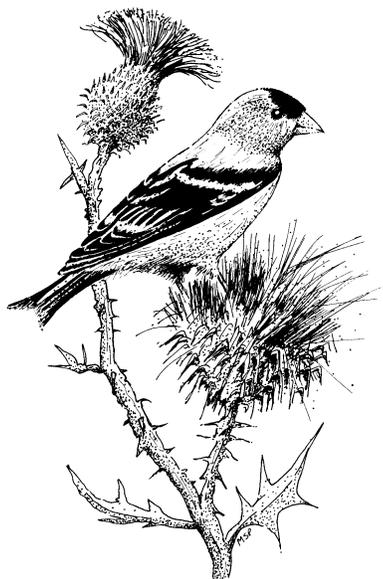


The Goldfinch

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



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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 2012 issue is March 25, 20112

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

CLUB MEETINGS - BY [JANE GEUDER](#)

Thursday, March 8, 2012 "Birding in Wales," by Mike Bowen, past president of the Montgomery County Bird Club. He will give us an overview of the outstanding natural areas of his native Wales and review the nearly 200 birds known to occur in one of Britain's most scenic regions. While not an exotic world birding spot, Wales can be a most interesting, surprising and rewarding destination with a very developed infrastructure — no straw hats or dug-out canoes here!

Thursday, April 12, 2012 "The Wonderful World of Bats: Why We Should Make Every Effort to Conserve Them," by Nina Fascione, Executive Director of [Bat Conservation International](#). She will discuss the essential role bats play in the world's ecosystems and the many threats they face today. Bat populations around the eastern United States and Canada have been devastated by White-nose Syndrome. Ms. Fascione will describe how BCI is working to understand and combat this relatively recent disease of these amazing flying mammals.

Meetings are at the **Robinson Nature Center**, 6692 Cedar Lane, Columbia MD 21044. Hospitality and club bookstore at 7:30 p.m. Meeting with program begins at 8:00 p.m. Nature Center doors unlocked at 7:15 p.m. and locked again at 8:15 p.m. There is no admission charge. For further information call Ward Ebert, 301-490-5807.

AUTUMN BIRD RECORDS: AUGUST 1 – NOVEMBER 30, 2011

BY JOANNE SOLEM

Weather, intensive birding, and luck combined to produce a season birders will long remember. A [Green Violetear](#), a gorgeous wanderer from south of the U.S. border, was a new county record, while a [Western Grebe](#) merited almost equal attention since the only previous sighting was more than 50 years ago. Relegated to secondary billing in this extraordinary season were [Red-necked Grebe](#), [Mississippi Kite](#), [Black-bellied Plover](#), [American Golden-Plover](#), [Western Sandpi-](#)

[per](#), [White-rumped Sandpiper](#), [Stilt Sandpiper](#), [Black Tern](#), [Snow Bunting](#), [Clay-colored Sparrow](#), [Nelson's Sparrow](#), and [Summer Tanager](#).

A flock of 23 **Snow Geese** at Johns Hopkins APL 10/11 (**JHy**; **JS-1** blue) paused until 10/14 (**NM**). Single **Cackling Geese** were tallied at Fulton Pond 11/10 (**KS**) and at Glenwood (Longfield Rd) 11/23 (**RRf**). **Tundra Swan**

(Records continued on page 2)

(*Records continued from page 1*) migration peaked 11/10 Duvall Rd (**KTf**) and Lime Kiln pond (**WE, MW**) to 11/17 Cavey La (**RRf**). Two **Gadwalls** on a Glenwood farm pond 9/17 were the second earliest ever (**W&SE, KLI**), as was an **American Black Duck** on a Tarbay Dr. pond 8/22 (**KS**). Three **Northern Shovelers** at Brighton Dam 8/28 didn't linger (**JHf, JHb**), but five at Centennial 10/26 (**BO**) stayed until at least 11/19 (**MKw**). Two were present at the Race Road wetlands 11/24 (**DCm**). A male **Northern Pintail** at Centennial 11/13 was the only one of the season and one of the few during 2011 (**KHf+**; **MKw**). The 8/22 arrival of three **Green-winged Teal** at Pigtail was the second earliest record (**JHf**). One **Long-tailed Duck** appeared at Brighton Dam 11/23 (**JHf**). Two **Buffleheads** on a pond on So. Trotter Rd 9/3 (**WE**) and one at Lake Kittamaquondi 9/6 (**DCm-1**) established new early records (previous 9/29/96 **L. Southworth**). A **Common Goldeneye** stopped at Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS) 11/13 (**JBy, RPt**).

Wild Turkey sightings were mostly in the north and west (**LCg, FLv, NM, K&DTf**); in the east, a hen wandered among homes near Waterloo Park/I-95 in late Oct. and Nov. (*vide* **AWt**). The field trip to Waterford Farm 11/5 produced two accommodating male **Northern Bobwhites** at the edge of a dirt road (**WE+**). The origin of this species is always suspect; these birds had been present since midsummer (**CSH**).

A **Red-necked Grebe** at TRIRS 11/12 was just the second fall record (**JHf, BHi, JS**). Later that

day, a **Western Grebe** was identified (**JHf, RRf; KS+**). Although it was the county's second "western" grebe (first since the species split), it had been so long since the first (11/23/59 **J. Wiloughby** to 1/1/60 **I. Hampe**) that it seemed like a new record. With a **Horned Grebe** and **Pied-billed Grebes** also present (**KS+**), it was a banner day for grebes at TRIRS! A late **American Bittern** at Alpha Ridge Landfill 10/22 lifted from waist-high dry grass atop a capped cell, an unusual habitat (**BO, RC+**). An im. **Black-crowned Night-Heron** at David Force WMA 10/31 (**WE, MW**) and one possible (heard-only) 11/5 at Lake Kittamaquondi (*vide* **KBd**) may have been the same late individual.

An adult **Mississippi Kite** over the Middle Patuxent Env. Area (MPEA) 9/12 was the seventh record (**CSt, JCu, KDy, EH**). It may well have been the same individual seen several times earlier in 2011 between US29 and I-95. **Bald Eagles** were well noted. The largest **Broad-winged Hawk** flight was caught 9/17 with 600 over Rockburn Branch Park in 15 minutes (**BO, EH**). **Merlins** were well reported from 9/10 Schooley Mill Pk (**BO**) to 11/17 Lisbon/MD144 (**WE**). **Peregrine Falcons** were few. One was spotted near the Glenwood library 9/17 (**W& SE, KLI**); a second was photographed eating a crow at Manahan Dr. 11/10 (**J&NOt**); a third was at Centennial 11/27 (**JBy, CSt+**; **MKw**).

The **American Coot** high count was 10 at Centennial 10/29 (**MKw**). A **Black-bellied Plover** was at TRIRS 8/27 (**TFe, GKg**). A

late **American Golden-Plover**, 18th record, dropped in at Fulton Pond 11/9 (**CSt**) where it stayed until 11/16 (**JW**). Its *arrival* date was more than a month later than the previous *departure* date (10/2/01 **S. Arnold**; 10/2/07 **M. Hafner**). A **Western Sandpiper**, 12th record, was picked out at the Tarbay Dr. pond 8/11, the second earliest record (**KS**); it was last seen 8/13 (**MO'S**). **Least Sandpipers** set a new high of 79 at the mudflats at the north end of TRIRS 8/8 (**NM**). Also present there were a **White-rumped Sandpiper**, 14th record, 8/9 (initially **Mont. Co-BHi**; then Howard **JHf, DCm**) to 8/11 (**JCu**), and three **Stilt Sandpipers** 8/7, eighth record and second earliest (**JMr**).

Autumn's only **Bonaparte's Gull** rested briefly at Fulton Pond 11/9 (**JW**). A few **Laughing Gulls** drifted through from 8/7 Martin Rd, W. Col. (**JHf-1**) to 9/4: Martin Rd (**JHf-3**) and MPEA field trip (**JHf+-1**). A **Black Tern**, 20th record, was glimpsed from Brighton Dam 8/28 (**JHb, JHf**). **Forster's Terns** were scarce with Brighton Dam producing both sightings: 8/27 (**TFe, GKg-1**) and 8/28 (**JHf, JHb-5**).

A **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** flying across TRIRS 11/13 set a new late date (**NM, RRf**) eclipsing the Nov 5, 2005 record (**B. Hubick, H. Holbrook**). **No Black-billed Cuckoos** were reported in 2011. Records dating to 1947 show 1985 as the only other year in which this species was missed. **Common Nighthawk** migration peaked between 9/2 and 9/5: one perched on a branch at Hallmark Rd 9/2 (**Web**); 92 were counted over

(*Records continued from page 2*) Thornbrook Rd 9/3 (**JCu**); and 104 passed over Cavey La in 10 minutes 9/5 (**RRf**). During that period others were noted at Rockburn (**DCm**), Henryton (**BO**), River Rd/Sykesville (**FLv**), and MPEA (**JHf**). A **Whip-poor-will** was heard 9/3 at Talbots Landing (near Rockburn)—the first reported since 2008 (**RGr**). About 100 **Chimney Swifts** utilized a furnace stack at Vantage House in E. Col. the evening of 8/30 (**W&SE**).

A **Green Violetear**, first county record, stopped at a feeder near Clarksville 10/24 to 10/26. Many birders were able to enjoy this extraordinary visitor thanks to gracious hosts **Diane** and **Dennis LaPoma**. **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** lingered into October with the last two departing 10/16 from Diversified La (**KDy**, **KHf**). **Red-headed Woodpeckers** were noted from 9/12 at both Mt. Pleasant (**JCu**) and W. Friendship (**BO**) to 11/20 Allview (**JMcK**). Four **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** were at Mt. Pleasant 10/8 (**BO**). A **Pileated Woodpecker** at Timberleigh 11/24 began using a feeder with sunflower chips as well as his favored suet (**DNg**).

Olive-sided Flycatchers were present at Schooley 8/22 (**NM**) and 8/25 (**JHf+**), Centennial 8/31 (**BO**), and MPEA 9/4 (**JHf+**, **ROr** ph.). A late **Eastern Wood-Pewee** was seen (not heard) at MPEA 10/21 (**JCu**). Single **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were reported at Schooley 8/25 (**JMo**) to 8/26 (**TDC**, **RRf**) and at MPEA 8/29 (**JHf**) to 9/10 (**RRf**). **Least Flycatchers** were spotted at MPEA 8/30 (**JCu**, **JHf-2**), Mt. Pleasant

8/31 (**RRf-1**) and Cavey Lane 9/11 (**RRf-1**).

Philadelphia Vireos were well reported from 8/30 MPEA (**JHf**, **JCu**) to 10/8 at W. Friendship, a new late date (**RRf**). The **Horned Lark** high was 50 at Glenwood/MD97 on 9/17 (**W&SE**, **KLI**). A **Fish Crow** flock of 140 flew over W. Friendship 10/7 (**JS**; **BO+**); from 10/14 to 10/30, 300-480 roosted at the University of MD Central Farm (UMDCF) (**BO**, **NM**, **JHf+**). All numbers were new highs; the 480 is the new record. Scattered **Common Raven** sightings continued with one perched at Pineway Dr., Rocky Gorge Res 9/17 (**J&RS**), two feeding on deer entrails at the north end of TRIRS 10/21 (**JBn**), and one being chased by crows over Fulton Pond 11/10 (**KS**). A few **Red-breasted Nuthatches** made an appearance with one at Western Regional Park 10/16 (**BO**), and one intermittently at Diversified La. 11/7 to 11/30 (**KDy**, **KHf**). Single **Marsh Wrens** were present at UMDCF 10/2 (**BO+**) to 10/30, second latest (**BO**, **NM+**); one was noted at W. Friendship 10/18 (**DCm**).

Gray-cheeked Thrush reports were few. One was at MPEA 10/11 (**JHf**). A thrush, perhaps a Gray-cheeked, was photographed as it visited a Stone Hill Dr. garden 9/30 to 10/2 (**KLz**-ph.). A **Swainson's Thrush** at Duvall Rd 10/29 tied the second latest date (**KTf**). Peak **Eastern Bluebird** numbers were reached 11/5 with 75 at Waterford Farm (**WE+**) and 30 at Mt. Pleasant (**KS**). A flock of 174 **American Robins** was counted at Thornbrook Dr 9/3 (**JCu**). A **Snow Bunting**, 13th record, accommodatingly stayed at the dam

at Lake Elkhorn from 11/12 (**ALw**) to 11/14 (**W&SE**). A used **Gray Catbird** nest 9/22 near a Wilde Lake home contained scotch tape as part of the nesting material (**CNw**). **American Pipits** were reported from Meadowbrook Pk (**JW**), Mt. Pleasant (**KS**), and UMDCF (**BO+**).

A **Golden-winged Warbler** at MPEA (Trotter Rd) delighted birders 8/31 to 9/5 (**JHf+**); a probable second bird at MPEA was found along the South Wind Trail (So. Wind Circle) 9/5 (**MKw**). The high count of **Black-and-whites** was nine at MPEA 9/1 (**JHf**, **BHi**, **DCm**). A **Tennessee** at UMDCF 11/6 established a new late date (**BO+**, **ROr** ph.); (previous 10/29/98 **D. Ecker**). The lone **Orange-crowned** this season was at Centennial 10/29 (**MKw**). A rather early **Nashville** appeared at Mt. Pleasant 8/25 (**JCu**). A **Connecticut** lingered at MPEA from 8/30 (**JHf**, **JCu**), second earliest, to 9/3 (**CSt**); one reported 100 yds. away on 9/16 in the same im. plumage could have been the same bird (**JfSt**). **Mourning**s were found at Pigtail 8/26 (**ROr-1**) and Fore Bay 9/9 (**JW-1**). **Cape Mays** were reported from 9/16 (**JHf**) to 10/5 (**BO**); the high was up to six at Wynfield 9/26 (**KDy**, **EH**). **Ceruleans** are unusual during fall migration so one seen well at MPEA 9/16 was a treat (**JfSt**). There were scattered **Bay-breasted** reports with a high of four at Schooley 9/17 (**NM**) and a new late date of 10/18 there (**DCm-1**); (previous 10/12/79 **D Holmes**). **Chestnut-sided**s peaked at nine at MPEA 8/31 (**JHf**). **Palm** numbers and dates were unremarkable with few westerns. A **Yellow-rumped** at

2011 ODONATE SURVEY

BY JOANNE SOLEM

County dragonfly news was modest in 2011. Date extensions included [Springtime Darner](#) 4/21 (Grazina McClure) and [Fawn Darner](#) 6/15 (Bob & Jo Solem, GMcC, Karen Darcy). Browns Bridge established a new location for the [Gray Petaltail](#) 6/6 (GMcC, B&JS, Wes Earp). That unusual species brought the total found at the WSSC reservoirs to 43.

[Common Green Darner](#) migration was obvious in the southern part of the county on 9/22. Nancy Magnusson counted 32 drifting past her second story office window at Johns Hopkins APL. The same day a neighbor of Bea Newkirk's on Old Scaggsville Rd. mentioned the numerous large dragonflies hovering in his yard.

The Sixth Annual Dragonfly Count held on 8/20 turned up 40 species. Coordinator June Tveekrem summarized results in the Sept/Oct *Goldfinch*. The 2011 count completed two cycles (rotating June, July, August dates) providing valuable insight into summer ode species and numbers.

(*Records continued from page 3*)

Centennial 9/3 was a new early date (**MKw**). A **Yellow-throated** at Schooley 8/26 was a pleasant surprise and a new species for the park (**MBt, KCv**); the one at Cavey La, near the Patapsco, 9/18 was closer to known breeding sites (**RRf**). **Wilson's** wandered through from 8/30 at MPEA (**JCu, JHf**) to 10/21 there (**JCu**).

As usual, October brought sparrows. Peak **Chipping** numbers were 80 at W. Friendship 10/7 (**BO+**). **Clay-colored**s are among the choice autumn species. One at UMDCF 10/13 (**NM, JHf**) to 10/14 (**BO+**) was just the eighth record. The ninth, at Western Reg. Pk 10/22 (**HfK**), ironically was spotted on Sparrow Big Day, but was not seen by the field trip. A **Vesper** was reported from the soggy swale at UMDCF 10/22 (**BO+**); two in the scrubby west fields at Mt. Pleasant 10/28 were in a more typical habitat (**BO**). Sixty **Savannahs** and 120 **Songs** were seasonal peaks, both at Mt. Pleasant 11/1 (**BO**). **Nelson's** were present at UMDCF 10/9 to 10/30, the second latest (**BO+**), with three there 10/25 (**DCm-ph. 2**). More than a dozen reports of **Lincoln's** included non-traditional areas Gorman NRA 9/17 (**JMcK-1**) and McGaw Ct 10/4 (**TDC**); 11 were tallied at multiple locations 10/22 (**BO+**).

A female **Summer Tanager** at W. Friendship 9/13 (**BO**) was present until 9/15. **Dickcissels** made a good showing on 9/17: W. Friendship (**JCu, DCm, JHf-2**) and Alpha Ridge Landfill (**RC-1**); on 9/18, three were present at W. Friendship (**JCu, BO+**). One at UMDCF 10/16 to 10/26 (**BO+**) was the second latest. Three **Rusty**

Blackbird reports ranged from 10/4 (**JW-1**) to 11/5 (**WE+-5**). A few **Purple Finches** passed through from 11/16 to 11/26 (**KTf, M&GMcC, MKw, JHf, BO**). At least 100 **American Goldfinches** were at Mt. Pleasant 8/28 (**BO**).

Hybrid: A White-fronted Goose x Canada Goose was picked out of a flock of Canadas at Fulton 8/28 (**DCm**).

Observers: **MBt** – Marcia Balestri, **JBn** – Jim Benton, **KBd** – Ken Board, **JBy** – Joe Byrnes, **KCv** – Kathy Calvert, **LCg** – Lisa Colangelo, **TDC** – T. Dennis Coskren, **JCu** – Jeff Culler, **RC** – Ralph Cullison III, **DCm** – David Cummings, **KDy** – Karen Darcy, **SE** – Sue Earp, **WE** – Wes Earp, **WEB** – Ward Ebert, **TFe** – Tom Feild, **HfK** – Harry Fink, **RGr** – Ralph Geuder, **JHf** – Joe Hanfman, **JHy** – John Hayes, **KHf** – Kevin Heffernan, **BHi** – Bill Hill, **EH** – Emy Holdridge, **JHb** – John Hubbell, **MKw** – Mike Kerwin, **GKg** – Geraldine King, **ALw** – Allen Lewis, **KLi** – Kathie Lillie, **KLz** – Kathy Litzinger, **FLv** – Felicia Lovelett, **NM** – Nancy Magnusson, **JMr** – Joel Martin, **GMcC** – Grazina McClure, **MMcC** – Mike McClure, **JMcK** – John McKitterick, **JMo** – Jim Moore, **DNg** – Diane Nagen-gast, **CNw** – Carol Newman, **ROr** – Richard Orr, **MO'S** – Michael O'Sullivan, **BO** – Bonnie Ott, **JOt** – John Ott, **NOt** – Nick Ott, **RPt** – Robert Peterson, **RRf** – Russ Ruffiing, **KS** – Kurt Schwarz, **CSh** – Chuck Sharp, **JfSt** – Jeff Shernot, **JS** – Jo Solem, **RS** – Robert Solem, **CSt** – Chuck Stirrat, **DTf** – Dick Tufts, **KTf** – Kate Tufts, **MW** – Mark Wallace, **JW** – Jim Wilkinson, **AWt** – Amanda Witt.

SPRING FIELD TRIPS

BY [BONNIE OTT](#) & [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 bonnieott@verizon.net. HCBC members receive priority on trips that are limited by number of participants. No pets.

WINTER SPARROW SEARCH

March 3, Saturday (Half day)

Limit: 12 people

Search the wetland and dry fields in this intensive search for as many sparrows as possible. Previous years have turned up non-sparrow rarities! Expect difficult walking for most of the day. Knee boots a must. Facilities at some spots.

Contact Bonnie Ott, bonnieott@verizon.net or 443-285-3302 to sign up and get info.

CENTENNIAL PARK

March 4, Sun., 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours) 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 - Jeff Culler, cullerfuls@hotmail.com or 410-465-9006.

WATERFOWL SEARCH

March 10, Saturday 8:00 a.m. (half day) Meet at Docksider parking lot at Lake Elkhorn. We'll carpool to search the Howard County waterways for ducks, grebes, mergansers and loons. Chance of an early migrant. Leader - Kurt Schwarz, krschwa1@verizon.net or 410-461-1643.

CENTENNIAL PARK

March 11, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours) Daylight Savings Time starts (set clocks ahead). Meet at west parking lot on Centennial Lane. See March 4 for description.

Leader - Mike Kerwin, m63kerwin@verizon.net or 410-461-2408.

CENTENNIAL PARK

March 18, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours). Meet at west parking lot on Centennial Lane. See March 4 for description. Leader - Joe Byrnes 410-730-5329 or LBRoller@verizon.net.

SHARPS AT WATERFORD

FARM March 24, Saturday 8:00 a.m. (half day). Meet at farm parking area, through barns on right. Rte. 97 S. to right on Jennings Chapel Rd., 1 mile to right into farm at sign. Moderate walking over crop stubble, farm roads and paths on this working farm. Fields with crop residue, extensive woodlands, Cattail Creek and floodplain, three ponds and five shallow waterfowl impoundments make for diverse habitats and good birding opportunities. Port-a-pots available. Knee-high waterproof footwear required for part of walk. Leader - Wes Earp, the_earps@verizon.net or 410-531-3197.

POTLUCK DINNER

March 24, Saturday (6:30 p.m.) Held at the Robinson Nature Center. Contact Kathie Lillie by Friday, March 23 at 410-489-5262 or klillie3@verizon.net for reservations. Members' photos are the program.

CENTENNIAL PARK

March 25, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours). Meet at west parking lot on Centennial Lane. See March 4 for description. Leader - Allen Lewis, allenrlewis@gmail.com.

ALPHA RIDGE LANDFILL

April 7, Saturday, 7:45 a.m. (half day). Meet at Alpha Ridge Park to carpool to landfill. Carpooling required. Moderate walking over hills and fields of the landfill. Vesper Sparrow and other field birds possible. Meadowlarks, kestrels and other open country birds expected. Rarities possible. Facilities at Alpha Ridge Park. Leader - Ralph Cullison, rociiii@cullison.org or 410-442-2181.

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND CENTRAL FARM

April 15, Sunday, (half day) Limit: 12 people. Moderate to difficult walking though the fields and wetlands of this private property. Knee boots a must. No facilities. Email the leader to sign up. Leader - Bonnie Ott, bonnieott@verizon.net.

MT. PLEASANT FARM - HOWARD COUNTY CONSERVANCY

April 21, Saturday, 8:00 a.m., (2-3 hours) Earth Day Walk in conjunction with the Howard County Conservancy. Meet at parking lot near the barn. Easy walking through the fields of Mt. Pleasant Farm. Tree

(Field Trips continued on page 6)

(*Field Trips* continued from page 5)

lines, hedgerows and streams provide opportunity for non-meadow species. Great opportunity for flyovers. Facilities available. *Leaders* – Scott Berglund, 410-750-2568 or Business250@yahoo.com, Mike Kerwin, m63kerwin@verizon.net or 410-461-2408.

PIGTAIL - TRIADELPHIA

May 5, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours). In conjunction with WSSC and Montgomery County Bird Club. *Meet at the Green Bridge Rd parking lot which is off Triadelphia Mill Rd.* The cove is bordered on three sides by deciduous and coniferous woods. Extensive mudflats may exist with the possibility of shorebirds. Rustic facilities available. *Leader* – Michael O’Sullivan, fr84vrdr@yahoo.com.

MAY COUNT

Saturday, May 12. Details in the May/June *Goldfinch*.

HENRYTON ROAD, PATAPSCO VALLEY STATE PARK

May 16, Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. (half day). *Meet at bottom of Henryton Rd at the dead end.* Walk along the Patapsco River looking for spring migrants. Easy walking along the river for nesting Worm-Eating and Yellow-Throated warblers. Plan for moderate walking and possible muddy trails areas. No facilities. *Leader* - Joe Byrnes, 410-730-5329, LBRoller@verizon.net.

 = Great for beginning birders

HOWARD COUNTY GREENFEST 2012

BY SUE MULLER

County Executive Ken Ulman invites you to Howard County’s fifth annual “GreenFest” on Saturday April 14th from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Howard Community College. Sponsored by the Departments of Recreation & Parks, Planning and Zoning and the Bureau of Environmental Services, this free family event celebrates Earth Month. The theme for GreenFest is “Saving the Environment One Yard at a Time” and features displays to provide citizens with practical information for making choices to lead a more ecologically sound lifestyle – both at home and the office.

The festival will also feature exhibits from community groups that focus on environmental awareness, including the [Howard County Bird Club](#). Other exhibitors include: [Robinson Nature Center](#), [Howard Astronomical League](#), [Howard County Forestry Board](#), [Howard County Conservancy](#), [Sierra Club](#), [Middle Patuxent Environmental Area](#), [Master Gardeners](#), and the [Howard County Climate Change Initiative](#), just to name a few.

There will be a rain barrel workshop and you will be able to take home a barrel for free! Sign up in advance at the website below. You must be a Howard County resident.

Activities include a nature walk on the campus nature trail and a herp search as part of the [Maryland Amphibian & Reptile Atlas](#). There will be sign-ups for tours of the Elkridge recycling facility and many free giveaways. The [Mid-Atlantic Turtle & Tortoise Society](#) will have live reptiles and the [Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center](#) will display live raptors. 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 in the parking lot from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. along with a Goodwill donation truck and a truck for electronics recycling. For more information on the event and the schedule of activities, visit the county’s website at www.hcgreenfest.org.

GREEN VIOLETEAR THANKS

Diane LaPoma, who hosted the Green Violetear, was a special guest at the December meeting. As a thank you to her and her husband for opening their yard to dozens of birders, Joe Hanfman presented Diane with a Certificate of Appreciation, an 8x10 Kevin Heffernan photo of the bird, a signed copy of a Sibley field guide, and a one-year membership in the Howard County Bird Club. For many, seeing this rarity locally was the high point of their birding year and a sighting they will long treasure.

TRIADELPHIA RESERVOIR CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

BY DAVID HOLMES

The 64th (or is it 65th?) Triadelphia Reservoir Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 17, 2011. The day was generally pleasant, but the birds seemed scarce. Our totals of 84 species and 26,229 individuals are well below last year's fairly amazing 96 species and 46,717 individuals. What happened? The biggest difference was the geese! We only counted 7,453 Canada Geese. Last year's count set a record with 22,759. That accounts for 15,000 fewer birds right there. Other ducks were somewhat less present with five fewer species and roughly 750 fewer individuals compared to last year. Then Common Mergansers did a takeover of Triadelphia Reservoir last year with over 1,700 birds. This year the whole count found 62. That makes another roughly 1,650 birds we did not see. Dark-eyed Juncos came in at 953 this year compared to 2,121 last year. That gives us another 1,000 plus birds we didn't see. Do you suppose they simply hadn't moved south yet because the winter was so mild? House Finches, American Goldfinches, and House Sparrows were at the lowest numbers since 2003 when it rained all day. Red-breasted Nuthatches and Purple Finches did not fly this year and we missed both American Pipit and Eastern Meadowlark.

There were no new species for the count this year and no lingering warblers. The most unfortunate story concerns White-crowned Sparrows. Our prime counter had the location all staked out on a Howard County farm only to be met with the response "Oh, we

can't let you go out there today. We're doing a serious deer hunt." He did get them for "Count Week."

Now, did anything GOOD happen on our count? Black Vultures were 95 birds above the highest count in the past 12 years with 267 birds. Turkey Vultures were average at 206. We doubled our previous high count of Common Ravens! Apparently the Rocky Gorge birds nested this year and were seen in the appropriate place. The real surprise was the two birds seen and photographed flying south over Northwest Branch Park. Our Silver Spring Rufous Hummingbird is back for her third winter. Last year, her hostess didn't think to call the hummingbird banders until February although the little lady had been there since October. Short-eared Owls are always a treat even though they have been seen in four of our past five years and two were found at their usual site (I think it is the old Laytonsville Landfill.) The number of participants (56) came back up to average for the past 10 years although we fielded more than 65 in 1999 and 2001. However, we spent a bit less time in the field.

We would love to find some more feeder watchers and could use some more help and an area organizer in Area 5 (South of Rt. 108, roughly north of Randolph Road and between Georgia and New Hampshire Avenues) and more birders in Area 2 - just east of Area 5. The Tally Rally featured some

very nice food and "bird that got away" stories. And we were done in time for the participants to appear at other holiday parties. We are looking forward to next year already. If you are interested in volunteering for next year's count, please contact me at mu-siclbndr@verizon.net.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

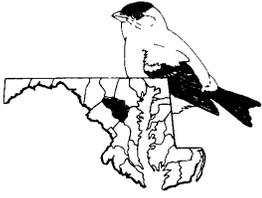
Board meetings are held the fourth Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted, at the home of the board member listed. If directions are required, please call the hosting board member.

March 22, Thursday

Jo Solem
10617 Graeoch Rd
Laurel, MD 20723
301-725-5037

April 26, Thursday

Karen Darcy
9775 Diversified Lane
Ellicott City, MD 21042
410-418-8731



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

10970 Millbank Row

Columbia, MD 21044

ADDRESS SERVICE SUGGESTED

March/April 2012 - Inside This Issue

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Odonate Survey	Spring Field Trips
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ANNUAL POTLUCK DINNER

BY KATHIE LILLIE

The annual potluck dinner will be held this year at the Robinson Nature Center on Saturday, March 24, 2012. The social hour starts at 6:30 p.m. and the dinner starts about 7:00 p.m. All club members and their guests are invited to share in the fun, the food, and the program. Be sure to mark your dishes and any accompanying serving implements with your name so we can get them back to the right person. If you cannot cook, you might sign up to bring beverages, snacks, ice, rolls or even power strips for warming trays/slow cookers.

Everyone is encouraged to participate in the "slide show," so bring your nature photos! **However, please note that again this year**

we ask each person to limit their slides to no more than 15 slides each. Presentation time is limited, so please respect this request! You can bring digital photos (or a PowerPoint presentation) on a CD or USB thumb drive. The club will provide a laptop with multimedia projector. For more information, contact **June Tveekrem** at june@southernspreadwing.com or 410-715-3979.

We would prefer that you sign up in advance so we can arrange for sufficient beverages, etc. You may sign up at either the February or March club meetings, or contact **Kathie Lillie** by Friday, March 23, 2012 at 410-489-5262 or klilie3@verizon.net. Please specify the number of attendees and what

food you are bringing.

Let Kathie know if you would like to come early to help set up (6:00-6:30 p.m.), help clean up afterwards (9:00-10:00 p.m.) 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 Robinson Nature Center is located on the west side of Columbia at 6692 Cedar Lane, Columbia, MD 21044 off of Route 32. There is ample parking.