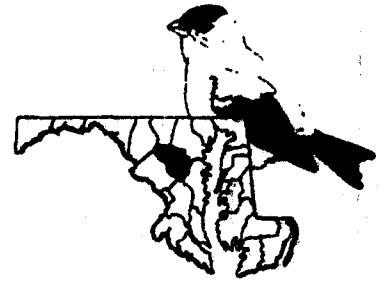




Vol 14, No 6  
May - June 1986

# Howard

A Chapter of the  
Maryland Ornithological Society



## FASCINATING RESULTS AS HOWARD COUNTY SCORES A FIRST FOR MD - DAVID HOLMES

It has been suggested for some time now that true winter in central Maryland (as measured by bird movements) is indeed a very short period and that Christmas Bird Counts are held too early to be a good study of what actually winters here.

It is known that many people with active feeders in Howard County feel somewhat unhappy removed from our winter counting mania since the 38 year old Christmas Count circle in our area excludes the majority of them.

Having successfully completed the first Midwinter Bird Count (Winter Count) in the state now, it all seems so obvious, doesn't it? You schedule a count during "real winter" --somewhere between January 15 and February 10 or so, and include the entire county like the May Count does; everybody can help, and we may learn something interesting. Now, we can wonder why it took us so long to put it together.

On February 1, an increasingly cloudy day with temperatures ranging from the low 20's to the mid-40's and light winds, 34 Howard County MOS members and friends (a number of birders came from distant parts of the state) were out tromping in 21 parties while an additional 27 people were checking feeders. A "party" on a count refers to one or more people who are basically counting the same individual birds at the same time. "Party hours" refers to the total actual time each party is out and counting. Our total effort came wonderfully close to the Triadelphia Christmas Bird Count figures from December 19, 1985, and that means that some of our number comparisons between the counts can be fairly direct.

	HD	TR	HO	TR
SPECIES	81+1h	104	88	120
INDIVIDUALS	28,966	77,402	452.5	360
OBSERVERS	34+27	38+1	97	120
PARTIES	21	25	36	38
HOURS-FEEDER	38	--	171	158
			MILES-FOOT	
			MILES-CAR	
			HOURS-FOOT	
			HOURS-CAR	
			TOTAL HOURS	

Seventeen species on <sup>the</sup> Triadelphia <sup>Count</sup> and not on Winter Count need quantities of available water. Triadelphia Reservoir is in both count areas, but it and farm ponds were fairly open on 19 December and nearly frozen on 1 February.

Let's compare numbers of some of our permanent resident species:

	HO	TR		HO	TR
Red-bellied Woodpecker	157	194	White-breasted Nuthatch	101	79
Downy Woodpecker	153	149	Carolina Wren	156	156
Hairy Woodpecker	26	26	Northern Mockingbird	213	316
Pileated Woodpecker	16	16	Northern Cardinal	606	795
Carolina Chickadee	308	377	House Sparrow	412	617
Tufted Titmouse	241	246			

Now, let's look at some migrants:

	HO	TR		HO	TR
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	14	Fox Sparrow	3	23
Red-tailed Hawk	39	65	Song Sparrow	275	608
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	11	24	Swamp Sparrow	11	41

Northern Flicker	91	153	White-throated Sparrow	1208	2159
Winter Wren	2	9	White-crowned Sparrow	94	52
Golden-crowned Kinglet	27	41	Dark-eyed Junco	1140	1865
Hermit Thrush	2	39	Purple Finch	93	109
Water Pipit	66	3	House Finch	820	532
Yellow-rumped Warbler	15	37	American Goldfinch	419	381
Field Sparrow	44	252	Evening Grosbeak	67	18

Does this suggest lack of specific habitat coverage, continuing migration, or just the usefulness of further study? Whatever, the differences are thoroughly intriguing. Blackbird comparisons are useless since we had no major roosts and these birds wander erratically from day to day and/or year to year. Each count area has one major landfill to provide gulls, but Triadelphia is dubiously blessed with two large crow roosts which Howard County does not enjoy. This brings up the problem of crows. Two areas mentioned that they had non-vocal crows so species could not be determined. Most people assume American until they hear "Fi-ish." This is, undoubtedly, inaccurate. Is there really evidence which suggests that all Fish Crows talk while most American Crows remain silent? We are edging toward the time (like next year?) when we will be asked to keep track of vocal crows--and turn in the non-vocal ones as "crow sp." It really does make perfect sense so let's start getting used to the idea now.

To this compiler, the most interesting birds are the gulls, especially the hybrid; the Red-headed Woodpecker, the 36 Tundra Swans (the Triadelphia flock of 36 was obviously alive and well), the Water Pipits, and the owl that got away and was not included in our count. It was not a great winter finch year although House Finches were terribly abundant.

Another interesting aspect of this count is the percentage of feeder watcher effort compared to percentage of birds reported. Our feeder watchers turned in 34 species and 2142 individuals, 7% of our total individual count. They put in about 38 hours of effort which was 22% of of 121 hour total. The percentage of individuals of each species ranged downward from 50% of Sharp-shinned Hawks (one bird out of two), but averaged between 10 and 12% for most common species. There are probably very good reasons for this disparity. The most intriguing feeder birds had to be the Canada Geese. The mental image of a Canada Goose on a backyard bird feeder simply boggles the brain....

So, did we learn anything? Of course; that we should do this again! We can possibly start working with real conclusions after three to five years when we have more experience with variabilities of weather and coverage. Meanwhile, I'm greatly looking forward to playing with next year's results--and hope you are equally enthusiastic about collecting them. This has possibilities of being a truly significant project. Let's go for it! *Farnell's had first tally.*

#### HOWARD COUNTY MOS - MIDWINTER BIRD COUNT FEBRUARY 1, 1986



Great Blue Heron	2	Ring-billed Gull	2284	Carolina Chickadee	308
Tundra Swan	36	Herring Gull	2702	Tufted Titmouse	241
Mute Swan	1	IceLand Gull	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	15
Canada Goose	6343	Lesser Black-backed Gull	1	White-breasted Nuthatch	101
American Black Duck	14	Great Black-backed Gull	16	Brown Creeper	14
Mallard	611	Herring x Gt. Black Backed Gull hybrid	1	Carolina Wren	156
Northern Pintail	1	Rock Dove	494	Winter Wren	2
Northern Shoveller	1	Mourning Dove	663	Golden-crowned Kinglet	27
American Nigeon	41	Great Horned Owl	2	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2
Canvasback	2	Barned Owl	5	Eastern Bluebird	110
Oldsquaw	1	Belted Kingfisher	23	Hermit Thrush	2
Hooded Merganser	2	Red-headed Woodpecker	1	American Robin	806
Black Vulture	49	Red-bellied Woodpecker	157	Northern Mockingbird	213
Turkey Vulture	101	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	11	Water Pipit	66
Northern Harrier	1	Downy Woodpecker	153	Cedar Waxwing	792
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	Hairy Woodpecker	26	European Starling	3614
Cooper's Hawk	3	Northern Flicker	91	Yellow-rumped Warbler	15
Red-shouldered Hawk	49	Pileated Woodpecker	16	Northern Cardinal	606
Red-tailed Hawk	39	Blue Jay	467	Rufous-sided Towhee	15
Rough-legged Hawk	1	American Crow	1619	American Tree Sparrow	24
American Kestrel	47	Fish Crow	128	Field Sparrow	44
King-necked Pheasant	1	crow sp.	695	Fox Sparrow	3
Northern Bobwhite	1			Song Sparrow	275

(continued)

Swamp Sparrow	11	Eastern Meadowlark	23	House Finch	820
White-throated Sparrow	1208	Rusty Blackbird	1	Pine Siskin	4
White-crowned Sparrow	94	Common Grackle	60	American Goldfinch	419
Dark-eyed Junco	1140	Brown-headed Cowbird	122	Evening Grosbeak	67
Red-winged Blackbird	134	Purple Finch	93	House Sparrow	412

Totals: 81 species - 1 hybrid 28,966 individuals

OBSERVERS: Burton Alexander, Maud Banks, Jim Blanchard, Ric Blom, Bob Bogdan, Lynne Bransome, Susan Buswell, Joe Byrnes, Alan Cameron, Marty Chestem, John & Eileen Clegg, Bob Dixon, Bob Doyle, Sam Droege, Chuck Dupree, Skip Dupree, Georgia Eacker, Frances Ehlers, Jane Farrell, Margo Garner, Edwin & Kevin Gould, Alice Grant, Bridget Grant, Mary Hall, Linda Harsy, Anne & Ken Hart, Pat Hirt, Margie & Chet Kupiec, Michael Leumas, Chris Ludwig, Grazina & Mike McClure, Marjorie Mountjoy, Rosamond Munro, Fran Nahrgang, Bea Newkirk, Jim Orgain, David Pardoe, Dan Poprosky, Bob Ringler, Fran Schoenberger, Zelda Simon, Teresa Simons, Jo & Bob Solem, Chuck Stirrat, Lynn Strow, Eva Sunell, Roy Trudel, Mark Wallace, Don & Martha Waugh, Mark Weatherholt, Hal Wierenga, and Helen Zeichner. Compiled by David Holmes & Jo Solem.



THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK

Each year there are numerous individuals who provide support for the club so that our activities can take place. Many have been acknowledged in earlier newsletters, but most of those listed below have not.

The following individuals joined the chapter as sustaining members for 1985-1986: Lois C. Carleton, Frances J. Ehlers, Dudley and Pat Jackson, Georgia Morris, Marjorie Mountjoy, James and Patricia Rouse, and Elise Seay.

~~Bea Newkirk efficiently organized the Rare Bird Alert and credits timely messages to a fine group who help telephone: Joan Varga, Barbara Doarnberger, Marjorie Mountjoy, Peggy Willson, Jean Adamson, Jeanne Nicholson, Debbie Grant, Joe Byrnes Margie Kupiec, Mike Leumas, Helen Zeichner, Monika Botsai, Anna Llewellyn, James Medwin, and "Spud" Loomis.~~

Some individuals help in ways that are rarely seen and appreciated; others are more visible, but all make a valuable contribution. Martha Waugh kept the feeder filled at the Central Library; Jon E. Boone and Chris Ludwig provided regular newsletter contributions while Jan and Don Randle helped collate and mail that publication; Mark Wallace built a large flight cage for Jane Zuke's raptor rehabilitation and is working on a small fly-proof holding cage; and Rod Botsai kept the sound equipment in good working order at monthly meetings. Monika Botsai and Grazina McClure took care of arrangements for the annual potluck. Don Randle served as an entertaining auctioneer with thanks to Lois Carleton, the Botsais and the Nature Nook for providing auction items. David Holmes serves as major author for two bird compilations while Paul Zucker coordinates our always anticipated May Count.

Assisting Marty Chestem in planning programs were Jane Geuder and Brenda Bell. Helping Eileen Clegg with hospitality at monthly meetings were Wendy and Helen Zeichner, Elsa Ponce, Margie Kupiec, Lois Carleton, Frances Ehlers, Jane Farrell, Sandy Goolsby, Jan Randle, and Chris Ludwig. Stops on the last feeder trip were at Pat Jackson's, Frances Ehlers', and Chuck and Linda Stirrat's. Clif Grant continued to furnish the bookstore with bluebird boxes. Peggy Willson volunteered to help Marty Chestem in her tireless efforts to publicize the state endangered species stamp and print.

Linda Harsy capably organized the April 19th workshop at the Central Library. She lists the following individuals as those who made presentations, led a walk, or helped with exhibits and the bookstore: Mike McClure, Marty Chestem, Jane Farrell, Jane Geuder, Jo Solem, Chris Ludwig, Paul Zucker, Steve Harsy, Fran Schoenberger, and Eva Sunell.

President John Clegg adds a thank you to his officers and standing committee chairmen as well as the members of the By-laws Committee: Anne Hart, Mike McClure, and Don Waugh and the Nominating Committee: Mike McClure, Rod and Monika Botsai.

## HELP THE BREEDING BIRD ATLAS PROJECT JUNE 21ST - JANE FARRELL

On 21 June 1986, the Howard County Bird Club will hold an Atlas Day followed by a potluck dinner hosted by Helen and Elmer Zeichner who live on Wilde Lake. Members are urged to participate even if they are only able to spend a few hours helping. We will try to pair inexperienced participants with more experienced observers. This is an opportunity to increase your observational skills while assisting the chapter with the Atlas Project. Although this is the fourth breeding season of the planned five year project, some areas of the county need additional coverage.

If you can help, contact me at 596-2630 (evenings).

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## AID TO PLANNING URBAN WILDLIFE HABITAT FOR SMALL PROPERTIES NOW AVAILABLE

Louise Dove, wildlife biologist with the National Institute for Urban Wildlife, has recently provided the Bird Club with a valuable aid in planning backyard wildlife habitat. The quarterly publication of the Institute features a series of topics authored by Louise covering such items as constructing a small pond, drawing a landscaping plan, creating a meadow, attracting reptiles and amphibians, etc. There are currently seven topics in the Urban Wildlife Manager's Notebook; additions are planned. The Bird Club's copies have been bound in looseleaf form and may be consulted at meetings (see Fran or Eva in the bookstore). Each of the "Notebooks" will be available at a modest cost.

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## A HAIR-RAISING EXPERIENCE - JAN RANDLE

Sunday, April 20, 1986, was a relatively warm, sunny spring day so I decided to spend part of the afternoon lying in the chaise lounge on the deck where we have most of our bird feeders.

After lying quietly for a short time, I heard and felt the presence of a bird on the cushion next to my head. A second or two later it jumped onto my head. I felt a pull on my hair; then the bird flew away. I saw that it was a titmouse which had a piece of my hair in its beak. Unbelievable! I had never heard of this behavior with a person before--with a dog or a fur coat maybe, but not with a human being. The bird was not satisfied with one piece. He came back repeatedly. He seemed to be snipping the hair off one piece at a time. As he left after the fifth trip, I went inside the house to call my husband and tell him of this strange behavior. After the phone call, I went back to the chair. Soon the bird was back. This time when he landed on my head, he started scratching and pulling hair. I figured enough was enough, so I got up and ended this hair-thinning experience.

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## WATCH FOR LEG FLAGS ON MIGRATING SHOREBIRDS



You can help the Pan-American Shorebird Program by reporting any leg-flagged shorebirds you observe on migrating shorebirds. The location of these colored leg flags provides the key to where they were captured. Please report the color of the flags for each bird spotted, the location of the sightings, and the date to Dr. J.P. Myers, Academy of Natural Sciences, Nineteenth and the Parkway, Philadelphia, PA 19103. Efforts in 1986 will concentrate on Red

Knot, Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone, Black-bellied Plover, Semi-palmated Plover, Piping Plover, White-rumped Sandpiper, and Semi-palmated Sandpiper.

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.

Field trips leave from Grempler 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.



MAY 8 - "EAGLES OF THE NORTH CHESAPEAKE" - Janice Chase. The fascinating story of Thursday radio tracking Bald Eagles to learn some of their secrets.

MAY 10 - SPRING BIRDS AND WILDFLOWERS AT APL. Leader: Burton Alexander, 997-3374. Saturday Mature flood plain at height of migration (see "Hot Spots" in this newsletter). Leave Grempler at 7:00 a.m. 1/2 day.

MAY 24 - HOLLOFIELD, PATAPSCO STATE PARK. Leader: Chris Ludwig, 796-8373. Look for Saturday late migrants & wildflowers. Leave Grempler at 1:30 p.m.

JUNE 6-8- STATE MOS CONVENTION, FROSTBURG, MD.

JUNE 7 - RECREATION EXPO, COLUMBIA MALL - Call John Clegg to volunteer, 730-4362.

JUNE 21 - ATLAS DAY. Spend all or part of the day atlasing during the height of the Saturday breeding season. Potluck tally. Call Jane Farrell, 596-2630 for info.

JUNE 28,29 - NEW JERSEY PINE BARRENS. Leader: Jim Stasz (301)-257-9540. Jim is intimately acquainted with the ecology of this fascinating area. Go for one Sat-Sunday day or two. ~~Meet at 10:00 a.m. on 6/28 on Rt. 206 north of Hammonton at~~

~~Atsion Ranger Station in Wharton State Forest. Camping available or make overnight reservations at Hammonton Motor Lodge (609)-561-5700. Wear old clothes and bring old tennis shoes for bog walking.~~

JULY 12 - BLUEBIRD BANDING IN HOWARD COUNTY. Bander: Mary Janetatos, 384-0744. Many Saturday of you requested a trip to observe bluebird banding. If possible, you will also be shown eggs in nest and perhaps other cavity nesters. Leave Grempler at 8:30 a.m. 1/2 day.

JULY 19 - HOLLOFIELD, PATAPSCO STATE PARK. Leader: Chris Ludwig, 796-8373. Find the Saturday breeding birds and summer plants here. Leave Grempler at 1:30 p.m.

JULY 20 - SUMMER HABITAT WALK, DAVID FORCE PARK. Leaders: Chuck Dupree, 796-1086 and <sup>to lead with me Savage Park</sup> Bill Eckert, 992-2464. } Co-sponsor Rec. & Parks. Meet at 1:00 p.m. at park Sunday next to bridge on Turf Valley Road, north of Rt. 40, west of Rt. 29.

AUGUST 17- RIVER WADE AT SAVAGE PARK. Co-sponsored w/ Rec. & Parks & How. Co. Sierra Sunday Club. Walk up the river to examine stream ecology, water insects and birds. Meet at building at Savage Park (west end of Baltimore St. in Savage) at 1:00 p.m. for 2 hour hike IN the river. Wear old tennis shoes--footgear is required. Do not bring binoculars unless wish to risk getting them wet. Cancelled in case of rain. Questions? Bill Eckert 992-2464, 8:30-4:30.

AUGUST 21-25 - SHOREBIRDING AT CHINCOTEAGUE N.W. REFUGE. Leader: Chuck Dupree, 796- Thur-Monday 1086. Chuck will be staying at the Seahawk Motel (804)-336-6527. Call him to arrange a meeting time & place. If you plan to stay in the town reservations should be made soon. (Chuck can suggest names of motels; camping available.) Super birding.

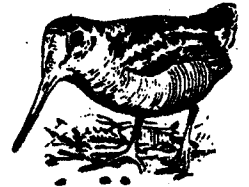
BOARD MEETING - May 22, 7:30 p.m. at the home of Maud Banks, 6666 DOWDALE PLACE, Columbia. Telephone 381-3240 for directions.



## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS PRESENTED BETWEEN APRIL 20, 1985 and APRIL 20, 1986

The Howard County Bird Club's mounted bird specimens, feeder box, and slide shows have been in frequent use during the past year. Presentations were made to the following groups: Webelos, Pack #944 at Bethany Methodist Church, H. Banks' class at Hyattsville Middle School, Brownie Troop at Clemen's Crossing Elementary School (E.S.), West Friendship E.S., Camp Schmidt Environmental Center (P.G. Co.), Glenelg Country School Day Camp, Catonsville College adult education class, Howard County Fair, St. Joseph's Nursing Home (Catonsville), Woodbridge Valley Garden Club (Balt. Co.), Howard Co. chapter, Sierra Club, Ellicott City Fair (Tiber Place exhibit), Columbia Hometown Fair (Mall), Dickeyville Garden Club, Ellicott City Birthday, Lorien Nursing Home, Hammond Village Webelos, Elkridge E.S. (whole school), Chesapeake Update exhibit, St. Louis Garden Club, Nature Study group at Glenelg C.S., Display at Glenelg C.S. auction, personal study Jim Hill, Harmony Hall Retirement Community, Ecology Club at Centennial H.S., Biology Classes (Geuder's) at Centennial H.S., Riverview E.S. (Balt. Co.), Montpelier E.S. at Camp Schmidt, Longfellow Garden Club, Children's House (Montessori), Stevens Forest E.S. (grades 1 & 2 gifted & talented), Girl Scout Troop #1301 (Long Reach), two seed sales, Hammond E.S. Brownie Troop #1240, Winter Habitat Course at Howard Comm. College, St. John's E.S. 4th grade, Boy Scout pack #720, den #4, Middle Patuxent Nursery School, Brownie Troop #369, Split Rail Garden Club, Jeffers Hill E.S. (whole school), personal study Cathy Williamson, DAR meeting in southern How. Co., Birdwatching classes Rec. & Parks, personal study Bob Bogdan, Spring Into Nature library workshop, and each of the bird club meetings. Monika Botsai helped provide direction for Kirk Rothemund, a seventh grade student at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, with a feeder project. He made most of the feeders in our box of recycled examples, hung them and made written observations. He won first prize in the 7th and 8th grade division of the school's science fair.

Individuals who made these presentations (often for groups they or their children were involved in) included Harry Banks, Maud Banks, Bill Bridgeland, Martha Chestem, John Clegg, George Cleland, Carolyn Cradler, Jane Geuder, Gloria Konyess, Bob Solem Jo Solem Eva Sunell, Cathy Williamson, and Helen Zeichner. Thousands of children and adults benefited in Howard and nearby counties. Most of our speaking requests <sup>were</sup> from elementary age groups. If you are interested in learning how to make presentations, contact Pres. John Clegg 730-4362



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### HURRAH FOR RECYCLERS!

Some of the Howard County Bird Club members have made it a habit to recycle their aluminum cans, newspapers, and bottles at the local Columbia Recycling Center operated by the Athelas Institute at 6655 Dobbin Road (Tel. 992-4234 if you need directions). Recycling saves natural resources, reduces litter, and extends landfill life. The bird club benefits and you derive a tax advantage so join the many who already recycle. If you wish to receive cash for your aluminum cans you may, but glass and newspapers will only be credited to an organization. Give them your name and ask that your items be credited to the Howard County Bird Club. Treasurer Don Randle in February received a check in the amount of \$40.82 covering the last two quarters of 1985. Although numerous entries listed no name, the following members were listed: Nash, Carleton, Ehlers, Holley, Orgain, Roberts, Randle, Dency, Geuder, Strikwerda, Chestem, Fielding, Chess, Botsai, Williamson, Kiekebusch-Steinitz, Baldau, Hill, Hirt, Dove, Flannery, Solem, Magnusson, Mountjoy, Eacker, Clegg, Reeder, Leumas, Hunt, Edwards, Burgett, and Nahrgang. Thanks also to those who recycled but whose names did not appear or were garbled. It does take some effort to collect and haul material for recycling, but it is a valuable conservation effort. A number of our members recycle for other organizations--we salute them also. Do what you can to preserve our natural resources. Remember: RECYCLING MAKES DOLLARS AND SENSE!

## BIRDING "HOT SPOTS" IN HOWARD COUNTY - CHRIS LUDWIG - APL

The quiet grounds of Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab provide county nature lovers a rich river valley with opportunities to find some uncommon county bird and plant species. Burton Alexander, an APL employee and Howard County MOS member, has explored the various areas within this section of the Middle Patuxent river valley and provided most of the information for this report.

Burton has opened a trail from the dirt road on APL's grounds to Old Columbia Road. The trail is marked with blue paint on tree (see "Blue Trail" on map) which is necessary because the trail deviates from the river's edge in spots and passes through some dense river thickets. One can park on the APL grounds ("P" on map) or park along Old Columbia Road where it crosses the Middle Patuxent River. At present, Johns Hopkins' policy is lenient toward visitors and we have no accounts of birders being discouraged from exploring the grounds away from the fenced area (darkened area on map). Hiking the dirt roads and side trails can be quite rewarding.

Following is a list of bird and plant highlights:

**Birds:** At least 92 species including Pileated Woodpecker, Belted Kingfisher, bluebirds (all year in open areas), Barred Owl, Wood Duck, Veery, Kentucky and Hooded Warblers. A Great Horned Owl nested at the

edge of one of the parking lots several years ago. Both Prothonotary and Cerulean Warblers have been seen here in migration (the latter is probably a nesting species).

**Plants:** 219 species of wildflowers including Showy Orchis, plus 10 species of ferns including Broad Beech, Rattlesnake, Cut-leaved Grape, and Maidenhair.

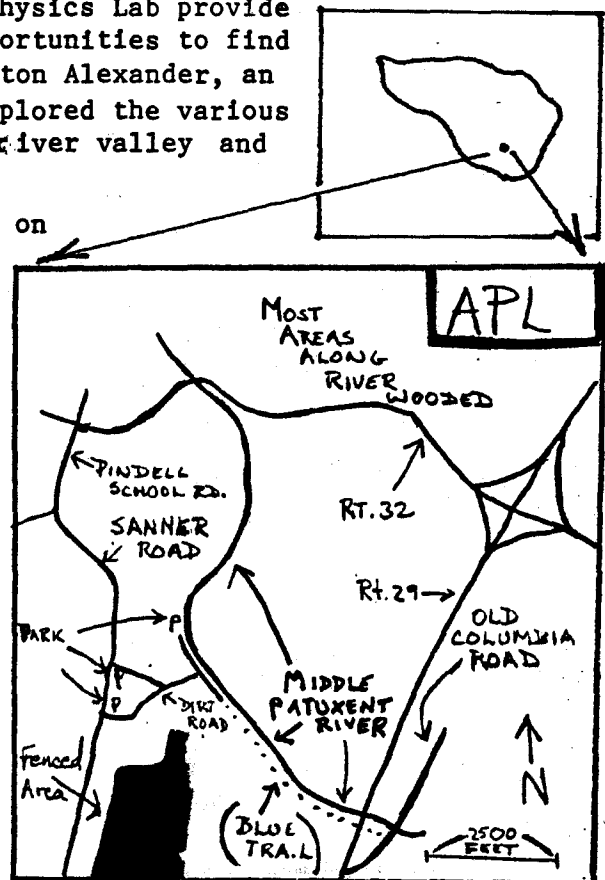
**Also:** Fox, deer and other mammals.

There is still much to be found at APL. Burton will lead a trip on Saturday, May 10 (see Calendar). This will be an excellent opportunity to learn some of the special haunts, find migrant warblers, vireos, and flycatchers, and observe attractive woodland wildflowers. A number of bird club members are employed at this facility. I look forward to additional sightings from them and others who hike the area.

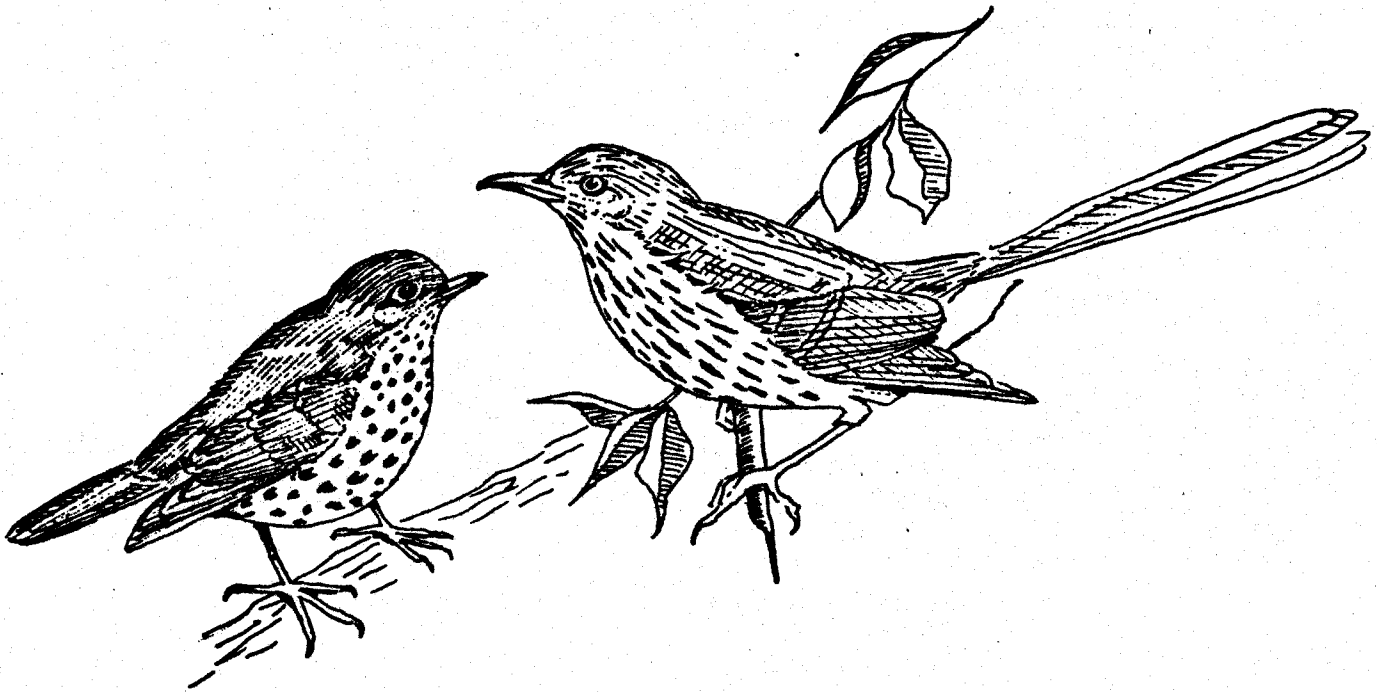
I will continue to update each of the "Hot Spots" described in newsletter articles so that eventually when we publish them in booklet form they will be as complete and as helpful as possible.

If you know of an interesting or exciting natural area in Howard County (birds don't necessarily need to be the highlight but it must be available to the public), please call or write

Chris Ludwig  
7992 Millstream Court  
Elkridge, Maryland 21227  
Telephone (301)-796-8373



DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER NEWSLETTER IS AUGUST 1, 1986. SEND OR CALL INFORMATION TO JO SOLEM, 10617 GRAELOCH RD., LAUREL, MD 20707; Tel. 725-5037. CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME.



Just before May Count day, the Wood Thrush and Brown Thrasher slip into Howard County making their way from more southerly climes. The thrasher is one of those "mimic thrushes," closely related to the mockingbird. It is an extraordinarily winsome bird with a tail that is longer than its body. Its slim shape and decurved bill clearly align it with the wren and thrush families.

The Brown Thrasher has a rich russet, back, wings, and tail. Its breast and belly are the color of light cream, all heavily festooned with black streaks. There is also a characteristic yellow eye.

The thrasher inhabits wood edges, brushy hedgerows, and old woodpiles. It will nest near and forage on suburban lawns, moving in and out of nearby shrubbery. It is a common bird, though not as visible as the mockingbird and its other close kin, the catbird. You might first recognize the Brown Thrasher by its distinctive, harsh "Chack!" warning note. With patience you will hear its song, a catbird-like mewling, but with a more melodic cadence, the notes coming in pairs.

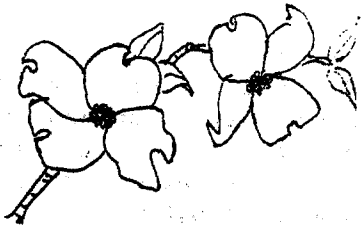
When it comes to song, few, if any, birds in the world rival the Wood Thrush. The gurgling "Eee-o-lay" punctuates the morning and late evening hours during May and June like no other sound. This magnificence is commonplace, often coming from a low twig on a small tree in a tiny copse of woods surrounding a burgeoning suburban development. If the song itself doesn't impress you, get a taped recording of it, slow it down 25 percent, and listen to sounds purer than James Galway ever produced. You'll never take the Wood Thrush song for granted again.

The Wood Thrush nests in a low tree or bush, usually in the woods. Like the Brown Thrasher, it will feed on the ground. Its red-brown head and back, combined with the white breast covered with dark spots (not streaks), may make you think of the thrasher. But the thrush's much smaller (bluebird) size, its robin-like bill, and rounder form (along with the spots) will quickly dispel the confusion.

Both birds obviously tolerate humans. Yet they are quick to take flight if we approach too quickly. They are found throughout the county from late spring until mid-autumn. In suitable habitat, both may be attracted by the sound of running water whether caused by a small stream, a modest recirculating pond, or water dripping from a tin can into a bird bath.



## IN MEMORIAM: "KRIS" KRISHNAMOORTHY



Howard County MOS marks the recent passing of Dr. Venkatar-aman (better known as "Kris") Krishnamoorthy. He and his family, Marci and Anú, joined the club in 1974 and immediately became enthusiastic participants in many activities. At first "Kris" knew little about the natural world here, but his insatiable curiosity and quick mind soon gave him command of the local birds. Blessed with a good ear, it was not long before he recognized most of the county's birds by song as well as by sight. Bird behavior intrigued him long before it became a popularized branch of ornithology. His last major contribution to the chapter constituted a special edition of the newsletter (Feb. 1981) entitled "The Endless Fascination of Bird Watching" in which he provided clues and aids that observers could use to increase their enjoyment of watching bird activity. He concluded his introduction to the subject by suggesting that "listing or counting is a lot of fun, but trying to understand the many facets of bird life is sublime."

Birds were only one of his interests as he investigated the flowers, amphibians, ferns, and grasses of the Middle Atlantic as well as specialized ecological areas such as the New Jersey Pine Barrens, serpentine areas in Baltimore County, and the Great Smoky Mountains in North Carolina. His almost daily walks during his lunch hour led to many interesting observations as well as the first county active nesting records for the White-breasted Nuthatch and Black-and-white Warbler.

"Kris" served the Howard County Bird Club in a number of capacities, most notably as treasurer and field trip chairman. He was an enthusiastic trip leader, a gifted naturalist, and an entertaining companion. We are grateful for what he shared with us. ~~On behalf of the club, the Board extends its sympathy to Marci and Anú.~~ A suitable memorial is being considered and will be announced.

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## BLUEBIRD AND OTHER NATIVE CAVITY NESTER BOXES BEING MAPPED - BOB BOGDAN



The warm early spring weather encouraged bluebirds to start nesting early. A number of other native cavity nesters are also well into their nesting cycle. Keep track of the native cavity nesters in your boxes or natural cavities or those on properties near your home, your work, or your favorite county hiking areas. We would like reports on as many bluebirds, chickadees, titmice, woodpeckers, Barred and Barn Owls, Great Crested Flycatchers, kestrels, and wrens as possible at the end of the breeding season. Make written notes so you don't forget.

A large map of Howard County is being prepared which will be used to locate and mark boxes on trails--or single boxes--monitored by Bird Club members and friends. If you would like your box(es) placed on the map, call me at 465-5370 or see me at the May meeting or May Count tally. You must commit yourself to submitting a report at the end of the season and to monitoring any box regularly to make sure that House Sparrows are not allowed to nest. Last year's 500 reported boxes fledged more than 1300 bluebirds and many other equally fascinating native cavity nesters, but there are many more that weren't reported.

If you would like to serve on the Boost Bluebirds Committee, let me know. I'd like to establish representatives in most areas of the county to reduce long distance telephone calls for following up box results and to provide a handy source of information to those who call with questions. A second pamphlet is being prepared with additional information about native cavity nesters which will supplement the one published last fall. It will be sent automatically to members renewing for 1986-87.

CONSERVATION NOTES - BOB SOLEM

This was a big year for environmental issues in the Maryland state legislature-- both for what was accomplished and what was not.

Most publicized of the successful legislative initiatives was the adoption of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas Criteria which governs development and land use in tide-water country. Another significant bill established the Heritage Conservation Fund to acquire and preserve ecologically sensitive areas. This bill authorizes money to buy and preserve lands identified through programs such as the Maryland Natural Heritage Program. The bad news is that the acquisition funds were cut from \$1,500,000 to \$625,000 and two new needed staff positions were eliminated.

Program Open Space, which is used to purchase land for parks and recreation areas and to protect threatened natural areas, survived another attempt at limiting the scope of the program. (Sometimes no action is good action.) Also, there is now legislation supporting acid rain studies, establishing nutrient control plans, barring lead shot, creating a funding mechanism for cleaning up leaking underground fuel tanks, and finally making hazardous waste polluters financially responsible for clean-up costs.

Other bills failed. Marty Chestem and Lucy Steinitz testified in favor of a bill regulating the sale of exotic birds in Maryland, but the bill failed in committee. Some other environmentally important measures also failed: pesticide right-to-know, regulation of acid rain pollution, a non-tidal wetlands law, environmental standing in water pollution cases, and a Maryland bottle bill.

This fall the first steps will be taken in Howard County to implement the "Patuxent River Policy Plan." The plan will guide development along the Patuxent River and its tributaries, preserve flood plain, and help improve water quality. Implementation efforts naturally follow from Patuxent River Discovery Day. More info in the fall.

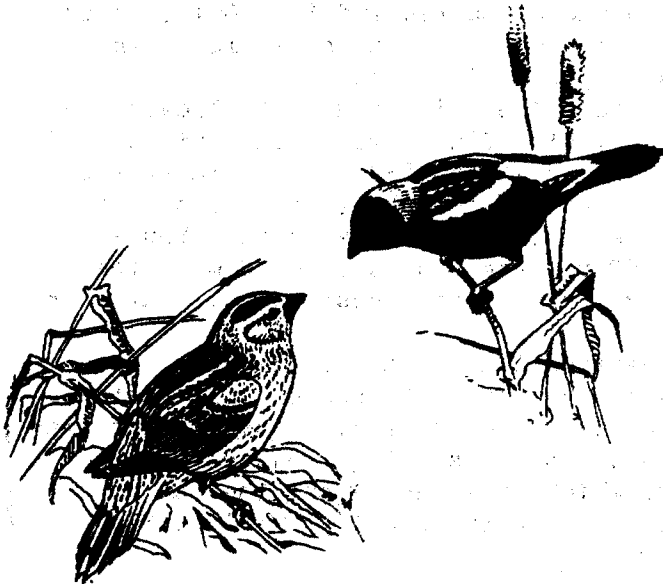
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COUNTY COUNCIL RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING PATUXENT RIVER DISCOVERY DAY RECEIVED BY CLUB

On Monday, April 21, 1986, the Howard County Council passed a resolution recognizing Patuxent River Discovery Day, May 3, 1986. At the Council's invitation, the Howard County Bird Club received a copy of this resolution on behalf of the citizens of the county. President John Clegg, Conservation Chairman Bob Solem, and Jo Solem were present for the ceremony. The framed resolution will be on display at the May meeting.

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HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB  
10617 Graeoch Road  
Laurel, Maryland 20707



... would like your box(es) placed on the map ...  
... meeting or May County ...  
... of the season and to monitor any ...  
... may be allowed to meet last year ...  
... and many other special ...