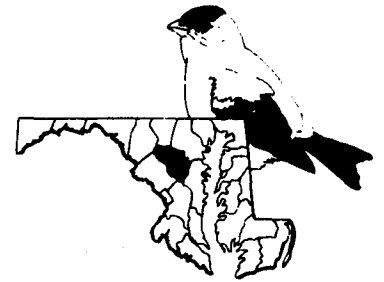




Howard



Vol. 19, No 4
Mar-Apr 1991

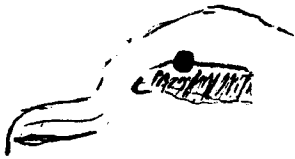
A Chapter of the
Maryland Ornithological Society

NORTHERN SHRIKES INVADE COUNTY FOR NEW RECORD

The new year began auspiciously for Howard County birders when Nancy Magnusson located an immature Northern Shrike at Schooley Mill Park on Jan 5, a first for the county. Initially, it was thought to be a Loggerhead and was put on the Howard Rare Bird Alert as such. It stayed until the early afternoon of Jan 6, was seen by at least a dozen people, but was not seen with certainty after that. Incredibly, the Howard County Midwinter Count on Jan 26 turned up a second Northern Shrike, this one along the Patapsco River just west of Marriottsville. It was spotted by Baltimore birders Dan Haft and Carol Renfrew who were helping on the count; later Cliff Barry and Art Rogers also saw it. It was not relocated on the following day although a search was made. More complete material than is published here will be submitted to the State MOS Records Committee.

First Shrike: Nancy Magnusson. Initially seen at 9:00 a.m. on Jan 5. A bird with uniformly gray upperparts with a brownish tinge flew into a tree. After it landed, I had a momentary glimpse of part of its face which looked plain gray with a light eye ring; no other part of the bird was visible. It hopped out of sight, sang for about five minutes, then flew out of sight. It was not relocated until about 1:00 p.m. when reinforcements began to arrive. (It's tough finding additional eyes on a nice Saturday morning!) It was eventually found and seen in a scope at long range; it was obviously a shrike. From that distance it appeared to be an adult ~~the mask was fairly obvious and the wings looked very dark against a pale gray body.~~ It then disappeared. About 3:30 p.m. it reappeared briefly in the top of a tree at much closer range. Now, through the scope, Dave Kubitsky and I could see there was only a suggestion of a mask, although there was an obvious eye ring. The bird was a brownish-gray; light barring could be seen on the breast. At this point I realized that there was a possibility that it was not a Loggerhead Shrike.

On Jan 6, Bonnie Ott, Marty Chestem and I found the bird by 8:00 a.m. and were convinced that we had an immature Northern Shrike. It was making circuits around the brushy fields surrounding the ravine west of the soccer fields. It perched consistently at the very tops of the trees. On this day it chattered several times and was seen chasing House Finches, Northern Cardinals, and even a Northern Mockingbird, but it was not seen to capture any prey. At least six different vocalizations were heard. It had a thick black bill with an obvious hook; the bases of both the upper and lower mandibles were light.

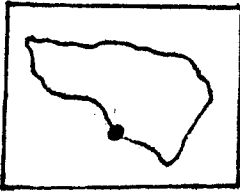


Second Shrike: Daniel Haft and Carol Renfrew. We heard a bird that sounded like a thrasher/bubbling cowbird/improvising Carolina Wren/chat. When we pursued the singer, it flushed from low in briars; thrasher-sized. It flew to the topmost branch of the tallest tree around, a sycamore. It was gray with a black wing patch when perched; no real markings on the wings in flight; not a strongly distinct gray and white. We moved closer, put a 40X scope on the bird. The hook on the bill was prominent. The facial mask showed mostly behind the eye with no sign of meeting over the eye. Carol claimed a two-toned bill (lighter-colored lower mandible) and streaked breast. The shrike was first flushed at about 9:00 a.m., was relocated and flushed again around 11:00 a.m. and flew off with mouse-type prey. (Dan's drawing.)

Thanks to the Rare Bird Alert callers organized so efficiently each year by Bea Newkirk. There may be only a few times a year that calls must be made, but those who have volunteered to do so try to get the news out as quickly as possible. The Rare Bird Alert is activated for birds which have been seen only a few times in the county. There has to be a reasonable chance the bird will be able to be found or it is not placed on the Alert.

BIRDING "HOT SPOTS" IN HOWARD COUNTY

Brighton Dam Nancy Magnusson



Brighton Dam straddles the Howard-Montgomery County border, forming the lower end of Triadelphia Reservoir. The dam is owned and operated by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC). To reach the dam, turn west on Brighton Dam Road from Ten Oaks Road (via Rt. 108 or Rt. 32) or Highland Road (Rt. 216). Continue west until you reach the dam; park in the WSSC parking lot on the Montgomery County side. WSSC day use permits are not required for the Brighton Dam area.

The discussion below pertains mainly to the reservoir side of the dam, but it pays to check downriver as well. To get the most out of your visit, check the reservoir along the entire length of the dam — the viewing area from the Howard County side differs from that of the Montgomery side. There is a walkway on the reservoir side of the dam which is wide enough for a tripod if you have a scope. There is only a curb on the downstream side from which to look out over the Patuxent River. Be careful when crossing the road and when standing on the curb—traffic comes whipping down the hills from both directions.

The major attractions at Brighton Dam are waterfowl; gulls, and Bald Eagles. As is true at most locations, birding ranges from exceptional to mediocre to dismal depending on the day; persistence pays off!

Waterfowl, loons, and grebes begin arriving in the early fall and remain in varying numbers through spring migration depending on whether the reservoir is ice-covered. During migration the species composition may vary greatly from day to day as birds arrive and then resume migration. During the winter, the situation is more static. Any loon, grebe, swan, goose, or duck which is "seeable" in Howard County is apt to show up on the reservoir. Common Loons, Red-breasted Mergansers and Common Mergansers are more likely to be seen here than at most other Howard County locations. American Black Ducks, Mallards and Canada Geese are common throughout the period. Tundra Swans, American Wigeons, Hooded Mergansers, Buffleheads, Lesser Scaups, Ring-necked Ducks, Common Goldeneyes and Pied-billed Grebes are sporadic, but not uncommon. Less common (and uncommon) species to watch for include Horned Grebe, Red-throated Loon, Oldsquaw, Greater Scaup and White-winged Scoter. (The last falls into the "how lucky can you get" category!)

The largest concentrations of gulls are present during the winter months. Build-ups are highly variable; there may be a flock of several thousand one day, and only ten birds the next. Persistence.... The most abundant species found are Herring and Ring-billed Gulls with smaller numbers of Great Black-backed Gulls. Lesser Black-backed Gulls are becoming more common in the East and are being found with some regularity at Brighton Dam. Glaucous Gulls were seen several times last winter at the dam; Iceland and Thayer's Gulls are also possibilities. The trick is to have patience and look at every bird — there may be only one "good" gull in a flock of hundreds. Early morning and late afternoon seem to be the best times for large numbers. Laughing and Bonaparte's Gulls may be present during migration but normally do not overwinter.

Bald Eagles may begin to appear in August and remain until May. Eagles are highly mobile, so it may take repeated trips before one is spotted. As many as six individuals were present off and on during the 1989-90 season, and at least four have been spotted this year. They may be seen soaring or fishing over the reservoir or sitting in the trees along the shore. It pays to look skyward if flocks of gulls or waterfowl take to the air for no apparent reason — the birds will often spot the eagles before you will.

Other birds to look or listen for at the dam area: Cliff Swallows which nest under the overhangs of the dam (summer and early fall); Belted Kingfishers (all year); Great Horned Owls (particularly vocal before dawn in the winter, but may call during any season); Caspian Terns (spring and fall migration, occasional in summer); Osprey (spring and fall); migrating hawks (fall); herons and egrets (spring, late summer and fall); Double-crested Cormorants (spring and fall migration).

Large bodies of water are magnets for vagrants and confused migrants, particularly following storms. Triadelphia Reservoir certainly qualifies — keep your fingers crossed and your eyes open. Sooner or later a pelican is going to turn up on the reservoir ... When you spot it, PLEASE give me and everyone else a call!!

THE BIRDING YEAR IN HOWARD COUNTY

MARCH

Jo Solem

- The Purple Martin vanguard should arrive during the last half of the month; Barn and Tree Swallows in late March or early April.
- In late March look for Chipping Sparrows at feeders and listen for their long trill in suburban areas.
- American Pipits should still be around in good numbers through the month.
- Horned Larks are paired, courting, and beginning to nest. School grounds with poor turf and farm fields with bare earth are good habitat.
- Majority of ducks are gone by third week of the month. Small numbers dribble through into April; a few are seen into May.
- Tundra Swan flights tend to be concentrated, sometimes as early as the first week of March, more often the second or third weeks.
- Ring-billed and Herring Gulls are still in evidence along with an occasional Great Black-backed, mostly near water, but sometimes in newly plowed fields.
- A few phoebes may winter, but the first half of the month the migrants return.
- Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks continue February's courtship activity and nest building. Migrants are also coming through.
- Flickers and other woodpeckers are noisily engaged in courtship which may involve drumming on houses as well as trees.
- Loggerhead Shrikes are seldom seen here, but late March and early April have produced the most county records.
- Flocks of Cedar Waxwings may descend on hawthorn and crabapple trees and strip them of remaining fruit.
- Woodcock courtship at dusk and dawn is most vigorous from now until the end of April.
- In swampy woods, watch and listen for Rusty Blackbirds.
- Towhees should return in numbers from mid to late March.
- In extensive long grass areas, check for Savannah Sparrows.
- Snipe courtship should be visible occasionally in low areas of mud and grass even though they are not a nesting species in the county.
- Fox Sparrows are found in greatest numbers the first two weeks in March although they can be seen at occasional feeders for much of the month.
- From the middle of the month on, goldfinches are beginning to assume breeding plumage.
- Fishermen are back on the reservoirs after March 1, so weekends at those areas are not as productive for birding. Many of the duck migrants will be on relatively small ponds, some on Columbia's lakes.
- Cattle Egrets most commonly start showing up in April, but a few have been seen in March.
- Look for Horned Grebes on any large body of water; peak numbers are in the latter half of the month.
- Crows are nest building this month. Watch for them carrying nesting material.
- Rapidly changing weather patterns this month and next can bring unusual species. Rainy, windy weather may force down migrant waterfowl, especially on weekdays when boats and people are few on the lakes and reservoirs.
- Migrating American Tree Sparrows sometimes may be caught around the first week of the month; heavy Song Sparrow migration usually concentrates the first or second week; Swamp Sparrows move in large numbers in the second and third weeks.

CLIFTON GRANT DIES

Clifton Grant was known to many birders as a special friend to cavity nesting birds. He made hundreds of boxes (mostly for bluebirds). Each was carefully crafted with quality materials and special skill. His generosity in giving them to conservation groups was well known. He donated many boxes for the program which the club runs jointly with the Dept. of Recreation and Parks. He also provided the club bookstore with a continuing supply and, on several occasions, made generous monetary donations of the proceeds earned from selling boxes at an area hardware store. Clif's environmental interests and enthusiasms were many, but to local bluebird lovers his cedar boxes will provide a special legacy for many springs to come.

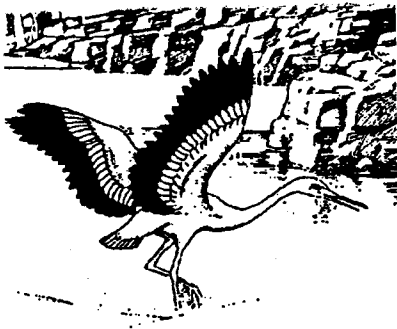
—Jo Solem

ECOLOGY PROGRAM AT H.C.C.

The Bird Club's December program featured Maryland's old growth forests. For those who share a concern for this special habitat in other areas, mark Tuesday, March 26 on your calendar. Lou Gold will speak at Howard Community College's Smith Theater at 8:00 p.m., sponsored by the H.C.C. Student Activities group to support an environmental scholarship fund. His topic: "Lessons from the Ancient Forest: Earth Wisdom and Political Activism" (slides and talk). He is an environmental activist and inspiring speaker. Donations of \$3 will be collected at the door, or purchase tickets in advance from Student Activities. Call 992-4896.

BIRDING THE LAND DOWN UNDER (II) Chuck Dupree

Many of our members travel widely. This newsletter welcomes descriptions of natural history trips. Share your adventures! This is the second of three parts.



Next on the itinerary was Alice Springs, which lies close to the geographic center of Australia and is the home of my daughter and her husband. A short time after leaving Cairns by plane little doubt remained why central Australia is called the Red Centre. The soil is every shade of red imaginable.

Alice Springs, with a population of 15,000, is nestled in a valley between mountains of MacDonnell Range. Looking more like an oasis than a desert town, there was a refreshing difference in the landscape compared with the adjacent outback. This lush vegetation in an arid land is made possible by the presence of an abundant water supply beneath the earth's surface, which is pumped up into huge water tanks.

Water, or the lack of it, has a great influence on the migration and nesting of birds. Some species have become adapted to the lack of water and remain in or near the same location all year. Others migrate with the seasons. Still others migrate long distances from other continents. Nesting seasons also vary greatly, coming to a halt when a dry season occurs. Although birds can survive periods of drought, extended periods sometimes reduce their numbers significantly. A recent example is the death of huge numbers of Australian Pelicans when Lake Eyre dried up.

When birding the outback, the best areas to look for birds are where there are supplies of water. There are some problems, however. Most of the main highways are well paved, but nearly all others require the use of a four wheel drive vehicle with a cowcatcher mounted on the front. Because the outback is open range, cattle and other animals (such as kangaroos, horses, buffalos and camels) may unexpectedly stray across the road.

Fortunately, most of the roads leading to the more scenic attractions and the water holes were quite good, although some were not paved. Not more than 50 miles from Alice Springs were several such places. Standley Chasm, a cleft in the MacDonnell Range where sheer walls 250 feet high loomed over the 15 foot wide opening, was an awe-inspiring sight. At Simpson's Gap, Rock Wallabies could be seen climbing around on a rock slide near the water. Ormiston Gorge, Emily Gap and Trepkina Gorge were other scenic attractions visited.

Dry river beds leading to the fissures in the mountains were very sandy and studded with Red River Gum, a eucalyptus tree. Some of the birds seen in such areas were White-plumed Honeyeaters, a flock of noisy Grey-crowned Babblers, Ringneck or Port Lincoln Parrot, Grey Shrike-thrush, Grey-headed Honeyeater, Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, Galahs and the ever present Australian Magpie-lark. Strangest sighting was a Eurasian Coot in a small waterhole in the middle of the outback. The most exciting find was a Spotted Bower-bird in front of his bower doing a mating dance and singing (if you can call it that) his love song.

Much of the land in the Northern Territory is Aboriginal land which is home to a huge portion of the 250,000 Aboriginals living in Australia. Part of that land is Uluru National Park, where Ayer's Rock and several massive boulders known as *The Olgas* are located. Because the rock was sacred to the Aboriginals, permission to enter the area was granted only on the condition that nothing detract from the beauty of the area. The trip to the 1,260 foot high world's largest monolith was well worthwhile. Aboriginal paintings made thousands of years ago still adorn the walls of the caves at the bottom of the rock. Some of the more interesting birds seen on the trip were the Australian Magpie, Singing Honeyeater, the rare Grey Falcon, and my first and only sighting of Emus.

Travelling the bush is a real experience. Renting a four wheel drive vehicle was necessary for a trip to Palm Valley. The road was terrible, strewn with boulders, sandy in some areas, and crossing water several times. Spring fed streams in the valley supported vegetation not seen anywhere else in the outback. Palm trees, cycads, and mulga dominated the landscape. White-backed Swallows were seen gathering mud to build nests and the Variegated Fairy-wrens were quite common. Plenty of drinking water, a spare tire, and extra gas is a necessity on such trips. Another good thing to bring along is plenty of film. The scenery is breath-taking.

Just south of Alice Springs, on the other side of Heavitree Gap, lies one of the best birding areas I have ever encountered. This is the site of the town's sewage treatment plant, protected as a wildlife sanctuary. Covering several hundred acres, the impoundments are criss-crossed with dikes and bounded by a swamp on one side, a dump on another and shrubland, mixed with stands of gum trees, on the remaining two sides. Salt flats, reeds, spinifex, and crop lands are other types of habitat found.

(To be continued)

CALENDAR OF PROGRAMS, FIELD TRIPS, SPECIAL EVENTS

Programs are held at Longfellow Elementary School, 5470 Hesperus Dr., Columbia. 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 noted. Carpooling is encouraged with riders sharing the cost of gas and tolls. Dress for field work with stout, reasonably waterproof footgear and layers of clothes. Trips do not always follow paths. No pets. Leaders may cancel due to inclement weather or fewer than 3 participants. Questions? Call leader or Field Trip Chair Bonnie Ott 461-3361.

- MARCH 3 OWL TRIP. Leader: Bonnie Ott 461-3361. Limit 12. Meet at 5:30 a.m. Sunday Call leader to register.
- MARCH 3 ROCKBURN BRANCH PARK. Leader: Bonnie Ott 461-3361. 1/2 day trip. Sunday Meet at Rockburn Park Landing Road office 7:30 a.m. Tree sparrows, kinglets, & Winter Wrens?
- MARCH 6 CENTENNIAL LAKE. Call Bonnie Ott 461-3361 for info. 3 hours. Meet at Wednesday parking lot at west end of Centennial Park off Cent. Lane at 8:00 a.m.
- MARCH 9 WILDE LAKE, COLUMBIA. Leader: Helen Zeichner 730-3695. Two hours. Meet Saturday at boat dock on Hyla Brook Road at 8:00 a.m. Focus on waterfowl.
- MARCH 10 CENTENNIAL LAKE. 8:00-11:00 a.m. Meet at parking lot at west end of Sunday Cent. Park off Cent. Lane. Joint trip with Baltimore Bird Club (BBC).
- ★ MARCH 14 "BARN OWLS IN MARYLAND" - Glenn Therres, Biologist, MD DNR. Project Thursday funded by the Check-off Program to increase Barn Owl population. Glenn keeps MOS aware of DNR programs with his column in *The Maryland Yellowthroat*.
- MARCH 17 PINEY RUN (Carroll County). Leader: Dave Kubitsky 461-8104. 1/2 day. Sunday Meet at Grempler 7:30 a.m. Good variety of waterfowl possible.
- MARCH 30 SCHOOLEY MILL PARK. Leader: Nancy Magnusson 461-8912. Meet at 8:00 a.m. Saturday ~~at park building. Look for early migrants.~~
- APRIL 6 U. OF MARYLAND CENTRAL FARM. Leader: Marty Chestem 730-1527. 1/2 Saturday day. Meet at Grempler 7:00 a.m. Look for sparrows, pipits, larks.
- APRIL 7 ROCKBURN BRANCH PARK. Leader: Bonnie Ott 461-3361. 1/2 day. Meet at Sunday Landing Road office 7:00 a.m. Early migrants possible.
- ★ APRIL 11 "RETURN OF THE RAPTORS." - Robert Schutsky, Senior Research Biologist, Thursday RMS Environmental Services, Muddy Run, PA. Bob describes the return of the Bald Eagle and the Osprey to the lower Susquehanna River Valley.
- APRIL 13 BACK RIVER SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT. 1/2 day trip with BBC. Meet at Saturday Grempler 7:00 a.m. Gulls and more! Call Bonnie Ott 461-3361 for info.
- APRIL 14, 21 & 28 CENTENNIAL PARK SPRING WEEKLY WALKS. Spring walks co-sponsored with Sunday Dept of Rec and Parks. Meet at parking lot at west end of Centennial Park off Cent. Lane. 7:00-10:00 a.m. Call Bonnie Ott 461-3361 for info.
- APRIL 15 WILDE LAKE, COLUMBIA. Leader: Helen Zeichner 730-3695. Three hours. Meet Monday at boat dock on Hyla Brook Road at 8:00 a.m.
- APRIL 20 SCHOOLEY MILL PARK BEGINNING BIRDER WALK. 1/2 day. Meet 7:00 a.m. Saturday at building. Call Bonnie Ott 461-3361 for info.
- APRIL 27 PATAPSCO (DANIELS AREA) WILDFLOWER WALK. Leader: Bob Solem 725-5037. Saturday 1/2 day. Meet at Grempler 9:00 a.m.
- APRIL 27 BLUEBIRD WALK AT ROCKBURN BRANCH PARK. Co-sponsored with Dept of Rec Saturday and Parks. Meet at Landing Road office. 9:00-10:00 a.m.
- MAY 4 PATUXENT RIVER DAY. Wildflower walk on Savage Historic Mill Trail 10:30 Saturday a.m.-12:00. Co-sponsored with Dept of Rec and Parks. Leader: Bob Solem 725-5037. Meet at Bollman Truss Bridge in Savage on Foundry St.
- MAY 5 ROCKBURN BRANCH PARK. Joint trip with BBC. Meet 7:30 a.m. at Landing Sunday Road park office. Last year over 80 species on this day. 1/2 day. Leader: Bonnie Ott 461-3361.

MAY 11 MAY COUNT. 44th statewide census by MOS. More info next newsletter.
Saturday Contact Paul Zucker 681-9005 for info or to volunteer.

BOARD MEETINGS:

Thursday, March 28 at 7:30 p.m. Longfellow Elementary School.
Thursday, April 25 at 7:30 p.m. Longfellow Elementary School.

THANKS TO WINTER SEED SALE HELPERS

Eileen Clegg, who chairs the seed sales, orchestrated a smoothly coordinated February pickup. The weather was cooperative, helpers were efficient, and almost all ordered seed was claimed. Helping to load or working outside were Don & Martha Waugh, Jim Blanchard, John Greer, Dave Kubitsky, Cleo & Gus Karafas, Bob Dettner, Bob Solem, Robert Palm, Jr., Michael Courbron, Tim Keller, Steve & Michael Koziol, Steve Drakos, Mark Wallace, Steve Clarkson, Tom & Jessica Horwath, John & Andrew Clegg, Jane Farrell, and Bruce Eberle. Working the desk or the bookstore were Connie Bockstie, Nancy Magnusson, Jo Solem, Helen Zeichner, Ralph Geuder, Sue Probst, Michele Wright (bookstore manager) and Elsa Ponce. Marty Chestem set up a display of DNR stamps and prints and arranged for a table of free conservation materials. Be sure to check it out next fall! Baked goods were provided by Barbara Davis, Eileen Clegg, & Romayne Smith. The next newsletter will contain news of the club's contribution for tropical rainforest preservation and those who provided support. Thanks to each person who helped to make this sale a resounding success!

FLOWER FEATURE

BLUETS

Georgia Morris & Bob Solem



BLUETS - *Houstonia caerulea*
(Also called Quaker Ladies or Innocence)

FAMILY - Bedstraw or Madder (*Rubiaceae*)

HABITAT - Grassy meadows, fields and open woods with moist, sandy soil.

HOWARD COUNTY BLOOMING SEASON - Mid-April to Mid-July.

HOWARD COUNTY LOCATION - Most parts of the county with open woods, including most parks. There is always a lovely patch on the eastern side of Rt. 29, ¼ mile north of Rocky Gorge. There is another patch on the SW corner of Rt. 216 and All Saints Road.

PLANT - 2" to 8" high, slender stalks over a rosette of basal leaves.

FLOWERS - 1/2" across, 4 radially symmetrical petals with a tubular corolla. The petals are pale blue at tips fading to white near center. The center is bright yellow orange. The effect is a blue eye with a yellow pupil.

FRUIT - A small 2-chambered capsule that splits to disperse its minute black seeds.

LEAVES - Stem leaves are opposite, small, narrow and oval-shaped.

SPECIAL INFORMATION - Although tiny, Bluets grow in tightly formed groups or colonies to give an appearance of a pale blue carpet in the wild. Each flower is either pistillate (female) with abortive stamens or staminate (male) with abortive pistils. Thus the flower cannot be self-pollinated and must rely on insects like the bee fly.

CHESAPEAKE BAY AND ENDANGERED SPECIES FUND



Eagle habitat is being protected.



Trees are being planted.



CHECK LINE 63
ON YOUR
MARYLAND STATE
INCOME TAX
FORM

MORE THAN 1500 BLUEBIRDS FLEDGED AGAIN

Mark Wallace & Joe Suess

The number of bluebirds fledged in 1990 was down less than 1% compared to 1989 while the survival rate of eggs laid to young fledged appears to be 3% higher. The number of eggs lost was significantly lower while the young lost increased. A record 764 boxes were monitored. We appreciate the kindness of the many property owners who allow bluebirders to monitor boxes on their land. Their names are too numerous to mention. We extend our thanks to the following individuals who submitted reports for 1990:

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Howard County Department of Recreation & Parks | | | |
| Anthony, Julie | Dolhert, Leonard | Jackson, Pat | Peters, Karl G. |
| Ballentine, William | Earp, Wes & Susan | Keller, Jim | Proia, Judy & Don |
| Barns, Dan | Erwin, John | Kidwell, Margaret | Prost, Adel |
| Becker, Brian | Fadely, Wilson | Kielman, Elaine | Resau, Jim |
| Bockstie, Connie | Fisher, Rosemary | Kubitsky, David | Ridgeley, Rosamond |
| Bogdan, Bob | Frasier, Emily | Lang, Larry | Robbins, Eleanor |
| Boone, Jon K. | Freas, Richard | Lohr, Marie | Rodgers, Hilde |
| Botsai, Monika | Freeland, Sonny & Shirley | Lord, Margaret | Serafinas, Phil |
| Bready, Nadine | French, Sandy | Lustbader, Sara | Shea, Mary |
| Brinkley, Marilyn | Fulmer, Glenn | McClure, Mike & Grazina | Simonsen, Mary |
| Brokaw, Rick | Funkhouser, Sarah & Glenn | McGrann, Debbie | Smith, Boyd & Edna |
| Brown, Allen | Garbin, Barbara & Len | Meltzman, Helen | Smith, Keith |
| Brown, Gisela | Gebhart, Arthur | Mileo, Tony | Snyder, Charene |
| Bulharowski, Adam | Gilbert, Emily | Miller, Charlie | Stirrat, Chuck |
| Buswell, Susan | Gorzo, Corrine & John | Miller, Marie | Suess, Joseph |
| Cameron, Eraina, John & Jeff | Grant, Lee & Carol | Muskovac, John & Kathy | Theis, Bill |
| Casciaro, Ceil | Hall, Mary | Newkirk, Bea | Titherington, Jan & Dot |
| Cattone, Nancy | Hawkins, Nancy & Guy | Newman, Cindy | Tyson, Helen |
| Clark, Tom | Heller, Jim | Nichols, Jim | Wallace, Mark (his trail & others) |
| Clegg, Eileen | Hirt, Pat | Nichols, Turner | Walton, Randy |
| Colston, Kathy | Hogue, Paul | Oaks, Janet & Ron | Westwood, Felix |
| Conolley, Diane & Walt | Horwath, Tom | Olow, John | Wright, Mary Jane |
| Cope, Regina | Hostetler, Naomi & Gene | Parlett, Donald | Zerhusen, Peter |
| Cradler, Carolyn | Jager, Albert | Pearre, Rob & Nancy | |
| Cuddeback, Chris | Jackson, Clifton | | |

~~Our special thanks again to Connie Bockstie and Ceil Casciaro for their management of the Sharp Road Bluebird Trail. Sandy French looked after the boxes along Carroll Mill Road again this year which was deeply appreciated. Carolyn Smith was added as a monitor and looked in on the birds occupying Charlie Miller's property. David Kubitsky did a fine job managing the trail at Belmont, as did Eleanor Robbins in southern Howard County. With the death of Frances Ehlers in June, it was necessary for us to share the duties of monitoring her bluebird trail. We hope we can recruit some additional help in 1991 to maintain this productive trail. Unusual events in 1990 included a report of bluebirds nesting in a dryer vent. An experimental box with a clear plastic bottom to discourage House Sparrows was used by bluebirds. There is insufficient data to comment on the anti-House Sparrow potential. The two plastic jugs on the Suess trail fledged 19 young without House Sparrow intervention of any sort! Such success has been enjoyed for the past few years. One of the boxes at the rear of the W.R. Grace & Co. property also continues its high productivity, fledging nearly 100% of the eggs laid each year. Nancy Hawkins reported bluebirds eating peanut hearts at a feeder on Lovet Road this winter.~~

	<u>Boxes Monitored</u>	<u>Total Used</u>	<u>Eggs Laid</u>	<u>Eggs Lost</u>	<u>Eggs Hatched</u>	<u>Young Lost</u>	<u>Young Fledged</u>	<u>Young Banded</u>
1988	636	346	2405	586	1813	256	1563	778
1989	713	297	2383	606	1777	262	1515	838
1990	764	312	2269	470	1800	293	1507	776

	<u>Chickadee</u>	<u>Titmouse</u>	<u>H Wren</u>	<u>C Wren</u>	<u>Tree Sw.</u>	<u>Sc Owl</u>	<u>Kestrel</u>	<u>P Martin</u>
1990	72	25	333	11	14	0	0	105

The *Bluebirds in the Parks* program which we co-sponsor with the Department of Recreation and Parks proved successful again. Bill Eckert, who is in charge of those boxes, reported that the 93 bluebirds fledged from 74 boxes was the third highest in the eight year history of the project. (That figure is included in the totals shown above.) Mike and Sandy Meyerhoff had major predation problems at Rockburn Branch Park in what had been a productive part of the program. Mike has constructed metal predator guards on each of the poles. If successful, they may be worth adopting on all park boxes to cut raccoon and snake predation. Mike is also experimenting with the Peterson style box which is widely used in the Midwest. The loss of Cliff Grant will be especially felt by the Parks program for he was the major builder of their bluebird boxes.

CONSERVATION REPORT

Bob Solem

Recycling in Howard County will continue to become more complete and easier. The county is divided into five areas, each of which has a contract for curbside pickup of trash. As these contracts expire, the county will add curbside recycling to the new proposals. By July 1993, the final area will have curbside pickup for recycling. County Executive Charles Ecker said once per week trash pickup will be a bid option for the July 1991 contract; the 1991 proposal will have once per week pickup of recyclables for the area. He said the county also has the option of requesting renegotiation of existing contracts so that the entire county has curbside recycling earlier. Composting of yard wastes is another program the county is actively investigating.

For now, those of us who don't have curbside recycling pickup can take our newspapers, cans, glass bottles and plastic to **MoRT** (Mobile Recycling Truck) at the locations and times shown on our last month's seed sale enclosure. If you go to these locations and MoRT is full, call **313-SORT** on weekdays to notify the Recycling Coordinator that they need to add more resources.

FIELD TRIP LEADERS NEEDED

The MOS convention will be held May 24-26, 1991 at the 4-H Center in Chevy Chase, MD, sponsored by the Montgomery Chapter. Some field trips will probably be planned to Howard County locations or to similar habitats. Field trip leaders are needed. Volunteer by contacting one of the local officers.

EARPS' BLUE SPRUCE TO ATLAS

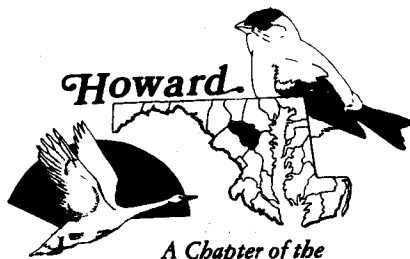
Wes and Susan Earp donated the proceeds from the sale of their 5' live Christmas blue spruce to the chapter for use in completing the Maryland Breeding Bird Atlas. The tree was purchased by Leslie Long. Thanks for a novel way to support a valuable project!

CHANGE OF ADDRESS? Please notify Treasurer Nancy Magnusson 461-8912 promptly. The state MOS must pay the postal service for each correction. Members may be interested to know that of dues paid by a single individual, \$10 goes to the state, \$5 stays with the chapter; for a household \$15 to the state, \$7.50 to the chapter. © 1991

HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

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- BLUEBIRD RESULTS
- BIRDING "HOT SPOT"



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