



# HOWARD

MARCH 1975

VOLUME III NUMBER 7

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
HOWARD COUNTY CHAPTER

## FIELD TRIPS

MARCH 15, SATURDAY: Another local trip--this time the emphasis will be on the Open Spaces of Columbia. Moderate walking, wear walking shoes. We will be out 3-4 hours. With luck we may find some early Spring migrants. Meet at Swansfield Elementary School parking lot at 8:00 a.m. Erv Klaas, leader (730-7821).

MARCH 22, SATURDAY: A Spring Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge trip. This should be an exciting and interesting day. The annual photography contest will be in progress at the Visitors Center which is of special interest to the club because Bob Herndon will have an entry. There is an eagle's nest in the Blackwater area and the eagles have been seen on the nest

in recent weeks. It is near the road and easily seen. A trip not to be missed! Be sure to bring lunch and a thermos of coffee

and the day's weather will dictate your clothing. Expect to be home around 5 p.m. Meet at Swansfield Elementary School parking lot at 7:30 a.m. for car pooling. Bob Herndon is the leader (730-0942).

There will be more about the following trips in the next newsletter:

April 13, Sunday--Bird banding demonstration at Woodbine.

April 27, Sunday--Shore birding on the Delaware Bay.

May 9-11 - Maryland Ornithological Society State Convention in Ocean City.

## GULLS

On our field trips in Howard County, we have seen gulls (ring-billed) in the fields and on the lakes and ponds. Usually someone expresses surprise at seeing them so far inland. Gulls are considered our most valuable scavenger birds and among the most widely distributed birds in the world. There are 44 recognized species and 29 breeding in the Northern Hemisphere. One species of gulls or another lives at least part of the year in every state in the union. The majority of gull species do inhabit ocean shores or the borders of lakes and large rivers, but you can observe gulls almost anywhere. They feed on both animal and vegetable substances, including marine life, refuse and carrion. They can drink either fresh or salt water. When they drink sea water, a pair of glands above their eyes allows them to excrete salt through openings in their bills.

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

The third annual Washington's Birthday 3-day birding trip was a mixture of good news and bad news. Good news in that we had more birders (16) than in previous years but bad news as far as the weather was concerned. The group left Swansfield early Saturday morning for the North Carolina Outer Banks with enthusiasm and high hopes in spite of the overcast skies and discouraging weather forecasts. A stop at Calmbridge, Md. for a fantastic view of the snowy owl that has wintered there (he is absolutely cooperative and seems to enjoy the sound of clicking cameras) was an excellent start. Another stop at Fisherman's Island National Wildlife Refuge in Virginia was exciting in that many gannets (perhaps a thousand) were seen off shore bombarding the ocean in spectacular dives. From the shore, at times it was like watching a snow storm of giant snowflakes.

The group journeyed on to Nag's Head arriving too late for Saturday afternoon birding. Sunday morning was fairly good for shore birds but by noon the rain started and that was it! Monday morning was foggy and rainy all the way back to Howard County. But it was a pleasant good group that made it a good trip anyway and a total count of 86 species wasn't bad considering the handicaps.

Larry Hood is already planning next year's trip and it will be a Maryland outing and probably also, Chincoteague. Lots of planning will be done between now and then and that weather has got to be with us. See you then.

The Howard County feeder trip on Sunday, February 23, was attended by 22 adults and children. The morning had been very wet (weather again!) but the rain stopped before the 1:30 p.m. meeting hour and the tour went on as scheduled. The group had excellent views of evening grosbeaks. And robins - Spring is coming after all. There were 22 species for the day. The last stop at the Rhinelanders was special--not only for the coffee and goodies but also because of the banding demonstration. Larry Hood and Erv Klaas banded a total of nine birds-- 2 Carolina chickadees, 3 song sparrows, 1 downy woodpecker, 2 white-throated sparrows and 1 Carolina wren.

### MARCH PROGRAM

MARCH 13, THURSDAY, 7:45 P.M.: "Birds of Southern Appalachian Mountains"-- Mark Simpson, M.D. will be the speaker. From North Carolina, Dr. Simpson studied the ecology of the Southern Appalachians for more than ten years and is credited with more than thirty publications on the subject. He has documented the southern breeding range of the saw whet owl and studied the distribution and ecology of the Swainson's warbler in the Southern Appalachian Mountains. He is currently an active member of the Carolina Bird Club, Chairman of its Research Committee and a member of the Executive Committee.