley, and I again hosted this year's hybrid Tally Rally and potluck at our house. Many thanks to all who attended and to Shirley for helping me with planning and hosting! It's always a fun time to relax and share stories of the day.

Area leaders' names are in boldface below. Thanks to everyone! I look forward to seeing all of you back in the woods on September 20th for our Fall Count.

Observers: *Area 1.* **Bill Hill**, Kathie Lillie, Mark Wallace, Mary Prowell, Donna Carollo, Lisa Troutman, Kent Middlehauff, Lisa Colangelo, Gayle Hill, Mike & Pam Perna, Jim & Marilyn Brinkley, and Wes & Sue Earp; *Area 2.* **Russell Kovach**, Ben Costello, Jeff & Karen Culler, David Holmes, Gregg Petersen, Kurt Schwarz, Peter Ashley; *Area 3.* **Chuck Stirrat**, Dianne Aguilera, Ralph Cullison III, Bob & Jan Depuy, Steve Jones, Felicia Lovelett, Woody Merkle, Stephanie Oberle, David Richardson, Russ Ruffing, Valerie Swan, Robin Todd, Michael Kerwin, Hsiao (Mei) & Wen-Jong Shyong, Mary Lou Clark, Andy Smith, Joe Hanfman, Matt Rogosky, and Nalayini Sivaraman; *Area 4.* **Mike McClure**, Mike Leumas, John Henri & Melody Rorabeck; Chuck Stirrat, Lauren Crocker, Steve Luke, Richard Love, Wren Kreinar, Matthew Lustig, Steve Talabac, Michael Kerwin, and Clayton Koonce; *Area 5.* **Thomas Seivert**, Terri, George, & Tom Berkheimer, Joe Hanfman, Clayton Koonce, Sabrina Lovell, David Sandler, Kristine Kuhlman, Tim Frye, Linda Altevors, John & Meg Harris; *Area 6.* **Brian Moyer**, Karan Blum, Brigitte Lund, Janet Lydon & Tim Thompson, Bonnie Ott, Steve Parr, Suzanne Probst, Bill & Melissa Crew, Jamie Lynch, John & Meg Harris, Richard Orr, and Laura Wolf; *Area 7.* **Meghaan Lane**, Ken Clark, Dennis Coskren, John McKitterick, Barry Miller, Sue Muller, Sue Neri, Jo Solem, Brittany Parsons, Michelle Stewart, Eva Sunell, Aaron Waechter, Vincent Legare, Randee Gordon, Rosa Lubitz, Hillary and Sam Yarmus, Cris Ausin, Ben Newton, and Jessi Steere.



## HOWARD COUNTY MAY COUNT RESULTS - MAY 10, 2025

Canada Goose	602	Eastern Wood-Pewee	122	Song Sparrow	194
Wood Duck	40	Acadian Flycatcher	60	Lincoln's Sparrow	1
Mallard	33	Willow Flycatcher	1	Swamp Sparrow	4
Hooded Merganser	1	Least Flycatcher	1	Eastern Towhee	143
Wild Turkey	28	Eastern Phoebe	71	Yellow-breasted Chat	18
Rock Pigeon	71	White-eyed Vireo	30	Bobolink	94
Mourning Dove	324	Yellow-throated Vireo	21	Eastern Meadowlark	10
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	8	Blue-headed Vireo	5	Orchard Oriole	79
Common Nighthawk	1	Warbling Vireo	50	Baltimore Oriole	193
Chimney Swift	199	Red-eyed Vireo	324	Red-winged Blackbird	689
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	58	Blue Jay	385	Brown-headed Cowbird	210
Sandhill Crane	1	American Crow	386	Common Grackle	146
Killdeer	19	Fish Crow	79	Ovenbird	113
Least Sandpiper	56	American/Fish Crow	127	Worm-eating Warbler	10
Semipalmated Sandpiper	1	Common Raven	10	Louisiana Waterthrush	33
Wilson's Snipe	1	Carolina Chickadee	208	Northern Waterthrush	19
Spotted Sandpiper	27	Tufted Titmouse	347	Blue-winged Warbler	2
Solitary Sandpiper	62	Horned Lark	17	Black-&-white Warbler	45
Lesser Yellowlegs	1	Bank Swallow	2	Prothonotary Warbler	1
Greater Yellowlegs	1	Tree Swallow	204	Tennessee Warbler	6
Common Loon	2	N. Rough-winged Swallow	57	Nashville Warbler	3
Double-crested Cormorant	10	Purple Martin	50	Kentucky Warbler	8
Black-crowned Night Heron	1	Barn Swallow	409	Common Yellowthroat	204
Green Heron	19	Cliff Swallow	65	Hooded Warbler	2
Great Blue Heron	36	Cedar Waxwing	474	American Redstart	111
Black Vulture	130	White-breasted Nuthatch	105	Cape May Warbler	11
Turkey Vulture	318	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	192	Northern Parula	157
Osprey	27	Carolina Wren	317	Magnolia Warbler	9
Northern Harrier	2	Northern House Wren	116	Bay-breasted Warbler	6
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	Gray Catbird	321	Blackburnian Warbler	4
Cooper's Hawk	17	Brown Thrasher	29	Yellow Warbler	41
Bald Eagle [ad/im/unk]	19	Northern Mockingbird	241	Chestnut-sided Warbler	12
Red-shouldered Hawk	90	European Starling	717	Blackpoll Warbler	21
Broad-winged Hawk	2	Eastern Bluebird	294	Blk.-thrt'd. Blue Warbler	18
Red-tailed Hawk	32	Veery	23	Palm Warbler	1
Eastern Screech-Owl	4	Swainson's Thrush	10	Pine Warbler	13
Great Horned Owl	4	Hermit Thrush	9	Yel.-rump'd (Myrtle) Warbler	23
Barred Owl	13	Wood Thrush	146	Prairie Warbler	18
Belted Kingfisher	23	American Robin	571	Blk.-thrt'd. Green Warbler	23
Red-headed Woodpecker	13	House Sparrow	350	Canada Warbler	9
Red-bellied Woodpecker	324	House Finch	261	Wilson's Warbler	2
Downy Woodpecker	103	American Goldfinch	271	Scarlet Tanager	97
Hairy Woodpecker	34	Grasshopper Sparrow	7	Northern Cardinal	935
Northern Flicker	67	Chipping Sparrow	328	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	23
Pileated Woodpecker	62	Field Sparrow	42	Blue Grosbeak	23
American Kestrel	4	Dark-eyed Junco	1	Indigo Bunting	228
Great Crested Flycatcher	188	White-crowned Sparrow	1		
Eastern Kingbird	139	White-throated Sparrow	122	Area Total Birds:	15,222
Olive-sided Flycatcher	1	Savannah Sparrow	11	Area Total Species:	143



**HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB**  
*Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society*  
**P.O. Box 1323**  
**COLUMBIA, MD 21044-1323**

### CALLING ALL MONARCH BUTTERFLY ENTHUSIASTS

Monarch Butterflies are on the wing as they begin migrating to their wintering grounds. Sadly, their population has been in decline for 30 years—and it continues. Help by reporting every sighting of this easy-to-identify iconic species. (You don't have to be a member of the Howard County Bird Club's Butterfly Group in order to report sightings of this or any other butterfly species.) When you are birding at one of the county's parks, walking around one of the lakes, scanning the skies at the Robbins' Skywatch, strolling in your neighborhood, or relaxing in your own yard, please take a minute to report any and every Monarch sighting. The [Butterfly Report Form](#) on the HCBC's website is easy to use. Scroll down to the very last species on the list, and enter the number you observed.

It's easy. It's fun. [And the total might surprise you.]



*Monarch butterfly, Wilde Lake, July 30, 2025, by Clayton Koonce.*

### INTRODUCING *THE BIRDING CHANNEL* A NEW YOUTUBE CHANNEL



Russ Ruffing, the compiler of the "Annotated Bird Records of Howard County," and a lifelong birder, has created a new YouTube channel, "The Birding Channel."

The site will feature, among other things, up close video of Purple Martin nests with eggs and young, in martin houses funded and monitored by the

Howard County Bird Club. Stay tuned for additional videos!

Anyone is welcome to contribute articles or ideas which you think will be of interest to other birders. Copy may be sent to [goldfinch@mdbirds.org](mailto:goldfinch@mdbirds.org)

**The Goldfinch**, newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club, is published five times per year. Copy deadline for the November/December issue is September 25, 2025.

Jamie Lynch, Editor  
 Joanne Solem, Proofreader