

HOWARD

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

MAY - JUNE 1980 VOL VIII NO. 5

OFFICERS FOR 1980-81

The following officers were elected to lead the Howard County MOS chapter during the 1980-81 year:

President - Michael McClure, 531-6170
Vice-president - Steve Simon, 730-4619
Secretary - Carole Cleland, 730-2946
Treasurer - David Pardoe, 531-6452
State Trustee - Eileen Clegg, 730-4362

Telephone numbers are listed so that members may call any of them with suggestions for field trips, programs or other ideas.

The out-going officers and committee heads deserve the thanks of the membership for their fine leadership during the past year. Thanks are also due Max Casper, Elise Seay and Eva Sunell who served so capably as the Nominating Committee.

RECREATION EXPO JUNE 7

The Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks is sponsoring its second annual Recreation Expo at the Columbia Mall on June 7.

This is an opportunity for the public to become acquainted with leisure time activities available in the county. Our chapter will have a display; we will need individuals to oversee the exhibit, pass out brochures, and answer questions about the club. You don't need to be an expert birder so consider donating an hour of your time on Saturday, June 7. Most members who helped last year enjoyed the chance to chat with people interested in birds and found that the specimens attracted much favorable attention.

Call Eileen Clegg, 730-4362 to volunteer.

SPRING ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE DATES NEEDED FOR MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

Please note early arrival and late departure dates during the spring migration. If you do not submit these dates directly to Bob Ringler, please call Jo Solem, 725-5037, and she will forward them.

GRAPE JELLY MAY ATTRACT ORIOLES

A few of our members have enjoyed success attracting orioles during the winter by putting out quartered apples. Recently, Craig Tufts of the National Wildlife Federation suggested that it might be possible to attract them during the breeding season. He mentioned to your editor that an individual in Minnesota has had phenomenal success (seven breeding pairs in a few acres) by mixing the cheapest grape jelly obtainable half and half with water. When well mixed it is placed in a relatively straight-sided, low (no more than 2") glass container and set on a convenient platform, i.e. porch railing, open board feeder, outdoor table, or what have you. (The man who originated this used communion glasses but any low glass container should be satisfactory). Short pieces of sisal twine were placed in the immediate vicinity.

If any club members try this and find it successful in attracting orioles, please let Jo Solem know, 725-5037.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS PRESENTED DURING 1979-80

Each year the club uses its mounted birds, nests, and slide programs in presenting talks to local groups. This material is available to club members if they wish to use items in making their own presentations to clubs, schools, Scout troops, etc. to which they or their children belong.

Our thanks to the following individuals who presented one or more talks or demonstrations: David Holmes, Marcia Krishnamoorthy, Joanne Moroney, Rosamond Munro and Jo Solem. Presentations were made to the following groups: Brownie Troop #1283 (introductory talk, bird walk and banding demonstration at Camp Ilchester), Cub Scout Den #4, Cub Scout Den #3, Pack #817, Cub Scout and Webelo Pack #601, ninth and tenth grade biology classes at Centennial High School (3 presentations), Cub Scout Pack #817, Children & Company, Girl Scout Troop #1397 (2 presentations), Howard County Garden Club, Cross County Garden Club, Phelps Luck Elementary School (fourth grade in several presentations), and the Carroll Garden Club. In addition specimens will be used in the June mall exhibit. Talks were presented to a minimum of 514 people. Individuals willing to participate by giving programs are always welcome. See President Mike McClure or call him at 531-6170.

FOOD FOR A HAWK - Bea Newkirk

One morning a few years ago I heard a loud call coming from a large mulberry tree on the edge of our swampy woods. Through my binoculars I could see a Red-shouldered Hawk perched there. He would sit looking from side to side for what seemed to me a very long time and then eventually glide through the trees and disappear. Each day he would return to the same spot, but in all the time I observed him I never saw him drop to the ground to obtain any food, nor did I see him bring food to his perch. One morning, however, I realized that he was attempting to eat something as he sat on a branch of the tree. Since I couldn't get a good view from where I was I decided to creep closer in an attempt to identify what he was eating. Apparently I came too close because he rose from his perch and flew off letting his prey fall to the ground. I was surprised to find that the catch that he had hastily dropped was a long loaf of French bread!

ACTIVE WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH NEST LOCATED IN HOWARD COUNTY - V. Krishnamoorthy

I found an active nest of the White-breasted Nuthatch in June of 1978 which seems to be a first record for Howard County.

The nest was about 20 feet from the ground in a natural cavity of a dead tree. The nest was easily located because of the incessant noise made by three young and the vociferous response of both parents. Both adults were observed feeding the young. On approaching the nest they performed a queer ritual. With a bill full of insects they would sweep their heads in an arc before proceeding to feed the babies. The young were independent in four weeks.

The nest tree was located in a deciduous woods near an unnamed creek at Hydronautics on Pindell School Road. The tree was cut down in 1979 and a house now stands on the site. Within a radius of one-quarter mile other species successfully nesting included a Hairy Woodpecker, Kentucky Warbler, and Louisiana Waterthrush.

MEMBERSHIP LIST

Add to or change the following items on the 1979-80 Howard MOS Membership List: John Bell, 730-8334; Lynne Clark to Lynne Clary; Frances J. Ehlers, 854-0234; Milton Glanz, 730-4396; Eva Sunell, 995-0029; Georgia Eacker to Mr. & Mrs. James Eacker & Douglas; Mr. & Mrs. Harry Banks, 6666 Downdale Place, Columbia, Md. 21045; Mr. & Mrs. Mort Silverman, 10519 William Tell Lane, Columbia, Md. 21044.

BARN OWLS HAD A SUCCESSFUL YEAR IN 1979

For a number of years Woody Martin, a biologist at the Patuxent Research Center, has banded the young Barn Owls living in a barn near the Nahrgang's. Last year for the first time in our observations the pair raised two broods, both of which were banded. The population of small rodents was high so with an ample food supply the first brood (banded June 7) contained seven young while the second brood (banded Nov. 5) contained five young.

Each year we expect the barn to be razed as part of the development of King's Contrivance but it is still standing. Although no owls have been observed during the first weeks of April, there is still a possibility that they will return. If you would be interested in being notified when (and if) a banding takes place, call Jo Solem 725-5037 or Fran Nahrgang 997-7985. Any banding takes place between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m.

HOWARD MOS MEMBERS SERVING

David Pardoe, new Howard County MOS treasurer, has recently been named editor of Maryland Out-of-doors, the publication of the Maryland Wildlife Federation. Martha Chestem has consented to serve another term as Vice-president for the state MOS organization and will once again be responsible for planning the annual convention. Jo Solem has been appointed editor of Sialia, the quarterly journal of the North American Bluebird Society.

C A L E N D A R

Listed below are programs and field trips for the remainder of our calendar year. Meeting place is the Grempler Realty Building on Little Patuxent Parkway in Columbia, unless otherwise indicated. From the south entrance of Columbia, the building is located left, beyond Symphony Woods and the Fire House, but before you reach Howard Community College (across from the Wilson Garden Center).

PROGRAMS - PLEASE NOTE DATE CAREFULLY - 7:45 p.m.

May 15 - Thur. - "Tepuis, Todys, and Toucans" - David Holmes. For the many members who have been privileged to hear David speak you know you will be treated to an informative and entertaining account of his birding trip to Venezuela. This country is definitely one of the best in the Americas for birds.

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trip chairman is Chuck Dupree, 796-1086. Severe weather conditions may force trip cancellation; if in doubt, contact Chuck or trip leader.

May 9-11 **MOS STATE CONVENTION IN OCEAN CITY, MD.** - Birding from early morning till after dark if you so choose with a variety of fine leaders. Several dozen field trips to a wide variety of habitats. Shorebirds, marsh birds, migrants, winter stragglers and others make for a long species list. Members should have received registration information by mail. If you have further questions contact Marty Chestem, 730-1527.

May 11 - Sun. **BIRDS AND WILD FLOWERS ALONG THE PATAPSCO RIVER - 1:00 p.m.**
Leaders: Steve Simon & Sarah Haviland. Walk the Daniels area of Patapsco State Park looking for spring migrants and wild flowers (it's also a great area for ferns). Steve, 730-4619. The path is wide and the walking easy. If you won't be able to attend the convention catch the peak of warbler migration (Yellow-throated Warblers nest along the Patapsco) and the last of the mid-spring flowers on a cool north-facing slope. Bring guides, binoculars and hand lens.

SUMMER BOOKSTORE - Brenda Ericsson

Requests for books during the summer can be filled by calling me at 730-3563. If items are not in stock they can be ordered. I can obtain almost any natural history book title as well as records and some check lists. Be sure you have all the necessary field guides BEFORE you leave for a vacation.

1980 MARKS SIXTY YEARS AS A BIRDER FOR ROSAMOND MUNRO

One of Howard County's most enthusiastic naturalists is this year marking sixty years as an active birder. Although the first bird she recorded was listed in 1919 (a House Sparrow), she received her first bird guide as a Christmas gift from relatives on December 25, 1920. It was a pocket-sized guide (probably by Reed) with colored illustrations. This early birding was done in her native Nova Scotia with the encouragement of her father. She has been a resident of the Fulton area of Howard County since 1947 and for many years was one of the few active birders in the county.

BIRD NAMES - SWALLOWS

Fourth in a series. For bibliography see Vol. VIII, No. 2 of HOWARD.

SWALLOWS - Hirundinidae

Hirundinidae - from "hirundo" a Latin word used by Pliny for "swallow"; also from Anglo-Saxon "swalewe"

Tree Swallow - Iridoprocne bicolor

Iridoprocne - from Greek words "iridos" for "of the rainbow" and Procne, who was changed into a swallow

bicolor - Latin for "two-colored," a reference to its dark upper plumage & white underparts

Tree - indicates its preference for natural cavities & abandoned woodpecker holes for nesting

Other Common Names - White-breasted Swallow; Blue-back Swallow; Stump Swallow; Eave Swallow; White-bellied Swallow

Bank Swallow - Riparia riparia

Riparia - from Latin "ripa" meaning "bank of a stream"

Bank - frequent nest site is stream bank

Other Common Names - Sand Swallow; Sand Martin; Bank Martin

Rough-winged Swallow - Stelgidopteryx ruficollis

Stelgidopteryx - Greek for "scraper-winged" for the stiff recurved hooks on the first primary feathers; therefore "rough-winged"

ruficollis - Latin for "rufous-necked" a puzzling reference because there is no red in the plumage

Other Common Names - Bridge Swallow; Rough-wing

Barn Swallow - Hirundo rustica

Hirundo - see above

rustica - "of the country" from Latin

Barn - a favorite nest site tho not limited to that location

Other Common Names - Barn-loft Swallow; Fork-tailed Swallow

Cliff Swallow - Petrochelidon pyrrhonota

Petrochelidon - Greek for "rock swallow"

pyrrhonota - also Greek meaning "russet-backed"

Cliff - in some areas (not Howard County), cliffs are a favorite nest site

Other Common Names - Eave Swallow; Jug Swallow; Barn Swallow; Mud Swallow; Moon-fronted Swallow; Crescent Swallow

Purple Martin - Progne subis

Progne - Latin for Procne who was transformed into a swallow

subis - Pliny claims it is the name of a bird which broke eagle eggs. The reason for attributing this characteristic to martins is unknown--and unfair!

Purple - a reference to the purplish-black plumage

Other Common Names - Black Martin; House Martin

CORRECTION - - -

The Bird Names section entitled WOODPECKERS in the previous issue of HOWARD (VOL. XIII, NO. 4) inadvertently contained errors because it did not reflect the most recent name changes. The changes with their meanings follow. The editor wishes to thank Chandler S. Robbins for graciously providing the corrections. These changes, as he pointed out, were the result largely of research by Dr. Lester L. Short, Jr. and were accepted in 1976 by the American Ornithologists' Union.

Red-bellied Woodpecker - Melanerpes carolinus

Melanerpes - Greek word for "black creeper" - now in the same genus as Red-headed Woodpecker; this term is appropriate for the Red-headed but not for the Red-bellied

Hairy Woodpecker - Picoides villosus

Downy Woodpecker - P. pubescens

Picoides - a combination of the Latin word for woodpecker "picus" and a contraction of two Greek words, "o" meaning "the" and eidos" for "like" to get "oidos" that means "resembling"

pubescens & villosus - Choate translated both villosus and pubescens as meaning "hairy," but there is a distinction here that has long been recognized by botanists. The glossary of the authoritative Gray's Manual of Botany (8th ed., 1950) defines "pubescent" as "Covered with hairs, especially if short, soft and down-like," and "villous" as "Bearing long and soft hairs."

Chan added a note which our readers might find interesting.

I also disagree with Choate's translation of varius, the specific name of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Choate says this Latin word means " 'variegated' for the mixed plumage." Instead, I favor H. C. Oberholser's interpretation (in South Carolina Birdlife by Sprunt and Chamberlain) that it means "different" and refers to the tremendous geographical variation in color pattern of this species. Some of the western birds are so different that they are considered by many authorities to warrant separation into a different species.

Howard County Bird Club
10617 Graeloch Rd.
Laurel, MD 20810