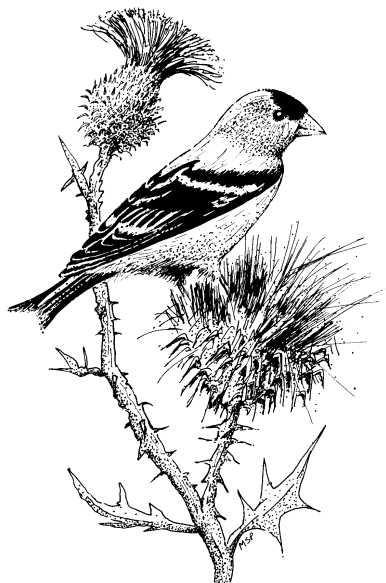


# The Goldfinch

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



## CLUB MEETINGS - BY JANE GEUDER

Thursday, November 12, 2009 "Aimophila Adventures," by Kurt Schwarz. While most birders go to Southeast Arizona in search of such gaudy species as Elegant Trogon and Flame-Colored Tanager, this Club member also pursued "little brown jobs" that are easily overlooked. Kurt will present his photos, audio tapes, and video clips of those species and more, along with some spectacular scenery. **CHANGES** (Nov. meeting only) - Glenwood Community Center (2400 Route 97, Cooksville, MD 21723). Hospitality begins at 6:30 p.m. Meeting begins at 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 10, 2009 "Where's the Ice?" by Sue Muller of Howard County Recreation and Parks. The Hudson Bay polar bear population is living at the southern limits of its natural habitat. Club member Sue Muller will take you on her 2006 adventure to Churchill, Manitoba in search of polar bears. She came back from this trip with a whole new view of global warming and will share with you how global warming is affecting these magnificent creatures. The presentation will be followed by a discussion of global warming and how every person can make a difference every day. Emphasis will be placed on greening up the holidays. Bring ideas to share!

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.

## SUMMER BIRD RECORDS

### JUNE 1 – JULY 31, 2009

BY JOANNE SOLEM

**A**lthough summer's special birds were not as notable as those of the last few seasons, some of the good birds were Hooded Merganser, Common Loon, Little Blue Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Broad-winged Hawk, Virginia Rail, Pectoral Sandpiper, Upland Sandpiper, Red-headed Woodpecker, Prothonotary Warbler, White-throated Sparrow, Dickcissel, and Pine Siskin.

A nice count of 23 **Wood Ducks** (4 ad., 13 im., 6 juv.) were at Race Rd Wetlands 6/16 (**NM**). A female **Hooded Merganser** appeared 6/24 at Fore Bay Pond (**SN**). Single **Wild Turkeys** were reported from River Rd 6/1-2 (**FLv**) and Roxbury Rd 6/8 (**KBl**). A **Common Loon** was spotted at Wilde Lake 6/6 (**NM**). The **Great Egret** high was 13 at Centennial Park 7/23 (**BO**). An im. **Little Blue**

(Records 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 January/February 2010 issue is November 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:

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Elkridge, MD 21075  
amanda.witt@yahoo.com

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

(*Records continued from page 1*)

**Heron** was at Lake Elkhorn 7/17 (**BMr**) to 7/22 (**DPw**). **Black-crowned Night-Herons** visited all the central lakes with a high of five (one ad.) at Wilde Lake 7/7 (**CN**). An ad. **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** frequented Elkhorn 6/10 (**BMr**) to 7/21 (**JMr**); two ad. were present 7/18 (**EH; MO'S**) and 7/20 (**JW**).

A juv. **Black Vulture** was seen outside a collapsed shed at Long Corner, Patuxent River St Pk 7/12 (**CSt**). The season's sole **Osprey** flew over Manahan Dr 6/24 (**BO**). Adult **Bald Eagles** were noted at Browns Bridge 6/11 (**JW-1**), Centennial 6/27 (**MKw-2**), and Fulton Pond 7/5 (**JW-1**). Two im. were present northeast of Folly Quarter Rd/Carroll Mill Rd 7/20 (**WE**). Four fledgling **Cooper's Hawks** appeared in a Font Hill yard 6/30 (**GAn**). A Coop nabbed a gray squirrel along Martin Rd 6/22 (**JHf**) and an ad. took a medium-sized rabbit from a Talbotts Landing driveway in mid-July (**RGr**). A **Broad-winged Hawk** hunting over a Fulton field 7/28 (**JHf**) was the lone report of this species. How sad that a fairly common nesting bird a generation ago has declined to a single summer sighting.

Nesting **Virginia Rails** continued at the University of Maryland Central Farm. Although a chick had been seen 5/21, a photograph of a large juvenile 7/12 (**ROr**) was a welcome bonus. As many as six to eight rails were present that day making sharp squeaky contact calls in the vicinity of pond 2 (**BO,EH, JS,ROr**). Nesting was also verified in the swale in 2004.

Despite reduced shorebird habitat because of high water, some spe-

cies established the second or third earliest arrivals on record: **Greater Yellowlegs** 7/10 (**BHi**), **Solitary Sandpiper** 7/8 (**NM**), **Spotted Sandpiper** 7/12 (**BO,EH,JS, ROr**), **Upland Sandpiper** 7/31 (**RC**), **Semipalmated Sandpiper** 7/23 (**BHi**), and **Least Sandpiper** 7/10 (**BHi**). Unfortunately, some of these early migration dates probably reflected unsuccessful nesting due to adverse weather conditions on their breeding grounds. Four **Pectoral Sandpipers** at Alpha Ridge Landfill 7/31 were a fine sighting (**RC+**).

The season's only **Black-billed Cuckoo** report came from Mt. Pleasant 7/6 (**SBg**); in contrast, **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** were widely noted. Summer **Red-headed Woodpeckers** are scarce in the county. Adults were seen near Florence Rd/St. Michaels Rd from 7/8 (**WE-1; JHf-2**) to 7/26 (**NM-1**), with two ad. at a nearby farm 7/17 (**WE**). **Cliff Swallows** nested again under the MD 32 bridge at Sykesville. At the end of the nesting season, up to 40 fed over scrublands a mile from the river 7/23-24 (**FLv**). Centennial's **Barn Swallows** peaked at 71 on 6/27 (**MKw**). At least eight **Veeries** were present along the South Wind Trail at the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area 6/14 (**JS**). Eighteen **Wood Thrushes** were tallied in the Sykesville section of Patapsco Valley St Pk 6/6 (**FLv**). Fifteen **Gray Catbirds** were counted at Centennial 6/13 (**MKw**). A **Cedar Waxwing** was on a nest at Gateway 6/7 (**JW**), while a flock of 16 was at Elkhorn 6/29 (**SN**).

Summer warblers included the following: four **Blue-winged Warblers** at River Rd 6/1 (**FLv**), five **Yellows** at Centennial 6/21

(**MKw**), single **Pines** at Rockburn Branch Pk 6/16 (**JS**) and Wincopin Trail 6/17 (**JS**), a **Prairie** at Mt. Pleasant 7/6 (**SBg**), and the last spring migrant **Blackpoll** at Hobbs Rd 6/3 (**B&GHi**). **Cerulean Warblers** are a choice species. One was seen/heard intermittently near River Rd 5/18 to 7/12 (**FLv**); one was also reported from Daniels 7/11 (**JW**). **Black-and-white Warblers** are expected along the Patapsco River where a few nest, but wanderers were spotted at Mt. Pleasant 7/10 (**SBg**) and Western Regional 7/30 (**JTv**). A male **Prothonotary** was a treat east of MD 94 along the Patapsco 7/26 (**GMcC+**). Three **Worm-eating Warblers** were noted at different locations along the trail west of Henryton Rd 7/15—two were feeding young (**BO**). **Kentucky Warblers** were present at River Rd 6/1 (**FLv**), Rockburn 6/16 (**JS**), and Long Corner 7/10 (**JS**). Despite depleted understory in many county woodlands, **Hooded Warblers** are still nesting in a few locations. Five were singing at Hugg-Thomas 6/24 (**BO,EH**).

Two tanagers seen and photographed at Centennial 6/27 (**MKw**) were in a puzzling plumage and, as yet, have not been definitely identified. Ten **Grasshopper Sparrows** were present at the landfill 7/11 (**RC+**). One **White-throated Sparrow** lingered until 6/27 west of Ellicott City (**KDy,KHf**). **Blue Grosbeaks** were widely reported. One at Popular Springs Park 6/22 was a new species for that small park (**JCu**). A pair of **Dickcissels** at the landfill 7/3-7/18 was certainly a summer highlight, even though no breeding was detected (**RC+**). The same location produced six **Eastern Meadowlarks** 7/11 (**RC+**). On

(*Records continued on page 3*)

(Records continued from page 2)

6/27, four **Orchard Orioles** were seen at Centennial (**MKw**) and the same number at Mt. Pleasant 7/10 (**SBg**). Five **Baltimore Orioles** were at Centennial 6/13-7/3 (**MKw**).

The late winter invasion of **Pine Siskins** shattered departure records. One seen at Wynfield 6/7 set a new late date (**RC**)—until one was photographed at a Manahan feeder 6/28 (**BO**).

**Correction:** Remove the **Summer Tanager** at Annapolis Rock 5/9 from the spring 2009 records.

**Observers:** **GAn** – Glenn Austin, **SBg** – Scott Berglund, **KBI** – Karan Blum, **JCu** – Jeff Culler, **RC** – Ralph Cullison III, **KDy** – Karen Darcy, **WE** – Wes Earp, **RGr** – Ralph Geuder, **JHf** – Joe Hanfman, **KHf** – Kevin Heffernan, **BHi** – Bill Hill, **GHi** – Gayle Hill, **EH** – Emmalyn Holdridge, **MKw** – Mike Kerwin, **FLv** – Felicia Lovelett, **NM** – Nancy Magnusson, **JMr** – Joel Martin, **GMcC** – Grazina McClure, **BMr** – Barry Miller, **SN** – Sue Neri, **CN** – Carol Newman, **ROr** – Richard Orr, **MO'S** – Michael O'Sullivan, **BO** – Bonnie Ott, **DPw** – Dave Powell, **JS** – Jo Solem, **CSt** – Chuck Stirrat, **JTv** – June Tveekrem, **JW** – Jim Wilkinson.

## 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.

**November 19, 2009** (Note: This is the **third** Thursday.)

Wes Earp

6480 South Trotter Road

Clarksville, MD 21029

410-531-3197

**December:** No board meeting

## FALL FIELD TRIPS

BY BONNIE OTT AND JOE HANFMAN

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 trips not on ADC maps are on the Club's website. Questions? Contact the trip leader or Field Trip Coordinator Bonnie Ott at [bonniecott@verizon.net](mailto:bonniecott@verizon.net). HCBC members receive priority on trips that are limited by number of participants. No pets.



### CENTENNIAL PARK

November 1, Sunday, 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. Early waterfowl, lingering migrants likely. Facilities available. *Leader- Kurt Schwarz 410-461-1643 or kerschwa1@verizon.net.*



### CENTENNIAL PARK

November 8, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., (2-3 hours) *Meet at West parking lot on Centennial Lane.* See November 1st for description. *Leader- Joe Byrnes 410-730-5329 or LBRoller@verizon.net.*

### HOWARD WATERFOWL SEARCH

November 14, Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. *Meet at the Broken Land Parkway parking lot at Lake Elkhorn.* Plan to visit the Columbia lakes search for gulls, ducks, grebes, loons and other waterfowl. Easy walking involved. Plan to carpool. Bring lunch and drinks. Scopes helpful. Facilities available. *Leaders- Bonnie Ott 410-461-3361 and Joe Hanfman 410-772-8424.*



### CENTENNIAL PARK

November 15, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., (2-3 hours) *Meet at West parking lot on Centennial Lane.* See November

1st for description. *Leaders - Karen Darcy and Kevin Heffernan 410-418-8731 or KJHeff@aol.com.*



### CENTENNIAL PARK

November 22, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., (2-3 hours) *Meet at West parking lot on Centennial Lane.* See November 1st for description. *Leader- Joe Hanfman 410-772-8424 or auk1844@comcast.net.*

### BLACKWATER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

December 5, Saturday (All day) Email the leader to reserve a spot and get details. Plan to stop at the Choptank River Bridge for ducks and coffee. Bring lunch and drinks. Dress warmly! Entrance fee or Duck Stamp required. We will carpool. Facilities at some spots. *Leader- Joe Hanfman 410-772-8424 or auk1844@comcast.net.*

### START YOUR 2010 LIST

January 1, Friday (8:00 -11:00 a.m.) *Meet at boat ramp of Centennial Park.* 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 where every bird is new! Facilities available. Call the leader for more info. *Leader- Bonnie Ott 410-461-3361.*



= Great for beginner birders

# SUMMARY OF THE 2009 HOWARD COUNTY FALL COUNT

BY MIKE MCCLURE AND CHUCK STIRRAT

The sixteenth annual Howard County Fall Count was conducted on Sept. 19, 2009. All field counters agreed it was a very slow day of birding, however, 130 species were observed producing an above average Fall Count total. Comparison totals for the prior 15 years are: high, 136 on 9/19/1998; low 108 on 9/18/2004; average, 124 species.

The number of participants and parties (53 and 34) was similar to last year's (53 and 30) but with four extra parties. The participants provided 209 hours of field counting time. The mileage was 505 compared to the average of 373 miles. The total of individual birds tallied to 13,668 which is below the average. Comparisons to prior years: high, 26,651 on 9/17/1994; low, 9,293 on 9/18/2004; average, 16,989 birds. Finally, there were 27 warbler species identified compared to prior years (high, 30; low, 13; average, 24 species) with 512 individual warblers sighted compared to an average of 446.

Fall Count has been adversely affected by the weather on eight occasions (50% of the time). These weather events ranged from severe drought, to extensive rainfall, to unseasonably hot and humid conditions, to comfortable temperature and humidity accompanied by high winds for the day. Saturday's temperature started in the upper 50's at 6:00 a.m. under light cloud cover, rising to 72° in late afternoon with lingering light cloud cover. The humidity was comfortable (dew point: 55° at 6:00 a.m. rising to 56° by 6:00 p.m.). Winds

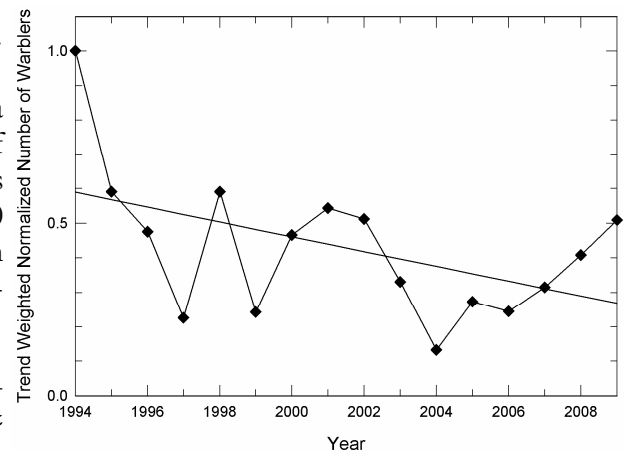
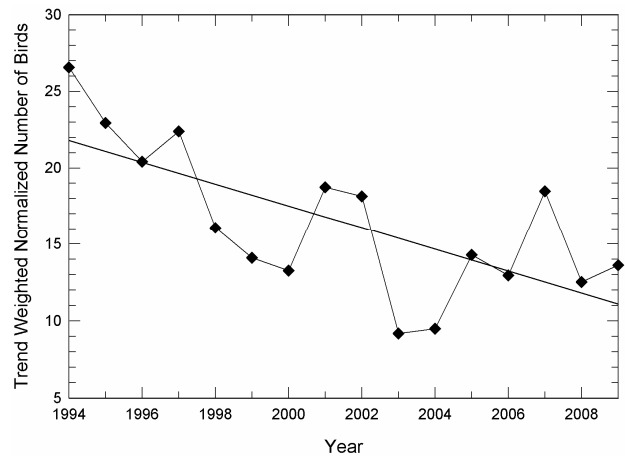
were very light throughout the day. In spite of the delightful weather, the count was very slow with the birds only showing up at a leisurely rate and frustrating all of the participants. There were, however, some bright patches; counters arriving at a new location, remaining stationary, and spending the next two hours counting warblers. This contrasts with other counters who didn't see a single warbler during the day. This problem is reflected in the data from the 16 years of Fall Counts as shown on the graphics for the total number of individual birds and warblers observed countywide. The trend lines show that the number of birds has declined by 50% since the Fall Counts began in 1994.

The accompanying table presents the count data. There were 18 species for which there was only one bird sighted countywide and 12 species for which there were only two birds sighted countywide. Species showing moderately high numbers (>500) are Canada Goose, 1,439; Blue Jay, 742; American Crow, 536; American Robin, 758; European Starling, 1,079, and Northern Cardinal 552.

Plan now to join us on a future seasonal count and if possible attend the tally as well. Next year the 2010 Fall Count will be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of September which will be the 18<sup>th</sup>.

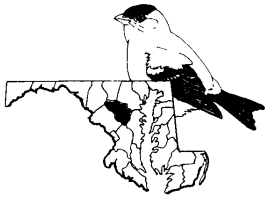
Thanks to the following participants: Randy Beaton, **Bill &**

**Karan Blum (Area 4)**, Monika Botsai, Jim & Marilyn Brinkley, Joe Byrnes, Dennis & Jane Coskren, **Jeff Culler (Area 2)**, Ralph Cullison III, **Karen Darcy (Area 3 Co-coordinator)**, Susan Earp, **Wes Earp (Area 1 Co-coordinator)**, Ward Ebert, Sid England, Erin & Tracy Eve, Tom Feild, Brand Gould, Joe Hanfman, **Kevin Heffernan (Area 3 Co-coordinator)**, Rob Hilton, Emy Holdridge, Geraldine King, Shashi Lengade, Felicia Lovelett, Brigitte Lund, Nancy Magnusson, Grazina McClure, **Mike McClure (County Co-coordinator)**, John McKitterick, Barry Miller, Tom Miller, Sue Neri, Richard L. Orr, **Bonnie Ott (Area 6)**, Ron Polniaszek, Clyde Robinette, **Kurt Schwarz (Area 5)**, Romaine Smith, Bob & Jo Solem, Michelle Stewart, **Chuck Stirrat (County Co-coordinator)**, Tom Strikwerda, **Eva Sunell (Area 7)**, Robin Todd, **Mark Wallace (Area 1 Co-coordinator)**, Jim Wilkinson, Paul & Timothy Woodford, and Michele Wright. Lastly, a very special thanks to **Don and Martha Waugh** who hosted the evening tally.



## HOWARD COUNTY FALL COUNT RESULTS - SEPTEMBER 19, 2009

Species	Totals	Species	Totals	Species	Totals
Canada Goose	1,439	<i>Empidonax species</i>	20	American Redstart	44
Wood Duck	41	Eastern Phoebe	85	Worm-eating Warbler	1
American Black Duck	1	Great Crested Flycatcher	1	Ovenbird	12
Mallard	219	White-eyed Vireo	13	Northern Waterthrush	2
Blue-winged Teal	2	Yellow-throated Vireo	3	Connecticut Warbler	1
Green-winged Teal	7	Blue-headed Vireo	1	Common Yellowthroat	120
Pied-billed Grebe	3	Philadelphia Vireo	2	Canada Warbler	1
Double-crested Cormorant	14	Red-eyed Vireo	51	<i>warbler species</i>	81
Great Blue Heron	33	Blue Jay	742	Scarlet Tanager	13
Great Egret	5	American Crow	536	Eastern Towhee	53
Little Blue Heron	4	Fish Crow	458	Chipping Sparrow	124
Green Heron	25	<i>crow species</i>	108	Field Sparrow	45
Black-crowned Night-Heron	1	Horned Lark	3	Savannah Sparrow	50
Black Vulture	172	Tree Swallow	1	Grasshopper Sparrow	4
Turkey Vulture	260	Carolina Chickadee	407	Song Sparrow	113
Osprey	5	Tufted Titmouse	259	Lincoln's Sparrow	1
Bald Eagle	6	White-breasted Nuthatch	176	Swamp Sparrow	2
Northern Harrier	1	Carolina Wren	342	<i>sparrow species</i>	8
Sharp-shinned Hawk	11	House Wren	30	Northern Cardinal	552
Cooper's Hawk	16	Winter Wren	1	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	31
<i>accipiter species</i>	3	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2	Blue Grosbeak	15
Red-shouldered Hawk	79	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	6	Indigo Bunting	112
Broad-winged Hawk	496	Eastern Bluebird	205	Bobolink	1
Red-tailed Hawk	36	Veery	6	Red-winged Blackbird	98
American Kestrel	15	Swainson's Thrush	6	Eastern Meadowlark	2
Killdeer	49	Wood Thrush	16	Common Grackle	295
Lesser Yellowlegs	11	American Robin	785	Brown-headed Cowbird	31
Solitary Sandpiper	9	Gray Catbird	409	Baltimore Oriole	1
Spotted Sandpiper	6	Northern Mockingbird	133	House Finch	179
Least Sandpiper	22	Brown Thrasher	20	American Goldfinch	469
Laughing Gull	25	European Starling	1,079	House Sparrow	310
Ring-billed Gull	8	Cedar Waxwing	196	<b>Total Birds:</b>	13,668
Rock Pigeon	370	Blue-winged Warbler	2	<b>Area Total Species:</b>	130
Mourning Dove	429	Tennessee Warbler	6	<b>Time Start:</b>	4:55 a
Black-billed Cuckoo	2	Nashville Warbler	4	<b>Time Stop:</b>	8:00 p
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	7	Northern Parula	32	<b>Hours on Foot:</b>	163.7
Eastern Screech-Owl	5	Yellow Warbler	1	<b>Hours by Car:</b>	32.4
Great Horned Owl	2	Chestnut-sided Warbler	14	<b>Miles on Foot:</b>	125.1
Barred Owl	8	Magnolia Warbler	47	<b>Miles by Car:</b>	377.0
Common Nighthawk	7	Cape May Warbler	1	<b>Hours Feeder Watching:</b>	5.0
Chimney Swift	85	Blk.-thrt'd. Blue Warbler	7	<b>Hours Stationary:</b>	5.0
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	33	Yel.-rump'd (Myrtle) Warbler	2	<b>Hours "Owling":</b>	3.0
Belted Kingfisher	42	Blk.-thrt'd. Green Warbler	29	<b>Miles "Owling":</b>	3.3
Red-headed Woodpecker	6	Blackburnian Warbler	4	<b>Total Observers in County:</b>	53
Red-bellied Woodpecker	195	Yellow-throated Warbler	1	<b>Total Parties</b>	34
Downy Woodpecker	126	Pine Warbler	7	<b>Total Party-Hours (Reg.):</b>	196.1
Hairy Woodpecker	23	Prairie Warbler	2	<b>Total Party-Hours (Feeder):</b>	5.0
Northern (Yellow-sh'd) Flicker	103	Palm Warbler	28	<b>Total Party-Hours (Station'y):</b>	5.0
Pileated Woodpecker	36	Bay-breasted Warbler	2	<b>Total Party-Hours (Owling):</b>	3.0
Eastern Wood-Pewee	39	Blackpoll Warbler	5	<b>Total Party-Hours:</b>	209.1
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	2	Cerulean Warbler	1	<b>Total Party-Miles:</b>	502.1
Least Flycatcher	1	Black-&-white Warbler	55		



## HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

*Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society*

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Columbia, MD 21044

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### November/December 2009 - Inside This Issue:

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Free-Flowing Patapsco River

## A FREE-FLOWING PATAPSCO RIVER?

BY KURT SCHWARZ

A total of four dams currently exist along the Patapsco River. Not one continues to fulfill its original function; as a result, all are under consideration for removal. The dams present a barrier to fish, such as shad and eels, which swim upstream to breed. Fish ladders installed in the 1990's have proven ineffective. So now plans are afoot for their removal.

Two dams could be removed soon, using federal stimulus funds. Union Dam, just downstream from the Route 40 crossing, was

breached by a storm in 1990, and its removal is planned for the fall of 2009. Since it has long been breached, there is no silt build-up behind the dam to complicate its removal. The Simpkins Dam, below Ellicott City, is next up for removal, hopefully in 2010.

There are as of yet no firm plans for removing the remaining two dams, Bloede, which is near the swinging bridge in the Orange Grove/Avalon section of Patapsco Valley State Park, and Daniels, one well-known to Howard County Bird Club members. Bloede has

some historical significance, since it was the first dam built with an internal hydroelectric generator. Several fatal accidents have also occurred there. Daniels is popular with kayakers and canoeists. Some resistance to the removal of both of these dams can be expected. It remains to be seen how a free-flowing stream might change the bird life along the river. Perhaps fewer Canada Geese?

Many thanks to Sue Muller who provided the background information for this article.