



Wrenderings



The Newsletter of the Harford Bird Club

Volume 27 Number 3

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President's Perch

Snowy Owls, Snowy Owls, Snowy Owls! Have you heard about the Snowy Owls! This is the largest Snowy Owl invasion to the Mid-Atlantic since I've been birding. If you haven't seen one, stop reading and go see one! As I'm writing this, Mark Johnson of Aberdeen found one in Aldino for Harford's first this year. For the latest information, be sure to check MDBirding.com.

These Snowy Owls are drawing the attention of people outside of the birder world and that is a great thing. It's easy to see why — owls are popular right now, they're big and white, and Hedwig was a fan favorite in all of the Harry Potter books and movies. So use this momentous occasion to talk to coworkers, neighbors, and other non-birders about birding and Snowy Owls. If you going to see a Snowy Owl, take a non-birding friend along. Tell them how far they flew from the Arctic Tundra and that this the most Snowy Owls that have ever been seen in Maryland since you have been birding. Tell them they are going to witness something special, something that doesn't happen every year. Be excited!

Now, you'll read about some bad behavior among Snowy Owl observers. There have been listserv and Facebook "disagreements" about birder/photographer behavior when it comes to the owls and other rare birds. The best that we can do as bird club members is try to educate and be proactive. If you tell someone about a Snowy Owl, be sure to also tell them about observing from a safe distance. This is to insure that the bird is not disturbed and that it is still present for other Snowy Owl watchers to see later.

So get out there and a see a Snowy Owl! If you want to look for one on your own, try large open fields and anywhere along the water. If you head towards the coast, check in the sand dunes. If you are fortunate enough to find your own Snowy Owl, please do tell us so that more people can share in your discovery!

Happy Holidays!
Matt

Josh Emm to Speak at January Meeting

The speaker for the January Meeting is club member and Rookie of the Year, Josh Emm. His program is entitled "Harford County Big Year" and Josh will be showing photos and telling tales from his 2013 Harford Big Year.

The January meeting will take place on Friday the 17th at 6:45 PM at Churchville Presbyterian Church. In case Harford County Public Schools are closed or let out early due to inclement weather, the meeting will be postponed until Friday, Jan 24th at the same start time. There will be no dinner but light refreshments will be provided.

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Plan Ahead!

- Christmas Count, Dec 28.
- Winter Count, Jan 25
- January Meeting @ Churchville Presbyterian Church, Jan 17. (Snow date Jan 24.)
- March Dinner Meeting at Churchville Presbyterian Church, Mar 7

Bird Droppings

Club News?

Have news the club should know about? Births, deaths, marriages, or any other notable events that belong in the newsletter? Please contact Corresponding Secretary Madeline Lovera at 410-879-6098 or email to mlovera30@aol.com.

Welcome!

A warm Harford Bird Club welcome goes out to the following new members. Thank you for joining... we look forward to seeing you out there on our birding trips and at our meetings!

Karen Kennedy of Churchville
Deidre DeRoia of Aberdeen

Some Dues Are Past Due

Some of you still have not paid your dues for the 2013-14 membership year. Members not paid by February 1 will be removed from the membership list at both the state and local level. Since the next newsletter will come out after February 1, **THIS IS THE LAST NEWSLETTER YOU WILL GET** if you don't renew your membership. If you have any questions about your membership, contact Marjie Heagy at 410-557-9485 or msheagy@zoominternet.net.

2013 Rock Run Christmas Bird Count

The 42nd annual Rock Run Christmas Bird Count will take place on Saturday, December 28th, 2013. This event is centered around Susquehanna State Park and covers a 15-mile circle spreading inland around the lower Susquehanna River and upper bay in both Harford and Cecil Counties. Sponsored by the National Audubon Society, information about the count, its history, previous years' results and a photo gallery can be found at <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>. The Rock Run CBC is an excellent opportunity for Harford Bird Club members to have fun and build friendships while contributing to one of the largest scientific databases concerning bird populations. At the end of the afternoon, count participants may gather to warm up with good food and tales of the day's adventures. Whether you are a veteran participant or a first-timer, become a citizen scientist and participate in this year's Rock Run CBC. Register today by e-mailing the HBC Count Coordinator Rick Cheicante at rickcheicante@cs.com.

2014 Mid-Winter Count

The 2014 Mid-Winter Bird Count is scheduled for Saturday, January 25th. The Mid-Winter Count is a bit more flexible than the Christmas Count in that you can bird anywhere you wish in Harford County! Feeder counts are welcome! Contact the coordinator, Rick Cheicante at rickcheicante@cs.com or 410-803-2712 to let him know where you will be counting to avoid overlap. Have fun, stay warm ... and good birding!

Harford Bird Club Executive Board

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Harford Birdlife

by Monroe Harden

Our winter residents are settling in now that fall migration is over. We often get some nice rarities during these months, so keep your eyes open! This report covers the period from October 13th through November 30th, 2013.

Geese, Ducks, Loons, Cormorants, Egrets

DK saw a **Cackling Goose** on Turney's pond on Oct 22nd. He also saw one there on Nov 25th. He had a blue phase **Snow Goose** on that pond on Nov 29th, and a group of about 50 there the next day. TH found a **Northern Shoveler** at Harford Glen on Nov 3rd. He saw a **Northern Pintail** there on Nov 17th. DL had a **Ruddy Duck** at Lakeside Business Park on Nov 3rd. PP saw it there on Nov 7th. BM reported a **Red-throated Loon** flying over the Edgewood area of APG on Oct 14th. DK found an immature **Great Cormorant** near Conowingo Dam during a club trip there on Nov 30th. He also saw a **Cattle Egret** on Turney's Pond on Nov 2nd. DL noted that a **Double-crested Cormorant** was present at Lakeside for several weeks in October.

Eagles, Yellowlegs, Owls, Hummingbirds

PV counted 154 **Bald Eagles** at Conowingo Dam on Nov 30th. TH saw a **Greater Yellowlegs** at Harford Glen on Nov 3rd. PP saw one there on Nov 7th. DK saw his resident **Eastern Screech Owl** at Newark Farms on Oct 22nd. PP saw a **Great Horned Owl** at Harford Glen on Nov 7th. TH saw one there on Nov 17th. SH had two **Barred Owls** at the Sweet Air portion of Gunpowder State Park on Nov 16th.

KH spotted an adult male **Rufous Hummingbird** at her home feeder in Forest Hill on Nov 4th. MH noted that this bird made regular visits for the next few days.

Vireos, Thrushes, Pipits, Waxwings

SH saw a **Blue-headed Vireo** near Annie's Playground in Fallston on Oct 22nd. PP saw a **Hermit Thrush** at Harford Glen on Oct 29th. He also had one there on Nov 19th. SH found one at Sweet Air on Nov 13th. DK saw a flock of about 30 **American Pipits** near the Bradenbaugh Flats area of Northern Harford County on Oct 30th. ToH saw 14 **Cedar Waxwings** at his birdbath in Creswell on Oct 24th.

Warblers, Sparrows, Finches

PP saw 3 **Yellow-rumped Warblers** at Harford Glen on Oct 15th. He saw an **Ovenbird** and a **Common Yellowthroat** there on Oct 22nd. DL found 2 **Field Sparrows** at Lakeside on Oct

20th. He and PL saw 6 at Swan Harbor on Oct 26th. BP found a **Vesper Sparrow** at Swan Harbor on Nov 2nd. PP had a **Lincoln's Sparrow** at Harford Glen on Oct 15th. TH reported 4 **Purple Finches** at Harford Glen on Nov 17th.

Contributors

BM- Barry Marsh, BP- Brad Phoebus, DK- Dennis Kirkwood, DL- Dave Larkin, KH- Kim Hafner, MH- Matt Hafner, PL- Peter Lev, PP- Phil Powers, PV- Pat Valdata, SH- Susan Hood, TH- Tim Houghton, ToH- Todd Holden

Conowingo Eagles Day

By Dave Webb

The club participated in the first-ever Conowingo Eagles Day at Fisherman's Park on November 9. Over 400 eagle enthusiasts and photographers enjoyed a sunny, cool Saturday morning featuring live raptors, free food and of course, plenty of action from scores of Bald Eagles feeding, soaring, roosting and frolicking about the river. Lots of the attendees stopped by our display to chat with club members about birds, learn about the Harford Bird Club, and grab a complimentary Harford checklist. Many visitors enjoyed views thru a spotting scope of some of the "non-eagles" that we discovered, including a very cooperative Peregrine Falcon that perched atop the switchyard for at least 45 minutes.

Harford Youth Birding

By Ruth Bergstrom

The amazing Early Birds of Prospect Mill Elementary School have already met twice since the beginning of the school year. In October, they were able to add two new species to their growing list on eBird – Pileated Woodpecker and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. The meeting in November began with a talk about learning to use flight patterns to help identify birds. We then headed outside to use these clues to identify Red-bellied Woodpeckers, American Robins, Blue Jays, and more. Thank you to Bob and Susan Hood, and Madeline Lovera for joining us.



Harford Bird Club Field Trips

Field trip schedule compiled by Tom Gibson and Lynn Davis

December 28 (Sat.) Christmas Bird Count. Contact Rick Cheicante (410-803-2712; rickcheicante@cs.com).

January 1, 2014 (Wed.) Perryman Area. Celebrate the new year/recover from New Year's Eve by birding the always productive Perryman Area with leader Phil Powers (410-679-4116 or birdsindm@verizon.net). Meet at the Wal-Mart parking lot at 8:30 AM.

January 11(Sat.) 2014 – Feeder Tour. Join our annual feeder tour to visit the private homes of a few of our members in the Darlington/Conowingo area to survey avian visitors to their bird feeders (Plus maybe a black bear?). While the birds enjoy some of their favorite foods, tour guests will also have the opportunity to enjoy some breakfast goodies. Reservations required. Contact leaders Tom Congersky (410-658-4137; jnitcon@zoominternet.net) and Diane Jones (410-404-9180; baltobirder55@me.com) for details and directions.

January 18 (Sat.) - Conowingo Gull/Eagle Watch. Dennis Kirkwood (410-692-5905; newarkfarms@gmail.com) leads this morning survey from Fisherman's Park just below the Conowingo Dam on the Harford County side of the Susquehanna. Meet at 8:00 AM to begin the search for Bald Eagles, some prospect for a Golden Eagle, various gulls and waterfowl.

January 25 (Sat.) – Mid Winter Bird Count. Contact the local compiler, Rick Cheicante (410-803-2712; rickcheicante@cs.com) to participate in this opportunity to measure birdlife abundance in our area. Feeder counters are especially welcome.

February 1 (Sat.) – Eastern Neck Wildlife Refuge/Upper Shore/Kent County. Late winter is prime time to visit here. Diverse habitat provides a broad variety of species with a focus on wintering waterfowl. The leaders are Tom Congersky (410-658-4137; jnitcon@zoominternet.net) and Randy Robertson. Meet at the commuter lot on Route 155 at the intersection with I-95 near Havre de Grace at 7:30 AM.

February 8 (Sat.) – Bradenbaugh Flats. Take a pleasant tour through NW Harford County's agricultural area to find wintering field birds and waterfowl. Expect Horned larks, Ring-necked Ducks, with a chance for Cackling Goose, Longspurs and Snow Buntings. The trip ends at the leader's house with hot soup. Meet at Jarrettsville Elementary School at 8:00 AM. Contact Dennis Kirkwood (410-692-5905; newarkfarms@gmail.com) for further information.

February 16 (Sun.) - Loch Raven Reservoir. Enjoy the rich habitat of Baltimore's premier watershed for wintering migrant songbirds, waterfowl, and raptors. Meet at the

Park-and- Ride on Rt. 152 just north of Rt. 147 near Fallston at 7:30 AM. Co-Leaders are Dave Larkin (410-569-8319 or dlarkin@towson.edu) and Phil Powers (410-679-4116 or birdsindm@verizon.net).

February 22 (Sat.) – Delaware Coast/Ocean City. Meet at the 155/I-95 Park-and-Ride at 6:30 AM. This trip will visit several hotspots along the Delaware Bay for wintering specialties. The trip will extend into Maryland at Ocean City. Contact leader Russ Kovach (russell.kovach@gmail.com; 443-386-4748)

March 6 (Thurs.) – Timberdoodle Search. Meet at 6:15 pm at the Sweet Air section of Gunpowder State Park. Take Greene Road, either SW from Rt. 165 or NE from Rt. 145 to Moores Road, then SW on Dalton-Bevard Road into the park; can also go S on Moores Road from Hess Road. Join leaders Mark Johnson (410-692-5978; mark.s.johnson@us.army.mil) and Joyce Browning (443-966-0249; jbrowni3@umd.edu) to witness the spectacle of the American Woodcock mating ritual.

March 9 (Sun.) – Swan Harbor Farm Park. This Harford County gem with three impoundments, a commanding view of the Chesapeake Bay, wooded trails, and open fields has developed into a fine location for a broad spectrum of bird life, including waterfowl, marsh specialties, raptors, and sparrows. Meet at 8:00 AM (**be careful to set your clocks for daylight savings time – it begins on this day**) at the parking lot adjacent to the Agricultural Education Center (near end of driveway). Leaders are Josh Emm (410-937-6790; apistopanchax@gmail.com) and Tom Gibson (410-734-4135; gibsonlld@aol.com).

March 13 (Thurs.) - Timberdoodle Search. Join this evening watch for one of our most interesting (and elusive!) birds, the American Woodcock, as it performs its mating sky dance. Meet at 7:15 PM at the Sweet Air location of the Gunpowder State Park (see March 6, above, for directions). The leaders are Mark Johnson (410-692-5978; mark.s.johnson@us.army.mil) and Joyce Browning (443-966-0249; jbrowni3@umd.edu).

March 22 (Sat.) – Harford Glen. Meet at the entrance gate of the Glen (west end of Wheel Road) at 7:30AM. Begin this tour with sightings from the parking lot, then proceed to survey the triple riparian habitats of Atkisson Reservoir, the faster flowing Winter's Run, and tributary Plumtree Run. Add the woodland trails and some open meadow to offer great opportunities for good birding. Co-leaders are Phil Powers (410-679-4116; birdsindm@verizon.net) and Dave Larkin (410-569-8319; larkin3001@comcast.net).

Field Trip Reports

Perryman November 9th

I found a new way to improve a bird trip -tell the group that you did a pre-trip and located almost nothing. It worked for this trip. The first stop produced over twenty edge-of-the-woods birds with a few flyovers. Down Fords Lane towards Perryman Park (which is in decline for most birds with the exception of four sparrow species), we had a small flock of Horned Larks who agreed to a photo shoot. Next at Forest Greens Pond, Gadwall, Wood Duck, Hooded Merganser and Ring-necked Duck appeared. Unfortunately, Chelsea Road has turned into a parking lot of warehouses. Most of the birding habitat is now either destroyed or on private property, a great loss for birders. Nine birders had a very pleasant day and fifty-one species were found. ~ **Phil Powers**

Sweet Air November 23rd

Fourteen hardy birders braved the cold wind to explore this section of the Gunpowder State Park in Baldwin, of which many were unaware. We tallied 39 species and had some good conversation identifying immature raptors (Bald Eagles and Red-tailed Hawk) and the sex of a Rusty Blackbird. Some had brief looks at Fox, Field and Chipping Sparrows, and all had good looks at the usual sparrows, including the flashy Eastern Towhee. Creepers were slow to appear, and there were a number of flyovers, including a flock of Snow Geese. A Winter Wren was coaxed in and entertained with good looks. We agreed to come back in a warmer season. ~ **Susan Hood**

Conowingo November 30th

A post-Thanksgiving Saturday morning field trip to Conowingo was attended by 8 participants and led by Dennis Kirkwood. The low temperatures didn't dampen the crowd at the Dam as eagle watchers numbered around 200. The Bald Eagle count was well over 120 birds and they provided quite a show with many actively and successfully fishing. The gull numbers were also quite good with about 1000 looking for food in the released turbine water. We could pick out a few Herring Gulls and Great-Black-backed Gulls among the Ring-billed Gulls and eventually saw a couple Bonaparte's Gulls. Waterfowl was in short supply with only Canada Geese, Mallards, and Black Ducks on the water. Near the end of the morning a flock of 50 Snow Geese passed over heading down river. As we hiked down the wildflower trail parallel to the river, we were treated to Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Brown Creeper, Carolina and Winter Wrens, and a few sparrows and chickadees. The great surprise was an immature plumaged Great Cormorant sitting on a small rock with a Double-crested Cormorant for comparison. This was a life bird for

several in the group and one of very few Harford County sightings over the years. Let's hope it stays for the Christmas Count! We ended the morning with around 30 species and worked off some calories from Thursday's feast. ~ **Dennis Kirkwood**

Delaware Coast December 8th

With snowy weather looming and forecast to start in the early afternoon, 7 birders (including 3 students from C. Milton Wright High School) decided to cut short the planned trip to Cape Henlopen and headed to Bombay Hook instead in search of one of the many Snowy Owls that had invaded Delaware. After several fruitless hours a phone call was received indicating that a Snowy Owl was located back in Harford County, less than 2 miles from our meeting location for the trip! We of course hightailed it back, only to get hampered by the snowfall that occurred earlier (and much heavier) than expected. After driving past at least 10 separate accidents and a Mack truck sliding backwards down route 95, we made it back to Harford County and were able to locate the Snowy Owl, perched on top of some farm equipment. A long drive to get the Snowy Owl in our own backyard, but in the end the journey is one we will not soon forget, and culminated in one of the most amazing birds one could hope to find in Maryland! ~ **Russ Kovach**

Rumsey Island December 14th

It was gratifying to see five hearty neighbors join Dennis and me for this walk on a day predicted to have very marginal weather. We met at the shopping center and by 8:30 we were driving to Shore Drive to begin our walk at the brown metal gate just before Town Center Drive. The group represented Abingdon, Joppa, Aberdeen and the exotic Bradenbaugh Flats. Everyone present had done some exploration of Mariner Point Park but only Phil and I had explored this little known section of Gunpowder SP. We spotted a number of our typical winter birds including White-throated, Field and Song Sparrows, Northern Flicker, Downy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers., Eastern Towhee, Dark-eyed Junco, Belted Kingfisher, Brown Thrasher, Northern Harrier and immature Bald Eagle. The common were also present, Northern Cardinal, Blue Jay, European Starling, Turkey Vulture, Ring-billed and Laughing Gulls, Great Blue Heron and Canada Geese. Prior to the quarry freezing, Hooded Merganser, Pied-billed Grebe, American Wigeon and Mallard were a common sight over several weeks. It was a pleasant experience acquainting very local birders with this area. Over the past 8 years I have rarely seen birders in this neighborhood. ~ **Julio Perez**



Harford Bird Club January Meeting

“Harford County Big Year”

by

Josh Emm

Friday, Jan 17th, 2014

Meeting Time: 6:45 PM

(If Harford County schools are closed for the day or close early, the meeting will be postponed until Jan 24th.)

Free for all... bring a friend!

Location: Churchville Presbyterian Church

2844 Churchville Road

Churchville, MD 21028



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