



The Goldfinch

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



CLUB MEETINGS - BY JANE GEUDER

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Thursday, March 13, 2014 "Coming Home: Understanding the Causes and Consequences of Dispersal in a Migratory Bird, the American Redstart," by Clark Rushing. This research uses scientific advances for studying birds as they return to their breeding grounds. Clark's fieldwork for this project has been carried out at the Patuxent Research Refuge in Laurel.

Thursday, April 10, 2014 "Birding and Beyond at Howard Hotspots," by Bonnie Ott. Explore the diversity of nature found in some of our county's natural areas. Club member and field trip co-coordinator, Bonnie will show us what exciting flora and fauna you might encounter while birding.

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.

AUTUMN BIRD RECORDS:

AUGUST 1 – NOVEMBER 30, 2013

BY JOANNE SOLEM

SNOWY OWL UPDATE

As noted in the previous newsletter's "Test Your Knowledge" section, the only confirmed sightings of Snowy Owl in Howard County were in 1947 and 1960. After the newsletter was published, we were advised by Bob Ringler of a third accepted sighting on February 1, 1985 by club member Dave Harvey. The owl was seen in flight near the intersection of US29 and Johns Hopkins Road.

The star of the season was the county's second confirmed Rufous Hummingbird. American Avocets (eighth record) and a Lawrence's Warbler (sixth) were other headline species. County birders were also treated to an assortment of species recorded 20 or fewer times: Golden Eagle, American Golden-Plover, Western Sandpiper, Short-eared Owl, Sedge Wren, and Clay-colored Sparrow.

A white **Snow Goose** was spotted in a field near Ten Oaks Rd circle 10/27 (**MKw**); one was at Centennial Pk 11/7 (**KS**). A **Cackling Goose** was located in a field across from Western Regional Pk (WRP) 11/23 (**RRf, HFk, MRg**). **Wood Ducks** peaked at 70 at Waterford Farm on Jennings Chapel Rd 10/16 (**BO, JCu, JHf**). **Blue-winged Teal** were noted from five at Brighton Dam 9/2 (**MKw**) to two at Waterford 10/12 (**JHf**), with a high of 17 over WRP 9/4 (**BO**). Four **Northern Shovelers** at Triadelphia Reservoir (TRIRS) 10/29 (**JHf**) and seven there 11/2 (**RBBy, PCv**), as well as a **Northern Pintail** at Alpha Ridge Landfill 10/12 (**BO, RCu**) were all nice finds. An assortment of waterfowl

(Records continued on page 3)

SPRING 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 or 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 1, Saturday, Half day. Limit: 12 people
Search the 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, 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 around the lake on paved path. Facilities available. Waterfowl expected; early migrant passerines possible.
Leader - Allen Lewis, allenrlewis@gmail.com

WATERFOWL SEARCH

March 8, Saturday (half day). Meet at Broken Land Pkwy and Rt. 32 Park & Ride (WEST side) at 8:00 a.m. 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. Daylight Savings Time starts (set clocks ahead). See March 2 entry for details.
Leaders - Richard and Renee Peters, Richard@rrrrpeters.org

CENTENNIAL PARK

March 16, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours.
See March 2 entry for details.
Leader - Jeff Culler, cullerfuls@hotmail.com, 410-465-9006

SHARPS AT WATERFORD FARM

March 22, 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 optional (if you choose to cross either creek).
Leader - Wes Earp, wesandsue@gmail.com, 410-531-3197

CENTENNIAL PARK

March 23, Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 2-3 hours.
See March 2 entry for details.
Leader - Mike Kerwin, m63kerwin@verizon.net, 410-461-2408

ALPHA RIDGE LANDFILL

April 5, Saturday, Half day. Meet at Alpha Ridge Park at 7:45 a.m. 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, rociit@cullison.org, 410-442-2181

MT. PLEASANT FARM - HOWARD COUNTY CONSERVANCY

April 26, 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 lines, hedgerows and streams provide opportunity for non-meadow species. Great opportunity for flyovers. Facilities available.
Leader - Mike Kerwin, m63kerwin@verizon.net, 410-461-2408

MAY COUNT

May 10, Saturday, details will be published in the next newsletter.

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL CONFERENCE

May 16 - 18, Holiday Inn Solomons Conference Center, Solomons, Calvert County. See MOS web site for details and to register for the conference:
<http://www.mdbirds.org/activities/conference/annual.html>

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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The Goldfinch, newsletter of the Howard County Bird Club, is published five times per year. Copy deadline for the May/June 2014 issue is March 25, 2013.

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finally appeared at TRIRS 11/12: six **Gadwall**, 12 **Ring-necked Ducks**, six **Lesser Scaup**, one **Common Goldeneye**, and a record 360 **Buffleheads** (JHf, ALw) [B. Hill 11/10/08 – 220]. Four **Green-winged Teal** were also noted there the same day (KS, HPt). Twenty **Hooded Mergansers** were tallied at Lake Elkhorn 11/12 (MSt). Eight **Common Mergansers** at TRIRS 11/9 (DCm) were the first of hundreds to come.

Wild Turkeys (2 ad., 5 yng.) were spotted near Pfefferkorn Rd/Rover Mill Rd 8/6 (LCg); one was also near Roxbury Rd/Dorsey Mill Rd 11/27 (KLI). The high count of 153 **Common Loons** flew over Brighton Dam 11/24, most within 10 minutes on a cold, windy morning (MKw). The season's lone **Horned Grebe** was spotted on TRIRS 11/9 (DCm). An **American Bittern** at Gateway 11/15 (*vide* BO) broke the previous departure record [J. Solum 11/3/95 and 11/3/99].

On 11/11, a **Red-shouldered Hawk** startled a viewer when it flew through a yard adjoining Lake Elkhorn clutching a black-and-white duck (probably a Bufflehead) (BMr). **Broad-winged Hawk** migration peaked the middle of Sept: 9/14 Centennial 142 (MKw), 9/16 Meadowbrook Pk 600 (BO), 9/16 S. Trotter Rd 180 (WE, MW), 9/16 Martin Rd, W. Col. 475 (JHf), and 9/17 Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA) 300 (KDY, DCm). An immature **Golden Eagle** (16th) appeared at Brighton Dam 10/26 (MKw, ph.). It was seen there again 10/28 when it and three **Bald Eagles** pursued a **Pied-billed Grebe** to exhaustion. When one of the Balds picked up the grebe, the Golden took it away (JHf). On 11/1, an *adult* Golden flew over the dam (17th) (CSt).

Shorebird highlights were few. An **American Golden-Plover** (20th) was spotted at Fulton Pond 8/13 (new early date) (RHI; m. obs.) [N. Magnusson 8/26/89]. Possibly a second appeared there on 9/1 (RHI, m. obs.); not until 9/2 was it determined to be a Golden based on the lack of black axillaries in flight (JCu, KCv). On 10/8 (second latest), a Golden again was reported from Fulton (KS). There was either a single bird that spent most of its daylight hours out of sight or there were two, possibly three birds, at Fulton in the course of the season. Three **American Avocets** at TRIRS 8/2 (new early date, tied the high count) (W&RDb) [E. Holdridge 8/6/04]. A **Greater Yellowlegs** at TRIRS 11/26 was the second latest (JHf). Another notable shorebird was a **Western Sandpiper** (15th) at Fulton 8/23 (JHf, KS+). The first **Pectoral Sandpiper** stopped at TRIRS 8/4 (JHf); at Fulton they were present from 8/17 (KS, MKw) to 10/9 (DCm), with a high of five on 9/28 (DCm). Seldom seen at Waverly Pond, a Pec was noted there on 9/18 (KS, HPt). Autumn **American Woodcock** reports came from Waterford 11/11 (WE+) and a W. Friendship home 11/15 (LCg).

One or two **Bonaparte's Gulls** wandered over TRIRS 10/28 (JHf, NM+) to 11/12 (JHf, ALw; KS). A juvenile **Laughing**

Gull at TRIRS 8/8 was the only one detected this season. It rested west of the pipeline at Greenbridge, made a brief flight into Howard (JHf), and returned permanently to the Montgomery shore, much to the dismay of later arriving Howard birders. **Great Black-backed Gulls** were noted consistently in Nov. near Jessup with a high of 34 on 11/22 (RRf). One to three **Caspian Terns** were present at TRIRS from 8/8 (JHf) to 9/21 (JCu, DCm). Other reports of singles came from Loyola Pond, E. Col. 8/30 (SN), Martin Rd, W. Col. (JHf), and Centennial 9/14 (MKw). A **Forster's Tern** at Brighton Dam 8/31 was a treat for Big Day counters (RRf, HFk, MRg).

Black-billed Cuckoo reports came from five sites from 8/6 (LCg) to 9/21 (MW). **Eastern Screech-Owls** appeared in a few yards where they are often noted annually: Hallmark Rd (WEB), W. Friendship (LCg), and Duvall Rd (KTF). A **Short-eared Owl** (11th record) at the landfill 10/12 was the highlight of the trip to that restricted facility (BO, RCu+). **Common Nighthawks** were widely detected with reports from 15 sites. High counts were 50-75 at River Rd/Sykesville 8/29 (FLv), 40 at Ellicott City 8/29 (PWf), 42 at Burleigh Manor 9/2 (MKw), and 50+ at Carrs Mill Rd 9/8 (LCg). Three over Cedar Lane Park 10/1 (third latest) were the last of the season (JHf).

The **Chimney Swift** flight at dusk into the Savage Mill chimney on 10/15 was a swirling 767 (SBY). Late **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** stopped at Hammond Village 10/3 (GMr) and Cavey La 10/14 (RRf, ph). A **Rufous Hummingbird** (second record) that turned up in the Benson Branch watershed 10/23 was initially thought to be a Ruby-throated (JKy). Homeowners left for a period and were surprised it was still present when they returned in Nov. After being repeatedly urged (by GMcC) to have the bird banded, Joyce contacted **Bruce Peterjohn** at the Bird Banding Lab. He successfully banded it 11/15 and identified it as a Rufous, a hardy visitor from the West. It was last seen at 8:30 a.m. on 11/18. **Red-headed Woodpeckers** appeared at six sites beginning at Cavey La 9/14 (JHf) extending to 10/22 at Manahan Dr (BO). Most sightings were during the last half of Sept.

A few **American Kestrel** sightings involved more than a single bird: Gateway 8/18 (SN-3), Mt. Pleasant 9/18 (KS-3), and W. Friendship 10/4 (KDY, HPT-4). A highly cooperative **Merlin** stayed at the Fulton turkey farm from 8/4 (second earliest) (JHf) until 10/8 (KS), often perching in the same tree. One was also seen at Patuxent River SP 9/21 (TFE, GKg). Five **Peregrine Falcons** were reported: 8/2 (KDY, HPT); 9/16 (JHf); 9/28 (MKw); 10/1 (BO, ROR); 11/9 (RPr).

Olive-sided Flycatchers made an appearance at Martin Rd 9/1 (JHf-1) and Manahan Dr 9/17 (BO-1). All **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** sightings were within a narrow window from 8/24 at Cavey La (RRf) to 9/5 at MPEA (JHf+). Between these dates,

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others were spotted at Mt. Pleasant 8/30 (**JCu**; **DCm**, **CSt**) and at MPEA 8/31 (**JCu**+). Some flycatchers cannot be reliably identified without vocalizations. An **Alder** at MPEA 8/31 cooperatively called three times (**JHf**). A bird at Blandair Pk 9/24 did not vocalize, so was safely left as a **Trail's** (**JW**). **Leasts** were present at MPEA from 8/15 (**JHf**) to 9/4 (**JHf**); one was at Cavey Ln 9/14 (**RRf**, **HFk**, **MRg**). Lingering **Eastern Phoebes** were at Elkhorn 11/29 (**JW**-1) and at Alpha Ridge Pk 11/30 (**BO**-1). Three **Great Crested Flycatchers** at MPEA 9/21 were the last (**KS**). The final **Eastern Kingbird** was spotted at Belmont 9/21 (**SPr**, **DOI**). A **Blue-headed Vireo** was present at Mt. Albert Rd 11/3 (**M&GMcC**); although not a record, any Nov. vireo is worth noting. **Philadelphia Vireos** drifted through during Sept. with reports from six locations.

Probably an all-time high of at least 200 **Fish Crows** was noted in the Jessup area 11/2 (**SN**) and 11/14 (**KS**). **Common Ravens** continue to be widely tallied. The bird at High Ridge PK 9/4 (**J&RS**) was likely from the nesting pair at nearby Duckett Dam; those at Mt. Pleasant 10/3 (**KS**), No. TRIRS 10/4 (**RRf**, **HFk**, **MRg**), Brighton Dam 10/20 (**MKw**), and Fox Chase 10/23 (**JHf**) could well be from another source. Were they coming from adjacent counties or is there an undiscovered nest in the county? A flock of 40 **Horned Larks** at Waterford 10/29 was the season's high (**BO**).

After two rather early **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, Cavey La 9/4 (**RRf**) and MPEA 9/14 (**KCr**), the trickle stopped. One more appeared at a feeder at Narrow Wind Way, E. Col. on 11/4 (**TEv**). Shortly after the first **Winter Wren** report 10/5 at Daniels (**M&GMcC**), they were widely noted. A **Sedge Wren** at Mt. Pleasant 10/21 lived up to its reputation for elusiveness (**BO**). Despite searches by at least a dozen birders, only one other person managed a recognizable look (**JHf**). **Marsh Wrens** were well represented from 9/10 (second earliest) at Font Hill Wetlands Pk (**BO**) to 10/29 (second latest) at Waterford (**BO**).

A **Gray-cheeked Thrush** at Elkhorn 9/15 (**ALw**) was the first autumn sighting; the one at the Franciscan Friars 10/18 was the last, which set a new late date (**NM**) [unknown obs. 10/17/66, 10/17/68]. Interestingly, all **Swainson's Thrush** records were in a narrow slot between 9/14 Gorman (Kindler) (**DRh**) and 9/23 MPEA (**KS**-2) and Mt. Pleasant (**JCu**-1). MPEA produced a nice count of at least 32 **Gray Catbirds** 9/12 (**JHf**+). An occasional **Brown Thrasher** lingers into winter, so one at Centennial 11/17 was not surprising (**RnPr**, **ABb**+). **American Pipit** sightings were mostly single birds with 12 on 10/29 at Waterford as the season's high (**BO**). **Cedar Waxwings** topped out at 65 at Meadowbrook 10/8 (**KS**).

Warblers always produce surprises. A **Worm-eating** at Patuxent River SP 9/21 (**TFe**, **GKg**) tied the second latest departure date.

As usual in fall, **Tennessees** had a long migration period. The first, on 8/17 at MPEA (**KS**), tied the early record, while one at Centennial 10/18 was the last report (**BO**); the high was six at Cavey La 9/14 (**RRf**, **HFk**, **MRg**). **Nashvilles** moved through mostly in Sept. with the 10/12 final sighting at Forebay (**JW**), far short of late dates. Two of the three **Orange-crowneds** were reported on the same day-10/3: Fox Chase (**BO**) and WRP (**JHf**, **JCu**), plus one at W. Friendship 10/5 (**RHI**). **Connecticuts** were spotted at at least four locations, sometimes multiple times, beginning at MPEA 9/6 (**DCm**) to 10/14 at Daniels (**M&GMcC**). **Mourning** sightings were all from MPEA beginning 8/21 (**KDy**, **HPt**, ph) (second earliest); the last was on 9/12 on a field trip where this skulking species was seen by *everyone* present (**JHf**+). Kudos to the leader! A relatively late **Kentucky** was noted at Gorman (Eden Brook) 9/21 (**TDC**). **Cape May** migration was the best in years with reports from at least nine locations, sometimes on multiple dates. Highs were six at MPEA 9/6 (**JHf**), six at Cavey La 9/23 (**RRf**), and 10 at Wynfield 9/20 (**KDy**, **BHi**, **HPt**). **Bay-breasted** dates were from half a dozen locations from 9/7 at MPEA (**RHI**, **JHf**) to 10/6 at Cavey La (**RRf**). **Palm** migration started 9/6 (tied second earliest) at Cavey La (**RRf**-w.) with the last report 11/30 at Alpha Ridge Pk (**DSd**-e.), with a modest high of 14 at Mt. Pleasant 10/25 (**BO**). **Yellow-throateds** are never easy to find away from nesting territories. One at Cavey La 9/11 (**RRf**) was seen again 9/14 (**RRf**, **HFk**, **MRg**), and finally 9/21 (**RRf**) which tied the late date. A **Prairie** in Allview 9/28 was at an odd location (**ESu**). A **Black-throated Green** at MPEA 8/21 tied the third earliest date (**KDy**, **HPt**); the last one was at Mt. Pleasant 10/23 (**KS**). All **Wilson's** sightings (W. Friendship, Cavey La, Mt. Pleasant) were between 9/6 (**BO**) and 9/29 (**EHs**). **Yellow-breasted Chats**, which can linger into Nov., were last detected at Blandair 10/8 (**JW**). A hybrid **Lawrence's Warbler** (sixth record) was photographed at Cavey La 9/13 (**RRf**).

The first **American Tree Sparrows** did not arrive until 11/20 when singles were spotted at Mt. Pleasant (**THg**) and at Blandair (**JW**). A **Clay-colored**, at the weedy front "pond" at WRP, set a new early date of 10/2 (**BO**; later **BHi**, **DCm**, **KS**) [N. Magnusson 10/5/91]. One was spotted at Mt. Pleasant 10/14 (**THg**), and one was picked out of a flock of **Chippings** (a typical association) at Elkhorn 10/25 (**ALw**). The high count of **Fields** was 26 at MPEA 10/25 (**KS**). **Vespers** were detected at four locations with a high of four at Waterford 10/29 (**BO**). Two **Savannahs** at WRP 9/22 (**BO**) swelled to 75-100 by 10/21 (**JW**), and dropped to 12 by 11/25 (**BO**, **ROR**). One **Grasshopper** lingered until 10/29 (second latest) at Waterford (**BO**). The lone **Nelson's** this season was at WRP 10/21 (**JW**). As usual, birders scoured hedgerows and weedy patches for **Lincoln's** finding them at at least eight sites. The high was three at WRP 10/2 (**BO**). **Swamps** peaked at 46 at Waterford 10/29 (**BO**). The first two **White-throateds** were counted at Schooley Mill Pk 9/21 (**NM**). Leading the **White-crowneds** was one at W. Friendship 10/4 (**RRf**, **HFk**, **MRg**).

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An eleven species sparrow day was notched at Waterford 10/29 (BO).

Five **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were at Cavey La 9/14 (RRf, HFk, MRg). A seasonal high of 45 **Indigo Buntings** was counted at WRP 9/22 (BO+). The only **Dickcissel** of the season was seen at Elkhorn 11/29, a good find (DSd). **Bobolinks** were few with the exception of 32 at WRP 9/22 (BO). **Eastern Meadowlarks** have become increasingly scarce county birds so flocks of 19 at the landfill 10/12 (BO, RCu+), 12 at Mt. Pleasant 10/25 (BO), and five at WRP 10/21 (JW) were heartening. **Rusty Blackbirds** were few with the earliest one at Lake Kittamaquundi 10/14 (EH); the high was 15 at Waterford 11/11 (JW). Scattered **Purple Finch** sightings from eight sites were almost all singles; most birds appeared at a location just once. The two late Sept. feeder visitors (RRf; J&MBr) aroused optimism, but not until the first half of Nov. did sightings pick up (M&GMcC, BO, JW, KtF).

Exotics: Khaki Campbell Duck – 10/15 or earlier (LRg, ph.) into 2014. Group of six at Centennial; domestics. Identified by BO. Original inquiry with photo on 10/22 (LRg) mentioned they had been there several weeks.

Thanks to Joe Hanfman, Nancy Magnusson, and Howard Patterson for assistance.

Corrections: Date for Mississippi Kite east of US29 over Red Branch Rd area was 6/20 (PWb). The House Wren nest with three eggs at MPEA thought to have established a record late egg date was an error and has been retracted (SKd, Jcf). [Identification was correct; date of final box check was in error.]

Observers: **ABb** – Abigail Barenblitt, **JBr** – Jim Brinkley, **MBr** – Marilyn Brinkley, **RBy** – Rod Burley, **SBy** – Sandra Byrd, **KCv** – Kathy Calvert, **KCr** – Karen Causo, **PCv** – Pauline Chvilicek, **JCf** – Jeff Claffy, **LCg** – Lisa Colangelo, **JCu** – Jeff Culler, **RCu** – Ralph Cullison III, **DCm** – David Cummings, **KDy** – Karen Darcy, **RDb** – Rae Dubois, **WDb** – Woody Dubois, **WE** – Wes Earp, **WEb** – Ward Ebert, **TEv** – Tracy Eve, **TFe** – Tom Feild, **JFn** – John Finedore, **HFk** – Harry Fink, **JHf** – Joe Hanfman, **BHi** – Bill Hill, **RHi** – Russell Hillsley, **EH** – Emy Holdridge, **THg** – Tim Houghton, **EHs** – Ed Huestis, **JKy** – Joyce Kelly, **SKd** – Sally Kendell, **MKw** – Mike Kerwin, **GKg** – Geraldine King, **ALw** – Allen Lewis, **KLI** – Kathie Lillie, **FLv** – Felicia Lovelett, **NM** – Nancy Magnusson, **GMcC** – Grazina McClure, **MMcC** – Mike McClure, **BMr** – Barry Miller, **GMs** – Georgia Morris, **SN** – Sue Neri, **DOI** – Daryl Olson, **ROr** – Richard Orr, **BO** – Bonnie Ott, **Hpt** – Howard Patterson, **RePt** – Renee Peters, **Rpt** – Richard Peters, **SPr** – Sue Probst, **DRh** – Derek Richardson, **LRg** – Louis Rodriguez, **MRg** – Matt Rogosky, **RRf** – Russ Ruffing, **DSd** – David Sandler, **KS** – Kurt Schwarz, **JSn** – Jeff Shenot, **JS** – Jo Solem, **RS** – Robert Solem, **MSt** – Michelle Stewart, **CSt** – Chuck Stirrat, **ESu** – Eva Sunell, **KtF** – Kate Tufts, **MW** – Mark Wallace, **PWb** – Pete Webb, **JW** – Jim Wilkinson, **PWf** – Paul Woodford.

EIGHT SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED TO HOG ISLAND CAMP

BY KATE TUFTS

MOS SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR

MOS received eight applications this year for the National Audubon Society's Hog Island, Maine camps. After a thorough consideration of each application, the Scholarship Committee agreed to award scholarships to all eight applicants. Each person is well qualified so that the committee is confident that the knowledge each gains on Hog Island will be put to good use in furthering the public's awareness of birds and the natural world.

Two of our awardees come from Pickering Creek Audubon Center near Easton. Samantha Pitts is volunteer coordinator, teacher and naturalist while her colleague, Krysta Hougen, is camp director and teacher naturalist. Samantha will be studying Field Ornithology on Hog Island while Krysta will participate in the Sharing Nature: an Educators' Week.

Lauren Greoski will also enroll in the Sharing Nature camp. Lauren is a park naturalist at Anita C. Leight Estuary Center in Harford County.

Jennifer Elmer, an active member of the Tri-County Bird Club, is a nature guide at the Delmarva Discovery Center and a naturalist at Pocomoke River State Park. Jennifer will also take part in the Sharing Nature camp.

Jacquelin Darrow is "... helping to develop a program that employs eBird to introduce bird study to young people..." in her capacity as graduate assistant at the Ward Museum of Waterfowl Art. Jacqueline has enrolled in the Joy of Birding workshop. Joining Jacqueline will be Elaine Friebele. Elaine is an education coordinator at Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary.

Two Howard County applicants include Molly Williams, an environmental educator at the James and Anne Robinson Nature Center, and Eileen Griffin, a second grade school teacher at Hollifield Station Elementary School. Both will participate in Sharing Nature: an Educators' Week. Eileen echoed what all of the applicants indicated, "I am eager to learn and share with my students."

Congratulations to each and every one of them.

THE 2013 BUTTERFLY YEAR IN HOWARD COUNTY (PART 2)

BY RICHARD SMITH

Continued from the January/February newsletter

On July 11 at Columbia Gateway, L. Hunt snapped photos of several specimens of **Broad-winged Skippers**, normally a bay-side species and only first reported in the county by A. Lewis in 2011. Apparently, the phragmites stands in the water containment ponds in this business park have been secretly supporting a population of this species for some time.

In late July, the **Silvery Checkerspot**, only re-reported in the county in 2009 and 2012 after an apparent absence of over 40 years, staged a sudden countywide invasion! The first individual was spotted by K. Litzinger who photographed one at Centennial Park on July 21. On July 24, singles were noted by A. Allor at the Elkhorn Garden Plot and the Robinson Nature Center; later that same day, she spotted over 50 at MPEA! Quoting from her account, "There were so many of them on the dirt and gravel road leading to the fields, I actually had to watch where I stepped."

The rare **American Snout** butterfly made a surprising number of appearances in 2013. In addition to singles at Eden Brook on Sept. 2 (L. Hunt) and Columbia Gateway on Sept. 6 (J. Wilkinson), A. Allor and K. Litzinger spotted four on Aug. 10 at the Mt. Pleasant Children's Garden.

American Snout

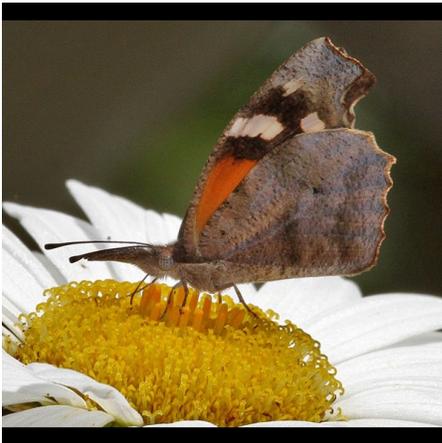


photo by Kathy Litzinger

The **Southern Broken-Dash**, a southern grass-skipper species and only first recorded in Howard County last year, has apparently established its occurrence range this far north in Maryland now. Several sightings were logged in 2013, particularly during L. Hunt's home garden survey (Clemens Crossing), from Aug. 4-28. It was also spotted during the HCBC butterfly field trip I led to the Lake Elkhorn powerline area on Aug. 31.

A **Hackberry Emperor**, a species only known from Centennial Park in recent years, was photographed by L. Hunt in David Force Park on Aug. 16.

The **Meadow Fritillary**, a small black and orange-checked brush-foot butterfly, is not often seen locally – that is, until L. Hunt and J. Sheppard surveyed a particularly butterfly-rich horse pasture along Jennings Chapel Rd on Sept. 6 where they counted over 50! The meadow also contained 50+ **Variegated Fritillaries** and 30+ **Common Checkered-Skippers**.

For several years, local butterflyers have searched the county for the rare **Harvester** butterfly. Its last known appearance was on June 1, 1996 along the river trail at Daniels. On Sept. 21, Bonnie Ott video-recorded an early instar of what may be one of its caterpillars among a cluster of wooly aphid nymphs in Rockburn Branch Park. The caterpillars are carnivorous and actually feed on nymphs of wooly aphid species. Early instar caterpillars are not well-marked for positive species identification, but at this point and under the circumstances of its presence with wooly aphids, a Harvester caterpillar is the closest call for this critter. No adult Harvester butterflies have ever been seen in Rockburn Branch Park.

As a surprising end to the 2013 butterfly season, Bonnie also snapped a photo of a fresh and apparently northward migrating **Painted Lady** on November 8 at Mt. Pleasant. This species is known to migrate north from the American Southwest in early spring. It appears they couldn't wait until next spring; and if the winter is mild, some of them may take shelter in brush and survive to continue their northward migration next year as usual.

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 27, 2014

Wes Earp
6480 S. Trotter Rd.
Clarksville, MD 21029
(410) 531-3197
the_earps@verizon.net

April 24, 2014

Kate Tufts
2830 Duvall Rd.
Woodbine, MD 21797
(410) 489-7052
ktufts@verizon.net

2013 ODONATE SUMMARY

BY JOANNE SOLEM

2013 was an unusually productive year with two new species added to the county's odonate list. **Umbur Shadowdragon** (*Neurocordulia obsoleta*), based on four exuvia found along the Patapsco River east of Old Frederick Road, 6/1 was # 97 (Richard Orr, Bonnie Ott). (Since this is a crepuscular species, finding an adult should prove challenging.) **Cherry-faced Meadowhawk** (*Sympetrum internum*), confirmed with both specimen and photographs at Fox Chase wetlands, September 14, was # 98 (Bonnie Ott).

Cherry-faced Meadowhawk



photo by Bonnie Ott

There was a nice variety of new early dates: Spotted Spreadwing 5/31 (BO), Sweetflag Spreadwing 6/22 (BO), Slender Spreadwing 5/18 (tied) (BO, Jo Solem), Seepage Dancer 6/1 (JS, Nancy Magnusson), Blue-tipped Dancer 6/1 (JS, Lisa Shannon), Cobra Clubtail 6/1 (RO, BO), Slender Baskettail 6/4 (BO), and Widow Skimmer 5/16 (Kurt Schwarz).

The only new late dates were Seepage Dancer 9/21 (BO), Orange Bluet 10/18 (BO), and Citrine Forktail 11/2 (BO). White-faced Meadowhawk (for which there had been a single record) was added at both Fox Chase and Meadowbrook Park (BO).

The eighth annual Howard County Dragonfly Count, cosponsored by Howard Co. Recreation and Parks and coordinated by Beth Johnson, was held on June 1. This earliest possible date led to a good number of unusual species and early dates. Twenty observers located 48 species, the second highest total ever. A summary was published in the Nov/Dec 2013 *Goldfinch*.

All specimens and photographs were vetted by Richard Orr. Photographs of Howard County dragonflies and damselflies can be found at the club's website: http://www.howardbirds.org/odonates/HC_Odonate_identification.htm

(Field Trips continued from page 2)

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HOT SPOTS FOR RED KNOTS

May 24, Saturday, all day.

Meet at the Meadowbrook Park & Ride at 5:45 a.m. to arrange the carpools. We depart promptly at 6:00 a.m. We will proceed to the Dupont Nature Center at Mispillion Harbor, where we have seen hundreds of Red Knots and other shorebirds in the past. We will go north to Ted Harvey Wildlife Management Area and Bombay Hook NWR. Expect shorebirds, late waterfowl, and gulls. Facilities are available at Dupont Nature Center, and Bombay Hook. Short walks from the cars. Mud is possible. Bring bug repellent, drinking water, bug repellent, food, bug repellent, sun screen, and bug repellent. Rendezvous: 08:30 a.m. at Dupont Nature Center. The itinerary is subject to change based on scouting trips and rare bird reports. The trip will be limited to 16 persons in 4 cars. We will permit 2-3 cars from other chapters to meet us there. Limits will be strictly observed. To reserve a spot contact Kurt Schwarz, krschwa1@verizon.net, 410-461-1643

 = Great for beginning birders

Annual Potluck

Remember to sign up for the Annual Potluck Dinner, to be held at the Robinson Nature Center on Saturday, March 29, 2014. 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. See the January/February newsletter for details.

Share Your Photos

The pre-meeting slide show on the television screen is a great opportunity to share your experiences with other club members. If you have bird and other natural history photos that you would like to share before the May 2014 meeting or to schedule one of the 2014-15 meetings, please contact Wes Earp, wesand-sue@gmail.com, 410-531-3197. He will outline number of images and technical requirements.

Howard County Big Days

Russ Ruffing, Harry Fink and Matt Rogosky conducted a Howard County Big Day each month (except June) in 2013. They endured the heat of summer, the cold of winter, snow and rain to tally 180 species for the year. They had a high of 122 species in May and a low of 58 in November. See the club web site for details on their impressive Big Day accomplishments: <http://www.howardbirds.org/HoCoBigDay/HoCoBirDays2013.htm>



HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

10970 Millbank Row
Columbia, MD 21044

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2014 GREENFEST

BY KATE TUFTS

This year's GreenFest will be on Saturday, April 5th from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Howard County Community College. The theme is "Water Quality Begins At Home." Again, the Howard County Bird Club will have a booth at the fest. We are looking for volunteers to spend a couple of hours representing the Bird Club at our display. It's fun and easy. Almost all questions concern backyard birds.

If you would like to volunteer to help with our display, please contact Kate Tufts at ktufts@verizon.net.

GreenFest

Water Quality Begins At Home

SAVE THE DATE
April 5, 2014
10 AM - 4 PM
Howard Community College
www.hcgreenfest.org