

# The Goldfinch

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



## AUTUMN BIRD RECORDS AUGUST 1 TO NOVEMBER 30, 2005

BY JOANNE SOLEM

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**The Goldfinch**, newsletter of the *Howard County Bird Club*, is published five times per year. Copy deadline for the May/June 2006 issue is March 25, 2006.

Suzanne Probst, *Editor*  
Joanne Solem, *Proofreader*

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 Suzanne Probst  
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**Please visit the Club's website at [www.howardbirds.org](http://www.howardbirds.org)**

Autumn 2005 was an exciting season for local birders. A Rufous Hummingbird, the first definite county record, headed this four month season. Other highlights, for which there were ten or fewer previous records, were Surf Scoter, White-rumped Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Sedge Wren, and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow. Normally notable species such as Long-tailed Duck, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Peregrine Falcon, Sora, American Golden-Plover, Upland Sandpiper, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Dickcissel were forced to take secondary billing. Four arrival dates and five departure records were also set. What an outstanding season!

As usual, a few Snow Geese appeared: a white phase bird was spotted in southern Howard County from 10/26 to 11/30 (MW) and a blue phase bird was seen along Trotter Rd 11/13 (WE). Except for Canada Geese, waterfowl numbers were low. A flock of 19 Wood Ducks (mostly males) were at West Friendship 10/20 (BO,EH,JS). A male American Wigeon lingered at Centennial from 9/9 (DH) to 11/20 (JW;TFe+). A Blue-winged Teal (f) was spotted at University of Maryland Central Farm (UMDCF) 8/31 (BO,EH,JS); Howard County Fall Count (HCFC) tallied four on 9/17; and one (f) was present at Centennial 11/21 (JTv). Early arrival dates were set by a Green-winged Teal (f) 8/24 Triadelphia (EH,JS) and a Redhead (m) 10/18 Centennial (JTv). Four Surf Scoters (one f) rested on Lake Elkhorn 10/29, the tenth county record (JBI). One or two Long-tailed

Ducks were reported on Triadelphia from 11/17 to 11/23 (EH;BHi;JS). The Common Loon spotted over west Columbia 9/17 was the second earliest ever (MW;KP). A Double-crested Cormorant at Lake Elkhorn 11/19 tied the second latest date (JC+). An immature Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was at Alpha Ridge landfill 8/13 to 8/27 (RC). Two Black-crowned Night-Herons (one ad.) at Wilde Lake 8/30 were the season's last (BO,JS).

Hawk watching this season produced modest numbers of raptors. The most consistent watching was at Centennial with a total of 59.9 hours on 13 days (MK). His highlights included Northern Harrier 1, Osprey 19, Broad-winged Hawk 721, Red-tailed Hawk 16, Sharp-shinned Hawk 30, Peregrine Falcon 3 (one on 9/11 was the county's second earliest), Merlin 1, and Bald Eagle 6 (MK). Two dozen hawk watchers at Mt. Pleasant 10/29 spent a cold, windy four hours during peak Red-tail migration and tallied 12. They also had 5 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 1 N. Harrier, and 1 American Kestrel (RG+). Brief skywatching on November 1, 2, and 3 tallied 18 Red-tails over Underwood Rd (WE). Four Merlins were reported between 9/24 and 10/15 (RC;WE;MK;MW). The third week of September is normally the peak Broad-winged Hawk migration. On 9/22, 750+ were counted between 10:30 and 10:45 a.m. at UMDCF (BO,EH,JS); on 9/24, 623 soared over Centennial in 4.75 hours (MK).

Two Soras, initially spotted 8/16 at UMDCF (BO,JS), were seen on five

*(Continued on page 2.)*

occasions, the last time 9/17 (**M&GMcC, RSm**). A Northern Bobwhite was heard 9/17 just west of Gorman Crossing E.S., south of Gorman Rd (**TDC, JTv**). The season's first American Coot was noted at Centennial 10/29 (**JTv**).

Shorebirds are often stars of the autumn season—this year was no exception. Triadelphia lacked suitable habitat for much of the period because of high water. By the time mudflats emerged, the peak migration had passed. One of the two shorebird hot spots was Browns Bridge on Duckett Reservoir where flats attracted a nice variety of species during August. On 8/31, eight Stilt Sandpipers were present (fourth record and new high count) (**JH**). The area also produced a high of 45 Least Sandpipers 8/28 (**EH, JS**) and seven Pectoral Sandpipers 8/29 (**RSu**). By early September the mud was dry, vegetation had begun to emerge, and shorebirds rested elsewhere. During August and September, the most productive county shorebird location was a sediment pond visible from Carr's Mill Rd at Western Regional Park (still under construction). The shallow water fluctuated nicely producing attractive habitat for a dozen species of shorebirds. Among the special species were 2 Buff-breasted Sandpipers 8/31 (fourth record) (**HH**), 1 Wilson's Snipe 8/25 (new early date) (**BHi**), 4 White-rumped Sandpipers 9/8 (eighth record) (**RC**) through 9/26 (2) (**B&GHI**), and 1 Stilt Sandpiper 9/17 (fifth record) (**TFe**). Most species were seen by numerous observers and were photographed. Noteworthy shorebirds away from these two sites were an Upland Sandpiper 8/16 UMDCF (**BO, JS**), and an American Golden-Plover 9/27 (**JS**) to 9/30 (**BHi**) at Triadelphia.

A Laughing Gull was sighted 9/11 at Western (**JMr**). On 9/17 there were three at the landfill (**RC**) and one over Gateway (**JW**). One Caspian Tern was spotted 8/13 at Triadelphia (**KS**); the last two 9/5 at Centennial (**MK**). Forster's Terns were reported from Brighton Dam: one on 8/12 (**EH, JS**) to four on 8/29 (**RR**).

A Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Schooley 11/4 was a new late record (**BHb, HH**). A Black-billed Cuckoo was noted at Forsythe Rd 9/25 (**DH+**).

Eastern Screech-Owls were reported from two on 8/28 Duvall Rd (**K&DT**) to one on 11/29 at Hallmark (**JEB**). On 10/18, a pair of Great Horned Owls vocalized at Timberleigh (**DN**). Common Nighthawk arrival 8/28 coincided with the largest group reported (28), over Warfield's Pond Park (**LC**). The last one was over UMDCF 9/17 (**M&GMcC, RSm**).

A female Rufous Hummingbird established a first definite county record. It appeared in mid-October among flowers and hummingbird feeders in a yard east of Ellicott City (**GR, SBr**). It was not seen by birders until 11/26 and was banded 12/3 (**DHo, BP**). Only when it was examined in hand was it possible to determine the species. The one previous record of a *Selasphorus* hummingbird, 11/14/93 in Savage, was not banded and can only be listed as Rufous/Allen's/Broad-tailed in the records.

The sole Red-headed Woodpecker sighting was at Forsythe Rd 9/25 (**DH+**). Flycatchers included a Least and a Yellow-bellied 9/7 at the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA) (**EH, JS**). There were three Olive-sided Flycatcher sightings: 8/26 Manahan (**BO**), 9/6 MPEA (**HH**), and 9/17 Mt. Pleasant (the second latest record) (**E&JMe**).

There were six Philadelphia Vireo reports between 8/26 and 9/30 at three locations (**BO, EH, JS; B&GHI; E&JMe**). A Purple Martin over Johns Hopkins APL 10/12 was the second latest and just the second October record (**D&MH**). A Cliff Swallow 9/30 UMDCF was a new late date (**BO**). The first Red-breasted Nuthatch put in an appearance 9/6 on Trotter Rd (**WE**). Scattered reports were mostly between mid-September and mid-November. The Winter Wren on 9/17 in western Howard County was the third earliest date (**DOI**). Marsh Wrens were reported in a narrow window

between 10/20 West Friendship (**BO, JS**) and 10/23 UMDCF (**BO+**). A Sedge Wren was photographed (no mean feat) 10/10 at Western (**RC**) for about the tenth record.

Gray-cheeked Thrush records were all between 9/24 at Sandchain Rd, east Columbia (**J&TDC**) and Henryton (**RC+**) and 10/1 MPEA (**SAr, RC+**). HCFC on 9/17 turned up 220 Eastern Bluebirds. Gray Catbirds occasionally winter so November birds are to be expected. This year there were seven at Centennial 11/20 (**TFe+**) with two still present 11/27 (**RR**). The seasonal high of 28 was counted at MPEA 9/4 (**KS**). Although the 9/16 arrival of American Pipits at UMDCF was the third earliest (**BO**), numbers reported for the season were all below 10.

Warbler migration was slow with low numbers for most species. Sixteen species were tallied on 8/25 at MPEA (**BO, EH, JS**). A Nashville Warbler 11/23 at the landfill was a record late date (**RC**). A lone Orange-crowned Warbler was reported from Schooley 10/20 (**MHf, HH**). The Black-throated Blue Warbler at Worthington 10/30 was a new late date (**E&JMe**). The Black-throated Green Warbler 11/13 at Centennial was photographed verifying the second latest record (**KH, KD+**). Cape May Warblers have become difficult to find, but this year one to five tarried on Wynfield Rd feeding on insect hatches 9/23 to 10/11 (**RC**). Two were also reported west of Ellicott City 10/9 (**RT**). The peak passage of Palm Warblers seemed to be 10/20 with 12 (all easterns) at West Friendship (**BO, EH, JS**) and six at Oakland Mills Garden Plots (**JW**). One of the western subspecies was detected at UMDCF 9/22 with two there on 9/30 (**BO, EH, JS**). Bay-breasted Warblers are infrequently reported. Singles were seen at MPEA 9/4 (**KS**) and at Rockburn 9/6 (**JMr**). The Blackpoll Warbler 8/25 at MPEA was a new early date (**BO, EH, JS**). A Wilson's Warbler lingered in Swansfield until 11/27 for just the

second November record (JTv). A Connecticut Warbler was spotted 9/4 MPEA (KS). Mourning Warblers were seen at Rockburn 9/17 (BO,EH) and Forsythe Rd 9/25 (DH+).

Sparrow migration was generally unremarkable. A Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow 10/10 UMDCF for the tenth county record was the most notable (BO). The 60 to 80 Chipping Sparrows and 200 Song Sparrows 10/20 at West Friendship were fine counts (BO,EH,JS). Two or three Savannah Sparrows 8/4 along A.E. Mullinix Rd. may have been nesting but could not be confirmed (EH,JS). Lincoln's Sparrows were reported from 9/25 Forsythe Rd (DH+) to 10/23 UMDCF (BO,TFe,EH,JS). A White-crowned Sparrow 9/25 Forsythe Rd was the earliest ever (DH+).

After successfully breeding at the landfill, the last Dickcissel was heard there 8/13 (RC). Rusty Blackbird records were all in November with the high a mere three at Centennial

11/13 (KH,KD+). Large flocks of Common Grackles were reported twice: 3,500+ over Hallmark 11/25 (WEB) and 7,500+ at Centennial 11/27 (RR). On 11/28 "thousands" of black-birds were noted over Little Patuxent Parkway (SN). Purple Finches were reported by 15 observers at 12 locations. The high count was 15+ at Schooley 10/20 (MHf,HH). Two Pine Siskins over Alpha Ridge Park 11/11 were the only ones reported (JW). Sixty American Goldfinches were counted 10/6 at Lake Elkhorn (SN).

HCFC-Howard County Fall Count, 9/17  
UMDCF-University of Maryland Central Farm  
MPEA-Middle Patuxent Environmental Area  
f-female; m-male

Observers: SAR-Stan Arnold, JBI-John Blaisdell, SBr-Stephen Braude, LC-Lisa Colangelo, JC-Jane Coskren, TDC-T. Dennis Coskren, RC-Ralph Cullison III, KD-Karen Darcy,

SE-Susan Earp, WE-Wes Earp, JEb-Jane Ebert, WEB-Ward Ebert, TFe-Tom Feild, RG-Ralph Geuder, MHf-Matt Hafner, DH-Dave Harvey, MH-Maureen Harvey, KH-Kevin Heffernan, GHi-Gayle Hill, BHi-Bill Hill, HH-Hans Holbrook, EH-Emy Holdridge, DHo-David Holmes, JHI-John Hubbell, BHB-Bill Hubick, MK-Mike Kerwin, NM-Nancy Magnusson, JMr-Joel Martin, GMcC-Grazina McClure, MMcC-Mike McClure, EMe-Elayne Metter, JMe-Jeff Metter, DN-Diane Nagengast, SN-Sue Neri, DOI-Daryl Olson, BO-Bonnie Ott, KP-Karla Pearce, BP-Bruce Peterjohn, RR-Robert Ringler, GR-Gina Ruk, RSm-Romayne Smith, KS-Kurt Schwarz, JS-Jo Solem, RSu-Rick Sussman, RT-Robin Todd, DT-Dick Tufts, KT-Kate Tufts, JTv-June Tveekrem, MW-Mark Wallace, JW-Jim Wilkinson, MWr-Michele Wright.

## FOURTH YEAR ATLAS RESULTS

### BY JOANNE SOLEM AND BONNIE OTT

Four years of atlasing have proven that Howard County has a superb group of atlasers. Not only have they confirmed an increasing number of species, but they continue to turn up special breeding birds.

Eighteen of the 34 blocks for which Howard County is responsible have established Probable or Confirmed status for 85% or more of their species. A remarkable achievement! Eight species have been sighted and confirmed in every quarterblock; another 48 species have been seen in every block.

During 2005, observers made a special effort to locate neotropical species whose numbers appear to have dropped since the 80's atlas. It paid off. Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Kentucky Warbler, and Hooded Warbler, for example, were added in 37 more quarterblocks with six confirmations.

Accompanying maps show that Wild Turkeys are marching across the county. At a time when Ring-necked Pheasants and Northern Bobwhites are clinging precari-

ously to their status as breeding species, this large game bird continues to turn up in unexpected locations county-wide. Sykesville NW even produced a hen on a nest!

The second pair of maps showing Grasshopper Sparrow distribution documents the unfortunate trend of many field species. In the case of understory dwelling neotropical species, an excess deer population clearing the understory in state and county parks and on WSSC property can be blamed for much of the nesting warbler loss. Deer are not primarily to blame for the loss of most field species; rather, suburbanization is clearly the major factor. As farm numbers continue to dwindle and houses sprout, there is simply no adequate habitat remaining for many field birds. The change has been most apparent in the south, central, and eastern portions of the county.

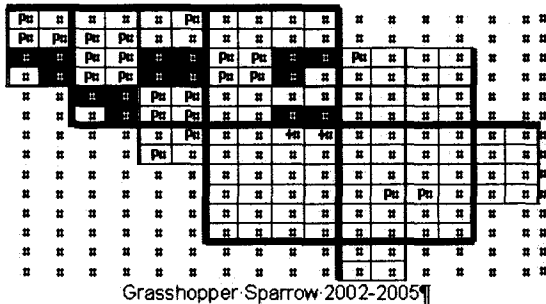
Exciting to the coordinators was that, in this fourth year of intense atlasing, unusual species were still being discovered. Hooded Merganser confirmations in both Woodbine SE and Laurel NW were unprecedented. Pine

Warblers have been confirmed in previous atlases but never with an active nest. That first county record was achieved in Woodbine SE in 2005. Prothonotary Warblers traditionally nest in small numbers along the Patapsco River. Confirmed nesting in Clarksville SW along the Patuxent River above Browns Bridge was a real treat and a first for any atlas at that location. A pair of Summer Tanagers in Sykesville CE was an astonishing find. Unfortunately, no evidence of breeding could be established. A major triumph was confirming Savannah Sparrow as a county breeder in Sykesville SE. This was memorable because neither prior atlas had any confirmations. Seven blocks show them in the 70's with two Probables. No blocks recorded them in the 80's atlas. Also in 2005, a site in Woodbine CW had Probable breeding with a small colony, so there is hope for a confirmation there. Another first county confirmation was Swamp Sparrow in Relay CW. It had been suspected at this location since 2002. Dickcissel is one field bird that can be trumpeted as a success story in 2005. This species is notorious for its unpredictable occupation of sites so who knows whether any will return to Alpha Ridge landfill in Sykesville CE in 2006. Four males and one female were observed in several adjoining territories. A nest with four eggs was unsuccessful, but later a fledged bird was photographed so there had been at least one successful nesting at that

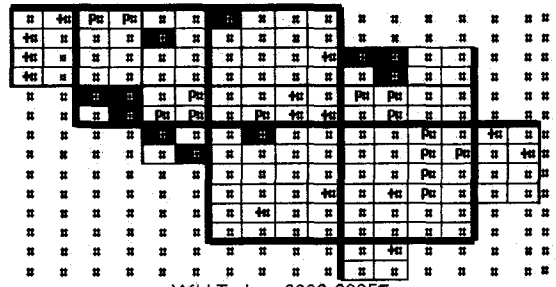
location. Although this was only the second confirmed county nesting (Sykesville SW in the 70's atlas), Dickcissel also was determined to be Probable in Woodbine SE in 2005. Together with the singing male in Woodbine NW in 2004, this has been an excellent atlas for Dickcissels.

In 2006, the fifth and final year of the Maryland Breeding Bird Atlas, we are looking forward to more exciting finds and to completing coverage for many species. Some atlasers have volunteered to assist in blocks adjoining theirs or wherever they are needed. Others are atlasing in parts of the state where coverage is scant. We are grateful for this generosity of time and skills. The enthusiasm, dependability, and pride that Howard County birders have shown in consistent and thorough coverage of the county is outstanding! Let's complete this final year on a high note.

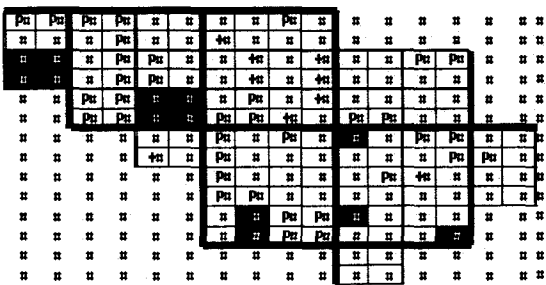
To examine the results so far in both tabular and map form, go to the Bird Club's website [www.howardbirds.org](http://www.howardbirds.org) We continue to welcome contributions from members and friends. Nestings or sightings of fledgling owls, vultures, Chimney Swifts, hummingbirds, pheasants, turkeys, bobwhites, and whip-poor-wills are always needed. Species, location, and date (at least an approximation) can be forwarded to Bonnie at 410-461-3361 or Jo at odenata@msn.com



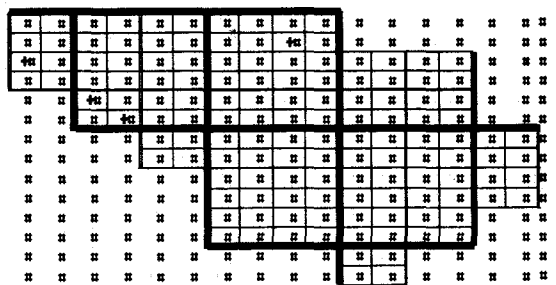
Grasshopper Sparrow 2002-2005



Wild Turkey 2002-2005



Grasshopper Sparrow 1983-1987



Wild Turkey 1983-1987

## CLUB MEETINGS

BY JANE GEUDER

Don't forget, club meetings are now being held at:

**Howard County Recreation & Parks Headquarters**  
**7120 Oakland Mills Road**  
**Columbia, MD 21046**

If schools are closed for the day or close early due to snow and/or ice, all indoor facilities are closed for the day. You can check on the status of programs and facilities by calling the recorded program status line at 410-313-4451.

Hospitality and club bookstore at 7:30 p.m.  
 Meeting/Program begins at 8:00 p.m. For further information call Jeff Friedhoffer, 410-997-5366.

**Thursday, March 9 "Special Birds and the Breeding Bird Atlas in Howard County,"** by Jo Solem and Bonnie Ott. The final year of the Maryland Breeding Bird Atlas is underway. See how Howard County's results so far compare with previous efforts, and find out what special species have been confirmed.

**Thursday, April 13 "Australian Ms. Adventures: the Great Kingfisher Quest,"** by Elayne and Jeff Metter. The presentation will emphasize how to do a leisurely-paced trip with an emphasis on watching and photographing birds. Club members, Jeff and Elayne, will present pictures of many of the common birds of the Cairns region of Australia which they found to be a great birding destination.

## HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB SPRING TRIPS

BY BONNIE OTT

**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](http://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](mailto: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.

### CENTENNIAL PARK

**March 5, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hrs.)**

*Meet at west end parking lot.*

Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species.

Great view of the sky for flyovers.

Facilities available.

*Leader—Tom Field 240-456-0856.*

### CENTENNIAL PARK

**March 12, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hrs.)**

*Meet at west end parking lot.*

Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species.

Great view of the sky for flyovers.

Facilities available.

*Leaders—Jane and Dennis Coskren*

*410-381-7344.*

### CENTENNIAL PARK

**March 26, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hrs.)**

*Meet at west end parking lot.*

Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species.

Great view of the sky for flyovers.

Facilities available.

*Leader—Joe Byrnes 410-730-5329.*

### HOWARD WATERFOWL SEARCH

**March 11, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. (half day)**

*Meet at Broken Land Parkway lot at Lake Elkhorn.*

Plan to visit the Columbia lakes, possible western ponds, and Triadelphia Reservoir to search for gulls, ducks, grebes, loons, and other waterfowl. Easy walking involved. Plan to carpool. Bring lunch and drinks. Scopes helpful. Facilities available at certain locations.

*Leader—Stan Arnold 410-768-0155.*

### CENTENNIAL PARK

**March 19, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hrs.)**

*Meet at west end parking lot.*

Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species.

Great view of the sky for flyovers.

Facilities available.

*Leader—TBA. Call Bonnie for information,*

*410-461-3361.*

### UNIVERSITY OF MD FARM


**April 9, Sunday, 6:30 a.m. (half day)**

*Limit: 12 people*

Search the wetland and dry fields for migrants. Expect difficult walking.

Knee boots a must.

*Call Bonnie to sign up, 410-461-3361.*

 =Great for beginning birders

*(Field Trips continues on page 6.)*

**EARTH DAY AT MT. PLEASANT**

**April 22, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. (1-2 hrs.)**

Meet at shed. Easy walking through the fields of Mt. Pleasant farm. Tree lines, hedgerows, and streams provide good habitat for viewing non-meadow species. Great opportunity for flyovers. Learn the basics of binocular and field guide use. Facilities available.

Leader—Kurt Schwarz 410-461-1643.

**SAVAGE MILL TRAIL BIRDS AND WILDFLOWERS**

**April 26, Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. (2 hrs.)**

Meet at Bollman Truss Bridge in Savage, corner of Gorman Rd. and Foundry St. Easy walk on a wide flat path to look for spring wildflowers and early migrants. Scenic trail along the Little Patuxent River at the Fall Line. No facilities.

Leaders—Bob and Jo Solem 301-725-5037.

**ROCKBURN BRANCH PARK**

**April 30, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (half day)**

Meet in parking lot on the left just past the restored schoolhouse.

Moderate but lengthy walking through the woods and fields of our largest county park looking for early migrants. Paths may be muddy. Facilities available.

Leaders—Karen Darcy 410-552-9342 and Kevin Heffernan 410-418-8731.

**BIG DAY**

**May 6, Saturday.**

Big Day is back! All day listing extravaganza! Limit: 12 people.

Plan to spend the day hiking around the county in search of as many species as possible. All types of footwear needed. Bring food and drinks. Brief lunch stop planned. Facilities available at certain locations.

Call Bonnie to sign up, 410-461-3361.

**HENRYTON, BIRDS AND WILDFLOWERS**

**May 9, Tuesday, 8:30 a.m. (half day)**

Meet at end of Henryton Rd.

Mostly flat trail along Patapsco River. Peak of migration and numerous wildflowers. Trail may be muddy in spots. No facilities.

Leaders—Bob and Jo Solem 301-725-5037.

**MAY COUNT**

**May 13, Saturday.**

(More information to come in the May/June newsletter.)

## Excess Inventory Benefits Birds



*On behalf of the Howard County Bird Club, President Jeff Friedhoffer accepted suet cake donations from Sherry Tomlinson and John Straugh of Pennington Seed.*

When Sherry Tomlinson's employer, Pennington Seed, began clearing inventory last fall, Sherry asked if it could be directed to the Howard County Bird Club. The company agreed and the Club found itself in possession of 400+ boxes of suet cakes, more than 160 suet holders, and 35 other feeders. The late October timing was excellent—just before peak bird feeding season and prior to holiday gift giving. Over the following weeks members and friends snapped up much of the stock at bargain prices. Proceeds were added to those of the October seed sale. So far, at least \$1,000 has been added to habitat preservation totals! Items sold to other MOS chapters benefited the atlas project. More than \$400 was raised.

The Howard Board authorized substantial donations of suet cakes to Patuxent Wildlife Research Refuge, Schooley Mill Park, Mt. Pleasant, Black Hill Park, Meadowside Nature Center, and Piney Run Park. Howard County atlasers were encouraged to request a suet feeder and a box of suet cakes for individuals who had provided land access or who had been especially helpful in providing information or assistance for the county atlas.

Jon Straugh and Sherry Tomlinson of Pennington Seed were present at the November meeting to make a formal presentation of the suet and feeders to President Jeff Friedhoffer. The Bird Club is enormously grateful to Pennington Seed for their generous donation. Many thanks to Sherry Tomlinson whose initiative and energy made the whole project possible. Among the many members who stored seed, hauled it to meetings, sold it, or transferred it to nature centers were Kevin Heffernan, Karen Darcy, Sue Muller, Emy Holdridge, Tracy and Erin Eve, Jane and Dennis Coskren, Mary-Jo Betts, Tom Miller, Maureen Harvey, Kate Tufts, Jo Solem, and Sherry Tomlinson.

**BLUE MASH TRAIL, MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

**May 20, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. (half day)**

Meet at Broken Land Parkway WEST lot.

Visit this Mont. Co. park that holds the potential for a wide variety of species. Terrain is fairly level but trails may be very muddy. Waterproof footwear is encouraged. Plan on four hours at Blue

Mash and another hour at Greenbridge and Brighton Dam on the way home. The latter have facilities. Plan to return to the park-and-ride by 12:30 p.m. We will be looking for late waterfowl, shorebirds, Northern Bobwhites, Cliff Swallows, and songbirds.

Leader—Stan Arnold 410-768-0155.

# HOWARD COUNTY ODONATE SURVEY 2005

BY JOANNE AND BOB SOLEM

The tenth year of surveying odonates produced a new dragonfly species for Howard County: **Eastern Ringtail** (*Erpetogomphus designatus*) 8/14/05 at Browns Bridge. A single male was netted and photographed (HH,JSt,MB) It is state-ranked as an S2 species. This is the fourth county in Maryland in which this species has been documented and the first one away from the Potomac River system. Eastern Ringtail is species 93 on the Howard County list and 44 on that of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC). No species were added to the other long-term study sites.



*Banded Pennant—male*  
(photo by June Tveekrem)

Of the half dozen early or late date additions, three were significant extensions: **Shadow Darter** emergence was moved forward more than a month from 9/14 to 8/12 (JT). **Stream Cruiser disappearance** was pushed from 5/15 to 6/13 (JT), and the **Banded Pennant** late date went from 8/11 to 9/9 (BS).

Serendipity always plays a role in nature study. A search for **Gray Petaltails** in a seepage area along the Patapsco on 6/23 did not produce the desired dragonfly which had been present on the previous visit. The three cast skins (*exuviae*) of the **Tiger Spiketail**, however, were an exciting find (JT).

During 2005, Bob and Jo Solem, June Tveekrem, and Sue Probst worked with Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks to design two odonate information boards to be erected eventually at Meadowbrook Park. Sue Muller posted a Font Hill Wetlands Park odonate list along with computer-generated versions of the Meadowbrook signs on the board near Centennial Lane.

Howard County's core of odonate chasers spread their enthusiasm beyond county borders in 2005. June Tveekrem led a field trip at the MOS convention at Solomons, May 21. Bob and Jo Solem presented a workshop at Meadowside Nature Center June 24 and at Adkins Arboretum July 16. They also surveyed a Carroll County wetland with Bob Ringler. Sue Muller, who was awarded an MOS scholarship to an Audubon camp week in Wisconsin, left camp leaders and participants with a new appreciation for odonates as amazing insects.

Data contributors were June Tveekrem, Sue Muller, Pam Frank, Sue Neri, Hans Holbrook, Jim Stasz, Mike Burchette, Richard Orr, Bob and Jo Solem.

We gratefully acknowledge support and land permission from several individuals, Howard Co. Rec and Parks, and WSSC.

Visit the Club's website [www.howardbirds.org](http://www.howardbirds.org) for a complete list of county and Maryland odonates, as well as an introductory pamphlet.

## FIRST HOWARD COUNTY ODONATE SURVEY

Saturday, July 15; rain date July 22

For odonate enthusiasts or those interested in learning about these fascinating insects. Teams of experienced (along with inexperienced) observers will cover representative habitats in many parts of the county.

Tally and meal afterward  
at June Tveekrem's.

To sign up or for information,  
contact June at [JuneTvee@toad.net](mailto:JuneTvee@toad.net).

## NEW JERSEY BIRDING GUIDE

BY SUSAN SETTERBERG

For those birders planning a trip to Cape May, the State of New Jersey and NJ Audubon have teamed up to publish a guide entitled "NJ Birding & Wildlife Trails." It is the first of a series and covers Salem, Cumberland and Cape May Counties. The book describes nine different routes that guide you through various state and local parks, hot spots and National Wildlife Refuges. The descriptions for each "trail" include seasonal expectations for birds, site descriptions of each stopping point on the trail, a little historical context for a few of the stops and some information on access and parking. Note pages have been added for each trail and there is even a glossary and reference guide in the back of the book.

This free book is available at the Cape May Bird Observatory, or you can call 800-VISITNJ.

For more information about New Jersey birding and wildlife trails go to [www.njwildlifetrails.org](http://www.njwildlifetrails.org).



**HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB**  
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Programs and Field Trips	Conservation Column
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**CONSERVATION COLUMN:  
SNOW BIRD CERULEAN WARBLERS**  
BY KURT SCHWARZ

A refuge for wintering Cerulean Warblers has been established in Colombia. Roughly 500 acres in prime wintering habitat for Ceruleans has been protected, in what is the first refuge in South America for neotropical migrants. The site is also home to three critically endangered bird species, according to Conservation International: Gorgeted Wood-quail, Colombian Mountain Grackle, and Chesnut-bellied Hummingbird. An additional two endangered species occur there as well: Rusty-faced Parrot and Black Inca. In addition, it protects a watershed and contains an ancient, indigenously-made stone path.

The refuge has been established. Fundacion ProAves, in Colombia, is now engaged in protecting the refuge (by funding guards) and promoting activities in the buffer area to build public support, and expand the area of useful habitat for birds. (Note: the Howard County Bird Club has invested its seed sale proceeds into very similar conservation projects abroad.)

Cerulean Warblers are, of course, a very special and not easily-come-by species in Howard County. The most reliable spot for them is the Henryton section of Patapsco State Park, but they have also been encountered in parts of Patuxent River State Park at the western end of the county.

**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 23, Thursday**

Mary-Jo Betts  
9494 Crisscross Court  
Columbia, MD 21045  
301-596-5859

**April 27, Thursday**

Kate Tufts  
2830 Duvall Road  
Woodbine, MD 21797  
410-489-7052