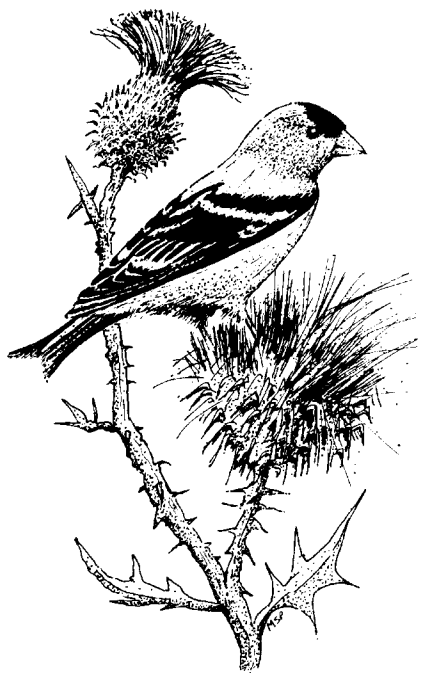


The Goldfinch

Newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club • A Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society



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Anyone is welcome to contribute articles or ideas which you think will be of interest to other birders. Copy may be mailed, or e-mailed to Dave Holyoke
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Please visit the Club's website at
www.howardbirds.org

SUMMARY OF THE 2003 HOWARD COUNTY FALL COUNT

BY MIKE MCCLURE AND CHUCK STIRRAT

The tenth annual Howard County Fall Count was conducted on September 20, 2003. In spite of what was agreed by all to have been a very slow day of birding, 121 total species were observed. Comparison totals for the prior 9 years are as follows: high, 136 on 9/19/1998; low, 113 on 9/20/1997; average, 126 species. The number of participants and parties (49 and 30 respectively) showed a slight variation from last year's (58 and 33 respectively). The totals for party miles and hours are shown on the tally sheet. The participants covered about 10% fewer hours and 20% fewer miles than were recorded last year. This decrease is most likely due to the passage on the preceding Thursday of hurricane *Isabel*. The total of individual birds tallied was 10,036, which sets a new low. Compare this to prior years: high, 26,651 on 9/17/1994; previous low, 14,600 on 9/16/2000; and average, 18,803 birds. Finally, there were 26 fall warbler species identified compared to prior years (high, 30; low, 18; average, 26 species).

Saturday's temperature ranged from the low 60's to the high 80's. The humidity was uncomfortable (dew point: 56-72 degrees) thanks to the remnant weather pattern of hurricane *Isabel*. Most areas were extremely wet due to the above normal rainfall (11.25 inches for the year through September 20, compared with 9.36 inches below normal for last year through September 21). In short, it was a miserable day in the field for the counters, both because of the weather and because the birds were few and far between.

Ten years of data is, at best, a limited database. But it's still interesting to look at some preliminary trends and watch these trends as new data is added with future counts. The data has been reviewed from 1994 through 2003 for "total species," "total birds," "total warbler species," and "total warblers." The yearly trends (1994-2003) for total species and total warbler species appear to be declining, but at a very slow rate. The yearly trend for total birds and total warblers, however, appears to show a clear decline. This is at least in agreement with what most birders are already seeing in the field regardless of the day. These same four quantities were reviewed by day during the count window of September (15-21) as well as by area (1-7). On average, the birding appears to be slightly better early in the count window and in the eastern portion of the county.

The accompanying table presents the count data. There were 19 species for which there was only one bird sighted countywide. There were 12 species for which there were only two birds sighted countywide. Species showing moderately high numbers were: Canada Goose, 720; European Starling, 1,406; and Rock Pigeon, 855. Finally, for only the second time during the fall count, Northern Rough-winged Swallow was sighted. That honor goes to counters in area 7.

Thanks to all participants and those who acted as area coordinators for the count: Stan Arnold, Randy Beaton, Karan & Bill Blum (Area 4),

(Fall Count Summary continues on page 2.)

HOWARD COUNTY FALL BIRD COUNT—SEPTEMBER 20, 2003

Species	Totals	Species	Totals	Species	Totals	Species	Totals
· Pied-billed Grebe	1	· Belted Kingfisher	13	· Brown Thrasher	31	· Northern Cardinal	613
· Double-crested Cormorant	13	· Red-bellied Woodpecker	170	· European Starling	1,406	· Rose-breasted Grosbeak	11
· Great Blue Heron	34	· Downy Woodpecker	121	· Cedar Waxwing	11	· Indigo Bunting	69
· Great Egret	3	· Hairy Woodpecker	15	· Blue-winged Warbler	5	· Bobolink	1
· Green Heron	14	· Northern(Yellow-sh'd) Flicker	91	· Tennessee Warbler	7	· Red-winged Blackbird	10
· Black Vulture	125	· Pileated Woodpecker	24	· Nashville Warbler	4	· Eastern Meadowlark	1
· Turkey Vulture	214	· Eastern Wood-Pewee	28	· Northern Parula	17	· Common Grackle	366
· Canada Goose	720	Empidonax species	16	· Yellow Warbler	1	· Brown-headed Cowbird	5
· Mute Swan	1	· Eastern Phoebe	45	· Chestnut-sided Warbler	12	blackbird species	3
· Wood Duck	21	· Eastern Kingbird	2	· Magnolia Warbler	68	· Baltimore Oriole	2
· Mallard	175	· White-eyed Vireo	32	· Cape May Warbler	1	· House Finch	96
· Blue-winged Teal	6	· Blue-headed Vireo	2	· Blk.-thrt'd. Blue Warbler	24	· American Goldfinch	302
· Green-winged Teal	8	· Yellow-throated Vireo	3	· Yel.-rump'd (Myrtle) Warbler	1	· House Sparrow	363
· Osprey	10	· Red-eyed Vireo	55	· Blk.-thrt'd. Green Warbler	51	Area Total Birds:	10,036
· Bald Eagle [ad/im/unk]	1	· Blue Jay	493	· Blackburnian Warbler	6	Area Total Species:	121
· Northern Harrier	1	· American Crow	115	· Pine Warbler	7		
· Sharp-shinned Hawk	7	· Fish Crow	13	· Prairie Warbler	2		
· Cooper's Hawk	12	crow species	73	· Palm Warbler	6	Supplemental Data	
accipiter species	2	· Tree Swallow	23	· Bay-breasted Warbler	2	Time Start:	6:00 a
· Red-shouldered Hawk	41	· N. Rough-winged Swallow	20	· Blackpoll Warbler	3	Time Stop:	7:50 p
· Broad-winged Hawk	39	· Bank Swallow	1	· Black-&-white Warbler	18	Hours on Foot:	132.6
· Red-tailed Hawk	15	· Cliff Swallow	2	· American Redstart	38	Hours by Car:	19.6
· American Kestrel	12	· Barn Swallow	22	· Worm-eating Warbler	1	Miles on Foot:	101.2
· Merlin	1	· Carolina Chickadee	229	· Ovenbird	9	Miles by Car:	198.4
· Killdeer	17	· Tufted Titmouse	177	· Northern Waterthrush	2	Hours Feeder Watching:	8.0
· Lesser Yellowlegs	1	· White-breasted Nuthatch	89	· Louisiana Waterthrush	1	Hours Stationary:	4.0
· Solitary Sandpiper	2	· Carolina Wren	165	· Common Yellowthroat	57	Hours "Owling":	.5
· Spotted Sandpiper	2	· House Wren	24	· Hooded Warbler	1	Miles "Owling":	.5
· Ring-billed Gull	27	· Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2	· Yellow-breasted Chat	1		
· Caspian Tern	3	· Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	8	warbler species	17	Total Observers in Area:	49
· Rock Pigeon	855	· Eastern Bluebird	64	· Scarlet Tanager	10	Total Parties in Area:	30
· Mourning Dove	380	· Veery	1	· Eastern Towhee	42	Total No. of Feederwatchers:	
· Black-billed Cuckoo	2	· Gray-cheeked Thrush	1	· Chipping Sparrow	61	Total Party-Hours (Reg.):	152.2
· Yellow-billed Cuckoo	3	· Swainson's Thrush	1	· Field Sparrow	24	Total Party-Hours (Feeder):	8.0
· Barred Owl	2	· Wood Thrush	10	· Savannah Sparrow	15	Total Party-Hours (Station'y):	4.0
· Common Nighthawk	2	· American Robin	448	· Song Sparrow	63	Total Party-Hours (Owling):	.5
· Chimney Swift	179	· Gray Catbird	435	· Lincoln's Sparrow	2	Total Party-Hours:	164.7
· Ruby-throated Hummingbird	13	· Northern Mockingbird	143	sparrow species	27	Total Party-Miles:	299.6

FALL COUNTY SUMMARY (Continued from page 1.)

Marty Chestem, Lisa Colangelo, Dennis Coskren, Jane Coskren, Ralph Cullison III, Jaime Dantzler, Karen Darcy, Ward Ebert, John Finedore, Jeffrey A. Friedhoffer, **Kevin Heffernan (Area 3)**, Dave Holyoke, Marcus James, Michael Kerwin, Cecilia Leumas, Mike Leumas, Brigitte Lund, Janet Lydon, Nancy Magnusson, Grazina McClure, **Mike McClure (County Co-coordinator)**, Elayne Metter, Jeff Metter, Barry Miller, Carol Newman, Richard L. Orr, **Bonnie Ott (Area 6)**, Anita Picco, **Ron Polniaszek (Area 2)**, Susan Polniaszek, Suzanne Probst,

Clyde Robinette, **Kurt Schwarz (Area 5)**, Romayne Smith, Bob Solem, Jo Solem, Pat (Michelle) Stewart, **Chuck Stirrat (County Co-coordinator)**, **Eva Sunell (Area 7)**, Robin Todd, June Tveekrem, Marilyn Veek, **Mark Wallace (Area 1)**, Don Waugh, Martha Waugh, Helen Zeichner, Paul Zucker. A very special thanks to Don and Martha Waugh who hosted the evening tally.

This tenth fall count provided an enjoyable, although difficult, time in the field for the participants, and of course there was the usual

camaraderie at the evening tally. Plan now to join us on a future seasonal count and, if possible, attend the tally as well.

Next year the fall count will be held on the 3rd Saturday of September, which will be the 18th.



BIG SIT! 2003 BY KURT SCHWARZ

Dawn arrived to an unusual sight on October 12—TWO Big Sitters in place on the south shore of Centennial Lake. The newly dubbed “Go Away Birders” were at it again. Ralph had arrived about 6:45 to a hooting Great Horned Owl. He had also noted a Greater Yellowlegs that put in a few more appearances during the day. Our fearless captain finally drifted in shortly after 7:00 with doughnuts in tow (the day would culminate with a total of nine Big Sitters).

A more-or-less clear day dawned. There were some high cirrus clouds off and on during the day. Temperatures were cool in the 40s, warming into the 70s by day's end. Light southerly winds kept raptor numbers down, but, oddly, raptors were the only highlight of the day.

The species total for the day was 41, only two better than our all-time low in 2002 of 39. The high count was 55 on 2000. Aside from the Great Horned Owl and Greater Yellowlegs, other highlights were Northern Harrier, both accipiters, several Broad-wingeds, a high-flying Osprey, and an awesome low-soaring Red-tail. Ward noted two late Chimney Swifts. Warblers were limited to abundant Yellow-rumpeds, and a single male Common Yellowthroat seen through a scope.

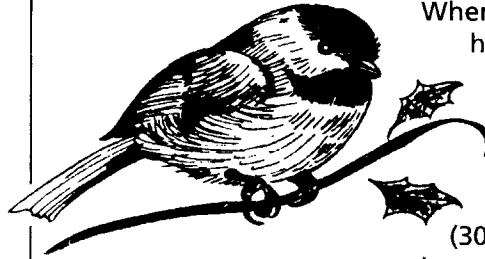
The Big Sit! phenomenon is spreading in Maryland. This year there were circles at Black Hills, Jug Bay, Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge, Fort McHenry, and Assateague. With the proliferation of Sits, the Centennial Sit may go into hiatus for 2004.

Species noted:

Great Blue Heron
Black Vulture
Turkey Vulture
Canada Goose
Mallard
Osprey
Northern Harrier
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper's Hawk
Broad-winged Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Greater Yellowlegs
Mourning Dove
Great Horned Owl
Chimney Swift

Belted Kingfisher
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Blue Jay
American Crow
Fish Crow
Carolina Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
Carolina Wren
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
American Robin
Gray Catbird
Northern Mockingbird
European Starling
Cedar Waxwing
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
Eastern Towhee
Song Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
Northern Cardinal
Red-winged Blackbird
Brown-headed Cowbird
American Goldfinch
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

HOLIDAY SHOPPING?



When doing your holiday shopping, why not consider a few purchases from the club's bookstore? If you have something in particular you are searching for, contact **Ann Marie Raterman** (301 847-1958) and ask if she can get that perfect item for you.

MEMBER APPRECIATION BY KURT SCHWARZ

As I noted in the last newsletter, the club requires the efforts of many members to continue functioning. Last time, we noted the efforts of our Bird Seed Sale Coordinator, Eileen Clegg. But there are many members whose contributions are somewhat less public. This month, I would like to acknowledge and thank the long-standing, long-unrecognized contribution of Ralph Geuder. Ralph has been our liaison with Howard County schools, and is the one who books our use of Longfellow Elementary. He has arranged every meeting with the school since I've been a member and, no doubt, long before that. All this he has done on his own initiative, unbidden by the president or chapter board. In addition, Ralph has provided me with helpful advice in dealing with the school administration. The most recent example was when I wanted to register a complaint about the Arctic conditions we had to endure during last winter's meetings. Ralph continues to book the space, and provide advice on dealing with the schools, and, to my knowledge, has never received a public thanks therefore. So, many thanks, Ralph!

2003 ANNUAL LISTS DUE BY JANE COSKREN

A list of all the birds seen in the county during the 2003 calendar year is being compiled for the 24th consecutive year. Did we break any records this year? Only you can help us decide. Assemble your sightings for the year (even if the list was compiled in your neighborhood or your yard) and mail to **Jane Coskren**, 6324 Sandchain Road, Columbia MD 21045 any time after December 31, but not later than March 3, 2004. The length of the list isn't important because your list may contain the bird that will make 2003 a year for the record books.

SUMMER BIRD RECORDS JUNE 1 TO JULY 31, 2003

BY JOANNE SOLEM

Although the summer season is the shortest on the birding calendar, it encompasses the most intense breeding activity. This year featured frequent rain (4 inches above normal in June alone), cloudy skies, high humidity, and lush vegetation. What a contrast to last year's extended drought and record high temperatures! The cool, wet spring extended migration into summer. Late nestings were almost the norm, although some pairs probably were re-nesting after early weather-related failures.

Atlas observers again established some special records. The first verified Bank Swallow colony in decades was particularly exciting, and a second county Bald Eagle's nest was an unanticipated but pleasant surprise. Red-headed Woodpeckers were confirmed in the Damascus Northeast atlas block; but alas, it was a Carroll County portion of the block (great find anyway, Bob).

An early migrant Pied-billed Grebe showed up on Lake Elkhorn 7/19 (SN). Double-crested Cormorants were reported from 6/2 (Lake Kittamaqundi 2 and Wilde Lake 4) through early July (HZ).

A Least Bittern startled observers at UMDCF 6/2 (BO,EH,JS) and 6/4 (JC,NM)—probably the same one present on 5/21. The Great Blue Heron colony continued with at least 12 nests at Vantage Point and five at Lake Kittamaqundi, though only three of the five at the lake were successful (MC,HZ). The last easily visible nestling finally fledged during the first week of August; unfortunately, dense vegetation prevented an accurate count of nestlings. The large dead nest tree on the island at the lake came down in a storm the last week of August (MJ; SPt). A Great Egret was present at Fore Bay Pond 7/5 to 7/9 (SN; JC). Green Herons are regular nesters in the county, but the nests are surprisingly difficult to locate. A pair nested in a yard in

Burleigh Manor where nestlings were photographed in early July (SL). A lone Black-crowned Night-Heron was spotted flying west over Clarksville northeast of Md 32/108 on 6/10 (JC,JS). All other sightings were at Lake Kittamaqundi 7/20 (SN) and Wilde Lake 6/2–2 (1 ad.) and occasionally all summer (HZ,SPe,CN).

A male Wood Duck was sighted sporadically from 6/23 to 7/28 at Fore Bay Pond (SN; MSt). Two Ring-necked Ducks lingered into the summer at Lake Elkhorn. On 6/9 both were reported (JC,JS), but by 6/19 the male had disappeared (SN). The female stayed at least until 7/24 (SN).

An Osprey was soaring over Coca-Cola Dr 6/16 (JC,JMa,J&RS); another was seen in June and mid-July at Waterford Farm, Jennings Chapel Rd (*vide* MW). June brought a report of a Bald Eagle's nest on Duckett Reservoir, Howard County. It was discovered by a WSSC officer while on a boat patrol. Officer Pitts reported that he had seen a nestling exercising its wings on the edge of the nest, probably in early June (*pers. com.* JS).

Breeding Cooper's Hawks continued to increase which is a major change since the last atlas. The notable rise in their summer numbers has coincided with a disappearance of breeding Broad-winged Hawks. Although the habitat changes in the county have been dramatic in the last two decades, one wonders if there are other factors affecting the presence and breeding success of Broad-winged. An observer related that during the summer a Red-shouldered Hawk regularly perched in a tree behind his yard. One day he watched a Cooper's Hawk occupy a nearby branch eyeing the buteo. The accipiter raised its feathers until it "looked like a porcupine" and then flew at the Red-shouldered Hawk chasing it through several yards. The Red-shouldered has not returned (GC). If adult Red-shouldered

Hawks can be intimidated by Cooper's Hawks, surely Broad-winged, which are somewhat smaller, could also be dominated by this aggressive accipiter.

A Wild Turkey was reported four times between late June and 8 July from Mt. Albert Rd (M&GMc). A Virginia Rail was a pleasant surprise at UMDCF 6/3 (JC,JS) and 6/4 (BO,EH). The last two migrant Common Nighthawks were over Wilde Lake 6/2 (HZ). A Spotted Sandpiper stayed at Fore Bay Pond until 6/5 (JW). The two July sightings (probably fall migrants) were along the Patapsco: 7/13 Daniels (JHa) and 7/26 east of Marriottsville (JW). A Least Flycatcher 7/20 at Mt. Pleasant was an unusual summer find (BO,RC). Horned Larks continued in a field along A.E. Mullinix Rd 6/10 (JC,JS).

An ornithological treat and a direct result of the atlas effort was the discovery of a nesting colony of Bank Swallows. Erosion created a 10 feet-deep dry gully on undeveloped industrial property west of Coca-Cola Dr. which proved to be an apt location for a colony. The first few nest holes were discovered in early June (JMa). By 6/16, there were 6 entrance holes, (JMa, J&RS,JC); on 6/19 the number was up to 12 (JMa); and 6/23 there were 20 in two clusters 50 feet apart (J&RS,JTv). The nest tunnels were in perpendicular embankments 1 1/2 to 2 feet from the top. All were in the same stratum which may have been the most easily excavated of the sediments. The site was photographed* (JTv). This was the first nesting in the county in decades, certainly the first verified with a photographic record.

Purple Martin boxes can be used by many cavity nesters. The following species attempted or succeeded in nesting in a box near Trotter Rd: Great Crested Flycatcher (nest with egg, unsuccessful), Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Eastern Bluebird (fledgling), and House Sparrow (MW).

(*Summer Bird Records continues on page 5.*)

SUMMER BIRD RECORDS (Continued from page 4.)

An almost entirely white Gray Catbird (dark on the throat and in the tail) returned for a second year to Longfellow, west Columbia (MC,SP,HZ). Cedar Waxwings occasionally build spring nests, but are often among the latest breeders. A pair at UMDCF was nest building 7/31 (BO,EH).

A pair of Blue-winged Warblers was feeding young along the Patapsco east of Sykesville 7/6 (JBy). More Blackpoll Warblers and American Redstarts than usual extended migration into June: Blackpoll—6/2 Manahan Dr. 1 (BO), 6/2 Wilde Lake 1 (HZ), 6/3 Fulton schools 3 (JC,JS), 6/5 Fore Bay Pond 1 (JW), 6/5 Hollifield E.S. 2 (JC,JS), and 6/6 Dunteachin' Farm 1 (JC,JS); American

Redstart—6/3 Hammond Village (JS), 6/6 Dunteachin' Farm (JC,JS), and 6/9 Centennial (SN).

Several Savannah Sparrows singing in a clover field on A.E. Mullinix Rd. 6/10 appeared to be nesting although breeding was not confirmed (JC,JS). The UMDCF on 6/2 produced a Swamp Sparrow (which had been seen on 5/25) and a Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow (BO,EH,JS)—a credit to the increasingly excellent wetland habitat between the swale and the river.

A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was reported from Meadowbrook in mid-July (*vide* BO). Relatively unusual was the Brown-headed Cowbird egg in a Carolina Wren nest in a garage in Hammond Village (GC). The wrens abandoned the nest eventually.

Observers: JBy—Joe Byrnes, GC—George Chase, MC—Martha Chestem, JC—Jane Coskren, RC—Ralph Cullison, III, JHa—Joe Halloran, EH—Emy Holdridge, MJa—Marcus James, SL—Suzanne Lisiewski, NM—Nancy Magnusson, JMa—John Maloney, M&GMC—Mike & Grazina McClure, SN—Sue Neri, CN—Carol Newman, BO—Bonnie Ott, SPe—Sherry Peruzzi, SPr—Suzanne Probst, JS—Jo Solem, RS—Robert Solem, MSt—Michelle Stewart, JTv—June Tveekrem, MW—Mark Wallace, JW—Jim Wilkinson, HZ—Helen Zeichner.

UMDCF—University of Maryland Central Farm

*photographs posted at www.howardbirds.org

'Twas the Night Before Bird Count

by Connie Bockstie (*with apologies to Clement C. Moore*)

Twas the night before Bird Count—suffice it to say every birder in Howard was primed for the day. Binoculars hung by the front door with care In hopes that those warblers soon would be there. There were birders aplenty all snug in their beds While visions of "avians" danced in their heads. And Marty in her 'jammies and blue birding cap Was deeply engrossed in a long peaceful nap.

When out on the street there arose such a clatter She fell out of bed seeing what was the matter. She ran to the window and tilted the blind. (She wasn't too certain just what she would find.)

The day was just dawning as she squinted to see What all the commotion could possibly be. When what to her sleep-weary eyes should appear But Helen, her buddy, in top birding gear: With her 10-40 Zeiss and her scope at the ready, Attached to a tripod—'twas sleek, strong and steady.

More rapid than eagles, MORE birders now came. As their numbers increased, Helen called them by name. "On Marty," she shouted, "On Suzy and Connie, On Nancy, on Jo and Jane, Emy and Bonnie. To the fields, lakes and woods—north, southeast and west, Go birders! Go birders! Now give it your best!"

As rare birds that before the wild hurricane fly When they meet with a "lister" mount up to the sky, So those birders dispersed—off this way and that. First one had a Red-tail; another a Chat. Then warblers aplenty and grosbeaks...a bunting! And sparrows and towhees, all there for the hunting. Birds flying and soaring on thermals in air; Birds perching and bathing—all noted with care. Birds skulking and hiding and so hard to see Just what in the world they could possibly be.

Birds flaunting and strutting and clearly in sight; Birds down on the ground and birds at a great height. There were birds seldom seen and birds that were dull: Like hundreds of Mallards and one White-winged gull. Some birds were expected and some were surprises. There were birds of all colors, all shapes and all sizes. And the birders themselves were great to behold: Some birders were young and some birders were old. Some birders were loners and some liked a crowd. Some birders were quiet; some birders were loud. Some birders were veterans and some were beginners. (But BIRDING is such that all birders are WINNERS!)

Their lists grew and grew as the birds came and went And before they all knew it—the whole day was spent! They wearily trudged to the tally at last. Though dirty and tired—it'd sure been a blast! All ate, drank and laughed, 'twas a wonderful party. But wait, just a sec—where were Helen and Marty? Then suddenly at the door both of them stood. You could Tell by their smiles that they'd found something GOOD! "Well," Marty exclaimed in her soft little way, "We saw lots of birds. 'Twas a wonderful day! And then I stopped home just to drop off my pack, And there in my backyard I saw something black. You wouldn't believe it—so I brought in the bird!" (And in a small bag "birdy" sounds could be heard.) She opened the bag to reveal a short tail, And then a red eye, and then—a Black Rail!

In all that large crowd not a sound could be heard— Every eye in the place was upon that small bird. Marty opened the door then and off the rail flew, And all that was left was his loud "Kik Kee Do."

And there is a legend that exists to this day:
The Black Rail still shows up at Marty's each May!

2004 MOS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

BY JEAN FRY

The Maryland Ornithological Society is now accepting applications from Maryland teachers, park rangers and youth leaders for scholarships to attend summer ecology and ornithology workshops. The National Audubon Society holds these workshops at its camps in Maine, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. Each grant covers the cost of tuition, room and board for an intensive six-day course of field study and instruction in ecology, ornithology, conservation, and natural history. The value of each scholarship ranges from \$600 to \$900. Travel expenses are the responsibility of the recipient.

Each year approximately ten scholarships are awarded. Brochures from the camps are not available until January, so specific dates for camps are not known until then. General descriptions of the content of workshops may be obtained from the scholarship chairperson, MOS chapter presidents, or MOS chapter representatives. Notification is made by early March. MOS requires that its scholarship recipients work with young people. This includes teachers, camp counselors, park rangers, students, and others who intend to make nature education a part of their careers. Applicants need not be members of MOS, but they must be endorsed by a chapter or a member of MOS. Applicants must be 18 years of age or older. Each candidate must submit:

1. A letter stating how the candidate's Audubon experience will be used to develop in young people an appreciation of our wild heritage and a sense of responsibility for the care and quality of our natural resources and environment.
2. Two letters of recommendation from individuals who know of the candidate's interests, activities, abilities, and potential. One of these letters should be from either a member of MOS or an MOS chapter. It is extremely helpful if the letters cite specific activities, accomplishments, or projects in which the applicant was involved, in addition to personal qualities.
3. A current resume.

Applications for the 2004 workshops are due by January 31, 2004. Please submit applications and questions to

Jean Fry,
Chairperson of the MOS Scholarship Committee,
1202 Ridge Road,
Pylesville, MD 21132.
Phone: 410-452-8539; E-mail: ffrj1@aol.com.

SPARROW BIG DAY

BY BONNIE OTT

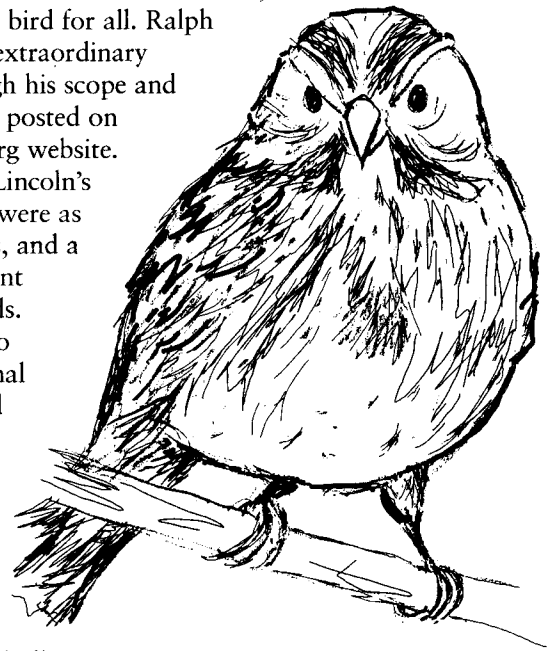
On the morning of October 4, 10 brave souls set out in the rain to search Howard County for sparrows. A bit early for big numbers of sparrows yet, but we did find 70 species so everyone was happy. Two American Bitterns were a treat and a Peregrine Falcon, a Merlin and American Kestrels satisfied us on the falcons. A Sora and Wilson's Snipe were flushed and we had a flyover adult Red-headed Woodpecker and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (which was a fall first for most.) Nine Tree Swallows swirled around in the rain, and a couple Horned Larks disappeared into the dirt. We didn't have many warblers, but the best were Cape May, Wilson's and Nashville and—get ready—a half dozen Yellow-rumped Warblers. A very young Blue Grosbeak was among the masses of Indigo Buntings.

We were, however, looking for sparrows, and although the numbers weren't great we did have nice diversity. I can finally relax since we found a DROP DEAD GORGEOUS adult Lark Sparrow!!! This was a lifer, state or county bird for all. Ralph Cullison took extraordinary pictures through his scope and they have been posted on howardbirds.org website.

We saw three Lincoln's Sparrows that were as cute as buttons, and a couple of elegant White-crowns.

There were also some exceptional White-throated Sparrows (always glad to have them back!) Savannahs were zipping around and Swamps were skulking.

Some Field Sparrows looked quite surprised and of course, we saw our friendly Song Sparrows (I wonder how many of the 56 sub-species we saw?) It was a memorable day for all 10 birders!



Bluebird Feeder In Search of Bluebirds

By Lisa Colangelo

I have a bluebird feeder in perfectly good condition that would be free to a good home. My bluebirds just never took to it and I ended up feeding the mockingbirds. If you want it call me at 410-489-4287 to pick it up, or I can bring it to a club meeting.

RENEW, RENEW, RENEW

Don't forget, if you have not already done so, it is time to renew your membership. Please complete and return the membership application that was included in the last issue of the newsletter. If you need another copy of the application, contact **Bob Solem** (301-725-5037) or download a form from the Howard Bird Club web page (<http://www.howardbirds.org/PDF/application.pdf>)

CALENDAR OF PROGRAMS AND FIELD TRIPS


PROGRAMS are held at **Longfellow Elementary School**, 5470 Hesperus Drive, Columbia. Meeting is cancelled if schools are closed for any reason. Hospitality session and bookstore begin at 7:30 p.m. Meeting/program begins at 8:00 p.m. For further information, call **Kurt Schwarz** at 410-461-1643.


Thursday, November 13 "A Southern Oceans Expedition: Scenery and Wildlife of the Antarctic Peninsula and South Georgia and Falkland Islands," by Phil and Barbara Davis. Phil and Barbara are former club members who owned the Columbia Wild Bird Center from 1990-1995. Phil also serves as secretary of the MOS MD/DC Records Committee.

Thursday, December 11 "An International Birder's Odyssey," by Hank Kaestner. Hank is a spice buyer and consultant. He will once again share good birds and interesting stories from this year's trips to Indonesia, Australia, Madagascar, Finland, Brazil and other exotic places.


FIELD TRIPS are a great way to improve birding skills, explore new places and meet other birders. Plan to arrive at the meeting area with enough time to be prepared to begin birding at the designated time. Carpooling is encouraged. Come prepared with appropriate footwear and gear (the trip description will offer advice). The leader has the option to cancel due to inclement weather. Directions for trips not on ADC maps may be found on the howard-birds.org website. If you have questions, call or e-mail the trip leader at the number/ address listed in the trip description, or field trip coordinator, **Bonnie Ott**, 410-461-3361 or bonnieott@verizon.net

To help make trips successful please stay behind the leader, keep talking to a minimum and stay with the group. Don't hesitate to ask questions or alert the leader to something you've spotted. Howard Bird Club members will be given priority on trips that are limited by number of participants. No pets.


 **BON SECOURS**
Nov. 1, Saturday. 1.5 hours. 9:30 a.m.
Meet in visitor's parking lot.
Leaders—Michele Wright, 410-465-6057, and Eva Sunell, 410-995-0029.
Easy walk through the lovely grounds of this spiritual center. Woodlands and fields will host a variety of birds.
Facilities available.


 **CENTENNIAL PARK**
Nov. 2, Sunday. 3 hours. 8:00 a.m.
Meet at west end lot.
Leader—Ralph Cullison, 410-442-2181
Easy 2-mile walk around lake on paved path. Migrant hawks expected and late passerines may be lingering.
Facilities available.

SANDY POINT STATE PARK
(Joint trip with Kent County.)
Nov. 8, Saturday. Half Day. 7:00 a.m.
Meet at Rt. 100 park-and-ride.
Leader—Walter Ellison.
Easy walking on paths and sand. A great location for waterfowl and gulls. Scopes useful. (Call Bonnie for information 410-461-3361.)
Facilities available.

 **CENTENNIAL PARK**
Nov. 9, Sunday. 3 hours. 8:00 a.m.
Meet at west end lot.
Leader—Harry Fink, 410-988-8008.
Easy 2 mile-walk around lake on paved path. Some waterfowl possible and hawks still passing through.
Facilities available.

PINEY RUN IN CARROLL COUNTY
(Joint trip with Carroll County.)
Nov. 15, Saturday. Half Day. 8:00 a.m.
Meet at 32/70 park-and-ride.
Leader—Bob Ringler.
Easy walk through the woodlands and fields of the Carroll County park. The lake hosts a variety of waterfowl. Scopes useful. (Call Bonnie for information 410-461-3361.)
Facilities available.

 **CENTENNIAL PARK**
Nov. 16, Sunday. 3 hours. 8:00 a.m.
Meet at west end lot.
Leader—Kurt Schwarz, 410-461-1643.
Easy 2-mile walk around lake on paved path. Waterfowl expected and late migrant hawks.
Facilities available.

 =Great for beginning birders

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

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

November 20, Thursday
(Note: this is the **third** Thursday.)
Kurt Schwarz
9045 Dunloggin Court
Ellicott City, 21042 • 410-461-1643

December: No board meeting

CENTENNIAL PARK

Nov. 23, Sunday. 3 hours. 8:00 a.m.
Meet at west end lot.
Leader—Richard Orr, 410-730-7290.
Easy 2-mile walk around lake on paved path. Waterfowl expected and winter arrivals possible. Facilities available.

BLACKWATER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Dec. 7, Sunday. All Day. 7:00 a.m.
Meet at the Rt. 32 and Broken Land Parkway park-and-ride.
Leader—Stan Arnold, 410-768-0155.
Visit this Maryland refuge during their open house weekend. Dress very warmly. Bring lunch, snacks and drinks. The majority of the trip will be driving through the wildlife loop of the refuge. Facilities available.

START YOUR 2004 BIRD LIST

Jan. 1, 2004, Thursday. ? to Full Day. 8:00 a.m.
Meet at the Centennial Park boat ramp.
(Call Bonnie for information 410-461-3361)
We'll spend the morning searching the county for as many species as possible. The trip will focus on the Columbia lakes with easy walking involved. If the weather and birding cooperate we will stop for lunch at a local restaurant and head out to Triadelphia Reservoir for the afternoon.
Facilities available.

MARTIN LUTHER KING WEEKEND

Jan. 17-19, 2004, Saturday to Monday
3-day Maryland Eastern Shore birding extravaganza. Limit of 16
Details in the January-February newsletter.

MIDWINTER COUNT

Feb. 7, 2004, Saturday



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB
Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society
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 Columbia, MD 21044
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CONSERVATION COLUMN
"INVASIVE PLANTS SERIES" BY BOB SOLEM

An excellent source book, from which this column is taken, is *Plant Invaders of the Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas* (J. Swearingen, K. Reschelittoff, B. Slattery, and S. Zwicker. 2002. National Park Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service).

Mile-a-minute

(*Polygonum perfoliatum*)

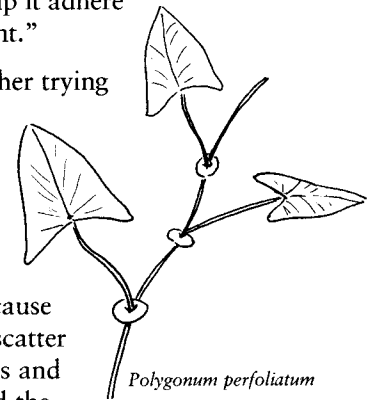
Mile-a-minute, also called perfoliate tear-thumb, was unintentionally introduced in the 1930s to a nursery site in York County, Pennsylvania. This successful introduction is the likely source of this invasive plant in the mid-Atlantic and northeastern United States. It is an herbaceous, annual, trailing vine; the stems are reddish and armed with downward pointing hooks or barbs; stems are surrounded by distinctive circular, funnel-shaped leafy structures. The leaves: light green and shaped like

equilateral triangles with barbs on the undersurface; alternate along the stems. The flowers are small, white and inconspicuous; fruits are attractive, metallic blue and segmented, each segment containing a single glossy, black or reddish-black seed. Birds are likely the primary long-distance dispersal agents; water is also an important mode of dispersal as fruits can remain buoyant for seven to nine days.

"Prevention and Control: Manual and chemical methods are effective for controlling mile-a-minute. Seedlings and vines are easy to pull by hand as long as gloves and sturdy clothing are worn. However, pulling vines with mature fruits should be avoided as it may help spread seeds. Contact and systemic herbicides are effective in controlling it. Because the foliage has a waxy covering, the

herbicide must be mixed with surfactant to help it adhere to the plant."

Don't bother trying to pull up the vines in the fall, winter, or early spring because you may scatter more seeds and compound the problem. A better time is **late spring** because the vines are starting their vigorous growth and you will be stopping them at a time they are especially vulnerable. But remember to wear gloves!



Polygonum perfoliatum