



THE GOLDFINCH



A CHAPTER OF THE MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 1999

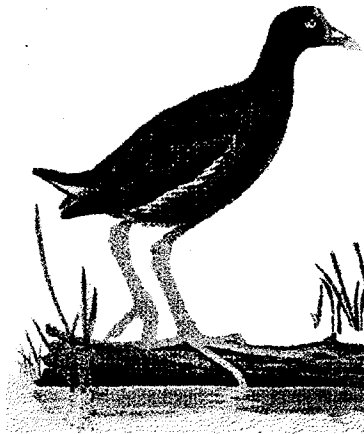
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SUMMARY OF THE 1999 HOWARD COUNTY FALL COUNT BY MIKE McCLURE AND CHUCK STIRRAT

The sixth annual Howard County Fall Count, the last club sponsored count before the Year 2000, was conducted on Sept. 18, 1999. The count saw our second lowest record for species (120 vs 113) while at the same time setting a new low for individuals. The number of participants and parties (48 and 23) was the lowest we have had yet. In all likelihood these results reflect the passage of Hurricane Floyd in addition to the recent rains which finally broke the La Nina drought that had the County listed driest in the State. Floyd barreled through the county on the preceding Wednesday and Thursday (Sept. 15th & 16th) dumping nearly 5 inches of rain and with enough wind to render many electrical feeder lines inoperative. In fact, for the 30 days preceding the count, the County received nearly 14 inches of rain, including Hurricanes Floyd's, and Dennis' and the passage of a major weather front. These rains left the shorebird habitats completely flooded and void of sightings. The totals for party miles and hours are shown on the accompanying tally sheet, with the party-hours being essentially the same as last year, while the mileage showed a 30% increase. The day's efforts recorded 120 species compared to previous year's records (133 in '94, 135 in '95, 130 in '96, 113 in '97 and 136 in '98). The total of individual birds tallied to 15,506 compared to prior years of 26,651, 26,643, 21,615, 22,781, and 17,190. Saturday's temperature reached the high 70's to low 80's with no cloud cover or winds. No precipitation was reported and the humidity was comfortable.

The accompanying table presents the count data. Fall warblers species identified were somewhat low (21) compared to prior years (30, 30, 29, 18 & 29). New species added on the Fall Count were Common Loon (1 in area 6), and Common Moorhen (1 in area 4). The Common Moorhen is an occasional visitor to the County with previous single records in 1992, 1991, 1986. There were two records of Common Moorhens in 1987.

This year the individual bird totals were dominated by: European Starling



(1754), Common Grackle (609), Chimney Swift (689), and Broad-winged Hawk (2427). These four species accounted for about 35% of the total birds observed compared to recent previous years "top four" of about 38% and about 56%. Blackbird numbers (redwing & species combined - 251) declined dramatically from recent prior years (4485 and 522).

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), Marty Chestem, Ward Ebert (Area 2), Darius and Paula Ecker (Area 3), Carol Garza, Dave and Maureen Harvey, John Hayes, Jane Heim, Emmy Holdridge, Mike Kerwin, Dave Kubitsky, Mike Leumas, Bob & Brigitte Lund, Nancy

Magnusson, Grazina and Mike McClure (County Co-coordinator), Paul McGowan, Doug Odermatt (Area 5), Daryl Olson, Richard Orr, Bonnie Ott (Area 6), Karla Pearce, Ron and Susan Polniaszek, Suzanne Probst, Marie Repsher, Carol and Gary Roberts, Kurt Schwarz, Bob and Jo Solem, Chuck Stirrat (County Co-coordinator), Tom Strikwerda, Eva Sunell (Area 7), Robin Todd, June Tveekrem, Marilyn Veek, Mark Wallace, Don Waugh, Dave Wiliz, and Helen Zeichner. A very special thanks to Don and Martha Waugh who hosted the evening tally rally.

This sixth fall count, as always, provided an enjoyable time in the field for the participants, and, of course, there was a fun-time at the tally rally. The event provided a great wrap-up for the day in spite of the recurring comment heard during the evening, "water everywhere, birds nowhere". And with great regret, "tracing paper" was not required to document any of this year's sightings.

Plan now to join us on a future seasonal count and if possible attend the tally as well. Next year the first fall count of the 2000's will be held on the 3rd Saturday of September, the 16th.

1999 ANNUAL LISTS DUE BY JANE COSKREN

A list of all the birds seen in the county during the 1999 calendar year is being compiled for the 21st consecutive year. Did we break any records this year? Only you can help us decide. Assemble your sightings for the year (even if the list was compiled in your neighborhood or your yard) and mail to Jane Coskren, 6324 Sandchain Road, Columbia MD 21045 any time after December 31, but not later than March 3, 2000. The length of the list isn't important, because your list may contain the bird that will make 1999 a year for the record books.

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| HOWARD COUNTY FALL BIRD COUNT - September 18, 1999 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|------|--------|---------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---|
| Species / Area No.: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Totals | Species / Area No.: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Totals | | |
| Common Loon | B | | | | | 1 | | 1 | Swainson's Thrush | B | | | 1 | | | | 1 | | |
| Pied-billed Grebe | B | | | | 1 | | | 3 | Wood Thrush | A | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 16 | |
| Great Blue Heron | A | 5 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 7 | American Robin | A | 46 | 5 | 12 | 40 | 47 | 67 | 23 | 240 | |
| Great Egret | B | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | Gray Catbird | A | 50 | 22 | 44 | 49 | 60 | 33 | 59 | 317 | |
| Green Heron | A | 1 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 3 | Northern Mockingbird | A | 27 | 10 | 13 | 27 | 26 | 28 | 60 | 191 | |
| Black-cr'd Night-Hero | * C | | | | | 1 | | 1 | Brown Thrasher | A | 2 | 1 | | 4 | 2 | 6 | | 15 | |
| Black Vulture | A | 8 | 11 | 19 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 1 | European Starling | A | 445 | 24 | 450 | 162 | 107 | 169 | 397 | 1754 | |
| Turkey Vulture | A | 45 | 33 | 45 | 20 | 10 | 33 | 15 | Cedar Waxwing | A | 17 | 8 | 18 | 24 | 82 | 114 | 9 | 272 | |
| Canada Goose | A | 199 | 49 | 84 | 132 | 32 | 239 | 190 | Blue-winged Warbler | B | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Mute Swan | A | | | | 1 | 2 | | 3 | Tennessee Warbler | B | | | 2 | | 1 | | | 3 | |
| Wood Duck | B | 16 | | 1 | 16 | | | 33 | Nashville Warbler | B | | | 3 | 1 | | 1 | | 5 | |
| American Black Duck | B | | | | 2 | | | 2 | Northern Parula | A | | | 3 | 2 | 2 | | 1 | 8 | |
| Mallard | A | 28 | | 6 | 106 | 5 | 40 | 63 | Yellow Warbler | A | | | | | | | | 2 | 2 |
| Osprey | B | 3 | 1 | | | | 3 | 7 | Chestnut-sided Warbler | A | 5 | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | | 11 | |
| Bald Eagle [ad/im/unk] | B | 1 | | | | | 2 | 1 | Magnolia Warbler | A | 2 | | 5 | 13 | 9 | 6 | 6 | 41 | |
| Northern Harrier | B | | 2 | | | 1 | | 3 | Blk.-thrt'd. Blue Warbler | A | | | 3 | | 4 | 1 | | 8 | |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk | B | 5 | 3 | 3 | | 3 | 13 | 2 | Blk.-thrt'd. Green Warbler | B | 5 | | 7 | | 8 | 2 | 1 | 23 | |
| Cooper's Hawk | B | 1 | 4 | 2 | | | | 7 | Blackburnian Warbler | B | | | | 2 | | 1 | | 3 | |
| accipiter species | | | | | | | | | Pine Warbler | B | 2 | | | | 2 | | 2 | 6 | |
| Red-shouldered Hawk | A | 5 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 17 | Prairie Warbler | A | | 1 | | | | | 1 | 2 | |
| Broad-winged Hawk | B | 401 | 23 | 32 | 25 | 401 | 1415 | 130 | Palm Warbler | A | | | | 2 | | | 6 | 8 | |
| Red-tailed Hawk | A | 3 | 4 | | 3 | 3 | 7 | 6 | Bay-breasted Warbler | B | | | | | 2 | | | 2 | |
| American Kestrel | A | 4 | | 3 | 3 | | 5 | 4 | Blackpoll Warbler | B | 1 | | | | 1 | | | 2 | |
| Merlin | * C | | 1 | | | | | 1 | Black-&-white Warbler | A | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 7 | |
| Common Moorhen | ** C | | | | 1 | | | 1 | American Redstart | A | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 14 | | 33 | |
| Killdeer | A | 22 | | | 2 | 2 | 3 | 6 | Ovenbird | A | 5 | | | | 3 | | | 8 | |
| Common Snipe | * B | | | | 1 | | | 1 | Common Yellowthroat | A | 13 | 5 | 10 | 9 | 14 | 5 | 6 | 62 | |
| Laughing Gull | B | | | | | | 4 | 4 | Wilson's Warbler | B | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | 4 | |
| Ring-billed Gull | A | | | 1 | | 1 | 7 | 3 | Canada Warbler | B | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | |
| Herring Gull | A | | | | 1 | | 1 | 2 | warbler species | | | | 14 | 7 | 2 | | 4 | 27 | |
| gull species | | | | 3 | 1 | | | 4 | Scarlet Tanager | A | 7 | | | | | 5 | 1 | 13 | |
| Rock Dove | A | 201 | 8 | 154 | 79 | | 95 | 19 | Eastern Towhee | A | 12 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 15 | 7 | 5 | 48 | |
| Mourning Dove | A | 86 | 47 | 34 | 54 | 32 | 89 | 99 | Chipping Sparrow | A | 24 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 17 | 8 | | 62 | |
| Yellow-billed Cuckoo | A | 2 | 2 | 3 | | 2 | 1 | 10 | Field Sparrow | A | | | 2 | 2 | 11 | 1 | | 16 | |
| Eastern Screech-Owl | B | | | 2 | | 2 | | 4 | Vesper Sparrow | * C | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Great Horned Owl | B | 1 | 4 | 2 | | | | 7 | Savannah Sparrow | * B | 2 | | | 9 | | | | 11 | |
| Barred Owl | B | | | 1 | | | | 1 | Song Sparrow | A | 8 | 1 | 5 | 15 | 2 | 7 | 14 | 52 | |
| Common Nighthawk | B | | 2 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | Swamp Sparrow | B | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Chimney Swift | A | 169 | 56 | 148 | 116 | 91 | 69 | 40 | White-throated Sparrow | A | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Ruby-thr'd Hummingbird | B | 1 | | 2 | | 1 | 4 | 8 | Northern Cardinal | A | 76 | 34 | 58 | 58 | 53 | 68 | 112 | 459 | |
| Belted Kingfisher | A | 3 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 4 | Rose-breasted Grosbeak | B | 6 | 2 | | 1 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 22 | |
| Red-bellied Woodpecker | A | 34 | 35 | 35 | 15 | 36 | 30 | 15 | Blue Grosbeak | B | 3 | | 2 | | | | | 5 | |
| Downy Woodpecker | A | 18 | 17 | 14 | 11 | 19 | 21 | 20 | Indigo Bunting | A | 44 | | 17 | 3 | 3 | | | 67 | |
| Hairy Woodpecker | A | 5 | 4 | 7 | | 6 | 3 | 4 | Red-winged Blackbird | A | | | 1 | 150 | | 30 | 20 | 201 | |
| Northern Flicker | A | 12 | 17 | 19 | 3 | 15 | 42 | 21 | Eastern Meadowlark | A | | | | 3 | | 1 | | 4 | |
| Pileated Woodpecker | A | 5 | 12 | 8 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 4 | Common Grackle | A | 52 | 1 | 500 | 4 | 2 | 40 | 10 | 609 | |
| Eastern Wood-Pewee | A | 10 | 10 | 4 | | 6 | 1 | 2 | Brown-headed Cowbird | A | | | 2 | | | | 18 | 20 | |
| Acadian Flycatcher | * A | | | 1 | | | | 1 | blackbird species | | | | | 50 | | | 50 | | |
| Empidonax species | | 4 | 4 | | 1 | | 5 | 14 | Baltimore Oriole | B | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | |
| Eastern Phoebe | A | 5 | 4 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 11 | House Finch | A | 4 | 26 | 24 | 21 | 25 | 59 | 43 | 202 | |
| Eastern Kingbird | A | 1 | | | | | | 1 | American Goldfinch | A | 157 | 25 | 55 | 99 | 38 | 110 | 45 | 529 | |
| White-eyed Vireo | A | 3 | 1 | | 3 | 1 | 6 | 4 | House Sparrow | A | 71 | | 12 | 73 | 20 | 33 | 123 | 332 | |
| Blue-headed Vireo | B | 2 | 1 | | 1 | | | 4 | Area Total Birds: | | 2774 | 789 | 2369 | 2023 | 1640 | 3463 | 2448 | 15506 | |
| Yellow-throated Vireo | B | | 1 | | | | | 1 | Area Total Species: | | 82 | 58 | 71 | 72 | 73 | 71 | 72 | 120 | |
| Warbling Vireo | B | 1 | | | | | | 1 | Area No.: | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Totals | |
| Philadelphia Vireo | * C | | | | 1 | | | 1 | Supplemental Data | | | | | | | | | | |
| Red-eyed Vireo | A | 6 | | 4 | | 12 | 6 | 10 | Time Start: | 7:00 a | 6:45 a | 5:00 a | 6:20 a | 4:20 a | 6:00 a | 6:00 a | 4:20 a | | |
| Blue Jay | A | 66 | 39 | 107 | 86 | 125 | 119 | 102 | Time Stop: | 7:45 p | 4:15 p | 6:00 p | 5:30 p | 5:40 p | 6:00 p | 6:00 p | 7:45 p | | |
| American Crow | A | 66 | 62 | 125 | 100 | 70 | 112 | 204 | Hours on Foot: | 23.0 | 7.5 | 18.8 | 22.9 | 26.2 | 16.0 | 23.1 | 137.5 | | |
| Fish Crow | A | 2 | 1 | 9 | 2 | | | 14 | Hours by Car: | 3.8 | 1.2 | 2.7 | 1.3 | | 1.5 | 7.7 | 18.2 | | |
| crow species | | 39 | | 24 | 195 | 10 | 10 | 178 | Miles on Foot: | 17.5 | 5.0 | 15.5 | 13.0 | 19.0 | 12.0 | 21.3 | 103.3 | | |
| Purple Martin | A | | 16 | | 1 | | | 17 | Miles by Car: | 46.0 | 16.0 | 46.0 | 24.0 | | 30.0 | 86.0 | 248.0 | | |
| Tree Swallow | A | 9 | | | | | | 7 | Hours Feeder Watching: | | | | | | 1.5 | 2.5 | | | |
| Barn Swallow | A | 8 | 1 | | | | | 50 | Hours Stationary: | 3.5 | | | | | | | 7.5 | | |
| Carolina Chickadee | A | 45 | 35 | 54 | 67 | 43 | 68 | 86 | Hours "Owling": | | | 5 | 2.0 | 7 | 1.5 | | 4.7 | | |
| Tufted Titmouse | A | 38 | 26 | 21 | 47 | 28 | 51 | 52 | Miles "Owling": | | | | 3.0 | 2 | 8.0 | | 11.2 | | |
| Red-breasted Nuthatch | * C | 1 | | | | | | 1 | Total Observers in Area: | 5 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 10 | 8 | 48 | | |
| White-breasted Nuthatch | A | 22 | 13 | 23 | 9 | 19 | 12 | 14 | Total Parties in Area: | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 23 | | |
| Carolina Wren | A | 26 | 25 | 31 | 32 | 40 | 53 | 55 | Total Party-Hours (Reg.): | 26.8 | 8.7 | 21.5 | 24.2 | 26.2 | 17.5 | 30.8 | 155.7 | | |
| House Wren | A | 4 | | 6 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 3 | Total Party-Hours (Feeder): | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ruby-crowned Kinglet | A | 1 | | | | 1 | | 2 | Tot. Party-Hours (Stationary): | 3.5 | | | | 1.5 | 2.5 | | 7.5 | | |
| Blue-gray Gnatcatcher | A | 1 | | 3 | | | | 1 | Total Party-Hours (Owling): | | | 5 | 2.0 | 7 | 1.5 | | 4.7 | | |
| Eastern Bluebird | A | 33 | 26 | 27 | 9 | 10 | 33 | 4 | Total Party-Hours: | 30.3 | 9.2 | 23.5 | 24.9 | 29.2 | 20.0 | 30.8 | 167.9 | | |
| Veery | B | | | | | | 1 | 1 | Area No.: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Totals | | |

BEGINNER'S CORNER BY BONNIE OTT

CHOOSING A FIELD GUIDE

There are so many different field guides, which one is best to start out with?

A. When choosing your first guide you want a book that is complete but not overwhelming. It can be helpful to the novice birder to choose a guide specializing in birds of the east coast. Having a book that is devoted to local species helps by immediately narrowing down your choices. I also found it useful to go through my book and highlight all the species that have been reported in Howard County. There is a complete checklist in the book *BIRDING HOWARD COUNTY* by Joanne Solem.

Q. Is it better to get a book that has photographs or one with paintings?

A. Many beginners are tempted to start with a book that has photos. Although these books may seem the easiest to use ~~they have many drawbacks. They often~~ show the bird in a pose that does not show its key identifying marks. They also have the birds limited to one species per page. If you are trying to compare species you will have to flip back and forth from different pages. This makes it difficult to compare field marks. Just like humans, each individual of a particular bird species looks slightly different. A photo guide can only show one or several individuals, while an artist can study many photos and do one painting that represents the most commonly seen characteristics in the species.

Q. What are the basic differences between the different guides?

A. Here is a summary of the 4 basic field guides:

A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS (East of the Rockies) by Roger Tory Peterson
This guide is a convenient size to carry. The best feature is the arrow system that points to the unique field mark on each bird. One disadvantage is that the range maps are not pictured with the bird. A

very good book for the beginner that can be used forever.

BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA by Chandler Robbins

Although this guide is for all of North America it has some unique features that can be helpful to a new birder. The plates of warbler and sparrow heads are very useful. Range maps and sonograms of the birds songs are pictured with their portraits. It is a good size for carrying in the field. If you plan to bird other parts of the county it is a great choice.

EASTERN BIRDS by James Coe

This is a nice sized guide that is perfect for the beginner. It is fairly complete with the only omissions being very unusual species. It has some helpful plates that compare confusing songbirds and that show birds by habitat. Range maps are pictured with the birds. The illustrations in this book are some of the best at capturing the "feel" of the bird.

BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA

(National Geographic society)

This is a book that can really confuse a beginner. It shows all the birds in North America along with immature plumages, subspecies and rarities. It is large and not as comfortable to carry. The range maps are pictured with the birds. It is a book that I keep as a reference in my car or at home.

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.

GALLON JUGS NEEDED

WANTED: empty gallon water jugs! Instead of crunching them for recycling they can be given good homes at The Wildlife Authority. Please give them to Bonnie Ott at any monthly meeting or field trip. Caps too!!!!

2ND ANNUAL CHESAPEAKE BAY BRIDGE-TUNNEL TRIP PLANNED

The bird club is planning a second trip to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel (CBBT) over the long holiday weekend of January 15, 16 and 17. Tentative plans are to leave on Saturday at 9:00 am, bird our way down to Exmore, VA, where we'll spend the night at the Best Western. Sunday we'll get an early start and spend the day birding the CBBT. We'll look for wintering waterfowl, loons, grebes and gulls. Great Cormorant and Northern Gannet are a sure thing, and both Eiders and Harlequin Duck are possible. We'll spend Sunday night in Exmore, check out Monday morning and drive to Chincoteague, VA, to bird until about noon, after which we'll leave for home. Please pre-register for this trip by calling **Jeff Friedhoffer** 410-997-5366 or e-mailing jfried997@cwixmail.com. You'll

need to make your own reservations at the hotel, Jeff can provide you the telephone number. The room rate will be between \$50.00 and \$60.00 per night. There is a \$10.00 toll to drive on the CBBT, and drivers must have a permission letter obtained by writing to the Director of Operations, Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, PO Box 111, Cape Charles, VA 23310 or call 757-331-2960. Request permission to stop on the bridge-tunnel islands to observe sea birds and waterfowl.

SUMMER BIRD RECORDS: JUNE 1 - JULY 31, 1999

BY JOANNE SOLEM

The summer season offered no real surprises, but, as always, there were interesting sightings.

An immature (im) **Double-crested Cormorant** was seen at Wilde Lake (WILLK) on 6/4 (SP); another was at Centennial Park (CENPK) on 7/18 (JC).

The **Great Blue Herons** at Vantage Point (VANPT) in Columbia established a new high of 10 nests. This is the largest heronry ever recorded in the county. (Any Great Blue Heron nest in the Piedmont is unusual.) In order to disturb the birds as little as possible, no attempt was made to get close enough to tally all nestlings. On 6/27 HZ counted 17 young, while on 7/19 MC had at least 22 (possibly as many as 25) young. Eight **Green Herons** at CENPK 7/21 were the seasonal high (JC). Three were seen together at Fore Bay Pond at Lake Elkhorn (LKELK) 7/11 and 7/14 (SN). On 7/21 six **Great Egrets** were reported at VANPT and three at CENPK (HZ). One or two were at LKELK between 7/26 and 7/31 (SN). On 7/27 two egrets (probably Greats) were seen at a Larriland farm pond on Rt. 94 (DN). **Black-crowned Night-Herons** appeared at two of the expected locations: LKELK 7/14 and 7/29 (SN) and WILLK 7/22 (HZ).

The pair of **Mute Swans** at CENPK had five cygnets as of 6/13 (KS); by the end of the period one remained (JC). An im **Tundra Swan** appeared at LKELK on 6/10 (SN, photo) which was also seen by MC. It was still present 7/18 (DC).

As usual, **Canada Geese** nested successfully in all parts of the county. On 7/17 SN counted 51 adults and goslings on LKELK; the high at CENPK was 275 on 7/18 (JC).

On 7/21 a female **Wood Duck** with seven downy young was spotted at CENPK (J&TDC); on 7/31 the total reached 11 (JC).

Cooper's Hawks are uncommon nesting birds in this county. At least one adult spent last winter and spring near GC's house in Hammond Village and then nested. Although the nest was not located, there were as many as three birds (including two im) in his yard in late July. A Cooper's Hawk was also reported from Dunloggin 7/3 (KS) and another from Pigtail (PIGTL) 7/31 (JC).0

With reservoirs at near record lows and Brighton Dam Rd. closed at the dam, it was hard to reach Howard County vantage points from which to view the remaining water, consequently, few birds were reported. WSSC officer Raymond Hohl saw an **Osprey** on Triadelphia Reservoir during the summer as reported in a 7/16 Baltimore Sun article featuring the resident Bald Eagle pair.

A **Ring-necked Pheasant** near Woodbine and another along River Road were reported to BO on 7/19 as "recent" sightings. Ten **Wild**

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.

Turkeys (two adults, eight young) were counted in the Woodstock area 7/23 (L&LH). A **Northern Bobwhite** seen where the powerlines cross Ilchester Rd. was reported to BO on 6/1.

The 25 **Killdeer** at Brown's Bridge (BRNBR) 7/31 were a seasonal high (J&TDC). One **Greater Yellowlegs** was at BRNBR and another at Fulton Pond (FULPD) on 7/3 (J&TDC). The first **Lesser Yellowlegs** appeared at CENPK 7/25 (JC). The earliest **Solitary Sandpiper** was spotted at CENPK 7/21 (J&TDC) with a high of 25 at BRNBR 7/31 (J&TDC). A **Spotted Sandpiper** was at CENPK 7/20 (RO). The seasonal high occurred on 7/31 with one at CENPK (JC), three at PIGTL (JC), 12 at BRNBR (J&TDC) and four at FULPD (J&TDC). Five **Least Sandpipers** arrived at CENPK 7/18 (JC); one **Semi-palmated Sandpiper** was noted 7/27 at CENPK (JC); and one **Pectoral Sandpiper** was at BRNBR 7/31 (J&TDC).

Two **Caspian Terns** flying over LKELK 7/20 (JC) were the only terns reported.

For the last few years Willow Springs Golf Course has been home to a family of **Red-headed Woodpeckers**. This year two adults were seen at the fifth hole on 6/29 (MW).

Yellow-billed Cuckoos were calling on 7/31 at BRNBR, PIGTL, and BRNBR (JC). The only **Black-billed Cuckoo** reported was heard on four dates between 7/8 and 7/22 at Timberleigh (TIMBR) (DN).

Cliff Swallows once again nested successfully beneath the Md 32 bridge over the Patapsco River (6/13-BO). An albinistic young **Barn Swallow** at the east end of LKELK was reported in late June (M&DW). They described it as "dirty white with blackish tones." It was last reported 6/28 (J&TDC).

Two **Willow Flycatchers** were seen at CENPK 6/13 (KS) and one was located at Meadowbrook (MDBRK) 7/11 (KS).

Blue Jays nested in the TIMBR area. DN observations of the species included a jay carrying what was probably a young robin, another eating a fledgling **Wood Thrush**, and several chasing a Cooper's Hawk through her yard on 7/13.

Cedar Waxwings were widely seen and heard. On 7/2 HP had two at Big Branch, while on 7/15 a family of six was drinking and flycatching on the Middle Patuxent River east of Kindler Rd. (JS).

A single **Prothonotary Warbler** sang a few times along the Patapsco River east of Woodstock 6/16 (JS). **Louisiana Waterthrushes** were found along all the major water courses in the county wherever there were rapids or extensive riffles (J&RS). On 6/13 BO, in the Hugg-Thomas WMA, found a good variety of nesting species including **Northern Parula**, **Common Yellowthroat**, **Kentucky Warbler**, **Hooded Warbler**, **Red-eyed Vireo**, **White-eyed Vireo**, **Yellow-throated Vireo**, **Acadian Flycatcher**, and **Eastern Wood-pewee**.

Unusual, but not unprecedented, was a male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** at an Ellicott City feeder for a week and a half in June (reported 6/30 to BO). A male **Blue Grosbeak** was at MDBRK 7/11, along with a **Yellow-breasted Chat** (KS).

Observers: George Chase (GC), Martha Chestem (MC), Jane Coskren (JC), T. Dennis Coskren (TDC), Dave Czaplak (DC), Lynn & Linda Holley (L&LH), Diane Nagengast (DN), Sue Neri (SN), Richard Orr (RO), Borris Ott (BO), Helen Patton (HP), Sherry Perizzi (SP), Kurt Schwarz (KS), Jo Solem (JS), Robert Solem (RS), Don Waugh (DW), Martha Waugh (MW), Helen Zeichner (HZ).

MOS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

MOS offers scholarships to attend summer ecology workshops which National Audubon holds at its camps in Maine, Connecticut, and Wyoming. Who is eligible? Do you work with young people as a teacher, camp counselors, park ranger, or student and intend to make nature education part of your career? Then these scholarships are designed for you. The scholarship grant covers the cost of tuition, room, and board for an intensive six-day course of field study and instruction in ecology, conservation, and natural history.

Want more information? Call Eileen Clegg at 410-730-4362, the Howard County coordinator for the MOS Scholarship Committee. Applicants do not have to be a member of MOS, but they must be endorsed by a chapter or member of MOS. Call Eileen before Christmas if you are interested. Completed applications

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CALENDAR OF PROGRAMS AND FIELD TRIPS

Programs are held at Longfellow Elementary School, 5470 Hesperus Dr., Columbia. Meeting is canceled 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 11, Thursday, "Spring in Ontario: Birds of Algonquin Park, Point Pelee, Long Point and Rondeau," by Ralph Geuder.
- ✓ December 9, Thursday, "The Birds of Namibia in Southwestern Africa," by Hank Kaestner.

January 13, Thursday, "Landbird Survey at Aberdeen Proving Ground," by Jim McCann, Maryland DNR.

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 footgear 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, e-mail bott@erols.com.

- ✓ November 7, - Ralph Cullison; 14 - Mike Kerwin; 21 - Maud Banks; 28 - TBA. Sunday's Centennial Park Walks. Meet at 8:00 am (3 hrs) at the west end lot. Walk the paved path around Centennial Park for migrating waterfowl and other species. Facilities available. Call 410-461-3361. Pg. 5.
- ✓ November 10, Wednesday - Weekday Walk - Lake Elkhorn - Meet at 9:00 am at the Broken Land Parkway lot. Walk around the lake on a paved path to view waterfowl and woodland species. No facilities. Call 410-461-3361 for info. Pg. 43
- ✓ November 20, Saturday - Geology Trip - Leader Dennis Coskren - Meet at 8:00 am at 108 and 29 park and ride to carpool to different piedmont locations. Learn their ancient history of our area as revealed in the rock. Call 410-381-7344 for info.

November 27, Saturday - Sandy Point State Park - Leader Mary Jo Betts - Meet at 7:30 am at Broken Land and 32 park and ride. We will carpool to this Anne Arundel park to look for winter waterfowl and Snow Buntings. Call 310-596-5859 for info.

January 15, 16 and 17, Saturday - Monday - 2nd Annual CBBT Trip - See details on page 3 of this newsletter. Due to the need to establish carpools, please pre-register for this trip with the trip coordinator.

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 18, To be announced.

December, None

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2000 NEWSLETTER MATERIAL is due NOVEMBER 26, 1999. 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>.

BIRD CLUB DISPLAY AT THE HOWARD COUNTY FAIR

Again this year the Howard County Bird Club had a display at the Howard County Fair. Thanks to all the volunteers who coordinated with the fair sponsors, set up the display, coordinated with the volunteers to man the booth, and to take down the display at the end of the fair. Thanks to the volunteers, the Howard County Bird Club receives much important publicity and visibility during fair week, which brings attention to our Howard County birdlife that otherwise may go unnoticed by many.

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must be in the hands of the MOS Scholarship Committee Chair by Jan 30, 2000. Each member must submit

- a written statement in the form of a letter showing how the Audubon experience will be used to develop in young people an appreciation of our wild heritage and a sense of responsibility for the care and quality of our natural resources and environment;
 - two letters or recommendation from individuals (at least one of whom is an MOS member) who know the candidate's interests and activities;
 - a current resume.
- Applicants must be eighteen or older.

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partment of Planning and Zoning to modify the current general plan. Howard County Citizen's Association (HCCA) has said that the biggest weakness of the guideline report is requiring the task force to identify problems neutrally rather than to use its expertise and deliberation to frame solutions for them. According to HCCA, this was most evident in the area of the environment, where many of the same issues from the last General Plan remained, with little tangible progress. This criticism generally is not true about migratory songbirds and forest interior species which were not specifically covered in the previous plan. You can view a copy of the current version of the General Plan Guidelines at Howard County libraries, or you can download it from the Howard County website (<http://www.co.ho.me.us/PZ/genplan.html>).

HOWARD COUNTY BIRD CLUB

Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

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CONSERVATION COLUMN BY BOB SOLEM

Howard County General Plan Guidelines have been published and are now available for public comment. The following sections are important regarding birdlife in Howard County:

"Through a combination of Federal, State and County regulations, there are currently significant protective measures in place for a variety of natural resources, including: water resources, forests, steep slopes, threatened and endangered species, air quality and open space. County resource protection measures include both land development regulations that control disturbance of sensitive resources and zoning regulations that encourage or require resource protection through mechanisms such as the cluster subdivision and density exchange options.

"The majority of land in the County is privately owned and is already developed; therefore, an important component of resource protection and restoration measures is private citizen participation. For this reason, the need for public outreach and education to encourage private citizen action is both implicit and explicit in the following summary of possible measures to enhance natural resource protection in the County.

"Forest Interior Species: Evaluate the merits of developing a program to establish

and protect wildlife corridors that include forest interior habitat. Forest interior species require large areas of forest interior habitat - usually defined as forest at least 300 feet from the forest edge. There are no current protection efforts directed specifically at forest interior species unless they are classified as threatened or endangered species. Forest interior species benefit from protective measures for forest resources when a concerted effort is made to minimize forest fragmentation and preserve or create large tracts of forest.

"Migratory Songbirds: Evaluate the merits of developing a program to establish and protect scrub/shrub and grassland habitat. The majority of songbirds in the United States are neotropical migrants that winter in the American tropics. Neotropical migrants and short-distance migratory songbirds that winter mainly in the United States have experienced significant population declines in recent decades. A significant factor contributing to this population decline is a loss of breeding bird habitat, including forest interior, scrub/shrub, grasslands and emergent wetland habitat. There are no current protection efforts directed specifically at migratory songbirds unless they are classified as threatened or endangered species. Significant opportunities exist to create additional scrub/shrub habitat along utility cor-

ridors and along the edges between forests and fields. Forest and field often occur together along roads, in parks, farms and urban and suburban backyards. A transition zone of scrub/shrub habitat can be created along the edges between forest and field which will provide the added benefit of reducing invasion by edge species into the forest. Grassland birds require areas of at least 100 acres or more of grassland, which presents significant challenges to protecting this habitat type. However, management techniques such as locating smaller tracts of grassland (at least 25 acres in size) close together with connecting strips between areas can protect and create larger areas of grasslands. Additionally, opportunities exist to establish grasslands on locations such as reclaimed sand and gravel mining areas and closed landfills. Evaluate the merits of developing a program to establish and protect scrub/shrub and grassland habitat."

These guidelines were developed by the General Plan Task Force, appointed by County Executive Robey. The issues were organized and amplified by five committees. The one concerned with the above issues, Working with Nature, was chaired by Howard Bird Club member Joyce Kelly. These guidelines will be used by the Howard County De-

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