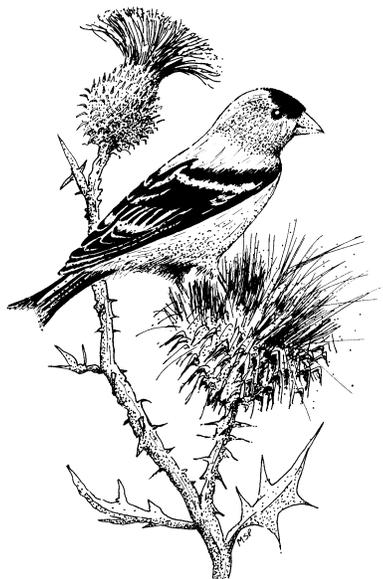


The Goldfinch

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



CLUB MEETINGS - BY JANE GEUDER

Thursday, March 13, 2008

“Alaskan Adventure,” by Kevin Heffernan and Karen Darcy. Kevin and Karen will describe the birds and other sights seen on a three week birding tour of Alaska that included St. Paul Island in the Pribilofs, Anchorage, Denali National Park, Nome, Barrow, and an all-day boat trip from Seward into Kenai Fjords National Park to observe seabirds and marine mammals.

Thursday, April 10, 2008

“Capturing Costa Rican Birds with a Video Camera,” by Marty Brazeau. His work led to a promotional video for the birding lodge, Rancho Naturalista. Marty, a Baltimore County school librarian, has used vacations to visit Costa Rica five times to film Three-wattled Bellbirds, manakins, and many hummers.

Meetings are held at Howard County Recreation & Parks Headquarters 7120 Oakland Mills Road, Columbia, MD 21046. In inclement weather, check 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 with program begins at 8:00 p.m. For further information call Kevin Heffernan, 410-418-8731.

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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 2008 issue is March 25, 2008.

Amanda Witt, *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 sent to:

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Please visit the Club's website at www.howardbirds.org

AUTUMN BIRD RECORDS AUGUST 1 TO NOVEMBER 30, 2007

BY JOANNE SOLEM

Experienced birders look forward to this lengthy season and were well-rewarded this year with White-winged Scoter, Black Scoter, Ring-necked Pheasant, Cattle Egret, Little Blue Heron, White Ibis, American Golden-Plover, Sanderling, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Sedge Wren, Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, and Dickcissel.

The only **Cackling Goose** of the season was found at Warfields Pond Park 11/23 (**BHi**). The peak **Canada Goose** migration took place 10/14 when several thousand

were counted in dozens of flocks of 50+ over the University of Maryland Central Farm (UMDCF) (**EH+**). Few **Tundra Swans** were seen; the high was 42 over Hipsley Mill Rd 11/29 (**JSh**). The county's only free-flying **Mute Swan** left Lake Elkhorn for Wilde Lake in late June. It moved to Centennial from at least 8/9 (**SN**) to 10/24 (**RR**); on 10/25 it was back at Elkhorn (**SN**) where, on 11/15, it was found dead (no sign of trauma) (**MSt**).

(Records continued on page 2)

(Records continued from page 1)

A **Gadwall** was reported from Triadelphia Reservoir 9/29 (NM) and 10/25 (JCu, BHi); a pair was present at Western Regional Park 10/28-31 (B&GHi). A flock of 17 **Blue-winged Teal** was seen from Brighton Dam 9/8 (NM). A female (f.) **Northern Shoveler** at Western arrived on 8/28 (a new early date) (EH) and stayed until 9/4 (BHb); another was seen at a Union Chapel Rd pond 11/17 (WE, MW). A flock of 47 **Green-winged Teal** at Triadelphia 10/27 was the season's high (EH, NM, BHi, JS). A male (m.) **Redhead** was there 11/29 (JCu) as was the season's high of 130 **Ring-necked Ducks** 11/27 (BHi). Any scoter is notable. Triadelphia hosted three **White-winged Scoters** 11/23 (EH, JS) and one f. **Black** 11/24 (second latest) (JHb+). **Long-tailed Ducks** were moving on 11/23; two on Triadelphia in the a.m. (EH, JS) grew to five in the p.m. (JCu). The peak **Bufflehead** flock was 35+ at Brighton Dam 11/16 (EH). **Common Mergansers** were slow to arrive with a single report of two f. on Triadelphia 11/1 (EH, JS).

Wild Turkeys were interesting with 14 along Long Corner Rd 8/2 (MBr); probably the same flock, now numbering 12, was seen there 8/30 (BMy). Four were at Pigtail (across the reservoir) 9/29 (NM); one was heard there 10/14 (NM). The most entertaining report (with photos) was of two adults (ad.) who gathered (or joined?) a flock of ~20 guineafowl along Highland Rd south of MD 108 on 10/23 (HMz); last reported 10/26 (JSh). A **Ring-necked Pheasant** was seen along MD 32 a few miles north of Clarksville 11/21 (MAB).

The last **Double-crested Cormorant** and three **Horned Grebes** were on Triadelphia 10/27 (EH, NM, BHi, JS).

Great Egret highs were 12 at Race Rd 8/25 (NM, JS) and eight at Meadowbrook 9/1 (JS+). Three **Little Blue Heron** reports included a juvenile (juv.) at Triadelphia 8/20-9/4 (BHi), a juv. at Race Rd 9/3 (TFe), and an ad. at Centennial 9/14 (MKw+). A **Cattle Egret** caused an identification stir at Elkhorn 8/28-9/6 (SN). Rarely do juv. birds of this species wander into this county—and rarely do they spend time along lakeshores associating with Mallards! Credit **Tom Feild** with correctly identifying it. A moderately late juv. **Black-crowned Night-Heron** was present at Sewells Orchard 10/13 (JS). One of the stars of the season was a juv. **White Ibis** that spent several days in the Orange Grove/Avalon section of Patapsco Valley State Park 8/18 (MTI) to 8/20 (JCu) [Howard Co. dates only]. This was the fourth county record

The last fall **Osprey** flew over Fulton Pond 11/25 (KMr). **Bald Eagles** continue to be widely noted with more than a dozen reports. The high was three (2 ad.) at Triadelphia 9/29 (NM). **Northern Harriers** were spotted at six locations. One at Centennial 8/26 was the third earliest (MKw). The county was not favored with heavy Broad-winged Hawk flights (or birders missed them). The two highest days were 9/19 with 353 over Woodbine in 15 minutes and another 68 near Lisbon (WE), and 9/16 when 314 were counted over Centennial (MKw). The eight **Merlin** reports between 9/12 (BO) and 11/15 (WE) were more

than usual. **Rock Pigeons** on the silos at the UMDCF attracted the attention of a **Peregrine Falcon** 10/11 (BO+).

Despite the drought-baked mudflats and dried ponds, a few good shorebirds redeemed what was an otherwise lackluster migration. An **American Golden-Plover** at Brighton Dam 10/2 tied the county late date (MHf). A **Semi-palmated Plover** at Triadelphia 8/7 was the sole report (BHi). Thirty **Greater Yellowlegs** in a flock over Brighton Dam 10/25 set a new high (BHi, JCu, JS). A **Sanderling** was at Triadelphia 9/28 (JS, EH, KD) until 9/30, the second latest date (KS). **Pectoral Sandpipers** turned up at four sites with a high of four at Western 9/7-11 (B&GHi). Other locations were the Circle D Ranch on Carrs Mill Rd 9/15 (K&DTf-2) and Font Hill Wetland Park 10/16 (MWr-2; B&GHi) to 10/21 (JTv-1). **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** usually appear on the rolling hills of turf farms making them difficult to see. This year one was present on Western's flat soccer fields from 9/6 (BHi) to 9/11 (KD), although it moved to the front pond periodically or flew off with **Killdeer** for extended periods. In November, **American Woodcock** were reported twice at Annapolis Rock Rd: 11/16 (RSch, JS), 11/18 (NM), and at David Force Park 11/21 (J&RS).

Bonaparte's Gulls were spotted at Triadelphia 11/23 (BHi, JCu-2) and 11/24 (EH-1). The only **Laughing Gull** reported in 2007 was flying over the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA) 9/29 (SAr, JS+). **Forster's Terns** were present at Brighton Dam in a

(Records continued on page 3)

(Records continued from page 2)

window from 9/1 (**B&GHi-1**) to 9/4 (**BHb-2**).

A **Black-billed Cuckoo** was reported from Centennial 8/22 (**BO**) and 9/12 (**JTv**). The excellent **Northern Saw-whet Owl** flight was reflected in birds at Annapolis Rock Rd 11/8, 11/16, and 11/29 (**JSh+**). One called softly, but distinctly, at dusk from conifers adjacent to Warfields Pk 11/15 (**BHi**). **Eastern Screech-Owls** were reported from five locations in Aug. and Sept. (**JSz,EBY; R&JG; JTv; KS; WE**).

Common Nighthawk highs were a modest 25 at Manahan 8/26 (**BO**) and 24 at Wynfield 9/21 (**RC**). The last **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** were present on 10/3 at Hallmark (**WEb**) and Mt. Albert (**M&GMcC**). There were seven **Red-headed Woodpecker** reports from 9/9 (**JSz,EBY**) to 10/14 (**BO+**), four of them from Western! **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** arrived suddenly on 9/30: Dickey Farm on Forsythe Rd (**DH+**), Schooley Mill (**NM**), and Rockburn (**JMe**).

Olive-sided Flycatchers were noted at Manahan 8/27 (**BO**) and at Western 9/23 (**BO+**). Both a **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** and a **Least Flycatcher** were spotted at Henryton/Marriottsville 9/9 (**JSz,EBY**). Another **Least** appeared at the Elkhorn Branch (formerly Oakland Mills) Garden Plots (ELKBP) 9/1 (**JW**). The **White-eyed Vireo** at Lake Elkhorn 10/27 was a record late date (**JTv**). A **Blue-headed Vireo** was detected at Centennial 11/1—the fourth November record (**RR**). A **Philadelphia Vireo** at MPEA 9/13 (**EHn**) and one at Rockburn

9/30 (**E&JMe**) were the only reports. This season added more **Common Raven** sightings to the year's growing list: 8/27 (**BO**), 9/11 (**JTv**), 9/15 [2 sites] (**B&GHi**) and (**KHf,KD**); 10/5 (**MHf-2**), 11/24 [2 sites] (**NM-2**) and (**JW-1**). The two **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** at Triadelphia 10/14 were the second latest ever (**NM**). **Bank Swallow** reports on successive days—Forebay Pond 8/21 (**JW-2**) and Triadelphia 8/22 (**BHb-1**)—completed the minimal sightings for the year. A well-photographed chickadee on Thornbrook Rd 10/27-30 was puzzling (**JCu+**). The opinion was that it was likely a **Black-capped x Carolina** hybrid (**RR,MIf,MHf**). In this winter of northern invasives, 30+ **Red-breasted Nuthatch** sightings were not surprising, with the earliest at Rockburn 8/29 (**BO**). A **Marsh Wren** was present at UMDCF from 10/17 (**BO,BE1**) to 10/28 (tied the second latest date) (**B&GHi,EH,NM,JS**); another was reported from Warfields Pk 10/21-22 (**B&GHi**). A **Sedge Wren** was seen at UMDCF this season. Presumably, one elusive bird was present from 10/17 (**BO,BE1**) to 10/28 (**B&GHi,EH,JS**).

Thrush highlights were few. The best was a new early **Swainson's Thrush** date of 9/2 at David Force Pk (**NM,BO**). Although the first **Hermit Thrush** was detected at MPEA 9/18 (**SBg**), there seemed to be a late influx near the end of November with four at Schooley 11/24 (**NM**) and four at Centennial 11/25 (including one singing quietly) (**BO+**). At both sites, one or more continued to be seen into Jan. Two **Gray Catbirds** lingered: one at Annapolis Rock

Rd 11/16 (**RSch**) and 11/18 (**NM**), another at Talbot's Landing 11/27 (**R&JG**).

Warbler migration was mediocre. An **Orange-crowned Warbler** was spotted in vines at Meadowbrook 9/27 (**KD,JS**). A **Yellow Warbler** at UMDCF 10/18 presented an identification challenge (**BO,JS+**). Fortunately, it was photographed (**BHi**) and set a new late date. **Cape May Warblers** at Wynfield are regular, thanks to an annual insect hatch in a Chinese elm. This year 1-2 were present 9/24-10/3 (**RC**). Single **Blackpoll Warblers** were detected on 9/30 at Wynfield (**RC**), MPEA (**KS**), and the Dickey Farm (**DH+**). The second highest count of 20 **Common Yellowthroats** was at Mt. Pleasant 10/4 (**BO,JS**).

Eastern Towhees peaked at 12 at MPEA 10/7 (**KS**). The first **American Tree Sparrows** were four at UMDCF 11/17 (**NM**). Four were also at Alpha Ridge Landfill 11/24 (**RC,JW**). The **Chipping Sparrow** peak was 10/28 when 20 were counted at ELKBP (**JW**) and 40 at Meadowbrook (**JW**). There were two **Vesper Sparrow** reports: landfill 10/27 (**RC-4**) and Meadowbrook 10/28 (**JW-1**). **Savannah Sparrow** numbers were modest with a peak of 50+ at UMDCF 10/28 (**BO**). A **Grasshopper Sparrow** lingered at Western until 11/7 setting a new departure date (**BO,BE1**). **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow** was a near-miss in this drought year; one turned up eventually at UMDCF 10/17 (**BO,BE1**). The **Fox Sparrow** high was a mere four 11/26 at Schooley (**JS**). **Lincoln's Sparrows** were well-reported from eight sites between 9/30 Schooley

(Records continued on page 4)

(Records continued from page 3)

(**NM-2**) and MPEA (**KS-5**), to 10/24 West Friendship Park (**JCu-1**). An early **White-crowned Sparrow** appeared in Allview 9/29 (**ES**). Single day sparrow counts were a modest nine species at UMDCF 10/11 (**BO**) and on Sparrow Big Day 10/14 (**BO+**).

A high of 25+ **Indigo Buntings** at Centennial 9/6 was a nice total (**BO**); the bird at ELKBP 10/28 was the latest fall record (two winter records) (**JW**). A **Dickcissel** at the UMDCF 10/14 was the sole report (**BO+**).

Nine **Rusty Blackbirds** were at UMDCF 10/28, the only sighting (**BO+**). **Purple Finches** were part of a southward movement producing 11 reports beginning at ELKBP 10/13 (**JW,JS+**). The highs were 7+ at Hipsley Mill 11/29 (**JSh**), 6 at Manahan 11/23 (**BO**), and 5-6 at Duvall Rd 11/25 (**KTf**). **Pine Siskins** also appeared beginning 10/26 (**JCu**). Highs were 13 on 11/18 (**KD,KHf**) and 9 on 11/23 (**RTd**). Watching birds from your own windows can pay off. On 11/24 a Morgan Ct lot produced 25 species including 6-12 Pine Siskins (**MBt**). **American Goldfinches** were seen in large flocks with ~90 at UMDCF 10/3 (**BO+**), ~90 at Schooley 11/26 (**JS**), and 40 w. of Ellicott City 11/10 (**KD,KHf**).

ELKBP – Elkhorn Branch Garden Plots

MPEA – Middle Patuxent Environmental Area

UMDCF – University of Maryland Central Farm

Observers: **SAr** – Stan Arnold, **SBg** – Scott Berglund, **MAB** – Mary Ann Beverley, **MBt** – Monika Botsai, **EBY** – Ed

Boyd, **MBr** – Marilyn Brinkley, **JCu** – Jeff Culler, **RC** – Ralph Cullison III, **KD** – Karen Darcy, **SE** – Sue Earp, **WE** – Wes Earp, **WEb** – Ward Ebert, **BEI** – Bill Ellis, **TFe** – Tom Feild, **JG** – Jane Geuder, **RG** – Ralph Geuder, **BG** – Bill Guion, **SG** – Shiras Guion, **MHf** – Matt Hafner, **DH** – Dave Harvey, **KHf** – Kevin Heffernan, **EHn** – Elaine Hendricks, **BHi** – Bill Hill, **GHi** – Gayle Hill, **EH** – Emy Holdridge, **JHb** – John Hubbell, **BHb** – Bill Hubick, **MIf** – Marshall Iliff, **MKw** – Mike Kerwin, **NM** – Nancy Magnusson, **KMr** – Kathy Mariano, **GMcC** – Grazina McClure, **MMcC** – Mike McClure, **EMe** – Elayne Metter, **JMe** – Jeff Metter, **HMz** – Helen Metzman, **BMy** – Brian Moody, **SN** – Sue Neri, **BO** – Bonnie Ott, **RR** – Robert Ringler, **RSch** – Robert Schaefer, **KS** – Kurt Schwarz, **JSh** – Jay Sheppard, **JS** – Jo Solem, **RS** – Robert Solem, **JSz** – Jim Stasz, **MSt** – Michelle Stewart, **ES** – Eva Sunell, **MTI** – Matt Tillett, **RTd** – Robin Todd, **DTf** – Dick Tufts, **KTf** – Kate Tufts, **JTv** – June Tveekrem, **MW** – Mark Wallace, **CW** – Carol Wilkinson, **JW** – Jim Wilkinson, **MWr** – Michele Wright, **HZ** – Helen Zeichner.

Summer Records not available when the seasonal article was written: m. **Ring-necked Duck** at Wilde Lake 6/1 (**HZ**); **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** eating crayfish at Elkhorn 7/1 (**J&CW**); ad. **Broad-winged Hawk** at Woodstock 6/16 (**M&GMcC, JTv**); ad. **Peregrine Falcon** southwest of Clarksville 7/22 (**MW**); **Virginia Rail** heard at Schooley Mill beaver wetland 6/6 (**W&SE**); **Common Raven** heard several times (probably in June) over his Long Corner home (**RSch**); and **Blue Grosbeak** at Atholton Park 7/15 (**B&SG**).

Exotics: Two **Bar-headed Geese** at Wilde Lake 6/1 (**HZ**).

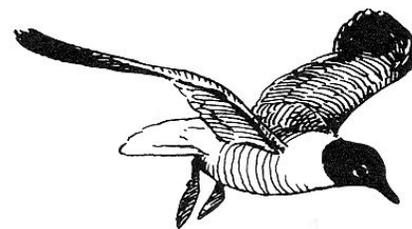
First Modern Record: The Maryland/DC Records Committee accepted a Howard County report of five immature **Anhingas** flying over the Columbia Mall 4/22/06

by **Brendan Klick**. The historical record is prior to 1805.

HOWARD COUNTY CONSERVANCY PROGRAM

BY KEVIN HEFFERNAN

The Howard County Conservancy, in cooperation with the Howard County Bird Club, is presenting a program on March 13, 2008. The program is a slide presentation and lecture by Scott Weidensaul based on his 2005 book entitled *Return to Wild America: A Yearlong Search for the Continent's Natural Soul*. Weidensaul retraced the 100 day trek of over 30,000 miles around North America taken by Roger Tory Peterson which he described in his book *Wild America* published 50 years ago. Weidensaul has been called one of the greatest living nature writers, and *Return to Wild America* has been praised by critics for his examination of what has been lost and his celebration of what remains of the wild nature of America. The program will be held at 7:00 p.m. at the Conservancy located at 10520 Old Frederick Road. Tickets are \$10. For more information, please call 410-465-8877. Many of us heard Scott Weidensaul's talk at the MOS Convention last July and it was great.



Laughing Gull - Credit: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

HOWARD COUNTY ODONATE SURVEY 2007

BY JOANNE AND BOB
SOLEM

Howard County's dragonfly news was modest in 2007. The second annual Howard County Dragonfly Count was held June 16, 2007 coordinated by June Tveekrem. Twenty-one counters found 44 species of dragonflies and damselflies as detailed in a previous article.

During 2007, extensions of dates were recorded for nine species: Powdered Dancer early date (ED) is now 5/30 (Bob & Jo Solem), Dusky Dancer ED 6/9 (B&JS, June Tveekrem), Lilypad Forktail ED 5/15 (JTv), Gray Petaltail ED 5/30 (B&JS), Comet Dancer ED 5/9 (Denise Gibbs, Kate Tufts), Ashy Clubtail late date (LD) 7/13 (BS), Brown Spiketail ED 5/28 (Nancy Magnusson, JS), Prince Baskettail tied ED 5/29 (Jim Wilkinson), and Blue Corporal LD 6/4 (JW).

At Western Regional Park three species (Ebony Jewelwing, Dragonhunter, and Unicorn Clubtail) were added to this young park's list bringing it to 31.

Thanks to Sue Muller and associates from Howard Co. Recreation and Parks for data from numerous sites, to Richard Orr for advice and support, and to Recreation and Parks for land permission.

EXCERPT FROM THE JOURNAL OF WILLIAM H. FISHER OF BALTIMORE REGARDING CROSSBILLS

C. Gamble Lowndes writes me from Lawyers Hill, Howard Co. Md. as follows: "About the month of March in the year 1890, my attention was drawn to a number of small birds acting in an unusual manner in a clump of small Pines. I fired at them and found two on the ground dead, and several others in the trees, also dead, but holding on by beak and claw, so that they were dislodged with difficulty.

On examining them, I found them to be Crossbills, the first ever seen in that part of the country as far as I could ascertain, and though I have showed them to many people since, I have never met anyone who has seen them alive, or dead, before or since.

As well as I can remember, the males were reddish brown, marked with yellow; the females entirely different from the males, being light green with brown feet, wings and tails.

There were about 40 birds in the flock, but they paid no attention to the report of a gun, so I had no difficulty in killing them all with a small rifle during a week. They paid no attention to the whistling of the bullets, nor to the death of their companions. Indeed I have killed as many as a dozen in succession before the survivors would leave the trees. They were quite good eating.

At night they roosted in a small

ravine filled with Pines and scrub Oak, and they spent the entire day in the clump of six Pines on our place. I never saw them in any other trees.

Their flight is quite swift, and much resembles that of the yellow Thistle-bird.

Their size is about that of the English Sparrow, a little stouter, but the shape is much the same. Their food was the Pine cone which they could rend with great dexterity with their powerful beaks; the ground beneath the trees was littered with cones as if a Red Squirrel had been at work. When eating they hang in any position by their claws, head downward quite often, exactly like a Parrot.

The bill, which is the most peculiar thing about the bird, is dull brown and crossed X. You will find the bird in Wood's Natural History with plates giving shape of bill."

Fisher's handwritten journal marked #1, pages 88-89. *Submitted by Bob Ringler.*



Anhinga

Credit: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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 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.

CENTENNIAL PARK

March 2, Sun. 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours)
Meet at West parking lot on Centennial Lane. 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 - Kurt Schwarz - 410-461-1643.*

POTLUCK DINNER

March 8, Sat. 6:30 p.m. social hour and 7:00 p.m. dinner. Held at the Owen Brown Community Center. Contact Sue Probst at 410-992-3489 or msprobst2@verizon.net by Friday, March 7th for reservations.

CENTENNIAL PARK

March 9, Sun. 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours)
Meet at West parking lot on Centennial Lane. See March 2nd for description. *Leader - Bonnie Ott - 410-461-3361.*

WOODCOCK WALK

March 14, Fri. 6:45 p.m. (1-2 hours) *Meet at Patuxent River State Park at Annapolis Rock Road horse trailer parking lot (halfway between Hipsley Mill Rd. and Rt. 94, on south side of road).* Short walks/standing along possibly muddy mowed paths. Portable chair useful. As darkness descends, we will watch and listen for displaying woodcock.

Owls are also possible. No facilities. *Leader - Jay Sheppard JMSheppard@aol.com.*

HOWARD WATERFOWL SEARCH

March 15, Sat. 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 16, Sun. 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours) *Meet at West parking lot on Centennial Lane.* See March 2nd for description. *Leader - Joe Byrnes 410-730-5329.*

CENTENNIAL PARK/ FIRST DAY OF SPRING WALK

March 20, Thurs. 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours) *Meet at the boat ramp parking lot.* See March 2nd for description. *Leader - Bonnie Ott 410-461-3361.*

CENTENNIAL PARK

March 30, Sun. 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours) *Meet at West parking lot on Centennial Lane.* See March 2nd for

description. *Leader - Ralph Cullison 410-442-2181.*

ALPHA RIDGE LANDFILL

April 5, Sat. 8:00 a.m. (half day)
Meet at Alpha Ridge Park, 1/2 mile west of Marriotsville Rd. on Md 99. Moderate to difficult walking over hills and fields of the landfill. Vesper Sparrow, meadowlarks, kestrels, and other open country birds expected. Rarities possible. Boots recommended. Facilities at the park. *Leader - Ralph Cullison 410-442-2181.*

UNIVERSITY OF MD FARM

April 13, Sun. 7:00 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.*

WEEKDAY WALK AT LAKE ELKHORN

April 17, Thurs. 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours) *Meet at Broken Land Parking lot.* Easy walking along the lake and to Forebay Pond. Migrants will be moving through. Warblers are generally in abundance. The lake can turn up interesting surprises. Hawks are also possible flying over. Great for beginners. No facilities. *Leader - Joe Byrnes 410-730-5329.*

 **BIRDING BY EAR - EARTH DAY AT MT. PLEASANT**

April 19, Sat. 8:00 a.m. (1-2 hours) *Meet at shed.* Easy walking through the fields of Mt. Pleasant farm. Tree lines, hedgerows, and streams provide opportunity for non-meadow species. Great opportunity for flyovers. Learn the basics of binocular and field guide use. Facilities available. Great for beginners. *Leader - Kurt Schwarz 410-461-1643.*

PATAPSCO DANIELS AREA
 April 26, Sat. 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours)
Meet at 1st parking lot on left at bottom (before the dam). Easy walking along the river. Path may be muddy. Wonderful spot for migrant and resident warblers (Worm-eating, Northern Parula, Louisiana Waterthrush). Tanagers, thrushes, and most woodland species may be found here. No facilities. *Leader - Joe Byrnes 410-730-5329.*

MIDDLE PATUXENT ENVIRONMENTAL AREA
 April 27, Sun. 8:00 a.m. (half day)
Meet at Trotter Rd. lot. Moderate walking through 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. No facilities. *Leader - Stan Arnold 410-768-0155.*

 = Great for beginning birders

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

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

March 27, Thursday

Ward Ebert
 7366 Hallmark Rd.
 Clarksville, MD 21029
 (301) 490-5807

April 24, Thursday

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

THE WOOD-PECKER & THE TOWEL

BY MONIKA BOTSAI

It was about 9:00 a.m. on January 4, 2008. It was a sunny morning with the temperature around 28° F. I heard a loud thump at the sliding glass door. When I went to investigate, I found a beautiful Red-bellied Woodpecker lying on the deck. I ran inside and grabbed an old, pinkish German towel and put the bird in it to keep it warm until it would recover. About ten minutes later I heard another loud thump. I ran to the door, and saw a hawk flying away with the bird and my towel hanging beneath them like a flag.

I later checked our backyard for the towel, but did not see it. In the afternoon I went out again. This time I found the towel, with two bloodstains, on my neighbor's property.

CONSERVE RESOURCES BY LIMITING YOUR JUNK MAIL

BY KEVIN HEFFERNAN

Most of us receive a lot of credit card offers, catalogues and other unsolicited mail. Even if you recycle these items, think about the resources required to produce them. It's a waste of those resources when most of this junk mail does not even get opened. Here are two websites that can limit the amount of junk mail you receive.

Catalog Choice is a free service that lets you decline paper catalogs that you no longer wish to receive. Go to www.catalogchoice.org/ and select the catalogs from a list. It's easy, you help the environment, and the catalog merchants save as well.

Another website, called "Stop the Junk Mail Monster" shows how to add your name to the "do not mail" list for junk mail and also how to end unwanted credit card solicitations. Go to www.ecocycle.org/junkmail/index.cfm.

SITE GUIDES UPDATE

The following Site Guides have been posted on the website:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Centennial Park | Gwynn Acres Path | Meadowbrook Park |
| Western Regional Park | Schooley Mill Park | Southwestern Ponds |
| Rockburn Branch Park | Warfields Pond Park | Plumtree Path |
| Elkhorn Branch (Oakland Mills) | Garden Plots | |



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

6007 Flywheel Court

Columbia, MD 21044

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HOWARD COUNTY GREENFEST

BY SUSAN MULLER

County Executive Ken Ulman invites you to Howard County's first annual "GreenFest" on Saturday April 5th from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Glenwood Center next to the Glenwood Branch of the Howard County Library. Sponsored by the Department of Recreation and Parks, Department of Planning and Zoning, and the Bureau of Environmental Services, this free family event celebrates Earth Month. The theme for GreenFest is "Green Buildings – Inside and Out," and features displays to provide citizens with practical information about green buildings – both home and office – and how new energy efficient technology can be used to

promote more ecologically sound lifestyles.

The festival will also feature exhibits from community groups that focus on environmental awareness, including the Howard County Bird Club. Other exhibitors include: Frogwatch USA, Howard Astronomical League, MOM's Organic Market, Habitat Stewards, Howard County Forestry Board, Howard County Conservancy, Sierra Club, Trout Unlimited, Growth Adventures, Patuxent Riverkeeper, and Master Gardeners, just to name a few.

Activities include a morning bird walk and wildlife hike. There will

be sign-ups for free home energy audits, tours of the Elkridge recycling facility and many free giveaways. "Reptiles Alive" will be displaying live animals on site between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m., and several other children's activities are planned to help them learn more about the environment and nature. In addition, free document shredding will be available. There will be a drop-off site for used cell phones, eyeglasses, and binoculars for the needy.

For more information on the event and the schedule of activities, visit the county's website at <http://www.howardcountymd.gov/DPZ/Environment/environmentagriculture.htm>.