



The Goldfinch

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



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CLUB MEETINGS - BY [JANE GEUDER](#)

Thursday, January 9, 2014 "The Osprey-Its Life and Recent Trends on the Patuxent River," by Greg Kearns, park naturalist, Patuxent River Park. From his 27 years of observing the Osprey, Greg will discuss its ecology, population data and trends. Our club has taken a pontoon boat field trip to Jug Bay Park to see rails and Greg's wetland restoration work there. He has spoken to the club several times in the past.

Thursday, February 13, 2014 "Birding Highlights of the Galapagos Islands," by Kevin Heffernan and Karen Darcy. The talk will describe the natural history of the islands and some of the unique flora and fauna there. Included are Darwin's Finches, Galapagos Penguins, Flightless Cormorants, Flamingos, Waved Albatrosses and Short-eared Owls. Kevin and Karen are club members and have traveled extensively in Latin America. They have spoken to the club a number of times in the past.

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 times have Snowy Owls been seen in Howard County? How long has it been since the last one?

[Answer](#) on page 2.

See the eBird article on the recent irruption of Snowy Owls on the East Coast at <http://ebird.org/content/ebird/news/>



Photo by Jeff Culler (Frederick County)

Twenty-Ninth Annual Midwinter Count

By Joe Byrnes and Joe Hanfman

Join the Howard County Bird Club's Twenty-Ninth Annual Midwinter Count on Saturday, February 1, 2014. Joe Hanfman (410-772-8424 / auk1844@gmail.com) and Joe Byrnes (410-730-5329 / LBRoller@verizon.net) are the count coordinators. You may volunteer to participate by signing up at a meeting, by contacting Joe Byrnes, or by contacting one of the area coordinators ([area map](#) available on the website):

Area 1	Mark Wallace Wes Earp	301-725-6370 410-531-3197	abcxyz5@verizon.net or the_earps@verizon.net
Area 2	Ward Ebert	301-490-5807	wardebert@verizon.net
Area 3	Maureen & Dave Harvey	410-795-3117	tangara@comcast.net
Area 4	Mike McClure	410-531-2780	michael.mcclure@jhuapl.edu
Area 5	Kevin Heffernan and Karen Darcy	410-418-8731	kjheff@aol.com or khdacy4@aol.com
Area 6	Bonnie Ott	443-285-3302	bonnicott@verizon.net
Area 7	Kurt Schwarz	410-461-1643	krschwa1@verizon.net

(Midwinter Count continued on page 2)

WINTER 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 Coordinators Joe Hanfman at auk1844@gmail.com Bonnie Ott at bonnieott@verizon.net. HCBC members receive priority on trips that are limited by number of participants. No pets.

START YOUR YEAR LIST

January 1, Tuesday, 8:00-11:00 a.m. Meet at [Mt. Pleasant Farm-Howard County Conservancy](#). Easy walking on mown paths and woodland trails. Plan to carpool to different locations to find as many species as possible — the one day of the year when every bird is new! Facilities available.
Leader - Bonnie Ott, bonnieott@verizon.net or 443-285-3302.

ALPHA RIDGE LANDFILL

January 11, Saturday, (half day) *Reservations required.* Carpooling is required. Moderate walking over hills and fields of the landfill. We will search for Short-eared Owls with no guarantee of finding one. Other possibilities are Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, Horned Lark, American Pipit, and Eastern Meadowlark. If we finish early, we may go to Mount Pleasant and look for wintering sparrows. Facilities at Alpha Ridge Park. Limited to a maximum of five cars. Contact Joe Hanfman for reservations, auk1844@gmail.com or 410-772-8424.
Leader - Ralph Cullison, rociii@cullison.org or 410-442-2181.

MIDWINTER COUNT

February 1, Saturday See page 1 for more details.

HOW TO FIND AN OWL

February 15, Saturday, 1:00 p.m., possibility of birding till dusk. Meet at *Annapolis Rock Rd horse trailer parking lot, midway between Hipsley Mill Rd and MD 94*. Learn how to find owls by habitat and signs. Jay is an expert at finding owls and will share his skills and knowledge as to how to find different species. Contact Jay to sign up so participants can be advised of weather related changes. Our target species are Long-eared, Northern Saw-whet, and other owls. No facilities.
Leader- Jay Sheppard, JMSheppard@aol.com or 301-725-5559.

WINTER SPARROW SEARCH

March 1, Saturday, (half day) Limit: 12 people Search wetlands 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 2, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., (2-3 hours)
Meet at west end parking lot off Centennial Lane. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Waterfowl expected; early migrant passerines possible. Facilities available.
Leader - Allen Lewis, allenrlewis@gmail.com

WATERFOWL SEARCH

March 8, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. (half day) Meet at *Broken Land Pkwy and Rt. 32 Park & Ride (WEST side) at 8:00*. We'll carpool to search the Howard County waterways for ducks, grebes, mergansers and loons. Chance of an early migrant.
Leader - Kurt Schwarz, 410-461-1643, krschwal@verizon.net



[CENTENNIAL PARK](#)

March 9, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., (2-3 hours)
Meet at west end parking lot off Centennial Lane. Daylight Savings Time Starts (set clocks ahead). Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Waterfowl expected; early migrant passerines possible. Facilities available.
Leaders - Richard and Renee Peters, Richard@rrrrrpeters.org



[CENTENNIAL PARK](#)

March 16, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., (2-3 hours)
Meet at west end parking lot off Centennial Lane. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Waterfowl expected; woodland trails for passerines. Facilities available.
Leader - Jeff Culler, cullerfuls@hotmail.com, 410-465-9006



= Great for beginning birders

(Midwinter Count continued from page 1)

Beginning birders are always welcome, as are individuals who wish to count only for part of the day. If you wish to count only at your feeder, contact Joe B. or Joe H. and request a feeder form.

The evening potluck tally will be at Jeff and Karen Culler's at 2672 Thornbrook Rd, Ellicott City, MD. Please contact the Cullers at 410-465-9006 or cullerfuls@hotmail.com by Wednesday, January 29th, to sign up for a vegetable, salad, or dessert, and to obtain directions. Dinner will be served at 6:45 p.m. If you cannot make the meal, you are welcome to drop in about 7:30 p.m. for the tally.

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

Test Your Knowledge Answer:

Twice (1947 and 1960) so it's been more than 50 years since Howard County has had a confirmed sighting.

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 March/April 2014 issue is January 25, 2013.

THE 2013 BUTTERFLY YEAR IN HOWARD COUNTY (PART 1)

BY RICHARD SMITH

After the extraordinary 2012 butterfly year (see *The Goldfinch*, Jan-Feb 2013), Howard County butterfly enthusiasts were not about to let that excitement dwindle. Eight Bird Club members signed up to participate in county site-specific butterfly inventories for a survey project initiated by Sue Muller, Jo Solem, and myself in early May 2013. Sites were chosen by each surveyor (or team), and a standard form listing species and numbers was completed for each visit. Site visits were to be conducted at intervals from every two weeks to once each month. Because of a butterfly's short lifespan and their multiple broods and cyclic emergence rates (for many species) over the course of a season, the numbers of individual butterflies and the cross-sections of species can vary considerably over such weekly and monthly periods. Digital photos were often submitted to me to verify identities of difficult species. Site leaders were as follows: Linda Hunt, Sue Muller, Allen Lewis, Kathy Litzinger, Sue Probst, Jay Sheppard, Kate Tufts, and Jim Wilkinson.

I extend many thanks to these individuals for their participation in this inaugural survey year. Their results will serve as baselines for their respective locations in coming years. I am going to postpone statements of conclusions from the surveys for another year or two, as I think attempting to draw conclusions now would be premature. The accumulated information will be valuable, so I do hope that participants will continue to survey their sites each year and that new surveyors and sites will be added in the future. I wish to especially applaud the efforts of Linda Hunt, who logged at least 25 visits to her Murray Hill survey location alone, and to Kathy Litzinger, who surveyed her yard south of Ellicott City on a daily basis over the entire 2013 butterfly season.

With all of these observational outings, several sightings were obtained for rare species and unusual numbers of uncommon species in 2013. I will now discuss several of these. All references to past and present records will be with respect to Howard County.

Among all butterfly groups, it was the Yellows that earmarked 2012 as a special year; in 2013, it was the Hairstreaks that made a fabulous showing. It started with the appearance of the seldom-seen [Eastern Pine Elf](#) in K. Litzinger's yard on April 13, followed by sightings by L. Hunt at Rockburn Park on April 25, by J. Wilkinson at Trinity Cemetery on May 1, and again in Kathy's yard on June 11 (a remarkably late date in itself for a notably single-brooded spring species; a voucher photo was also submitted).

The next rare hairstreak sighting came from J. Sheppard who spotted a [Coral Hairstreak](#) at a Hipsley Mill old meadow on June 15. This species had not been reported in the county since the 1970s. Subsequent sightings were logged there by Jay or others on June 21, 24, and June 27. This butterfly species must have been peaking after 40 years, as Bonnie Ott also snapped a photo of one at Mt Pleasant on June 19. Another rare hairstreak also appeared at the Hipsley Mill area. On June 29, I nabbed a photo for the Howard County Butterfly website of a [Striped Hairstreak](#) that was nectaring on common milkweed along a nearby open woodland trail. Multiple sightings of the strikingly blue iridescent [White M Hairstreak](#) were also reported on Sept. 3 and 9 in the Columbia Gateway area (J. Wilkinson and Annette Allor). Before leaving spring sightings, I should highlight that L. Hunt succeeded in securing a shot of the [Southern Cloudwing](#), a first for the

HCBC website, at her Murray Hill location on May 14. This butterfly was recorded from this site over 20 years ago, and it is still the only location known for it in the county. From Linda's survey we know it is frequent there from mid-May into early June and again (second brood) in early August.

The now rare [Baltimore Checkerspot](#) staged a re-appearance (a single specimen) near the Marriottsville Rd. Patapsco River bridge on June 1 during the HCBC Dragonfly Count, as reported by Rick Borchelt and count leader Beth Johnson. (The initial sighting near there was on June 29, 2009.)
Part 2 in the next newsletter

SEED SALE – BIGGER AND BETTER

BY WARD EBERT

Sales rebounded this year as prices retreated and we offered extended pickup days. We netted over \$1,000 which will be designated for a habitat preservation project to be selected by the club's Board of Directors. This is roughly twice what we brought in last year.

Thanks to all who bought seed, contributed money, and supported this sale. Thanks particularly are due to Kevin Cassidy and the staff of the Wildlife Authority for managing the extended pickup times.

The board will be considering further improvements to the form and process this winter. As always, your ideas are welcome.

Special thanks to Jeffrey Friedhoffer for volunteering to assist with next year's seed sale.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

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

January 23, 2014

Jo Solem
10617 Graeoc Rd.
Laurel, MD 20723
(301) 725-5037, odenata@msn.com

February 27, 2014

Karen Darcy
9775 Diversified La.
Ellicott City, MD 21042
(410) 418-8731, Khdarcy4@aol.com

Site Guide

Included in this issue is the site guide to Lake Elkhorn. Guides to other birding spots are available on the club's website.



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

10970 Millbank Row
Columbia, MD 21044

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ANNUAL POTLUCK

BY KATHIE LILLIE

The annual potluck dinner will again be held at the Robinson Nature Center, Columbia, MD on Saturday, March 29, 2014. The doors open at 6:00 p.m. for room set-up, snacks at 6:30 p.m., and dinner starts at 7:00 p.m. All club members and their guests are invited to share in the fun, the food, and the program. The club furnishes beverages and eating utensils. Those attending please bring a main dish, hors d'oeuvres, a salad, a vegetable or a dessert. (To assist those with food allergies, it is suggested that you include a list of ingredients along with your dish. Be sure to mark your dishes and any accompanying serving implements with your name so we can get them back to the right person!)

Everyone is encouraged to participate in the after-dinner "slide show," so bring your nature photos. However, please note that once again we limit images to no more than 15 photographs per person. 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 and the group will provide a laptop for projection of the photos.

Please let us know in advance you will be attending so we can arrange for enough chairs, beverages, etc. You may sign up at either the February or March club meeting, or contact Kathie Lillie by Friday, March 28, 2014 at 301-807-3785 or klillie3@verizon.net. It is helpful, too, if you can 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 at 6692 Cedar Lane, Columbia, MD 21044 (410-313-0400). Route 32 Exit 17 takes you to Cedar Lane. There is ample parking.

HOWARD COUNTY BIOBLITZ! BY SUE MULLER

Big news! The Howard County Department of Recreation & Parks is partnering with the Ecosystem Landscaping Committee from "Transition Howard County" to conduct the County's first BioBlitz. A BioBlitz is an intense period of biological surveying in an attempt to record all the living species within a designated area during a 24 hour period. This BioBlitz will be held on April 26, 2014 at the Howard County Living Farm Heritage Museum and West Friendship Park. If you would like to be a leader of one of the bird teams (several will be needed to cover the period), please contact Sue Muller at smuller@howardcountymd.gov or 410-313-4697. Information on participant sign-up will be announced early next year.