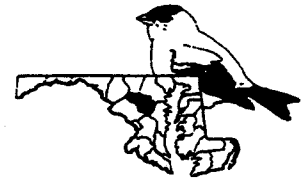




# THE GOLDFINCH



A CHAPTER OF THE MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

MAY - JUNE 2002

VOLUME 30, NUMBER 5

## WINTER BIRD RECORDS: NOVEMBER 30 TO FEBRUARY 28, 2002 BY JOANNE SOLEM

**S**tars of the winter season were Surf Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Rough-legged Hawk, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Long-eared Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Lincoln's Sparrow, and Common Redpoll.

Although ponds and portions of lakes and reservoir were ice-covered by late December, the mild temperatures by mid-January meant mostly open water much of the winter.

A Common Loon was present 2/2 on Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS) (NM) with 2 on 2/7 (KT). The only Horned Grebes were 8 on 12/8 at Centennial Park (CENPK) (KS). Great Blue Herons were seen at their nests on Lake Kittamaquidi (LKKIT) and Vantage Point (VANPT) on 1/26. Of the 16 visible nests, only 4 contained incubating birds on 3/1 (MCHZ). The Breeding Bird Atlas is already bearing ornithological fruit by forcing birders to examine all parts of the county. A second small heronry was discovered in the county, this one on Race Rd in a beaver-created wetland. Five nests were present from previous years. It is not yet known how many are active this year (JMa).

Snow Geese (1 bl., 1 wh.) were present aperiodically (usually with hundreds of Canada Geese) at either Johns Hopkins APL or Fulton (m. obs.). For Tundra Swans it was a short winter with 73 on 12/3 TRIRS (NM) heading south and 12 on 2/2 over Rockburn Branch Park (BOEH, MIB, SB) winging north. A male Wood Duck was spotted 1/19 VANPT (HZ). A female Gadwall was at CENPK 1/5 (JS). She was seen intermittently until 2/28 (KS). American Wigeon were around much of the winter. Howard County Midwinter Count (HCMC) on 2/2 tallied 95. The American Black Duck high of 100+ was counted 1/5 on TRIRS (RC, NM). On the same date, 24 were spotted on the Middle Patuxent River at Carroll Mill Rd (M&GM). Probably one pair of Northern Pintails moved around the central part of the county for three weeks, usually with a flock of wild Mallards. Pintails were seen 1/22 LKKIT (MJ), 1/27 UMDCF (BO, EH), and several more times at LKKIT until 2/14 (JS). Canvasbacks were scarce with a mere 5 the high on 1/12 CENPK (KS) and 1/27 LKKIT (SN). The 6 Redheads present from early January at CENPK were last reported 1/28 (KS). Ring-necked Ducks wintered in good numbers with a single observer high of 115 (5 females) 2/1 on Union Chapel Rd (MW). The following day, birders found 327 countywide.

Two of the choice seasonal sightings were from TRIRS: a Surf Scoter on 1/5 (EH, RC, NM) and a pair of Long-tailed Ducks on 2/2 (NM). The only Common Goldeneyes were 2 males on 2/2 on T. Duckett Res. (JC, JS).

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 301-725-6037. 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). LOCATIONS ARE WRITTEN OUT THE FIRST TIME CITED; THEREAFTER, ABBREVIATIONS ARE USED.

Hooded Mergansers were present all winter with some paired and others in single sex flocks, such as the 14 females 2/14 on Lake Elkhorn (LKELK) (JS). On 1/5, 465 Common Mergansers were counted from Brighton Dam (BRDAM) (NM, RC). Ruddy Duck numbers were low. HCMC turned up just 20.

Perhaps TRIRS's extremely low water level made fishing easy which might explain the 5 Bald Eagles present for at least a month: 1/5 (NM) & 2/20 (HH). In addition to the 2 adults at the nest, there were 3 others which could be distinguished by plumage. Northern Harriers were hard to find with just 2 reports: 1/15 Meadowbrook (MDBRK) (BO) and 2/3 West Friendship (LC). The lone Rough-legged Hawk sighting was a dark phase bird 12/15 at University of Md Central Farm (UMDCF) (BO, EH).

A Wild Turkey was present 2/12 along Annapolis Rock Rd (ANPRR) (SAr). A few American Coots wintered with a high of 4 on 2/4 LKELK (SN, JS). A flock of 24 Killdeer 12/24 on UMDCF was the high for the season (M&GM). Despite the frozen conditions on 1/1, a Common Snipe flushed at UMDCF (BO+). American Woodcock were courting in January taking advantage of the moderating weather. By 2/19, at least 9 were counted at ANPRR (SAr).

The last Bonaparte's Gulls came through in December with 5 on 12/8 (TRIRS) (KS) and a first winter bird there the following day (NM). Although a single Great Black-backed Gull appeared now and then at BRDAM during January and February, the high of 5 was logged 2/2 at Alpha Ridge landfill (RC). Owls made a

good showing. NM's "tooted" whistle got a response from a Northern Saw-whet Owl in a pine stand on Rt. 97. Barn Owl and Long-eared Owl appeared on the Midwinter Count tally thanks to JSh. Four Long-eareds were present on ANPRR at least until 2/24 (RC). On 2/2, young were heard in a Great Horned Owl nest in a pine on Dorsey Mill Rd (*vide* MW).

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were reported by many observers. Red-headed Woodpeckers wintered in two locations. On Rt. 97 along the Patuxent River, an adult and an immature (im.) were seen on 12/15 (JSh, CS) and relocated on 2/2 (JSh). The single im. bird in the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPENV) was so predictable that birders were able to locate it by searching near a numbered post on a trail along the river. The bird's head had become mostly red by the end of the season.

Horned Larks are never easy to find. The high was 24 on 1/20 along Long Corner Rd (J&CW). This was not a major invasion year for Red-breasted Nuthatches. The few that visited county feeders tended to be unpredictable.

The mild winter with plentiful fruit meant there were reports of large flocks of American Robins and numerous Eastern Bluebirds (461 on HCMC was a new high). That count also tallied 3 Gray Catbirds. Wintering Brown Thrashers were reported in three locations, one in each of the winter months (CSh, AB, BO). The high count of Cedar Waxwings was 200 feeding on fruit of ornamentals at the Hickory Ridge Village Center, Columbia 2/3 (FP).

American Tree Sparrows numbers were low. Counters could locate just 11 on HCMC. While 25 Savannah Sparrows were still present at Western Regional Park 12/3 (JS), by 2/2 the countywide total was down to 28. A measure of the mild winter was the presence of 69 Fox Sparrows on HCMC, while on 2/16 MDBRK had a surprisingly high 22 (BO, EH). The first-ever January records of Lincoln's Sparrows were 1/1 at UMDCF (BO+) & 1/29 MPENV (HH). Early in the

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season White-crowned Sparrow numbers seemed to be low, but by 2/2 a farm on Roxbury Rd produced 65 (MW). Chipping Sparrows are an unusual wintering species in the Piedmont, but they are consistent most winters under RC's West Friendship feeders. This year 14 was the peak number on 1/6; that dropped to 6 on 2/18. The only Rusty Blackbirds were singles on 2/2 at two different locations (CS,D&AA) & (MC,HZ).

Winter invasives were few and elusive, but there were scattered reports of Purple Finches and Pine Siskins. A Common Redpoll briefly visited a Wilde Lake feeder 2/12 (HZ).

Addendum for Autumn 2001: a female Wilson's Warbler was spotted in the Oakland Mills garden plots in east Columbia 11/28/01 (JW).

Thanks to all who submitted sightings, not all of whom are cited by initials in the preceding article. D&AA - Dianne & Andy Aguilera, SAR - Stan Arnold, MJB - Mary-Jo Betts, AB - Anne Bradford, SB - Sue Buswell, MC - Martha Chestem, LC - Lisa Colangelo, JC - Jane Coskren, RC - Ralph Cullison III, HH - Hans Hollbrook, EH - Emy Holdridge, MJ - Mark James, NM - Nancy Magnusson, JMa - John Maloney, M&GM - Mike & Grazina McClure, SH - Sue Neri, BO - Bonnie Ott, FP - Fred Pierce, KS - Kurt Schwarz, JSh - Jay Sheppard, CSh - Craig Sholley, JS - Jo Solam, CS - Chuck Stirrat, KT - Kate Tufts, MW - Mark Wallace, C&JW - Carol & Jim Wilkinson, HZ - Helen Zeichner, m.obs. - many observers.

## BIG SIT! 2001 REDUX BY KURT SCHWARZ

I have already related the results of the Third HowCo Bird Club Big Sit! held on 21 October 2001, as well as the scheduling challenges we encountered. The results of the 2001 count have been published by the New Haven (Connecticut) Bird Club and I wanted to share them.

Participation in this international event grew from 66 circles in 2000 to 116 in 2001. There were circles in 27 states and four foreign countries, i.e. England, the Netherlands, Mexico, and South Africa. In 2000, circles in 21 states and England and the Netherlands took part. The species total grew by 177 from 432 in 2000 to 609 in 2001. There were three circles in Maryland, with top honors at 55 species going to a new circle, The Fort McHenry Wetlanders, which included several stalwarts of the MD birding scene. HowCo came in second at 49 species (down from our high of 55 in 2000), followed by a group of three in a backyard in Newburg wherever that is, with 11 species. The top count of all worldwide was "The Undutchables," sitting on a dike near Rotterdam in the Netherlands, who racked up 107 species. Hmm, what IS it about the Netherlands, circles there placed 1, 3, and 10 in total species count!

The Big Sit! is a lot of fun, and certainly not very strenuous. We see about as many species sitting on the south shore of Centennial as we would walking the two and a half miles it takes to circle the lake. Alas, with the shift of the date from the third to the second Sunday in October, we probably cannot count on Howard County Parks and Recreation catering the affair, but we can always try to convince Darius to fetch pizza. Mark your calendars now for Sunday, 13 October, 2002.

## SEVENTEENTH HOWARD COUNTY MIDWINTER COUNT, FEBRUARY 2, 2002 BY JOANNE SOLEM AND MARY-JO BETTS

On a pleasant winter day, 75 field and feeder observers found 94 species of birds in Howard County which tied the record high set in 1994 and 1997.

The low temperature was 28° F., the high 43° F. with north or northwest winds 5 to 20 mph. The sky was clear, or mostly so, all day. With no snow cover, no precipitation, and almost no ice on the water, it was a pleasant February day.

We added Common Loon (N. Magnusson) to the cumulative total, while Barn Owl was found for just the second time.

Nine species set high counts: Ring-necked Duck 327 (not quite twice the previous high), Green-winged Teal 12, Long-tailed Duck 2, Common Merganser 430, American Woodcock 6, Long-eared Owl 3, Eastern Bluebird 461, Gray Catbird 3 (tied-t), and Fox Sparrow 69 (more than double the previous high).

Second highs were Pied-billed Grebe 4 (t), Great Blue Heron 26, Gadwall 5, American Wigeon 95, Red-breasted Merganser 1 (t), Bald Eagle 3 (t), Common Snipe 4 (t), Red-headed Woodpecker 2, Carolina Wren 317, Song Sparrow 722, and Dark-eyed Junco 1667.

Third high counts included Hooded Merganser 47, Ruddy Duck 20, Killdeer 16, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 18 (t), Eastern Phoebe 3 (t), White-breasted Nuthatch 205, Winter Wren 24, Hermit Thrush 24, and Eastern Towhee 49.

Open water may have boosted some waterfowl totals. American Woodcock took advantage of mild winter temperatures to begin courtship flights in January. If more observers had been out at dawn and dusk on count day, the total of 6 might well have been higher. Gray Catbird, Carolina Wren, Eastern Phoebe, and Hermit Thrush totals also reflect a mild winter. The astonishing number of Fox Sparrows points to spring migration starting several weeks ahead of the usual mid-February movement. On the 2001 Midwinter Count, the Eastern Bluebird total exceeded 400 for the first time. This year's mild winter and ample food supply helped push the number to 461, another high. Will we hit 500 next year?

New low counts were Mute Swan 1 (yes, only one wild, free-flying bird), Mallard 483, Northern Pintail 1 (t), Rock Dove 235, Mourning Dove 557, and Pine Siskin 1. Second lows were Wood Duck 2 (t), Common Goldeneye 2 (t), American Kestrel 16 (tied last year's second low), Red-breasted Nuthatch 2, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 2 (t), and Rusty Blackbird 2. Third lowest numbers were Canvasback 4, American Coot 5, Ring-billed Gull 642, Herring Gull 329, Great Black-backed Gull 5, Eastern Screech-Owl 3 (t), Great Horned Owl 4, Horned Lark 5, American Tree Sparrow 11, and Purple Finch 4 (t).

It's nice to see Mute Swan, Mallard, and Rock Dove setting new lows, but let's not rejoice until three to five years show a pattern.

After all, birders don't usually spend much time searching for those species. European Starling numbers, which had set lows the last two years (3562 and 3391) bounced back to 6140 in 2002, so that hopeful trend fizzled. The lows do reflect the lack of northern invasives. House Finches at 892 remained in the 700 to 900 range of the last 7 years, well below the all-time high of 2272 in 1994.

Because they are strong fliers and can cover many miles each day, totals for species such as vultures, Canada Geese, crows, and gulls are basically calculated guesses after consultation with some observers. Without an accurate knowledge of all vulture roosts, all we can be sure of is that vulture numbers are healthy. The increasing tendency of Canada Geese to spend the night away from the largest lakes and reservoirs makes it hard to count them with any degree of accuracy. On an early February night while atasing for owls between midnight and 3:00 a.m. in western Howard County, N. Magnusson said she was rarely away from the sound of gabbling geese on the ground or in the air. Her gloomy (facetious) assessment was to take whatever number of geese had been submitted on Midwinter Count, double it, and it would still be undercounting them. Their numbers make them the bird equivalent of white-tailed deer—a sizeable species having an increasingly negative impact on local habitat. Gull numbers appear to have rebounded slightly from their recent all-time lows; American Crows are well below their all-time high; and Fish Crows have been hard to find on the last two Midwinter Counts.

Comparing results with the Triadelphia Christmas Count (TCC) of December 15, 2001, often gives a picture of how winter weather has affected certain species. Although there were differences within groups of birds, such as 12 species of waterfowl on TCC versus 19 on HMC, the total species count was remarkably similar: 95 TCC, 94 HMC. This happens very seldom as HMC often lags by as many as a dozen species. Numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches, Purple Finches, and Pine Siskins were almost identical—that is, extremely low. Common Merganser numbers on TCC were 20 compared to 430 on HMC which is typical because the majority do not arrive until close to the new year. Some of the species that are often heavily impacted by lengthy periods of cold temperatures and/or heavy snow cover show little variation this winter as illustrated in the chart at the end of this article.

People watching feeders spotted 35 species including 3 of the 4 Purple Finches (R. Smith, H. Stanton), and H. Stanton had the only Pine Siskin. Feeder watchers always turn up a few hawks as well as the expected seed and suet eaters.

Mary-Jo Betts capably organized the count

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and was ably assisted by the area coordinators shown in boldface on the following list. Chuck Stirrat computerized the material making it ever so much easier for Jo Solem to compile the results. Special thanks to both field and feeder counters, including those who joined us from other counties. Their efforts are all much appreciated. Field observers who provided explanatory comments on their sheets for a few species or that pinpointed raptor time and direction near area boundaries deserve a pat on the back. Martha and Don Waugh are gracious hosts for the tally which is a fitting finale to the day. We are sorry to report the recent death of Hal Simon. Hal and Zelda volunteered their home for Midwinter Count tallies two through six. Many of us remember their careful organization so everyone could be accommodated, and the cheerful camaraderie of those special evenings. What excellent hosts! The memories are as warm as some of those winter nights were cold.

We gratefully acknowledge permission to survey private or limited access property which greatly enhances the accuracy of the count: WSSC (both reservoirs and surrounding land), Alpha Ridge landfill, Mount Pleasant, the University of Maryland Central Farm, and Belmont.

Seventeenth Midwinter Count participants:  
 Area 1. Mark Wallace, Jim & Marilyn Brinkley, Lisa Colangelo, Paul Jung, Diane Nagengast (F), Kate Tufts, Dick Tufts (F), Jay Sheppard; Area 2. Nancy Magnusson, Ward Ebert, Bill Kidwell (F), Peter Oser-ton, Ron Polniaszek, Jay & Sylvia Silverman, Tom Strikerda, Paul & Sherry Zucker, Area 3. Dave & Maureen Harvey, Ralph Cullison, Darius & Paula Ecker, Linda & Lynn Holley (F), Tom Miller, Kurt Schwarz, Ben Silverstein, Robin & Will Tress; Area 4. Mike McClure, Andy & Dianne Aguilera, Bill & Karan Blum, Marge Cullison (F), Georgia Ecker (F), Grazina McClure, Connie Moore, Clyde Robinette, Romayne Smith, Susan Setterberg, Michele Stewart, Chuck Stirrat; Area 5. Doug Odernatt, John & Martha Blaisdell (F), Ellen & Hal Bryson (F), Martha Chestem, Jeff Friedhoffer, Carol Newman, Jeanne Odernatt, Fred Pierce, Suzanne Probst (F), Nanine Rhinelander, Craig Sholley, Michele Wright, Helen Zeichner; Area 6. Bonnie Ott, Stan Arnold, Mary-Jo Betts, Sue Buswell, Jane Heim (F), Emy Holdridge, Dave Kubitsky, Brigitte Lund, Janet Lydon (F), Elaine & Jeff Metter (F), Emily Miller (F), Richard Orr, Anita Picoo, Hank Stanton; Area 7. Kurt Schwarz, Jane & Dennis Cosken, John McKitterick, Sue Neri, Karla Pearce, Bob & Jo Solem, August & Eva Sunell, June Tveekrem, Don Waugh. Area coordinators are in boldface; (F) is primarily a feeder watcher. Field observers who also counted their feeders are listed as field only, if an observer counted in more than one area, they are listed once.

Reserve Saturday, February 1, 2003 for the Eighteenth Howard County Midwinter Count.

	TCC	HMC
Eastern Phoebe	3	3
Carolina Wren	342	317
Eastern Bluebird	441	461
Hermit Thrush	14	24
Gray Catbird	4	3
Brown Thrasher	4	0
Chipping Sparrow	3	0
Fox Sparrow	78	69

## MAY COUNT IS SATURDAY, MAY 11, 2002

BY PAUL ZUCKER

Since 1948, the Maryland Ornithological Society has conducted an annual May Count. Everyone is urged to join in; no matter your skill level. Identification is only part of being successful; you have to spot the bird first, so every pair of eyes helps. And, it is great fun. The compiler for Howard County is Paul Zucker. Call him at 301-270-7896 (Home) or 443-778-4971 (Office), e-mail paul.zucker@napl.edu to participate in the count. Paul will pair you up with someone else if you'd like, based on your skill level, and assign you an area to cover. Special requests are honored whenever possible. Or, if you prefer, you may contact one of the following area coordinators (listed by area, see map in the January Goldfinch): (1) Mike Kenwin 410-461-2408, (2) Paul Zucker 443-778-4971, (3) Chuck Stirrat 410-531-2477, (4) Mike McClure 410-531-2780, (5) Doug Odernatt 410-662-1812, (6) Bonnie Ott 410-461-3361, or (7) Jo Solem 301-726-5037.

**How It Works:** The county has been divided into seven areas (as for the Winter Count), each with an area coordinator. The area coordinators will assemble the parties and combine their results after the count. All parties however must make sure their day lists are delivered to the tally rally. Leaders are responsible for tracking party miles and time, names and addresses of the participants, and documentation for unusual sightings. Observers within talking or shouting distance of each other are considered one party. If two or more birders spend an hour together on foot, that constitutes one party hour; however, if one member is separated from the other for 1/2 hour, then the total is 1 1/2 party hours. All birds (including wren, Starlings, and House Sparrows) must be counted. Large flocks can be estimated. If you see something exciting outside your assigned area, make a note of the time, direction of flight, and location. The sighting can be reported to the area coordinator for that sector at the tally; and the bird may be added to the count if we are assured double counting did not take place. Keep a separate count of the hours spent owling and watching feeders. This year the state coordinator has requested those who are interested to fill out a questionnaire about the habits in their individual count areas. This form is in the March/April Yellowthroat.

For the coming five years the Maryland Breeding Bird Atlas will be in full swing. During the May birdcount, there are over 50 species that are within their "safe dates" (the enclosed checklist will indicate which ones these are). This means that any sighting of them can be used by the atlas project. A sighting of ANY species exhibiting courtship or nesting related behaviors should be recorded and submitted to the atlas project. Please consult with your area leader or an atlas block leader about the infor-

mation the atlas needs to record for each sighting. Careful notes will be needed as to the location of all atlas observations, and we are in the process of developing some labeled maps that may be of assistance. This is an extremely important project for the MOS and for the Howard chapter, and all the support provided is immensely appreciated.

**Unusual Sightings:** Any species not previously recorded in the county or listed on the enclosed checklist needs to be documented. Acceptable documentation includes the name of the person making the identification, names of all others who saw the bird, when and where it was seen, lighting conditions, optics used, behavior of the bird, time period observed, field marks, etc. Sometimes sketches help. Some examples of what is considered unusual are: Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, American Bittern, Little Blue Heron, Cattle Egret, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Glossy Ibis, Tundra Swan, Snow Goose, American Black Duck, Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Blue-winged Teal, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Greater or Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Bullhead, Red-breasted Merganser, Hooded Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Laughing Gull, Merlin, Virginia Rail, Sora, Semipalmated Plover, Upland Sandpiper, Sanderling, White-rumped Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Long-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Phalarope, Bonaparte's Gull, Caspian Tern, Forster's Tern, Barn Owl, Chuckwill's-widow, Whip-poor-will, Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, Marsh Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Gray-cheeked Bicknell's Thrush, Loggerhead Shrike, Philadelphia Vireo, Golden-winged Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Summer Tanager, Pine Siskin, Dickcissel, American Tree Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Rusty Blackbird or Purple Finch.

**The Tally Dinner!!** Everyone who participates in the count is welcome to attend the tally pot luck. If you are unable to attend, please make arrangements with your area leader or the compiler to turn in or phone in results during the count day or early that evening. Call Jan Randle at 410-531-6296 to let her know the number of people coming from your party and your choice of food to share. Non-cooks and all day counters can ask Jan for alternative suggestions. Dinner usually begins between 6:30 and 7:00 pm. The tally will begin at 8 pm. The Randles live in Braebum which is on the west side of Cedar Lane in the section north of MD 32 and south of the stoplights at Owen Brown and Freetown Roads. The entrance road to the area is Braebum Road, turn right on Lochridge and continue to first house on left after Hillbrook Drive, 6424 Lochridge Road.

### CORRECTION: BREEDING BIRD ATLAS HELPERS BY JO SOLEM

Names of the following individuals who helped assemble atlas packets on January 4, 2002 were accidentally omitted from the article in the last newsletter: Robert Brennan, Anne McEvoy, Marty Chestem, Eva Sunell, and Helen Zeichner. The help of each person was much appreciated.

### LOST HAT DESPERTELY SEEKING OWNER

A Cape May Bird Observatory denim baseball cap was lost from its owner on February 16, 2002 at the Breeding Bird Atlas training at Helen Zeichner's. Whoever's head is missing this hat, please call Helen at 410-730-3695.

**Supplemental information:**

Time Start: \_\_\_\_\_  
Time Stop: \_\_\_\_\_  
Hours on Foot: \_\_\_\_\_  
Hours by Car: \_\_\_\_\_  
Hours by Boat: \_\_\_\_\_  
Hours by Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
Hours Feeder Watching: \_\_\_\_\_

Miles on Foot: \_\_\_\_\_  
Miles by Car: \_\_\_\_\_  
Miles by Boat: \_\_\_\_\_  
Miles other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Weather:**

	Temp.	%Clouds	Wind*	Precip.
Dawn	_____	_____	_____	_____
AM	_____	_____	_____	_____
Noon	_____	_____	_____	_____
PM	_____	_____	_____	_____
Dusk	_____	_____	_____	_____
*Speed <u>and</u> Direction (e.f. NW 10, S5)				

Hours "Owling": \_\_\_\_\_ Miles "Owling": \_\_\_\_\_

Area Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_  
Party Leader: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Party Members (alphabetically):**  
(Name, Address, Phone)

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**Write-ins** (all need to be documented, however detail required will vary. All species that have not been seen more than 4 times in past 15 years are write-ins.) **OR Atlas information:**

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**Sub-Area Code:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Sub-Area Description (boundaries or location):**

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## 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, May 9 "Random Moments in Nature," by Michael Smith, photographer.

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](mailto:bonnie1163@home.com).

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](mailto: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 were 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. 11:00 p.m.

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.

May 23, Thursday. Jeff Friedhoffer, 10042 Mending Wall, Columbia, MD 21044, 410-997-5366

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2002 NEWSLETTER MATERIAL IS DUE JULY 26, 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 Dennis Ecker, 9270 Crazyquilt Court, Columbia, MD 21045, Phone 410-312-9165 or e-mail to [Paulae2156@aol.com](mailto:Paulae2156@aol.com). Also, please visit the club's site on the World Wide Web at <http://www.howardbirds.org>.

### HOWARD COUNTY ODONATE UPDATE BY JOANNE AND BOB SOLEM

The sixth year of the Howard County odonate (dragonfly and damselfly) survey produced one new species and several dozen new sites. The long-sought Gray Petaltail was seen at two locations in Patapsco Valley State Park raising the county species total to 89. The Centennial Park list added one species (Sweetflag Spreadwing) to bring that list to 50. Font Hill Wetland Park added Least Clubtail for a total of 52 species. Both parks have been surveyed since 1996. The Middle Patuxent Environmental Area in its third survey year reached 44 species.

During 2001 several of the county's more unusual species were spotted and, in some cases, photographed. Special species included Black-tipped Damier (not seen since 1997), Brown, Tiger, and Tiger-spotted spiketails (all second or third records), and Stripe-winged

Baskettail (a second location).

Our thanks to Howard County Recreation and Parks for land access as well as helpful personnel. Thanks also to WSSC for access to land surrounding the reservoirs (although no species were added in 2001). Many people provided sightings, cast skins, photographs, or assistance: Richard Orr, keeper of the Maryland list, was an invaluable support; Sue Muller provided some great photographs of unusual sightings with the Rec and Parks digital camera; Nancy Magnusson had one of the petaltail sightings; Sue Neri kept an eye and her camera trained on Lake Elkhorn odonates; Bonnie Ott supplied a late date for Swamp Damier when one flew into her kitchen—and an even later date when one rested on her infamous Bradford pear; Sue Probst helped survey the pond at Belmont while checking her bluebird trail; Ward Ebert

spotted a Tiger Spiketail along the stream in his yard; Kurt Schwarz pointed out some attractive ponds; June Tveekrem began using her digital camera to good effect; Michele Wright, Jane and Dennis Coskren, Jay Sheppard, and Kate Tufts supplied sightings.

All county sightings and locations are computerized and mapped. Check the Howard County and Maryland species list on the Bird Club's web page: <http://www.howardbirds.org>.

Join the fun. While you're afield, keep an eye out for interesting wetland habitats and odonates. Call or e-mail your finds to Bob or Jo at 301-725-5037 or [odonata@msn.com](mailto:odonata@msn.com).

# HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

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## CONSERVATION COLUMN

BY BOB SOLEM

Every year the Maryland legislature meets for 90 days, ending its annual session after the due date for this column. And every year there are some important pieces of legislation affecting the environment and our response to it. This year is no exception. But since the session has not yet ended, I can't report on what ultimately happened.

What is clear is that we have a Lame Duck Governor who no longer has the clout he had in previous years, and Maryland has a budget deficit that will be solved by cutting nearly everyone's programs below what they feel is the absolute minimum needed. So on that happy note, let's look at what has happened so far. For more current information, read your daily newspaper.

The Wildlands Bills, protecting another 4200 acres of mature and old growth forest in the Savage River State Forest from further logging, have passed in both the House and Senate; the Governor is expected to sign the legislation.

Atlantic Coastal Plains Protection Act (HB 301, to give Maryland's coastal bays the same protection the Chesapeake Bay has) does not seem to be going anywhere. There has been no House action since the committee hearing February 20. But there also has been no action on a competing bill (HB 1183, which leaves all protection up to Worcester County—the county which benefits from unlimited development of the coastal bays), so it may be that *status quo*

will prevail—meaning no legislation on coastal bays for the second year.

Deer management and Sunday hunting sailed through the House with little trouble, even getting the support of Delegate Liz Bobo, but it may not have the same success in the Senate, which responds to its own political winds. There is no indication at the time this is being written of the possible Senate action. The final hope (consistent with the MOS testimony before the House) is that the Governor would veto any bill opening up deer hunting on Sundays.

Budget cuts to the tune of as much as \$101 million were still pending when this was written. Such drastic cuts would devastate Program Open Space, Rural Legacy, and GreenPrint, which protect farmland and open spaces from development by purchasing the land or the development rights. Cuts that are part of the \$101 million are also proposed affecting the state's land conservation, Smart Growth, resource conservation, and environmental enforcement programs. As our MOS Conservation Committee points out, the health of our economy and our environment are closely linked—one of Maryland's best assets is its quality of life and beautiful natural resources like the Chesapeake Bay. Maintaining the integrity of these programs is important to the health of our environment and the quality of life for all Marylanders.

## POTLUCK THANKS

BY MARY-JO BETTS

Once again, our Potluck Dinner was a great success. Thanks to everyone who brought such delicious dishes, as well as those who presented such outstanding slide programs. I want to give a special thank you to all of you who every year, volunteer your services to make the dinner so enjoyable for the rest of us. On the top of this list is Marty Chestern, who every year produces her personalized birdy placemats that we all look forward to. I also want to thank the many members who were kind enough to come early and help set up the room, as well as helping to clean up after. This year, these special friends really came through for me and pitched in to bring many of our key items including, drinks, ice, slide screen, door prizes, the list goes on and on. These amazing people include: *Marty Chestern, the Cullison's, Karen Darcy, the Ecker's, the Friedhoffer's, Carol Garza, the Harvey's, Kevin Helfeman, Emory Holmridge, the Holley's, Dave Holyoke, Bonnie Ott, the Probst's, the Solem's, Chuck Stirrat, Eva Sunell, the Tufts', the Waught's, and Helen Zeichner.* We also want to thank The Franklin's from the Wildlife Authority for their generous door prize donation.

For the second year in a row there was a record number in attendance. And again this year the dishes and slides were more sensational than I can ever remember. With the great food, fabulous slides, fantastic company and conversation, I will look forward to joining all of you next year for another wonderful time.

