

The Goldfinch

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



AUTUMN BIRD RECORDS AUGUST 1 TO NOVEMBER 30, 2003

BY JOANNE SOLEM

The four months of autumn comprise the longest birding season, and can always be counted on to produce surprises. The yearly pattern of above-average precipitation continued. Wind and rain from Hurricane Isabel in mid-September was followed shortly by another storm with high winds and equally heavy rain. The storms did not produce any unusual species, but did fill reservoirs and lakes to overflowing which severely restricted shorebird habitat. Despite this handicap, a calling flyover **Long-billed Dowitcher** was an exciting county find. Equally unusual was an adult **Lark Sparrow** seen by all participants on a field trip. Seasonal highlights included the first fall sighting of a **Red-necked Grebe** and a sixth record for **Clay-colored Sparrow**.

Common Loons were few with no flocks detected and all reports from Triadelphia Reservoir 10/23 (JS) to 11/21 (EH,JS). The same location on 10/23 produced both a **Horned Grebe** and a **Red-necked Grebe** (first autumn record) (EH,JS). **Double-crested Cormorants** continued sporadically until 11/9 Wilde Lake (D&Jod) with a maximum of 4 over the Ellicott City Wal-Mart 8/13 (ES,MWr). The only **American Bittern** reported was at the University of Maryland Central Farm (UMDCF) 10/4 and 10/11 (BO,EH,NM,JS+). **Great Egrets** were tracked through the period at several locations—most consistently at Fore Bay Pond (SN;MSt+). Five **Snowy Egrets** were observed flying the length of Lake Kittamaquundi 8/6 (JC). The final **Green Heron** was seen at Centennial

Pk on 10/21 (JTv). An immature **Black-crowned Night-Heron** stayed until 10/13 at Wilde Lake (HZ).

Waterfowl migration was generally unremarkable. A few **Tundra Swan** flocks were noted with 46 on 11/8 over Manahan Dr (BO) and 23 on 10/11 at Wilde Lake (HZ). A white phase **Snow Goose** was seen several times from 10/21 to 10/29 in southern Howard Co (KH;NM;JS); a flock of 7 flew over Manahan Dr on 11/8 (BO). **Ring-necked Ducks** built to a high of 40 on 11/15 at Lake Elkhorn (SN). A flock of 80 **Buffleheads** waited out high winds on Triadelphia Reservoir on 11/7 (EH,JS). On 10/23 that reservoir produced 3 **Surf Scoters** (tied early record), 6 **Red-breasted Mergansers** (third earliest), and 4 **Long-tailed Ducks** (EH,JS). A pair of the latter was also found 11/6 on Wilde Lake (D&Jod).

Bald Eagles were widely reported in all the autumn months (RC,EH,KL,NM,SMu,BO,JS,GW,J&CW). A **Northern Harrier** was spotted on a new early date of 8/23 at UMDCF (EH,BO,JS).

(Continued on page 2.)



Eastern Screech-Owls

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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

AUTUMN BIRD RECORDS (Continued from page 1.)

Broad-winged Hawk numbers were modest with a high of 600 on 9/21 over Manahan Dr (BO). **Golden Eagles** were seen twice: 11/1 an adult at UMDCF (BO,NM,EH,RC,JS) and 11/2 an immature over Sand Chain Rd (JC). **Merlins** were noted four times between 9/16 Manahan Dr (BO) and 10/31 Western Regional Pk (RC). A **Peregrine Falcon** over Brighton Dam 9/19 on the heels of Isabel produced the second earliest record (HH); another cruised over UMDCF 10/4 (BO+).

A flock of 13 **Wild Turkeys** (4 ad.) appeared in a Woodstock yard 8/4 (L&LH). Single **Soras** were flushed 8/28 and 10/24 at UMDCF (BO,JS+). A **Black-bellied Plover** flew over the same area 9/14 (second earliest) (BO,JS), and 40 **Killdeer** were present there 10/11 (EH,NM,JS). **Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs**, **Spotted**, **Solitary**, **Least** and **Pectoral sandpipers** were neither unusually early or late, nor were they present in large numbers. The season's best shorebird by far was a **Long-billed Dowitcher** heard calling as it circled UMDCF 9/28 (BO,EH). This was just the third county record, and the only one verified by its distinctive call. A **Wilson's Snipe** appeared on 9/14 (second earliest) at UMDCF (RC,EH,BO,JS).

Laughing Gulls are tough to find in the county. From a high of 1 on 8/17 to 2 on 9/17, they tracked over Manahan Dr (BO). **Caspian Terns** were reported from 8/16 on Lake Kittamaqundi (HZ,MJa) to 9/21 at the same location (TSch). Four **Forster's Terns** were present 9/4 at Brighton Dam (JS).

Two **Black-billed Cuckoos** were reported 9/20 on Howard County Fall Count (MW;RS). A family of 6-7 **Eastern Screech-Owls** was present in a yard northwest of Dayton 9/10 (RBr). One was also discovered 11/9 roosting in a box in a yard near Brown's Bridge (GW).

Common Nighthawks moved through from 8/25 Manahan Dr (BO) to 9/20 (Howard County Fall Count). The high was 50-70 on 8/29 near MD 216/Ten Oaks Rd (DH). From 11 to 22 were reported by

LC,WE,GMc,BO. The 2 **Chimney Swifts** on 10/12 at Centennial Pk were within the usual mid-October departure date (Web). A **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** 10/14 Dunloggin Ct was definitely on the late side (SG). **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were noted between 9/17 Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (BO) and 10/31 Western Regional Pk (RC). The earliest **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was 9/17 at the Environmental Area (BO).

Two **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were nice: 9/10 UMDCF (BO) and 10/4 (new late date) Font Hill Wetland Pk (KH,KD). An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was present in the dead trees along Manahan Dr 8/27-28 (BO). A **Yellow-throated Vireo** 10/7 at Wynfield Rd established a new late date (RC). **Philadelphia Vireos** were reported at Rockburn Branch Pk 9/11 (BO,JS) and 9/24 (JMr), as well as at Mt. Pleasant 9/27 (BO). **Blue Jays** were moving 10/21 when 30 were noted at Fore Bay Pond (SN). Two early departing swallow species lingered until 9/20 along Jennings Chapel Rd (MW)—the third latest date for **Bank Swallow** and the latest for **Cliff Swallow**. The first **Red-breasted Nuthatch** of the season showed up in a Font Hill Dr yard 11/1 (GA). A **Brown Creeper** on 9/1 in Worthington was the third earliest (EMe).

A **Carolina Wren** was seen feeding a **Brown-headed Cowbird** 8/1 Hammond Village (MW). (In July, a cowbird egg had been found in a wren's nest in a garage a block away. That nest was abandoned.) The earliest-ever **Marsh Wren** popped up at



Common Nighthawk brought to Judy Holzman at All Creatures Great and Small. Later released at Belmont Conference Center. (See article on page 6.)

UMDCF 9/6 (BO,EH,JS). **Gray-cheeked Thrushes** were seen at Rockburn 9/20 (BO,EH) and 9/25 (BO,EH,JS), and on 9/30 at Worthington (EMe). On 10/21 at least 80 **American Robins** were present at Fore Bay Pond (SN). **Gray Catbirds** lingered until 11/3 Wilde Lake (D&Jod) and 11/23-28 Lake Elkhorn (JW). A **Brown Thrasher** was still present 11/16 at Western Regional Pk (JW). Forty **American Pipits** were in the fields at UMDCF 11/20 (BO,EH,JS).

Warbler migration was lackluster with no high numbers and no spectacular fallouts. A late **Prairie Warbler** on 10/10 at West Friendship was the third latest (LC). **Palm Warblers** often are reported by the dozen; this year there were few. A **Blackpoll Warbler** 8/31 at Mt. Pleasant was the second earliest ever (BO,RC,JS). A **Louisiana Waterthrush** 9/20 at UMDCF established a new late date (M&GMc, RSm, CRo). The **Wilson's Warbler** 10/10 at the Oakland Mills Garden Plots was the second latest date (JW). Two of the more unusual warbler species were recorded: **Orange-crowned** 10/11 at Rockburn Branch Pk (KH,KD) and 10/25 Broken Land Pkwy/US 29 (Jmk), and **Connecticut** 10/1 at Western Regional Pk (BO,JS).

For sparrow enthusiasts, finding 10 sparrow species in a single day is a treat to be savored. RC notched 10 on 10/18 and 10/25. Both dates netted a special species—on the 18th it was a **Vesper** at Alpha Ridge landfill and on 10/25 a **Clay-colored** at Western Regional Pk. Field trip participants on 10/4 were thrilled to find a handsome **Lark Sparrow*** (second record) at Western Regional Pk. (RC,BO,SAr,KD,EH,KH,EK,KS,JS). The 2 **Grasshopper Sparrows** on 10/25 at the landfill were the second latest on record (RC). The same observer tracked **Chipping Sparrow** migration when the 24 on 10/14 at Wynfield Rd rose to 55 on 10/25, then dropped to 1 on 11/1. **Savannah Sparrow** numbers peaked at 120 on 10/12 UMDCF (BO). The Centennial Pk walk 11/23 turned up a dozen **Fox Sparrows** (HF,ROR+).

(Continued on page 3.)

AUTUMN BIRD RECORDS (Continued from page 2.)

A female **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** lingered to 11/1 appearing at a Wilde Lake feeder at the same time a “brown” **Purple Finch** (female or immature) was present providing a useful comparison (**HZ**). **Dickcissels** were discovered at UMDCF on 8/28 and 9/30 (**BO,JS**), as well as 10/18 at Western Regional Pk (**JW**).

One could hardly call the boreal visitors this season an invasion, although **Purple Finches** were widely reported in small numbers from 10/5 Manahan (**BO**) through the period (**RC,WEb,EH,KS,ES,JW,HZ**). **Pine Siskins** were seen from 10/29 into late November at Manahan Dr (**BO+**) and 11/23 Wynfield Rd (**RC**).

Observers:

SAr-Stan Arnold, **GA**-Glenn Austin, **RBr**-Ricky Bauer, **LC**-Lisa Colangelo, **JC**-Jane Coskren, **RC**-Ralph Cullison, III, **KD**-Karen Darcy, **WE**-Wes Earp, **WEb**-Ward Ebert, **HF**-Harry Fink, **SG**-Scott Geist, **DH**-Dave Harvey, **KH**-Kevin Heffernan, **EH**-Emy Holdridge, **HH**-Hans Holbrook, **L&LH**-Lynn & Linda Holley, **MJa**-Marcus James, **EK**-Elise Kreiss, **KL**-Kathy Litzinger, **NM**-Nancy Magnusson, **JMr**-Joel Martin, **GMc**-Grazina McClure, **MMc**-Mike McClure, **JMk**-John McKitterick, **EMe**-Elayne Metter, **SMu**-Sue Muller, **SN**-Sue Neri, **D&Jod**-Doug & Jeanne Odermatt, **ROR**-Richard Orr, **BO**-Bonnie Ott, **CRo**-Clyde Robinette, **TSch**-Tammy Schwaab, **KS**-Kurt Schwarz, **RSm**-Romaine Smith, **JS**-Jo Solem, **RS**-Robert Solem, **MSt**-Michelle Stewart, **ES**-Eva Sunell, **JTv**-June Tveekrem, **GW**-Ginny Walker, **MW**-Mark Wallace, **CW**-Carol Wilkinson, **JW**-Jim Wilkinson, **MWr**-Michele Wright, **HZ**-Helen Zeichner.

UMDCF–*University of Maryland Central Farm*

***photograph posted at www.howardbirds.org**

All seasonal sightings are welcome.

Submit data to odenata@msn.com or to 10617 Graeloch Rd, Laurel, MD 20723.

Material is due three days after the end of the season: winter (Dec-Feb), spring (March-May), summer (June-July), autumn (Aug-Nov). Any species that is listed on the Howard County Field Checklist as accidental or hypothetical or is a new county record must be accompanied by documentation. Questions? Contact Jo at the above addresses or at 301-725-5037.

MEMBER APPRECIATION

BY KURT SCHWARZ

Have you ever wondered how this copy of the newsletter got into your hands? Well, the person responsible for mailing the newsletter, as well as other Howard County Bird Club mail, is **Marty Chestem**. Marty is one of the founding members of the Howard County Bird Club and has been a crucial, if quiet, cog in the club machinery ever since. In addition to handling club mailings, she also arranges the “For Free” table, and the display of bird-related articles on the right side of the auditorium for every meeting. She also spends many hours each year finding cartoons, cutting them into the placemats and making enough so that each person at our potluck tables has a different one. Every year she comes to the potluck early to set up the tables with the placemats and help with many other things. And that’s only what she CURRENTLY does.

Marty’s past accomplishments are also quite noteworthy. In addition to being a founder of the Howard Chapter, she has also served as the MOS President. She has been a contributor to both previous breeding bird atlases, the Columbia Lakes Checklist and a wildflower survey the club conducted some two decades ago. She served for over a decade on the Checklist Committee and has kept careful track of the Great Blue Heron colonies at Vantage Point and Lake Kittamaqundi since their establishment. And, on an amusing note, she took part in the investigation of a putative Hudsonian Godwit sighting, that turned out to be a Wilson’s Snipe.

Take a moment to thank Marty for all her contributions. They may not be flashy, but they are vital to the functioning of the club. Thank you, Marty!

**A LETTER TO THE HOWARD COUNTY CHAPTER OF THE
MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY (MOS)**

By **Maryanne Dolan**, Silent Auction Coordinator for the MOS Conference

Dear MOS Members,

The June MOS Conference might be months away, but planning is already underway. We hope to top last year’s silent auction/raffle proceeds of \$3,000. With your help, I think we can.

We are asking each chapter to donate one or two items, representative of its area, to the raffle. This will bring in different types of items and will create interest in different areas of Maryland. And if you know of someone in your chapter who does unique work, or of a business with products of interest to birders, and who are willing to donate, we’d be grateful for your intercession. Remember, we do have charitable donation forms. Finally, we are also asking chapter members to donate items to the silent auction. All proceeds benefit local conservation efforts.

I will be back in touch with chapter presidents closer to the conference seeking volunteers. If anyone has any questions, or needs to contact me, feel free to call or email me at any time. Thanks in advance for your help.

Sincerely,

Maryanne Dolan, Silent Auction Coordinator
ABTrowbridge@msn.com • (202) 483-8188 (home number)

MAY COUNT IS SATURDAY, MAY 8, 2004

BY PAUL ZUCKER

Since 1948, the Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) has conducted an annual May bird count. Everyone is invited to join in, no matter what your skill level. Identification is only part of the challenge; you have to spot (or hear) the bird first, so every extra pair of eyes and ears helps. This is a great opportunity to meet other bird club members, to learn from more experienced members, and to have a great time. (This announcement usually appears in the *May Goldfinch*, but we are sending it out now since the count is at the earliest possible date this year [May 8]. Please mark your calendars now.)

The county has been divided into the same seven areas as for the winter count (see map below), and each has an area coordinator. If you have a particular preference for an area to count in, please contact the corresponding coordinator. The coordinators for each area are:

Area 1	Kate Tufts	410-489-7052
Area 2	Ward Ebert	301-490-5807
Area 3	Chuck Stirrat	410-531-2417
Area 4	Mike McClure	410-531-2780
Area 5	Doug Odermatt	410-992-1812
Area 6	Bonnie Ott	410-461-3361
Area 7	Jo Solem	301-725-5037

Otherwise, you may call me, the count compiler, at home at 301-279-7896, or e-mail me at paul.zucker@jhuapl.edu. Special requests are honored whenever possible.

The leader of each party records the number of all birds seen (even European Starlings and House Sparrows!) using the checklist included in this issue of the newsletter. Extra copies of this checklist will be given to the area coordinators as well. These are specially constructed lists that show the birds that are normally seen on the count. Any bird that has been found in four or fewer of the last fifteen counts has been excluded. If you are fortunate enough to see a bird not on this list, you need to write

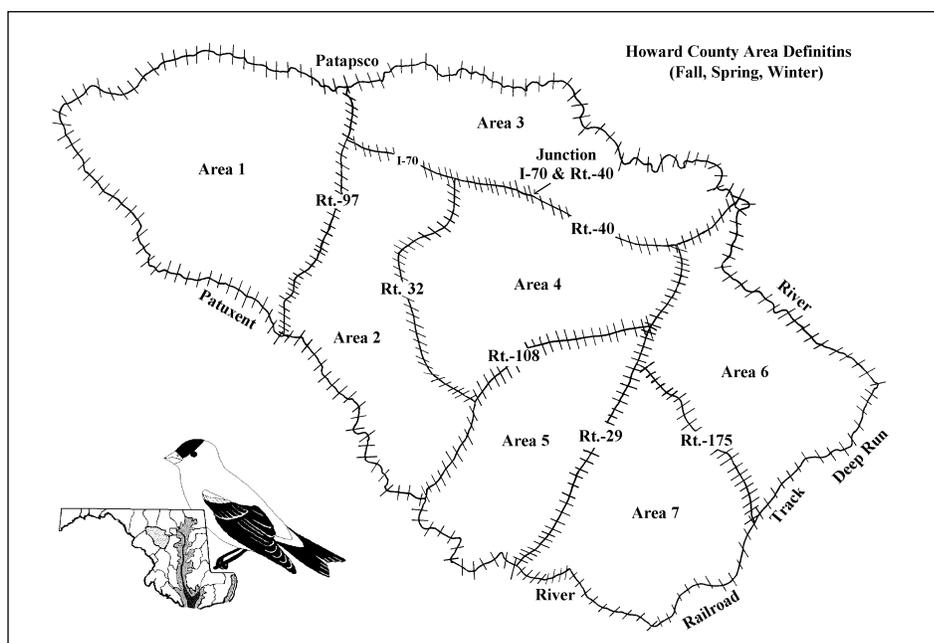
it in and, on the back, write a couple of sentences about what you observed and where you found it.

On the back of the checklist, the party leader needs to record the start and stop times, total party hours by foot, car, or other means, and the party miles. Observers within talking or shouting distance are considered to be one party. If two or more birders spend an hour together on foot, that constitutes one party hour. If one member is separated from the others for half an hour, then the total is 1.5 party hours. Non-birding hours should not be counted. In addition, the names and addresses of all the party members should be listed on the back of the checklist. If you see something outside of your assigned area, please make a separate note of it, as it may be included for the area where you saw it.)

This year is the third season for the Maryland Breeding Bird Atlas. Those species that are within the "safe dates" are shown on the checklist with an asterisk. Even if you do not have an atlas block to survey, you can help by noting any kind of courtship or nesting behavior. Please note down the behavior and carefully note the precise location. All such

data, as well as sightings of species that are within the safe dates, are useful for the atlas. This is an extremely important project for the MOS and for the Howard chapter, and all support provided is immensely appreciated.

The completed checklist must be turned in to the area coordinators at the tally rally that night! You are strongly urged to attend the tally rally after the count. It is a great opportunity to relax and swap stories of the day. If you cannot make it, be sure that your checklist gets delivered or gets called in to **Jan Randle** (410-531-6296) by 7 p.m. **The tally dinner will again be at the Randle's**, continuing a magnificent tradition of hospitality. Call Jan Randle in advance and let her know how many are coming from your party and your choice of food or beverage to bring. Dinner will begin by 7 p.m. and the tally will start at 8 p.m. The Randles live at 6424 Lochridge Road in the Braeburn neighborhood of Columbia. From Cedar Lane, turn west onto Braeburn Road (the turn is between route 32 and Freetown Road), next turn right onto Lochridge and continue to the first house on the left beyond Hillbrook Drive.



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, March 11 "Winter Hummingbirds in the Mid-Atlantic Region," by Mary Gustafson, Washington area bander and researcher. Mary, a Howard County Bird Club member, has banded and studied hummers who have stayed around during the last six or more winters. She will explain their biology and behavior and the special considerations involved in their capture and handling. Among her most recent captures were hummingbirds near the Smithsonian Institution this winter.

Thursday, April 15 (NOTE: this is the *third* Thursday) "Iceland: Land of Fire and Ice," by Greg Kearns, photographer and naturalist at Patuxent River Park. Greg Kearns is more familiar to us for his Sora Rail research. This time he will share what he learned about arctic and pelagic bird life, centered on the bare but beautiful Icelandic landscape. We welcome Greg and his enthusiasm back for another presentation.

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 howardbirds.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.

LARK AND PIPIT SEARCH ON UNDERWOOD ROAD

March 6, Saturday. 3 hours. 8:00 a.m.

Meet at 32/70 park-and-ride.

Leader—Ralph Cullison, 410-442-2181.

We will walk country roads in search of pipits and larks. It's always possible a rarity may be among them. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Scopes useful. No facilities.

POTLUCK DINNER

March 13, Saturday.

(See Jan/Feb newsletter for details.)

WOODCOCK WALK AT MPEA

March 14, Sunday, (evening - 2 hours)

Leader—Sue Muller (301-498-8462 or sonicsue@boo.net) Limit of 15. Call or e-mail Sue to reserve spot.

Easy walk into the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area to listen for displaying woodcock. Bring flashlight and wear dark clothes. No facilities.

CENTENNIAL PARK SPRING WALK

March 21, Sunday. 3 hours. 8:00 a.m.

Meet at the West end parking lot. Leader- Ralph Cullison (410-442-2181)

Easy walk around the lake on paved path. Migrants should start to appear. Early phoebes, towhees and Purple Martins possible. Facilities available.

WEEKDAY WALK AT LAKE ELKHORN

March 25, Thursday. 8:00 a.m.

Meet at the Broken Land Parkway lot. Leader—Emy Holdridge (410-964-0196)

Easy walk around the lake on paved path. Migrant waterbirds, herons and passerines expected. No facilities.

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.

March 25, Thursday

Suzanne Probst
5413 Killingworth Way
Columbia, 21044 • 410-992-3489

April 22, Thursday

Kurt Schwarz
9045 Dunloggin Court
Ellicott City, 21042 • 410-461-1643

MIDDLE PATUXENT ENVIRONMENTAL AREA

March 27, Saturday. ? day. 8:00 a.m.

Meet at Trotter Road parking lot.

Leaders—Ron and Susan Polniaszek (410-531-6658)

Moderate to difficult hiking though the MPEA. Woodlands, fields and streams provide a variety of habitat. Fox Sparrow, Pine Warbler, Brown Thrasher and Chipping Sparrow likely. No facilities.

CENTENNIAL PARK SPRING WALK

March 28, Sunday. 3 hours. 8:00 a.m.

Meet at the West end of Centennial Park.

Leaders—Kevin Heffernan and Karen Darcy (410 418-8731)

Easy walk on paved path around the lake. Early migrants increasing. Possible Night-Herons, gulls and courting hawks. Facilities available.

CENTENNIAL PARK SPRING WALK

April 4, Sunday. 3 hours. 8:00 a.m.

Meet at the west end lot of Centennial Park. Leader—Bonnie Ott (410-461-3361)

Easy walk on paved path around lake. Loons, grebes and mergansers possible on the lake. Bonaparte's Gulls and Caspian Terns may fly-over. Swallows should also be abundant. Facilities available.

BEGINNER'S BIRD WALK AT LAKE ELKHORN

April 17, Saturday. 2 hours. 8:30 a.m.

Meet at the Broken Land Parkway lot.

Leader—Tom Miller (410-781-4268)

Easy walk on paved path around the lake. Focus on beginning birding skills. The woodlands, wetlands and water provide a great variety of birds. No facilities.

(Field Trips continue on page 6.)

 =Great for beginning birders

WEEKDAY WALK AT WILDE LAKE
April 21, Wednesday. 2 hours. 8:00 a.m.
 Meet at the boat dock.
 Leader—Jeff Friedhoffer (410-997-5366)
 Easy walk on paved path along lakeside and along wooded stream. Kinglets, gnatcatchers and early warblers expected. No facilities.

EARTH DAY EXTRAVAGANZA AT MPEA
April 24, Saturday.
Option of half or full day.
 Meet at gravel lot off Trotter Road.
Morning birdwalk at 8:30 a.m.
 Leader—Kurt Schwarz (410-461-1643)
 Easy walking along field edges and woodlands to search for migrants. Bring picnic basket or visit nearby Clarksville Crossing food establishments for lunch.
Wildflower and Butterfly Walk in the afternoon. 2 hours. 1:00 p.m.
 Leaders—Bob Solem (301-725-5037) and Dick Smith (410-997-7439)
 Easy hike through Middle Patuxent Environmental Area in search of spring wildflowers and early butterflies. Paths may be muddy. No facilities

SIGNS OF SPRING AT BON SECOURS.
April 25, Sunday. 2 hours. 8:30 a.m.
 Meet at visitor's parking lot.
 Leaders—Michele Wright (410-465-6057) and Eva Sunell (410-995-0029)
 Easy walking through the grounds of this lovely spiritual center. Woodlands and fields with great views of the sky for flyovers. Facilities available.

MAY COUNT

May 8, Saturday
 (See article on page 4.)

BIG DAY

May 15, Saturday (dawn to dusk)
 Sign up for an intense all day trip to list as many species in the county as possible. Plan to walk 5-10 miles at a good pace. A 30-minute break for lunch is planned. Footwear for all conditions will be needed. Call Bonnie to register (410-461-3361) Limit of 12 people, must commit to the entire day.

WEEKDAY WALK "FLYING CREATURES"
May 20, Thursday. 2 hours. 8:00 a.m.
 Meet at Font Hill Wetlands Park off Font Hill Drive. Leader: Jo Solem (301-725-5037)
 Easy walking on paved paths to search for dragonflies, butterflies and birds. No facilities.

JUDY HOLZMAN AND ALL (HER) CREATURES, GREAT & SMALL

BY SUZANNE PROBST

It was during the Midwinter Count of 2000 that I first met Judy. Dave Kubitsky, Dave Wilusz and I were trudging through the ice and snow at Belmont Conference Center when we came upon a Barred Owl, face down in the snow. We carefully picked the owl up and discovered it was still alive. As the result of a fortuitous cell phone call to Bob Solem, we were able to contact a local wildlife rehabilitator named **Judy Holzman**. And so began, as the cliché goes, a wonderful, if not very unusual, relationship!

Judy has been involved in wildlife care since 1990 and founded *All Creatures Great and Small* in 2000. This home-based, non-profit organization is totally operated by Judy, a state- and federally-licensed wildlife rehabilitator, and many volunteers. On any given day during her "busy season" (which can last from March until October!), Judy may have various injured hawks, owls, kestrels, crows, vultures, ducks or geese, as well as baby robins, mockingbirds, catbirds, bluebirds, swallows, sparrows, wrens, finches, Cedar Waxwings, Mourning Doves and the occasional baby oriole, Chimney Swift, or Barred Owl. In addition to birds, Judy and her volunteers also care for orphaned baby mammals such as squirrels, rabbits, ground hogs and opossums. However, if an animal's condition is more serious or needs medical attention beyond her capabilities, Judy will ensure that the animal receives treatment from one of several local veterinarians or other wildlife centers especially equipped to handle that particular animal's needs.



Since our first encounter, I have taken a number of injured or orphaned critters to Judy. I am always impressed by the swift care she gives to each new patient. She immediately assesses each animal's condition through a gentle examination. Then she quickly begins whatever life-saving treatment may be indicated, such as re-hydration, immobilization of a broken limb or administration of antibiotics. For baby birds, she has various small tissue-lined baskets in her "hospital room." Judy is quite conscientious about nourishing her babies, and it is not unusual for her to have a "feeding schedule" that would drive many mothers crazy! But Judy and her volunteers are very dedicated—it is quite an experience to be in the room at chow time!

Judy also takes great care when an animal is finally well enough, or mature enough, to be released. **Mark Wallace, Eva Sunell, Sue Neri** and I (as well as many others) have had the joyful experience of watching Judy release an animal back to the wild. Sometimes the animal may need to go to one of several enclosures that Judy has had built on private property. Judy and several volunteers then monitor the animal's condition in a semi-wild setting, providing food and exercise until the animal is ready to be released on its own.

As you can well imagine, not only does this take up a lot of volunteer time, but also money! *All Creatures Great and Small* is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that relies entirely on private donations and grants for its funding. For more information about *All Creatures Great and Small*, log onto www.allcreaturesgreatandsmall.org. For a wildlife emergency or to donate, contact Judy directly at 301-596-0044.

Editor's Note: the Howard County Bird Club regularly contributes to All Creatures Great and Small through funding donations.

2003 HOWARD COUNTY ODONATE SURVEY

BY JOANNE AND BOB SOLEM

The eighth year of the Howard County odonate survey produced a new species and a number of site additions despite the considerable challenge imposed by the weather. Several previous years had been exceedingly dry; 2003 more than compensated for those deficiencies with record-breaking precipitation. While water is essential to dragonflies and damselflies, frequent heavy rains can do immense damage to odonate populations. Increased sediment loads decrease water clarity and alter river and lake bottoms where many larvae reside. The reduced oxygen spurs algal growth and provides an advantage to those adaptable species that tolerate low oxygen levels. Unusually high water often floods out essential emergent edge vegetation vital for egg-laying, resting, and emergence. Numerous cloudy days and cool temperatures with chill winds in spring and early summer added to problems for sun-loving odes.

Despite unpromising conditions, a new species was added to the county list: **White-faced Meadowhawk** (*Sympetrum obtrusum*). This is a species that cannot be identified by sight, so we gratefully acknowledge our dependence on Richard Orr for verifying our very tentative identification. The county list now stands at 92. Among other notable finds were second sites for **Seepage Dancer** and **Black-tipped Darner**. Sue Muller came up with a third Patapsco River Valley location for the state-rare **Gray Petaltail**.

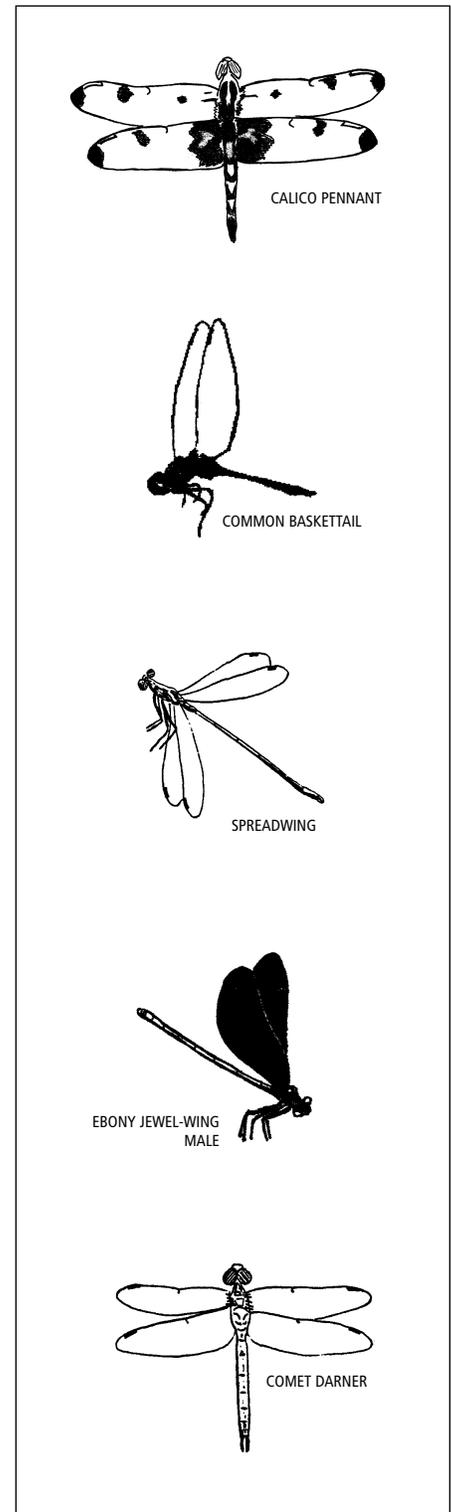
Of the major sites being surveyed annually, only Centennial Park failed to add any new species. Its list remains at 50. Font Hill Wetland Park is the most productive site for odonates with a total of 54 species. Meadowbrook (now 41) and the Middle Patuxent Environmental

Area (49) both added two species in 2003. For both locations, one of the additions was **Blue Corporal**, abundant on the Coastal Plain but difficult to find in the Piedmont; the MPEA site is the westernmost location in the county. Western Regional Park's list jumped dramatically from 14 to 23. This park is in the process of development so the few sediment control ponds are new and raw without edge vegetation. Despite its short list, several unusual stream species have been found there in previous years.

The University of Maryland Central Farm's list increased to 35, reflecting the attractiveness of the wetlands west of Folly Quarter Rd. In marked contrast to the abnormally low water levels of 2002, both Triadelphia and T. Duckett reservoirs were overflowing for most of 2003. One new species was added to bring their list to 47.

Many survey areas can only be covered through special access, so we particularly thank Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission for land permission. A core of individuals provides identification help, field data, photographs, and companionship. In addition to **Richard Orr**, they include **Sue Muller, June Tveekrem, Sue Neri, Jay Sheppard, Bonnie Ott, Nancy Magnusson, Cheryl Farfaras, and Jane and Dennis Coskren**.

Visit the Club's website, www.howardbirds.org, for a complete list of county and Maryland odonates, as well as directions for downloading an introductory pamphlet. You too may become hooked on these spectacular and fascinating insects!



Sample of illustrations from introductory pamphlet. All illustrations of odonates courtesy of Bob Solem.



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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 Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas* (J. Swearingen, K. Reschelittoff, B. Slattery, and S. Zwicker. 2002. National Park Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service).

Garlic Mustard

(*Alliaria petiolata*) Origin: Europe. Garlic Mustard was first recorded in the United States around 1868, from Long Island, New York, and was likely introduced by settlers for food and medicinal purposes. Garlic Mustard ranges from eastern Canada, south to Georgia and as far west as Kansas and Nebraska. It occurs in a wide range of moist to dry habitats including roadsides, floodplains and forest edges and interiors, and does not tolerate highly acidic soils. Garlic Mustard invades areas disturbed by human activities. It appears to be aided by white-tailed deer who prefer to eat native wild-

flowers and leave Garlic Mustard untouched. Garlic Mustard displaces many native spring wildflowers that occur in the same habitat.

Description: A biennial herb in the mustard family (*Brassicaceae*); completes its life cycle within two years and dies back by the second June, when it is recognizable only by its dried fruiting stalks; flowering plants range from 1 to nearly 4 feet in height. Crushed leaves and stems have a garlic-like odor; first-year plants appear as a rosette of kidney-shaped leaves that stay green throughout the winter; in its second year, the plant forms a shoot which rapidly elongates and flowers in early spring. Flowers are small, white and in clusters in the axils of leaves along the stem: each flower has four petals in the shape of a cross; fruits are slender, erect capsules that contain a row of shiny black seeds when mature. A single plant can produce hundreds of

seeds, which are scattered up to several yards from the parent plant.

Prevention and Control: Because Garlic Mustard seeds can survive for five or more years in the soil, effective management requires a long-term commitment. Hand removal of entire plants, including the roots, is effective for light, scattered infestations. Cutting flowering plants low to the ground in spring will prevent flowering and thus seed production. Careful hand removal and bagging of plants with mature fruits can be done from June through August. Several herbicides are also effective for its control. Researchers are investigating the potential for biological control of Garlic Mustard.

Remember: pulling up the whole plant just exposes the buried seeds, allowing them to germinate and create a new crop. Cutting off the flowering plants in the spring (and leaving the roots alone) is more effective.