A non birder recently asked me to explain the Christmas Bird Count. I think this Facebook post sums it up...

Copy of Post placed day after CBC:
POST. “Saw these people on park island. It was below 20f this am and snowing. Its a little too cold and dangerous for boating in my opinion.” (local citizen)

[photo of 5 adults hunkered down in a small open motorboat off of Havre de Grace, gray cold, snowing—like Washington crossing the Delaware, almost.]

REPLY, 1st HBC member: “The counts have been done in the weeks around Christmas for many years. The bird clubs divvy up their sectors and teams of people spend the day counting whatever birds they find in their area. These are then consolidated locally and nationally to make a big giant snapshot of bird populations and distributions.”

REPLY 2nd HBC member: “That’s me! And yes, we were braving the cold for citizen science!”

REPLY 3rd HBC member: “It’s all for citizen science. For the last 118 years the Audubon Society has held the Christmas Count. We spend a day and count all the birds in an area surrounding Susquehanna State Park. Helps determine bird populations and the possible causes of the rise and fall of species counts. It’s like a game to most of us!”

Are you amazed by these birders/citizen science participants? I had no idea the boat was so small or that anyone would willingly go out on the water in snowy, 18 degree weather. I found myself walking in fields in parts of the county I have never before visited. Others were out in the dark to count owls. Some spent 12 hours identifying species, some spent a few hours. It can feel like a field trip, a game, or even an adventure (ask the boat crew). For me, it is one time I feel like I’m contributing to science as we collect data. I’m certain we are collectively making a difference.

(Continued on page 2)
The Harford Bird Club members are often part of a bigger picture. The bird counts and bird banding are examples of substantial efforts and commitment by members that contribute all the way to a national level. It’s more obvious that we are part of a bigger picture in these scenarios where data is collected for scientific studies of birds and the environment for now and for the future.

Being part of the bigger picture is also personal when we share our interest in birding with family and friends. Often the result is hearing, “I saw a bird and thought of you?” The bigger picture is the observation or questions that follow. Recently at the youth count, grandparents and parents were sharing a birding experience with the youngest generation that was also an opportunity to make an outdoor memory and spark interest. The bigger picture is that our members worked together and contributed their time and talents to make such an event possible. We can only hope our enthusiasm for birds will somehow influence how others think about birds, nature, and conservation in a positive way.

I’m grateful for the many and varied efforts of all of our members. In this, the Year of the Bird*, I encourage you to take time to reflect on how birding influences you and your community. We all have stories. Our newsletter is again filled with activities by and for our members that makes our club vital and relevant. Thank you HBC members for your support and dedication to all of our activities.

For more information about the fascinating history of the CBC, visit the Audubon website: www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count

* Audubon and National Geographic Declare 2018 as Year of the Bird

“More than 100 organizations join forces for 12 months of storytelling and science to examine how our changing environment is impacting birds around the globe.”


Deborah Stewart

(Continued from page 1)
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 443-425-3974 or send an email to lovebluebird206@gmail.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!

LEE & BETTY FRANCIS of JOPPA
JANE WILES HONECKER of BEL AIR

Volunteer Opportunity
BIRD COUNT COORDINATOR
Spring is the biggest time of year for migration and birding. Will Harford Bird Club be staging its annual countywide May Count? Regrettably, HBC did not hold a midwinter count due to vacancy in this volunteer position. The next count is in May.

Time required: Moderate amount of time for one event.
Skill: Organized and able to follow a protocol to coordinate block leaders. Communication with team about coordinating the count and entering data.
Contact Deb Stewart or Amanda Koss for more information

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2017
Many thanks to Mark Johnson and to all who helped count birds at the annual CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, 2017. THE HBC had a successful CBC thanks to Mark Johnson for taking lead on this important event. The blocks were covered and birds were counted throughout the day ending with the tally rally in Havre de Grace. See the count results on the next page.

March Dinner Meeting
Our next club meeting will be on Friday, March 2 beginning at 6:15 p.m. with a delicious dinner prepared by the members of the Churchville Presbyterian Church. There will be a brief HBC update at 7:15 along with our raffle. This month the raffle will be a 50/50 cash raffle. The presentation will start at 8 pm.

We are very excited to announce our guest speaker who is Peter G. Kaestner, a retired American diplomat and amateur ornithologist. Peter is an extraordinary birder having lived and traveled all over the world. His “life list of 8,750 birds (per ebird.org), Kaestner remains one of the most prolific birders in the world, surpassed only by about ten others.” This promises to be a fascinating talk.

Reservations and fee for the dinner are required. The reservation form and details are on Page 9. Johanne Hendrickson will be accepting registration and checks. Due: February 23, 2018.

Annual Awards will be presented during a short business meeting to honor members who have distinguished themselves in various areas of our HBC birding community.

Congratulations to Marty Crouse
The Maryland Ornithological Society recognized HBC member, MARTY CROUSE with a VALUABLE SERVICE AWARD for her contributions as Membership Director. Marty volunteered to manage a database of members at the state level and interacted with all MOS chapters. Marty excelled in this role and her efforts are appreciated. Thank you Marty for volunteering for MOS! You make us proud!
It was relatively cold on 30 December when thirty-five observers spent most of the day counting birds in the Rock Run sectors. It was reported as cold as 15°F at sunrise and it never warmed above freezing. Most water was frozen which made stream crossing easier and there was a dusting of snow that day. Together the teams logged 33 miles walking, 334 miles driving, and nearly 8 hours nocturnal birding.

Both the Harve de Grace team and David Ziolkowski found a Snowy Owl that has been hanging around the area and two teams also reported Common Ravens, likely also the same individuals. Ninety-eight species were seen that day; however, Sean McCandless found a Wilson’s Snipe in Colora, Josh Emm reported a Long-tailed Duck at Conowingo, and Joel and Phyllis Donnelly who live in the Deer Creek Sector added a Pine Warbler all the next day which counted as “count week” species and took us to 101 for the count. Surprisingly, relatively few gull species were found and literally no winter finches were observed.

Most of the counters stopped by MacGregor’s Restaurant to help add species to the tote board David Webb assembled and hear about the highlights of the day (and we all appreciated getting someplace warm for a while). I would like to thank Rick Cheicante who helped immensely transitioning this year’s effort and I wish to thank all who came out and sent me their data seamlessly. This all-star team found the Snowy Owl, two Common Ravens, and the only Northern Pintail and Chipping Sparrow for the count (58 species).

Sector 3 (Colora) – Tom Congersky, Rupert & Cynthia Rossetti, Annellen Hughes – Tom and his team hit his backyard and found three raptor species, one of two Snow Goose found on the count, Horned and Pied-billed Grebes (33 species).

Sector 4 (Bainbridge) – Sean McCandless, Collen Edwards, and Suzanne Procell also covered this area and found a Cackling Goose, three gull species and one American Pipit (30 species).

Sector 5 (Perry Point) – John Hughes, Derek McQuirk – John and Derek dug up eight waterfowl species (277 Ring-necked Ducks), Cooper’s and Sharp-shinned Hawks, and three other raptor species (50 species).

Sector 6 (Swan Creek) – David Ziolkowski – David tackled Swan Creek and found eleven waterfowl species including 3 Cackling Geese, 250 Tundra Swans, and 150 Canvasback. He was one of the few that found Killdeer in this frozen landscape and also saw Snowy Owl and Common Ravens (62 species HIGH COUNT).

Sector 7 (Harve de Grace) – David Larkin, Phil Powers, Amanda Koss, Al Conrad – This all-star team found the Snowy Owl, two Common Ravens, and the only Northern Pintail and Chipping Sparrow for the count (58 species).

Sector 8 (Aldino) – Jack Fuller, Nancy Gillis – Jack and Nancy covered the Aldino area for the first time and found 51 Horned Larks along with five woodpecker species (28 species).

Sector 9 (Susquehanna State Park) – Mark Johnson, Bob Werrelin, Cole Etinhofer – Cole had fun watching Dr. Bob taking out Dr. Mark sliding down the ridge trail in the snow, but we crossed the stream by the ranger’s house easy enough. We found all three merganser and mimic thrush species (51 species).

Sector 10 (Rolling Green) – David Webb and Jean Wheeler – This seasoned team had reported nice looks at all three falcon species (Merlin, American Kestrel and Peregrine Falcon) and tagged all seven woodpecker species! They also observed three species of owls and of raptors (48 species).
Sector 11a (Deer Creek) – Mary Murray, Deb Stewart, Richard & Nick Spigler – These first-timers for this sector did us all proud and found Field and Fox Sparrows, five woodpecker species and four raptor species (including Northern Harrier (35 species).

Sector 11b (Shuresville) – Josh Emm – Josh beat this area up and found 14 White-fronted Geese, 43 American Pipits, and five woodpecker species (50 species).

Sector 12 (Dublin/Berkley) – Alicia Farrell (no report).

Sector 13 (Conowingo) – Gene Scarpulla and Marcia Watson – Gene kept watch at the dam for rare gulls and instead found Peregrine Falcon and Black-crowned Night-Heron. Marcia covered the canal trail and together they picked up 37 species.

Sector 14 (River Flats) – Dennis & Kristin Kirkwood, Peter Jay, Peter Kaestner, Diane Jones – The river team (sound like a bluegrass band, doesn’t it?) hit the cold open water and found twelve waterfowl species; 47 total.

Sector 15 (Swan Harbor) – Matt Addicks – Matt covered this area as it was teased out from the Harve de Grace Sector this year. Matt found eight sparrow species (the only Tree Sparrow) only one Eastern Starling (how do you find just ONE starling?), and the only House Wren and Eastern Phoebe for the count (56 species).

Field Trip Reports

Feeder Tour 2018
January 13
A dozen birders gathered at the homes of two HBC members for the annual Feeder Tour. The weather outside was a bit chilly and threatening but the atmosphere in the homes was warm and welcoming. Attendees found delicious food and refreshments awaiting them. They also found well stocked and conveniently placed feeders with plenty of birds to view. While the usual feeder species were present in numbers and no true rarities were seen, we had very good looks at the birds. A pair of Eastern Bluebirds and a handsome Northern Flicker were among the best sightings of the day. As gracious as the arrangements were, as beautiful as the birds were, as delicious as the food and drink were, the camaraderie, pleasant conversation and socialization also contributed to a very enjoyable morning for all.

Speaking for all, a special thanks to the hosts, Marty Crouse and Marjie Heagy, who worked so hard to makes the event the success that it was. ~ Tom Gibson

MOS Conference
The annual Maryland Ornithological Society held its annual convention and business meeting Feb 2, 3, 4 in Ocean City, Maryland. The weekend was filled with multiple field trips in the area, a compelling keynote speaker and informative lectures, poster presentation, social hour, and a business meeting. 12 members of the HBC attended and...

Did you know...

Dave Webb is treasurer of MOS?
Marty Crouse has been Membership Chair for several years?
Dave Ziolkowski is poster coordinator for the convention?
Matt Hafner gave a lecture on eBird Friday?
And Matt was point person id’ing birds at the OC Inlet Saturday morning.
Eric Vangrin has been requested to survey plants and trees at an MOS sanctuary?
This is just a few examples of state level involvement by HBC members. Who knew!!?
Almost all of this month’s reports are for rarities. Our Snowy Owls continued through December and we had several other notable winter visitors. This report covers the period from December 1st, 2017 through January 31st, 2018.

Geese, Ducks, Grebes
DK found a Ross’s Goose at Turney’s Pond off Harford Creamery Rd on Jan 8th. KMH also saw one in Jarrettsville on Jan 31st. DK also counted a remarkable 20 Cackling Geese at Turney’s Pond on Dec 2nd.
DL saw 8 Gadwall, 9 Ring-necked Ducks, 14 Hooded Mergansers, and a Pied-billed Grebe at Lakeside Business Park on Dec 3rd. The Common Goldeneye was the first he has seen there. JD saw 4 Long-tailed Ducks near the Conowingo Dam on Jan 2nd. Small groups or individuals were seen in the same general area by others through Jan 14th. MJ saw a Horned Grebe at Susquehanna State Park on Jan 1st. He saw 2 in Oakington on Jan 22nd.

Eagles, Cranes, Owls, Ravens
DW saw a Golden Eagle circling for a few minutes over Camp Saffron on Jan 25th. MJ saw 4 Sandhill Cranes at Gunpowder Falls State Park on Dec 14th. The Snowy Owl found in Street in late November continued in the general area through Dec 22nd. Another Snowy Owl was seen in and around the Tidewater Marina in Havre de Grace from mid December through Dec 30th. Both birds were seen and photographed by many observers. DW saw 2 Short-eared Owls hunting near Phillips Army Airfield on Aberdeen Proving Ground on Jan 8th. DB heard a Northern Saw-whet Owl near her home in Street from Jan 13th through Jan 28th. MJ saw 2 Common Ravens flying over the Susquehanna River from the Cecil County side toward Harford County on Jan 6th. EL saw one at Rocks State Park on Dec 22nd. BSH also saw one at their Fallston home on Jan 9th. That was a first for their yard.

Wrens, Gnatcatchers, Warblers, Sparrows
MA saw a House Wren at Swan Harbor Farm on Dec 30th. BP found a late Blue-gray Gnatcatcher there on Dec 5th. DL saw 18 American Pipits and a Clay-colored Sparrow in Perryman on Jan 1st. DaL had a Pine Warbler in Oakington on Dec 2nd. DK and DaL had a Vesper Sparrow on the Bradenbaugh Flats on Jan 10th. It was still there during a club trip on Jan 20th. JE found a Lapland Longspur in a group of Horned Larks near Canning House Rd on Jan 10th.

Contributors

Field Trip Reports

Bradenbaugh Flats
January 20

The annual field trip to NW Harford County and the World Famous Bradenbaugh Flats drew 20 birders out for a sunny and mild morning of very interesting sightings. Several visitors from Baltimore County and two new attendees to a Harford Bird Club trip were among the participants. We visited two large ponds that had some open water and enjoyed views of Hooded Merganser, Ring-necked Duck, Northern Pintail, and 4 Cackling Geese. We carefully surveyed the field near Turney’s pond and were able to locate a cooperative Vesper Sparrow as well as several Savannah Sparrows. We finished the morning having great looks at 2 Red-headed Woodpeckers which was a marvelous ending to a fantastic morning. The trip total was 32 species. The trip ended at the leader’s house where everyone had a lunch of hot soup and bread. We think this trip has been an annual event for almost 30 years and fortunately the birds continue to cooperate. Special thanks to the many private landowners who give us access to their properties in order to make this trip successful. ~ Dennis Kirkwood
February 25 (Sun.) – Loch Raven – Meet at 7:30 AM at the park and ride on Rt.152 just north of Rt.147 near Fallston for a leisurely walk through the Loch Raven watershed. Enjoy the rich habitat of Baltimore’s premier watershed for wintering migrant songbirds, waterfowl and raptors. The leader is Dave Larkin (larkin3001@comcast.net or 410-569-8319).

March 3 (Sat.) – Perryville – Meet at 9:00 AM at Stumps Point at the far end of the Perryville Community Park. Expect to see eagles, winter ducks, woodpeckers, and hopefully swans. Leaders are Colleen Webster (cwebster@harford.edu or 410-459-4577) and Sue Procell (procell1@comcast.net or 443-417-4919).

March 17 (Sat.) – Harford Waterfowl Tour – Meet at 6:45 AM at the McDonalds in Edgewood on Rt.40 for a chance to search a variety of locations to see the many species of waterfowl that use our waterways. Leader is Dave Webb (porzana@comcast.net or 410-939-3537).

March 24 (Sat.) – Perryman Area – Meet at 7:30 AM at the Aberdeen Walmart parking lot. Explore several spots within this Bush River region that attract a variety of species (wintering sparrows, raptors migrating waterfowl). The leader is Mark Johnson (marksjohnson2@gmail.com) or 410-692-5978).

March 31 (Sat.) – Susquehanna State Park – Meet at 8:00 AM at the Lapidum Parking Lot at the south end of Susquehanna State Park. We will look for gulls, lingering waterfowl and perhaps some early surprises. Additional sites in Susquehanna State Park may also be visited. Leader is Dennis Kirkwood (newarkfarms@gmail.com or 410-692-5905).

April 7 (Sat.) – Rocks State Park – Spend the morning on the trails of the Deer Creek woodland to search for various woodland species. Some hiking on hilly trails is involved. After the main walk we’ll visit one or more picnic areas that will require a $3.00 ($5.00 out of state) per person fee. Gather at the Ranger station parking lot on Rocks Chrome Hill Rd. at 7:30 AM. The leader is Mark Magnani (mwmagnani@gmail.com or 410-838-1778).

April 14 (Sat.) – Harford Glen – Meet at the Glen (west end of Wheel Rd.) at 7:30 AM. This Harford County preserve offers great opportunities for good spring birding. The woodland trails through rolling hills and some open meadow entice a wide variety of birds. We will begin this tour with sightings from the parking lot and then proceed to survey the triple riparian habitats of Atkisson Reservoir, the faster flowing Winter’s Run, and the Plumtree Run tributary. The woodland trails and open meadows offer great opportunities for good birding. The leader is Phil Powers (birdsinmd308@gmail.com) or 410-679-4116).

April 20 (Fri.) – Jerusalem Mill – Visit this appealing stretch of the Little Gunpowder River marking Harford County’s western border. This area involves some hiking and hills. Meet at the parking lot by the mill on Jerusalem Road at 7:30 AM. The leader is Phil Powers (birdsinmd308@gmail.com) or 410-679-4116).

April 21 (Sat.) – Susquehanna State Park – An ideal time to enjoy emerging wildflowers, early migrant songbirds, including warblers, and lingering winter visitors. Meet at the parking area at the confluence of Deer Creek and the Susquehanna River just north of Rock Run Mill at 8:30 AM. The leaders are Sue Procell (procellmd@gmail.com) or 443-417-4919) and Eric Vangrin (evangrin@msn.com) and Colleen Webster (cwebster@harford.edu 410-459-4577).
**HBC YOUTH GRANT**
Congratulations to Southampton Middle school student, Nick Spigler on receiving a HBC Youth Scholarship to attend ABA Camp Avocet, a youth birding camp in Lewes, Delaware. The Harford Bird Club Executive Board selected Nick who has been an avid birder since Second Grade. He has participated in Project FeederWatch, monitors a Bluebird nest box trail, and helps with the banding team at Eden Mill. This July, Nick will continue to advance his birding knowledge at this premiere program for young birders. We look forward to Nick’s report on the camp. Thank you Mary Murray, Education Chairperson for your mentorship of this terrific student.

**YOUTH BIRD COUNT**
More citizen science occurred with almost 30 young birders and adults ages 4 to 16 who were grouped by age and sent on a birding tour of Swan Harbor. Rachel Hebert, HBC Youth Coordinator, and Mary Murray, Education Chair, planned and organized the Youth Bird Count and solicited help of club members to lead or support the program. Rachel’s use of social media was a big help in recruitment and registration. The children were very involved on this beautiful winter morning. A highlight is seeing the final count entered and submitted online to Cornell followed by the image of the world map light up over Swan Harbor. This successful youth bird count requires thank you’s to Rachel Hebert, trip leaders, and volunteers and to Peggy Eppig and the MAEF education center for their support.

**Colleen Webster** wrote this poem after her experience with the Junior Bird Club Christmas Count and an Eagle watch with several cub scouts. And Matt Hafner’s oldest son, Alex, is the lucky kid with the vulture feather in the end!

**Orientation: Big, Small**

Find the river between the trees along the folds of sloping land.

See the rocks cropping out from January’s icy slew that brings them in.

Then find them.

Bald Eagles, Great Blue Herons, Black Vultures and the ever-present Ring Billed Gulls, even Common Golden Eyes sifting this cold through feathers, talons, beaks that wing through what we hold on to here on this frozen shore.

Focus. Use binoculars to bring close what flies far, perches above, swims out aloft from all that waits in static for us to return to our heated nests where electronic sirens call to us threaten to drown us.

But there is the path, smaller and closer than we think our better mermaid, a nine-year-old at the scope who sings out the birds in his circle

Emily’s hope—a four-year-old lofting a vulture feather.
Support Our Sponsors
The following businesses generously donated prizes for the raffle at the last meeting. Please patronize them and thank them for their support of the club.

JOHN & LINDA IRELAND
WILD BIRD MARKETPLACE
OPERATING OUT OF 3765 SALEM CHURCH ROAD
IN JARRETTSVILLE
410 836-5000

The Harford Bird Club has a group on Facebook. Check it out at https://www.facebook.com/groups/116785841751195/

The Harford Bird Club Dinner Reservation Form
Please cut and mail the bottom portion of this page to Johanne Henrickson, 2014 Tiffany Terrace, Forest Hill, MD 21050 by Friday, February 23rd, 2018 if you plan on attending.

__________ Number of adults (at $14.00 each)
__________ Number of children 16 and under (at $6.00 each)

Please make checks payable to Harford County MOS.

Print your name(s) above as you would like it to appear on your name tag!

Include address and phone number if you would like transportation to the meeting.

TEL: __________________________ Address: __________________________
Harford Bird Club
March Meeting

"My Amazing Life as a Diplomat-Birder"
by
Peter Kaestner

Friday, March 2nd
Dinner — 6:15pm, General Meeting — 7:15pm
Location: Churchville Presbyterian Church
2844 Churchville Road
Churchville, MD 21028