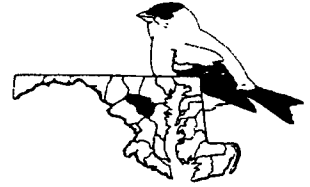




THE GOLDFINCH



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AUTUMN BIRD RECORDS: AUGUST 1 TO NOVEMBER 30, 2000 BY JOANNE SOLEM

Autumn usually brings special sightings and this season was no exception. The best bird was a **Greater White-fronted Goose**. As a third county record it would have been noteworthy as a one-day wonder, however, it made appearances at Wilde Lake and Centennial for more than two weeks enabling dozens of Maryland birders to see it. A **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow** at the University of Maryland Central Farm for the second consecutive year was an excellent find. A **Glossy Ibis** observed at a golf course wetland was also one of the notable birds of the season.

An early **Pied-billed Grebe** appeared 8/12 at Lake Elkhorn (LKELK) (SN). **Horned Grebes** were few with the first one making an appearance 11/14 at Centennial Park (CENPK) (HZ). A flock of 20+ **Double-crested Cormorants** flew over the intersection of Rts 29 & 108 on 8/12 (KS); the last one was reported 11/18 at Wilde Lake (WILLK) (DOD;CN). Are all young cormorants slow learners or was the one which was engaging in courtship activity with an orange buoy at the pond on Stanford Blvd. 10/12 (JC) an exception?

The only **American Bittern** reported was at the University of Maryland Central Farm (UMDCF) 10/5 to 10/22 (BO,JS+). Most of the young **Great Blue Herons** at Lake Kittamaquidi were out of the nest by 8/16. On that date there was just one near a nest (MC). **Great Egrets** again lingered into November with the last one reported at CENPK 11/19 (J&CW). **Little Blue Herons** were at Fore Bay Pond (FORBY) from 8/8 (JW) to 8/30 (SN), with two immatures present 8/16 (KS). **Black-crowned Night-Herons** were consistent at WILLK with reports from 8/2 (2-HZ) to 10/15 (1-DOD). LKELK is a prime location for either of the night-herons. **Black-crowns** were seen there from 9/6 on (JC). **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** were sporadic from 8/19 to 9/22 (SN), mostly late afternoon and evening. FORBY at the southeast end of the lake was a favorite hangout.

A **Greater White-fronted Goose** appeared initially at WILLK 11/13 (SPe,KBo;HZ). It was reported too late in the day for others to see it, but the next morning local lakes and reservoirs were searched. It was relocated at CENPK (BO) and reappeared almost daily at that lake until 11/26. It was last recorded on 11/28 having returned again to WILLK (DOD). Fortunately, it was well photographed at CENPK (RG). **Snow Geese** were few this sea-

son with a blue phase 11/4 at Fulton Pond (FULPD) (JB) and a flyover white phase 11/19 on a Bird Club walk at CENPK (MK+). The first major **Canada Goose** migration was detected the night of 9/27 when many flocks were heard over Hammond Village (HAMVL) between midnight & 4:00 a.m. (MW). Among the hundreds of Canada Geese at CENPK in mid to late November was a **small race bird** well described by NM, also seen by JC; MK+. At WILLK, an unusually large number of **Canadas** was reported 11/27 (500+-CN). All **Tundra Swan** flocks were noted between 11/4 HAMVL & 11/18 Rt 175/AA county line (POs).

Duck migration seemed to be both late and sparse. One long-time observer characterized it as the poorest fall for waterfowl in 25 years (MW). There were just two reports of **American Wigeons**: 10/9 LKELK (1-JC) & 11/13 Union Chapel Rd pond (UNCHP) (14-KT). **Blue-winged Teal** observations clustered mostly in October from four on 10/5 UMDCF (BO,JS,GF) to one 11/4 at WILLK (DOD). Two female (f) **Northern Pintails** frequented the UMDCF 10/8 (BO,JS+) to 11/18 when just one f. remained (NM,JS). A male (m.) was seen 11/23 at WILLK (DOD), a fine bird for that lake. **Green-winged Teal** peaked on 10/30 with 24 at Clark's on Roxbury Rd (MW). The first three **Canvasbacks** arrived 11/22 at WILLK (CN). **Ring-necked Duck** numbers were low with the flock at LKELK reaching 22 on 11/9 (JC). **Bufflehead** num-

bers reached eight at CENPK 11/14, the seasonal high (BO). The only **Common Goldeneyes** detected were two f. that touched down 11/16 at CENPK, but left almost immediately (BO). Twelve **Hooded Mergansers** were spotted in two locations: 11/13 at the Brighton Dam Quarry (MW) and 11/28 at the UNCHP (WE). **Common Mergansers** finally arrived with 30 at Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS) 11/25 (NM,JS). The eight **Ruddy Ducks** on LKELK 10/23 to 10/25 were the seasonal high (JC).

The last **Osprey** was at CENPK 10/22 (BO). RC had at least one on six days between 9/10 and 9/22 with three on 9/17 over Wynfield Dr (WYNFD). Possible migrating **Bald Eagles** were reported from 9/4 WYNFD (RC) to 11/18 Daniels, Patapsco Valley State Park (DANPV) (Gownys *vide* BO). The TRIRS pair was seen near the nest 11/25 (NM,JS). The high count of 17 **Sharp-shinned Hawks** was tallied 10/14 at Meadowbrook (MDBRK) (RG+). Although no major **Broad-winged Hawk** flights were detected over the county, there were some good numbers posted: 9/17 Hallmark (HALMK) (110-WEb); 9/16 MDBRK (189-BO) & Rockburn Branch Park (RKBRP) (170-BO); 9/20 Triadelphia Mill & Triadelphia Rds (128-WE); & 9/28 MDBRK (177-BO). Consistent watching by RC produced the following at WYNFD: 9/17-603, 9/18-405, 9/22-297, & 9/24-134. The same observer found a **Rough-legged Hawk** over Alpha Ridge landfill (ALRGL) 11/7. **Merlins** were reported from 9/21 at Mt. Pleasant (MTPLT) (BO) to 10/17 at UMDCF (NM). **Peregrine Falcons** are always a treat. One was seen 10/9 at MTPLT (BO,NM,JS). Fifteen minutes in the early afternoon of 9/24 produced five species of hawks in western Howard County (HOWCO) (WE,MW).

Wild Turkeys were reported three times: 9/16 from western HOWCO (WE); 10/7 MTPLT (BO,RSt); and 11/7 east of Rt 27 & Windsor Forest Rd (WE). A **Sora** was present 10/4 UMDCF (J&RS) to 10/8

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(BO,JS+). The shallow wetland habitat at the farm was excellent this year, so it was no surprise to have this species appear both spring and fall. A f Northern Bobwhite was an intermittent visitor 8/18 to 9/11 at WYNFD (RC). The first American Coot appeared at CENPK 9/17 (NP). Numbers of coots remained low throughout the season.

Autumn is eagerly anticipated by shorebirds enthusiasts. Unfortunately, this was not a good season locally. Howard County has not seen an autumn producing so few shorebirds in more than 20 years. Killdeer numbers were abnormally low. The only moderately good count for that species was 30 on 9/2 (BO,HZ), but in order to reach that number it was necessary to combine totals from several turf farms. There were no yellowlegs reports; one Solitary Sandpiper (9/16 JWi,KSa); a mere six reports of Spotted Sandpipers (all singles); no Semipalmated or Pectoral sandpipers; and just two sightings of Least Sandpipers (8/19 FULPD 3-J&TDC and 9/16 Howard County Fall Count [HCFC] JWi,KSa). One American Woodcock 10/19 at MTPLT (BO) was a pleasant surprise.

Since ALRGL receives a limited amount of trash, county gull numbers are down dramatically. A few Ring-billed Gulls and even fewer Herring Gulls are the only species regularly seen. One Laughing Gull 8/21 Tollhouse Rd (TOLHS) (BO) and one 11/7 ALRGL (RC) were the only ones spotted this season. Three Great Black-backed Gulls 11/7 ALRGL (RC) constituted the lone seasonal record. Three Caspian Terns 9/13 on TRIRS (JS,KT) were the only terns of any species reported.

Common Nighthawks were spotted 8/25 WYNFD (1-RC) to 9/16 Waterford (WATFD) (1-MW). Strangely low was the seasonal maximum of three on 8/26 Gwynn Acres Path (GWACP) (BO) & 9/13 Manahan (MANHN) (BO). Three Red-headed Woodpeckers were noted: 9/16 CENPK (K&BB,JL), RKBPR (BO,MJB,EH), & 10/7 MTPLT (BO,JMe+). The first two Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were spotted 9/29 at Font Hill Wetland Park (FHWLP) (BO). A movement of Northern Flickers was tallied 9/14 at David Force Wildlife Management Area where 15 were counted (BO,JS,MJB,HZ).

Olive-sided Flycatchers were seen at MANHN 8/24 & 9/5 (BO). Four Philadelphia Vireo reports were nice: 9/6 & 9/11 MANHN (BO), 9/16 TRIRS (PZ+) & 9/16 UMDCF (GM,RSM,CR). No swallows stayed late. The first Red-breasted Nuthatch arrived on 9/16 WATFD (MW), but no large flight developed. The only other records were 10/29 HALMK (1-WEb) & 10/31 Scott's Cove, Rocky Gorge Reservoir (2-ES,MWr). The first Brown Creeper was spotted 9/25 at HALMK (JEB). A fluffed up Carolina Wren spent several nights beginning 9/19 on the top of a porch column beneath a roof, protected from predators and the elements in southern HOWCO (BN). HALMK held a lingering House Wren 11/19 (WEB). October is generally the time to search for Marsh Wrens. The first one appeared 10/3 at

FHWLP (BO,HZ+) and one was glimpsed 10/9 at Alpha Ridge Park (ALRGP) (JS). Between 10/5 & 10/17 from one to four (10/5) birds were spotted at UMDCF (BO, m.obs.). The latest Marsh Wren was at the farm 11/4 (BO). Golden-crowned Kinglet numbers were low except for the 20 on 10/9 at LKELK (JC). All fall reports of Ruby-crowned Kinglets were singles.

Few thrushes were detected, none on unusually early or late dates. A gray-cheeked thrush sp. (not possible to determine whether it was a Gray-cheeked or a Bicknell's) was noted at Henryton, PVSP 9/16 (DE). A Gray Catbird lingered at least until 11/16 CENPK (BO), while a Brown Thrasher was still present on Ilchester Rd 11/28 (JL). American Pipits were seen at UMDCF from 10/10, with a high of 50 on 10/31 (BO,JS,EH). The largest Cedar Waxwing flock was 60 on 9/16 WATFD (MW).

Although most observers complained about having to work hard to see warblers, there were a few good days and most species were tallied. On 9/5 HZ at WILLK had nine warbler species plus an adult Bald Eagle and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak; at MANHN the same day BO had five warblers species and an Olive-sided Flycatcher. The following day at MANHN BO & MJB had a dozen warblers species plus two hybrid Brewster's Warblers along with a Philadelphia Vireo, then BO added two more warbler species at CENPK in the afternoon. On 8/26 J&TDC spotted five warbler species in their yard on Sandchain (SNDCH); the same day BO tallied seven warbler species at MANHN, plus an additional six species the following day.

The two reports of Golden-winged Warblers were both from August: 8/20 Woodstock, PVSP (JMr) and 8/26 TOLHS (BO). The lone Orange-crowned Warbler was seen 10/8 UMDCF (BO,JS,NM). Nashville Warblers arrived early and stayed late with the first seen 8/26 TOLHS (BO) and the last 11/10 WILLK (DOD). A Yellow Warbler lingered until 9/29 at CENPK (BO). The first Chestnut-sided Warbler appeared 8/10 at WILLK (HZ); the last was detected 9/28 at MANHN (BO). A f Magnolia Warbler lingered at the Oakland Mills garden plots (OKMGP) until 11/7 (JW). The high count of that species was 10 on 9/27 at GWACP (BO). The first Cape May Warbler was present 8/30 along Trotter Rd (MW). Black-throated Blue Warblers peaked at LKELK 10/9 with 10 (JC). An early Yellow-rumped Warbler appeared 9/4 at DANPV (RC) with a peak on 10/20 of 50+ at UMDCF (BO,JS). A high of 22 Black-throated Green Warblers was at MANHN 9/27 (BO). Black-burnian Warblers were well reported from 8/19 DANPV (JS) to 9/30 HALMK (WEB). A final Yellow-throated Warbler was noticed 9/20 at FHWLP (BO). Palm Warblers showed up 9/7 CENPK (JC) with the last two at the OKMGP 11/11 (JW). There were several nice counts of Palms: 10/10 UMDCF (60-BO,JS) & 10/21 MDRK (30-RB,DP). The relatively drab "western" was tallied on at least four occasions. The percentage of that sub-

species was usually low, but on 10/9 at MTPLT the six Palms included three westerns (KS); on the same date at ALRGP, one of two was a western (J&CW). Bay-breasted Warblers arrived early with one at Hipsley Mill Rd 9/16 (K&DT,LC). For a bird that is primarily an October migrant, it was odd that the last two Blackpoll Warblers were seen on 10/3 at Dunloggin (KS) & FHWLP (BO). Fourteen American Redstarts were tallied 9/10 at GWACP (BO,HZ). One Prothonotary Warbler 9/6 MANHN (BO) was a fine sighting—the only one of the season. Two Northern Waterthrushes were found 9/10 at GWACP (BO,HZ), a usual spot for them, while the last Louisiana Waterthrush was spotted 9/16 in so. HOWCO (JC,JS). One final Kentucky Warbler was noted 9/4 at DANPV (RC). Two Connecticut Warblers were excellent sightings. One was spotted 9/16 in the Nichols Cove area of TRIRS (Web,R&SPo); the other was near the end of their normal migration on 10/21 at FHWLP (RB,DP). Common Yellowthroats sometimes linger late. One was found 11/29 at CENPK (DOI). Wilson's Warblers have also been known to stay well past initial cold waves. A f. was seen in the autumn olive hedgerow at the OKMGP 11/18 & 11/28 (JW). Canada Warblers made a nice showing with three on 8/26 at SDCN (J&TDC) and one on the same date at WILLK (HZ). Birders on 9/16 found a total of six countywide. The final Yellow-breasted Chat was noted 9/16 in so. HOWCO (MBES). Hybrids are always of interest. Two Brewster's Warblers on 9/6 MANHN (BO,MJB) were seen together.

The only Summer Tanager record was 9/13 on MANHN (BO). RC caught a small wave of six Scarlet Tanagers 9/18 at WYNFD. Two f Eastern Towhees were at LKELK 10/10 (SN).

October's featured birds are sparrows. Some of the ebb and flow is caught at feeders, but walking fields is usually necessary to locate some species. Chipping Sparrows hit a peak of 100 on 10/16 at Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab (JHAPL) (JWi). RC had 35+ at his feeders at WYNFD on 10/15 with five remaining on 11/23. One was spotted 11/30 in the Longfellow section of west Columbia (DOD). Field Sparrow numbers at MTPLT rose from three 10/4, to 32 on 10/12, topping out at 69 on 10/19 (BO+). Despite searching, the only Vesper Sparrows noted were 10/21 at ALRGP (2-RC). Savannah Sparrow migration at the UMDCF always produces good numbers. Peaks were reached on 10/22-194 & 10/24-208 (BO,JS+). On 11/7 ALRGL had 18 Savannahs (RC). The last Grasshopper Sparrow was spotted at UMDCF 10/22 (BO). A Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, certainly a highlight of the season, was present 10/15 UMDCF (BO,JS,KL). This bird was watched at close range for several minutes while it methodically ate seeds of Karlow switch grass (one of the warm-season grasses planted in the last few years). It then dove into heavy vegetation in the swale and was not seen again despite searching.

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BALMY DAYS PLEASE OCEAN CITY BIRDERS

BY KATE TUFTS

A birding trip to Ocean City in January usually means long underwear, heavy boots and warm gloves. Thus prepared, twenty members of the Howard County Bird Club headed east on January 13th for three days of cold weather birding on Maryland's eastern shore. Boy, were they surprised. The weather turned positively balmy. Jackets were unzipped, gloves discarded and by the end of the first day, outer layers were stowed in car trunks. Vests and shirts were enough. The only thing missing was the sunscreen.

The first stop of the day was the beautiful Pickering Creek Environmental Center in Talbot County. Bald eagles immediately welcomed the group to this 400-acre preserve of diverse habitat ranging from open fields to hardwood forest and nontidal wetlands. It was a great way to start the day as numerous birds were immediately added to the trip list. Sparrow potential here is high and odds are that a return trip in the fall might be a high priority.

After a quick stop for lunch, the group drove to the Easton Waste Water Treatment Plant for more bald eagles, harriers, many gulls and too many Canada geese.

The stop at the Choptank Bridge was an unusual treat because there was no wind. Ducks were varied but few due to the presence of hunters cruising around in their fearsome camo-boat. However, once the hunters spotted the stalwart birders and their arsenal of spotting scopes and high-powered binocs, they turned tail and headed for shallow water.

A spur-of-the-moment side trip to the Fishing Bay Wildlife Management Area proved to be the perfect ending to a perfect day of birding. It was that magical hour just before sunset and the birders were surrounded by 25,000 acres of tidal wetlands with an occasional loblolly pine to provide perching possibilities. The rumor was this was a good spot to find short-eared owls. It was a good rumor. A short-eared owl appeared almost immediately, as did a rough-legged hawk. Excited birders quickly ticked off more life birds. To add to the enchantment of the moment, a formation of tundra swans flew over and called to the birders that the day was done. All were reluctant to leave that special place.

The second day started with a stop at the 4th Street mud flats and then some extended viewing at the Ocean City Inlet. Sightings of

Brants through pilings proved challenging to some, but in the end, everyone came away with a smile. It was probably the extraordinary views of the harlequin ducks that truly delighted the troops. State birds were jumping onto lists left and right.

Most of day two was spent at Assateague State Park where an American bittern was thoughtful enough to hang around the edge of the road so all could get incredible views of this normally secretive bird. A very cooperative merlin loitered long enough to hold a workshop. Mysterious chip notes emerging from high grass kept the group riveted for many minutes; a sedge wren was the consensus, but the rascal never showed himself for verification.

A tired yet pumped up group met at the Kitty Hawk Grille that night for dinner and unexpected Ravens sightings. Oddly enough, dinner did not appear until the last of the Ravens disappeared from view in a wave of glory and the odd calls of "woof, woof."

Day three came in with a total change of weather. Predictions of 50 degrees found birders ill prepared for reality. How about foggy and damp and 40 degrees at best. Back to the car trunks for warmer gear.

The first destination, the Burton Island Trail was closed for hunting and the Indian River Inlet had such poor visibility that the group soon gave up trying. Silver Lake in Rehobeth was a fruitful stop however, with many puddle ducks including a couple that had not been added to the list previously. It was also close to hot coffee and warm pizza.

About 105 birds were reported for the trip and two out of three days produced glorious weather. Not bad for January.

PELAGICS ANYONE?

BY BONNIE OTT

We are considering putting together a pelagic boat trip if we garner enough interested parties. Craig Sholley has volunteered his services as a coordinator. This trip would involve paying a boat and or leader fee and spending the night at the shore before the trip. Please call or e-mail Bonnie Ott if you are interested.

SCHOOLEY MILL PARK CHECKLIST

PUBLISHED

The Howard County Bird Club has published a Bird Checklist for Schooley Mill Park. A cooperative effort, the checklist was compiled by the Bird Club and printed and distributed by the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks. This checklist is the fourth in a series of checklists planned for Howard County's major parks and environmental areas. Checklists have been published for Centennial Park, Rockburn Park and the Columbia Lakes.

This checklist provides data on the 180 species observed at Schooley Mill between the mid-1980's and 2000. The data include the status (resident, migrant, visitor, or accidental) of each species for spring, summer, fall and winter and also indicate the species that have bred in the park.

The current Schooley Mill Park coordinator is Nancy Magnusson, who can be reached at 410-480-0342 with additional observations for use in future revisions. The first park coordinator, George Chase, instituted weekly surveys in 1988, which formed the basis for the park list.

The following birders contributed their park lists, sightings and/or editorial skills in this effort: *Scott Atkinson, John Blaisdell, Jon Boone, George Chase, Marty Chestern, Jane and Dennis Coskren, Susan and Wes Earp, Darlus Ecker, Gerald Elgert, David Holmes, Mike Kerwin, Nancy Magnusson, Michael O'Brien, Daryl Olson, Peter Oseron, Bonnie Ott, Bob Ringler, Craig Sholley, Jo Solem and Lisa Stevens.* Ruth Pacheco provided the drawing of the Prairie Warbler for the cover. Thanks also to all other members who contributed by leading trips or participating in counts in the park.

We also appreciate the assistance provided by the following Howard County government and Department of Recreation and Parks personnel: Linda Sampson and her assistant Lou Ann Prosack, who prepared the checklist for publication; Gary Arthur, Director of Recreation and Parks; and John Bird, Chief of the Bureau of Parks.

Checklists will be available at scheduled meetings and events. To receive a copy in the mail, send a stamped self-addressed envelope to Nancy Magnusson, 8589-F Falls Run Rd., Ellicott City, MD 21043.



HOWARD COUNTY ODONATE UPDATE

BY JOANNE AND BOB SOLEM

The fifth year of the Howard County odonate (dragonfly and damselfly) survey produced just one new species, but added many new locations for dozens of species.

A Springtime Darner (*Basiaeschna janata*) was found over riffles on the Little Patuxent River at David Force Park. It raises the county list to 88 species. Monitoring continued at established county, state, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC), and Columbia Association sites as well as some new ones. Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks (HCDR&P) personnel (especially Sue Muller who has become an odonate enthusiast) are providing good data.

Receiving special attention in 2000 was the Middle Patuxent Restoration Project at the University of Maryland Central Farm. Reports were made to the Natural Resources Conservation Service to help them gauge the effectiveness of the project (members of the bird club also provide bird sightings for this site). Likewise, the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA) was a major focus in 2000.

The two county parks for which species have been tallied on a continuing basis are Centennial Park (since 1996) and Font Hill Wetland Park (since 1996—before the current wetland project was completed). A Yellow-sided Skimmer was spotted on the August odonate trip at Centennial bringing that park's total to 49. Dragonhunter and Stream Bluet were added to the Font Hill list raising that total to 51—a fine testament to the variety of wetland habitats at this relatively small park. At the MPEA, the Middle Patuxent River and ponds yielded 42 species in its second census year. The list for the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) land is 41.

Although county water levels were closer to normal after two years of drought, there seemed to be fewer odonates in many locations which may have been directly related to the two previous dry years. Every breeding season is different and brings surprises.

Each year an increasing number of people provide sightings, photographs, specimens found dead, exuviae (cast skins), land permission, or time in the field. Special thanks to mentor Richard Orr, keeper of the Maryland list, who answers so many questions; to Sue Muller, who provided dozens of records and

encouraged county stream monitors to be alert for larvae and exuviae; to Nancy Magnusson, a treasured field companion; and to Jay Shepard, who arranged visits and accompanied us to a jewel of a wooded pond on state park property. Others who provided help include Sue Neri, Daryl Olson, Kurt Schwarz, Cheryl Farfaras, Marlee Lindon, Kate Tufts, Lynn Moore, Jane Geuder, and Laurie Alexander. Carol Newman and George Theodoris passed along larvae from two stream monitoring sites (all specimens were returned to their stream habitat after identification). We continue to be grateful for access granted by WSSC to survey lands surrounding the two reservoirs and for permission to cover county lands under the jurisdiction of HCDR&P.

All county sightings and locations are mapped and have been computerized. The list of Howard County and Maryland odonates is available on the Howard County Bird Club web page <http://www.howardbirds.org>

An article in the Baltimore *Sun* in late July featured the increasingly popular study of odonates (including the Howard County effort) publicizing the new field guide *Dragonflies through Binoculars* by Sidney W. Dunkle. This is the only guide covering all of North America. If you have an interest in these fascinating insects, it is worth checking.

We encourage individuals to salvage dead dragonflies labeling them with date and location. These specimens may provide useful data as did the Swamp Darner that Marlee Lindon found in her garage. If you wish to learn more about dragonflies and damselflies, watch for details of the annual club odonate trip led by Richard Orr on Saturday, August 18, 2001.

If you observe or collect anything, contact Bob or Jo Solem at 301-725-5037 or at odona@msn.com.

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Fox Sparrows were not detected until 11/7 ALRGL (RC). The first migrant Song Sparrows were 20 at FHWLP 9/20 (BO). County numbers rose steadily with more than 100 birds on five dates; the highs were 402 on 10/22 at UMDCF (BO) & 420 on 10/12 at MTPLT (BO). Even experienced birders sometimes find it difficult to locate Lincoln's Sparrows. October in Howard County is the time and place to find this subtly attractive bird. The first arrival was 10/2 at ALRGP (BO). Several of the high counts shattered previous records with 10 seen on both 10/9 at MTPLT (BO) & 10/14 MDBRK (BO). The astonishing all-time high was 20 on 10/12 MTPLT (BO). Two were also noted 10/16 JHAPL (JW). The last Lincoln's was spotted 10/31 at UMDCF (BO). Swamp Sparrows came in on time with one at Savage 9/16 (ROR). Numbers rose at UMDCF from 58 on 10/15 to 127 on 10/22 and dropped back to 30 by 11/4 (BO,JS+). The first two White-throated Sparrows arrived 9/29 at FHWLP (BO). A White-crowned Sparrow made an appearance 10/8 UMDCF (BO) with a peak of 35 on 10/22 UMDCF (BO). Dark-eyed Juncos were not detected until 10/12 at MTPLT (2-BO).

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks came through in a two week period from one on 9/5 WILLK (HZ) to two on 9/19 WYNFD (RC). The individual high count was five on 9/17 along the Middle Patuxent, Eden Brook (J&TDC). The last Blue Grosbeak was found 10/8 UMDCF (BO+). Indigo Buntings hit a high of 20 on 9/21 at MTPLT (BO). The Bobolink peak was a modest eight on 10/8 UMDCF (BO+).

Eastern Meadowlark numbers are watched carefully for this declining grassland species. This season they were found at the UMDCF, MTPLT, and MDBRK with a high of 11 on 11/7 at ALRGL (RC). The three Rusty Blackbird sightings were singles beginning with 10/20 at UMDCF (BO,JS). The last Orchard Oriole was noted 9/3 at CENPK (KS+).

All Purple Finch sightings were in November with a high of four f. 11/5 at CENPK (RC+). What a treat for MW to see at least 160 American Goldfinches feeding in a field of sunflowers at WATFD.

Observers cited by initials: MB - Maud Banks, MJB - Mary Jo Betts, JB - John Blaisdell, K&BB - Karan & Bill Blum, KBo - Ken Board, RB - Rod Burley, MC - Martha Chestern, JC - Jane Coskren, TDC - T. Dennis Coskren, LC - Lisa Colangelo, RC - Ralph Cullison, WE - Wes Earp, JEB - Jane Ebert, WEb - Ward Ebert, DE - Darius Ecker, GF - Gail Frantz, RG - Ralph Geuder, EH - Emy Holdridge, MK - Mike Kerwin, KL - Kathleen LaGreca, JL - Janet Lydon, NM - Nancy Magnusson, JMr - Joel Martin, GM - Grazina McCure, JMe - Jeff Metter, SN - Sue Neri, BN - Bea Newkirk, CN - Carol Newman, DOD - Doug Odermatt, DOI - Daryl Olson, ROR - Richard Orr, POs - Peter Osenton, BO - Bonnie Ott, DP - Dave Perry, SPe - Sherry Peruzzi, NP - Norma Petersen, R&SPo - Ron & Susan Poiniaszek, CR - Clyde Robbette, KSA - Karen Salvini, KS - Kurt Schwarz, RSm - Romayne Smith, JS - Jo Solem, RS - Robert Solem, RSt - Ralph Stokes, ES - Eva Sunell, DT - Dick Tufts, KT - Kate Tufts, MW - Mark Wallace, CW - Carole Wilkinson, JW - Jim Wilkinson, JM - Jim Wilkerson, MWr - Michele Wright, HZ - Helen Zeichner, PZ - Paul Zucker

CALENDAR OF PROGRAMS AND FIELD TRIPS

Programs are held at Longfellow Elementary School, 5470 Hesperus Dr., Columbia. Meeting is canceled if schools are closed for any reason. Hospitality session at 7:30 pm. Meeting/program begins at 8:00 pm. Club bookstore opens at 7:30 pm.

- ✓ **Thursday, March 8** "Birding the Other Aleutians," by Scott Crabtree.
 - Thursday, April 5** "Birds and Mammals of Northern Tanzania," by Craig Sholley.
- Field trips meet as described for each trip. Carpooling is encouraged; riders share the cost of gas and tolls. Dress for the field trip with stout, reasonably waterproof footwear and layers of clothes. Trips do not always follow paths. NO pets. Leaders may cancel due to inclement weather or fewer than three participants. FOR INFORMATION, CALL **BONNIE OTT**, at 410-461-3361 or e-mail bott@erols.com.
- ✓ **March 8, Thursday - Lake Elkhorn Weekday Walk** (8:30 a.m. 2 hours) Leader: Bonnie Ott. Meet at Broken Land Parkway lot. Walk the paved path around the lake in search of waterfowl, woodpeckers and, Winter Wren. Great walk for new birders. No facilities. Pg. 43. Call Bonnie for info 410-461-3361.
 - ✓ **March 10, Saturday - Annual Pot Luck Dinner** See details in January-February 2001 Goldfinch or call Mary-Jo Betts, 301-596-5859, for details.
 - March 17, Saturday - Waterfowl Search** (8:00 a.m. 1/2 day) Leader: Jane Coskren. Meet at the concession stand of Centennial Park. We will carpool to various locations in Howard County to look for migrating waterfowl. Scopes helpful. Pg. 5. Call Jane for info 410-381-7344.
 - March 18, Sunday - Centennial Lake** (8:00 a.m. 3 hours) Leader: John Maloney. Meet at west end lot on Centennial Lane. Walk around the lake on paved path looking for waterfowl. Fox Sparrows expected. Great for beginners! Facilities available. Pg. 5. Call John for info 301-317-4961.
 - ✓ **March 20, Tuesday - Wilde Lake First Day of Spring Walk!** (8:30 a.m. 2 hours) Leader: Bonnie Ott. Meet at boat dock. Walk along the lake on paved path and possible muddy woodland path. Waterfowl likely and variety of woodland birds. No facilities. Pg. 47. Call Bonnie for info 410-461-3361.
 - March 24, Saturday - Mount Pleasant Fox Sparrow Search** (8:00 a.m. 1/2 day) Leader: Kurt Schwarz. Meet at shed. Moderate to difficult walking over hilly mown grass areas in search of Fox Sparrows and other wintering species. Facilities available. Call Kurt for info 410-461-1643.
 - March 25, Sunday - Centennial Park** (8:00 a.m. 1/2 day) Leader: Mike Kerwin. Meet at west end lot off Centennial Lane. Walk around lake on paved path to view waterfowl and early migrants. Great for new birders. Facilities available. Pg. 5. Call Mike for info 410-461-2408.
 - March 31, Saturday - Gwynn Acres Birding by Ear for Beginners** (8:00 a.m. 3 hours) Leader: Bonnie Ott. Meet on Old Columbia and Rams Horn Row. Learn tips and techniques to identify birds by their voices. Easy walking on paved path through woodlands. No facilities. Pg. 24. Call Bonnie for info 410-461-3361.
 - April 1, Sunday - Centennial Park** (8:00 a.m. 3 hours) Leader: Karen Darcy. Meet at west end lot off Centennial Lane. Walk the paved path around the lake for a variety of birds. Woodland and waterbirds. Possible Bonapartes Gulls. Facilities available. Great for new birders. Pg. 5.
 - April 7, Saturday - Wilde Lake Beginner Walk** (9:00 a.m. 1-1/2 hours) Leader: Mike McClure. Meet at boat dock. Learn the basics of bird identification: how to use binoculars and field guides. Easy walking on paved path along lake and in woodlands. No facilities. Pg. 47. Call Bonnie for info 410-461-3361.
 - April 8, Sunday - Centennial Park** (8:00 a.m. 3 hours) Leader: Ralph Cullison. Meet at west end lot off Centennial Lane. Walk the paved path around the lake; early spring migrants will be arriving. Look for Caspian Terns. Facilities available. Excellent walk for novices. Pg. 5.
 - April 11, Wednesday - Weekday Walk Font Hill Wetlands Park** (8:00 a.m. 1-1/2-2 hours) Leader: Bonnie Ott. Meet at sign on Font Hill Drive. Walk the paved path around ponds and wetlands for early spring migrants. Easy walking. No facilities. Call Bonnie for info 410-461-3361.
 - ✓ **April 14, Saturday - University of MD Central Farm** (7:00 a.m. 1/2 day+) Leader: Bonnie Ott. Trip will be limited to 15 people, Howard members given priority. Sparrows and other goodies with possible shorebirds. Waders or high boots a must for first half of trip. Change into dry terrain footwear for the second half. Very long hard walking involved. No facilities. Call Bonnie to reserve a spot 410-461-3361.
 - April 21, Saturday - Meadowbrook** (8:00 a.m. 1/2 day) Leader: Kurt Schwarz. Boots a must for a walk through this wetland-dotted field area. Many migrants arriving! Great for flyovers. No facilities. Call Kurt for info 410-461-1643.
 - April 22, Sunday - Mount Pleasant Birding for Beginners** (9:00 a.m. 1-1/2 hours) Leader: Mike Kerwin/Dave Holyoke. Celebrate Earth Day! Learn the basics of how to identify birds; how to use binoculars and field guides. Meet at shed. Facilities available. Call Mike for info 410-461-2408.
 - ✓ **April 26, Thursday - Gwynn Acres Weekday Walk** (8:30 a.m. 2 hours) Leader: TBA. Meet at Rams Horn and Columbia Rd. Walk this paved path through woodlands along the Little Patuxent River. Migrants of all kinds possible. No facilities. Pg. 24. Call Bonnie for info 410-461-3361.
 - ✓ **April 28, Saturday - Daniels, Patapsco Valley State Park Wildflowers and Butterflies** (9:00 a.m. 1/2 day) Leaders: Bob Solem and Dick Smith. Meet at Camels Den lot. Walk along the river to look at the display of Dutchman's Breeches along with early spring butterflies. Possible spring azures, dusky-wings and swallowtails. Path may be muddy. No facilities. Pg. 32. Call Dick for info 410-997-7439 or Bob 301-725-5037.
 - April 29, Sunday - Audrey-Carroll Sanctuary, Frederick County** (7:30 a.m. 1/2 day) Leaders: Ron and Sue Polniaszek. Meet at the MD 32 and I-70 park-and-ride. Walk this mixed habitat of fields, woodlands and pond at the Audubon sanctuary to look for spring migrants. No facilities. Call Ron for info 410-531-6658.

Board of Directors meetings are held the fourth Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm, unless otherwise noted, at the home of the board member listed. If directions are required, please call the hosting board member.

- ✓ **March 22, Thursday** Don Waugh, 9522 Angelina Circle, Columbia, MD 21045, 410-381-8841.
- ✓ **April 26, Thursday** Kurt Schwarz, 9045 Dunloggin Ct., Ellicott City, MD 21042, 410-461-1643.

MAY-JUNE 2001 NEWSLETTER MATERIAL IS DUE MARCH 23, 2001. Anyone is welcome to contribute articles or ideas which you think will be of interest to other birders. Call or mail to Paula and Darius Ecker, 9270 Crazyquilt Court, Columbia, MD 21045, Phone 410-312-9165 or e-mail to Paulae2156@aol.com. Also, please visit the club's site on the World Wide Web at <http://www.howardbirds.org>.

HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

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CONSERVATION COLUMN

BY BOB SOLEM

What a difference six words make...

In the Maryland legislature this year, House Bill 99, "Entitled: Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas - Addition of Coastal Bays," is a simple bill that amends Section 8-1807(a) by adding a third subsection:

(3) ALL COASTAL BAYS OF THE STATE.

So why is that important? Section 8-1807(a) defines the planning area of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. *The law is designed to protect vitally important land and water resources. The "Critical Area" is all land within 1000 feet of the mean high water line of tidal waters of the landward edge of tidal wetlands or tributary streams, including the tidal waters themselves.* The change to the law would primarily affect Worcester County and Ocean City. The change would include the coastal bays watershed—those areas that drain into the bays that are part of the Atlantic Ocean (Assawoman Bay, Isle of Wight Bay, Sinepuxent Bay, Chincoteague Bay). Some of the best birding areas. Crucial habitat for terrestrial wildlife, plants, shellfish, and many species of fish is protected under the Critical Areas law.

The Critical Areas Law is implemented on a cooperative basis between the state and

local governments; the local governments would have control over its own programs that will be designed to manage development and other human activities in the critical Area so as to protect areas of special environmental concern and improve the quality of runoff into the bays.

Worcester County is the fastest growing county in Maryland; this is a way to insure smart growth and to help protect coastal bay health. Two-thirds of Worcester County is already included in the Critical Areas Law, only the coastal bays watershed is currently excluded.

Individual property owners would still be able to build a single family home on an individual lot, transfer a parcel of land to a family member, and build a private pier. Most farms in the coastal bays watershed already use Best Management Practices to prevent run-off of sediment and nutrients and have vegetated buffers. The change to the law allows continued harvesting of timber, as long as it is done in a manner that follows the criteria to protect water quality and wildlife habitat and provides for reforestation of timbered areas. For more information on Critical Areas, see <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/criticalarea/>.

SCOUT NATURALIST PROGRAM IN NEW YORK

BY MARTY BRAZEAU

Scouts 14 and older and adult leaders can enroll in the two week "Scout Naturalist Program" this summer at Massawepie Scout Reservation in the New York Adirondack Mountains. Director Marty Brazeau, is forming a group of Maryland scouts to participate in the program! Graduates will be able to teach scouts about ecology and conservation during troop meetings and on camping trips that explore natural areas. They will receive a handsome scout naturalist badge. Scouts will sharpen their "self-taught naturalist" skills as we explore forest, lakes, and streams. Instruction on nature hike and conservation project leading will be given. There will be an emphasis on bird study throughout the program. During week two, canoe and backpack through the Cranberry Lakes Wilderness Area. The \$450 program fee includes all expenses except travel to camp. Scholarships may become available. For more information call Marty at 410-665-7462 or e-mail him at scoutnature2001@aol.com. More detailed program information given on the web at: <http://MassStaffAlumni.org/Naturalist.htm>.

