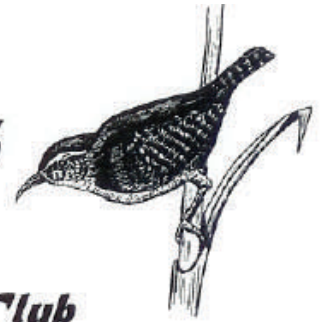




Wrenderings



The Newsletter of the Harford Bird Club

Volume 20 Number 6

December, 2007

President's Perch: Rock Run CBC Next Week!



Hard to believe that the winter is all but here and that event, the event that our birding year revolves around, the Rock Run Christmas Bird Count, is less than two weeks away on Saturday, December 29th, 2007! As I think about the CBC of past years, just about everything that can happen to birders has occurred during this count. Over 30+ years we have seen rain, snow, getting locked out of cars (once or twice), greetings from inquisitive land owners; and of course lots of fantastic birds along the way! It occurs to me now that I have done this count more than half of my life, and there is little that I look forward to each year with as much anticipation as I do the Rock Run Christmas Count!

One of the greatest aspects of the count is of course meeting back at Lorna Wortman's house for homemade soup and bread, and this year will be no exception. Count coordinator Jean Wheeler will be there to greet all as they come in from the field, often cold, wet, and muddy; and never will the combination of smiling faces, great food, and great conversation be so welcomed.

Sadly our club has lost one of those smiling faces this autumn. Paul Hines, well known for his never-ending good humor and conversation at our dinner meetings and on birding trips, passed away on October 13th at age of 77. The memorial service that followed featured another of Paul's loves: kites were flying so high above the Churchville Presbyterian Church that they could be seen from Darlington to Bel Air! Clearly a person fascinated by flight, it is clear that Paul's spirit will forever fly high in the thoughts of those who knew him. Paul is survived by many members of his close family, including wife Emily who continues to be a great friend to the Harford Bird Club, and who serves as our liaison to the Churchville Presbyterian Church.



Speaking of meetings, our January meeting will feature our very own Dave Ziolkowski, in town to share stories and pictures of the recent trip to Panama that he co-lead with Dennis Kirkwood. Many HBC members attended this trip abroad, thus this is sure to be a comical meeting, one not to be missed!

In the meantime however, it is time to get ready for holiday travels, and the Rock Run CBC! See you all at Lorna's on the evening of December 29th, and of course, best birding wishes to all... *-Russ Kovach*

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Plan Ahead!

- Rock Run Christmas Bird Count: Sat, December 29
- January General Meeting: Fri, Jan 11, 2008, 7:00pm
- Mid-winter Count: Sunday, January 27, 2008
- March Dinner Meeting: Fri, Mar 7, 2008, 6:15pm
- May General Meeting: Fri May 2, 2008, 7:00pm at Harford Glen!
- May Count: Saturday, May 10, 2008
- MOS Conference, May 30, 31, and June 1; Edgewood, Maryland
- Summer Social: Friday, July 18, 2008, 6:30pm
- November Dinner Meeting: Fri, Nov 3, 2008, 6:15pm

Harford Bird Club

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Bird Droppings



Are you a Bird Brain?

As many of you know **NASA** sent animals into space before human astronauts were ever allowed to fly. Dogs, chimpanzees, and even mice and rats were all sent to space by different countries! So why is it that a bird has never been sent into space?

Answer elsewhere in this issue.

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 Marty Crouse-Farley at 410-557-6786 or email to mhcf@msn.com.

Volunteers needed for Rock Run CBC!

The 36th Rock Run Christmas Bird Count will be held on Saturday, December 29. If you would like to participate please call Jean Wheeler at 410-879-7424 or email her at jswheeler44@msn.com. It is a fun day. We need lots of volunteers to really cover the circle well. This is promising to be a year of the unusual and unexpected. Once again Lorna Wortman will host the tally rally. I can't wait for that great stew and homemade bread! -*Jean Wheeler*

Harford County Mid-winter Count

Unlike the Christmas Bird Count, the Mid-winter Bird Count covers all of Harford County on the same day. This count, which has traditionally been held on the final Saturday of January, allows birders considerable flexibility in counting hours and locations. If interested in counting, please contact Mark Johnson at 410-692-5978 or by email at: mark.s.johnson@us.army.mil

Time to Get Involved!

After several years of inking our "Harford Birdlife" column, Becky Gallo will step down. Her dedication and thorough reporting on the bird sightings of Harford County will be challenging to replace, however it can be done! Anyone interested in taking over the HBL column should contact Russ at 410-457-4274 or NikonF5user@aol.com for additional information. The club is also in need of both a newsletter editor and Public Relations committee chairperson. Both offer fantastic opportunities to be involved with the Harford Bird Club's executive board, a whole new level of birding excitement! -*Russ Kovach*

Welcome!

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

Harford Birdlife

by: Becky Gallo



3

Red-breasted Nuthatches were reported from all parts of Harford County. DDMW were the first to see them on Sept 16th, then RC saw one in Bel Air on Oct 6th, next LW saw 1 in Street on Oct 11th, the same day DL reported 2 at his feeders in Abingdon and the last sighting was from RC in Creswell on Oct 6th.

Goose, Grebe, Herons

DK saw his first Cackling Goose of the year at Turney's Pond (Oct 27). At Lakeside on Oct 28th DL saw a Pied-billed Grebe. CW counted 21 Great Blue Herons at Tydings Marina in Havre de Grace on Oct 3rd. Great Egrets were spotted at Tydings Marina (CW & MoH) and off of Harford Creamery Road (DK). Green Herons were reported from the Tydings Marina on Sept 23rd, 25th and Oct 8th (CW).

Hawks, Falcons

Ospreys were sighted in Havre de Grace throughout Sept and Oct (CW, MoH, DL). Bald Eagles were in their usual areas – Havre de Grace, Susquehanna State Park, Bulle Rock (MoH), flying above the I-95 Bridge/ Susquehanna River (SG) and at Tydings Marina (CW). A Sharp-shinned Hawk was spotted at Tydings Marina on Sept 25th (CW), flying over Route 155 on Oct 8th (CW) and in Creswell on Oct 28th (RC). MoH saw a Cooper's Hawk while in Bulle Rock on Sept 20th. A Red-shouldered Hawk was spotted in Havre de Grace on Sept 27th and CW reported seeing 2 on Route 155 on Oct 8th. A Broad-winged Hawk flew over the Harford Community Campus on Oct 8th (CW). American Kestrels were common throughout Sept and Oct at Swan Harbor (JRG) and RC saw one in Creswell on Oct 28th. A Merlin was seen at Swan Harbor on Sept 7th (MoH) and another was spotted off of Bradenbaugh Road on Sept 27th (DK). TL & CW saw a Peregrine Falcon while driving through Havre de Grace on Oct 8th.

Sandpiper, Gulls, Terns, Owls, Goatsucker

The only sandpiper reported was a Spotted Sandpiper seen on Sept 22 at the Havre de Grace Lighthouse (CW) and on Sept 23rd DL saw one at Lakeside. DZ had a good day on Sept 4th scoping out the Tydings Mud Flats and reported to have seen 3 Laughing Gulls, a Bonaparte's Gull, 25 Caspian Terns and 100 Forster's Terns. On Sept 21st MoH was at the same spot and reported 6 Ring-billed Gulls, a Great-Black backed Gull, and 25 Forster's Terns. CW didn't want to be left out and on Oct 3rd she scoped out 3 Caspian Terns and 60 plus Forster's Terns. DL decided he wanted to be counted and was at the flats on Oct 6th and saw a Caspian Tern. On Sept 2nd MoH was birding near the Broad Creek Boy Scout Camp and heard one Eastern Screech Owl and 2 Barred Owls. JRG reported a Great Horned Owl calling on a regular basis in the wee hours of Oct. CW saw a Common Nighthawk fly past her around 11am in the outdoor classroom on Harford Community College Campus.



INTERESTING FACT: Many know that Ben Franklin did not like the idea of the Bald Eagle becoming a symbol of the United States, but few know that this bird of prey is much more common in Canada than in the United States! In fact, recent bird surveys have concluded that there are more Bald Eagles in British Columbia alone than in the whole of the US, including Alaska!

Harford Birdlife (continued from page 3)

Swift, Kingfisher, Woodpeckers, Flycatchers

Chimney Swifts were in Havre de Grace on Sept 20th and Sept 28th (MoH). A Belted Kingfisher was spotted at APG on Sept 2 (MoH). CW saw one at Tydings Marina on Sept 25th, Oct 3rd and Oct 8th. Red-headed Woodpeckers were still present in DKs' meadow as of Oct 31st. RC saw a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in Creswell on Oct 28th. A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher was banded at Eden Mill on Sept 6th and another on Sept 23rd (MJ). DL saw 4 Eastern Phoebes at Lakeside on Sept 23rd and 3 on Oct 14th.

Titmouse, Creeper, Wren, Kinglet, Thrush, Mimid,

Carolina Chickadees were reported from Creswell by RC on Oct 28th. A Brown Creeper was seen in Bel Air on Oct 6th by RC. A Marsh Wren was seen at Swan Harbor on JG's hike. DL saw 2 Ruby-crowned Kinglets at Lakeside on Oct 14th and Oct 28th. Eastern Bluebirds were spotted at Swan Harbor on Sept 7th and at APG on Sept 15th by MoH. SBH happily reported a 3rd clutch of Eastern Bluebird babies fledged from their Fallston yard on Sept 10th. SM watched a Swainson's Thrush get hit by a car in Havre de Grace on Oct 6th, it recovered 10 minutes later and was able to be released. DL saw a Brown Thrasher at Lakeside on Sept 23rd.

Waxwing, Warblers, Tanagers

Cedar Waxwings were in RC's yard in Creswell on Oct 28th. A late Tennessee Warbler was spotted at Lakeside on Oct 21st by DL. DL also saw 2 Magnolia Warblers at Lakeside on Oct 14th. SM reported seeing 10 Palm Warblers at Bulle Rock on Oct 11th. MJ was excited on Sept 23rd to capture, band and release a Connecticut Warbler, a first for Eden Mill. DL saw one Common Yellowthroat at Lakeside on Sept 23rd. A Scarlet Tanager was seen in Fallston on Sept 10th by SBH. An Eastern Towhee was reported from Creswell on Oct 28th (RC).

Sparrows, Grosbeak, Blackbird, Finch

On Oct 14th at Lakeside DL reported a lone Field Sparrow, 12 White-throated Sparrows and 3 White-crowned Sparrows. Then on Oct 21st DL reported one Field Sparrow and one Swamp Sparrow. Finally on Oct 28th DL reported 2 Savannah Sparrows and one Swamp Sparrow. In between those sightings SM saw a Lincoln's Sparrow at Bulle Rock on Oct 11th. A White-throated Sparrow was seen by RC in Creswell on Oct 6th and Oct 28th. A Grasshopper Sparrow was seen on JG's hike at Swan Harbor – a first recorded sighting! DDMW saw a Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Earleton on Sept 16th. MoH counted 200 Brown-headed Cowbirds at APG on Sept 13th. American Goldfinches were reported from Susquehanna State Park, Havre de Grace, Swan Harbor and Fallston.

Contributors

RC – Rick Cheicante, JG – John Gallo, JRG – John & Rebecca Gallo, SG – Steve Grossi, MoH - Monroe Harden, SBH – Susan & Bob Hood, MJ – Mark Johnson, DK – Dennis Kirkwood, DL – Dave Larkin, TL – Tom Leckey, SM – Sean McCandless, DDMW – Dave, Danny & Marsha Webb, CW – Colleen Webster, LW – Linda Weeks, DZ – Dave Ziolkowski

I want to thank everyone who contributed. The next article will have sightings from November 1 thru December 31, 2007. You can call me with sightings - 410-459-8873 or email me – scout564@msn.com. Please send the reports to me as you see them.

Thanks and Happy Birding! -**Becky Gallo**

Bird Brain Answer: *Birds, when they swallow food, are famous for holding their heads up in the air, 'gulping' down their food. This is because food travels from a bird's mouth to crop not by muscular contractions, but by gravity! If a bird were brought to space, it could not eat and would starve to death in the low-gravity environment.*

Field Trip Reports

Harford Waterfowl Tour: November 18th, 2007

Eight birders joined me at Tydings Marina on a blustery day that promised rain soon, but not before we took in some good sights. At the start, the Susquehanna Flats did not offer more than distant Forster's Terns, Great Black-backed and Ring-billed Gulls, and of course, Canada Geese. But a beaver carrying a limb to a food cache lifted our spirits just before a Sharp-shinned Hawk flew to a nearby phone pole to watch us. When he flew off, we followed suit and hit a few more spots in Havre de Grace, before venturing over to Furnace Bay in Cecil County. Our persistence was rewarded with Northern Shovelers, a large raft of American Coot, some Lesser Scaup, a few Ring-necked Ducks, half dozen Wood Ducks, and the joy of Hooded Mergansers and Bufflehead which accommodately could be viewed at once in our scopes, a lovely lesson on the similarities and differences of those males. Even a few Black Ducks and about a dozen Great Blue Herons were in the protected shallows. An immature Bald Eagle even flew over before we left, just ahead of the rain. *Colleen Webster*

Broad Creek Saw-whets: November 30, 2007

Many of us who convened at the Conowingo cabin this Friday were treated to two of these diminutive owls. Though plagued with some playback issues in the beginning, we ended up with two first fall Northern Saw-whet Owls - both within earshot of the cabin in the Saffran area of the Camp. Very special thanks go to Marj and Alex Heagy who arranged the fantastic (and warm) cabin for us and to Mark Johnson who rushed up from work and did a food run mid-way through. We, and all of the great company who joined us, had a wonderful time. *Dave Ziolkowski Jr. (edited)*

Delaware Shore: December 1, 2007

Nobody showed up at the early departure time for the annual "Delaware Shore Trip, so leader Russ and Annie detoured from the planned trip to visit the marshes of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. Blackwater provided the typical several dozen Bald Eagles, in addition to Chipping Sparrow, Brown-headed Nuthatch, and Pine Warbler. Also encountered was the ghostly denizen of Eastern Shore woods; the endangered Delmarva Fox Squirrel made an appearance. Matt Anthony and his mother arrived later and decided to venture independently to Cape Henlopen in Delaware where they were greeted by Northern Gannet, Canvasback, and a raft of Common Eiders that may have contained a King Eider (Delaware birding guru Jeff Gordon, who was with Matt when the bird was sighted, is reviewing this bird as we speak (type?). *Russ Kovach*

Have a story, drawing, or poem (or anything else) you would like to submit to Wrenderings? Send submissions to Russ at NikonF5user@aol.com

Harford Bird Club Field Trips:

Field trip schedule compiled by Colleen Webster

Saturday, December 29

Rock Run Christmas Bird Count. Contact Jean Wheeler at 410-879-7424 for more information.

Saturday, January 12

Harford County/Cecil County Feeder Tour. What a better way to start your year off, and get into birding? Join club president Russ Kovach and Cecil birder Marcia Watson as they point out all that beginner birders need to know when looking out their home windows onto feeder areas. From the meeting location we'll carpool to our first host's home where we'll perch in the warmth and overlook their bird feeder spread for an hour or so before migrating on to the next. Participation is limited though, and beginner birders are particularly welcome, so please contact Russ at (410) 457-4274 to reserve your spot and receive further information for this fun event!

Sunday, January 20

Conowingo Gull Watch. Just when the post-holiday season blues have got you in their sights, you can count on Dave Webb to get you some gulls up at the dam. The hydroelectric fish Cuisinart rarely disappoints pulling in good numbers of waterfowl and Bald Eagles as well as such rarities as Black-legged Kittiwake, Glaucus, Iceland, Thayer's, and Black-headed Gulls. A fine time for a variety of those high-flying fish-eaters, despite the cold and wind. Bundle up and meet Dave at the parking lot closest to the dam at 8 am. Call for more information at (410) 939- 2526.

Saturday, January 26

Mid-Winter Count. Choose your location. Feeders are ok. Contact Mark Johnson at 410-692-5978 for more information.

Saturday, February 2

World Famous Bradenbaugh Flats. Another good morning for regulars and beginner birders alike. Bradenbaugh born and raised, Dennis Kirkwood is the premiere guide to escort you through the bustling hedgerows and large open fields of this winter birding wonderland. The trip consists mostly of drive-and-stop birding, followed by a wrap-up at the Kirkwood's house featuring delicious homemade soup and breads. Ring-necked Duck, Horned Lark, and White-crowned and Savannah Sparrows, as well as Cackling Goose, are regulars but American Pipit, Snow Bunting, and Lapland Longspur are distinct possibilities. Meet at Jarrettsville Elementary School at 8:00 AM. Contact Dennis at 410-692-5905 for more information.

Sunday, February 10

Winter Invasives. Let Russ Kovach lead you through his neck of the woods searching for what promises to be a good show of mixed finches, Red-breasted Nuthatches and possibly even crossbills. Meet at Dublin Elementary at 7:30 and keep your fingers crossed for those crossbills. Call Russ for more information at (410) 457-4274.

Saturday, February 16 - Sunday, February 17

NJ Shore. Loomed over by a 172' lighthouse and renowned among boaters as being central Jersey's most treacherous waterway, the ever changing rips and tides of Barnegat inlet have earned a reputation for producing the unexpected almost expectedly. Add to that a stop at the famous Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge on the second day and you have the makings of an outstanding 'trip to remember'. Good close views of Harlequin Duck and 'Ipswich' Sparrow can be expected (bring your camera) with Northern Gannet, Snow Bunting, Eiders, Great Cormorant and a plethora of other northern winter birds sure to fill the list! Trip departs at 7 AM Saturday with expected return by ~5 PM Sunday. All are welcome but co-leaders Dave Ziolkowski and Les Eastman have a limited number of without charge overnight spots for club members on a first call (first commit) basis. Contact Dave at 443-299-8453 for more information.

Sunday, February 24

Loch Raven. Join veteran leaders Dave Larkin and Lynn Davis to explore one of Baltimore's most scenic waterscapes. Just six miles north of downtown Towson, this water reservoir and its surrounding forest is a magnet for pine-loving songbirds and waterfowl. Ring-necked Duck, Red-breasted Nuthatch and Fox Sparrow are likely to be seen. Meet at 8:00 AM at the MD 152 and MD 147 park-n-ride. Contact Dave at 410-569-8319 for more details.

Wednesdays, March 12 and 19

Oodles of Timberdoodles. When these odd birds fly, we want to be there to see this bizarre spectacle—so come to one or both of these Timberdoodle watches. Meet at the Aberdeen Wal-Mart at 6:30 pm. Leaders Colleen Webster and Susan and Bob Hood will take you to the site.

Saturday, March 15

Harford Waterfowl Tour. Randy Robertson and Jean Wheeler lead the search for our spring visitors, those web-footed, heavy-bodied birds. The Susquehanna Flats offer good looks at many migrating ducks and their near cousins. Meet at Tydings Marina at 8:00 am. Contact Jean at (410) 879-7424 for more information.

Saturday, March 29

Swan Harbor Farms. This small but significant park on the Oakington Peninsula offers 469 acres of bay side rolling farmland, undeveloped woodland, and brushy meadows. Possibility for Bald Eagle, Wilson's Snipe, a good mix of ducks, and wintering sparrows. Join caretaker John Gallo and Tom Gibson at the park headquarters at the end of the entrance road at 8:00 AM. Call John at (410) 459-0548 for more information.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT IS GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT WITH NATURE

*In February, volunteers throughout the U.S. and Canada are invited to
“Count for Fun, Count for the Future!”*

New York, NY & Ithaca, NY, October 2007—Millions of novice and accomplished bird watchers can make their fascination with nature add up for science and for the future during the 11th annual Great Backyard Bird Count, led by Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. During “Presidents’ Day” weekend, February 15–18, 2008, anyone can count birds from wherever they are and enter their tallies online at www.birdcount.org. These reports create an exciting real-time picture of where the birds are across the continent and contribute valuable information for science and conservation.

“These volunteers are counting not only for fun but for the future,” said Tom Bancroft, Chief Science Officer for Audubon. “It’s fun to see how many different kinds of birds can be seen and counted right in your backyard or neighborhood park. Each tally helps us learn more about how our North American birds are doing, and what that says about the health and the future of our environment.”

“The GBBC is a great way to engage friends, family, and children in observing nature in their own backyard, where they will discover that the outdoors is full of color, behavior, flight, sounds, and mystery,” said Janis Dickinson, Director of Citizen Science at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

People of all ages and experience levels are invited to take part wherever they are—at home, in schoolyards, at local parks or wildlife refuges, even counting birds on a balcony. Observers count the highest number of each species they see during at least 15 minutes on one or more of the count days. Then they enter their tallies on the Great Backyard Bird Count web site www.birdcount.org.

The web site provides helpful hints for identifying birds. Participants can compare results from their town or region with others, as checklists pour in from throughout the U.S. and Canada. They can also view bird photos taken by participants during the count and send in their own digital images for the online photo gallery and contest.

In 2007, Great Backyard Bird Count participants made history, breaking records for the number of birds reported, and the number of checklists. Participants sent in 81,203 checklists tallying 11,082,387 birds of 613 species.

“Literally, there has never been a more detailed snapshot of a continental bird-distribution profile in history,” said John Fitzpatrick, Director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. “Imagine scientists 250 years from now being able to compare these data with their own!”

Already, the count results show how the numbers of some birds species have changed in recent years, such as a decline in Northern Pintails and an increase in Hooded Mergansers, consistent with trends from the Christmas Bird Count and Breeding Bird Survey.

“People who take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count see the results of their efforts in the news and in bird conservation work taking place across the country, said Audubon Education VP, Judy Braus. “Whether the counts occur at home, at schools or nature centers, they’re more than engaging and educational science activities for young people and adults, they’re a way to contribute to the conservation of birds and habitat nationwide.”

Lt. Daniel Britt, who served in Iraq 16 months, is glad to be back home in Zimmerman, MN, where he and his sons plan to join the GBBC. “We get a bunch of birds in our backyard,” Britt said, “but my oldest son, Daniel, and I may cross country ski into the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge to count birds there.”

For more information on how to participate, including identification tips, photos, bird sounds, maps, and information on over 500 bird species, visit www.birdcount.org. (Press release provided by Pat Leonard, Cornell Lab of Ornithology)



Harford Bird Club January General Meeting



USGS Breeding Bird Survey Biologist

David J. Ziolkowski Jr.

Presents:

Panama: Pulling the Tails of Natural History in a Land of Winged Jewels and Poo-Slinging Monkeys

Friday, January 11th, 2008

Meeting Time: 7:00 PM

No Fee!

Location: Churchville Presbyterian Church
2844 Churchville Road
Churchville, MD 21028



If unable to deliver, please return to:
Martha Crouse-Farley
3500 Advocate Hill Drive
Jarrettsville, MD 21084

Mail To:

Visit us on the web:
www.harfordbirdclub.org