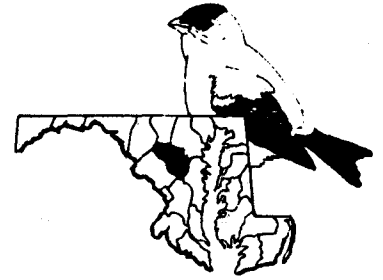




Vol 14, No 3  
Jan-Feb 1986

# Howard

A Chapter of the  
Maryland Ornithological Society



## ANNUAL POTLUCK, SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 1986 FEATURES FOOD, FUN, AND SLIDES

Mark your 1986 calendars so that you don't miss the annual potluck which features an abundance of good food and slides taken by members. It will be held at the Florence Bain Senior Center behind Joseph Square on the west side of Columbia.

The club furnishes eating utensils, beverages, social hour snacks, rolls, and condiments; members attending bring a salad, vegetable, main dish, or dessert. IT IS NECESSARY TO RESERVE SPACE so adequate arrangements can be made and a balance of food choices planned. Call Monika Botsai 465-5758 or Grazina McClure 531-2780 no later than Tuesday, February 25th to let either of them know the number of people in your party as well as the type of food you will bring. Children, accompanied by an adult, are welcome. Can't cook? Adjustments can be made.

Food is only half the fun. If you are a photographer, bring along some nature-related slides to share (maximum of 15 minutes worth) and be part of the program. An attractive item is auctioned--this year it is a framed print of the Philippine Eagle, an endangered bird of prey. The print was given to the club when we made a donation for its support. Susan Rose, artist, professional framer, and a member of the chapter, generously framed it without charge. Door prizes include bird seed, an item or two from the club bookstore, and a print from the Nature Nook. (Donations for door prizes are welcome.) The social hour begins at 6:30 p.m. with dinner at 7:00. Be sure any dishes and the serving implements which should accompany them are marked with your name.

The Florence Bain Senior Center is located at 5470 Beaverkill Road which is off Harper's Farm Road, one block east of Cedar Lane. There is ample parking.

## HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB DONATES FUNDS

At the November meeting the Board designated the following donations: MOS Breeding Bird Atlas Project \$400.00 (which will be increased by a matching grant); \$250.00 to the Peregrine Fund headquartered at Cornell University; \$150.00 to Jane Zuke, a local rehabilitator; and \$500.00 to the Committee to Preserve Assateague Island, Inc. The letter received from President Judy Johnson of the latter organization indicates the timeliness of our gift. Presentation of the check to the Peregrine Fund was made by Martha Chestem to John Barber at the December meeting who spoke that evening about Scarlett, the Peregrine who attracted national attention by nesting on the USF&G building in downtown Baltimore. John was thrilled by the generosity of our gift and indicated to Marty that it would be matched by USF&G which made it even more valuable.



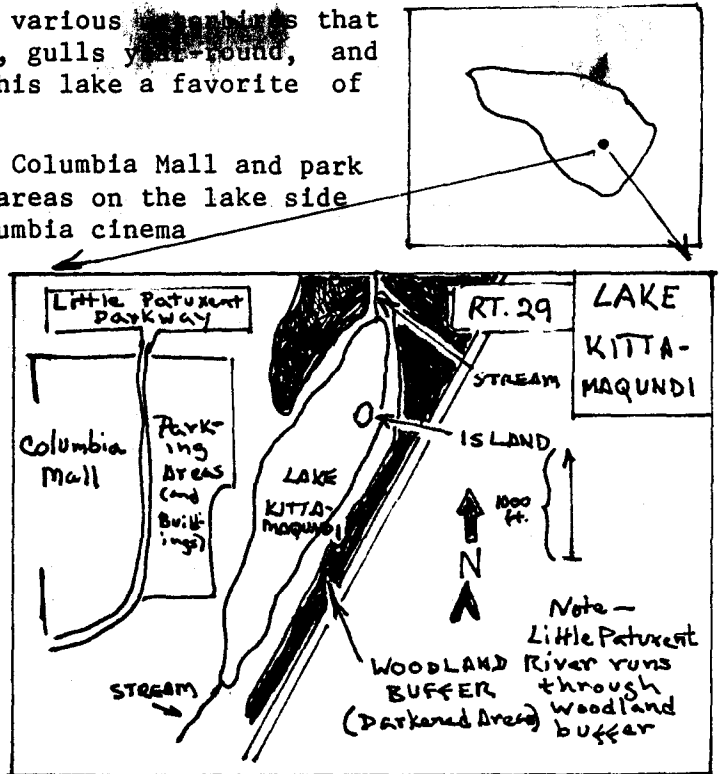
DEADLINE FOR MARCH-APRIL NEWSLETTER IS FEBRUARY 15TH. NEWSLETTER ITEMS SHOULD BE MAILED OR PHONED TO JO SOLEM, 10617 GRAELOCH RD., LAUREL, MD 20707; TEL. 725-5037.

## BIRDING "HOT SPOTS" IN HOWARD COUNTY - CHRIS LUDWIG - LAKE KITTAMAQUUNDI

Lake Kittamaquundi is well known for various species that frequent the lake. Waterfowl in winter, gulls year-round, and occasionally more unusual species make this lake a favorite of county birders.

The logistics: Simply drive to the Columbia Mall and park in the lots opposite the mall's parking areas on the lake side of Little Patuxent Parkway (near the Columbia cinema for example). Walk to the lake front and survey the water area from the paved path which lines the west side of the lake. To enjoy land birding, cross the stream at either end of the lake--that on the southwest side can be tricky, especially after a rain.

If you want to confine your birding to county limits, two good species can often be found here. Hooded Mergansers are seen with great regularity from November through March. Look on the north side of the island which seems to be a favorite spot for them. Laughing Gulls are uncommon in the county, but they have been seen several times on this lake and are to be looked for in the flock that frequents the dock area or the shallows near the Columbia Inn.



The rarest bird seen so far on Lake Kittamaquundi was the Red Phalarope (briefly two) observed from October 1-12, 1982, at the north end of the lake. It pays to watch any lake with regularity because storms, fronts, and wind shifts can cause major population changes overnight. Mid-winter-early spring and autumn-early winter are the periods of greatest turnover.

The following are some birds to watch for at Lake Kittamaquundi:

- 1) Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Common Goldeneye, and other waterfowl. Open water from late October through March, sometimes later.
- 2) Pied-billed Grebe. Watch for this small diver in open water from October through March.
- 3) Belted Kingfisher. Can be seen perched or in flight year-round at water's edge, usually on the east side of the lake.
- 4) Great Blue Heron. Look along the shorelines year-round (except when the lake is frozen). Easily overlooked despite its size.
- 5) Green-backed Heron, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper. Look around shorelines from May through September.
- 6) Gulls. Ring-billed are, by far, the most common but occasional Herrings mix with the flock. Check for the unusual Laughing Gull; there is always a possibility that other, more rare, gulls may show up. September through April.
- 7) Canada Goose. There are geese on the lake all year, largest flock in fall.

Thanks especially to Marty Chestem and Jo Solem for highlights on this lake. The diversity of species is testament to the ability of birds to tolerate close quarters with human habitats: highways, parking lots, and shopping malls. The business districts of few cities can offer the variety of birdlife that can be observed on Lake Kittamaquundi over the course of a year.

CALENDAR OF PROGRAMS, FIELD TRIPS, AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Programs are held at Longfellow Elementary School, 5470 Hesperus Dr., Columbia, MD. Meeting is cancelled if schools are closed for any reason. Hospitality session at 7:30 p.m. Meeting/program begins at 8:00 p.m. Club bookstore opens at 7:30 p.m. Heat conservation in effect during winter months; dress accordingly.

Field trips leave from Gremler Realty parking lot (across from the Flier building on Little Patuxent Parkway in Columbia) unless otherwise listed. Carpooling is encouraged with riders sharing the cost of gas and tolls. Dress for field work with stout, reasonably waterproof footwear and layers of clothes. Trips do not always follow paths. No pets. Leaders may cancel due to inclement weather. If you have questions, contact leaders whose phone numbers are listed or Field Trip Chairman Chris Ludwig at 796-8373, evenings.

JAN. 9 - OLD-FASHIONED MOVIE NIGHT: "Time for Survival," a justification for attempting to save endangered species, along with "Kirtland's Warbler," a bird which has a highly specialized habitat and is frequently parasitized by the Brown-headed Cowbird. The Program Committee hopes to have an update on several endangered species Patuxent Refuge is working with. Will there be popcorn? Of course!

JAN. 14 - BY-LAWS MEETING - Longfellow Elementary School, 7:30 p.m. Try to finish Tuesday work on revision of by-laws. Note day and date.

JAN. 23 - BOARD MEETING - 7:30 p.m. All officers and committee chairmen. *at Solems*

JAN. 25 - SEED SALE PICKUP. 8:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. See attached brochure.

JAN. 26 - WINTER HABITAT WALK - Co-sponsored with Howard Co. Rec. & Parks. David Sunday Force Park. Leaders: Bill Eckert, 992-2464 (days) and Chuck Dupree, 796-1086 (evenings). Meet at 12:30 p.m. at Gremler or at the park at 1:00 p.m. off Rt. 40 on Turf Valley Rd. about 1/4 mile on right at bridge.



FEB. 8 - WINTER NATURE HIKE - Hollofield Section of Patapsco State Park. Leader: Saturday Chris Ludwig, 796-8373. Check the state of winter weeds, ferns, and birds. Chris will lead another trip later in the year to this botanically fascinating area. See what it offers in winter. Meet at Gremler at 1:00p.m.

FEB. 13 - CAVITY NESTING BIRDS OF HOWARD COUNTY. Panel discussion and movie. Are Thursday cavity nesters threatened? How do we find them? What can we do to protect them? Exhibits and pictures along with the new Berlet film "Bluebirds: Bring Them Back."



FEB. 22 - FEEDER TRIP: HOWARD COUNTY. Leader: Spud Loomis, 730-2152. Meet at Saturday Gremler at 1:00 p.m. to spend a few hours checking feeders in the county. By this time, much of the natural food supply is exhausted and severe weather often brings in some interesting species. Good way to learn identification of common species and pick up ideas for your own feeding area. Thanks to Don and Martha Waugh, Jane Farrell, Alice and Clif Grant, and Helen Zeichner who were the stops on our December 15th feeder trip.



FEB. 27 - BOARD MEETING - 7:30 p.m. All officers and committee chairmen.

MARCH 1 - ANNUAL POTLUCK AND SLIDE NIGHT - Florence Bain Senior Center. Call Monika Saturday Botsai 465-5758 or Grazina McClure 531-2780 by Tuesday, February 25th to reserve space and make food choice. 6:30 p.m. social hour: 7:00 dinner.

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HAVE YOU EVER HAD A YEN TO RUN A BOOKSTORE? THE CLUB IS LOOKING FOR SOMEONE (OR TWO) TO BE THE MANAGER AT MEETINGS AND SEED SALES. If you are interested, call John Clegg, evenings, 730-4362.

## A RARE OPPORTUNITY - MIKE AND GRAZINA McCLURE

While working outside last fall, we were interrupted by the sound of a bird slamming into one of the picture windows on our house. We assumed that it was a Mourning Dove as were a good 100' away and the previous two birds to hit this window were doves. As we approached the bird lying on the ground, it was obvious that this was no dove but rather, we assumed, the Sharp-shinned Hawk which we had seen in the front yard the day before. A quick examination of the bird suggested that it was approximately 14-15" in length. A comparison of this body length with the body lengths given in the various field guides left us confused as to which accipiter we actually had.

| Accipiter     | Robbins et al | Peterson | Nat. Geo. Soc. |
|---------------|---------------|----------|----------------|
| Sharp-shinned | 10.5"         | 10-14"   | 10-14"         |
| Cooper's      | 15.5"         | 14-20"   | 14-20"         |

It is a well-established fact that within birds of prey the male is always smaller than the female. We were further cautioned by Peterson: "male Cooper's and female Sharp-shinned may approach each other so closely in size and tail shape that many cannot be safely identified in the field. See American Birds, May 1979." Did we have a female Sharp-shinned or a male Cooper's Hawk? Clearly, the answer would not come from the three standard field guides.

We called Howard County's resident expert, David Holmes, for help in this identification. Dave quoted the following data from The Banding Manual, Vol. 2, compiled by the U.S. and Canadian Fish and Wildlife Services:

| Accipiter     | Wing Chord Length |        |           | Tail Length |
|---------------|-------------------|--------|-----------|-------------|
|               | Overall           | Male   | Female    | Delta       |
| Sharp-shinned | 215mm or less     | <184mm | 185-215mm | <12 mm      |
| Cooper's      | 220mm or more     | <246mm | >251mm    | >13 mm      |

Measurements of our bird were as follows: body length 406.4mm (16.0"); wing chord 241.3mm (9.5"); and tail delta 22.3mm (0.88"). Based on these measurements the bird was identified, with 95% confidence, to be a male Cooper's Hawk.

### DEFINITIONS

Body Length - Length from tip of bill to tip of tail. Note that The Banding Manual does not quote this measurement and hence it may be assumed that body length is not a reliable field mark for discriminating between Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks.

Wing Chord - Length from the shoulder to the tip of the longest primary flight feather (See "Describing Birds," p. 16, Robbins et al, for topography of a bird diagram.)

### ECOLOGY OR ORNITHOLOGY SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS BEING ACCEPTED FOR SUMMER OF 1986

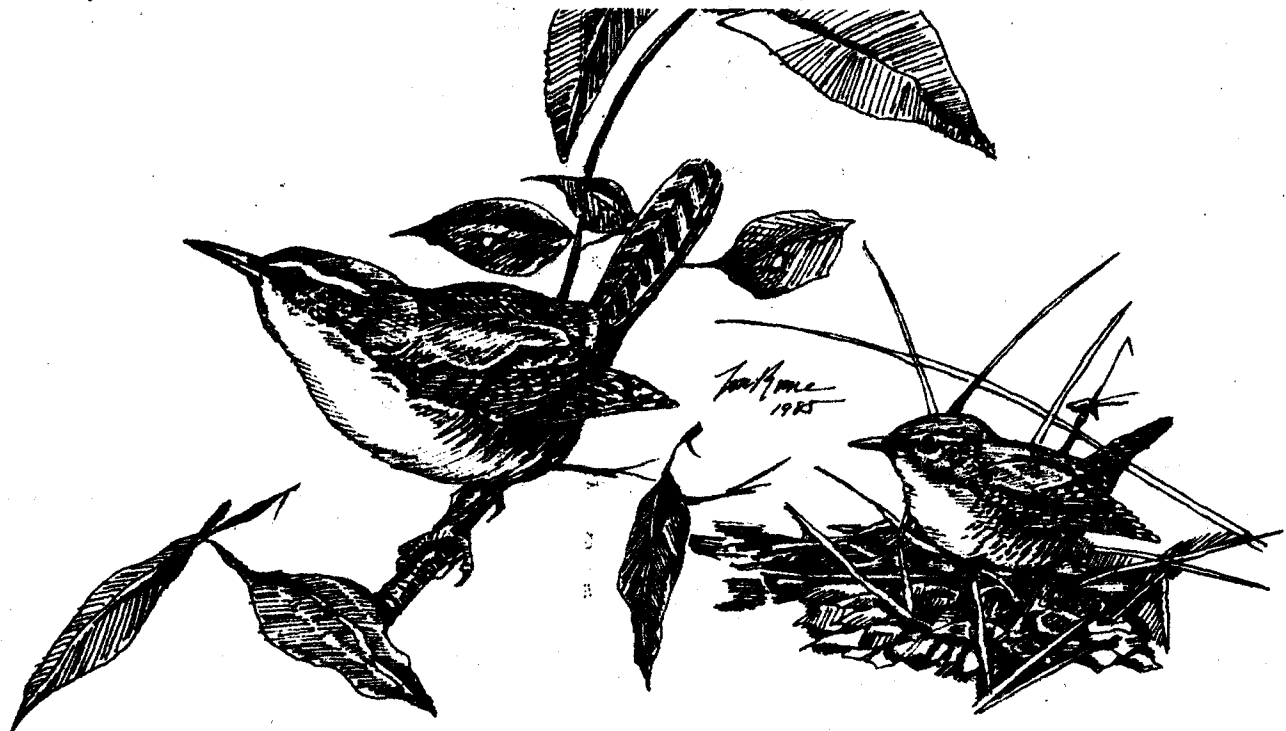
The Maryland Ornithological Society annually grants six scholarships for tuition to 12-day National Audubon Society ecology camps held at four locations or for a week of ornithological study at Cornell University. (Recipients must provide their own transportation to the camp of their choice.) A major requirement is that recipients must work with young people. Although applicants need not be members of MOS, each must be endorsed by a chapter or member of MOS. For further information and application, contact President John Clegg, 909 Lamskin Lane, Columbia, MD 21045, Tel. 730-4362. Completed applications must be returned by January 15, 1986.

WINTER WRENS: CAROLINA AND WINTER - JON E. BOONE, ILLUSTRATED BY THE AUTHOR

Of the 59 species of wrens throughout the world, two normally spend the winter in Howard County. And what better name could one of them have than Winter Wren? This very small, secretive bird is the "Jenny Wren" of England and the only wren found in Europe. In many European countries it is known as the king of birds. Legends tell of how, in antiquity, all the birds gathered to decide upon a leader. They agreed that whichever among them flew the highest would be king. Of course, the flight of the eagle impressed them all. But just as the eagle touched down on earth ready to declare its regency, out popped the wren which had stowed away beneath the eagle's back feathers. The wren was not at all bashful about advertising its leadership. Even today, the bird is known in Holland as "Winterkoning," or king of winter.

The Winter Wren nests in more northern climes or at higher altitudes. During its layover here, it stays near water. It is a woodland bird, most often found near a large brush or wood pile. Recognize it by its small size, stubby tail, dark brown coloration, and by its heavy dark barring. It emits sharp "tsip, tsip" notes, louder, crisper than that of the Song Sparrow but similar in quality. The Winter Wren does not often come to feeders. Yet, on a cold winter day as you walk through the woods, the bird is a delightful surprise as it darts in and out of thick underbrush. Look for it often, for it is not that uncommon. Try the Triadelphia/Greenbridge Road corridor and the Daniels area of Patapsco Valley State Park.

Our other winter troglodyte is the Carolina Wren. Such a bird it is. Rather large for a wren, it has a long bill, a white eyebrow, reddish-brown coloration (with a very light breast and belly), and a rotund figure. It also is a bird of the woodland. Unlike its cousin, however, it is a frequent guest at the feeder preferring raisins, sunflower seeds, and suet. The Carolina resides here year-round. And it sings in every month. The male carols an explosive "churry, churry, churry, churry." Very often, the female rasps a loud trrrrrrr, descending in pitch, in concert with her mate's "churry" refrain. This example of a "duet" song has many purposes. For me, it's just beautiful--one of those phenomena that is often hidden to the layman. Once discovered, it becomes a transcendent window to perhaps a better world. I hope you listen for the duet song of the Carolina and enjoy it as much as I do. If you miss it, the Carolina Wren is a fine scold, a sound you won't miss.



President  
Mrs. Judith Colt Johnson  
616 Piccadilly Road  
Towson, Maryland 21204  
301-828-4530

Vice President  
Carolyn D. Williams  
4202 Forest Court  
Fairfax, Virginia 22032  
703-273-1961

Committee to Preserve Assateague Island, Inc.

November 27, 1985

Mr. Robert Solem, Conservation Chairman,  
Howard Chapter, Md. Ornithological Society,  
10617 Graefloch Road,  
Laurel, MD 20707

Dear Bob:

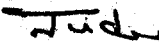
I am quite overcome with the most generous contribution of \$500.00 from the Howard County Chapter of the MOS. Do tell the members how very, very grateful we are.

This will help us no end. The Department of Interior has refused to come up with any extra money to assist in the added work of preparing the Master Plan for Chincoteague NWR and E.T.S. A firm, Barry Lawson, has been found that will do transportation studies for \$8,600, with assistance being given by former Regional Director, Dick Griffith and some staff help, and we have been asked to fund this. I have asked the President of the Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce if they would help us fund this, and Dr. Lawson is to address them on the scope of the study on December 3rd. The Lawson firm has done work for the Regional Office of FWS and they and Dick Griffith seem to have confidence in them. Dick is contributing 10% of the cost. I am trying to find other support, but you can see your contribution could not have come at a better time.

I have changed our mailing list so that John Glegg should receive future newsletters.

Ever so many thanks, again.

Sincerely,

  
Judith C. Johnson  
President

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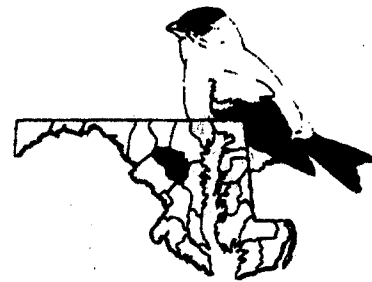
MARTHA CHESTEM PRODUCES BASIC BIRD GUIDE FOR A CATONSVILLE NURSING HOME

After leading a walk at St. Joseph Nursing Home in Catonsville, Howard County Bird Club member Marty Chestem decided that they might find an elementary guide to birds useful. Using items from her own reference material, she created a picture scrapbook of common birds. We hope they derive much pleasure from it.



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HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB WINTER SEED SALE PICKUP IS SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 1986

Coordinator Eileen Clegg has announced the date of the last seed sale for the 1985-1986 year. Maryland state sales tax is included in the prices listed below.

Pickup is at the First Presbyterian Church on Rt. 108,  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile east of Rt. 29 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 25, 1986. **IF YOU WILL BE UNABLE TO PICK UP YOUR SEED AT THAT TIME, YOU MUST CONTACT EILEEN IN ADVANCE AT 730-4362 TO MAKE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS. Because the club has no storage facilities, failure to pick up seed without prior notification of the coordinator means your seed will be sold!** You will receive a refund minus a \$5.00 handling fee. If, on the pickup date, you desire additional seed or wish to purchase seed without having ordered it, check at the church between 1:00-1:30 p.m. All unclaimed seed will be sold at that time on a first-come, first-served basis. Supplies will be limited.

Volunteers are needed to work at the desk inside or to load outside. Call Eileen or indicate your willingness to help in the appropriate space on the order blank below. It's fun and those people who help load receive their choice of a 25 lb. bag of sunflower seed, a 25 lb. bag of millet, or a 4 lb. bag of thistle.

~~NOW AVAILABLE: An 8 lb. bag of PEANUT HEARTS is being offered for the first time. These can prove attractive to woodpeckers, jays, chickadees, titmice, nut-hatches, Carolina Wrens and cardinals. One of few feeder foods for Eastern Bluebirds.~~

We will again be located in the large fellowship hall on the lower level. Steve Harsy, bookstore manager, will have an ample supply of items at discounted prices.



ORDERS MUST BE PREPAID AND RECEIVED BY MONDAY, JANUARY 20, 1986



ORDER TODAY. BE SURE TO MARK THE JANUARY 25th PICKUP DATE ON YOUR CALENDAR  
HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB WINTER SEED SALE



|                                       | No. of Bags | TOTAL |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------|
| 50 lbs. Black Oil Sunflower.....      | .....@12.00 | _____ |
| 25 lbs. Black Oil Sunflower.....      | .....@ 6.25 | _____ |
| 50 lbs. White Proso Millet.....       | .....@ 8.50 | _____ |
| 25 lbs. White Proso Millet.....       | .....@ 4.50 | _____ |
| 50 lbs. Sunflower Chips (Hulled)..... | .....@23.50 | _____ |
| 25 lbs. Sunflower Chips (Hulled)..... | .....@11.75 | _____ |
| 4 lbs. Niger Thistle Seed.....        | .....@ 4.00 | _____ |
| NEW! 8 lbs. Peanut Hearts.....        | .....@ 4.00 | _____ |

Prices INCLUDE 5% Maryland state sales tax. Do not add. Total Order \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to Howard County Chapter-MOS.

Mail to Howard Co. Bird Club Seed Sale  
9094 Lambskin Lane  
Columbia, MD 21045

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

YES! I would like to volunteer. Please call me. TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

This is my first order. Please add my name to your mailing list.

MOST PRICES ARE LOWER THAN LAST TIME. STOCK UP NOW!

**YOUR ORIGINAL IDEAS NEEDED FOR "ATTRACTING BIRDS IN WINTER" HANDOUT**

The Howard County Bird Club is compiling a tip sheet as a handout at future seed sales. It will include a recipe for "Bird Cake" by Rosamond Munro, "Decorating Ideas" by Eva Sunell, and the following idea submitted by Monika Botsai: To add life to window boxes during the winter, cut branches of Japanese Barberry, Pokeweed, and other berry-bearing plants. Stick them into the soil so they stand upright. Monika finds that mockingbirds love these (as well as the apple slices she lays in the box). It's possible that bluebirds and Cedar Waxwings might also be attracted if the branches were placed away from the house. If you have come up with a simple yet effective method of attracting birds to your yard in winter, contact Jo Solem (725-5037 or 10617 Graeloch Rd., Laurel, MD 20707) so your idea can be included.

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REMEMBER TO RECYCLE YOUR ALUMINUM, NEWSPAPERS, AND GLASS AT THE CENTER ON THE CORNER OF DOBBIN AND MCGAW ROADS. ASK THAT THOSE ITEMS FOR WHICH THEY DO NOT PAY CASH BE CREDITED TO THE HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB. SAVE THE RECEIPTS FOR INCOME TAX PURPOSES IF YOU ITEMIZE. RECYCLING MAKES DOLLARS AND SENSE!

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION: CLEAN WATER ACTION COUNCIL A LEGITIMATE GROUP

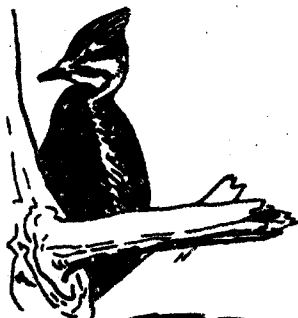
At the November 8, 1985, meeting concerning the Chesapeake Bay and the Patuxent River held at Howard Community College, a question from the audience was raised as to whether the "clean water" individuals who collect funds door-to-door were a scam. According to the answer given, they are a legitimate environmental group and the only one in the area which depends for its funds on this type of solicitation. The group should have registered with the county and those collecting should have adequate identification. (This is not intended as an endorsement but simply clarification.)

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A REMINDER: David Holmes, 5643-A Harpers Farm Rd., Columbia, MD 21044 will soon be compiling (for the seventh year) a list of all bird species seen in Howard County during 1985. Send your list of sightings to David by January 15, 1986.

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Howard County Bird Club  
9094 Lambskin Lane  
Columbia, MD 21045



WINTER SEED SALE INFO  
JANUARY 25, 1986  
ANNUAL POTLUCK  
MARCH 1, 1986