

vegetation south to the tree line usually attracts migrants. On your way uphill, visit the owl enclosure and check the feeders behind the Center. Pine Siskins were visiting them during a recent winter.

For a longer hike, continue past the Center to the Butterfly Garden (partly funded by the Howard County Bird Club) (9). Check the dead tree beyond the stream crossing for vultures, hawks, and smaller birds. At this point, you can go straight across the stream, or turn right, and set forth on yet more trails through fields and woods. If you turn right, you will eventually encounter HodgePodge Lodge, the set of a nature-oriented MPT series which ended in the 1970's. The small wetland (10) and nearby trees and fields can be active. Look for Eastern Bluebirds among the redcedars.

The Community Garden has native planting beds along the west fence that may be worth checking for birds and butterflies as the plants mature.

Special Attractions: Butterfly Garden; Heirloom Orchard; John L. Clark Arboretum and Honors Garden; reconstructed Montjoy Barn (c. 1798, the sole surviving English-style wheat barn in Maryland); an impressive Tulip Poplar stump in front of the farmhouse (tree dated to the Revolutionary War); the original HodgePodge Lodge; Community Garden.

Deer Hunts: Note that controlled deer hunts are held on a few days in fall and winter. *On hunt days, cones and signs are placed in the driveway entrance to indicate that the trails are temporarily closed.*

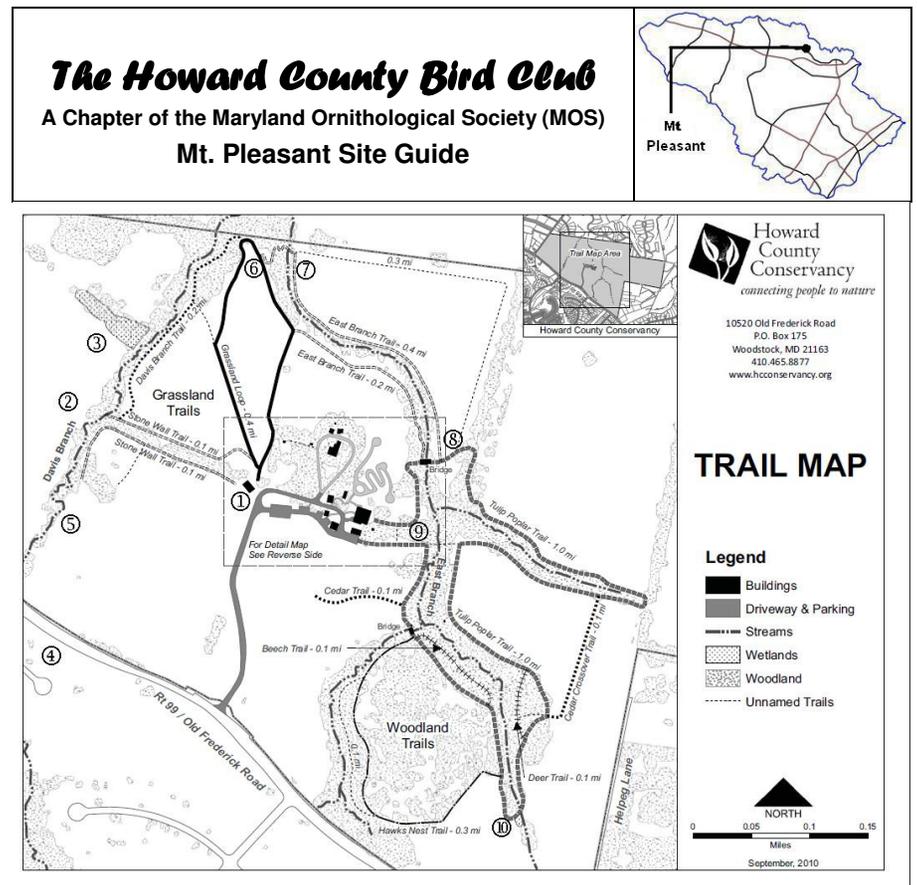
Seasonal Bird List: A complete seasonal bird list is on the HCBC's web page. There are also butterfly, dragonfly, mammal, amphibian and reptile lists. The URL for these lists is http://www.howardbirds.org/birdinghowardcounty/MtPleasant/mount_pleasant_species_lists.htm.

Compilers: Kurt Schwarz and Scott Berglund

For complete species lists, photographs, directions, and additional information, check the following website: <http://www.howardbirds.org>. Click on Birding Howard County, Maryland, Site Guides, Mt. Pleasant.

This material is a digest taken from the revised version of *Birding Howard County, Maryland* by Joanne K. Solem. More than 40 sites are available at the above website.

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This 300-year old farm, on the north side of Old Frederick Road (MD 99) one-half mile east of Woodstock Road, is the headquarters of the Howard County Conservancy. For birders, it is one of the county's premier destinations for field and edge species, especially during migration.

Size: 232 acres.

Trails/Paths: Four miles of mowed-grass paths.

Best Time to Visit: Spring, fall, winter.

Coverage Time: 2–3 hours

Notable Birds: Wild Turkey and American Kestrel year-round, Savannah Sparrow and American Tree Sparrow in winter, Lincoln's Sparrow in migration, Yellow-breasted Chat, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Eastern Meadowlark spring through fall. Rarities: Ring-necked

Pheasant, Northern Bobwhite, Glossy Ibis, Rough-legged Hawk, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Black-bellied Plover (pond east of Woodstock Post Office), Upland Sandpiper, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Philadelphia Vireo, Marsh Wren, Orange-crowned Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Clay-colored Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, and Dickcissel.

Amenities: Restrooms in Gudelsky Environmental Education Center, available only during public hours. Gift shop. Public programs.

Operation and Hours: Trails open dawn to dusk seven days a week; no fee. Nature center hours: Wednesday through Saturday 9:00 a.m.– 3:00 p.m., closed Saturdays during winter. Fees for some programs and special events. For additional information: phone 410-465-8877; web page <http://www.hcconservancy.org>

Habitat: A 232-acre farm containing fields, hedgerows, small woodlands, streams, two small natural wetlands and one small artificial wetland. Four miles of mown trails extend east and west from the central cluster.

Layout: Buildings, parking, and planned activities are grouped near the end of the entrance drive. Mown trails extend east and west from the parking area over rolling hills, through a few woodlands, and along field edges. There are some bridged stream crossings. Land on the western edge from Davis Branch to Woodstock Road is owned by Howard County; some Patapsco Valley State Park land abuts the east boundary—both are managed by the Conservancy.

Handicapped Access: Gravel parking lot. Paths are not suitable for wheelchairs—all are mown grass with some inclines. The Gudelsky Environmental Education Center is handicapped accessible. There is some access to much of the central cluster (watch feeders from inside the Center, examine flowers and water feature in the Honors Garden, and check trees and shrubs near the parking area). There is a good view of the sky.

Birding: Check the wires along the driveway for Eastern Bluebirds, and the occasional Eastern Meadowlark. Watch the sky for flyovers. The yard and orchard around the historic farmhouse are attractive to woodpeckers and sapsuckers. The community gardens may hold sparrows, buntings, and some migrants in the fall.

A suggested route is to start at the Montjoy Barn (1 on the trail map). Scan the fields to the south for Eastern Meadowlarks, then go north through a hedgerow. Here, at the top of the hill, stop and scan the fields and sky. The lone tree downhill in the field on the right is a

favorite perch for American Kestrels, Northern Harriers, and smaller birds. At the nearby signpost, turn west (left) on the Stone Wall Trail and continue downhill along the tree line.

At the bottom of the hill, a bridge crosses Davis Branch (2). If you cross, you will enter a fairly extensive grassland area. In the colder months, Savannah Sparrows can often be flushed; occasionally a Vesper Sparrow is present in mid-fall and once a Clay-Colored Sparrow. The north side of this tract contains a small area of cattails (3). Fall through spring, check it for Swamp Sparrows. The long grass and saplings beyond have held Pine Siskins in a recent winter.

From the bridge, you may also consider walking south to Old Frederick Road (MD 99) and crossing the road carefully to inspect the large pond east of the post office (4). The pond can host waterfowl, and sometimes shorebirds including a Black-bellied Plover one May day.

After re-crossing the bridge (2), look to the right for a trail crossing the stone wall. After crossing, turn right toward the stream and check the nearby vegetation. In the spring, continue south with the stream on your right to reach the artificial wetland (5) which can hold Wilson's Snipe and a shorebird or two in migration. The wetland dries quickly except in extended wet periods. Bushwhacking through tall grass may be necessary. Retrace your steps to the stone wall.

If, after re-crossing the bridge (2), you do not choose to visit the wetland, turn left (north) and follow the mown trail along the scrubby streamside vegetation. Palm Warblers are frequent here in migration, especially fall. Follow the trail along the stream, into the woods, and up the hill. At the top of the hill, look for the signpost for a trail leading downhill (6) in a switch-back pattern. At its base, there is a stream crossing consisting of a log with a hand rope. This area can be quite productive.

After crossing the East Branch (7), turn right on the path. In migration, a variety of warblers, vireos, and sparrows are usually present. Least Flycatcher, Marsh Wren, Mourning Warbler, and Orange-crowned Warbler are among the special birds that have been recorded before reaching the next bridge (8). At 8 you will be below the Gudelsky building and parking lot, completing about a one-mile loop. Spend some time on both sides of the foot bridge and explore a short distance in both directions on the west side of the bridge as this is frequently one of the most productive spots on the property. In fall, grasses and plantings in the Honors Garden and on the slope below it hold numerous sparrows, while spring and fall the streamside