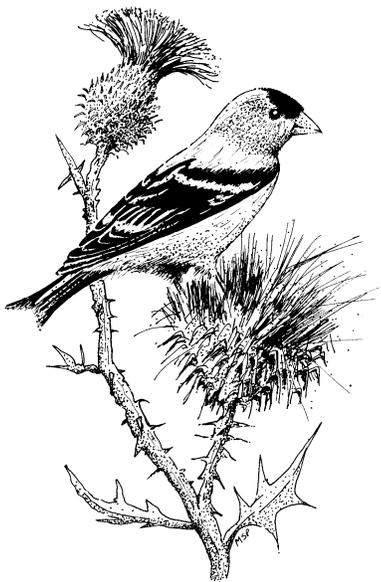


The Goldfinch

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



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Amanda Witt, *Editor*
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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 sent to:
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AUTUMN BIRD RECORDS AUGUST 1 TO NOVEMBER 30, 2006

BY JOANNE SOLEM

The long autumn season always brings special species. Headliners this year were Golden Eagle, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Black Tern, Common Raven, Snow Bunting, and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

The first **Snow Goose** of the season (white phase) was spotted at Lime Kiln Pond 10/13 (**JW**). It was followed by two (one blue) at Triadelphia Rd 10/18 (**DN**); a high of four (wh.) were at Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab 11/26 (**BHb**). **Cackling Goose** sightings began with one (or two) birds at Centennial 11/29 (**JTv-ph.**); four were reported from there 11/30 (**SCI**). Take special care identifying this species since small **Canada Geese** frequent this lake. The only **Tundra Swans** were a flock of 40 over Duvall Rd 11/11 (**KT**). The county's lone free-flying **Mute Swan** remained most of the period at Lake Elkhorn. Its foray to Wilde Lake lasted just one day (11/26) (**SN**).

A flock of **Wood Ducks** at US 29 and Broken Land Pkwy reached 20 on 10/8 (**JMcK**). A **Gadwall** stopped off at Centennial 11/18 (**SAr+**). Two summering **American Wigeon** were noted on 8/8 (**JS**), three were present 9/16 (**ML**) to 9/26 (**SLg**), and just one re-

mained on 11/3 (**KS**). Two were at Pigtail 11/20 (**BHi**). Two **Northern Shoveler** females dropped onto a pond at Waterford Farm (Jennings Chapel Rd) 10/21, a real treat (**MW**). **Northern Pintails** were at Centennial from one on 10/4 (**RR**) to two on 11/26 (**ROr+**). Pigtail hosted six **Green-winged Teal** 11/21 (**BHi**). County **Redheads** are always notable. Three were at Big Branch 11/13 (**BHi**), and four at Centennial 11/23 (**JW**). The high **Ring-necked Duck** count reached 72 at Big Branch 11/24 (**EH**). A single **Lesser Scaup** was at Centennial 11/23 (**JW**). Five **Buffleheads** arrived at Centennial 10/29 (**RR**); the high was 35 at Triadelphia 11/3 (**EH,JS**). Five **Hooded Mergansers** were on a pond at Md 99 and Morgan Station Rd 11/29 (**WE**). An early **Ruddy Duck** stayed at Johns Hopkins APL 8/8 (**KH**) to 8/14 (**NM**); the high was 12 at Triadelphia 11/3 (**EH,JS**).

A **Ring-necked Pheasant** cock was a pleasant surprise along Carrs Mill Rd near Bushy Park Rd 9/9 (**RB**). A **Wild Turkey** hen was noted on the west side of Bethany Lane just north of US 40 in mid-October (*vide MW*r).

(Records continued on page 2)

(Records continued from page 1)

Three **Pied-billed Grebes** appeared at Lake Elkhorn 10/12 (**SN**), reaching a high of six on 11/4 (**MSt**). Two **Horned Grebes** were spotted at Triadelphia 11/23 (**BHi**; **JS**) for the sole report. **Double-crested Cormorants** were scarce with a flock of 10 over Bon Secours on 10/11 as the meager high (**MWr+**).

The **Great Blue Heron** colony on Carroll Mill Rd was successful, though the four/five nests were difficult to monitor. At least three nestlings were counted in two nests (**M&GMcC**). Eight **Great Egrets** were tallied on Fall Count 9/16. The last **Green Heron** was present at Centennial 10/11 (**JTv**). There was a **Black-crowned Night-Heron** at Wilde Lake 9/16 (**CN**), and one at Elkhorn 10/2 (**CStn**). An immature **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** was spotted at Elkhorn 8/4 (**SN-ph.**; **BMi**).

A late **Osprey** soared over Centennial 11/25 (**JTv**). Again this season there were numerous **Bald Eagle** reports. The last two years there have been frequent adult eagle sightings from the University of Maryland Central Farm (UMDCF) and the county's central lakes. The mystery of their origin was solved by **Wes Earp** who photographed a nest at historic Doughoregan Manor 8/24. The nest has been successful the last two years with two fledged in 2006. This constitutes the third active county nest and the first away from the reservoirs. Fall Count 9/16 tallied three **Northern Harriers**, 22 **Sharp-shinned Hawks**, and 30 **Cooper's Hawks**. (Not all hawk numbers were available for this compilation.) **Broad-winged Hawks** appear to have peaked between 9/17

and 9/26: 1,000 were counted over E. Columbia 9/17 (**JMcK**), 330 over Talbots Landing 9/21 (**RG**), and 300 at MPEA 9/26 (**BO,JS**). An early migrant **Red-tailed Hawk** was spotted at Meadowbrook 9/7 (**RG**), and a very early **Golden Eagle** sailed over Manahan Dr 9/16 (**BO**). The season's three **Merlins** were detected in early October: 10/2 at Md 175 and Snowden River Pkwy (**BHb**), 10/3 UMDCF (**BO,JS**), and 10/7 Oakland Mills Garden Plots (OKMGP) (**JW**). **Peregrine Falcons** were seen at Meadowbrook 10/1 (**WE**) and over W. Columbia 11/15 (**JC**). Two **American Kestrels** were at W. Friendship Park (no public access) 9/13 (**WE**), while three were present along Old Frederick Rd between Md 97 and Md 32 on 10/14 (**JW**).

Rails were few. A **Sora** was heard at Meadowbrook 10/19 (**JW**) and one was flushed at UMDCF 10/21 (the second latest ever) (**BO+**). An **American Coot** arrived at Waterford 10/29 (**BHi**); the high was 15 at Pigtail 10/30 (**RR**).

Lack of public access to Triadelphia Reservoir during 2006, while dam repair was proceeding, hampered the potential for many shorebird species. Greenbridge and Pigtail reopened in late October, but, because the water had been drawn down all year, waist-high vegetation covered usual mudflats. Browns Bridge was moderately attractive from mid-August until early September. The first **Semipalmated Plover** arrived at Western Regional Park 8/15 (**B&GHi**); the last one was reported from Meadowbrook 9/13 (**SLg**). The **Killdeer** high was a modest 33 at Browns Bridge 9/3 (**JS**). One **Greater Yellowlegs** and two

Lessers were at Browns Bridge 8/13 (**EH**). At Western RP a **Spotted Sandpiper** and five **Least Sandpipers** showed up 8/1 followed by a **Solitary** and two **Semipalmated Sandpipers** 8/2 (**B&GHi**). The high count for Least was 31 at Browns Bridge 9/3 (**JS**) with 24 at Western RP 8/16 (**BHi**). Nine **Semipalmated Sandpipers** stayed at a drawn-down sewage lagoon at UMDCF 8/30 to 9/12 (**WE**). Three **Pectoral Sandpipers** were located at a Daisy Rd farm 9/16 (**MW**). The star of this lackluster shorebird season was a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** (fifth county record) along Triadelphia Rd 9/3 (**B&GHi-ph.**). The earliest **Wilson's Snipe** showed up at UMDCF 9/13 (**BO**).

The only **Laughing Gull** reported in 2006 made a cameo appearance at Western RP 9/2 (**JS,EH**), while an opportunistic **Great Black-backed Gull** frequented a shopping center at Md 175 and Snowden River Pkwy 9/30 (a new early date) (**JTv**). Few **Caspian Terns** were detected: one at Lake Kittamaqundi 9/10 (**EH**) and two there 9/20 (**SPr**) spanned the sightings. A **Black Tern** was glimpsed west of Rocky Gorge Dam 9/16 as it disappeared around a bend in the reservoir—a typically brief view (**TDC**). This was the first record since 1999 and tied the second latest date. The only **Forster's Tern** report was 9/2 from Brighton Dam (**EH,JS**).

The last **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** was tallied 9/30 at the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA) (**KS**). A **Barred Owl** family was present at the east end of Elkhorn 8/28 when four/five were heard (**SN**). It was pleasant to re-

(Records continued on page 3)

(*Records continued from page 2*)
 ceive a flurry of **Eastern Screech-Owl** reports: Fall Count tallied three on 9/16; two were heard at Rockburn Branch Park 9/17 (**JMr**); three were present in west-central HOWCO 9/29 (**AMcKg**); one roosted in a box at Hallmark 10/7 through November (**WEB**); and two birds responded to a tape at Talbots Landing 11/25-26 (**R&JG**).

The first six **Common Nighthawks** wandered over Manahan Dr 8/20 (**BO**); the last five were seen over Trotter Rd 9/18 (**WE**). The final three **Chimney Swifts** were spotted at Mt. Pleasant 10/20 tying the third latest date (**J&TDC**). [Mt. Pleasant, ½ m. east of Woodstock Rd on Md 99 is now open to the public Friday and Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.] The last certain **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** was at Stone Hill 10/5 (**KLz**). Another hummingbird turned up at a feeder in Timberleigh in late October staying until 11/8 (**DN**). It was not possible to identify the species from observation or photographs (**BHi**), so banding was planned; unfortunately, a *warm* spell interfered. Hummingbird bander **David Holmes** said the photos suggested Ruby-throated; but, since a *Selasphorus* species could not be ruled out, it will remain “one that got away.” **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were scarce with one 9/17 at Rockburn BP (**JMr**) and one 9/27 at David Force Park (**BO**)—the same place and date where the first **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** showed up (**MWr+**).

Two **Olive-sided Flycatchers** were spotted in typical dead tree-top locations: Md 97 and Patuxent River 8/16 (**BHi**) and west of Elli-

cott City 8/23 (**KH**). A **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** and a **Least Flycatcher** were identified along the Patuxent River west of Henryton 9/9 (**TM,TFe+**). The last **Great Crested Flycatcher** was noted at MPEA 9/26 (**BO,JS**).

If accepted, a well-seen **Philadelphia Vireo** reported from Meadowbrook 8/19 would be a state early date (**D&MH**). Four others were on more expected dates between 9/6 at Fore Bay Pond (**BO,EH**) and 9/27 MPEA (**BO**). A **Red-eyed Vireo** was noted at Meadowbrook 10/23 (second latest date) (**KS**); the peak was ~50 at MPEA 9/8 (**BO,EH**). On 9/22, 118 **Blue Jays** passed over Meadowbrook during a hawkwatch (**RG**). The explosion of county **Common Raven** sightings continued: 10/14 Centennial (**JTv**), 10/15 Western RP (**BO+**), 11/4 Bon Secours, heard only (**MWr+**), and 11/11 Brush Run, E. Columbia (**JW**). This brings to ten the number of reports since early May when the second-ever raven was sighted! **Horned Larks** are regular at Western RP with a seasonal high of eight on 8/22 (**SBg**). The largest group was 30 along Triadelphia Rd 9/22 (**EH,JS**).

The warm fall weather produced some lingering species. The two **Tree Swallows** on 11/5 at Centennial were the second latest ever (**KS**), until one was well-seen over Triadelphia 11/23 which established a new late date (**BHi**). **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, as predicted, were scarce. One stopped briefly in Swansfield, W. Columbia 10/14 (**JTv**) and another made an appearance w. of Ellicott City 11/27 (**KH,KD**). The first **Winter Wren** visited a yard at Stone Hill 10/11 (**KLz**). Four **Marsh Wren**

sightings ranged from 9/16 (second earliest ever) along the Patuxent Branch Trail, Pratt Bridge area (**JMcK**) to 10/21 which produced one at UMDCF and three at Waterford (**BO+**). **Golden-crowned Kinglets** made their presence obvious 11/2 when “dozens” were present at Meadowbrook (**JTv**). **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were especially evident at Mt. Pleasant 10/20 where ~50 were observed (**J&TDC**).

A **Veery** flight of ten just before dawn was heard over Elkridge 9/17 (**BHb**). The last **Swainson's Thrush, Veery, and Gray-cheeked Thrush** along with the first **Hermit Thrush** were at MPEA 10/10 (**MHf,BHb,HH**). The high count of Hermit Thrushes was on 10/29 with three at Rockburn BP (**KH,KD+**) and two at Brush Run, E. Columbia (**JW**). A flock of 25 **Eastern Bluebirds** at Western RP 9/13 contained an unexpected **Blue Grosbeak** (**RR**). Fall Count 9/16 tallied 142 bluebirds.

Gray Catbirds disappeared early with the last one at Mt. Pleasant 10/12 (**BO,EH,JS**), while the last **Brown Thrasher** was spotted 10/29 at Rockburn BP (**KH,KD+**). Two **American Pipits** were detected at UMDCF 10/11 (**BO+**); two were also noted at Meadowbrook 11/25 (**JW**). The largest group of **Cedar Waxwings** was ~75 feeding on fruit at Centennial 11/5 (**KS+**).

Golden-winged Warblers were a highlight of warbler migration. Remnants of Ernesto dropped one in a Worthington yard 9/1 (**EMe**); one was also spotted along the Patuxent Branch Trail 9/12 (**SCl**);
(Records continued on page 6)

CLUB MEETINGS - BY JANE GEUDER

Club meetings are 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 Kevin Heffernan, 410-418-8731.

Thursday, March 8, 2007

“Movin’ In March---It’s All So Brown!” by David Holmes.

Expect some pointers on difficult to identify birds in early migration. A month before the more colorful songbird migration begins, there are lots of birds of subtle, blend-in plumage passing through Maryland. David, a club member and busy bird bander, will give us some ID tips to help us sort out our sightings.

Thursday, April 12, 2007

“The Ecology of American Redstarts During Winter: No Tropical Vacation!” by Colin Studds. Colin is with the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and is a Ph.D. student at the University of Maryland. His research focuses on understanding how the habitats American Redstarts use during their tropical winter can affect their spring migration and survival.

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 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; 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.

WOODCOCK AND OWL

SEARCH March 3, Saturday 1:30 p.m. (for owls) and 5:30 p.m. (for woodcock) *Meet at the horse trailer parking lot on Annapolis Rock Road about half way between Hipsley Mill and MD 94. We will stay until darkness descends (~5:30) if the weather is reasonably conducive for owls flying and woodcock displaying. Latecomers are welcome to come just at dusk. Email Jay Sheppard for more information jmsheppard@aol.com.*

CENTENNIAL PARK

March 4, Sunday 8:00 a.m.
Meet at West end parking lot on Centennial Lane.
Easy walking around the lake on paved path. Facilities available.
Leader- Kurt Schwarz 410-461-1643.

CENTENNIAL PARK

March 11, Sunday 8:00 a.m.
Meet at West end parking lot on Centennial Lane.
Easy walking around the lake on paved path. Facilities available.
Leader- Ward Ebert 301-490-5807.

WATERFOWL SEARCH

March 10, Sat. 8:00 a.m. (half day)
Meet at Broken Land Parkway/MD 32 Park and Ride, West lot. We'll carpool to search the Howard County waterways for ducks, grebes, mergansers and loons. Chance of an early migrant. Expect to stop at facilities along the route.
Leader- Stan Arnold - 410-768-0155.

CENTENNIAL PARK

March 18, Sunday 8:00 a.m.
Meet at West end parking lot on Centennial Lane.

(Field Trips continued on page 5)

(Field Trips continued from page 4)

Easy walking around the lake on paved path. Waterfowl expected, woodland trails for passerines.

Facilities available.

Leader- Ralph Cullison – 410-442-2181.

CENTENNIAL PARK

March 25, Sunday 8:00 a.m.

Meet at West end parking lot on Centennial Lane.

Easy walking around the lake on paved path. Waterfowl expected; early migrant passerines possible. Facilities available.

Leader- Bonnie Ott - 410-461-3361.

ALPHA RIDGE LANDFILL

April 7, Saturday 7:45 a.m.

Meet at Alpha Ridge Park to carpool to landfill. Half day.

Moderate walking over hills and fields of the landfill. Vesper Sparrow and other field birds likely.

Meadowlarks, kestrels and other open country birds expected. Rarities possible. Facilities at Alpha Ridge Park.

Leader- Ralph Cullison 410-442-2181.

BIRDING BY EAR FOR BEGINNERS

April 15, Sunday 8:00 a.m.

Meet on Old Columbia Rd and Ram's Horn Row

Walk the paved Gwynn Acres Path through a wooded stream valley.

Learn the basics of birding by ear. No facilities.

Leader- Kevin Heffernan - 410-418-8731.

WEEKDAY WALK AT CENTENNIAL PARK

April 17, Tues. 8:30 a.m. 2-3 hours.

Meet at West end parking lot on Centennial Lane.

Easy walking around the lake on paved path. Migrant passerines should be moving through.

Possible terns and other water birds. Facilities available.

Leaders- Joe Byrnes - 410-730-5329 and Jeff Culler 410-465-9006.

HAWKS AT FORT SMALLWOOD PARK

April 21, Saturday 9:00 a.m.

Meet near the Hollywood Video store in the parking lot of the Lyndwood Shopping Center to carpool to the Anne

Arundel County site. Go east on MD 100 to Exit 4 (MD 103) north to Montgomery Rd.; right at Montgomery; right at Marshalee Dr., 1/4 mile to the shopping center on the right. Though primarily a hawk watching trip, the park has the potential for a number of other kinds of birds. Bring lunch, drinks, sunscreen and a chair. There are portable toilets, but no drinking water. A 100 yard walk is all that is involved. Weinberg Park is nearby for those interested. Nominal admission charge.

Leader – Ralph Gender – 410-788-3764.

Leader – Ralph Gender – 410-788-3764.

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND FARM

April 22, Sunday

Meet at farm parking lot.

Walk the wetlands and dry fields of the central farm looking for sparrows, ducks and marsh birds. Tall boots and waterproof pants a must. Difficult walking at times. No facilities. Limit of 12.

Call Bonnie Ott to reserve a spot- 410-461-3361.

BUTTERFLIES AND WILDFLOWERS

April 28, Sat. 9:30 a.m. 2 hours.

Meet in the Mount Pleasant parking lot.

Walk the meadows and fields of the Howard Conservancy property to enjoy the butterflies and wildflowers of the farm. Facilities available.

Leaders - Dick Smith for butterflies and Bob Solem for wildflowers. Call Bob for info 301-725-5037.

MIDDLE PATUXENT ENVIRONMENTAL AREA

April 28, Sat. 8:00 a.m. half day.

Meet at Trotter Road lot.

Moderate walking on the wooded paths and along the river.

This is a fabulous area for many species of passerines. A warm season grass field may host sparrows. Warblers and vireos expected.

Boots recommended, grass can be tall and paths may be muddy.

Leader - Stan Arnold 410-768-0155.

WEEKDAY WALK AT BON SECOURS

May 2, Wed. 8:00 a.m. 2 hours.

Meet at visitors' parking lot

Easy walking around the lovely grounds of this spiritual center.

Woodlands and fields offer a variety of habitats. Facilities available.

Leader- Michele Wright 410-465-6057.

BIG DAY

May 5, Saturday

Limit of 12

All day intense birding to garner as many species in the county as possible. Bring food and drinks and plan to bird from dawn to dusk.

Facilities at some areas. Expect all types of terrain and difficult walking in some areas.

Call Bonnie Ott to reserve a spot - 410-461-3361.

MAY COUNT

May 12, Saturday all day

Details in next newsletter.

 = Great for beginning birders

(*Records continued from page 3*) and one was at MPEA 9/16 (second latest date) (**KS**). Four reports of **Tennessee Warblers** ranged from 9/10 at MPEA (**TFe**) to 10/10 at Meadowbrook (**BO**). **Orange-crowned Warblers** were reported over extended periods from two locations: 9/23 to 10/10 at Meadowbrook (**BO+**) and 10/7 to 11/4 at OKMGP (**JW**). **Nashville Warblers** were present from one at Big Branch 9/16 (**WEb,R&SPo,TStk**) to one at Meadowbrook 10/24 (**JS+**) with a high of four/five on 10/8 at US 29 and Broken Land Pkwy (**JMcK**). The **Magnolia Warbler** high was 12 on 9/26 at MPEA (**BO,JS**). **Cape May Warblers** were few. The only sightings were 9/8 at MPEA (**BO,EH**) and 9/17 at Rockburn BP (**JMr**). The **Black-throated Blue Warbler** at Pigtail 10/30 tied the county late date (**RR**). **Yellow-rumped Warblers** peaked at a low 44 on 10/14 at MPEA (**KS**). **Palm Warbler** migration was spread from 9/9 to 11/7. Most heartening was the number of observers who separated the eastern (yellow) and western (white) subspecies. Of 18 Palm sightings, 12 included at least one western. The highest numbers were 10/14 when four of six were westerns at (where else?) Western RP (**JW**) and 10/19 when the same observer had four westerns of six at Meadowbrook and one western at OKMGP. The one **Bay-breasted Warbler** was seen along Plum Tree Path 9/16 (**K&BB**). A **Connecticut Warbler** stayed at the OKMGP 9/24 to 10/3 (**JW**); another was detected at Rockburn BP 9/30 (**E&JMe**). **Wilson's Warblers** moved through from 9/9 at Henryton (**TM,TFe+**) to 9/30 at the Dickey Farm (Md 97 at Patapsco River) (**DH+**), with three

on Fall Count 9/16. Although not a record, an early **Canada Warbler** at Elkridge 8/9 was a choice find (**E&SAr**). A female **Common Yellowthroat** lingered until 11/10 at OKMGP (**JW**). Few birders this season were as fortunate as **Elayne Metter** when the storm of 9/1-2 dropped a lovely collection in her yard in Worthington, e. of Ellicott City. It included eight warbler species: **Golden-winged, Northern Parula, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, Pine, Black-and-white, Ovenbird, and Canada**, plus Red-eyed Vireo, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and Eastern Phoebe.

The first **American Tree Sparrow** finally put in an appearance 11/18 at Alpha Ridge Landfill (**RC**). **Chipping Sparrow** highs were 24 at Meadowbrook 10/23 (**KS**) and 20 at Rockburn BP 10/29 (**KH,KD+**). **Vesper Sparrows** are one of the county's special migrants. This year one was seen intermittently at the west end of Meadowbrook from 10/18 (**BO**) to 11/5 (**JW**). On 10/21, one was at OKMGP (**JW**), two to four were at Waterford (**BO+**), and one was at the landfill, last seen 11/4 (**RC+**). The atlas effort produced a second **Savannah Sparrow** breeding confirmation. An adult was observed feeding a fledgling on a playing field at Western RP 8/20 (**RB**). It probably originated in a farm field on the south side of Carrs Mill Rd. The high of 60 was counted both 10/3 and 10/11 at UMDCF (**BO+**). The final **Grasshopper Sparrow** was found at Waterford 10/21 (**BO+**). **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows** were the star of the sparrow migration. Since this species was first recorded in the county in 1988, the highest number reported in any

year has been two in the fall of 2001. Either four or five were present this season at UMDCF. The first one showed up on a record—early 9/24 (**BO,KS+**). It was a lovely bright bird (for purposes of trying to distinguish numbers present, they will be referred to as “bright” or “drab”). On 10/3, two were noted—one bright and one drab (**BO,JS**); the bright bird's plumage was sufficiently different from that on 10/3 so that it could be determined to be a third bird. On 10/11 two were again seen, but this time it was two dull birds (**BO,JS**). The dull bird of 10/3 could not be excluded, so all that can be stated is that there were at least four, possibly five, birds present during the season. **Fox Sparrows** took their time arriving with the earliest 10/28 at Fore Bay Pond (**JW**). Four at Meadowbrook 11/25 was the high (**JW**). Peak **Song Sparrow** numbers were 45 on 10/10 at Meadowbrook (**BO**) and 60 on 10/11 at UMDCF (**BO+**). **Lincoln's Sparrows** were widely reported by the sharp-eyed with the earliest at David Force Park 9/27 (**MWr,BO,JS**). Other sightings came from UMDCF, OKMGP, Meadowbrook, MPEA, and Mt. Pleasant, with a high of four on both 10/7 and 10/21 at Mt. Pleasant (**BO+**). A high of 40 **Swamp Sparrows** was noted at UMDCF 10/11 (**BO+**). A **Dark-eyed Junco** wasted no time migrating, arriving at Swansfield, W. Columbia on 9/12, the second earliest date ever (**JTv**). A leucistic junco with a broken white collar and other small white areas was at Dunloggin 10/29 (**KS**). **Snow Buntings** are usually detected just a few times each decade. The much-anticipated trip to the lim-

(*Records continued on page 7*)

(*Records continued from page 6*)
ited access landfill produced a county bird for the majority of the birders present on 10/4. It was also a new early date. Two buntings offered excellent scope and binocular views from multiple angles. When the birds flew off, others nearby (but previously unseen) multiplied the total from two, to five or seven. On 11/11, three were still present, but they were not detected after that date (**RC+**). Sparrow Big Day on 10/21 produced 11 species including Grasshopper and Vesper, but, disappointingly, no Nelson's. Good sparrow migration days (and nights) were 10/18 when Meadowbrook was "crawling with sparrows" (**BO**) and the night of 10/25 when the flight notes of dozens of sparrows were detected over Elkridge (**BHb**).

In 2004, a leucistic **Northern Cardinal** (all white with a little red in a few tail feathers) was reported twice at Meadowbrook. Although that bird was not noted since 2004, its genes live on. On 10/12 and 10/24, at that park, a bright pink cardinal with limited white areas was observed (**BO,JS+**). Fall Count 9/16 recorded 40 **Blue Grosbeaks**. The latest **Indigo Bunting** lingered until 10/22 at Fore Bay which tied the county's third latest date (**JW**). **Bobolink** numbers were unremarkable with a high of 30 at UMDCF 10/3 (**BO,JS**). Since 1999 **Dickcissels** have been recorded annually. Of course, 2004 and 2005 were banner years with nestings at the landfill (2005) and probable nesting on Old Frederick Rd (2004) and Roxbury Rd (2005). As is typical for this unpredictable species, breeding history did not repeat itself. The only Dickcissel detected in 2006

was a first winter female at Meadowbrook 11/5 (**JW**).

Fall Count 9/16 tallied 12 **Eastern Meadowlarks**. Five were at the landfill on 11/4 (**RC+**). In recent years, **Rusty Blackbirds** have been scarce. Despite limited numbers, a new arrival date was set with one at MPEA 9/28 (**BHb**). One lingered along the south shore at Centennial from 10/27 (**SLg**) to 11/3 (**KS**). **Purple Finches** were few. The earliest were two at Swansfield, W. Columbia 9/16 (**JTv**) and two at Meadowbrook on 9/28 (**SLg**). The only other reports were one at OKMGP 11/4 (**JW**) and two at Duvall Rd 11/18-19 (**KT**). A leucistic male **House Finch** (white patches on head and wings) was noted at Meadowbrook 10/5 (**RR,JS**).

Exotics: A pair of handsome **Ruddy Shelducks** spent a few days in the county. They were seen in flight along Carrs Mill Rd 8/11 (**LC**) and at Western RP 8/14 (**KT-ph**).

MPEA – Middle Patuxent Environmental Area

OKMGP – Oakland Mills Garden Plots

UMDCF – University of Maryland Central Farm
ph. – photograph

Observers: **EAr** – Elaine Arnold, **SAr** – Stan Arnold, **SBg** – Scott Berglund, **BBl** – Bill Blum, **KBl** – Karan Blum, **RB** – Rod Burley, **LC** – Lisa Colangelo, **SCl** – Steve Collins, **JC** – Jane Coskren, **TDC** – T. Dennis Coskren, **RC** – Ralph Cullison III, **KD** – Karen Darcy, **WE** – Wes Earp, **WEb** – Ward Ebert, **TFe** – Tom Feild, **JG** – Jane Geuder, **RG** – Ralph Geuder, **MHf** – Matt Hafner, **DH** – Dave

Harvey, **MH** – Maureen Harvey, **KH** – Kevin Heffernan, **BHi** – Bill Hill, **GHi** – Gayle Hill, **HH** – Hans Holbrook, **EH** – Emy Holdridge, **BHb** – Bill Hubick, **SLg** – Shashi Lengade, **ML** – Mike Leumas, **KLz** – Kathy Litzinger, **NM** – Nancy Magnusson, **JMr** – Joel Martin, **GMcC** – Grazina McClure, **MMcC** – Mike McClure, **AMcKg** – Al McKegg, **JMcK** – John McKitterick, **EMe** – Elayne Metter, **JMe** – Jeff Metter, **BMi** – Barry Miller, **TM** – Tom Miller, **DN** – Diane Nagengast, **SN** – Sue Neri, **CN** – Carol Newman, **ROr** – Richard Orr, **BO** – Bonnie Ott, **SPr** – Suzanne Probst, **RR** – Robert Ringler, **KS** – Kurt Schwarz, **JS** – Jo Solem, **MSt** – Michelle Stewart, **CStn** – Christine Stratton, **KT** – Kate Tufts, **JTv** – June Tveekrem, **MW** – Mark Wallace, **JW** – Jim Wilkinson, **MWr** – Michele Wright.

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 22, Thursday

Karen Darcy
9775 Diversified Lane
Ellicott City, Md 21042
(410) 418-8731

April 26, Thursday

Kate Tufts
2830 Duvall Rd.
Woodbine, Md 21797
(410) 489-7052

HOWARD COUNTY ODONATE SURVEY

BY JOANNE AND BOB SOLEM

A new county dragonfly, Cobra Clubtail (*Gomphus vastus*) was added to the odonate list on June 16, 2006 (**RS**). It was located east of Old Frederick Road on the Patapsco River. The county list now stands at 94 after 11 years. Previously, this dragonfly had been recorded only from the Potomac River and its major tributaries. In 2006, it was found in both the Patapsco and Susquahanna river systems.

Other significant news was completion of the first annual Howard County Odonate Count. On July 29, 2006, 28 counters from six counties located 36 species. Detailed results were published in a previous newsletter by compiler June Tveekrem. This year's count is planned for Saturday, June 23.

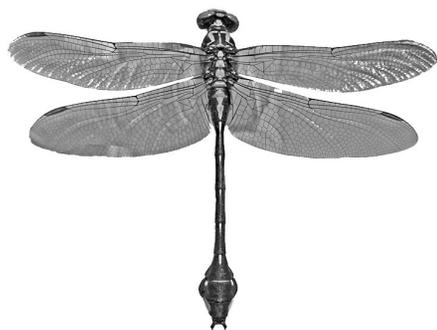
Of seven locations that have been

surveyed for a number of years, the following had additions in the last few years. (Number in parentheses following the location is the first year that area was surveyed.) New species were Centennial (1996)—Great Spreadwing (**JTv**), Common Baskettail, (**R&JS**), and Banded Pennant (**KC**) for a total of 53; Font Hill Park (1996)—Azure Bluet (**JTv**), Lancet Clubtail (**RS**), Bar-winged Skimmer (**RS**), and Golden-winged Skimmer (**RS**) for a total of 58 (the highest of any site); Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (1999)—Painted Skimmer, (**BHb**) which raises the total to 50; Meadowbrook Park (1996)—Great Blue Skimmer (**JS,NM,PC**) for a total of 42; and Western Regional Park (2001)—Double-striped Bluet (**R&JS**), Fragile Forktail (**JP+**), Comet Darner (**RB**), and Spot-winged Glider (**R&JS, JTv**) to bring its

total to 28. Sue Muller, Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, annually provides sightings from assorted open space locations.

Data contributors included Rod Burley (**RB**), Pat Caro (**PC**), Ken Clayton (**KC**), Pam Franks (**PF**), Bill Hill (**BHi**), Bill Hubick (**Bhb**), Nancy Magnusson (**NM**), Sue Muller (**SM**), Jerry Persall (**JP**), Jo Solem (**JS**), Robert Solem (**RS**), and June Tveekrem (**JTv**).

We are indebted to Richard Orr for advice and continuing support. We gratefully acknowledge cooperation and land permission from Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks. Lack of public access to Triadelphia Reservoir in 2006 precluded additions to the WSSC property list.



The Cobra Clubtail was added to the Howard County odonate list in 2006 by Bob Solem. This male was east of Old Frederick Road along the Patapsco River on June 16. *Photograph by June Tveekrem*

WARBLER IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP

(JUST IN TIME FOR THE SPRING WARBLER MIGRATION)

BY KEVIN HEFFERNAN

A warbler identification workshop will be given on Saturday, April 14 from 9:30 a.m. to noon at the Glenwood Community Center. This workshop was first presented at the MOS state convention last year and got rave reviews. The presentation consists of five or six slides for each of the 37 warbler species normally found in Maryland. Locations, habitat preferences, identification pointers for adult males and females, behavioral clues, vocalizations, and fascinating facts are all included. The photographs are simply stunning. The Glenwood Community Center is located at 2400 Route 97, Cooksville, Maryland, about a mile south of Route 70. The workshop will be held in the Annapolis Rock meeting room and will be limited to 12 participants. Sign up at the Bird Club meeting or by calling Kevin Heffernan at (410) 418-8731. If oversubscribed, it will be repeated.

CALLING HOWARD COUNTY BIRDERS!

BY JOANNE SOLEM

Birding Howard County, Maryland was published in 1995. Twelve years later it needs revising, in large part because there are numerous additional sites. The Bird Club board has decided not to reprint the book in hard copy; instead, it will be revised and posted on the club's website enabling it to be continually updated. The flexibility and memory capability of the website will allow inclusion of a wide variety of wildlife sightings (mammals, butterflies, reptiles, dragonflies, etc.), as well as photographs and bird lists.

With such exciting potential, how can you help? You are invited to supply data. Look over the list below and choose one or two favorite locations or roam the county investigating many sites. One person is needed to oversee each major site, but any number can provide data. There are no required number of trips and no meetings, just an enthusiasm and willingness to compile (if a site leader) and supply information to make the site descriptions as accurate as possible. Directions to each location are available in the *Howard Birding* section of the club's web page under "Directions to Howard Birding Spots" (<http://www.howardbirds.org/howard/directions.htm>).

[org/howard/directions.htm](http://www.howardbirds.org/howard/directions.htm)). A bird checklist divided by season will be supplied after e-mailing odenata@msn.com your choice(s). More information will be available in the *Members' Corner* section of the club's web page under "Records" (http://www.howardbirds.org/mem_corn/records.htm).

Sites which have published checklists (Centennial, Rockburn Branch, Schooley Mill, and the Columbia Lakes) always need updating, more vital are locations for which there is little data (new parks) or favorite sites for which checklists have never been compiled (Patapsco Valley State Park, Patuxent River State Park, WSSC property). Sightings from past field trips will be incorporated and previous records from individuals can be added. If you atlast a block containing any site, you probably have valuable data to contribute.

This is a significant undertaking but should yield excellent information for anyone interested in the natural history of Howard County. The book lists about 30 contributors to site material. In the web format, many more should be able to provide data. Join the fun!

List of Sites

Alpha Ridge Park
Bon Secours Spiritual Center
Cedar Lane Park
David Force Park
Font Hill Wetlands Park
Guilford Park
Gwynn Acres Path and Plum Tree Path
High Ridge Park
Hugg-Thomas Wildlife Management Area
Meadowbrook Park
Middle Patuxent Environmental Area
Middle Patuxent River – Eden Brook Rd.
Middle Patuxent River – Kindler Rd.

Mount Pleasant
Oakland Mills Garden Plots
Patapsco Valley State Park (sections)
Patuxent Branch Trail
Patuxent River State Park
Poplar Springs Park
Savage Trail System (3 sections)
Sewells Orchard Ponds
Vantage Point/Lake Kittamaqundi
Warfields Pond Park
Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (public property)
Western Regional Park

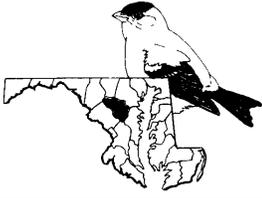
In Memoriam: Zelda G. Simon

Long-time member Zelda Simon died December 24, 2006 at the age of 77. Zelda and her husband, Hal, were Bird Club members for almost 25 years. Birders who participated in the early Midwinter Counts will remember the Simons as hosts for the tally, years two through six. Several of those count days were cold and snowy. Upon arrival a sign directed counters into the attached garage where coat racks had been placed. After shedding coats and boots, one left the chill and entered the welcome warmth and light of the kitchen where good food and fellowship preceded the tally. In recent years, despite declining health, Zelda continued to travel and enjoy her wide circle of friends. Even after Hal's death in 2002, she consistently attended the Club's annual potluck. She was present, as usual, in 2006. Zelda was an individual of many interests and talents. Her zest for life and her commitment to bringing people together will continue to inspire those who knew her.-- *Joanne Solem.*

Second Annual Howard County Dragonfly Count - Saturday June 23, 2007

No experience needed!

To sign up or get more information, contact June at 410-715-3979 or June@SouthernSpreadwing.com



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

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Columbia, MD 21044

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In Memoriam

Cats, Wildlife, and You

CATS, WILDLIFE, AND YOU

BY KURT SCHWARZ

As most of us are aware, the birds we love face many threats in their day-to-day existence, including habitat loss, predation, and weather. What some of us may not realize, however, is a threat that may exist in our very homes: free-ranging cats.

According to the American Bird Conservancy (ABC), there are over 90 million pet cats in the United States, and untold numbers of feral and stray cats. It is estimated that free-roaming cats take hundreds of millions of birds, small mammals, and reptiles per year. A particularly worrisome trend is the prolif-

eration of “managed” feral cat colonies, where the cats are trapped, neutered, and released. These colonies are fed, but even well-fed cats take prey. On Fire Island in New York, such colonies present a direct threat to nesting endangered Piping Plovers. A similar threat is posed to Piping Plovers as well as threatened Least Terns in New Jersey.

In addition, while Fluffy is out taking the air, and the random goldfinch or shrew, she is subject to predation, automobiles, and disease. And she can bring disease or disease vectors (ticks, fleas) back

into the house, putting you and your family at risk.

The solution to these problems is quite simple. Keep your cat indoors. And spay or neuter Snowflake. Outdoor activity for your cat can be provided by making an enclosure for it, or use a harness and leash. Your cat’s health, your own, and that of local wildlife will all benefit.

For further information, and a wealth of resources, see the ABC’s Cats Indoors! Campaign at <http://www.abcbirds.org/cats/>, or contact me for a brochure.