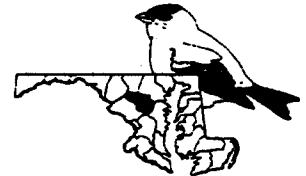




THE GOLDFINCH



A CHAPTER OF THE MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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AUTUMN BIRD RECORDS: AUGUST 1 TO NOVEMBER 30, 2001 BY JOANNE SOLEM

Perhaps once a decade Howard County birders are treated to an exceptional year. Not since 1994 have we enjoyed the variety of unusual species that 2001 brought our way. The best was saved for last as field birders savored the array of special birds during fall migration. Although some of the sightings will be subject to local Records Committee scrutiny before acceptance, the highlights include an im. **Ruddy Turnstone** (a new county record), a possible **Mississippi Kite**, and **American Avocet**, **Stilt Sandpiper**, and **Clay-colored Sparrow** (all with three or fewer previous records). Those rarities crowded out species which ordinarily would receive featured billing such as **Northern Goshawk**, **Rough-legged Hawk**, **Virginia Rail**, **Sora**, **American Golden-Plover**, **White-rumped Sandpiper**, **Dunlin**, **Sedge Wren**, **Orange-crowned Warbler**, **Summer Tanager**, **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow** (possibly 2 sub-species), **Dickcissel**, and **White-winged Crossbill**. Let's hope we don't have to wait as long for another notable year!

August arrivals of **Pied-billed Grebes** are expected, but the one which showed up on 8/7 at Centennial Park (CENPK) (SAr) was the second earliest ever. The only **Horned Grebes** were 4 on 11/3 on Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS) (NM,JS).

The lone **American Bittern** reported stayed at Meadowbrook (MDBRK) from 10/10 (BO,EH) to 10/23 (SAr). A **Great Egret** at Lake Elkhorn (LKElk) set a new county late date by lingering until at least 11/30 (SAr, JS). With the water level so low and fishing so easy, why would it leave? Thirteen **Great Egrets** were present 8/7 at the University of Maryland Central Farm (UMDCF) (WE). The **Snowy Egret** that arrived at the same location 7/30 (summer compilation) stayed until 8/5

EACH SEASON HOWARD COUNTY BIRD SIGHTINGS ARE COMPILED AND SUBMITTED TO **MARYLAND BIRDLIFE AND FIELD NOTES**. BECAUSE BOTH PUBLICATIONS PROVIDE OVERVIEWS FOR LARGE AREAS, ONLY A FRACTION OF HOWARD COUNTY SIGHTINGS ARE PUBLISHED. THE RECORDS ARE NOT LOST, HOWEVER, FOR THEY ARE THE BASIS FOR COUNTY RECORDS. ALL RECORDS ARE WELCOMED AND APPRECIATED. ANY INDIVIDUAL WHO TURNS IN SEASONAL SIGHTINGS RECEIVES A COPY OF THE COUNTY COMPILATION. TO REQUEST A FORM ON WHICH TO LOG DATES, PLEASE CALL 301-725-5037. THE BOARD HAS REQUESTED THAT A DIGEST OF THE SEASONAL HIGHLIGHTS APPEAR IN THE NEWSLETTER. OBSERVERS ARE REFERRED TO BY THEIR INITIALS (SEE THE LIST AT THE END OF THE ARTICLE).

(BO,MJB). These egret sightings are indicators that the Middle Patuxent Restoration Project (MPRP) at the farm is a maturing success story as other records in this article will attest. Although not open to general birding, field trips are planned seasonally. Questions regarding access should be directed to Field Trip Chair Bonnie Ott 410-461-3361. **Black-crowned Night-Herons** were present at the three expected locations: Lake Kittamaquundi (LKKIT) (8/3-SAr-10/9-MC,2) and Wilde Lake (WILLK) (8/14-HZ; SAr). Lake Elkhorn had an im. on 9/17 (SN) as well as an ad. **Yellow-crowned Night Heron** previously reported from 7/28 which stayed until 8/1 (K&DT; J&CW).

An early **Snow Goose** flock was heard 10/6 over UMDCF (TF). The most obliging **Snow Goose** of the few reported was a blue phase bird which seemed comfortable in the company of several hundred **Canada Geese** at the Johns Hopkins APL intermittently from 11/23 until the pond froze over (NM). The peak day of **Canada Goose** migration detected locally was 9/29: 2 high flocks were flying south on a strong north wind over Western Re-

gional Park (WSTRP) (BO,JS,KT) in the a.m., while that evening flocks were heard passing over Hammond Village between 9:00 p.m. and midnight (MW). No **Tundra Swans** were reported.

Twenty-two **Wood Ducks** 10/17 on Stephens Rd. (JMa) were nice. A f. **Gadwall** made an appearance 10/21 at CENPK (KS) staying until 10/31 (HZ). At least 1 pair of **Mallards** nested rather late at CENPK where a f. was observed with 3 "semi-downy" young on 9/12 (KS).

The first 2 **American Wigeons** showed up 9/23 TRIRS (KS). Peak numbers of **American Black Ducks** were noted on 11/11 with 20 on a Daisy Rd pd. (MW) and 23 at a pond on Roxbury Rd. (MW). **Blue-winged Teal** are often early migrants with 1 f. detected on 8/31 CENPK (KS). The largest flock was 35 on 9/25 TRIRS (BO,JS). Thirteen **Northern Shovelers** were spotted flying over Schooley Mill Park on 8/30 (MHf). It was a new species for the park and a new high count for the county. (Only birders in an inland county would rejoice in that number.) The **Green-winged Teal** seasonal high was 12 on 9/20 CENPK (HH). **Canvasbacks** were few and **Redheads** nonexistent. **Ring-necked Duck** numbers were also low with a high of 25 on 11/27 WILLK (SSa). (HOWCO high numbers typically occur in late winter.) On 10/28 there were 54 **Lesser Scaup** on TRIRS (NM), one of the few autumn reports. One m. **Long-tailed Duck** was present on TRIRS from 11/11 (RSu) to 11/23 (NM). **Bufflehead** num-

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bers peaked at 30 on both 11/11 TRIRS (RSu) and 11/20 CENPK (HH). Common Goldeneyes are rarely seen in large numbers, so 1 m. on 11/11 TRIRS (RSu) fit the pattern. The Hooded Merganser high was 11/11 with 15 on Union Chapel Rd Pd {UNCHR} (MW) and 12 on Elliott Rd Pd (MW). The first Ruddy Duck was spotted 10/2 at Lime Kiln Pd (SAr) with a high count on 11/3 of 53 at TRIRS (NM,JS).

Raptors provided some nice records this year. On 9/22 RG had 3 Ospreys over Rockburn Branch Park (RKBRP). A Mississippi Kite flying over Manahan Dr. (MANHN) about 4:30 p.m. on 8/29 (BO,HZ) will be a second county record, if accepted. Bald Eagles were reported from many county locations with a high of 3 on 11/3 TRIRS (NM,JS). The first Northern Harrier was noted 9/29 at MTPLT (KS+). Two Northern Goshawk sightings were unusual in the county with an im. on 10/30 at Rt. 1 and Whiskey Bottom Rd (JSh), and another the following day at UMDCF (BO,EH,JS). The peak passage of Broad-winged Hawks was 9/16: CENPK 4500 (MK), SLMLP 2000+ late a.m. & early p.m. (NM,BO,KS+), MANHN 2240 during the p.m. (BO), and 17 on Hallmark (HALMK) (WEb). The last 3 Broad-wingeds were reported 10/24 Alpha Ridge Park (ALRGP) (JMa). The only autumn Rough-legged Hawk was a light phase bird 11/3 UNCHR (MW). Merlins were reported at 10 locations from 9/1 Belmont (BO+) to 11/9 Oakland Mills Garden Plots (JW). Peregrine Falcon dates ranged from 9/25 MANHN (BO) to 11/1 at the Rt. 104 circle (EMe). Most interesting was an observation of that species feeding on a Killdeer 10/5 LKELK (ES,MW).r).

In October, 10-12 Wild Turkeys were spotted along Annapolis Rock Rd (IN). A Northern Bobwhite was present in a garden 11/8 MANHN (H&JSt) not far from the major transmission lines where a few have been recorded in recent years. A Virginia Rail flushed 9/1 at UMDCF (BO). This was an odd date—not a summer record, but a month and a half prior to either of the two other autumn records. What it clearly illustrates is the deficiency of our knowledge of county rail migration. Soras were reported 9/27 UMDCF (NM) and 10/10 MDBRK (BO,EH). The first 2

American Coots showed up 10/10 at LKELK (SN) with a high of 13 on 11/3 (TRIRS) (NM,JS).

This was a stellar season for shorebirds—no thanks to the usual hot spots of Pigtail and Brown's Bridge. Birds congregated along an elongated spit off Greenbridge Rd on the Montgomery County side of TRIRS. For Howard County birders a certain amount of patience was required to wait until the birds flew (or were flushed by gulls or boats) into Howard waters. Fulton Pond produced an American Golden-Plover and a Dunlin on 9/15 (KS,JFn), both good finds. The first Common Snipe was present on an extremely early 9/2 UMDCF (BO,JS+), and an American Woodcock was seen 10/28 UMDCF (BO,JS,EH,HH,RHo) and another 11/7 Rt 32 and the Little Patuxent R. (JSh). Almost all other unusual shorebird records were from the Greenbridge spit: Black-bellied Plover 9/24 (JMa), Semipalmated Plover 9/10 (NM), American Avocet 10/7 (E&JMe), Sanderling 9/20 (SAr,2), Semipalmated Sandpiper 9/4 (SAr), White-rumped Sandpiper 9/26 (NM,3), and Stilt Sandpiper 9/21 (JS,3). The more common species were also present. The star of the show was an im. Ruddy Turnstone 9/4 (SAr) and 9/5 (NM,BO,POb+), which was a new county record. Although the individuals who were the first to report the shorebirds are credited, in most cases, up to several dozen birders were able to see a particular species. Most of the choice sightings were made during September, but a few migrants came through in October. A Spotted Sandpiper 11/12 TRIRS (SAr,JMa) closed the shorebird season on TRIRS.

Laughing Gulls were few with a high of 14 on 8/21 MANHN (BO). Bonaparte's Gull sightings were all in a narrow window between 11/3 TRIRS (NM,JS, 5) and 11/12 TRIRS (SAr,JMa, 1). Caspian Terns were tallied for almost two months from 8/3 Brighton Dam (BRDAM) (SAr, 1) to a rather late 9/27 TRIRS (BO,EH,SAr,JS, 1). Three Forster's Terns appeared on an early 8/3 BRDAM (SAr); the last was spotted 9/23 TRIRS (KS).

An Eastern Screech-Owl was noted 8/24 at Daniels, Patapsco Valley State Park (PVSP) (DF), a perennial location. Heartening were reports of this owl from Henryton, PVSP 10/7 (SAr), LKELK

10/29 (JMa), and 10/22 & 11/7 Timberleigh (DN). Let's hope they can be found again during the breeding bird atlas!

The last Common Nighthawk was winging south on 10/22 near Ellicott City (DF), the latest ever for the county. The high of 72 was on 9/1 at Belmont (BO+). A lone Chimney Swift 10/21 CENPK (KS+) was the last migrant.

A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker arrived a bit early on 9/12 at Font Hill Wetlands Park (KS). The biggest woodpecker news was that of Red-headed's which were reported from 7 locations, including 2 sites where 2 were seen: 10/2 WSTRP (BO) and 11/16 Patuxent River SP (JSh).

Several nice flycatcher sightings included an Olive-sided on 8/29 (BO) and 9/12 (BO,HZ), both on MANHN. BO had a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher on 8/29 CENPK and again 8/30 MANHN (m.obs.).

Blue-headed Vireos are usually the last vireos to depart. The latest was noted on 10/29 at WILLK (DOd). Five Philadelphia Vireo reports were more than usual. Three of them were on 9/15 (Howard County Fall Count). The earliest on 8/28 Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPENV) (HZ,MJB) was one of the county's few August records. Many years Blue Jays migrate without a recognizable peak. This year 600+ moved through ALRGP 10/4 in a two hour period (BO). Horned Larks were reported from 4 locations (SAr, WE, D&MH).

Red-breasted Nuthatches came through in small numbers beginning with 1 on 8/31 WSTRP (BO). The earliest Brown Creeper was spotted on 9/15 at Toll House Rd. (HSt) and the first Winter Wren appeared at CENPK on 9/13, the second earliest county date ever (GA). On 11/7 at least a dozen were counted along the Middle Patuxent R. between Kindler Rd and Murray Hill Rd (JSh). A Sedge Wren on 9/1 UMDCF (BO) was definitely a choice sighting, especially because it was the earliest autumn date ever for the county. Our 4 autumn sightings now span 9/1 to 10/16! Marsh Wren was present at UMDCF from 9/27 (BO,EH,SAr,JS) to 10/28 (BO,EH,HH,RHo,JS).

Two Gray-cheeked Thrushes were reported with 1 singing on 9/8 on Sandchain Rd., e. Col (TDC); another was seen

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9/15 along the Middle Patuxent R. at Cedar Lane (HH).

Gray Catbird populations peaked in mid September with 24 on 9/12 CENPK (KS), 104 on 9/15 so. HOWCO (JC,JS), and 40 on 9/23 MPENV (SAr+). The high count of American Pipits was 140 on 10/20 UMDCF (NM). At least 200 Cedar Waxwings were counted at RKBRP 10/31 (ES,MW).

Few warblers arrived early or stayed late, nor did most come through in high numbers. An Orange-crowned Warbler was a highlight on a club field trip 10/20 to WSTRP (BO+). A Northern Parula lingered until a rather late 10/19 UMDCF (BO,EH,SAr,JS). Magnolias peaked 9/15 when PMc tallied 30 at CENPK. Cape May continued to be an infrequently sighted species with the bird on 9/15 in s.e. HOWCO (JMa) the only one this season. WEb had a relatively late Pine on 10/14 HALMK. The first Palm 9/1 SLMLP (NM) was early. Thirty was the rather modest high on 10/20 WSTRP (BO,JS+, 1 western). A Cerulean 9/15 in so. HOWCO (JC,JS) was a late county record as was an Am. Redstart 10/16 MTPLT (MHf). A Connecticut on 9/15 Kindler Rd/Middle Patuxent R. (JC) was the sole report. Also on 9/15 a Mourning was spotted on Jennings Chapel Rd (MW).

A Summer Tanager 10/3 MANHN (BO) was the latest ever.

Sparrows generally showed up in good numbers and variety this season. A peak of 68 Chipping Sparrows was noted on 10/21 MTPLT (BO,JS). Fields hit a high of 60 on 10/14 MTPLT (BO). An im. Vesper on 9/1 at UMDCF may have fledged there (BO) with four as the seasonal high on 10/28 UMDCF (BO+). One at MDBRK 11/12 (HZ,MC) was unusually late. Five Savannahs were present 9/8 WSTRP (BO) with a high of 170 on 10/18 UMDCF (BO). A Grasshopper lingered until 10/27 at MDBRK (HH) to establish a late record. Fox Sparrows peaked in November with 6 on 11/1 MTPLT (BO) and 6 on 11/19 MDBRK (SAr). The Song Sparrow high was 248 on 10/19 UMDCF (BO,JS). By 10/31 some had already moved on, so that the count in the same location dropped to 160 (BO,JS). The earliest ever autumn Lincoln's showed up 9/2

UMDCF (NM,BO). In Sept and Oct they were reported from 8 locations on 16 dates. Swamps hit a high of 140 on 10/16 MTPLT (BO). The first two White-throateds showed up 9/6 at LKKIT (HZ). A White-crowned was first noted 10/3 UMDCF (BO+). Numbers remained low with no more than a dozen counted in any location. A Dickcissel on 10/18 WSTRP (BO,EH), was a great find.

The season was unusual in bringing an influx of Clay-colored Sparrows (if four is an influx). With only two previous county records, it is nothing short of astonishing to record four sightings in one season. To account for this surge in reports it would be easy to speculate that there are more and better observers each year, but, considering the attention given to sparrows in this county the last five years, I doubt that that is the answer—especially since three out of the four were in areas that have been well-searched in previous autumns. The following Clay-colored were reported: 10/14-15 MTPLT (BO,2, KS+), 10/27 MDBRK (HH), 1/4 WSTRP (BO,NM,RC).

New county highs for Indigo Buntings came from Sisters of Bon Secours property on Marriottsville Rd 8/24 where 40 were found (BO), and 9/18 UMDCF (BO,SAr) where 60 were detected. The last Bobolink hung on until 10/31 UMDCF (BO,EH,JS). The success of the MPRP alluded to earlier can be partly gauged by the fact that Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow is now an annual visitor (for the third successive fall), this year from 9/27 (BO,EH,SAr,JS) to 10/16 (BO,JS,KT,MHf). On 10/2 there were 2 (differences in plumage indicated the possibility of 2 sub-species) (BO,JS).

There were no large flocks of Eastern Meadowlarks noted. The earliest Rusty Blackbird was 10/3 at UMDCF (MI,BO+), with 35 the largest flock on 11/21 at LKELK (JW). An ad. m. Baltimore Oriole lingered into late Nov. It was seen south of Ellicott City twice within 3 days eating suet: 11/27 MANHN (EMi) and 11/30 Autumn Hill Ct (CB) (locations are less than a mile apart).

There was a sprinkling of northern visitors. The first Purple Finch was spotted 9/30 SLMLP (BO+). There were

4 Oct reports and 8 in Nov. Pine Siskins were seen in both Oct and Nov with the first on 10/6 in Clemens Crossing, w. Col (HH) with a high of 8 on 10/27, same place and observer. November brought a few Evening Grosbeak sightings from 11/2 in Swansfield, w. Col (JTv,2) to 11/28 Woodstock (L&LH,8-10). The star of the invasives was a f. White-winged Crossbill 11/1 Sandchain, e. Col (J&TDC) which stayed at a feeder several hours enabling a dozen eager listers to observe it.

At least 100 American Goldfinches were counted 8/26 MTPLT (KS); on 11/9 there were 55 in an Allview yard (ES).

Altogether a noteworthy season!

Observers cited by initials; abbreviations: SAR - Stan Arnold, GA - Glenn Austin, MJB - Mary-Jo Betts, CB - Connie Bockstie, MC - Martha Chestem, JC - Jane Coskren, TDC - T. Dennis Coskren, RC - Ralph Cullison, III, WE - Wes Earp, WEb - Ward Ebert, DF - Dave Famer, JFn - John Finadore, RG - Ralph Geuder, MHf - Matt Haffner, D&MH - Dave & Maureen Harvey - Emy Holdridge, HH - Hans Holbrook, RHo - Robert Holbrook, L&LH - Lynn & Linda Holley, MI - Marshall Iloff, MK - Mike Kerwin, NM - Nancy Magnusson, JMa - John Maloney, PMc - Paul McCowan, EMe - Elaine Metter, JMe - Jeff Metter, EMi - Emily Miller, DN - Diane Nagengast, IN - Ian Nagengast, SN - Sue Neri, POB - Paul O'Brien, DOd - Doug Odermatt, BO - Bonnie Ott, Ssa - Steve Sanford, KS - Kurt Schwarz, JSh - Jay Sheppard, JS - Jo Solem, HSt - Hank Stanton, JSt - Jennifer Stanton, ES - Eva Sunell, RSu - Rick Sussman, DT - Dick Tufts, KT - Kate Tufts, JTv - June Tveekrem, MW - Mark Wallace, CW - Carol Wilkinson, JW - Jim Wilkinson, MW - Michele Wright, HZ - Helen Zeichner; ad - adult, im. - immature, m. - male, f. - female, HOWCO - Howard County, Col - Columbia, m.obs - many observers..

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volved.

All 34 Howard County blocks have been assigned. All can use the help of extra eyes and ears in the course of the five years of the project. When you observe evidence of breeding of any species, contact one of the county co-coordinators: Bonnie Ott 410-461-3361, bonnie1163@home.com or Jo Solem 301-725-5037, odenata@msn.com. We need the name of the species, activity observed, exact location, and your name. This information will be passed along to the person in charge of the block. If you would like to provide sightings from your home/neighborhood on a regular basis, we will be happy to give you the name and contact information for the block in which you live.

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Florence Rd~1.3 miles: turn left into Starting Gate Court: park at Brighton Court. 1:30 p.m. Leisurely stroll to view early wildflowers and look for butterflies. Binoculars helpful. Leaders Dick Smith 410-997-7439 and Bob Solem 301-725-5037. No facilities.

April 21, Sunday. Half Day. Schooley Mill Park. Meet at upper parking lot at 7:30 a.m. Moderate walking along field edges and through woodland trails for spring migrants. Leader: Daryl Olson 301-730-7290. Facilities available. Pg. 19.

April 22, Monday. 2-3 hours. Earth Day Birding. Meet at Lake Elkhorn Cradlerock parking lot at 8:00 Easy walking on the paved path around the lake. Tern, swallows and migrant warblers. Leader: John Maloney 301-317-4961. No facilities. Page 43.

April 27, Saturday. Half day. Middle Patuxent Environmental Area. Meet at Board of Ed. Building on Rt 108 to carpool to Trotter Road 7:30 a.m. Moderate and difficult walking through a wide variety of habitats. Leader: Stan Arnold 410-768-0155. Facilities available.

April 28, Sunday. Half Day. Henryton's Yellow-throated Warblers. Meet at the end of Henryton Road 7:30 a.m. Moderate walk along the river (2 miles) in search of resident and migrant warblers. Leader: Ralph Cullison 410-442-2181. No facilities. Page 35.

May 4, Saturday. Half day. Wincopin Neck Trails. Meet at paved lot off Vollmerhausen Rd. Look for wooden fence and park sign at 7:30 a.m. Moderate/difficult hiking through woodland trails on some steep slopes. Migrant warblers, vireos and thrushes. Good diversity of wildflowers. Leader: Stan Arnold 410-768-0155. No facilities.

May 5, Sunday. Half Day. Daniels-Warblers Along the River. Meet at the large lot on Daniel's Road 7:30 a.m. Moderate/difficult walking through the woods and along the river. Worm-Eating Warbler, Scarlet Tanager. Leader: John Maloney 301-317-4961. No facilities. Page 32.

May 7, Tuesday. 2 hours. Weekday Walk at Wilde Lake. Meet at the boat dock at 8:00 a.m. Easy walk along the lake and through the wooded trails. Orioles, swallows, long-legged waders and woodland species. Leader: Bonnie Ott 410-461-43361. No facilities. Page 47.

May 11 -MAY COUNT

May 18, Saturday. All day, bring lunch and beverages. Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Education Center. NCEEC, the environmental education for Charles County Public Schools is located on Nanjemoy Creek a tidal tributary to the Potomac River. Habitats include forest, tidal marsh and open water. Possibility of canoeing. There is also a possibility of a visit to the Nanjemoy Creek Heronry (Great Blue Heron Colony) owned by the Nature Conservancy of arrangements can be made. Walking at NCEEC is all on flat ground and there are facilities. If we get to visit the heronry it will be off path and involves some physical hiking. Those who choose not to make the hike may stay at NCEEC and bird until we return. Meet at the Park and Ride lot on MD 197 in Laurel 7:00 a.m. to carpool for 1 and a half hour ride. The lot is approximately one mile from the intersection of MD 198 and MD 197 on the left just past Cherry lane. Leader: Mike Callahan 301-490-9318 or raptorsrule@juno.com.

May 19, Sunday. Half Day. Hugg-Thomas WMA. Moderate to difficult walking through woodland trails and along field edges. Hooded, Kentucky, Louisiana waterthrush and Acadian flycatchers. Meet in gravel lot at 7:30 a.m. Short side trip to see nesting Cliff Swallows possible. Leaders: Dave and Maureen Harvey 410-795-3117. No facilities. Pg. 41.

May 23, Thursday. 2-3 hours. Weekday Walk at Centennial. Easy walk around the lake for Orioles, herons and lingering migrants. Meet at the west end lot at 8:00. Leader: Bonnie Ott 410-461-3361. Facilities available. Page 5.

May 25, Saturday. Half day. Western Regional Park. Moderate to difficult walking through fields and along woodland trails. Meet in the gravel lot behind library at 7:30 a.m. Leader: Kate Tufts 410-489-7052. Facilities in library.

June 7-9 Annual MOS Conference. Details will be mailed by MOS.

June 29, Saturday. 1.5-2 Hours. Dragonflies for the Beginner. Look for those that can be identified on the wing or through binoculars. From US 29 go west on US 40 2.4 miles to Centennial Lane. Go south (left) on Centennial Lane less than 0.1 mile to stop light: turn left onto Frederick Road: go 0.2 mile to a right on Font Hill Drive: continue 0.4 mile to the park sign on the right. Park along the street. In case of rain, alternate date: Sat. July 6. To confirm call Bob or Jo Solem at 301-725-5037.

1:00 p.m. Font Hill 916

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 14.** "Where the Heron Finds Its Home." This award-winning Canadian film documents that the presence of this largest and most widely distributed North American heron reflects the health of its wetland home.
 - Thursday, April 11.** "Life History of the Purple Martin," by Kathy Klimkiewicz
- 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 bonnie1163@home.com.
- ✧ **February 16, Saturday, 2-4 p.m.** Atlas Training Meeting (optional) Want more info about how to work on the atlas? Jo Solem and Bonnie Ott will present a basic session demystifying codes and safe dates. Open to questions. Bring your atlas packet. Will be held at Bonnie house, call 410-461-3361 to reserve a spot and get directions.
 - ✧ **March 2, Saturday, Pot Luck Dinner.** See article in the January/February issue of the Goldfinch.
 - March 3, Sunday, 3 hours.** Centennial Park. Moderate walking around the lake on a paved path. Meet at the west end parking lot 8:00 a.m. Leader: Mike Kerwin 410-461-2408. Facilities available. Pg. 5.
 - ✧ **March 10, Sunday, 3 hours** Centennial Park. Moderate walking around the lake on a paved path. Meet at the west end parking lot 8:00 a.m. Leader: TBA. Call 410-461-3361. Facilities available. Pg. 5.
 - ✧ **March 16, Saturday. Half day.** Triadelphia Reservoir 101. Confused by where to bird at the dam? Get to know the reservoir hotspots: Greenbridge, Big Branch and Pigtail. Some difficult walking expected. Meet at the main parking lot on the dam at 8:00 a.m. to carpool to various locations. Leader: Stan Arnold. Call 410-768-0155. Facilities available.
 - March 17, Sunday, 3 hours.** Centennial Park. Moderate walking around the lake on a paved path. Meet at the west end lot at 8:00 a.m. Leader: TBA. Call 410-461-3361. Facilities available. Pg. 5.
 - March 20, 1.5 hours. Wednesday.** First Day of Spring Weekday Walk at Font Hill. Easy walking on paved paths and mown grass. Meet at sign on Font Hill drive at 8:30 a.m. leader: Bonnie Ott. Call 410-461-3361. No facilities. *Rained out*
 - March 24, Sunday, 3 hours.** Centennial Park. Moderate walking around the lake on a paved path. Meet at the west end lot at 8:00 a.m. Leader: Karen Darcy and Kevin Heffernan. Call 410-461-3361 for info. Facilities available. Page 5.
 - April 6, Saturday, 1.5 - 2 hours.** Beginner's Bird Walk at Bon Secours. Meet in visitor's parking lot off Marriottsville Rd at 8:30 a.m. Moderate walking through woodland paths and fields. Learn how to identify our resident wintering species and perhaps a few migrants. Leaders: Michele Wright and Eva Sunell. Call Bonnie 410-461-3361. Facilities available.
 - April 7, Sunday. Half Day.** Mount Pleasant Early Spring Arrivals. Meet by shed at 8:00 a.m. Moderate/difficult walking through the grounds of the Howard County Conservancy. Extensive fields should host sparrows and meadowlarks. Excellent view of the sky for flyovers. Leader: Robin Todd 410-313-8154. Facilities available.
 - April 12, Friday, 2 hours.** Weekday Walk at Gwynn Acres. Meet on Old Columbia Rd and Ram's Horn Row at 8:00. Easy walking along the paved path through the woodlands. Looking for early woodland migrants, woodpeckers and possible Barred Owls. Leader: Bonnie Ott 410-461-3361. No facilities. Page 24.
 - ✧ **April 13, Saturday. Half Day.** Ellicott City Hotspots. Joint trip with AA Bird Club. Meet at Rt. 100 park and ride 8:00 a.m. We will carpool to various areas in central Howard County. Bring footwear suitable for wetland areas. Mix of moderate to difficult walking possible. Leader: Bonnie Ott 410-461-3361. Facilities available.
 - ✧ **April 14, Sunday. Half Day.** University of Md. Farm Vesper Sparrow Search. Limited Trip, Call Bonnie 410-461-3361 to reserve a spot and get details. Very rigorous walking through wetlands. No facilities.
 - ✧ **April 20, Saturday. 2-3 hours.** Butterflies and Wildflowers. Directions: From 170 take MD 94 (Woodbine Rd.) south: continue past

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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 28, Thursday Kate Tufts, 2830 Duvall Rd., Woodbine, MD 21797

April 25, Thursday Kurt Schwarz, 9045 Dunloggin Ct, Ellicott City, MD 21042

MAY-JUNE 2002 NEWSLETTER MATERIAL IS DUE MARCH 22, 2002. 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

Maryland is again considering deer hunting on Sundays. (It seems to be an annual event once the Maryland Legislature goes into session.)

House Bill 9, which has 18 co-sponsors (including the Speaker of the House) is being proposed (according to the preamble of the bill) because there are too many deer in Maryland which have adapted to the suburban environment. The excessive numbers of deer increase the risk of Lyme disease, the number of deer-vehicle collisions, increase crop damage, and have exceeded the carrying capacity of the land. Non-lethal control mechanisms have *not* been effective. Hunting is the most effective method to reduce the size of the deer herd and is the most cost-effective to do so. Although not stated in the preamble, it is clear that another purpose is economic: Western Maryland and the Eastern Shore depend on the revenues produced by hunting and hunters to an extent that is not appreciated by those of us in the central part of the state.

House Bill 9, as introduced, proposes a deer hunting season of at least 21 days,

including three Sundays except that Sunday hunting provisions do not apply to: Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's and part of Frederick counties, and Baltimore City. (These are the "Urban Management Region." The Urban Management Region may have increased harvest by the use, as appropriate, of bait, professional sharpshooters, lethal darts, or capture and euthanasia.) The Department of Natural Resources will establish the actual seasons and bag limits on a region-by-region or zone-by-zone basis. Meat may be donated to authorized tax-exempt organizations. Processing costs for such meat may be paid by private donations or deer tag revenues.

Full text of the bill is available on the <http://mlis.state.md.us/2002rs/billfile/hb0009.htm>

If you want to contact your delegate or state senator and are not sure about the correct phone or fax numbers or the email addresses, go to the Maryland legislature web site <http://mlis.state.md.us>

BREEDING BIRD ATLAS NEWS BY JOANNE SOLEM AND BONNIE OTT

On January 4, 2002 a group of Howard County Bird Club volunteers gathered at Jane Coskren's and prepared material for Maryland Breeding Bird Atlas blocks. Some came for the morning, some for the afternoon, and a few enthusiastic people stayed all day circling the table. When the last county box was completed shortly after 4:00 p.m., material had been assembled for the more than 1200 atlas blocks in the state. Bob Solem had prearranged the maps, bird lists, and labels which allowed the effort to be completed. Helping that day were *Sue Probst, Bonnie Ott, Jane and Ralph Geuder, Wendy Keller, Janet Lydon, Emy Holdridge, Martha and Don Waugh, Michele Wright, Jane Coskren, Kate and Dick Tufts, and Bob and Jo Solem.* A job well done!

Some Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks employees have been most helpful in preparation for field work. Mark Raab has provided a permission letter enabling atlas workers to survey county-owned pieces of property (not all of which are parks) and to obtain maps showing parcel locations. Kudos to Dawn Smith and Ed Bromley for generating the fine maps and to Brenda Belensky for overseeing the project. We are immensely grateful for the opportunity to cover all of this land and thank each individual in-