



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, January 8, 2015 "The Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill: the fates of the marine birds and the pelagic Sargassum community," by Dr. Chris Haney. This talk will examine why and how Sargassum serves as a hot spot for marine birds, thereby raising their risk of oil exposure. Dr. Haney has received awards for his role in a consortium of federal and state agencies that monitored the Exxon Valdez oil spill disaster in Alaska. Currently he is Chief Scientist at Defenders of Wildlife.

Thursday, February 12, 2015 "*Birds of a Feather: seasonal changes on both sides of the Atlantic*," by Colin Rees. His talk will draw upon observations from the book he co-authored with a birder from the U. K. Colin currently chairs the Long Range Planning Committee of MOS. A long time birder, Colin has worked for international organizations in many countries and has devoted his career to the conservation of wildlife and the natural environment.

Dick Smith and Linda Hunt will also make a brief PowerPoint presentation summarizing the 2014 butterfly surveys.

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 Robin Todd, 410-491-5333.

HOWARD COUNTY WINTER BIRD COUNT

FOR YOUTH

BY SUE MULLER

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

How many species of sparrows can you expect to see in Howard County in January? Can you name them?



Dark-eyed Junco by Bonnie Ott

Answer on [page 4](#)

The Howard County Department of Recreation & Parks, the Howard County Conservancy, and the Howard County Bird Club are working together to host the county's first Winter Bird Count for Youth. The count will be held on Saturday, January 31st from 9:00 a.m. to noon at the Belmont Manor & Historic Park in Elkridge. Children will be divided into two groups (ages 8 to 11 and 12 and up). Volunteers are needed to teach children to identify feeder birds, lead outdoor bird walks, and introduce children to the idea of a life list using eBird. Volunteers with spotting scopes will be needed as well. To volunteer, please contact Sue Muller, smuller@howardcountymd.gov. If you know any children that would want to participate, they must pre-register at belmont@hconservancy.org. An adult will need to be present with each child. Please note this is a free event!

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

ALPHA RIDGE LANDFILL

January 17, 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.*

MIDWINTER COUNT

February 7, Saturday See [page 5](#) for more details.

HOW TO FIND AN OWL

February 21, Saturday, 1:00 p.m., possibility of birding till dusk for owls and early woodcocks. *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 and Northern Saw-whet, along with resident owls. No facilities.
Leader - Jay Sheppard, JMSheppar@aol.com or 301-725-5559.

[CENTENNIAL PARK](#)

March 1, 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. Waterfowl expected; early migrant passerines possible. Facilities available.
Leader - Jeff Culler, cullerfuls@hotmail.com, 410-465-9006.

WATERFOWL SEARCH

March 7, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. (half day) *Meet at Broken Land Pkwy and Rt. 32 Park & Ride (WEST side).* 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 8, 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 around the lake on paved path. Waterfowl expected; early migrant passerines possible. Facilities available.
Leaders - Richard and Renee Peters, Richard@rrrrpeters.org



[CENTENNIAL PARK](#)

March 15, 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. Waterfowl expected; woodland trails for passerines. Facilities available.
Leader - Allen Lewis, allenrlewis@gmail.com



= Great for beginning birders

THE HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING

NEW MEMBERS,

OCTOBER 1-NOVEMBER 30, 2014

Nancy & Reid Compton

Karen Lewis

Nancy McAllister

Mary Maxey

Alicia & John Oelfke

Danielle Pajak

Carolyn Rimes

Revolon Schmidt

Debbie & Lou Taylor

Anthony VanSchoor

Site Guide

Included with this issue is the site guide to Patapsco Valley State Park-Henryton. Guides to other birding spots are available on the club's website.

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

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

THE 2014 BUTTERFLY YEAR IN HOWARD COUNTY

BY RICHARD SMITH AND LINDA HUNT

The butterfly season of 2014 had some definite highlights, but it didn't start out that way. People who look for butterflies must sustain a glimmer of hope for these miniature gems and be intrepid explorers to find them. This year gave us the "winter that wouldn't end," with lower than average temperatures through March, above normal precipitation peaking in April (with 8.6 inches recorded), and only half the spring days with any sunshine at all. Our three butterfly field outings in June, July, and August and the two counts at Robinson yielded not only few species but low numbers of all butterflies. A reward of high numbers came to those who persisted, but by then the calendar was registering mid-July. Butterfly numbers and species continued to increase through July, peaking first in the middle and later part of the month and then again in mid-September. Weather and weak butterfly numbers had presented no deterrence to the hardy breed of Howard County Bird Club butterfly people. More than a dozen HCBC butterfly enthusiasts completed 175 days of surveys at three dozen sites from the middle of March until the end of October, finally totaling 10,340 individual butterflies counted and 68 total species for the season. Another dozen members found and reported some of the rarer and more unusual species among these. Monarchs, weak in the season at first, surged by September with a season total of 172, and many common skippers became abundant. A few details and highlights are provided below.

The 2014 season entered full gear in early April with "Azure" discussions, prompted by daily sightings of more than 30 at David Force NRA by Linda Hunt. We say "Azure" because a good dorsal photo (a difficult feat) is needed to narrow them down to species. In April, they can be one of two, the rarer Spring Azure, or the more common "spring form" of the Summer Azure. In the final review, only two uniquely documented specimens passed muster as Spring Azures by Azure expert Harry Pavulaan of Leesburg, VA. These were from Richard Orr at MPEA and Annette Allor at Western Regional Park. Richard Orr and Bonnie Ott pulled out some other nice specialties over the season – four White M Hairstreaks at Sharp's Farm on April 14, and on May 10 Bonnie logged the only Howard County Eastern Pine Elfin for the year, still resident at Rockburn Branch Park. After the virtual invasion of Silvery Checkerspots into Howard County in 2013, only a total of a dozen were recorded countywide in 2014, and only at four locations – Benson Branch Park (May 14 by Grazina McClure), David Force NRA (June 4, 7, Aug. 4, 15 by Linda Hunt), Beaverbrook (July 31 in Richard Orr's garden), and Murray Hill (Aug. 15 by Linda Hunt). At least they are still here. Juniper Hairstreaks, undeterred by any weather factors,



Silvery Checkerspot
Beaverbrook 7-31-14
Richard Orr

appeared around the county throughout April and May, and again later in July. Falcate Orangetips were sighted as usual at Gateway but also at Schooley Mill Park and MPEA. Kevin and Karen Heffernan spotted the first brood of American Coppers at Mt. Pleasant on May 11, and an abundant second brood appeared from July through September. On May 23, Linda Hunt spotted an unfamiliar smaller skipper scurrying among the Southern Cloudywings at Murray Hill. It turned out to be the rare Dusted Skipper, not seen in the county for more than 20 years.



American Copper
Mt. Pleasant 7-23-14
Linda Hunt

Although a scant 652 butterfly specimens had been reported by Memorial Day, some real excitement began on June 8 when Annette Allor photographed an adult specimen of the rare and elusive Harvester butterfly at Rockburn Branch Park, strengthening the case for Bonnie Ott's caterpillar, videotaped in 2013 at roughly the same location, as being of that species. In quick succession,



Harvester
Rockburn Branch Park 6-9-14
Annette Allor

Jim Wilkinson located and photographed a Harvester east of Marriottsville Rd. near the Patapsco River (PVSP) and another at Rockburn Branch Park, all in June. The connection had now been established of Harvesters with large concentrations of wooly aphid nymphs and large growths of spongy sooty mold (which flourishes on the honeydew left by the aphids) on beech trees.

Concentrations of this fungus were found along the Morning Choice Trail in PVSP where Mike and Grazina McClure, Kevin and Karen Heffernan, and Jo Solem spotted both the caterpillar and the butterfly from mid-September to early October. Kevin even nabbed a photo of a female depositing eggs in an aphid cluster. Finally, Linda Hunt photographed a Harvester caterpillar at a new site, the Wincopin Red Trail where, earlier, Jo Solem and Grazina McClure had found more wooly aphids and spongy sooty mold on beeches.



Harvester caterpillar
Morning Choice Tr. PVSP 9-21-14
Kevin Heffernan

In spite of all the Coral Hairstreaks and Meadow Fritillaries reported last year, only singles of each were sighted this year – the

(Butterfly Year continued on page 4)

Coral Hairstreak on June 30 at Hipsley Mill (PRSP) and the Meadow at Western Regional Park on July 21; both by Linda Hunt. A single Broad-winged Skipper was reported by Kathy Litzinger (in her yard of course) on August 13. A Hackberry Emperor was spotted at a new location, the Univ. of MD Training Center, by Suzanne Klick on August 13. Common butterflies, including Sulphurs, most Swallowtail species, Lady butterflies, Eastern Tailed-Blues and Skipper species became more plentiful by mid-August. However, there were smaller numbers of especially the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail in 2014 (307 total) compared to 2013 (469 total). Considering that surveyors only counted a



Sleepy Orange
Clemons Crossing 8-2-14
Linda Hunt

total 3,943 butterflies of all species in 2013 when the survey was just starting, the 307 total for 2014 is markedly low for this species. Only eight Sleepy Oranges were seen around the county from July to October; and Cloudless Sulphurs, Little Yellows, and Clouded and Long-tailed

Skippers did not show at all. Remarkably, the Giant Swallowtail, new to the county just two years ago, was sighted three times: at Mt. Pleasant by Emy Holdridge on August 27 and at Kevin and Karen Heffernan's house, less than 1.5 miles east of Mt. Pleasant, on September 3. John McKitterick had the final one, on lantana in his garden again this year, on September 12.



Giant Swallowtail
8-27-14
Emy Holdridge

Fiery Skippers were rare until late September and October when Jim Wilkinson reported several at a productive location just west of Route 1 in Elkridge.

We wish to thank the field trip leaders and especially each of the butterfly surveyors for the dedication that went into the extensive surveys contributed to the bird club county records for 2014: Ann Coren, Jeff Friedhoffer, David Gillum, Kevin and Karen Heffernan, Emy Holdridge, Linda Hunt, Asuncion Lavind, Allen Lewis, Kathy Litzinger, Grazina & Mike McClure, Sue Muller, Richard Orr, Bonnie Ott, Suzanne Probst, Kurt Schwarz, and Jim Wilkinson.

Just from the 2013 and 2014 data, the surveys are revealing astonishingly consistent year to year patterns in butterfly brood cycles. The patterns are especially clear when the entire county's results from a particular year are apportioned into monthly third data bins. It will make an entertaining presentation at a future bird club meeting.

2015 HOG ISLAND, MAINE SCHOLARSHIPS ANNOUNCED

BY KATE TUFTS, MOS SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR

The Maryland Ornithological Society is pleased to announce that it is awarding eight scholarships for the 2015 summer ecology and ornithology workshops on beautiful Hog Island, Maine. The camp is operated by the National Audubon Society. This year's award recipients represent six different Maryland counties and a wide range of professional experience from park ranger to school teacher to naturalist and volunteer. Half of them are MOS members.

The ever popular, Sharing Nature: an Educators' Week will be attended by **Christine Smith**, a Park Naturalist at Cunningham Falls State Park and member of the Frederick Chapter of MOS. Joining Christine will be **Peggy Eppig** who is the Director of Agriculture and Natural Resources Education with the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation. Peggy is a member of the Cecil Bird Club. One other awardee looking forward to the Sharing Nature workshop is **Jennifer Brown-Whale** who is an elementary science teacher with the Howard County Public School System.

The Joy of Birding workshop will be attended by **Gabrielle Cammarata**, an outdoor volunteer and recipient of the Governor's Volunteer Service Award. Also attending will be a Montgomery County Bird Club member and Master Naturalist volunteering at Brookside Gardens, **Carolyn Smith**.

Morgan McGinnity is a Park Naturalist at Watkins Nature Center in Upper Marlboro and works with their birds of prey collection. Morgan will be enrolled, appropriately enough, in the Raptor Rapture session. **Grant Melville**, a Volunteer Education Coordinator at the Ward Museum in Salisbury, has chosen the Maine Seabird and Conservation workshop, while **Amy Schoop**, Ranger at Patuxent Research Refuge selected Field Ornithology.

Congratulations to the Hog Island campers of 2015. They have much to look forward to. As one of last year's attendees stated, "From the time I stepped onto that boat I was learning, smiling, excited, full, and in awe. The workshops were incredibly well designed and incredibly fitting for my job speciality." Another commented that Hog Island is every naturalist's dream.

Test Your Knowledge Answer:

Ten species of sparrows are reported routinely in Howard County in January: American Tree, Chipping, Field, Savannah, Fox, Song, Swamp, White-throated, White-crowned, and Dark-eyed Junco. There is one January report of Lincoln's Sparrow, in 2012, by Bonnie Ott at Mt. Pleasant Farm/Howard County Conservancy. Two Harris's Sparrows appeared at an Allview feeder January 23, 1965. One was banded.

THIRTIETH ANNUAL MIDWINTER COUNT

BY JOE HANFMAN

Join the Howard County Bird Club's Thirtieth Annual Mid-winter Count on Saturday, February 7, 2015. Joe Hanfman (410-772-8424 or auk1844@gmail.com) is the count coordinator. You may volunteer to participate by signing up at a meeting or by contacting one of the area coordinators:

- Area 1: Mark Wallace - 301-725-6370 or abcxyz5@verizon.net
 Wes Earp - 410-531-3197 or the_earps@verizon.net
 Area 2: Ward Ebert - 301-490-5807 or wardebert@verizon.net
 Area 3: Maureen & Dave Harvey- 410-795-3117 or tangara@comcast.net
 Area 4: Mike McClure - 410-531-2780 or michael.mcclure@jhuapl.edu
 Area 5: Karen & Kevin Heffernan - 410-418-8731 or kjheff@aol.com or khdarcy4@aol.com
 Area 6: Bonnie Ott - 443-285-3302 or bonnieott@verizon.net
 Area 7: Kurt Schwarz - 410-461-1643 or krschwal@verizon.net

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 feeders, email 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, February 4th, 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. Contact your area coordinator if you are unsure of the status of the count.



Map by Michael McClure

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 22, 2014
 Jo & Bob Solem
 10617 Graeoch Rd.
 Laurel, MD 20723
 (301) 725-5037, odenata@msn.com

February 26, 2014
 Ward Ebert
 7366 Hallmark Road
 Clarksville, MD 21029
 (301) 490-5807, wardebert@verizon.net

SEED SALE AND HABITAT DONATIONS

BY WARD EBERT

Jeff Friedhoffer stepped up to handle the seed sale orders this year and deserves thanks from all of us. We netted well over \$1000 this year and saw an increase in the number of folks making additional tax-deductible donations. These funds are used to benefit wildlife and wildlife habitat through projects to be selected by the club's Board of Directors.

Thanks to all who bought seed, donated money, and supported this sale. Thanks also to Kevin Cassidy and the staff of the Wildlife Authority for managing the buying and delivery process. This year we compressed the schedule by a week to allow Kevin more time to obtain better pricing of our seed. Thanks go to Bob Solem who has all the work to do between the time prices are set and the time you get your order form.

As always, your ideas are welcome. The board is receptive to suggestions for worthy habitat projects or improvements to the seed sale process.



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 be held at the Robinson Nature Center, Columbia, MD on Saturday, March 28, 2015, from 6:00 -10:00 p.m. The doors open at 6:00 p.m. for room set-up and dinner starts at 7:00 p.m. There is no RNC entrance fee to attend the potluck. All club members and their guests are invited to share in the camaraderie, the food, and the program. The club furnishes bottled water and utensils. Those attending bring a main dish, hors d'oeuvres, a salad, a vegetable, or a dessert. (It is suggested that you include a list of ingredients along with your dish, as some members have food allergies.) Be sure to mark your dishes and any accompanying serving implements with your name so you can go home with the implements you brought with you!

Everyone is encouraged to participate in the after-dinner "slide show," so bring your nature photos. **However, please note that as usual 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 and the club will provide a laptop with a projector to display your photographs.

Please let us know in advance that you will be attending so we can arrange for enough chairs, tables, etc. Sign up sheets will be available at club meetings, or you may contact Kathie Lillie at klillie3@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 interest in birds and nature. There will be many dishes to entice you and the slide presentations are always great. 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.