

HOWARD

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
MAY COUNT EDITION 1982
VOL. 10 NO. 5



THIS YEAR'S MAY COUNT IS SET FOR SATURDAY MAY 1.

Every year since 1948 members and friends of the Maryland Ornithological Society have conducted an annual May count. No other state can equal this record of spring migration counts taken on a single day each year. The results of this group effort are compiled and published in Maryland Birdlife.

All members of the ~~Howard County Chapter and interested friends~~ are invited to participate. This is an excellent opportunity to get to know other chapter members (and there is a tally rally at the end of the day). Inexperienced birders are encouraged to participate, and the compiler will try to team them up with more experienced birders. (I personally have learned an immense amount about birding from going out on counts like this in a small group with more experienced colleagues.) Participation is also sought from people who will watch their feeders. It is not necessary to spend the entire day on the count--part-day participation is also encouraged.

The compiler for the Howard County May Count is:

Paul A. Zucker
14104 Castle Blvd. Apt. 403
Silver Spring, MD 20904
890-6521

(please note that this is a new address and phone number). The areas to be birded and the groupings of observers into parties will be assigned by the compiler. Whenever possible, requests will be honored. (There are many parts of the county which are yet to be covered.) It is necessary for all participants (including feeder watchers) to contact the compiler during the two weeks prior to the count.

Completed tally sheets on the official forms (plus descriptions of unusual sightings) can be turned in to the compiler at the tally rally or mailed to him no later than the Wednesday following the count. Your cooperation on this matter is especially appreciated since the state organization has an early deadline for the compiler's report. For your convenience, two copies of the official tally form are enclosed in this mailing.

called Paul
4/22/82

SPECIFIC REQUESTS AND HINTS

The following specific requests and hints are offered in an effort to streamline and further organize the May Count. Your cooperation and any suggestions are appreciated.

1. Before starting it is a good idea to develop a strategy for covering the assigned area. Some birders will even scout the area a few days or a week in advance.
2. On the count day it is recommended that you start out as early as possible. Picnic lunches are a good idea. One person in each party should be designated as the record keeper. He can start out by listing the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all the participants in the party.
3. When you enter your assigned area, please record: STARTING ODOMETER _____

STARTING TIME _____.

4. It is necessary to keep track of party hours and party miles separately for time spent in the car, on foot, or with other means of transportation. Observers within talking or shouting distance of each other are one party. Thus if a party of three people spends an hour together on foot, then one party hour should be notated. If, however, one party member is separated from the others for half of that hour, then a total of one and a half party hours should be tallied. I find it easiest to keep track of the hours spent on foot by making a notation to the nearest quarter hour each time I get back in the car.

PARTY HOURS SPENT ON FOOT:

5. It is also important to keep track of time off. Time spent on lunch or on travel outside the assigned area is time off. (Such time and mileage are excluded from the reported totals.)

TALLY OF TIME OFF:

Mileage outside the assigned area (odometer readings) also needs to be tallied.

6. Count all birds. Large flocks can be estimated (don't be timid--most people underestimate). Although undue effort should not be spent chasing after common birds, it is important to count all the common birds seen.
7. Two copies of the tally sheet have been provided so that one may be used for scratch if desired. Personally, I like to use a notebook. When I see a few birds of a species, I record it using hash marks. When I see a large flock, I write the total number and then circle it. It is a good idea to have extra paper along for making notes about unusual sightings. If something unusual is seen, it is useful to make the appropriate notes on the spot. (See the procedures for unusual sightings and a list of species which are unusual on the page following the check lists.)
8. When you leave your assigned area please record: FINAL ODOMETER:

FINAL TIME:

9. Party hours by car can be figured by subtracting the total hours on foot (or by other means of transportation) from the total elapsed time. If the party split up at various times, more detailed records are needed than indicated above. Party miles on foot can be estimated using an average speed for birders of one mile per hour.
10. If you see birds outside of your assigned area, please make notes on a separate sheet of paper. This information should not be added to your tally but should be given to the person responsible for the area where the birds were seen.
11. At the end of the day, please fill out both sides of the official tally sheet and give it (or mail it within a few days) to the compiler. Also, please indicate the assigned area. Descriptions of unusual sightings need to accompany the tally sheet.

UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

All unusual sightings need to be documented. Such documentation should include:

- Name of person making the identification,
- Names of all others who saw the bird,
- When and where the bird was seen,
- How far away the bird was (approximately),
- What the lighting conditions were,
- What the bird was doing and how long it was observed,
- What field marks and coloration were observed,
- and any other information that pertained to the decision as to the species of the bird in question.

The following species are unusual for Howard County May Counts and need to be documented. First, all species not on the official check list (enclosed in this mailing) are considered unusual. Second, all the following species, which have been seen only occasionally on Howard County May Counts, are considered unusual and should be documented:

Horned Grebe, Pied Billed Grebe, Double Crested Cormorant, Cattle Egret, Black or Yellow Crowned Night Heron, American Bittern, American Black Duck, Gadwall, Green Winged Teal, Blue Winged Teal, American Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, Canvasback, Greater or Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Common Merganser, Red Breasted Merganser, Northern Harrier, Merlin, Wild Turkey, Sora, American Coot, Wilson's Phalarope, Short or Long Billed Dowitcher, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper, White Rumped Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Herring Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Black Billed Cuckoo, Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, Chuck Will's Widow, Common Nighthawk, Red Headed Woodpecker, Yellow Bellied Sapsucker, Willow Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, Olive Sided Flycatcher, Black Capped Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, Marsh Wren, Swainson's Thrush, Gray Cheeked Thrush, Golden Crowned Kinglet, Water Pipit, Loggerhead Shrike, Philadelphia Vireo, Chestnut Sided Warbler, Bay Breasted Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Canada Warbler, Rusty Blackbird, Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Dickcissel, Pine Siskin, American Tree Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, and any other species you suspect may never have been seen on the Howard May Count.

MAY COUNT TALLY POTLUCK TO BE HELD AT DON & JAN RANDLE'S

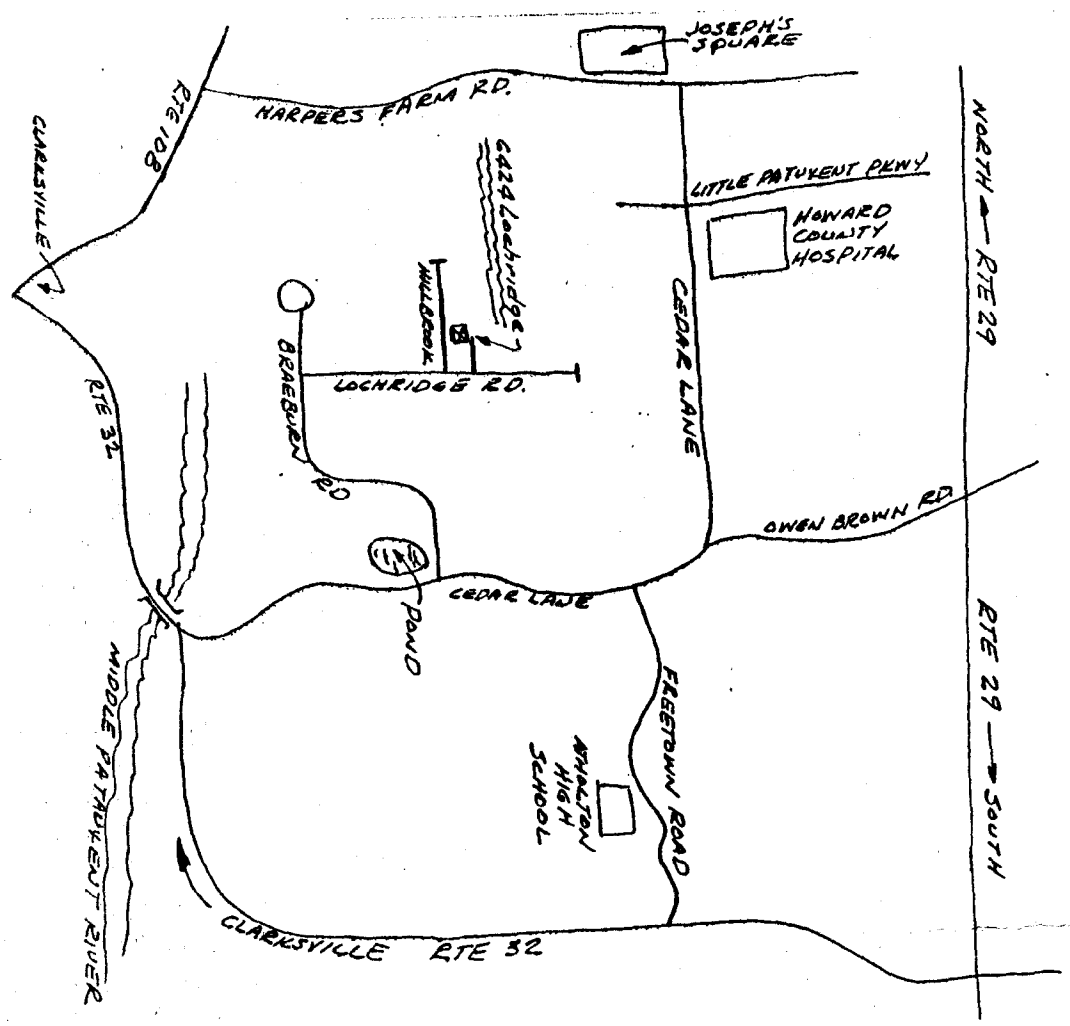
Although it is not necessary to attend the tally in order to participate in the May Count, many birders find that the get-together in the evening is a pleasant and satisfying way to end the day. Share your sightings, find out what others have seen, and perhaps relate the thrill of seeing some species for the very first time. Anyone who has participated in the Count is welcome. Call Jan Randle, 531-6296, to let her know the number coming and your choice of food to share. Counters begin gathering any time after 5:30 p.m.; dinner usually begins between 6:30-7:00 p.m.

If you are unable to attend the tally, mail your results promptly so that Paul can meet the state deadline with his compilation. All participants will receive a copy of the results and highlights.

A map to aid you in locating the Randle's is printed on the reverse side of this sheet.

The drawing of the Black-and-white Warbler is by Charlotte Bunting who was a chapter member before moving to Baltimore a number of years ago.

Donald & Janet Randle
6424 Lochridge Road
Telephone 531-6296



Howard County MOS
10617 Graeloach Rd.
Laurel, MD 20707



May Count
Information

