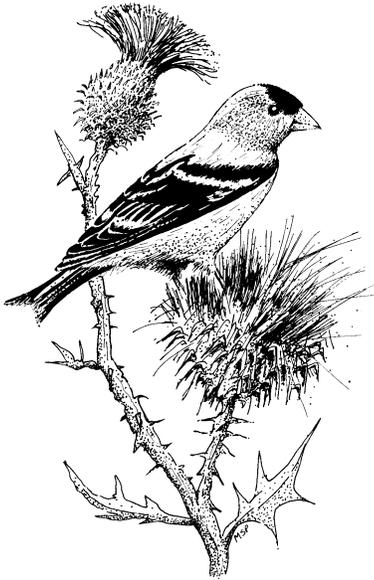


The Goldfinch

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



CLUB MEETINGS - BY JANE GEUDER

Thursday, January 8, 2009 "In Search of My Zornis," by Hank Kaestner. Spending ten days in newly opened parts of India, Hank and his brother, Peter, saw 300 species of specialty birds. In searching for the enigmatic Fire-tailed Myzornis, Hank scored 59 lifers and saw an amazing number of babblers. He will include a look at the historic roles of species in India and a bit of modern spice-related traveling. **LOCATION CHANGE** (Jan. meeting only) - Glenwood Community Center (2400 Route 97, Cooksville, MD 21723). Directions are at http://www.co.ho.md.us/RAP/rap_glenwood.htm#anch170617.

Thursday, February 12, 2009 "Trogans and Mot-Mots," by Kurt Schwarz. Western Mexico provided these and other life birds for Kurt "south of the border." Kurt's first international birding trip was to the San Blas region of Mexico and yielded exotic habitats, flora, and fauna.

Meetings are held at Howard County Recreation & Parks Headquarters 7120 Oakland Mills Road, Columbia, MD 21046. Hospitality and club bookstore at 7:30 p.m. Meeting with program begins at 8:00 p.m. For further information call Tom Miller, 410-795-7005.

HABITAT PRESERVATION EFFORT: THE THICK-BILLED PARROT

BY KURT SCHWARZ

Over the past 25 years, the Howard County Bird Club has raised more than \$61,000 for habitat protection through its bird seed sale. Regrettably, the 2008 seed sale had to be cancelled. To sustain its commitment to habitat preservation, however, the Board of Directors has decided to seek funds through a direct appeal to the Club's members. We have selected what we feel is an exciting and worthy project. As an added incentive, an anonymous donor has issued a matching challenge of \$400. In effect, contributors will be doubling their donation!

The Board has chosen the Thick-billed Parrot Conservation Project of the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) as the beneficiary of our donation. This species used to breed in the mountains of Arizona and New Mexico, but disappeared midway through the last century, largely as the result of shooting. It persists in old-growth forests in the Sierra Madre Occidental Mountains in Chihuahua Province, Mexico.

The ABC, in partnership with its local partner Pro Natura Noreste,

(Habitat continued on page 2)

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The Goldfinch, newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club, is published five times per year.

Copy deadline for the March/April issue is January 25, 2009.

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:

Amanda Witt
6134 Starburn Path
Columbia, MD 21045
amanda.witt@yahoo.com

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

(Habitat continued from page 1)

has purchased 2,470 acres of old-growth forest in the Sierra Madre Occidental, where this habitat has declined by 99.4% due to logging and fires. The project has three goals: promote the nesting success of the parrot through the placement of nest boxes, monitor nest sites, and develop a conservation plan. Nest sites are in short supply because the quaking aspens that are most prone to large cavities suitable for nesting occur at only a few sites, and the extinct Imperial Woodpecker is no longer excavating cavities in other trees. Nest boxes have already proven to be a

suitable substitute. Twenty boxes have been placed, with nesting confirmed in one, and suspected in two others.

It is hoped that Thick-billed Parrot numbers will increase to the point that they could be reintroduced into Arizona. The current refuge also is home to the threatened Mexican Spotted Owl, Eared Trogon, and Northern Goshawk. All these species will benefit from the development of a conservation plan, another aspect of the project. For further details, see <http://www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/international/action/>

[thick billed parrot.html](http://www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/international/action/thick_billed_parrot.html) . For a video, see <http://www.youtube.com/abcbirds>

We understand that these are tough economic times, but a small donation can make a difference and will be greatly appreciated. Help us reach \$400 so our total will be doubled. Make your tax-deductible check to "Howard County Chapter MOS," with "habitat" in the memo portion. Direct it to Emy Holdridge, Treasurer HCBC, 5812 Harness Court, Columbia, MD 21044.

WINTER FIELD TRIPS

BY BONNIE OTT

Field trips are a great way to improve birding skills, explore new places, and meet other birders. Arrive at the meeting site ready to leave at the designated time with appropriate footwear and gear. Carpooling is strongly encouraged. The leader may cancel due to inclement weather/hazardous driving conditions. Directions for locations not on ADC maps are on the Club's website. Questions? Contact the trip leader or Field Trip Coordinator Bonnie Ott at bonnieott@verizon.net. HCBC members receive priority on trips with a limited number of participants. No pets.

START YOUR 2009 LIST

Jan. 1, Thurs. (8:00 - 11:00 a.m.)
Meet at Centennial Park boat ramp; South entrance on Md 108. Easy walking on paved paths and woodland trails. Plan to carpool to different locations to find as many species as possible. The one day of the year on which every bird is new! Facilities available. *Leader - Bonnie Ott 410-461-3361. Call for more info.*

MIDWINTER COUNT Feb. 7, Saturday (See page 3 for details.)

HOW TO FIND AN OWL

Feb. 21, Sat. (1:00 p.m.; possibility of birding until dusk) *Meet at Annapolis Rock Road horse trailer parking lot, midway between Hipsley Mill Rd. and Rt. 94.* Learn how to find owls by habitat and signs. Jay is an expert at finding owls and will share his skills and knowledge as to how to find different species. Contact Jay to sign up so participants can be advised of weather-related changes. *Leader - Jay Sheppard 301-725-5559 or JMSheppard@aol.com.*

CENTENNIAL PARK

March 8, 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.

 = Great for beginning birders

TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL MIDWINTER COUNT

BY JOE BYRNES AND JOANNE SOLEM

Join the Howard County Bird Club's Twenty-Fourth Annual Midwinter Count on Saturday, February 7, 2009. Joe Byrnes (410-730-5329 / LBRoller@verizon.net) and Jo Solem (301-725-5037 / odenata@msn.com) are the count coordinators. You may volunteer to participate by signing up at a meeting, by calling Joe Byrnes, or by contacting one of the area coordinators.

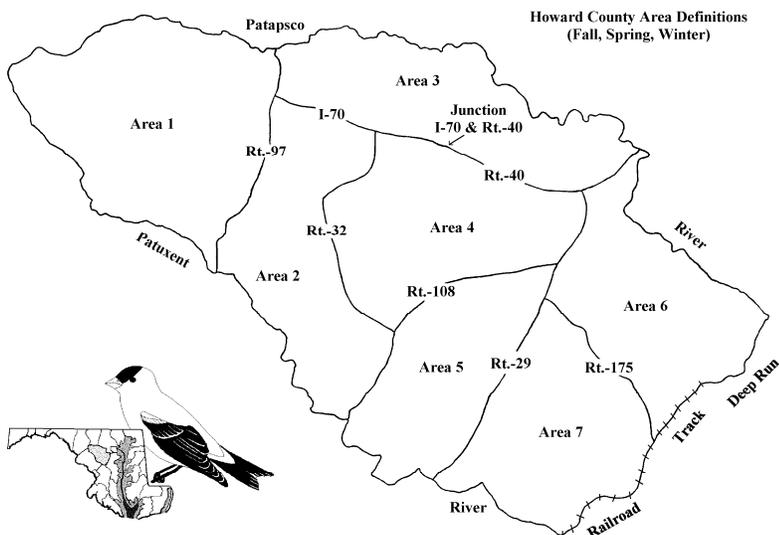
Beginning birders are always welcome, as are individuals who wish to count only for part of the day. A checklist for this count is available on the club's website. If you wish to count only at your feeder, call Joe and request a feeder form.

The evening potluck tally will be at Jeff and Karen Culler's at 2672 Thornbrook Rd, Ellicott City, MD.

Please contact the Cullers at 410-465-9006 or cullerfuls@hotmail.com by Wednesday, February 4th, to sign up for a vegetable, salad, or dessert, and to obtain directions. If you cannot make the meal, you are welcome to drop in about 7:30 p.m. for the tally.

If there is a question about the weather, we will try to make a decision the night before. Call your area coordinator; Joe or Jo (between 5:00 & 6:00 a.m.) if you are unsure of the status of the count.

Area 1	Mark Wallace Wes Earp (assistant)	301-725-6370 410-531-3197	none the_earps@verizon.net
Area 2	Ward Ebert	301-490-5807	wardebort@comcast.net
Area 3	Maureen & Dave Harvey	410-795-3117	dahtangara@erols.com
Area 4	Mike McClure	410-531-2780	none
Area 5	Kevin Heffernan	410-418-8731	kjheff@aol.com
Area 6	Bonnie Ott	410-461-3361	bonnieott@verizon.net
Area 7	Kurt Schwarz	410-461-1643	krschwa1@comcast.net



IN MEMORIAM: KATHLEEN KLIMKIEWICZ

Member Kathy Klimkiewicz died unexpectedly November 6, 2008, at her Laurel home at the age of 65. Most of her career was spent at the Bird Banding Laboratory at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. She was a master bander who, for many years, mentored individuals meeting her high standards. Some, including Columbian David Holmes, went on to become master banders themselves. Kathy's generosity in helping young birders was well-known. In recent years, her health limited her birding activities, but she served as a ready source of information. Each fall she reminded the birding community that Purple Finches could not be sexed by color. Brown birds could be either females or first-year males.

In Howard County, she is remembered for her Purple Martin presentations which were based on her extensive banding of that species. She was the senior coordinator of the national prototype Montgomery/Howard Breeding Bird Atlas in the early 1970s. She also served on the editorial board for the first statewide Maryland/DC Breeding Bird Atlas in the 1980s. In this county, she helped with field work and mini-routes among her other contributions. Kathy put an individual stamp on every project with which she was connected and will be long remembered by friends and associates. --*Joanne Solem*

DO WE HAVE YOUR CORRECT EMAIL ADDRESS?

BY BOB SOLEM

During the first week of January 2009, the Howard County Bird Club will send a special email to all members who have provided an email address. This special message is to verify that we have your correct email address in our files. A separate email will go to members who are on the Rare Bird/Lister Alert. We use the email system for special notices that cannot be sent in a timely manner in any other way. If the email is returned because of delivery failure, **we remove your email address from the system.**

If you receive the email(s), you need do nothing; the system works. But if you want to receive these emails and did not receive one, send an email to webmaster@howardbirds.org and ask to have your email address added (or corrected). Remember, this service is only available to members.

WEBSITE FOCUS – SITE GUIDES

BY AMANDA WITT

As you know, the Howard County Bird Club provides in-depth information on county birding. Because there is too much information available to include all of it in *The Goldfinch*, the club maintains a very detailed website, www.howardbirds.org.

The site not only contains field trip and program information in the Overview section, but also has sections entitled Birding Howard County, Maryland, Howard Birding, Members Corner, Birding Organizations, and Flora & Fauna. Each of these categories has many subcategories such as photos of birds seen in the county, birds seen on field trips, results of the breeding bird atlas, species accounts, and site guides. These sections, along with many others, are constantly being updated and improved. Therefore, beginning with the January/February 2009 issue, *The*

Goldfinch will periodically feature a different section of the website with which to familiarize club members.

Site guides are the first featured section of the website. These are part of the web revision of *Birding Howard County, Maryland*, and are one of the most informative sections available. Each site guide describes the habitat, the best time of year for birding, the approximate length of time needed to bird the area, and the notable birds seen at the location. Directions to and photographs of the site are included. Bird species lists are almost always shown, and, if available, species lists for butterflies, dragonflies, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians are also provided. Currently, there are more than thirty site guides available on the website.

Included in this issue is a sample site guide to Western Regional Park, in order for you to get a taste of what is available online. This park was selected because it is one of the county's newest parks and many people may be unfamiliar with the great birding there.



Pied-billed Grebe - Credit: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

BY AMANDA WITT

Did you miss the Midwinter Count or do you want to do more bird counting? If so, the 12th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is for you. The GBBC is sponsored by the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and will be held February 13-16, 2009. Observers count the highest number of each species they see during at least 15 minutes on one or more of the count days. Then they enter their tallies on the GBBC website, www.birdcount.org.

This Northern American count has been a huge success. In 2008, Great Backyard Bird Count participants made history again by breaking 2007 records for the number of species, and the number of checklists. Participants sent in more than 85,700 checklists comprising 635 species. Interestingly, more checklists were sent in last year from Columbia than any other city or town in Maryland. You can explore the results of prior years by visiting www.birdcount.org.

BLUEBIRD MONITORS NEEDED

Bluebird nest box monitors are needed for the 2009 breeding season. Sue Muller oversees the Recreation and Parks program which has openings in many parts of the county. Contact her at smuller@howardcountymd.gov.

Mount Pleasant, the Howard County Conservancy property has an 18-box trail in need of one or more monitors. Contact Shannon Davis at shannon.davis@hcconservancy.org.

Bluebird box monitoring is an excellent family activity. If inexperienced, instruction will be provided.

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.

January 22, Thursday

Kevin Heffernan
9775 Diversified La.
Ellicott City, Md. 21042
410-418-8731

February 26, Thursday

Bob and Jo Solem
10617 Graeoch Road
Laurel, Md. 20723
301-725-5037

TRAP- NEUTER- RETURN PROGRAM

BY KURT SCHWARZ

A recent letter in the Howard County Times advocated a trap-neuter-return program as beneficial to stray cats. This idea, however, is of little benefit to cats, and certainly not to the birds we love. Many of us own and love cats and the intent to reduce unwanted cat numbers through neutering is to be applauded. But we should not condone the re-release of stray cats, where they would remain subject to the elements, predators, disease, and being run over. Meanwhile, their hunting instincts remain intact as they kill wild birds and other wildlife. Furthermore, the release of such cats, even to a "managed" colony probably violates Maryland law, specifically Title 10, Subtitle 6, which makes it a misdemeanor to abandon a domestic animal on public or private property.

If you want to help a stray, by all means, capture it and neuter it, but keep it indoors, or place it in a closely-supervised, fully-enclosed facility where it will enjoy protection, without harming wildlife. Of course, cats are one of many threats to bird life, such as habitat loss, disease, window crashes, etc. But this is a threat that can be addressed, to the benefit of both cats and wildlife. See the American Bird Conservancy's Cats Indoors campaign at: <http://www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/cats/tnr.html>.



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

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Columbia, MD 21044

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Bluebird Monitors	In Memoriam
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ANNUAL POTLUCK DINNER

BY SUE PROBST

The annual potluck dinner will again be held at the Owen Brown Community Center on Saturday, March 7, 2009. The social hour starts at 6:30 p.m. and the dinner starts at 7:00 p.m. All club members and their guests are invited to share in the fun, the food, and the program. The club furnishes beverages, social hour snacks, rolls, and eating utensils. Those attending may bring a main dish, a salad, a vegetable, or a dessert. Be sure to mark your dishes and any accompanying serving implements with your name so we can return them to the right person. If you cannot cook, other arrangements can be made. Everyone is encouraged to participate in

the "slide show," so bring your nature slides or digital photo presentations. (The club will provide both a conventional slide projector and a multimedia projector with a laptop computer. Pictures may be brought on either a CD or a flash drive. For more information contact **June Tveekrem** at June@SouthernSpreadwing.com or 410-715-3979.)

You **MUST** reserve in advance so we can arrange for sufficient beverages, etc. You may sign up at either the January or February club meeting, or contact **Sue Probst** by Friday, March 6, 2009 at 410-992-3489, or msprobst2@verizon.net. You will need to specify the num-

ber of attendees and what food you are bringing. Let Sue know if you would like to come early to help set up, help clean up afterwards, or help in any other way. If you are a new member, or if you have not attended our dinner before, we strongly encourage you to come and get to know others who share your passion for birds and birding. There will be many delicious dishes and great slide presentations. So mark your calendars and come join the fun!

Directions: The Owen Brown Community Center is located on the east side of Columbia at 6800 Cradlerock Way, off Broken Land Parkway from Route 29. There is ample parking.