



Vol 11, No 6 1983  
May Count Edition

# Howard

A Chapter of the  
Maryland Ornithological Society



MAY COUNT IS SATURDAY, MAY 7, 1983 - Paul Zucker

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 at the optional tally rally at the end of the day. Inexperienced birders are encouraged to participate; the compiler will try to team them with more experienced birders. (Personally, I 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 counting (although many people do)--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  
Telephone 890-6521

The areas to be birded and the groupings of observers into parties will be assigned by the compiler although, 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.

Due to the very early deadline for the compiler's report set by the state organization, ALL tally sheets must be completed and turned in to the compiler at the tally rally following the count. All participants are strongly urged to attend the tally rally, but, if you are unable to attend, please arrange for someone to bring in your completed tally sheet or arrange with the compiler to phone in results. A copy of the official tally sheet is enclosed. All results must be reported on this sheet; both sides must be completed. All verification of unusual sightings should be turned in with the tally sheet.

## SPECIFIC REQUESTS AND HINTS

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

1. Before starting it is a good idea to develop a strategy for covering the assigned area. Some birders will "scout" the area a few days or a week in advance.
2. On the count day start as early as possible. Picnic lunches are a good idea. One person in each party should be designated as the record keeper. He should start by listing the names, addresses and phone numbers of all participants in his party.

3. When you enter your assigned area, please record STARTING ODOMETER  
and 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 into the car.

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.) 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 birds seen. Don't ignore House Sparrows and European Starlings.

7. For keeping notes in the field, I like to use a notebook. Final totals, times and miles are then transcribed to the tally sheet which is enclosed. 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 section below entitled UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS for procedures and species to be documented.)

8. When you leave your assigned area please record FINAL ODOMETER.

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 as indicated under 4. 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 to the compiler. Also, please indicate the assigned area and attach descriptions of unusual sightings. All tally sheets must be received by the compiler the evening of the count in order to be counted.

#### 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,
- Any other information pertaining to the decision of the species of the bird in question.

## UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS (continued)

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 on three or fewer Howard County May Counts in the last 10 years 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, Cooper's Hawk, Merlin, Wild Turkey, Sora, American Coot, Wilson's Phalarope, Short or Long-billed Dowitcher, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Herring Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Black-billed Cuckoo, Common Screech 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, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Canada Warbler, Rusty Blackbird, Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Dickcissel, American Tree Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow and any other species you suspect may never have been seen on the Howard County May Count.

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## 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 one of the best birding days of the year. It provides an excellent opportunity to share your best sightings, find out what others saw, and perhaps relate the thrill of seeing some species for the very first time. Anyone who participates in the Count is welcome at the tally (including feeder watchers). 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.

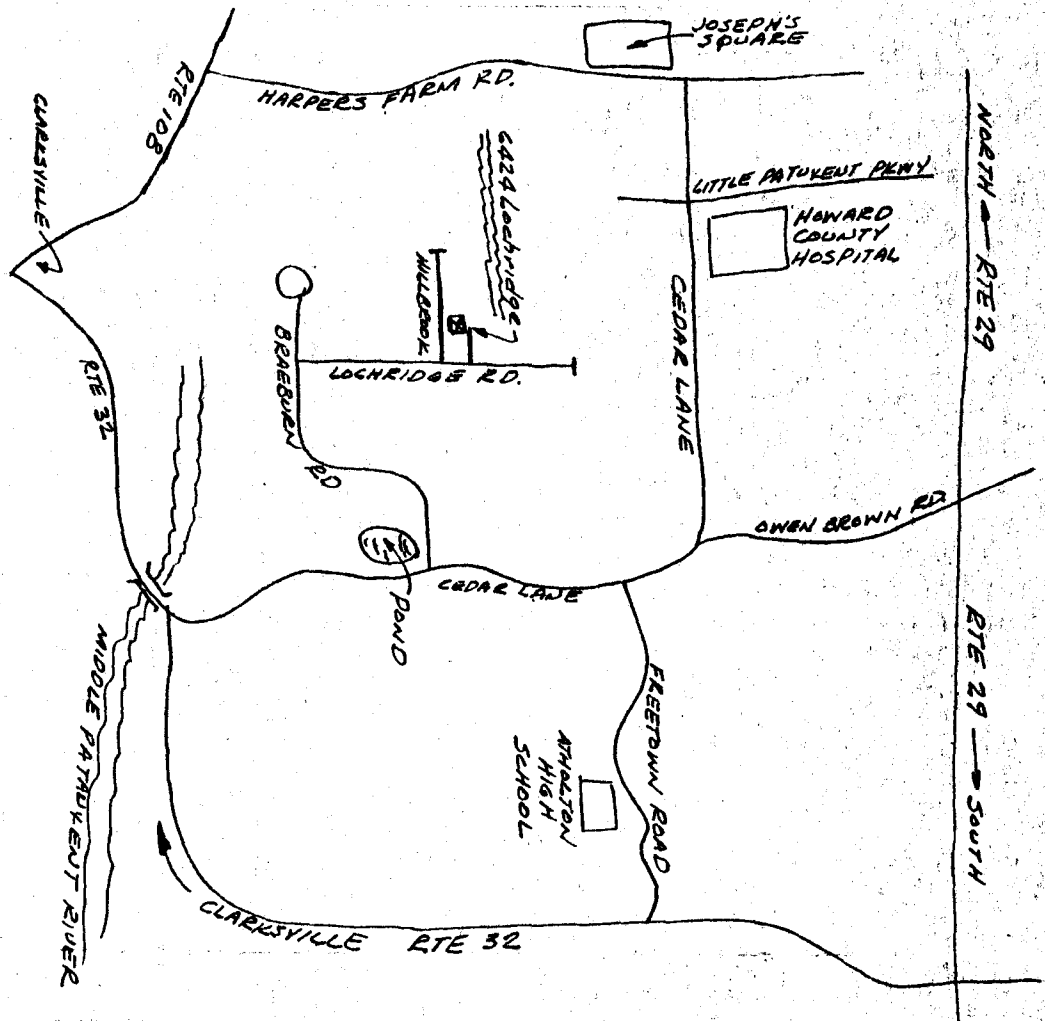
If you are unable to attend the tally, arrange to drop off your results at the tally or arrange with Paul to phone results to him either at the tally or later in the evening at home. This will enable him to meet the state deadline with his compilation. All participants will receive a copy of the results and highlights.

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

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The drawing of the Common Blue Violet on the front advertising the wildflower workshop is the work of Grazina McClure.

Donald & Janet Randle  
6424 Lochridge Road  
Telephone 531-6296



**PART-TIME MOS EXECUTIVE SECRETARY POSITION OPEN - Martha Chestem**

I hope the Howard County Chapter has a big representation at the MOS State Convention May 13-15. We did well last year. As our chapter continues to grow in numbers and enthusiasm, we can do a lot toward making the convention even more fun and more successful than it already is.

An important business matter to be accomplished at this annual event is the election of officers. This year I have been nominated as President for the coming year. Some of you may not know that one of the duties of the President is to select an Executive Secretary. This is a paid position and, of course, is a part-time position with most of the work being done at home. (It does require attending a couple of Saturday meetings during the year.) It helps a lot if the President and Secretary live in the same part of the state (in fact, it is almost a "must") which is why I'm hoping there might be someone with the necessary qualifications and desire within our chapter here in Howard County. I'd like to hear from anyone interested in taking on these duties and will be happy to explain what is expected and the salary. An ability to type is about the only special skill required (the Society has a great IEM that will be loaned to the Secretary). Call me, Martha Chestem, at 730-1527, for further details.

**Rain or  
shine**



# **SPRING WILDFLOWER WORKSHOP**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 30 '83**

**HOWARD CO. LIBRARY, COLUMBIA, MD. 9:15 AM - 4:45 PM**

ENJOY a day with the spring wildflowers: **FIELD TRIPS, SLIDE SHOWS, DISPLAYS.** Activities rain or shine. You may bring lunch or eat nearby at the Mall. Complimentary coffee, cider and cookies available at the meeting room. **NO ADMISSION CHARGE--COME FOR ALL DAY OR DROP IN AND OUT AS YOU WISH.**

## MORNING

- ✓ **KING'S CONTRIVANCE, LITTLE PATUXENT FLOODPLAIN 9:30-11:30 a.m. Leader: Eva Sunell**
- ✓ **BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO WILDFLOWERS 11:00 a.m. by Jo Solem. Library Meeting Room**
- ✓ **SAVAGE MILL TRAIL AND SAVAGE PARK 9:45 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Bring lunch and beverage. Leaders: Bob Solem and Bill Eckert. Below confluence of Little and Middle Patuxent Rivers at the Fall Line. Upland. Interesting mix of plants. Bill Eckert (Howard Co. Parks and Recreation) will have brochures and will talk about the historic aspects of the mill town visible along the trail and the Bollman Truss Bridge at the entrance.**

## AFTERNOON

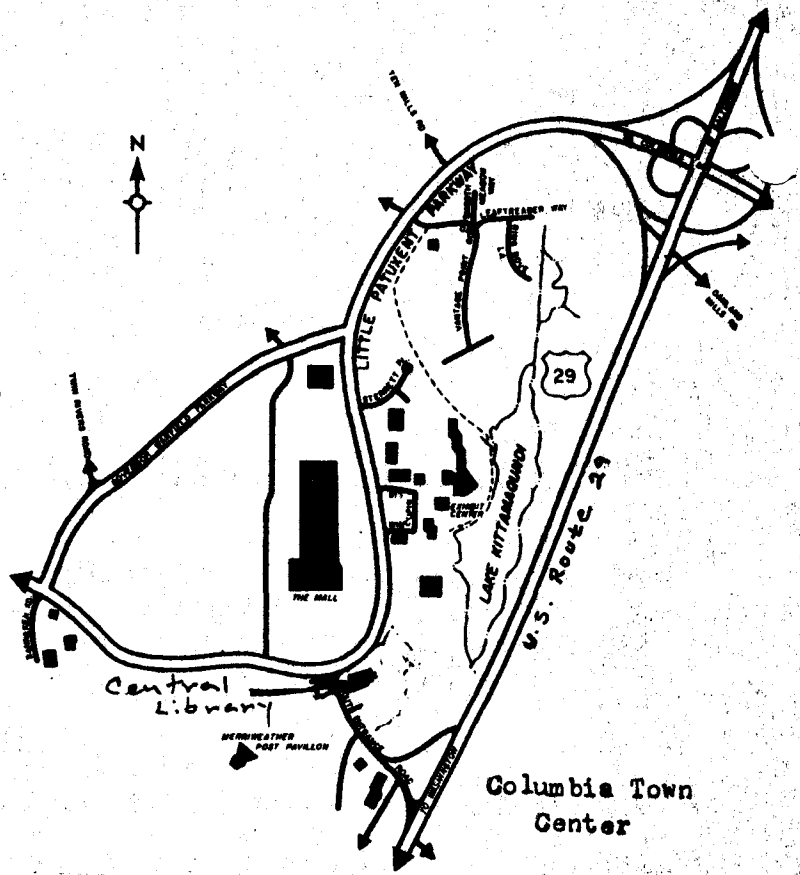
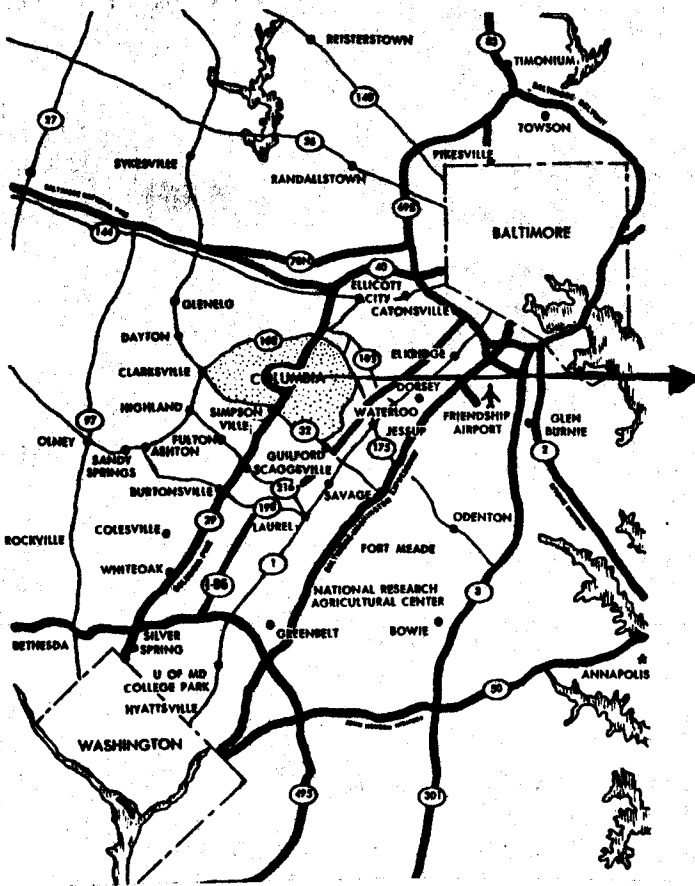
- ✓ **BEGINNER'S TRIP, BRAEBURN AREA OF MIDDLE PATUXENT RIVER 1:15-3:30 p.m. Leader: Jo Solem**
- ✓ **DANIELS AREA OF PATAPSCO STATE PARK 1:30-4:00 p.m. Leader: Chuck Dupree. Steep, north facing slope with Dutchman's Breeches, Trailing Arbutus and unusual ferns. Wide flat path. Good birding too!**
- ✓ **"JEWELS IN YOUR GARDEN" 1:45 p.m. Library Meeting Room. Plantings to attract wildlife. Slides lent by Prince George's Audubon Society.**
- ✓ **GARDENING TO ATTRACT WILDLIFE About 3:00-4:15 p.m. (This field trip follows the slide show above). Visit Alice Grant's garden in Columbia, a National Wildlife Federation Backyard Habitat which has been featured in a national magazine.**
- ✓ **"SPRINGTIME IN HOWARD COUNTY" 3:45 p.m. by Elise Seay. Slide show of Howard County Spring scenes. Photography by Howard Co. MGS members. Library Meeting Room.**

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The Howard County Chapter Bookstore will be at the workshop with a good selection of natural history materials attractively priced. Also an opportunity to buy T-SHIRTS and SWEATSHIRTS with the GOLDFINCH logo. Other wildflower items will be featured.

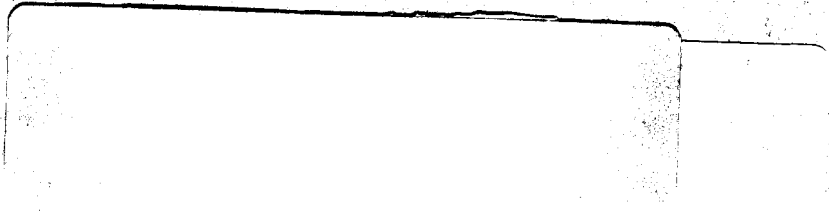
This activity is sponsored by the Howard County Bird Club, a chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society. For information call Marty Cheston -730-1527 / Jo Solem -725-5037

**REMEMBER: This workshop is for everyone...Come and bring the family and a few friends.**



Additional parking at The Columbia Mall.

Howard County Chapter MOS  
 10617 Graeoch Rd.  
 Laurel, MD 20707



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 SATURDAY, APRIL 30, 1983

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