



HOWAIRD

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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HOWARD COUNTY MAY COUNT RESULTS MAY 1, 1976

If birders have nightmares a recurring one is probably that of totally inclement weather the day of a major census. This year's May Count which held the promise of excellent totals as a result of an early spring was incredibly miserable. Chan Robbins who has tallied in Howard County for several decades flatly stated it was his worst count day in 20 years. The rains didn't start till after 8:00 A.M. so the early risers got a couple of hours of good birding in; then came mist which gradually became heavier until the deluge made birding all but impossible at times. The birds weren't moving and worse they weren't singing—every species added to the list in the afternoon was a major triumph. Imagine a count with only 2 Turkey Vultures, a total of 10 hawks of all species and the conspicuous absence of

numerous common species from many lists. For those who stuck it out for any part of that day-to-remember you are to be thanked for your dedication (or nuttiness). Totals of all species were extremely low as were overall totals. High species were Starling 441, White-throated Sparrow 216, Robin 183, Cardinal 181, Common Grackle 172 and House Sparrow 149. Last year we had several birders who sighted over 90 species—this year anything over 60 was a good day's work; Chan Robbins 72, Jo Solam 70, Kris Krishnamoorthy 65 and Rosamund Munro 62. Twenty-five people participated of whom 9 were feeder and yard watchers. Total species for the day was 123 compared to last year's record 145. A total of 3917 birds were counted; last year 13,829. turned out to be 125. Pat Jackson added 2

Among the 23 species of warblers seen Yellow-rumps, Yellowthroats and Parulas led the list though at least singles were seen of Prothonotary, Magnolia, Tennessee, Black-throated Blue, Cerulean and Yellow-throated. Both orioles were sighted and both tanagers. Winter birds lingered so E. Grosbeaks, P. Finches, H. Finches, Pine Siskins and 1 Red-breasted Nuthatch (R. Munro) appeared. Ten species of sparrows were counted including Vesper (RM), Grasshopper, and Fox (A. Fazekas). All swallows were noted except Bank. Duck species were low with only Mallards, Blacks & Wood Ducks making the list. Among the shorebirds which stopped for the day were Spotted, Solitary & Least Sandpipers, Greater Yellowlegs, Killdeer and Woodcock. One Great Blue Heron (M. Krishnamoorthy) and 2 Green Herons, 4 Whip-poor-wills, 1 Bobolink (Chan Robbins), 1 Blue Grosbeak (Nan R Rhineland), 1 Yellow-billed Cuckoo (K. Krishnamoorthy), 1 Solitary Vireo (J. Solam), 1 Veery (KK), 2 Yellow-throated Vireos (GR), 2 Water Pipits (JS), 1 Pileated Woodpecker and 1 Ruby-throated Hummingbird (Doris Aymar—Havilands also had 1 in Mont. Co.). The above list should give the reader an idea of the many species which were represented by only 1 or 2 birds and no effort was made to list every one. Three species of owls—Barred, Screech & Barn were listed. B. Hotz deserves special mention for her feeder count of 50 House Sparrows. . . .

The sun came out as we began gathering for the tally buffet at the Rhinelanders. The club thanks Nan and Fred for being gracious hosts to our second annual tally and to Lucille Peters who made sure there was a good balance of food and plenty of it. To Kris Krishnamoorthy and Tom Moyer who organized and tallied the count a tremendous thank you. It may be that just as 1975 was our year for an extraordinarily good count we will look back and remember May Count 1976 as one of our most difficult and challenging birding experiences ever.

NEW LEADERS

The newly elected and appointed Board members for the Howard chapter of MDS are listed below along with their phone numbers. The Board meets monthly in an attempt to provide a variety of interesting programs and activities for this club. Your suggestions are encouraged and welcomed.

President-Ben Dawson 730-8549; Vice-president-Lucile Peters 465-6293; Secretary-Paul Zucker; Treasurer-"Kris" Krishnamoorthy 997-5967; Newsletter-Nan Rhinelander 286-2427 and Jo Solem 725-5037; Community Relations-Anita Conron 988-9390; Education and Planning-Bob Herndon 730-0942; Membership-Alice Fazekas 730-3993; Publicity-Frances Dawson 730-8549; Conservation-Eileen and John Clegg 730-4362; Bookstore-Marcia Krishnamoorthy 997-5967; Programs-Tom Moyer 730-0138; Field Trips-Cathy & Leroy Williamson 730-0338; Trustee to State MDS-Marty Chestem 730-1527.

OUTDOOR WORKSHOP

Our first-ever Outdoor Workshop was held at Camp Woodbine on Sunday, April 25. Despite intermittent drizzle in the morning, the skies improved by noon and the participants had a chance to examine the flora and fauna of the area. Lucile Peters did a fine job of planning--you missed an interesting day if you couldn't make it. Just over 40 people including some from the Frederick and Patuxent chapters saw some early migrants: Indigo Bunting, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Eastern Kingbird, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Veery, Great-crested Flycatcher, Broad-winged Hawks, Baltimore Oriole and Yellow-throated Vireo. A Red Fox, Spotted Turtles, and a Black Rat Snake were also seen plus numerous species of trees, wild flowers and ferns. Perhaps the highlight of the day was the finding of three Blue-gray Gnatcatcher nests and a Parula Warbler nest--all still being worked on. The Parula nest was first any of us (including the leader David Holmes) had ever seen. It was 50' up in an almost bare tree with a Gnatcatcher's nest perhaps 25' from it in another bare tree so both pairs could be watched from a vantage point. Both the bird banding by Kathy Klimkiewicz and the horseshoe-making demonstration by Tom Moyer were popular.

CALENDAR

PROGRAM

May 13, Thursday - Mrs. Oscar Carlson - "Mark Catesby, the Naturalist". This is an outstanding color film about one of America's early naturalists. It is one of the Williamsburg series of films and is highly recommended for children as well as adults: 7:45 P.M. at Swansfield Elementary School.

June 12, Saturday - Annual Picnic at Pat Jackson's on Trotter Rd.- The annual picnic is held in lieu of a June evening meeting. A map will be published in the June newsletter but for now reserves this late afternoon and early evening on your calendar. Bring own food, drink and utensils. Grills are furnished. Come any time after 4:00 P.M. and enjoy birding and wild flower watching (last year we found the Green Dragon, *Arizacma Dracontium*--a relative of the Jack-in-the-pulpit blooming along the river and a nest of baby rabbits). Lasts till dusk.

NOUNS FOR BIRDS

are you acquainted with the following English collective nouns for some common birds? (from Nov. 1975 and March 1976 issues of Organic Gardening)

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| cast of hawks | murder of crows | dool of turtledoves | walk of snipe |
| charm of goldfinches | skein of geese | maister of peacocks | murmuration of |
| exaltation of larks | watch of nightingales | siege of heron | starling |

Eileen and John Olegg have recently been appointed as co-Conservation Chairmen. They plan to do a monthly column in the newsletter spotlighting ideas, problems, sources of information, etc.

OLLEGG'S CONSERVATION CORNER

If you are an amateur ornithologist, botanist, entomologist and/or naturalist, then the Maryland Conservationist Magazine is a must! This black and white magazine features a variety of subject matter dealing with natural history and wildlife in Maryland. The "Ospreys of Petersons Point" is a feature article in the March/April '76 issue. The subscription fee of \$2.00 a year entitles you to 6 issues--a real bargain!

Mail your check to: Maryland Conservationist Magazine
Taxes State Office Building C-4
Annapolis, Md. 21401

Know and explore your state this year!

BOOK REVIEW

The Dictionary of American Bird Names. Ernest A. Choate. Gambit, Boston, 1973.
Illustrated. \$6.95.

What is a "timber doodle"? Why is the name "sora" unusual?

Here in one convenient bird-guide-sized volume is the answer to the "why?" of bird names.

All the birds on the American Check List are alphabetically arranged in two sections. The first section covers the origins and meanings of common names, including local and nicknames; the second, scientific names. The text is enlivened by comments and anecdotes.

A third section contains a biographical index of "bird people"--Audubon, Nuttall, et. al. Finally, there is a necessary English-Latin glossary. Illustrations are from Bewick's A History of British Birds.

* A "timber doodle" is a local name for woodcock. Sora is one of the few native American Indian names that have endured, although Whiskey Jack is close--it comes from the Algonquin Whiskatjan.

Rosamund Munro

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT PROTECTS SNAILS

The Interior Department recently put 32 species of snails on either the endangered or the threatened species list. Since the Endangered Species Act was passed in 1973, 139 species of mammals, birds, fish and reptiles have earned the dubious distinction of being named to the list. Since snails are a link in the food chain, eaten by both fish and birds, they are a helpful indicator of the overall health of rivers, prairies and forests. The step of adding them to the list gives them protection from collectors and prohibits federal agencies from funding projects (such as dams) that would harm them but habitat changes may still cause the demise of some species which exist in only one known area.

EXCHANGE - DON'T DISCARD

Feel free to bring your no-longer-wanted conservation or nature-oriented magazines, bulletins or newsletters to any meeting where they can be recycled to other readers.