



The Goldfinch

Newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club
 A Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society
www.howardbirds.org



CLUB MEETINGS - BY [JANE GEUDER](#)

Inside this Issue:

Club Meetings	1
President's Welcome	1
Field Trips	2
Spring Bird Records	4
New One Day County Record	7
Seed Sale Announcement	7
Board of Directors Meetings	7
May Count Results	8
Fall Count Announcement	10

Thursday, September 12, 2013 "*Birding in Borneo and Peninsular Malaysia*," by Dave and Maureen Harvey. In June of 2012 these well-traveled, skilled birders saw over 300 species of which 280 were life birds. Maureen is current MOS president. Both Dave and Maureen are known for their long service to the Carroll County Bird Club. They are active members of the Howard County chapter as well.

Thursday, October 10, 2013 "*Hummingbirds of the Mid-Atlantic Region*," by Bruce Peterjohn, Chief of the USGS Bird Banding Laboratory. This presentation will summarize our current knowledge of the status of hummingbirds across the Mid-Atlantic region with an emphasis on the wintering species. Thirty years ago Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were thought to be the only hummingbird species that regularly occurred in eastern North America, and they were thought to be strictly summer residents. Research has shown that this is not the case. Club member David Holmes and Bruce conduct the hummingbird banding project.

Meetings are at the Robinson Nature Center, 6692 Cedar Lane, Columbia MD 21044. Hospitality 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 Wes Earp, 410-531-3197.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

How many species of hummingbirds have been seen in Howard County? Can you name them? Which species have been seen in more than one year?
 (Answer on [page 8.](#))

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

BY [WES EARP](#)

Several board meetings ago we were pondering the plight of the club's paper archives from a time before computers. Randomly pulling file folders we stumbled onto one labeled *Five Year Goals 1988 to 1993*. Within was a single sheet of paper and on that a list of ten tasks. It was an ambitious list at the time and now, looking back some 25 years, it seems no less daunting, even though we now take many of the results for granted.

Here they are, paraphrased for brevity:

1. A bird and wildflower checklist for each major county park and Columbia lakes.
2. Revise *Attracting Birds in the Maryland Piedmont*.

(President's Welcome continued on page 3)

FALL FIELD TRIPS BY [JOE HANFMAN](#) & [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 trips not on ADC maps are on the Club's website. Questions? Contact the trip leader or Field Trip Coordinator Joe Hanfman at auk1844@gmail.com. HCBC members receive priority on trips that are limited by number of participants. No pets.

BUTTERFLIES THROUGH BINOCULARS


August 31, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. (2-3 hours). *Meet at Elkhorn Garden Plots, Oakland Mills Road opposite Dasher Court.* Enjoy searching for late-summer butterflies, and receive expert instruction on their identification. Easy walking in the garden plot and on paved paths. *No facilities. Cancelled if raining or overcast. Leader—Dick Smith.*

ROCKBURN BRANCH PARK

September 7, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. (half day) *Meet in parking lot on the left just past the restored schoolhouse. The park gate is just beyond Rockburn Elementary School.* Moderate walking through the woods and fields of our largest county park looking for migrants. Paths may be muddy. *Facilities available. Leaders - Karen Darcy and Kevin Heffernan 410-418-8731 or KJHeff@aol.com*

MIDDLE PATUXENT ENVIRONMENTAL AREA

September 12, 7:30 a.m., Thursday (half day) *Meet at the Clegg Meadow off South Wind Cir, Columbia, MD 21044.* Moderate walking through wooded trails and along the river. Great area for migrants of all species. Field edges and thickets provide sparrow habitat. If time and birds warrant, we will also do the Trotter Rd. Loop. Prepare for wet grass and mud on the trails. No facilities. *Leader – Joe Hanfman, auk1844@gmail.com or 410-772-8424*

 **MT. PLEASANT FARM—HOWARD COUNTY CONSERVANCY** September 18, Wednesday, 7:30 a.m. (Half day) *Meet at parking lot.* Easy walking through the fields of Mt. Pleas-

Anyone is welcome to contribute articles or ideas which you think will be of interest to other birders. Copy may be sent to:

Howard Patterson
4209 Hermitage Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21042-6235
howard21042@verizon.net

The Goldfinch, newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club, is published five times per year. Copy deadline for the November/December 2013 issue is September 25, 2013.

Howard Patterson, *Editor*
Joanne Solem, *Proofreader*

ant Farm. Tree lines, hedgerows and streams provide opportunity for non-meadow species. Great opportunity for flyovers. *Facilities available. Leader – Joe Byrnes 410-730-5329, LBRoller@verizon.net*

FALL COUNT

September 21, Saturday. See page 10 for more details.
<http://howardbirds.org/howard/counts.htm>

HAWK WATCH AT MEADOWBROOK PARK

September 21, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. (half day) *Meet at hawk watch site on hilltop on west side of park.* Bring a chair and sustenance for however long you plan to stay. Harry will provide tips on separating species in flight. The park provides paved path for walking. Ponds and great sparrow habitat should provide other birding opportunities. Sun protection is recommended. *Facilities available. Cancelled in inclement weather. Leader – Harry Fink, harry@mdphelp.com, 410-446-4747*

FIRST DAY OF AUTUMN TRIP WESTERN REGIONAL

PARK September 22, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (half day) *Meet at Carr's Mill Road lot.* Moderate walking along field edges and woodland trails. Opportunity for warblers, sparrows, thrushes and flyovers. Small pond may host shorebirds. Facilities available. Leader - Bonnie Ott, bonnieott@verizon.net, 443-285-3302

FUNGI SEARCH

September 29, Sunday, afternoon.
Explore local parkland for a variety of fall fungi. Site to be determined. May be cancelled if weather has been exceedingly dry. Contact Bob/Jo Solem at odenata@msn.com

MT. PLEASANT FARM—HOWARD COUNTY CONSERVANCY

October 6, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours) *Meet at parking lot.* Easy walking through the fields of Mt. Pleasant Farm. Tree lines, hedgerows and streams provide opportunity for non-meadow species. Prime time for sparrows. Great opportunity for flyovers. Facilities available. Leader – Russ Ruffing, ruff2@verizon.net

SPARROW BIG DAY

October 12, Saturday (*all day*) Limit: 12 people.

(Field Trips continued from page 2)

Search the wetland and dry fields in this intensive search for as many sparrows as possible. Going for 12 species! 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, 443-285-3302 to sign up and get info.

ELKHORN GARDEN PLOTS

October 14, Monday 8:30 a.m. (2 hours) *The plots are on the east side of Oakland Mills Road opposite Dasher Ct.* The Garden Plots offer excellent opportunities for unusual sparrows, migrant passerines, and interesting late season butterflies. *No facilities.*

Leader – Jim Wilkinson, 410-381-9250, lakekoshare@gmail.com

LAKE ELKHORN

October 19, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours.) *Meet at Dockside 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. *No facilities.*

Leader – Allen Lewis, allenlewis@gmail.com

WEST FRIENDSHIP PARK

October 20, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (half day) *Meet at shopping center just west of Rt. 32 and Rt. 144.* Will carpool to nearby park. Moderate walking along field edges and through stream valleys. Small ponds may have some surprises. Expect wet areas. *Rustic facilities.* Leaders - Jeff Culler, cullersfuls@hotmail.com,

410-465-9006 and Joe Byrnes 410-730-5329,

LBRoller@verizon.net

DICKEY FARM, HOWARD COUNTY

November 2, Saturday, 8:00 am, (half day) Joint trip with Carroll County. *Meet at the Park 'n Ride on MD Rt. 32 just north of I-70.* Moderate but long hike. Good mixed habitat, expect good sparrow numbers. *No facilities.*

Leader Dave Harvey, 410-795-3117

CENTENNIAL PARK

November 3, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (2-3 hours) (Note: daylight saving time ends) *Meet at west end parking lot off 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 - Mike Kerwin, m63kerwin@verizon.net, 410-461-2408

SHARPS AT WATERFORD FARM

November 9, 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 is advisable for part of hike.*

Leader – Wes Earp, the_earps@verizon.net, 410-531-3197

 = Great for beginning birders

(President's Welcome continued from page 1)

3. Publish a checklist of the birds of Howard County.
4. Establish a hawk watch site.
5. Expand the Boost Bluebirds and Other Cavity Nesters Project.
6. Work to insure publication of the *Maryland Breeding Bird Atlas*.
7. Use the Memorial/Gift Fund to underwrite one special endeavor each year.
8. Continue to work for the establishment of a Nature Center in Howard County.
9. Increase our efforts on county and state conservation issues.
10. By 1993 donate \$5,000 to Maryland and Latin American Nature Conservancy chapters.

I haven't the corporate knowledge to assess the success of each endeavor. But you don't have to be a tenured club member to recognize that we enjoy the enduring benefits of some, continue to fulfill others, and one has become an ongoing legacy unique to the Howard County Chapter of MOS. While some may not have been achieved to the extent desired, the effort represents hundreds, if not thousands, of volunteer hours donated by past and present members.

Welcome to the Club's 42nd year. I hope to see all of you at club meetings, bird walks, and our occasional out-of-county excursions in the coming year.



SPRING BIRD RECORDS: MARCH 1 – MAY 31, 2013

BY [JOANNE SOLEM](#)

What a difference a year makes! After enjoying one of the warmest springs on record in 2012, temperatures in 2013 dropped to the other extreme. Fortunately, one can count on unusual birds to appear despite changing weather conditions.

The annual Big Day field trip always has the potential for rarities. This year, an overcast, drizzly May 18th produced the best sighting of the spring—a BLACK RAIL—which was also a new county record. This stealthy bird of almost mythical reputation was present in the swale at the University of Maryland Central Farm shortly after noon. While trolling for rail species, recordings of all possible state species were played—almost as a joke. When a Black Rail responded immediately, birders' faces reflected disbelief and astonishment. The rail called almost continuously for 15 minutes providing ample time for recordings to be obtained. No attempt was made to flush the bird. A second Big Day group could not be reached immediately because they were in the Patapsco Valley where cell phone contact is spotty. Unfortunately, by the time they arrived almost an hour later, the rail was silent.

In addition to the “holy rail,” other spring highlights were Cattle Egret, Glossy Ibis, Sandhill Crane, Long-eared Owl, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Henslow's Sparrow, Summer Tanager, and White-winged Crossbill.

A Snow Goose (wh.) at Centennial Park 4/6 tied the late departure date (MKw, ph.). Rarely is a major county migratory movement as carefully monitored as the Canada Goose flight over Centennial on 3/10. For almost two hours, flock after flock could be seen winging purposefully north providing the high point for that day's field trip (JBy+). The total was 79 flocks and 9,019 birds (MKw). Other county reports that day came from FLv, NM, M&GMcC, and MW. The last Cackling Goose was spotted at Centennial 3/19 (JW).

The Gadwall high was eight at Race Road Wetlands 3/1 (MO'S). American Black Ducks reached 22 at the UMDCF 3/2 (BO+). Five Blue-winged Teal at Lake Elkhorn 3/19 (ALw) increased to 10 by late morning (KDy, HPt). The flock remained until 3/25 (JW). Northern Shovelers continued at Race Rd with a high of six on 3/13 (MO'S); two stayed until 5/4 (MJn). Two Northern Pintails were seen at Race Rd 3/4 (MO'S). The season's lone Greater Scaup (f) was at Waverly Pond 4/17 (RRf). A rather late Canvasback (f) was at Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS) 4/26 (RRf, HFk, MRg). A Long-tailed Duck spent 3/10 at Elkhorn

(MSt, BMr, m. obs.). One was also present at the Centennial Walk 3/17; while the group watched, it lifted off and headed northwest (JCu+). In addition to expected locations, Hooded Mergansers were noted at Sewell's Orchard (SN-1) and at the Atholton shopping center pond (LHt-5). Five Red-breasted Mergansers at Lake Kittamaquundi 3/29 were the last ones (RHI). The final Ruddy Duck was present at Centennial 5/11 (MLm, MKw, PWf, JHs).

Wild Turkeys were reported from at least seven locations with a high of 10 at Bushy Park Rd/Carrs Mill Rd on 3/16 (MKw). No major loon flights were caught, although one bird lingered at TRIRS until the end of the period (NM). Six Horned Grebes, the last, and 84 Double-crested Cormorants, the season's high, were counted from Brighton Dam 4/12 (JHf). More American Bitterns than usual were reported, from 4/9 at Fox Chase (BO) to 5/11 at Waterford (MW). Two at Race Rd 4/18 were particularly cooperative (DCm); one was still being seen there on 5/1 (RRf). Others were sighted at David Force WMA 4/18 (BO) and at UMDCF 4/26 (BO+). Sewerline construction at Vantage Point followed protocols set up by Maryland DNR's David Brinker to protect nesting Great Blue Herons. A check of the colony on 3/29 found at least 26 nests, with a standing or incubating bird on at least 20 of them (JS, M&GMcC). (Totals are consistent with those of recent years.) A flock of 11 Great Blues over Waterford 3/23 was an unusual number for that location since last year's colony there was not in use (WE+). The year's first Great Egret appeared at Centennial 3/16 (MRg; M&GMcC). A Cattle Egret made a fortuitous appearance on May Count (5/11) at Fulton (R&RnnPts; NM). Four Black-crowned Night-Herons at Wilde Lake 3/29 were the season's first (MOM). A Glossy Ibis, 19th record, at Fulton 5/7 was one of the season's choice sightings (HPt, KDy).

Although Bald Eagles continued to be widely seen, the pair that attracted the most attention nested along the Middle Patuxent River easily visible from Folly Quarter Rd. Despite gawking commuters, occasional photographers, and road repair crews, the eagles were unfazed. By early May, it was possible to count three heads above the edge of the deep nest (m. obs.). Later all appeared to have fledged successfully. Two Northern Harriers at UMDCF 4/26 were the last (RRf, HFk, MRg). Red-shouldered Hawks continued to flourish even in heavily used areas with a nest at Elkhorn with three young 5/31 (SN) and two nests at Cen-

(Records continued on page 5)

(Records continued from page 4)

ennial (3/1 **BO**; 3/17 **JCu+**). **Broad-winged Hawk** reports were few with neither large numbers of migrants nor evidence of local nesting.

Two **Virginia Rails** were noted. One at Fox Chase 4/21 was the third earliest (**BO**); a second was at UMDCF 5/11 (**RRf, HFk, MRg**). UMDCF water levels and vegetation were attractive to **Soras** from 4/14 (**JHf+-1**) to a peak of four/five on 5/11 (**M&GMcC**)—still present 5/18 (**BO, JHf+**). As noted in the introduction, a **Black Rail** was heard at the UMDCF on 5/18, a treasured memory for the seven birders present: **BO, JHf, KCv, DCm, MKw, KS, JS**. An **American Coot** lingered until 5/11 at Gateway (**ESu, SN**). On 4/6, a **Sandhill Crane**, eighth record, was spotted feeding in a cornfield on the south side of Old Frederick Rd, west of Morgan Station Rd. The observer watched it rise and fly to the northwest (**JTv**). It was not relocated.

Shorebird migration was mediocre, due, in part, to high water levels. Two **Semipalmated Plovers** at Fulton 5/11 (**RRf, m. obs.**), a **Semipalmated Sandpiper** at Fulton 5/7 (**JHf, m. obs.**), and a **Dunlin** at Waverly Pond 5/7 (**JHf, m. obs.**) were all good sightings. Although not a record number, 63 **Wilson's Snipe** at Alpha Ridge Landfill 4/6 was a fine seasonal high (**RCu+**). Third earliest records on 4/10 at Waverly Pond were **Spotted Sandpiper** (**RRf**) and **Greater Yellowlegs** (**JCu**). **American Woodcock** were reported from River Rd/Sykesville 3/9 (**FLv-6**), Mt. Pleasant 3/11 (**BO-1**), Annapolis Rock 3/15 (**JHf+-8**), and Cavey La 3/23 (**RRf, HFk, MRg-1**). The woodcock at a W. Friendship home on 5/19 was well into safe dates for nesting (**LCg**).

The last two **Bonaparte's Gulls** were at TRIRS 4/12 (**JHf**). Two **Great Black-backed Gulls** were at Dorsey Run Rd on 3/23 (**RRf, HFk, MRg**). A second earliest date for **Caspian Tern** was set on 3/29: Centennial (**JCu**), Lake Kittamaquidi (**DCm**), and Wilde Lake (**JS;KDy, HPt**). Did one bird visit three lakes that day?

Both species of cuckoos were reported. A pair of **Black-billed** were courting 5/4 to 5/23 at Cavey La (**RRf; m. obs.**). Other reports came from Mt. Pleasant 5/5 (**KDy, KHf; RHI**), W. Friendship Pk 5/11 (**JCu, JHf**), Annapolis Rock 5/21 (**ALw, DCm**), and a W. Friendship home 5/25 (**LCg**). Two **Long-eared Owls** at Annapolis Rock 3/28 set a record late date (**JSh, m. obs.**) [2/28/96 W. Ebert, P. Zucker]. A few **Common Nighthawks** were spotted, from a total of seven on May Count to three at Cavey La 5/22 (**RRf**). An **Eastern Whip-poor-will** calling at a neighbor's on Cavey La on 5/16 was a fine record (*vide* **RRf**). A lone **Chimney Swift** over Centennial 4/2 was a new early date (**MRg**) [4/5/97 J.

Coskren, G. Jett]. Adverse weather in early April delayed the next sighting until 4/12 at Daniels (**JHf**).

One **Red-headed Woodpecker** was reported in April at MPEA on 4/21 (**ADv**); May reports were from Patuxent River SP 5/11 (**TFe, GKg**), MPEA 5/17 (**JHf, JFs, ph**), and Henryton 5/27(**KS**) to 5/30 (**EHs**).

Merlin sightings were at both Florence Rd and Dorsey Rd 3/23 (**RRf, HFk, MRg**), W. Friendship 4/9 (**KDy, HPt**), and Cavey La 4/17 (**RRf**). **Peregrine Falcons** were noted twice: Underwood Rd 3/27 (**DCm**) and Cavey La 4/14 (**RRf**).

An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** at Manahan Dr 5/15 accommodatingly stayed a few hours (**BO, m. obs.**). An **Acadian Flycatcher** at Big Branch 4/27 tied the second earliest date (**ALw**). An **Alder Flycatcher** was reported at MPEA 5/16 (**JSz**). **Least Flycatchers** appeared mid-May with sightings at Cavey La 5/10 and 5/14 (**RRf**), and one at Centennial 5/11 (**MLm, MKw, PWf, JHs**). At MPEA, third earliest record arrivals were **Great Crested Flycatcher** 4/26 (**KDy, HPt**) and **Eastern Kingbird** 4/11 (**KDy, HPt, HFk**).

Despite dam construction, the pair of **Common Ravens** at Rocky Gorge (T. Howard Duckett) Dam nested again. This year they moved to the Prince George's Co. side. On 4/14, two nestlings were visible (**JS, KKx**). A few weeks later, Bart Pitts, a WSSC employee, photographed four large young in the nest. In general, swallows were late in arriving. Besides the known large colonies, it was heartening to see four pairs of **Cliff Swallows** on 5/30 nesting in a former location under the MD32 overpass at Cedar La (**JS**). That species also probably nested under the bridge over the reservoir at Browns Bridge Rd, a location that has had sporadic records. High water prevented verifying nests there (**NM**).

Red-breasted Nuthatches continued to be widely reported with the last one seen at Cavey La 5/14 (**RRf**). A **Marsh Wren** was noted at UMDCF between 4/26 (**BO, HPt+**) and 5/18 (**BO, JHf+**). **Gray-cheeked Thrushes** were especially cooperative at MPEA in the vicinity of post 11 on the Red Trail this season. Four was the high the afternoon of 5/15 (**JHf**), along with an assortment of other thrushes. **Cedar Waxwings** were scarce until the second week of May.

Despite the cool spring, there were a few early warbler records: **Blue-winged** 4/17 MPEA (**KDy, HPt, DSm-tied**), **Nashville** 4/20 Marriottsville (**MRg**) [4/22/99 B. Ott], **Kentucky** 4/17 (**KDy,**

(Records continued on page 6)

(Records continued from page 5)

HPt, JCu–tied), and **Palm** 3/19 Big Branch (**KDy, HPt**) [3/22/12 R. Ruffing]. After the bizarrely early February **Louisiana Water-thrush (JW)**, this normally late March species was not reported again until 4/3 (**KDy, HPt**). **Black-and-whites** showed up on 4/12 (**M&GMcC**), **Northern Parulas** 4/13 (**HFk, RRf; KS**), and **Yellow-throateds** 4/8 (**DCm; KDy, HPt**).

The lone spring **Prothonotary Warbler** was spotted at Meadowbrook 5/7 (**BO**). A **Cerulean** was at Browns Bridge 5/11 (**NM**); another was singing territorially along the Patapsco a short distance east of Henryton Rd on 5/23 (**JHf, RRf**), where it remained into June. A **Mourning** was at MPEA 5/8 (**KDy**) as well as on 5/17 (**RRf**). **Bay-breasteds** were spotted 5/2 at Marriottsville (**EHs**), 5/8 at Cavey La (**RRf**), 5/15 at MPEA (**HPt, KDy, DCm, SEv**), and 5/17 at Rose La (**RPt**). The last **Palm** on 5/12 at Cavey La was the second latest departure (**RRf**). Seven **Canadas** were a good find at MPEA 5/17 (**RRf, HFk**). Five **Wilson's** were tallied: Elkhorn 5/8 (**ALw, DSd**) and 5/15 (**ALw**), MPEA 5/9, Patuxent River SP 5/11 (**TFe, GKg**), Manahan Dr 5/15 (**BO**) and Centennial 5/16 (**HPt+**). The best one-day warbler total by a single party was 24 on 5/11 by the Big Day team (**RRf, HFk, MRg**).

A **Vesper Sparrow** was detected at the landfill 4/6 (**RRf, ph**); others were at W. Friendship 4/9 (**KDy, HPt-2**) and at Mt. Pleasant 4/13 (**BO-4**). The seasonal high of 40+ **Savannah Sparrows** was counted at Mt. Pleasant on 3/11 (**BO**). A **Henslow's Sparrow**, 13th record, was the sparrow highlight of the season. It was discovered on May Count in an extensive hayfield on the south side of Jennings Chapel Rd (**TFe, GKg**). It was heard sporadically (seen only a few times) through the end of the period (m. obs.). The high count of **Fox Sparrows** was 12 at Mt. Pleasant 3/17 (**BO**). **Lincoln's** were noted at Meadowbrook 5/9 (**BO-1**), Schooley Mill Pk 5/11 (**NM-2**), Mt. Pleasant 5/11 (**RRf, HFk, MRg-1**), and Cavey La 5/16 (**RRf-2**). The last **White-throats** stayed until 5/15 at Talbots Ldg (**J&RGr-1**) and at Cavey La (**RRf-1**). Ten sparrow species were recorded countywide on 5/11 by the Big Day team (**RRf, HFk, MRg**).

The wintering **Summer Tanager** barely lingered into the spring season. She was last observed 3/2 at Sebring Dr (**BDn**) and at nearby Martin Rd at noon the same day (**JHf**). A male in half red, half yellow plumage turned up at Manahan Dr 5/15 (**BO**). A **Scarlet Tanager** at Gorman NRA (Kindler) 4/17 was the second earliest (**JS**). Adverse weather again slowed movement so it was more than a week before the next one was spotted on 4/26 at MPEA (**RRf**). **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were reported at feeders by **JMcK, GMs, M&GMcC, RHI, MKw**, and **KDy**. A few **Blue Grosbeaks** and **Indigo Buntings** also appeared at feeders.

Bobolinks were noted from late April to mid-May with a high of 140 at UMDCF 5/10 (**BO JHf+**). Due to dwindling habitat in the county, **Eastern Meadowlarks** are always of interest. The high was a flock of 14 at the landfill 4/6 (**RCu+**). Other reports were from Gateway 4/9 (**JW-4**), MD94 Lisbon 4/9 (**WE-5**), Mt. Pleasant 4/14 (**CSt, M&GMcC, JS, EH-4**), and the Howard Co. Fairground 5/30 (**LCg-1**).

Rusty Blackbirds were widely reported from early March until mid-April with a modest high of six at W. Friendship 4/9 (**KDy, HPt**). Other locations included Cavey La (**RRf**), Shaffers Mill Rd (**DCm**), Gwynn Acres Path (**HPt, KDy**), Fox Chase (**JCu+**), Gateway (**JW**), and Henryton (**CSt, M&GMcC, JS**). An **Orchard Oriole** on 4/18 at MPEA was the second earliest (**HPt, KDy, EHs**). Among sites where **Baltimore Orioles** nested were the Robinson Nature Center (**ESu**), Schooley Mill Park (**NM**), and over water at Lake Kittamaqundi (**CKc, ph**). A mixed flock of 10,000 blackbirds (mostly **Red-winged Blackbirds** and **Common Grackles**) passed over Cavey La 3/4 (**RRf**).

After scattered winter reports, **Purple Finches** appeared at at least 15 locations, mostly after the first week of April. Numbers were low with a modest high of 12 at Diversified La on 4/22 (**KDy**). One **White-winged Crossbill** at Brush Run, E. Col. 4/25 was the sole spring report and a record late date (**JW**) [J. Wilkinson 4/15/09]. The **Pine Siskin** invasion lasted well into May. Highs of 18 were reported at Manahan Dr 4/19 (**BO**) and the same number at Diversified La 4/22 (**KDy, KHf**). The last one was logged on 5/25 at Allview, the third latest departure date. At least one had been present at that location since 10/13/12 (**JMcK**)!

Thanks to Nancy Magnusson and Joe Hanfman for proofing the text.

Abbreviations: m - male, f - female, m. obs. - many observers, May Count - May 11, MPEA - Middle Patuxent Environmental Area, TRIRS - Triadelphia Reservoir, UMDCF - University of MD Central Farm,

Observers: **JBy** - Joe Byrnes, **KCv** - Kathy Calvert, **LCg** - Lisa Colangelo, **JCu** - Jeff Culler, **RCu** - Ralph Cullison III, **DCm** - David Cummings, **KDy** - Karen Darcy, **Adv** - Andrew Davis, **BDn** - Brian Duncan, **WE** - Wes Earp, **SEv** - Susan Evans, **TFe** - Tom Feild, **HFk** - Harry Fink, **JFs** - Jared Fisher, **JGr** - Jane Geuder, **RGr** - Ralph Geuder, **JHf** - Joe Hanfman, **JHs** - John Harris, **RHI** - Russell Hillsley, **EH** - Emy Holdridge, **EHs** - Ed Huestis, **LHt** - Linda Hunt, **MJn** - Mark Johnson, **MKw** - Mike

(Records continued on page 7)

Kerwin, **GKg** – Geraldine King, **KKx** – Kim Knox, **CKc** – Clayton Koonce, **MLm** – Mike Leumas, **ALw** – Allen Lewis, **FLv** – Felicia Lovelett, **GMcC** – Grazina McClure, **MMcC** – Mike McClure, **JMcK** – John McKitterick, **NM** – Nancy Magnusson, **BMr** – Barry Miller, **GMs** – Georgia Morris, **SN** – Sue Neri, **MOm** – Michael Oberman, **MO’S** – Michael O’Sullivan, **BO** – Bonnie Ott, **HPt** – Howard Patterson, **Rpts** – Richard Peters, **RnPt** – Renee Peters, **MRg** – Matt Rogosky, **RRf** – Russ Ruffing, **DSd** – David Sandler, **KS** – Kurt Schwarz, **JSh** – Jay Sheppard, **DSm** – David Smith, **JS** – Jo Solem, **JSz** – Jim Stasz, **MSt** – Michelle Stewart, **CSt** – Chuck Stirrat, **ESu** – Eva Sunell, **JTv** – June Tveekrem, **MW** – Mark Wallace, **JW** – Jim Wilkinson, **PWF** – Paul Woodford.

New One Day County Record Set!

Russ Ruffing, Harry Fink, and Matt Rogosky plan to conduct a Big Day in Howard County each month during 2013 following American Birding Association rules. Their effort on May 11 resulted in a new official one-day county record of 122 species. The previous unofficial high, set on the May 3, 2003 Big Day field trip, had been 119.

By good fortune the date chosen was one of the best spring 2013 migration dates. From the White-crowned Sparrow in Russ’s yard on Cavey Lane before dawn to two Eastern Screech-Owls in Harry’s yard on Linden Church Road after dark, there were many memorable moments. Being soaked by a late afternoon downpour at Centennial will certainly be part of that memory—but so will the Great Egret, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Green Heron, Purple Martin, and Palm Warbler that made that stop worthwhile.

The Middle Patuxent Environmental Area in the evening was the scene of the record-breaking species: Wood Duck (119 tied), Hairy Woodpecker (120 new record), and Yellow-billed Cuckoo (121). The screech-owls (122) at Harry’s were the capstone to an exhausting, exhilarating day.

A summary of each month’s [2013 Big Day](#) is available on the club’s website.

SEED SALE ANNOUNCEMENT

BY WARD EBERT

Kevin Cassidy, the owner of The Wildlife Authority, has agreed to again host our seed sale. The sale will be held on October 5th, but this year customers will have the option to pick up their orders **any day through the following Saturday** if they are unable to do so on the 5th.

Around the second week of September an order form will sent by mail, by email, and will be posted on the Howard County Bird Club website. Seed can be picked up from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday (see website for hours on other days) at the Wildlife Authority, 3275 Bethany Lane, Suite B, Ellicott City, MD 21042. Please visit their website, wildlifeauthority.com, for a map and more information.

As in the past, our net proceeds from the seed sale will be contributed to conservation causes. Over the years, the Howard County Bird Club has contributed more than \$68,000 to various conservation organizations. The vast majority of these funds have come from the seed sales. So please stock up on seed and help the birds.

We thank all of you who have supported the sale over the past years. We hope that you will support this year’s sale as well. See you on Saturday, October 5th!

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.

September 26, 2013

Robin Todd
10174 Green Clover Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21042
Totnesman@aol.com

October 24, 201

Howard Patterson
4209 Hermitage Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21042
410-461-9686

HOWARD COUNTY MAY COUNT RESULTS

BY [KEVIN HEFFERNAN](#)

Fifty-nine birders participated in the 66th annual May Count which was held on May 11, 2013. The day was partly cloudy with periods of light rain and temperatures in the 70s. There was a heavy downpour in the late afternoon. The 152 species was the fourth highest in 40 years, exceeded only by 154 species in 1977 and 153 in 1984 and 2004. The 15,385 birds, however, was the lowest in the last ten years. A total of 230 species have been seen over the 40 years that the count has been run by the Howard County Bird Club. (Numbers cited below are for the same period.) Seventy-seven species have been seen every year while 22 species have been seen only once. No species was seen for the first time this year.

Cattle Egret was seen for the seventh time (first time since 1995). Sora was seen for the sixth time including four of the last six years. Marsh Wren was seen for the fifth time (first since 2001). Virginia Rail was seen for the fourth time (two of the last five years). The rarest bird of the count was Henslow's Sparrow, seen only for the third time (two of the last five years).

Five species established or tied all-time high counts: Sora, Marsh Wren, and Henslow's Sparrow (1 each), Black-crowned Night-Heron (3), and Bald Eagle (7). An additional 21 species reached or tied 10-year high counts: Ring-necked Duck, Ruddy Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, Cattle Egret, American Bittern, American Coot, Semipalmated Plover, Least Flycatcher, Blue-headed Vireo, Horned Lark, Purple Martin, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Hermit Thrush, Blue-winged Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Palm Warbler, Lincoln's Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, and Purple Finch.

No species fell to an all-time low count. Seventeen species had ten-year low counts: Mallard, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Mourning Dove, Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Kentucky Warbler, Eastern Towhee, Indigo Bunting, Common Grackle, and House Finch. The most notable misses (followed by the number of years seen) were Nashville Warbler (34), Great Horned Owl (28), Bay-breasted Warbler (27), Bank Swallow (27, four of the last six), and Common Raven (3, three of the last six).

Four American Kestrels were counted after being missed for the first time ever last year. Great Egret had been seen 13 times, including each of the last 10 years.

A compilation spreadsheet of the May Count data from 1974 through 2013 can be found on the Howard County Bird Club website.

Many thanks to our compiler, Chuck Stirrat. His tireless efforts and attention to detail make this task much easier than it would otherwise be. I also want to thank the Area Coordinators: Wes Earp, Tom Strikwerda, Chuck Stirrat, Mike McClure, Karen Darcy, Bonnie Ott, and John McKitterick. Finally, a special thanks to Kathie and Ralph Lillie for volunteering to host the tally rally. Their hospitality was very much appreciated.

To the following participants, a big thank you; without you, these counts could not happen: Jim Brinkley, Marilyn Brinkley, Lisa Colangelo, Dennis Coskren, Jeff Culler, Ralph Cullison, Karen Darcy (Area 5 Coordinator), Deborah DeSalvo, Sue Earp, Wes Earp (Area 1 Coordinator), Tom Feild, Harry Fink, Jane Geuder, Ralph Geuder, Joe Hanfman, John Harris, Kevin Heffernan (May Count Coordinator), Bill Hill, Gayle Hill, John Hoffman, Emy Holdridge, Ed Huestis, Mike Kerwin, Geraldine King, David Lane, Shashi Lengade, Mike Leumas, Allen Lewis, Kathie Lillie, Felicia Lovelett, Nancy Magnusson, Grazina McClure, Mike McClure (Area 4 Coordinator), John McKitterick (Area 7 Coordinator), Barry Miller, Tom Miller, Sue Neri, Carol Newman, Peter Osenton, Bonnie Ott (Area 6 Coordinator), Howard Patterson, Ron Polniaszek, Sue Probst, Matt Rogosky, Russ Ruffing, Kurt Schwarz, Jay Sheppard, Romayne Smith, Chuck Stirrat (Area 3 Coordinator), Tom Strikwerda (Area 2 Coordinator), Michelle Stewart, Eva Sunell, Nick Theodoris, Robin Todd, Kate Tufts, Ginny Walker, Mark Wallace, Paul Woodford, and Paul Zucker.

Test Your Knowledge Answer:

Three species (plus one inconclusive):

- Ruby-throated (annually)
- Rufous (one record—2005)
- Green Violetear (one record—2011)
- One inconclusive *Selasphorus*—Rufous/Allen's/Broad-tailed (1993)

HOWARD COUNTY MAY COUNT RESULTS - MAY 11, 2013

Canada Goose	580
Wood Duck	24
Mallard	71
Ring-necked Duck	1
Ruddy Duck	3
Wild Turkey	5
Common Loon	4
Pied-billed Grebe	3
Double-crested Cormorant	21
American Bittern	1
Great Blue Heron	46
Great Egret	2
Cattle Egret	1
Green Heron	31
Black-crowned Night-Heron	3
Black Vulture	79
Turkey Vulture	146
Osprey	11
Bald Eagle [ad/im/unk]	7
Northern Harrier	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1
Cooper's Hawk	7
Red-shouldered Hawk	61
Broad-winged Hawk	4
Red-tailed Hawk	23
Virginia Rail	1
Sora	4
American Coot	1
Semipalmated Plover	2
Killdeer	24
Spotted Sandpiper	46
Solitary Sandpiper	67
Greater Yellowlegs	3
Lesser Yellowlegs	4
Semipalmated Sandpiper	10
Least Sandpiper	53
Wilson's Snipe	5
Rock Pigeon	88

Mourning Dove	252
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	16
Black-billed Cuckoo	2
Eastern Screech-Owl	2
Barred Owl	13
Common Nighthawk	7
Chimney Swift	186
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	19
Belted Kingfisher	32
Red-headed Woodpecker	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	265
Downy Woodpecker	94
Hairy Woodpecker	27
Pileated Woodpecker	51
American Kestrel	4
Eastern Wood-Pewee	78
Acadian Flycatcher	85
Willow Flycatcher	5
Least Flycatcher	1
Eastern Phoebe	60
Great Crested Flycatcher	98
Eastern Kingbird	109
White-eyed Vireo	41
Yellow-throated Vireo	13
Blue-headed Vireo	6
Warbling Vireo	31
Red-eyed Vireo	445
Blue Jay	485
American Crow	354
Fish Crow	52
<i>crow species</i>	155
Horned Lark	27
Purple Martin	73
Tree Swallow	171
N. Rough-winged Swallow	29
Cliff Swallow	55
Barn Swallow	341
Carolina Chickadee	240

Tufted Titmouse	251
Red-breasted Nuthatch	3
White-breasted Nuthatch	59
House Wren	103
Marsh Wren	1
Carolina Wren	406
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	285
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
Eastern Bluebird	211
Veery	39
Swainson's Thrush	36
Hermit Thrush	3
Wood Thrush	261
American Robin	661
Gray Catbird	616
Northern Mockingbird	158
Brown Thrasher	42
European Starling	528
Cedar Waxwing	157
Ovenbird	174
Worm-eating Warbler	13
Louisiana Waterthrush	43
Northern Waterthrush	10
Blue-winged Warbler	21
Black-&-white Warbler	36
Tennessee Warbler	4
Common Yellowthroat	417
Hooded Warbler	11
American Redstart	90
Cape May Warbler	2
Cerulean Warbler	2
Northern Parula	163
Magnolia Warbler	35
Blackburnian Warbler	8
Yellow Warbler	155
Chestnut-sided Warbler	37
Blackpoll Warbler	20
Blk.-thrt'd. Blue Warbler	97

Palm Warbler	5
Pine Warbler	6
Yel.-rump'd (Myrtle) Warbler	88
Yellow-throated Warbler	1
Prairie Warbler	35
Blk.-thrt'd. Green Warbler	38
Canada Warbler	11
Wilson's Warbler	1
Yellow-breasted Chat	19
Eastern Towhee	157
Chipping Sparrow	289
Field Sparrow	96
Savannah Sparrow	49
Grasshopper Sparrow	53
Henslow's Sparrow	1
Song Sparrow	178
Lincoln's Sparrow	3
Swamp Sparrow	12
White-throated Sparrow	426
White-crowned Sparrow	10
Scarlet Tanager	125
Northern Cardinal	684
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	16
Blue Grosbeak	11
Indigo Bunting	166
Bobolink	107
Red-winged Blackbird	802
Eastern Meadowlark	13
Common Grackle	249
Brown-headed Cowbird	238
Orchard Oriole	64
Baltimore Oriole	183
Purple Finch	4
House Finch	91
Pine Siskin	11
American Goldfinch	357
House Sparrow	196
Total Birds	15,385
Total Species	152



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

10970 Millbank Row
Columbia, MD 21044

September/October 2013 - Inside This Issue

Club Meetings	President's Welcome
Field Trips	Spring Bird Records
New One Day Record	Seed Sale Announcement
May Count Results	Fall Count Announcement

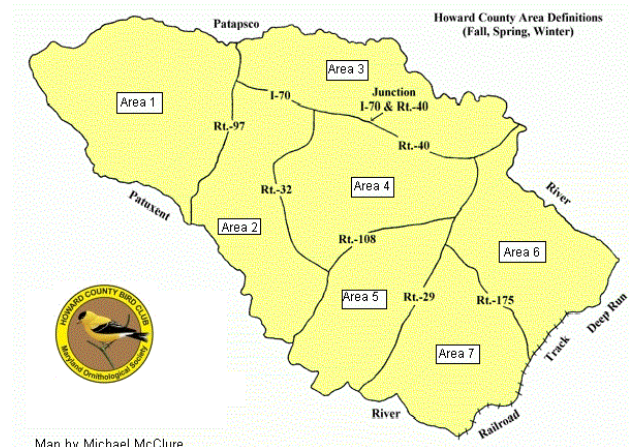
TWENTIETH ANNUAL FALL COUNT

BY [MIKE MCCLURE](#)

The Howard County Bird Club's annual Fall Count, scheduled each year on the third Saturday of September, will be on September 21st. Mike McClure 410-531-2780 and Chuck Stirrat 410-531-2417 are the county co-coordinators. Prior years have set an average of 124 species of birds identified on the count. Spend the day birding with us and help raise the average! Birders of all skill levels are encouraged to participate. Ask to be put with an experienced individual if you do not wish to have your own territory. The county is divided into seven areas (shown below) which are used for all annual counts. A fall season field sheet for Howard County is available on the Club's website. Species that require a writeup include those identified with a double asterisk (**), as well as any writeins. Others that may require a writeup or oral amplification (*), as well as those that are early or late dates (@), are indicated. As initiated last year, in addition to counting birds, participants may choose to count butterflies and/or dragonflies/damsselflies. Field sheets are available on the club's website.

The following area coordinators have been named: Area 1) Mark Wallace 301-725-6370 and Wes Earp 410-531-3197; Area 2) Jeff Culler 410-465-9006; Area 3) Karen Darcy & Kevin Heffernan

410-418-8731; Area 4) Mike McClure 410-531-2780; Area 5). Kurt Schwarz 410-461-1643; Area 6) Bonnie Ott 443-285-3302; and Area 7) Eva Sunell 443-319-5866. You may call an area or county coordinator to volunteer, or check at the September meeting. Martha and Don Waugh will host the tally rally at 9522 Angelina Circle, Columbia, MD. The potluck dinner will be served at approximately 7:00 pm, r.s.v.p. with food category at (fletcherw@msn.com) or 443-878-6961 by Sept. 20th, to reserve space and if necessary obtain directions.



Map by Michael McClure