

# MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

*Bulletin of the Maryland Ornithological Society*

*2101 Bolton Street, Baltimore 17, Maryland*



Volume IX

JANUARY - JUNE, 1953

Numbers 1 - 3

THE MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
2101 Bolton Street, Baltimore 17, Md.

State President: Chandler S. Robbins, Laurel, Md.  
State Secretary: Orville W. Crowder, Chase, Md.  
State Treasurer: A. J. Fletcher, Route 1, Denton, Md.  
Vice Presidents: H. C. Heineman, Harry Cox, Dr. John W. Richards,  
Ralph Peakes, Marvin Hewitt, W. Bryant Tyrrell,  
Miss H. Elizabeth Slater

LOCAL UNITS:

Garrett County Bird Club	Baltimore Club of M. O. S.
Allegany County Bird Club	Harford County Bird Club
Washington County Bird Club	Caroline County Bird Club
Frederick Branch, M. O. S.	Takoma Park Nature Society

C O N T E N T S

January - June, 1953

Some Records New to Frederick County John W. Richards	3
Birds Eating Termites Hervey Brackbill	4
THE SEASON - January, February, March, April, 1952 Chandler S. Robbins	5
Adventure of a Baltimore Birder at Pleasant Valley Camp, Garrett County, June 15-17, 1951 Percy W. Jones	11
A Northward Flight of Evening Grosbeaks Mrs. Melvin H. Partridge	14
Field Trips, 1952 Orville W. Crowder	15

COVER: Canada Goose and Young, Fairlee, Md.  
by Charles J. Cignatta  
HEADINGS: Irving E. Hampe

M A R Y L A N D B I R D L I F E

Published Bi-monthly, except July-August, by the Maryland  
Ornithological Society, to Record and Encourage the Study  
of Birds in Maryland.

Editor: Chandler S. Robbins, Patuxent Refuge, Laurel, Md.  
Art Editor: Irving E. Hampe  
Production: M. Catherine Crone, Orville Crowder, J. L. Gerry



# MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

*Published bi-monthly except July-August by the  
Maryland Ornithological Society  
2101 Bolton Street, Baltimore 17, Maryland*

---

Volume IX

January - June, 1953

Numbers 1 - 3

---

## SOME RECORDS NEW TO FREDERICK COUNTY

John W. Richards

During 1950 and 1951 I had an opportunity to make frequent observations on birds, especially in the vicinity of Emmitsburg in northern Frederick County. I had the good fortune of recording a few species not previously known from the three western counties of Maryland, and several others new to Frederick County. My wife, Ruth Richards, and three students at Mount Saint Mary's College, Paul O'Brien, Robert Connor, and William Keene, shared in a number of the observations.

**YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON** - An adult was seen on the Monocacy River near Mumma Ford on May 12, 1951 (Connor, O'Brien, J. Richards). This is the first record west of the Seneca area of Montgomery County.

**LEAST BITTERN** - One was seen in a small marsh near Mount Saint Mary's College on May 29, 1950.

**GREATER SCAUP DUCK** - One male on Tom's Creek near Fourpoints, Feb. 14, 1951.

**AMERICAN GOLDEN-EYE** - A flock of 5 males and 4 females was noted on Emmitsburg Reservoir, Nov. 3, 1951 (J. and R. Richards).

**BUFFLE-HEAD** - 3 males and 2 females on Emmitsburg Reservoir, Nov. 3, 1951 (R. and J. Richards).

**CERULEAN WARBLER** - A male found on May 6, 1951, in a lowland woods near Mount Saint Mary's College by O'Brien, was seen later the same day by Connor and John and Ruth Richards. This is not only the first recorded occurrence in Frederick County, but is also the first report of this species from the Catoctin Mountain area.

**WESTERN PALM WARBLER** - One was seen about a mile west of Emmitsburg on May 12, 1951 (Connor, O'Brien, R. and J. Richards).

**BREWER'S BLACKBIRD** - One male with about one-half of its tail feathers white, was first seen on the Mount Saint Mary's College campus on Nov. 24, 1951, and was observed almost daily through Dec. 3 (O'Brien, Keene, R. and J. Richards). The only previous reports of this species in Maryland, both sight records, are from the Coastal Plain.

**BLUE GROSBEAK** - Although previously recorded in southern Frederick County, this species has not, up to this time, been noted in northern Frederick County, nor for that matter in any part of Maryland immediately adjacent to the Pennsylvania line. A male was seen on a dirt road east of Emmitsburg on May 18 and 19, 1951, by Connor, O'Brien, and R. and J. Richards.

EVENING GROSBEAK - Twelve were seen near the Monocacy River on Dec. 26, 1951, by J. Richards, and 6 were seen at the same place on March 8, 1952 by O'Brien and R. and J. Richards. On Dec. 30, 1951, three parties recorded a total of 18 individuals on the Catoctin Mt. Christmas Bird Count.

PINE GROSBEAK - A flock of 6 was first seen on Nov. 24, 1951 at the cemetery on the mountain above Mount Saint Mary's. They stayed in the vicinity, being observed almost daily through Dec, 24, 1951 (Keene, O'Brien, R. and J. Richards). They were recorded again on Jan. 30 and Feb. 6, 1952. Twelve, on Nov. 25, was the largest number seen at one time. The only previous record from Maryland is a specimen from Assateague Island.

Mt. St. Mary's College, Emmitsburg.

---

#### BIRDS EATING TERMITES

On the morning of May 7, 1950, two Starlings, three English Sparrows and a Chipping Sparrow fed for varying periods on a swarm of termites at the edge of a sidewalk in the Howard Park section of Baltimore. When the Robin's feeding attracted my attention to them, there must have been a couple of hundred termites; when the last bird left ten minutes later I could find just one. I saw a few of the insects fly away during those ten minutes, but most of them were eaten by the birds.

A Robin from a nest nearby was the heaviest feeder; it was already eating when I came by. I flushed it to collect specimens of the termites - later identified as Reticulitermes flavipes by Dr. T. E. Snyder, Division of Insect Identification, U. S. Department of Agriculture - and as soon as I withdrew it returned and fed busily for five minutes, then took a billfull of the insects to its nestlings, then returned and itself ate again until the termites were exhausted.

The Robin's feeding, apparently, attracted a banded Starling and then two male English Sparrows. The Starling did not stay long; later an unbanded Starling appeared and fed briefly. A female English Sparrow also appeared, and this species fed sporadically through most of the ten minutes. A Chipping Sparrow twice appeared and fed briefly.

Hervey Brackbill  
4608 Springdale Avenue, Baltimore

---

#### GARRETT COUNTY UNIT ORGANIZED

Garrett County joined the ranks of counties with organized bird groups in November, when the Garrett County Bird Club was formally launched as a local unit of the Society. After a preliminary public meeting at the High School, at which State President Robbins spoke, a smaller group met several weeks later at the home of Misses Slater and Sanders in Mountain Lake Park and completed the formal organization. Miss H. Elizabeth Slater is President, Z. Bond Evans is Secretary, Rev. Felix Robinson is Treasurer, and Miss K. Friel Sanders is State Board member. State Secretary Crowder took part in the organization meeting.



THE SEASON - January, February, March, April, 1952

Chandler S. Robbins

Uniform and comparatively mild weather conditions prevailed through the first two months, giving us our fourth consecutive mild winter. Even at the head of the Chesapeake, tidal estuaries remained open except during a brief cold snap at the close of January. March came in like a lion, with snow storms on the first and third; but temperatures for the month were only slightly below normal. The principal meteorological event was the rain storm of the 11th, which was accompanied by record high winds (gusts up to 80 miles an hour at Friendship Airport). Just as March ran true to form with its winds, so did April with its showers. In fact, it outdid itself, breaking all previous precipitation records much to the disgust of all bird students. Despite the low percentage (39%) of possible sunshine, mean temperatures were above normal. A full week of hot weather, Apr. 17-23, with the mercury generally in the eighties the last 4 or 5 days, favored the arrival of belated migrants as well as premature individuals of such later species as the Red-eyed Vireo, Nashville Warbler, and Baltimore and Orchard Orioles. Then came six continuous days of rain and northerly winds, cutting off virtually all migration through our area, and dampening the spirits (if not the bodies) of all would-be observers.

Grebes, Cormorants, Herons. Two Pied-billed Grebes spent the entire winter at Preston in Caroline County (Marvin Hewitt). The first migrants of this primitive species were recorded in tidal estuaries in southern Maryland and Gibson Island on Mar. 2, but none was recorded in the Emmitsburg area of Frederick County until Apr. 6, when the first Horned Grebe also appeared there (John W. Richards). An unusual record for Caroline County was obtained on Apr. 22, when Mrs. A. J. Fletcher saw a flock of 5 Double-crested Cormorants in flight over Denton. A very early Green Heron was identified at Gibson Island on Apr. 4 by Mrs. Gail Tappan. Mar. 27 was an early date for the Black-crowned Night Heron to arrive at Emmitsburg, considering that migrants of this comparatively scarce species did not turn up at Coastal Plain locations until mid-April. By far the most extraordinary occurrence of this period was a Least Bittern noted at Carroll Island on Jan. 6 by Thomas A. Imhof, establishing the first winter record for Maryland.

Waterfowl. A heavy northward migration of Whistling Swans occurred on Mar. 12; Seth H. Low saw 800 from the Matapeake Ferry, and Edwin Willis recorded the peak movement in the Middle River area the same day. Mrs. Tappan and Mrs. Bowditch saw a Snow Goose on Feb. 20, the first of this species from Gibson Island. Two Blue Geese were seen with 6,000 Canadas at the Glenn Martin farm near Chestertown on Feb. 21 (John Steenis and Carl Plummer). Peak flights of Canada Geese were noted at eight localities on Mar. 20 and 21. Willis stated that diving ducks were very numerous in the Middle River area during the spring migration period, but dabbling ducks were below normal. Baldpate reached peaks of 3,000 birds at Middle River on Feb. 19 and 2,000 at Gibson Island on Feb. 26. Redheads numbered 5,000 on Galloway Creek on Feb. 19, and Scaup reached the high tally of 2,100 on Seneca Creek, Feb. 14. Farther south, at Gibson Island, peaks of 1,000 each for Canvas-back and Lesser Scaup were estimated on Mar. 18 (Mrs. W. L. Henderson). Ruddies remained way below normal, with a maximum of only 300. High counts for some of the less common diving ducks at Gibson Island, supplied by Mrs. Henderson, were 200 Ring-necked Ducks on Jan. 11 and Feb. 27, 50 American Golden-eyes on Mar. 2, 30 Buffleheads on Jan. 3, and 70 Old-squaws on Jan. 17. On Mar. 8 Clark Webster saw 500 Ring-necked Ducks at Patuxent Refuge, far exceeding all previous records. The only rarities in this period were the European Teal which remained at Berlin to April 20 (David A. Cutler and Robert Sehl), and a male European Widgeon at Gibson Island, Feb. 4-12 (Mrs. Henderson and others).

Vultures and Hawks. Black Vultures, newcomers to Caroline County last June, were noted during the present period at Bridgetown (Dr. Riley), Denton and Ridgeley (Fletcher). A general northward movement of most species of hawks commenced between Mar. 9 and 17. First reports for the Black Vulture, Cooper's, Red-tail, Red-shoulder, Bald Eagle, Marsh Hawk, Osprey and Duck Hawk all fell during this period. The Broad-wing, as usual, did not appear until Apr. 14 at Emmitsburg and Apr. 16 at White Marsh. Single Golden Eagles were identified at Emmitsburg on Apr. 14 by Dr. Richards and Apr. 18 by Paul O'Brien. A late Rough-legged Hawk was at Middle River on Mar. 25 (Willis).

Shorebirds. Birds of the sandpiper and plover families have a more extended migration period than do those of any other group. Killdeer arrived at Middle River on Feb. 5 and were seen regularly thereafter. Woodcock, which in warm seasons begin to move into Maryland at the end of January, were not recorded until Feb. 23 at Patuxent Refuge, Mar. 6 at Middle River, and Apr. 3 at Emmitsburg. About half of our shorebird species, coastal migrants in particular, do not reach us until May or the very end of April. The species typically found inland were recorded first at Middle River, except for the rare Upland Plover which was seen only at Denton (Apr. 22, Oscar Morgan). Willis's Middle River dates for other species were: Wilson's Snipe on Mar. 4, Spotted Sandpiper on Apr. 22, Solitary Sandpiper on Mar. 30 (earliest Maryland record), Greater Yellow-legs on Mar. 23, Lesser Yellow-legs on Apr. 15, Pectoral Sandpiper on Apr. 13, and Least Sandpiper on Apr. 29.

Land Birds. Table 1 gives a comparison of arrival dates of 44 species at ten localities. Records for Emmitsburg were submitted by John W. Richards, Westminster by Duvall Jones, Lake Roland by Mrs. Alice S. Kaestner, Charles Buchanan and others, Towson by Mr. and Mrs. Richard D. Cole, Middle River primarily by Edwin Willis, but including a few observations from White Marsh by Douglas Hackman, Laurel by Robbins, Stewart and A. C. Martin, Silver Spring by Frank C. Cross and John H. Fales, Gibson Island by Mrs. W. L. Henderson, Southern Maryland by Catherine Crone and Allen Stickley, and Caroline County by Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Fletcher, Marvin Hewitt, Alicia Knotts, A. May Thompson and Bob Maloney. "0" indicates that the species was not recorded this spring. A blank means that no significant arrival date was obtained due either to presence of the species all winter, or to insufficient observation in the proper habitats. A study of these arrival dates will reveal some interesting facts about the rate of movement and direction of progress of some of our migrant species. On the whole the birds arriving in March and early April reached different localities over an interval of several weeks. Certain mid-April arrivals, however, arrived in most areas within a period of about a week. The House Wren, for instance, reached all localities within 3 or 4 days of April 19 thanks to the unusually warm weather which prevailed at that time. Species due to arrive only 4 or 5 days later, on the other hand, were cut off by the cold rainy weather which ensued, and although scattered individuals came through on time, the species went unrecorded in other areas until the first week of May (see Black and White, Parula, Black-throated Green, and Prairie Warblers, and Oven-bird, Yellow-throat and Redstart). Underscored dates are believed to be the first observation of migrants in Maryland this year. The Gibson Island Catbird and Denton Palm Warbler are believed to represent wintering rather than migrating individuals. Purple Martins, in particular, were late in arriving at most nesting sites. Southerly gales attending the March 11 storm were undoubtedly responsible for the first arrival at Williston on the very early date of Mar. 13 (Bob Maloney). Three weeks passed before any more martins were noted in Maryland.

Owls. The Long-eared Owl, one of our least conspicuous birds of prey and one of the more migratory members of its family, frequently goes a whole season without being detected. We owe the only reports of the present winter to Marvin Hewitt and the Fletchers who examined two that were trapped at Goldsboro in Caroline County on Jan. 18 and 19. Duncan McIntosh observed a Barn Owl at Westminster on Mar. 29.

Jays, Nuthatches, Wrens. It was a good winter for Blue Jays in Maryland, and a heavy flight passed northward in April and early May. Red-breasted Nuthatches remained throughout the winter in most areas where there were sufficient evergreens to attract them. A Long-billed Marsh Wren wintered again at Middle River (Willis). Carolina Wrens survived the winter well except from the Catoctin area westward where they suffered as a result of the heavy December snow. Seth Low's farm near Unity in Montgomery County is the easternmost locality where

Table 1. First arrival dates, 1952

Species	Emsburg	West mins	Lake Rold	Tow-son	Midl Rivr	Lau-rel	Silv Sprg	Gibs Is.	So. Md.	Caro line
Whip-poor-will	4/19			5/4	4/11	4/18		5/20		4/14
Chimney Swift	4/11	4/16	4/22	4/27	<u>4/10</u>	4/19	4/19	4/21	4/6	4/15
Eastern Phoebe	3/16	4/1		3/20	3/18	3/12	3/20	3/18	<u>3/2</u>	3/16
Tree Swallow	4/11	4/12	5/6	3/22	4/8	3/26		4/22	<u>3/22</u>	3/21
Rough-winged Sw.	4/10		4/29		4/29	4/20		4/19	4/13	<u>3/22</u>
Barn Swallow	4/11	4/12	4/29	5/5	3/29	4/19		4/2	4/20	4/1
Purple Martin	4/10	4/10			4/6	4/4	4/19	4/9	4/13	3/13
House Wren	4/19	4/20	4/22	4/21	4/22	4/19	4/18	4/15		<u>4/19</u>
Catbird	4/27		4/29	5/1	4/12	5/1	4/28	<u>3/18</u>		4/12
Brown Thrasher	4/9	4/16	4/15	3/29	<u>4/8</u>	4/2	3/31	4/4	4/6	<u>4/5</u>
Robin	2/29	3/10			2/29	2/28	3/10			3/10
Wood Thrush	4/30	5/10	5/6	5/1	4/30	<u>4/23</u>	4/28	4/25	5/4	4/20
Hermit Thrush	4/18	4/5		4/18	4/16		4/9			<u>4/21</u>
Gnatcatcher	4/16	4/16		4/21	4/13		4/20	4/15	4/6	4/1
Ruby-cr. Kinglet	3/26	4/10	4/15	4/21	4/6	4/19	4/19	4/20		<u>4/8</u>
American Pipit	<u>3/16</u>		0		3/19			4/13	3/23	0
Cedar Waxwing	<u>3/9</u>	4/8		3/20	2/27	<u>2/24</u>	3/5	2/25	3/2	3/2
Migrant Shrike	3/5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<u>3/2</u>	3/5
Blue-head Vireo	4/12	4/20	4/29	0	4/6	4/19		5/11		5/9
Black & White W.	4/11	4/23	5/13	5/5	<u>4/29</u>	4/19	4/20	5/2	4/6	4/18
Parula Warbler	5/7		5/6	5/10	5/3	4/19	<u>4/19</u>	5/10	4/20	4/30
Yellow Warbler			4/22		4/19	<u>4/20</u>	<u>4/25</u>	5/1	4/20	4/20
Myrtle Warbler	3/27	4/22	4/15	4/21	4/20	3/21				4/3
Black-thr. Green	4/23			0	4/22	5/5	5/2	5/19	0	5/20
Yellow-thr. W.	0	0	0	0	<u>4/6</u>	4/22	0	4/6		4/2
Pine Warbler	0	4/19	0	0	3/25	3/13		5/1	3/24	<u>4/5</u>
Prairie Warbler	5/10			5/10	<u>4/20</u>		4/20	5/1	4/20	4/23
Yellow Palm W.	4/17	4/16	4/15	4/10			<u>4/16</u>	4/11	<u>4/20</u>	3/22
Oven-bird	5/3	5/10	5/6	<u>5/10</u>	4/16	4/19	4/20	5/11	4/20	4/20
La. Water-thrush	4/15		4/22		<u>4/12</u>	4/4	4/16	0	4/13	3/30
Yellow-throat	4/29	5/10	5/6	5/10	4/22	5/3	4/22	4/23	4/20	<u>4/14</u>
Am. Redstart	5/4		4/22	5/9	5/3	4/23	4/26	5/11	4/13	<u>5/3</u>
Baltimore Oriole	5/1	5/10	4/29	<u>4/19</u>	5/4	5/4	5/4	4/21	0	4/23
Rusty Blackbird	3/16				3/4	3/22			<u>3/2</u>	0
Purple Grackle	3/6	3/11		3/30	3/22	3/10	3/12	2/5		3/10
Cowbird		4/2		3/12	3/10	3/12		<u>3/14</u>	<u>3/2</u>	3/29
Purple Finch	4/23		4/22	3/4		3/21	4/17			3/19
Red-eyed Towhee	4/8	4/7		<u>4/8</u>		4/3	3/22	<u>3/13</u>		3/21
Savannah Sparrow	3/19				3/23				4/12	
Grasshopper Sp.	<u>4/19</u>	4/23	4/22		4/22				<u>4/13</u>	4/19
Vesper Sparrow	3/27	4/16			3/30	3/25		4/16		3/21
Chipping Sparrow	3/26	4/1	4/22	4/5	4/6	3/22		4/2	<u>3/2</u>	3/20
Field Sparrow	3/29	4/1		4/16		<u>3/12</u>		3/16		
Fox Sparrow	3/15			<u>3/1</u>	3/2	<u>3/1</u>		3/2		3/11

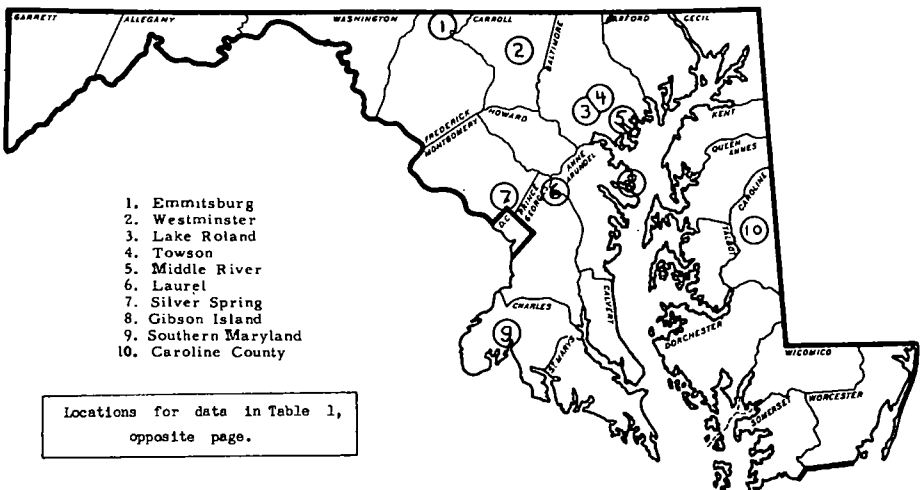


Bewick's Wrens appear almost every year; the first for 1952 was banded there on Apr. 21.

Catbird, Thrasher, Thrushes. Lone Catbirds seen on Mar. 18 at Bodkin Point near Gibson Island (Mesdames North, Tappan and Henderson) and on Mar. 2 at Denton (Fletchers) had presumably wintered nearby, as they were more than a month ahead of the normal migration period. Mrs. Fletcher observed a wintering Brown Thrasher on Jan. 11 at Garland Lake near Denton. Only small flocks of Robins were noted in most areas this spring, but at Emmitsburg Dr. Richards saw an enormous concentration estimated at 3,000 birds within a 200-yard radius on Mar. 19.

Waxwings, Vireos. This was an especially good season for Cedar Waxwings. In many years only a few spend the winter, and the main migration does not begin until almost mid-May. But this year a heavy early flight arrived at the close of February (see Table 1), and highest counts in the central, southern and eastern parts of the State were noted in March or early April: 450 at Port Tobacco, Mar. 23 (Catherine Crone, Katherine Keeley, Allen Stickley); 200 or more at Gibson Island from Mar. 19 to 29, the most ever recorded there (Mrs. Henderson); 94 at Middle River, Mar. 25 (Willis); and 100 at Denton; Apr. 2 (Alicia Knotts). Small flocks lingered in Caroline County to the end of April, but they disappeared from other sections between Apr. 15 and 22. Edwin Willis spotted a record-early Blue-headed Vireo at Middle River on Apr. 6. The other vireos, which (with the exception of the rare Philadelphia Vireo) generally arrive in late April, were cut off by the cool rainy weather which persisted at that time; only a few individuals passed beyond southern and eastern Maryland before this period closed.

Warblers. This family, perhaps more than any other, was affected by the late April weather; several species which would almost always



qualify for inclusion in an April arrival table have been left for the following period. The Yellow-throated Warbler has seldom been reported north of its breeding grounds which extend to the northern limit of Loblolly Pine at Denton, Kent Island, Gibson Island and southern Prince Georges County. This year, however, two localities to the north which had previously recorded this species had additional records: Middle River, Apr. 6 (Willis), and Patuxent Refuge from Apr. 22 on (Seth H. Low and others). Arrival dates earlier than those shown in Table 1 were Pine Warbler at Beltsville on Mar. 12 (Fales) and an extremely early Black and White Warbler at Pennyfield in Montgomery County on Mar. 31 (Jeanne Stivers).

Orioles. There were two exceptionally early oriole reports, both recorded on Apr. 19, and attributable to the heat wave. Miss Thompson saw an Orchard Oriole on this date at Denton, and Mr. and Mrs. Cole noted a Baltimore Oriole at Towson. There were follow-up reports of both species at other early dates: Orchard Oriole at Denton, Apr. 22 (Mrs. Fletcher); and Baltimore Oriole at Gibson Island, Apr. 21 (Mrs. Fletcher).

Finches and Sparrows. A flock of about 10 Pine Grosbeaks, including 1 or 2 adult males was carefully observed at the junction of Nicodemus and Cherry Hill Roads near the Reisterstown Pike in Baltimore County on Feb. 17 by W. P. Braker and reported to Allen Duvall; it represents the first record for this part of the State. The Evening Grosbeak account is so long that it is being presented separately. Northbound Goldfinches reached a spectacular peak of 1,000 at Gibson Island on Apr. 28 and 29 (Mrs. Henderson). Seldom have Red-eyed Towhees been seen in such numbers throughout the winter on the necks at the head of the Chesapeake: Willis recorded this species regularly in the Middle River area, and counted as many as 15 on Feb. 25. The westernmost bird to survive the winter was reported from Emmitsburg on Mar. 2 (Dr. Richards). Dr. and Mrs. F. H. Vinup identified 2 White-crowned Sparrows on Gibson Island, Apr. 10, the second record for the island, and the earliest arrival date for the State. The next report on this species was from the Coles' home in Towson ten days later. The peak for both Song and Fox Sparrows was noted in all areas during the brief period, Mar. 15 to Mar. 19. The only Snow Buntings reported were on Kent Island, near the eastern end of the Bay Bridge on Jan. 13 (Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher).

---

#### BOOKS AND SUPPLIES AVAILABLE

Virtually all bird guides, and a selection of the more popular general bird texts, are available at discounts from publishers' list prices through the Supplies Committee of the Baltimore Unit. Books may be ordered by mail; a list of books is available and may be obtained by sending a postal to the chairman, Miss Etta Wedge, 3120 St. Paul Street, Baltimore 18. The Allegany and Caroline Clubs have a similar service locally. Any incidental profit is being earmarked for some future project of a lasting character, such as a sanctuary or habitat preservation undertaking.

ADVENTURE OF A BALTIMORE BIRDER AT PLEASANT VALLEY CAMP  
GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND, JUNE 15-17, 1951

Percy W. Jones

The postcard announcement of this trip dated May 31st sent to the entire membership forecast what was to be expected in birding experiences. Would that I were gifted with the ability to express in the written word the joys and thrills that I personally experienced on this last of the state-wide trips of the season. Those of us who were fortunate to be there will echo I'm sure my own enthusiasms inadequately recounted though they are. I can only say to those of our friends and members who missed out this time, by all means do not fail to schedule it as a must in your log of future trips to be taken. I count myself fortunate indeed to have been among those present and emphatically record here my own recommendation that the Society place this trip on its annual list each year.

The gods were kind and the weather and temperature ideal for the time of year and locale. Driving up Friday afternoon on Route 40 and beginning at Frederick the glorious scenery of the Appalachian Mountains unfolded before us range after range. A stop at Cumberland for a stout meal before pushing on to our objective, the camp at Pleasant Valley, shoved our spirits even higher if that were possible, and as we turned off the highway at Grantsville and headed south on 495, the sun was going down in a blaze of glory to our right beyond the next tree-covered mountain ridge. As per directions, we turned left in Bittering and moseyed along to the pines marking the road in to the camp area. Winding our way around, and then over a bridge at the lower end of a beautiful lake, we immediately glimpsed the camp lodge and cabins higher up on our right in a splendid grove of trees. Wood smoke from atop a big stone chimney at the main lodge drew us on and after parking our car we were greeted graciously inside by our official hostesses Miss Livingstone and Mrs. Miller. The latter checked us off the registration list, assigned us our cabin and accepted our "dough", meanwhile passing greetings and pleasantries back and forth among the birders already assembled before the big open fireplace ablaze with burning logs.

By ten o'clock all the anticipated arrivals had signed in and under our hostess' guidance announcements were made, directions given, (this was our first trip here), and plans for the next day agreed upon. Six of us, all men, righthanded aloft for the Wolf Swamp trip to be led by that peerless leader Chandler Robbins and due to leave at 6.00 A.M. following a rising bell at 5.00 and breakfast at 5.30. With that prospect before me, it didn't take long to find our cabin and make up my cot. Piling on all the available blankets and sweaters—brrrrr! it was cold! I fell asleep amid sounds of snoring companions and after one last look at the moon above the treetops and the starshine overhead auguring good weather for the morrow.

No sooner had I snuggled down or rather literally curled up and the last man in had pulled the light, than I was conscious of a bell tolling. Great grief! it can't be five o'clock already! Yes it could be and was, confirmed by a hasty look at the luminous dial of my wrist watch. Dick Cole alongside had his flashlight on, Orville Crowder was zipping his way out of his sleeping bag and Chandler was pulling on his third pair of trousers by the time I screwed up courage enough to "hit the deck." Grunts, groans, and wisecracks about the temperature punctuated the small noises of creaking cots and guys getting into clothes and boots. As silently as possible in order not to wake the non-trippers, we filed out to morning ablutions followed by coffee and donuts at the main lodge. With a cigaret and my fourth cup of that delicious brew I began to thaw out and resemble a human being once more. Shortly we piled into Dick's car. The red top segment of the circle which is the visual outer rim of the mighty sun appeared above the horizon in the east as we shoved off.

Wolf Swamp lies approximately  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles east of Grantsville, and the National Pike (U. S. Route 40) crosses the northern tip of the swamp area at Piney Grove. It shows up on the Avilton Quad topographic map as elliptical in shape, approximately  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles in length and averaging about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a mile in width, running in a southwesterly direction between Meadow Mountain and Red Ridge. Elevation 2700 feet. Red Run flows to the northeast out of the swamp into Piney Creek which in turn empties into the Frostburg Reservoir to the eastward. The spruce-hemlock bog itself covers nearly 15 acres, is irregular in shape and is the last virgin stand of this habitat of any size in Maryland.

Debarking from our car on a side road paralleling the bog, Chandler led us down a mossy track with the big trees overhead and thick brush all about. 100 yards and we were forced into single file as there is a dense and quite uniform under-story of rhododendron and practically no herbaceous cover at all. Soon I was put to it to maintain my place in line, clambering over huge moss-covered logs, ducking under and around the dense tangles of rhododendron roots and branches, pulling aside long thick trailing vines, grasping hand holds to keep from falling in the bog water and stepping gingerly into water holes kneeboot deep when there was nowhere else to put my foot. Down there on the forest floor it was dank, chill and gloomy, and silence pervaded over all. What trail there was was known only to our leader. In less than ten yards, the man ahead was lost to sight and sound. Overhead the hemlocks and red spruces, the red maples and yellow birches lifted their huge trunks and leafy branches to almost completely shut out the sky and only once in a while let filter in a bit of sunshine. Every now and then the word was passed to keep silent and standing frozen with "glasses" searching the thick cover, we listened intently for a bird note or song, identified a moment later by our leader and master of bird calls.

Hearing the songs of the Northern Water-thrush, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Canada, Blackburnian and Black-throated Blue Warblers was indeed a treat for they cannot be heard in summer in the Coastal Plain or Piedmont areas around Baltimore. We could hear them but seldom see them. This was virgin forest, remember.

The sun was well up now but I couldn't tell the points of the compass until we broke out into an open glade in the center of the bog. There my companions had gathered in a knot and were gazing down at something atop a mossy hummock. I looked too but at first couldn't see anything unusual, and then Chandler squatted down and reaching out his hand toward a smallish open hole in the moss brought forth one at a time four tiny fledglings. We were all enraptured and why not? This was the first actual nest of record in Maryland of a Nashville Warbler. Chandler then proceeded to give us a lesson in expert bird banding; I didn't know before they made bands sufficiently small to fit those tiny nestlings' legs, now only some 6 or 7 days old. It was good to be out in the open again and for a while we wandered around noticing the late flowering flora, some similar to our own but contrasting vividly thereto at this high elevation and temperature for the month of June. Here we picked up a Magnolia Warbler and a Black and White, a Crested Flycatcher, a Catbird and a Black-capped Chickadee.

At a call from our leader we set off again into the swamp resuming our single file order and heavy going in the dense undercover. I'm sure I pulled my legs up and down a thousand times more than I stretched them forward and there were few spots where you could walk upright and then just a couple of yards. Where we were headed I hadn't the faintest notion but I sensed something was up. Before long I caught a signal from the man ahead to stop, make no noise and crouch down. Shortly he waved me on and stealthily I approached him as he pointed ahead. Just as I reached him he whispered "there! about 8 feet up and 15 feet ahead" pointing again. I carefully scanned what I thought was the right spot but couldn't make out a thing at first; then a bright splotch of color focused in surrounded by a blur of brown. "What is it," I whispered. "Owl," he replied. "Yeah, what kind?" "SAW-WHET." "Never saw one before." "Neither have I." WOW!! It later developed to be a life first for every member of our party except our leader who with consummate skill had tracked down this one for us, still partly in juvenile plumage. On an earlier trip Robert E. Stewart and he had found an adult Saw-whet here. This was the second nesting record for this species in Maryland. What a thrill.

The morning was well along now as we made our way out of the bog. Before long we reached the grassy track leading up to the gravel road and our parked car. When we reached it off came heavy clothing and boots as we passed the water jug around and loafed a bit and soaked up the brilliant sunshine, a vast difference to the cool green depths of the swamp. The ride back through the glorious high-country side, winding roads and mountain ranges all about was gay and conversation rife with frequent exclamations and references to all we had seen and

heard. As we pulled into the parking lot beside the main lodge the blue water of the lake below looked most inviting and then and there I decided to have a quick swim before the luncheon bell. Hurrying to our cabin, I doffed the rest of my heavy clothing and slipped on a pair of swimming trunks. Grabbing a towel I ran down to the little pier jutting out from the shore and jumped in, much to the surprise of several grown-ups and some youngsters fooling around the edges. WHEW! was it cold! like ice water! Believe me I didn't stay in long, just enough to feel refreshed and appetite-sharpened for that meal coming up next. I was ready for anything now and the afternoon and following day brought further thrills and adventures which I shall always recall with great delight and pleasure. But that's another story.

3002 Ferndale Ave., Baltimore, Md.

---

#### A NORTHWARD FLIGHT OF EVENING GROSBEAKS

I was out in front of our house in Frederick at 8:15 a.m. on or about May 15, 1952, and saw a flock of hundreds of Evening Grosbeaks flying northward, twenty to thirty feet above the ground. They were large and silvery-looking in the early light, and kept coming in a low flying band. My brother, who was with me, said he had never seen so many birds in one flock. As far as I can remember they made very little noise. After they had gone I saw and heard some Evening Grosbeaks in the trees beside the house. They stayed only a few minutes and then went on - evidently stragglers from the big flock.

Just before this we were called out to Harmony Grove, about five miles north of Frederick, to see a flock of Evening Grosbeaks that had been feeding there for about five days. I would estimate that there were fifty birds in this flock and they were not at all timid. Mrs. William R. Slemmer and I went out and stayed a long time watching them. Mrs. Mabel Hoyler and Miss Sarah Quinn saw two female Evening Grosbeaks at Culler Lake in Frederick on May 3, before I had seen any. As far as I know these are all that were seen in the vicinity of Frederick this spring.

Mrs. Melvin H. Partridge  
1613 Shookstown Road, Frederick

---

**SEMINARS:** The Baltimore club's educational program for 1953 got under way early with two scheduled seminars. A six-meeting seminar on Bird Song, led by Mr. Robbins, set out to explore the purpose, technical aspects and identification of bird song, using recordings, signal generators and other equipment. Shortly afterward, a seminar on Basic Botany was opened, under the capable leadership of Mr. Elmer George Worthley. Besides six evening meetings, the Botany Seminar undertook an extensive program of field trips, scheduling 10 of these. The botany enthusiasts point out that in the mid-afternoon period when birds are quiet and elusive, the flowers are still approachable. Accordingly, the botany field trips are scheduled for the same general location as the bird field trip of the same day, beginning at 2 p.m.

## FIELD TRIPS, 1952

Some highlights of the 1952 field trip program of the Baltimore Club deserve preservation in these pages. Often these trips are attended by members of other local units and take on the aspect of statewide activities. There is an unavoidable tendency, as we grow older as a group, to settle into a round of annual pilgrimages, since many birding spots have attractions to offer on certain specific week-ends, and they lure us back perennially. Nevertheless, there are a number of new localities each year, and the whole program is truly statewide in coverage. Those of us who take part in these trips through the whole round of seasons are getting to know our State's natural attractions better and better, and to appreciate them more each year.

January trips, to Annapolis on the 13th and a round of feeding stations in Baltimore on the 20th, found the usual winter species. The annual Kent Island trip on February 10, scheduled as a statewide activity, shattered all attendance records by drawing a crowd of 80 observers in 22 cars, with seven local clubs represented. Commander Berry's good leadership found itself occupied largely with getting our motor cavalcade turned around on dead-end roads, and the good graces of our friends the John Campbell Whites stood up well under the picnic lunching of these four-score hungry people. In spite of the turmoil we made in moving about, excellent views of waterfowl were had by everyone. Swan and geese paraded in front of our windows at lunch, Golden-eyes and Old-squaws ran up the highest counts for ducks, and a total of 52 species was tallied for the day. At Matapeake, 10 White-winged Scoters and 6 Surf Scoters permitted continued study, and proved to be life-list new birds for more than 30 people.

Lake Roland on February 16, with Mrs. Lubbert as leader, yielded 22 species; the annual Gibaon Island trip on March 2 had the usual fine views of water birds, with 350 Baldpate taking top honors. The "duck round-up" at Chase on March 9, with Mr. Crowder as leader and host, drew another large crowd; 16 cars made the rounds and tallied 58 species of birds in all.

Mrs. Kaestner's faithful - and perennial - leadership at Lake Roland took care of a Sunday trip on March 16, and later on made possible a weekly study of the migratory season on six consecutive Tuesday morning walks. Sixteen people patronized these weekday trips and saw a total of 118 species, including 27 kinds of warblers.

On March 22, under Mr. Llewellyn's guidance, we had our first twilight trip to watch the flight antics of Woodcock, this time at Patuxent Refuge. On March 30, Mr. Low led a walk along the south side of Triadelphia Reservoir, with mostly Washington people among the 10 present, winding up with a group visit to Miss Tuttrup's home. Features of this trip included 4 White-crowned Sparrows, a Woodcock flushed in broad daylight, and 20 Meadowlarks.

Two April walks traced the earlier migrants. On April 6, Ogden Ramsay showed us around the McDonogh duck pond where his behavior

experiments are being conducted. On April 20, the annual Conowingo pilgrimage uncovered 50 species; the breath of spring permeated the check-list, with newcomers such as Broadwinged Hawks, Purple Martins, Palm and Yellow Warblers, and our good old standby Louisiana Water-thrush in its regular place at Rock Run. On this trip, luncheon at Evelyn Gregory's attractive Fourteen Shillings Farm, now another perennial "must", was a enjoyable as ever.

A new venture marked the spring's showiest week-end on May 4, when under the leadership of Katherine Keeley we made our first official club visit to the marvelous estate of Dr. Paul Bartsch, near Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Botanical attractions vied with birds and even threatened to eclipse the check-list, but with the aid of stops at Roaches Run and Dyke, the final count was 77 species. The Blue Goose at Roaches Run helped many of us to a new life-list bird.

The lower Patapsco on May 11 produced 66 species and several active nest construction jobs. The annual Catoctin Conference the following week-end added to the reputation of these annual gatherings, the feature this year being a condensed Basic Ornithology Seminar; 115 people took part in this long-to-be-remembered week-end. The remainder of the spring saw us on other annual pilgrimages: to Ocean City on May 24 and 25, with the usual high species count; to Garrett County June 13 to 15 to enjoy the high-country nesting show, with Pileated Woodpeckers feeding young right before our eyes within the bounds of camp; to Worthington Valley on June 22 for an unsuccessful search for nesting Upland Plover and Cliff Swallows; and finally to the Bessons' open house and picnic at their Chalk Point cottage on June 24, with 54 Baltimore and Washington people enjoying the many attractions there.

After summer vacation, field trips resumed with the Annapolis trip on September 7. Thirty-four people, from several clubs, visited Sandy Point, enjoyed the hospitality of the Woods in West Annapolis, and thrilled at the variety of birds in Father Edward's traps at St. Conrad's Friary.

The second year of big inter-club week-end birding at Cape May, New Jersey, on September 19-21, attracted 32 Maryland people. The date hit a veritable migration jackpot; every acre of the Cape teemed with birds of countless species. Our members tallied 89 species, including such things as Cattle Egrets, Marbled Godwits, and shore birds of all kinds. The boat trip on the Scotty Warren, with Joe Cadbury as leader, was a memorable occasion. The two night sessions, with lectures by Dr. Arthur A. Allen and Hal Harrison, were highlights, and Bill McHoul brought home the door prize - a framed Roger Tory Peterson print of Snowy Egrets.

Other fall features included a visit to Hampton under the leadership of the Stracks, our annual trip to the Crowder sanctuary at Chase, another visit to Seth Low's, a jaunt at the height of fall color to Hawk Mountain, and finally a December trip to Perry Point under the direction of Bob Bowen.

Orville W. Crowder