



THE GOLDFINCH



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SUMMARY OF THE 1997 HOWARD COUNTY FALL COUNT BY MIKE MCCLURE AND CHUCK STIRRAT

The fourth annual Howard County Fall Count was conducted on Sept. 20, 1997. The impact of the hot, summer-like weather is borne out by the low tally results. The number of field counters and parties was slightly greater than last year (55 participants in 28 field parties). The totals for party miles and hours are shown on the accompanying tally sheet, with the party-hours and miles being essentially the same as last year. The day's efforts recorded a new low total of 113 species, down from prior years (133 in '94, 135 in '95, and 130 in '96). The total of individual birds tallied to 22,781 compared to 26,651, 26,643, and 21,615 from prior years. Saturday's temperature approached 90°F at mid-day under persistent cloud cover with light AM sprinkles, south-west winds of 10 to 20 mph winds, and enough humidity to keep everyone uncomfortable. So while the count occurred on one of the later available days (allowed range Sept. 15 to 21), it was the first time that fall temperatures and humidity were not in place!

The accompanying table presents the count data. Fall warblers were present in low numbers at 18 species of warbler identified compared to previous years (30, 30, and 29). New species were Ringed-neck Duck (one in area 4), Common Snipe (one in area 4), and Grasshopper Sparrow (2 in area 7).

This year the individual bird totals were dominated by: Rock Dove (1033 sightings), European Starling (5948), Brown-headed Cowbird (1692) and blackbird species (4055). These four species accounted for about 56% of the total birds observed.

Thanks to all participants and those who acted as area coordinators for the count: Maud Banks, Mary-Jo Betts, BILL AND KARAN BLUM (AREA 4), Joe Byrns, Marty Chestam, Wes Earp, Ward Ebert, DARIUS AND PAULA ECKER (AREA 3), Jeff Friedhoffer, Carol Garza, Dave and Maureen Harvey, Mike Kerwin, Dave Kubitsky, Mike Leumas, Nate Levy, Brigitte Lund, Nancy Magnusson, Grazina and MIKE MCCLURE (COUNTY CO-COORDINATOR), John McKitterick, Elaine and Jeff Metter, Erich Neupert, Carol and Paul Newman, DOUG ODERMATT (AREA 5), Daryl Olson, Richard Orr, BONNIE OTT (AREA 6), Anita Picco, Susan Polniaszek, Ann Marie Rateman, Frank Reilly, Chan Robbins, Susan Setterberg, Jay and Sylvia Silverman, Skip Skipton, Romayne Smith, Bob and Jo Solem, CHUCK STIRRAT (COUNTY CO-COORDINATOR), Tom Strikwerda, EVA SUNELL (AREA 7), Robin Todd, Marilyn Veek,



MARK WALLACE (AREA 1), Don Waugh, Roxann Yeager, Helen Zeichner, and Sherry and PAUL ZUCKER (AREA 2). A very special thanks to Don and Martha Waugh who hosted the evening tally rally.

A couple of final thoughts on the low species count. There was little doubt that the weather was a factor. Those birds that were in the county, spent the day hunkered down in the scrub out of the wind and sprinkles. They were simply hard to find!

Equally problematic with the day's weather was that there have been few reports on major migration movements this fall. The spring migration appeared to be normal in comparison to other recent migrations. Thus, it is safe to assume that the migrants made it to their nesting areas. There have been no reports of a major nesting failure either. So it is safe to assume that there were a normal

number of birds available for the fall migration. Did they migrate west of the Appalachian Mountains? Did they migrate at night in small numbers as a continuous stream vice the expected waves along weather fronts? What route they have taken on their trip south remains a mystery. We are confident that they have indeed migrated south. We are also confident that there will be both a spring and fall migration in '98. We only hope that those migrations will be more visible.

Our only out-of-state visitor this year was Sue Setterberg, who has become our seasonal count migrant from New Jersey, her new home. Despite fewer birds, this fourth Fall count provided an enjoyable time in the field and, of course, there were many "neat birding" observations related at the tally rally. Plan now to join us next year when the count will be held on Saturday, September 19th.

FONT HILL WETLANDS PARK BY JO SOLEM

Recently, Mark Raab, Howard County Recreation and Parks, in preparing a pamphlet for the dedication of Font Hill Wetlands Park asked if the Bird Club could come up with a preliminary total of the bird and dragonfly species there.

Data from this park has been kept separate on annual seasonal bird counts for the last few years. Several individuals also visit the area on a regular basis. Thanks to Karan and Bill Blum, Mike Kerwin, Susan Setterberg, Bob and Jo Solem, and Chuck Stirrat who furnished material on short notice.

A total of 104 bird species have been observed in the park with Great Egret, American Bittern, Snow Goose, Ring-necked Duck, and Least Flycatcher being among the most notable. As the wetlands and lakes mature, it is likely that there will be numerous additions to the list. Mike Kerwin would appreciate being notified of your sightings by phone at 410-461-2408 or e-mail to MIKER@EROLS.COM.

Bob and Jo Solem and Nancy Magnusson have found 35 species of dragonflies and damselflies in the park. The most unusual is the handsome Appalachian Snaketail, which is considered rare throughout its range.

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HOWARD COUNTY FALL BIRD COUNT - September 20, 1997																				
Species / Area No.:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals	Species / Area No.:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals			
Pied-billed Grebe	B	1						3	4	Gray Catbird	A	61	11	34	60	71	27	59	323	
Great Blue Heron	A	1	1	3	8	2	6	29	4	Northern Mockingbird	A	11	2	15	10	25	36	34	133	
Great Egret	B			1	1			2	4	Brown Thrasher	A	5		3			1	2	11	
Green Heron	A	2			7	1	3	7	20	Cedar Waxwing	A	40	2	8	4	4	5	32	95	
Black-cr'd Night-Hero	* C							1	1	European Starling	A	3660	110	598	221	331	351	677	5948	
Mute Swan	A				3	2			5	White-eyed Vireo	A	3	2		2	1	2	4	14	
Canada Goose	A	232	40	33	151	70	43	68	637	Solitary Vireo	B			1				1	1	
Wood Duck	B	5		15	5	2			27	Yellow-throated Vireo	B	1							1	1
Mallard	A	20		19	73	41	19	149	321	Red-eyed Vireo	A	3	1	5	7	6	1	5	28	
Ring-necked Duck	** A				1				1	Tennessee Warbler	B			1					1	1
Black Vulture	A	3	2	32	4	2	2		45	Nashville Warbler	B			1			1	1	3	3
Turkey Vulture	A	37	14	37	9	13	12	1	123	Northern Parula	A			4		1	2		7	7
Osprey	B	2	1	3	1	1	1		9	Yellow Warbler	A					1			1	1
Northern Harrier	B	1							1	Chestnut-sided Warbler	A			3	2	1	1		7	7
Sharp-shinned Hawk	B	2		7	2			2	13	Magnolia Warbler	A	2	4	6	1	4	1		18	18
Cooper's Hawk	B	1	1	2		1		1	6	Blk.-thrt'd. Blue Warbler	A	5		4			1		10	10
accipiter species		1		2	1				4	Yellow-rumped Warbler	A					1			1	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	A	2	2		4	1	2	11	22	Blk.-thrt'd. Green Warbler	B	4	1	8		1	4		18	18
Broad-winged Hawk	B	3		21				1	25	Blackburnian Warbler	B	1		2	1	1			5	5
Red-tailed Hawk	A	5		3	2			3	13	Pine Warbler	B						2		2	2
American Kestrel	A	12	3	10	8	1	1	8	43	Palm Warbler	A	3		5					8	8
Killdeer	A	76	2	36	59	4	8	1	186	Black-&-white Warbler	A	2	1	3	2			3	11	11
Greater Yellowlegs	B							1	1	American Redstart	A	6	1	2	7	2	5	3	26	26
Lesser Yellowlegs	B		3					2	5	Worm-eating Warbler	B			1					1	1
Solitary Sandpiper	B							1	1	Ovenbird	A	1					1	1	3	3
Spotted Sandpiper	B		2					1	3	Northern Waterthrush	B			1		2			3	3
Common Snipe	* B				1				1	Common Yellowthroat	A	9		5	3	14	13	17	61	61
Laughing Gull	B			3				21	24	warbler species		13		15	4	4		8	44	44
Ring-billed Gull	A			3	6	3	10		22	Scarlet Tanager	A	4	1		1	1		1	8	8
Herring Gull	A			14					14	Northern Cardinal	A	60	4	51	48	74	52	110	399	399
gull species						1			1	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	B	2	1	1		1	1	3	9	9
Rock Dove	A	49	500	125	108	3	192	56	1033	Indigo Bunting	A	62		1			2	9	74	74
Mourning Dove	A	207	11	129	107	30	17	157	658	Eastern Towhee	A	11	2	2	1	9	8	6	39	39
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	A		1			1			2	Chipping Sparrow	A	12	9	15	10				46	46
Eastern Screech-Owl	B			4		1			5	Field Sparrow	A	7		1	3	13	1	15	40	40
Great Horned Owl	B			1		4			5	Savannah Sparrow	* B							1	1	1
Barred Owl	B					1			1	Grasshopper Sparrow	B							2	2	2
Common Nighthawk	B	2				5			7	Song Sparrow	A	16		1	6	5	17	23	68	68
Chimney Swift	A	15	7	69	78	72	23	177	441	Swamp Sparrow	B	5		1		2			8	8
Ruby-thrt'd Hummingbi	B			1	1	1	1	1	5	sparrow species		26		2					28	28
Belted Kingfisher	A	6	1	6	3	6	2	4	28	Bobolink	B	3							3	3
Red-bellied Woodpecker	A	27	4	20	11	42	14	36	154	Red-winged Blackbird	A				7	160	28	235	430	430
Downy Woodpecker	A	14	4	9	5	17	16	19	84	Common Grackle	A	50		1	6	5	10	7	79	79
Hairy Woodpecker	A	1	1	5	4	2	3	6	22	Brown-headed Cowbird	A	1500	40		152				1,692	1,692
Northern Flicker	A	6	8	30	10	12	25	29	120	blackbird species		15			500	40		3500	4055	4055
Pileated Woodpecker	A	4	3	2	2	8	3	4	26	Baltimore Oriole	B					1			1	1
Eastern Wood-Pewee	A	7	2	3	2	4	2	2	22	House Finch	A	51	14	66	27	40	43	112	353	353
Empidonax species		7	1			1			9	American Goldfinch	A	123	1	42	109	29	52	62	418	418
Eastern Phoebe	A	9	2	9	2	4	7	7	40	House Sparrow	A	10		44	70	36	23	39	222	222
Gr. Crested Flycatche	A	2							2	Area Total Birds: 7043 1055 2112 2623 1947 1422 6579 22781										
Tree Swallow	A	1						2	3	Area Total Species: 77 50 76 65 76 63 72 113										
Barn Swallow	A	4			9		70	83		Area No.: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Totals										
Blue Jay	A	85	25	99	104	119	93	133	658	Supplemental Data										
American Crow	A	89	42	83	161	98	51	150	674	Time Start:	6:00 a	6:45 a	4:30 a	7:00 a	5:00 a	7:00 a	6:30 a	4:30 a		
Fish Crow	A	23		3	1	1	15		43	Time Stop:	7:30 p	1:00 p	5:00 p	5:00 p	5:15 p	noon	5:00 p	7:30 p		
crow species		88	100	160	160	158	21	142	829	Hours on Foot:	26.8	6.0	14.3	16.7	39.0	11.5	30.8	145.1		
Carolina Chickadee	A	27	2	28	41	74	30	81	283	Hours by Car:	7.2	.3	7.8	2.8	1.1	1.0	1.5	21.7		
Tufted Titmouse	A	25	5	27	32	41	16	71	217	Miles on Foot:	17.5	5.0	15.3	11.5	34.0	14.0	31.0	128.3		
Red-breasted Nuthatc	* C	5			2	4	4	8	23	Miles by Car:	94.0	8.0	54.3	31.8	12.0	18.0	26.3	244.4		
White-breasted Nuthatc	A	15	2	11	3	15	6	8	60	Hours Feeder Watching:	1.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	1.0		
Brown Creeper	A	1		1					2	Hours Stationary:	.5	.0	1.0	.0	.8	.0	2.0	4.3		
Carolina Wren	A	17	8	32	21	32	13	42	165	Hours "Owling":	.7	.0	2.0	.0	1.5	.0	.0	4.2		
House Wren	A	8	2			2	2	6	20	Miles "Owling":	.1	.0	5.0	.0	5.0	.0	.0	10.1		
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	A	2							2	Total Observers in Area:	5	7	10	8	10	5	10	55		
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	A				1	1			2	Total Parties in Area:	5	1	3	3	6	3	7	28		
Eastern Bluebird	A	84	22	32	21	54	38	12	263	Total Party-Hours (Reg.):	34	6	22	20	40	13	32	167		
Veery	B			2		1		1	4	Total Party-Hours (Feeder):	1.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	1.0		
Gray-cheeked Thrush	* C			1					1	Tot. Party-Hours (Station'y):	.5	.0	1.0	.0	.8	.0	2.0	4.3		
Swainson's Thrush	B							2	2	Total Party-Hours (Owling):	.7	.0	2.0	.0	1.5	.0	.0	4.2		
Wood Thrush	A					6	2	2	10	Total Party-Hours:	36.2	6.3	25.1	19.5	42.4	12.5	34.3	176.3		
American Robin	A	20	24	23	133	80	32	91	403	Area No.:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals		

PHALAROPES, POLYANDRY AND PROFLIGACY

BY BRYAN MACKAY

The shorebirds rise as one from the beach, their wingbeats a sudden white noise like distant applause. The flock wheels and turns, beats against the wind for a short while, and then settles to the sand again like a grey snowfall. Hundreds of Semipalmated Sandpipers, a few Ruddy Turnstones, and a Red Knot or two prowl the edge of Delaware Bay, seeking the greenish-black eggs of horseshoe crabs laid carelessly and profligately along the high tide line. I had come to see this, eastern North America's last great wildlife spectacle, but even it had started to lose its charm after a full morning of watching and waiting. I scan the crowd at water's edge one last time - and there it is.

Birders live for the rarities. They may exclaim over trip counts, rhapsodize about a particularly good look at a favorite bird, or watch with fascination an unexpected behavior, but ultimately every birder wants to see a species he or she has never seen before. And if the bird is uncommon or unusual, so much the better. My rarity this May day at Port Mahon was a Red-necked Phalarope.

Phalaropes are pelagic birds that come ashore only to breed. Of the three species of phalaropes, the Red-necked is the most commonly seen on land, but more frequently in fall



migration than in spring. Red-necked Phalaropes nest on the arctic tundra and are circumpolar in distribution. Most North American birds winter off the coast of Peru.

This Red-necked Phalarope was a bit larger than a sandpiper, although from time to time it would be harassed by the smaller species and was clearly subordinate. It had a white belly and dark back with two reddish-buff stripes. The neck was white, the top of the head black, and a distinctive brick-colored patch swirled across the neck and up the side of the head. Red-necked Phalaropes are sexually dimorphic (males and females look different); this one was clearly a female. The bill was needle-like and the toes lobed.

As I read my guidebook, it struck me that

the female was more brightly colored than the male. This is unusual; males are typically gaudier, presumably as an attraction to females. Females are duller, presumably to blend in better with the surroundings while brooding on the nest. What was going on?

A little research in the library revealed the answer. In Red-necked Phalaropes, sex roles are reversed. Females desert the nest after laying eggs, leaving males to incubate the eggs and feed the young. Indeed, some females practice sequential polyandry. In this mating system, a female mates with one male, and after ovipositing finds another male to repeat the process with. Polyandry is rare, occurring in less than 1% of bird species. In an interesting sidelight, Audubon mislabeled males and females in all his phalarope paintings due to their reverse pattern of sexual dimorphism.

As I packed my binoculars to head home, I reflected on this trip to Delaware Bay. I had come to see a spectacle, vast numbers of horseshoe crabs and birds, meeting in one place at one time, and a reaffirmation of the annual cycles of the natural world. But what I took home with me, what stands out now in memory, was not the phenomenon of all those animals, but the marvel of one single, unique bird, a phalarope far out of place and time.

COLUMBIA LAKES BIRD CHECKLIST PUBLISHED

BY JANE COSKREN

The Howard County Bird Club has completed the Columbia Lakes Checklist project, and the list is being printed. A cooperative effort, the checklist was compiled by the Bird Club, and designed, printed, and distributed by the Columbia Association. This checklist is the third in a series of checklists planned for Columbia's lakes and major open space parcels and Howard County's major parks and environmental areas. Checklists have been published for Centennial Park and for Rockburn Park.

The checklist provides data on the 226 species observed in the open space areas around Lake Elkhorn, Lake Kittamaquindi, and Wilde Lake from 1974-1997. The data identifies the status (resident, migrant, visitor, or accidental) of each species for spring, summer, fall, and winter and indicates the lakes where the species has been observed.

Marty Chestem and Helen Zelchner coordinated the checklist effort, with participation by the following club members: Maud Banks, Pat Birnie, Jon E. Boone, Jon K. Boone, Marty Chestem, Jane

Coskren, Fred Cowden, David Cummings, Paula & Darius Ecker, Nancy Flowers, Sue & John Greer, Alice & Dick Hegner, Jim Hill, Linda & Lynn Holley, David Holmes, Mike Kerwin, Alice Kretz, Chris Ludwig, Kathy Mariano, Linda McDaniel, Sandy Meyerhoff, Carol & Paul Newman, Doug Odermatt, Bonnie Ott, Jim Orgain, David Parkins, Patty & Jim Rouse, Tom Sauer, Sue Setterberg, Steve Simon, Zaida Simon, Jo Solem, Eva Sunell, Helen Thompson, Carol & Jim Wilkinson, Martha & Don Waugh, and Helen Zelchner. Thanks also to all club members who contributed data by leading trips, participating in counts in the lake areas, and contributing seasonal arrival and departure data.

Special accolades to Sue Probst who drew the Ruddy Ducks for the cover. We also appreciate the assistance provided by the Columbia Association, especially that provided by Pat Kennedy, Chic Rhodehamel, and Jeff Kendrick.

The checklist will be available at Club meetings and events beginning in November. A copy will be mailed to you if you send a stamped self-addressed envelope to Marty Chestem, 10850 Faulkner Ridge Circle, Columbia, Maryland 21044.

COLUMBIA LAKES BIRD CHECKLIST

Lake Elkhorn
Lake Kittamaquindi
Wilde Lake



Columbia, Maryland

SUMMER BIRD RECORDS: JUNE 1 - JULY 31, 1997

BY JOANNE SOLEM

Probably the same **Double-crested Cormorant** moved from Wilde Lake (WILLK) 6/20 (DOD) to Lake Kittamaquidi (LKKIT) 6/21 (MC). Among the most exciting observations this season was a continuation of a spring report. Three pairs of **Great Blue Heron** nested in a beaver-created wetland at Vantage Point (VANPT) near LKKIT. The three nests each produced 3 young (MC). This is the only known record of more than two nests in the county. The 9 fledged are a high for this predominantly Piedmont county. July brought reports of **Great Egrets** with the first at VANPT 7/12 (MC) and a high of 18 at Centennial Park (CENPK) 7/19 (RP). VANPT also produced a **Little Blue Heron** 7/30-31 and 7 **Green Herons** 7/30, of which 2 were immatures (im) (MC). Lake Elkhorn (LKEK) had single **Black-crowned Night-Herons** 6/24 (DE), 7/3 im (JC), and 7/31 im (MC). WILLK was the other location favored by this species; by August as many as 4 were being seen each evening. In July there was 1 on 7/17 (C&PN) & 1 im 7/21 (DOD).

On 6/4 CENPK had an appalling 38 flightless young **Canada Geese** (J&TDC). The proliferation of this species on every pond, lake, river and in many fields has rapidly pushed them into the "pest species" category. Each year there are a few ducks that don't seem to get the word that it's time to migrate. This year a female **Canvasback** was still present at CENPK 7/12 (JC); a pair of **Ring-necked Ducks** were also at CENPK 6/4 (J&TDC). The female lingered till 7/12 (JC).

A summer **Osprey** was over WILLK 6/20 (DOD).

A roost of 10-12 **Wild Turkeys** near the Patuxent River, south of Jennings Chapel Road was discovered 6/28 (JSh). A second report was from Marriottsville west along the Patapsco River where 1 was seen 7/13 (J&TDC). Two **Northern Bobwhites** were noted at Schooley Mill Park (SLMPK) 6/1 (WEB). The last **American Coot** lingered at CENPK until 6/1

EACH SEASON HOWARD COUNTY BIRD SIGHTINGS ARE COMPILED AND SUBMITTED TO **MARYLAND BIRDLIFE** AND **FIELD NOTES**. BECAUSE BOTH PUBLICATIONS PROVIDE OVERVIEWS FOR LARGE AREAS, ONLY A FRACTION OF HOWARD COUNTY SIGHTINGS ARE PUBLISHED. THE RECORDS ARE NOT LOST, HOWEVER, FOR THEY ARE THE BASIS FOR COUNTY RECORDS. ALL RECORDS ARE WELCOMED AND APPRECIATED. ANY INDIVIDUAL WHO TURNS IN SEASONAL SIGHTINGS RECEIVES A COPY OF THE COUNTY COMPILATION. TO REQUEST A FORM ON WHICH TO LOG DATES, PLEASE CALL 301-725-5037. THE BOARD HAS REQUESTED THAT A DIGEST OF THE SEASONAL HIGHLIGHTS APPEAR IN THE NEWSLETTER. OBSERVERS ARE REFERRED TO BY THEIR INITIALS (SEE THE LIST AT THE END OF THE ARTICLE). LOCATIONS ARE WRITTEN OUT THE FIRST TIME CITED; THEREAFTER, ABBREVIATIONS ARE USED.

(J&TDC).

Shorebird reports were few and numbers low. One **Lesser Yellowlegs** dropped in at VANPT 7/30 (MC). Two **Solitary Sandpipers** were at LKKIT 7/10 (MC) with a high of 5 for the season at CENPK 7/19 (JC). One assumes that the **Spotted Sandpiper** at Font Hill Wetlands Park 6/21 (JC) was a non-breeding spring migrant. Barely a month later (7/20) 1 was seen at CENPK (MC). Four **Least Sandpipers** were at Fulton Pond 7/20 (J&TDC).

After the gypsy moth population crashed several years ago, cuckoo reports have dropped dramatically. Although **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** were heard at a number of locations along the Patapsco River, especially during late June (JS), the only **Black-billed Cuckoo** this summer was at Timberleigh (TIMBR) 6/16 (DN). The **Barred Owls** that frequent the Gwynn Acres Path nested successfully; 2 or 3 young were seen & heard 7/12 (BO). Barreds were also reported from Hallmark Road 6/9 (WEB) & TIMBR 6/7-7/24 where 1-2 birds were seen. On 7/2 one of those owls carried off a **Common Grackle** (DN).

A late **Common Nighthawk** was over LKEK 6/5 (DE). On 7/6 at least 100 **Chimney Swifts** went into a roost at the Columbia Mall (MC). The site has now been destroyed in the mall expansion.

There was good news for **Red-headed Woodpecker** admirers, as the birds were reported from two different county locations. A pair appeared to be nesting near the 6th hole at the Willow Springs Golf Course, MD 32 & I70. (MS). Red-heads had been reported in May from TIMBR; one appeared again 6/16-19 at a



feeder there (DN). That observer also had a female **Hairy Woodpecker** bringing a young bird to the feeder.

An exceedingly late **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was spotted at LKEK 6/13 (DE). The colony of **Cliff Swallows** underneath the MD 32 bridge over the Patapsco River at Sykesville was active again this year (CS).

Although **Cedar Waxwings** nest in small numbers in the county, they are late nesters; as usual, small flocks were still being seen well into June. At LKEK, 4 on 6/24 (including at least 1 carrying food) (DE) & 6 on 6/25 (DE) were probably family groups; 2 were seen at the same location 7/9 by the same observer. At WILLK, 2 were noted 7/19 (DOD).

A **Warbling Vireo** is a notable find, especially during the breeding season; 1 was seen at CENPK 6/29 (JC). **Blackpoll Warblers** hung on this spring into the summer season. WILLK still had 3 on 6/5 (DE) and the last (a male) was reported from that location 6/9 (DE). Three **American Redstarts** (1 im) were noted in the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area 7/20 (JC). The last **Canada Warbler** was reported from Henryton 6/1 (CS).

Three **Indigo Buntings** came to a feeder in the Fulton area 6/3 (RM). And finally, nicely colored male **White-throated Sparrow** was a surprise at an Allview feeder 6/23 (ES).

Observers: *Martha Chestem (MC), Jane Farrell Coskren (JC), T. Dennis Coskren (TDC), Ward Ebert (WEB), Darius Ecker (DE), Rosamond Munro (RM), Diane Nagengast (DN), Carol & Paul Newman (C&PN), Doug Odemast (DOD), Bonnie Ott (BO), Ray Petersen (RP), Jay Sheppard (JSh), Jo Solem (JS), Hank Stanton (HS), Chuck Strat (CS), Eva Sunell (ES).*

BIRD CLUB DISPLAY AT THE HOWARD COUNTY FAIR

BY DARIUS ECKER

The Howard County Bird Club had a display in Exhibit Hall 2 at the Howard County Fair during the week of August 9-16. **Tom Strikwerda** coordinated the event with the Fair Board of Directors, and **Darius Ecker** coordinated prime-time booth coverage with volunteers from the club. **Darius and Paula Ecker, Marty Chestem and Helen Zeichner** set up the display on Friday night before the fair, and **Darius and Paula Ecker** dismantled the display on the last day of the fair.

Thanks to the following volunteers who worked the booth: **Ralph and Jane Geuder, Jeff and Elaine Metter, Dave and Maureen Harvey, Chuck Strat, Dennis Coskren, Don and Martha**

Waugh, and Tom Strikwerda.

The booth, as always, attracted the attention and interest of many fairgoers. The Red-tailed Hawk attracted many children to the booth, and prompted many ooh's and ahhh's.

As stated in the last issue of the newsletter, due to constraints on our time this was the last year we will be able to coordinate the staffing of the booth for the Howard County Fair. We are looking for a volunteer from the club to take responsibility for this worthwhile effort. Of course, we will be available to assist anyone interested. Please call **Darius Ecker 410-312-9166** or **Maud Banks 410-381-3240** to volunteer.

CALENDAR OF PROGRAMS AND FIELD TRIPS

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 pm. Meeting/program begins at 8:00 pm. Club bookstore opens at 7:30 pm.

- ✓ November 13, Thursday "A Trip to the Galapagos Islands," by Ralph Geuder. Learn about some of the endemic species of birds, reptiles and mammals.
- ✓ December 11, Thursday "Maasi Mara to the Mountains of the Moon," by Craig Sholley. An overview of the birds and mammals of this East African area.
- January 8, Thursday "Cinnamon Buns and Cinnamon-rumped Trogons," by Hank Kaestner. Join the travels of a birding spice-buyer in Indonesia.

Field Trips meet as described for each trip. Carpooling is encouraged; riders share the cost of gas and tolls. Dress for the field trip with stout, reasonably waterproof footwear and layers of clothes. Trips do not always follow paths. NO pets. *Leaders may cancel due to inclement weather or fewer than three participants.* FOR INFORMATION, CALL **BONNIE OTT**, at 410-461-3361.

November 2, 9, 16, 23 Sunday **Sundays at Centennial Park Walk** - Meet at 8:00 am at the west end parking lot. **Leader: TBA.** Walk the paved path around the lake. Call Bonnie for more information.

- ✓ November 15, Saturday **Waterfowl in Howard County** - Meet 8:00 am at the Centennial Park concession stand. **Leader: Jane Coskren.** We'll tour several Howard County lakes and ponds. Call leader at 410-381-7344 for more information.

November 29, Saturday **Snow Bunting Search at Sandy Point State Park** - Meet at 7:30 am at the Route 32 and Broken Land Parkway park and ride (car parking). **Leaders: Darius and Paula Ecker.** Last year we were successful in our search. Call leaders at 410-312-9165 for more information.

- ✓ December 3, Wednesday **Autumn (August 1 - November 30) Bird Records Due** - Mail to Jo Solem, 10617 Graeoch Road, Laurel, MD 20723.

- ✓ December 20, Saturday **Triadelphia Reservoir Christmas Bird Count** - For details or to volunteer, contact Jo Solem, 301-725-5037 or Mark Wallace, 301-725-6370.

January 1, Thursday **Start Your New Year List** - Meet at 8:30 am at the Broken Land Parkway parking lot at Lake Elkhorn. **Leaders: Darius and Paula Ecker.** This half day field trip will tour Howard County in search of birds for our year lists.

February 7, Saturday **Midwinter Count** - Mark your calendar. Details will be in the next issue of the newsletter.

February 28, Saturday **Annual Pot Luck Dinner** - Mark your calendar. Details will be in the next issue of the new newsletter.

Board of Directors meetings are held the fourth Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm, unless otherwise noted, at the home of the board member listed. If directions are required, please call the hosting board member.

- ✓ November 20, Thursday **Mike Kerwin**, 10257 Bristol Channel, Ellicott City, MD 21042, phone 410-461-2408.

December - NONE

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 1998 NEWSLETTER MATERIAL is due NOVEMBER 28, 1997. Anyone is welcome to contribute articles or ideas which you think will be of interest to other birders. Call or mail to Paula and Darius Ecker, 9270 Crazyquilt Court, Columbia, MD 21045, Phone 410-312-9165 or e-mail to Paulae2156@aol.com. Also, please visit the club's site on the World Wide Web at <http://www.abs.net/~darius/birding.html>.

RENEW, RENEW, RENEW

Don't forget, if you have not already done so, it is time to renew your membership. Please complete and return the membership application that was included in the last issue of the newsletter. If you need another copy of the application, contact **Paula and Darius Ecker**, 410-312-9165.

MOS SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

The Maryland Ornithological Society annually awards ecology and ornithology tuition scholarships to Audubon camps. If you work with young people, you may wish to apply for a scholarship. Contact President **Maud Banks** 410-381-3240 for additional information.

BOOKSTORE GIFTS

The Howard County Bird Club's bookstore carries a wide variety of bird field guides and CD's plus many natural history books—all at a deep discount. Consider giving *Birding Howard County, Maryland* as a gift during the coming holidays. Manager **Ann Marie Raterman** brings the bookstore to each meeting, or contact her at 410-740-7315.

HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

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CONSERVATION COLUMN BY BOB SOLEM

With nearly 1000 acres of undeveloped land, the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA) is a significant resource for Howard County. This area will be monitored by the Middle Patuxent Valley Association. One of the important uses for this area is as an educational resource, both for the Howard County school system and for informal education by the public through the efforts of the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks. Rec and Parks has already made major improvements in access to MPEA with a small parking lot off Trotter Road and a number of trails through the area. *Suzanne Probst* will be following the activities of the Middle Patuxent Valley Association's Education Committee on behalf of the Howard County Bird Club.

To join the MPVA, send \$10 (individual) or \$15 (family) to MPVA, P.O. Box 334, Clarksville, MD 21029 with your name(s), address, phone number, e-mail address, and area of special interest (birdwatching, hiking, horseback riding, fishing, deer management, trail clearing, educational walks, animal and plant inventory, etc.)

HOWARD COUNTY BIRD MYSTERY REVEALED

Did you ever wonder how or why the American Goldfinch became the Howard County Bird? Following is a reprint of an article from the November-December 1977 newsletter that explains how this occurred.

"The executive branch of the Howard County government recently asked the Howard Chapter of MOS to recommend a county bird. The membership present at the September meeting was invited to nominate choices. They were asked to consider only birds which were found throughout the county, lived here all through the year and had a "good reputation"! Of those nominated, the two receiving the most votes were the Carolina Chickadee and the American Goldfinch. In a run-off election the goldfinch was the winner."

Mystery solved!!! We now all know how the American Goldfinch became the Howard County Bird. Thankfully, the goldfinch has maintained it's "good reputation" now for 20 years. Thanks to the membership at the September 1977 meeting for a good choice!!!

SCHOOLEY MILL PARK CHECKLIST BY NANCY MAGNUSSON

We are beginning to work on the Schooley Mill checklist. *Nancy Magnusson* will be compiling the data, please send all sightings to her at *8589-F Falls Run Road, Ellicott City, MD 21043*. A partially filled in checklist is available. If you would prefer to contribute your data in this manner, call Nancy at *410-992-8763* to receive a copy. Data should be by month (if possible) especially for the more uncommon species. Otherwise, seasonal data is fine: For bird record purposes, seasons are defined as: Winter (December-February), Spring (March-May), Summer (June-July) and Fall (August-November). For unusual species, dates and numbers would be useful for determining status codes. Indicating nesting species would also be appreciated. No list is too small, all help will be gratefully accepted! We would like to receive your sightings by the end of November. Thanks for your help!

VOLUNTEER ARTIST NEEDED

The bird club is seeking a volunteer to do the cover illustration for the Schooley Mill checklist. If you are interested in volunteering your talent, please contact any board member or *Paul* *410-312-9165*.

