

A photograph of three people in winter clothing using binoculars in a snowy forest. The person on the left is wearing a blue and red striped hat and a blue jacket. The person in the middle is wearing a red jacket and a red hat. The person on the right is wearing a dark jacket and a blue and white striped hat. The background is a snowy forest with bare trees.

THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

*The oldest continuing
“Citizen Science”
project in the United States*

Prepared by:
Kevin Howe, Acting President
Northern Neck Chapter,
National Audubon Society

- **WHAT IT IS**
 - Birding, Fun, Learning, Conservation, Citizen Science
- **HISTORY**
 - Oldest continuing Citizen Science Project in North America
- **HOW IT WORKS**
 - Organized by National Audubon Society & thousands of Volunteers, Collect Data, Submit Data
- **WHEN IT IS**
 - Christmas time – One day between December 14th to January 5th
- **WHY YOU SHOULD PARTICIPATE**
 - It's fun, interesting, gets us outside, learn something, be a part of a 120 year continuous Citizen Science project
- **TO PARTICIPATE**
 - Please contact Jeff Wright by email at pec11908@me.com for info & sign up

Christmas Bird Count (CBC)

WHAT IS IT?

- A National Audubon Society sponsored Citizen Science Project
- It is the Oldest continuous Citizen Science Project in the US
- The Count – actually a Survey/Census - of all birds seen or heard within a 15-mile diameter circle
- The Count must be performed between December 14 to January 5 and be a midnight to midnight period
- It is a long term assessment of the early winter trends in bird species composition, distribution and abundance
- The data compiled over this 120 year period has revealed much about our avian fauna

Massive Hunting of birds in late 1800-early 1900 jump started the bird conservation movement



Most of the bird killing was for the collection of feathers, used for women's hats, a passing fashion

A real motivation for the first Christmas Bird Count was an annual Christmas event held by hunters called the “**Side Hunt**”. This Side Hunt was popular in the late 1800’s with hunters who would choose sides and go out to shoot everything that moved (feathers and fur) and the group with the largest pile of dead animals “won” (their words, not mine). So a Christmas Bird Count was organized to parallel this Side Hunt which also went out of fashion like hat feathers.

Four people helped kickstart the conservation movement in late 1800’s and into the 1900’s:

- **George Bird Grinnell**
- **Harriet Hemenway**
- **Mina Hall**
- **Frank Chapman**

Christmas 1900 Participants – the first CBC was held in 25 localities with 27 people



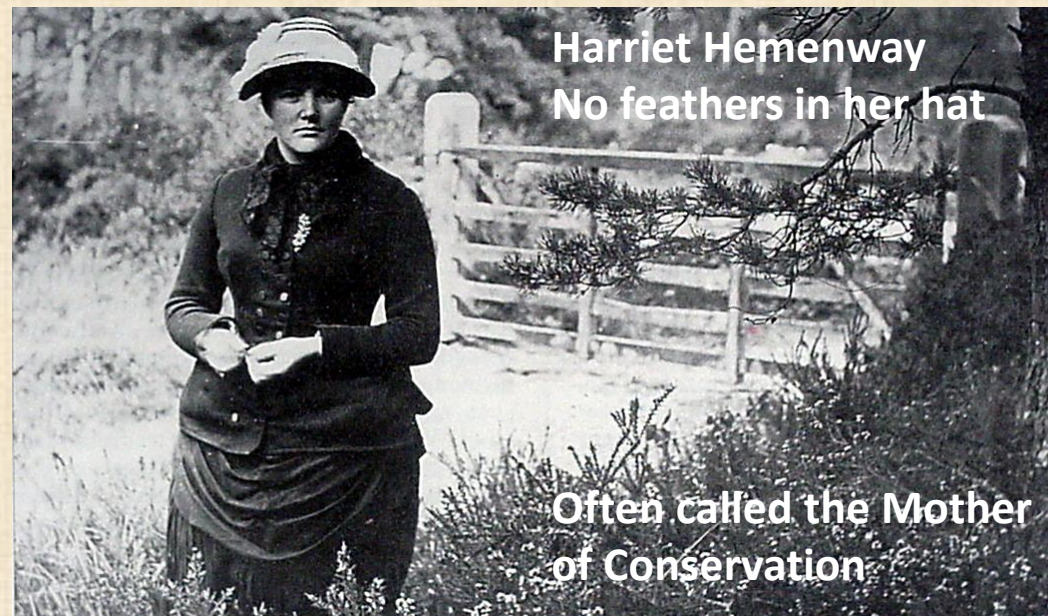
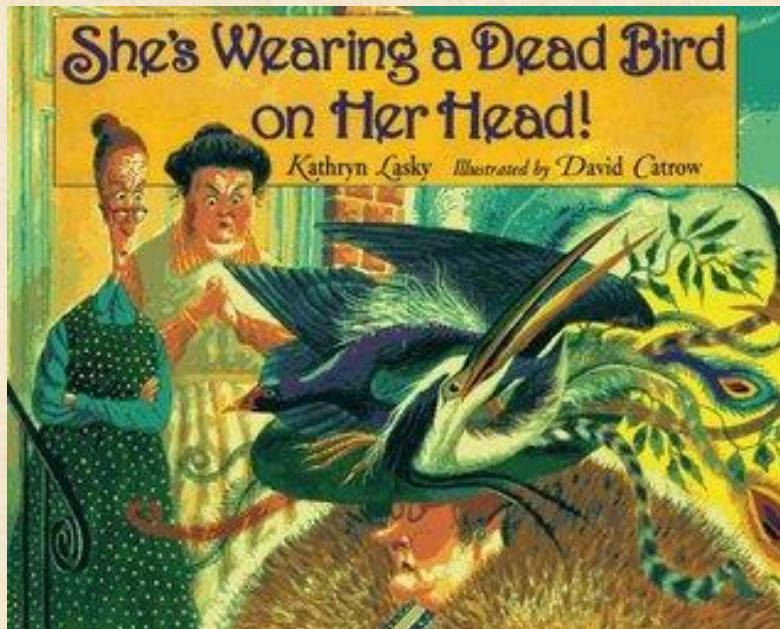
HISTORY OF The National Audubon Society & THE CBC

1886 – George Bird Grinnell – Editor of Forest & Stream, 1886-1911

- Formed the first Audubon Society in 1886 & wrote the many editorials regarding the slaughter of birds for hat feathers

1896 – Harriet Hemenway & Mina Hall, Boston Socialites & Conservationists

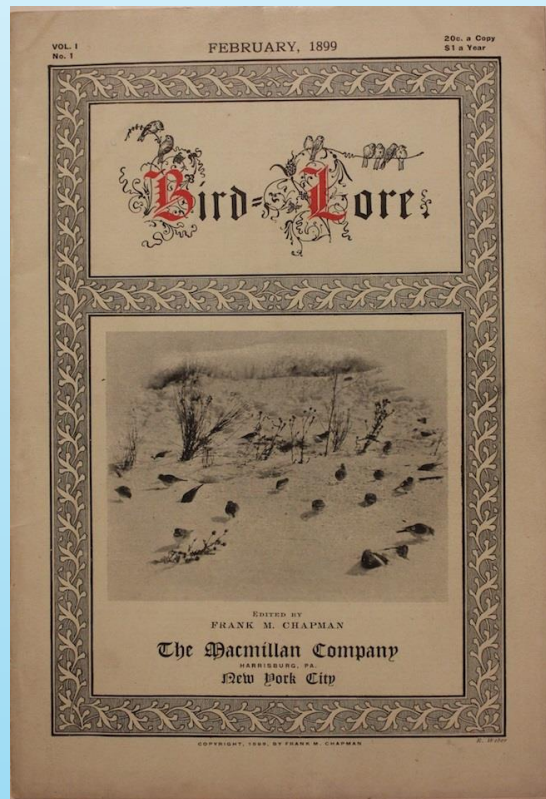
- Formed the Massachusetts Audubon Society, still a force today



HISTORY – Continued

- 1898 – following Massachusetts Audubon, Audubon groups were formed in 15 states & DC from Maine to California but not Virginia.
- 1900 – Frank Chapman, editor of Bird Lore (1899-1939) & ornithologist of note proposed a Christmas Bird Count in opposition to the Christmas Side Hunt
- 1905 – National Audubon Society formed by combining various state Audubon Societies

1899



1940



1964



2018-2019 CBC RESULTS (US Only)

- 1,974 counts, 51 were new for this 119th count. Counts were down in this year due to the Federal government shutdown from Dec. 22 to Jan 25 which closed Federal lands on which counts were planned.
- 60,392 participants – more participants than previous year by nearly 1,600 more than the previous year
- More than 45 million birds recorded, about 4 million less than the previous year
 - This was thought to be due to two things:
 - Federal government shutdown closing many areas
 - Unusual cold front in mid to late November in upper 2/3 of US forcing many waterfowl and lingering-late migrants south much earlier
- 661 species seen or heard
- Portland, OR led the US participation with 346 people while Hilton Head, SC was next with 220. Ft. Belvoir led VA with 190 participants (#12 on the US list), followed by Manassas-Bull Run with 114 participants (#33 on US list), then Williamsburg with 112 participants (35th on US list)
- Of the top 80 localities, Matagorda, TX lead in species recorded (as in a number of previous years) with 229 while Cape Charles, VA came in 77th with 152 species.
- Virginia held 52 counts finding 215 different species

HOW THE CBC WORKS

- Volunteers, Volunteers, Volunteers
 - Anyone with desire – expert or newbie; homebody or trekker
- One Count Compiler (=Leader=Coordinator), often with assistance
- Several Sector Leaders coordinate to cover the 15-mile diameter circle
- Species identified by sight or sound and all individuals counted
- Drive/walk/boat your sector for as long as you wish - day or night (e.g. owls)
- **Homebodies with feeders can do a feeder watch by prior arrangement**
 - **Your home must be within the circle of focus**



Warm CBC in Florida



California CBC Dreaming



Bundled up CBC in Wisconsin



Maine Cold Coast CBC



NORTHUMBERLAND – LANCASTER CBC OVERVIEW

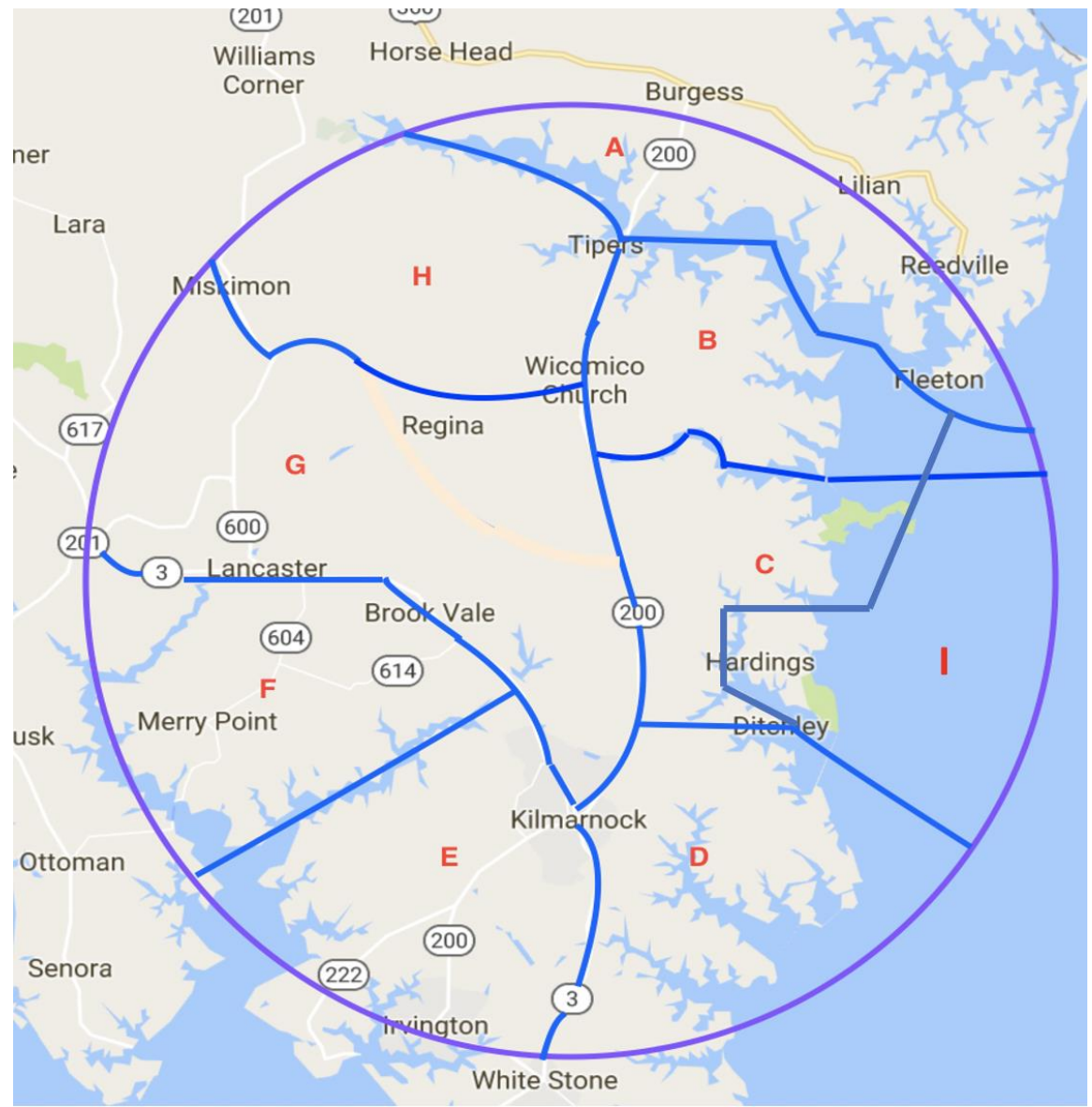
- **COVID Protocol Respected and in place for all birders...**
- **We will cover (again) the Eastern End of the Northern Neck and Portions of Northumberland and Lancaster County**
- **The 15-mile count circle is “gerrymandered” into 9 sectors for the 2020 count**
- **No overlap with the Western End of the NN, i.e. George Washington’s Birthplace CBC**
- **We use Public Lands and Public Roads - private property can only be used with prior owner’s prior permission**
- **Day-light hours or nights for owls ...**
- **Due to COVID, your own feeders, property & neighborhood, is ideal to watch and record**
- **Pictures, as always, are worth 10,000 words**

Christmas Bird Counts are a NNK Virginia Master Naturalist Approved Project

The 15-mile Circle which will forever be used for our CBC
Showing Sectors for the 2020 Count

NORTHUMBERLAND — LANCASTER CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT BEGAN IN 2016

FOUNDER & COMPILER OF
THIS COUNT IS JEFF WRIGHT



An open event to all and free

An “**In the Field**” - Centric event allowing for walking, driving or home-body bird watching

Sector Leaders coordinate everyone before the event to minimize overlap & confusion

Small Birding Teams – Normally 1 to as many as 10 (not this year)

but this year there will be no teams, just individuals, due to COVID Protocol



Sector Leaders determine:

- Sites & Routes within Sector
- Gather data from participants
- “Dry Runs” encouraged

**The Fifth Year for the CBC
in Northumberland - Lancaster
Counties**

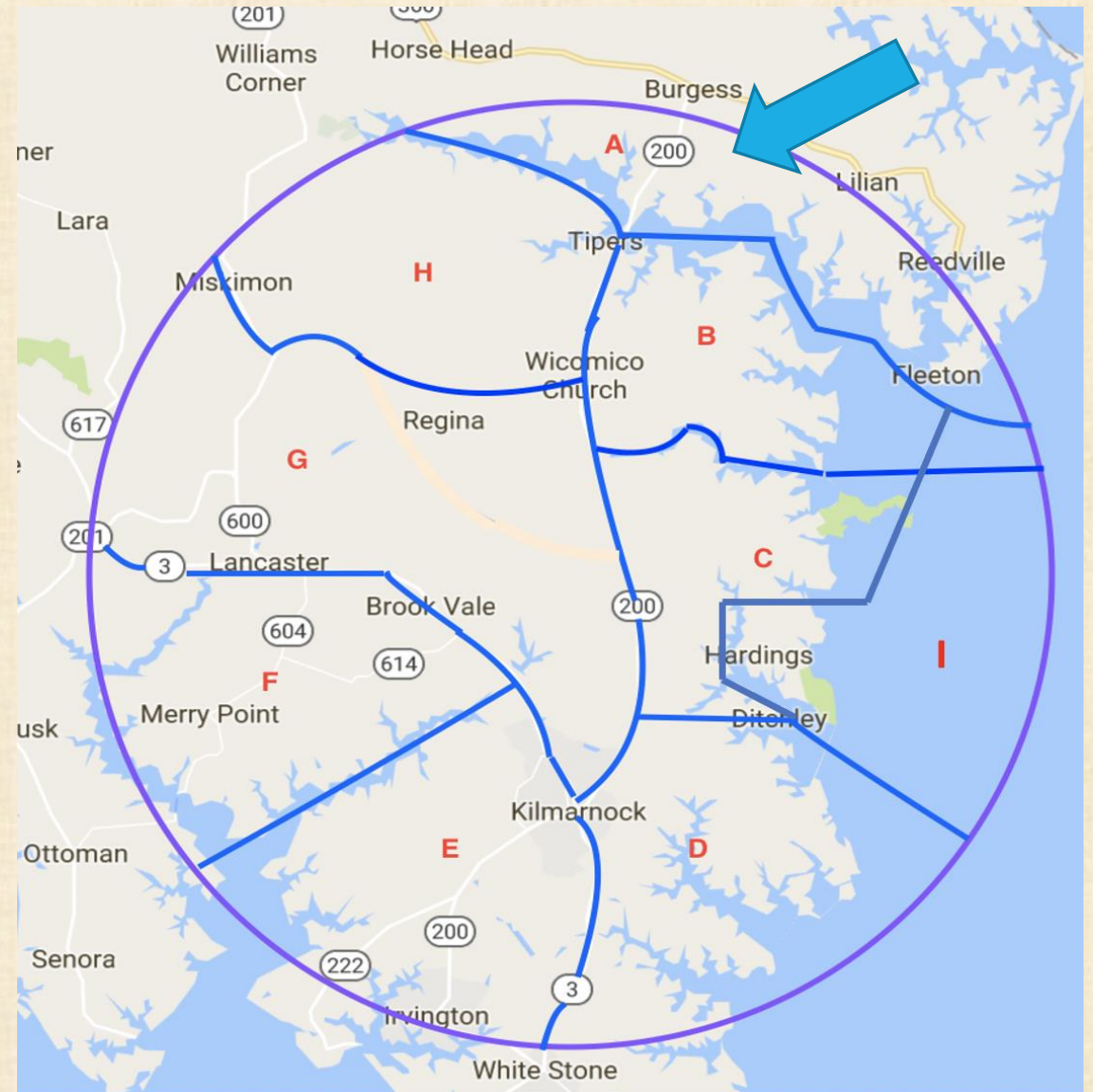
N-L CBC SECTOR "A"

Description of General Boundaries

- South of Rte 360 and Burgess, RTE 200 to North end of Bridge over the Greater Wicomico River, North Bank of the Greater Wicomico River and associated creeks, Reedville's Main St South of the Fisherman's Museum, Chesapeake Bay

Including

- Lillian
- Fairport
- Fleeton
- Areas South of Burgess



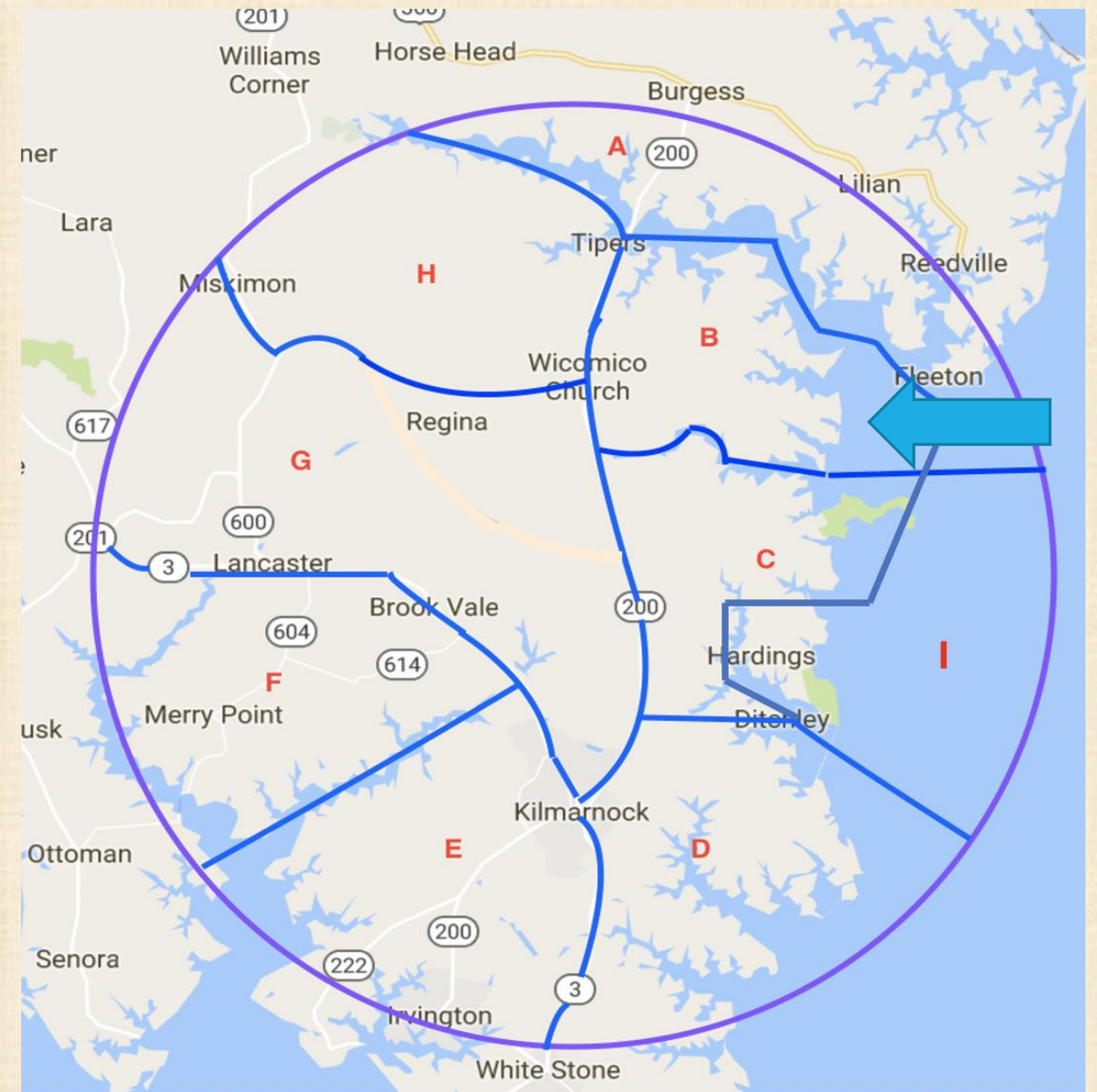
N-L SECTOR "B"

Description of General Boundaries

- Ingram Bay, South Bank of the Greater Wicomico River, East of Rte 200, North of Balls Neck Rd to Crosshills Road to the start of Mill Creek and the North Bank of Mill Creek

Including

- Remo
- Mila
- Sandy Point
- Mile Creek, Harvey's Creek, Crane Creek & the Bay



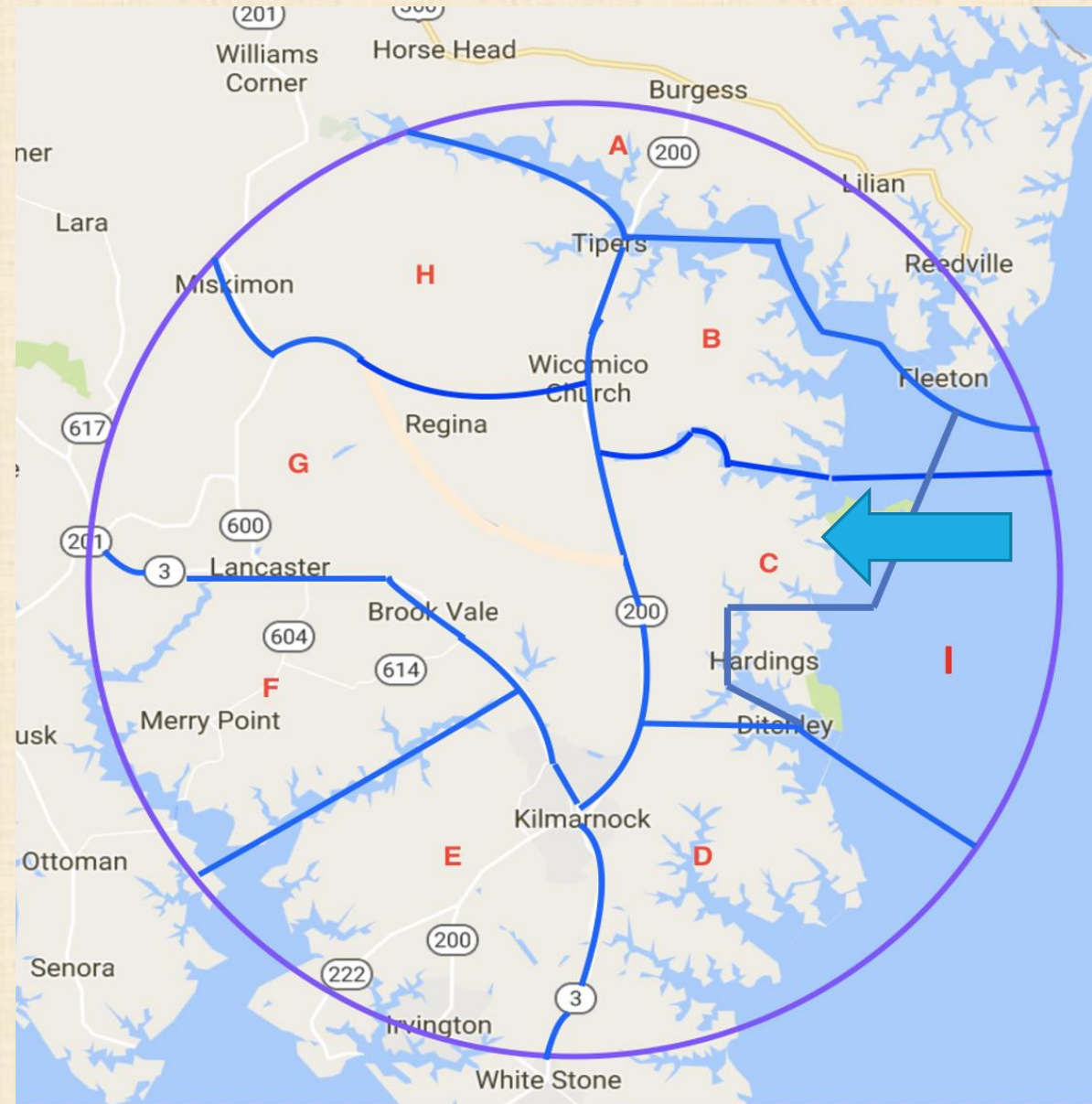
N-L CBC SECTOR "C"

General Description of Boundaries

- Chesapeake Bay, North Bank of Mill Creek, East of Rte 200, North of Ditchley Road

Including

- Shiloh School
- Rehobeth Church
- Dameron Marsh
- Dividing Creek
- Salt Pond



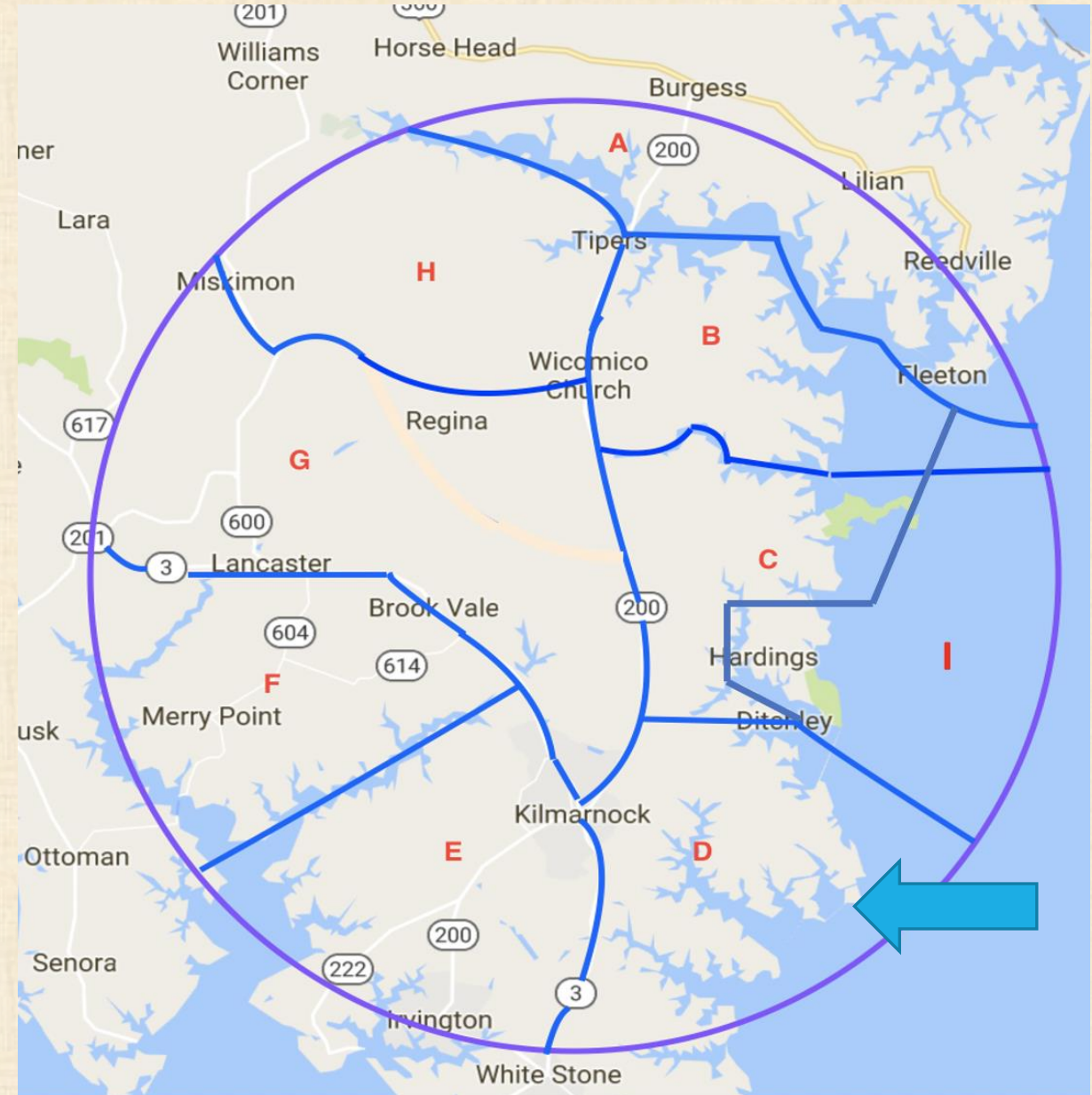
N-L CBC SECTOR "D"

General Description of Boundaries

- Chesapeake Bay, South of Ditchley Road to include Prentice Creek, East of Rte 200, East of Rt3 North of White Stone where the highway becomes two lanes in each direction

Including

- Indian Creek Country Club
- Indian Creek
- Fleets Bay Neck
- Bluff Point Neck
- Grace Point
- Kilmarnock Wharf
- Barnes Creek
- Henrys Creek
- Ocran
- Dymer Creek
- Poplar Neck



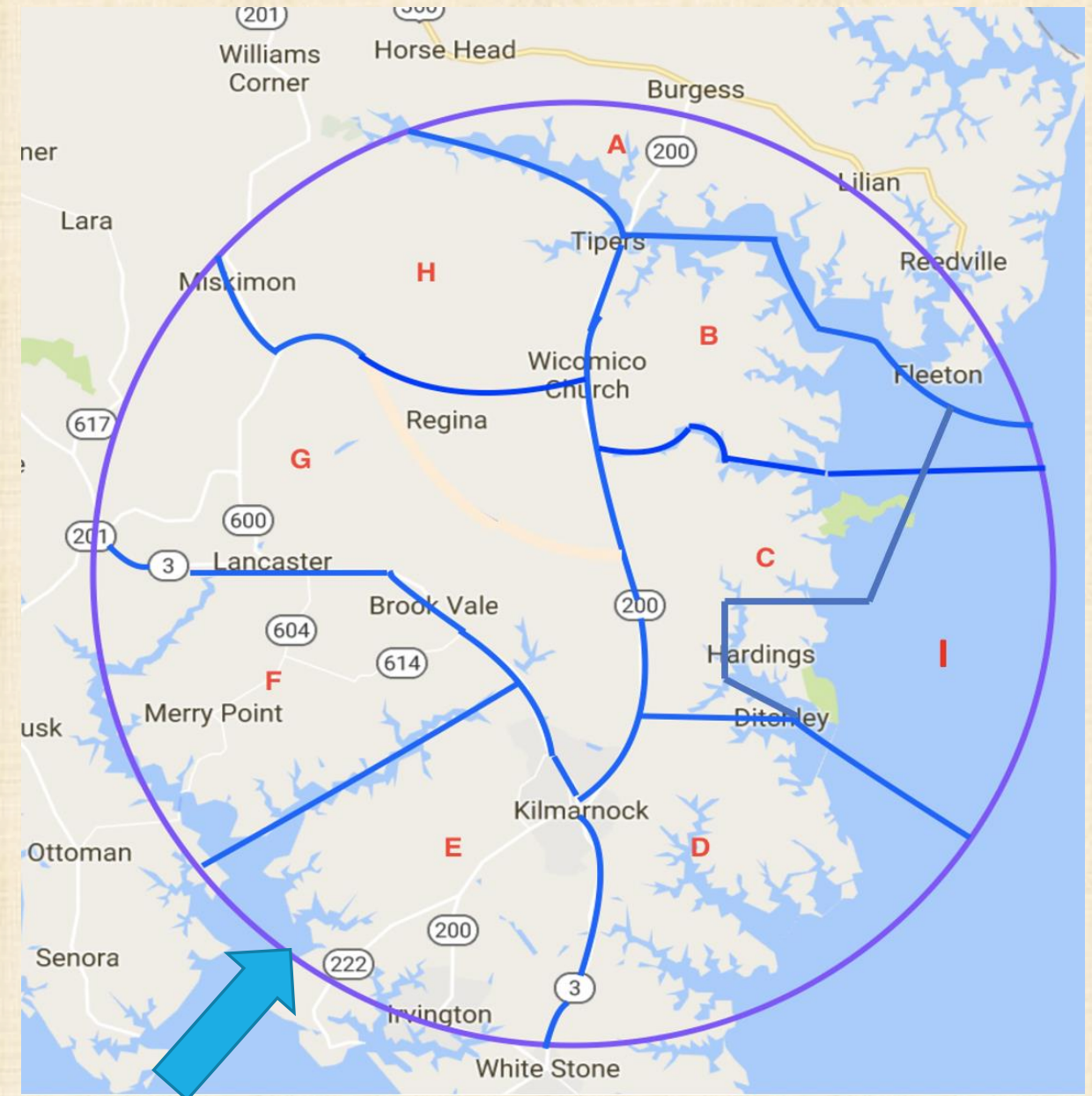
N-L CBC SECTOR "E"

General Description of Boundaries

- West of Rte 3 Starting North of White Stone where the Highway becomes 2 lanes in each direction, Rte 3 continuing North through Kilmarnock, till the road crosses the Eastern Branch of the Corrotoman, the South East banks of the Eastern Branch of the Corrotoman, and portions of Irvington

Including

- Portion of Kilmarnock
- Bon Secour Hospital Campus
- YMCA/Free Clinic Campus
- Double Eagle Country Club
- Rappahannock Westminster Canterbury
- Portions of the Tides Inn
- Christ Church



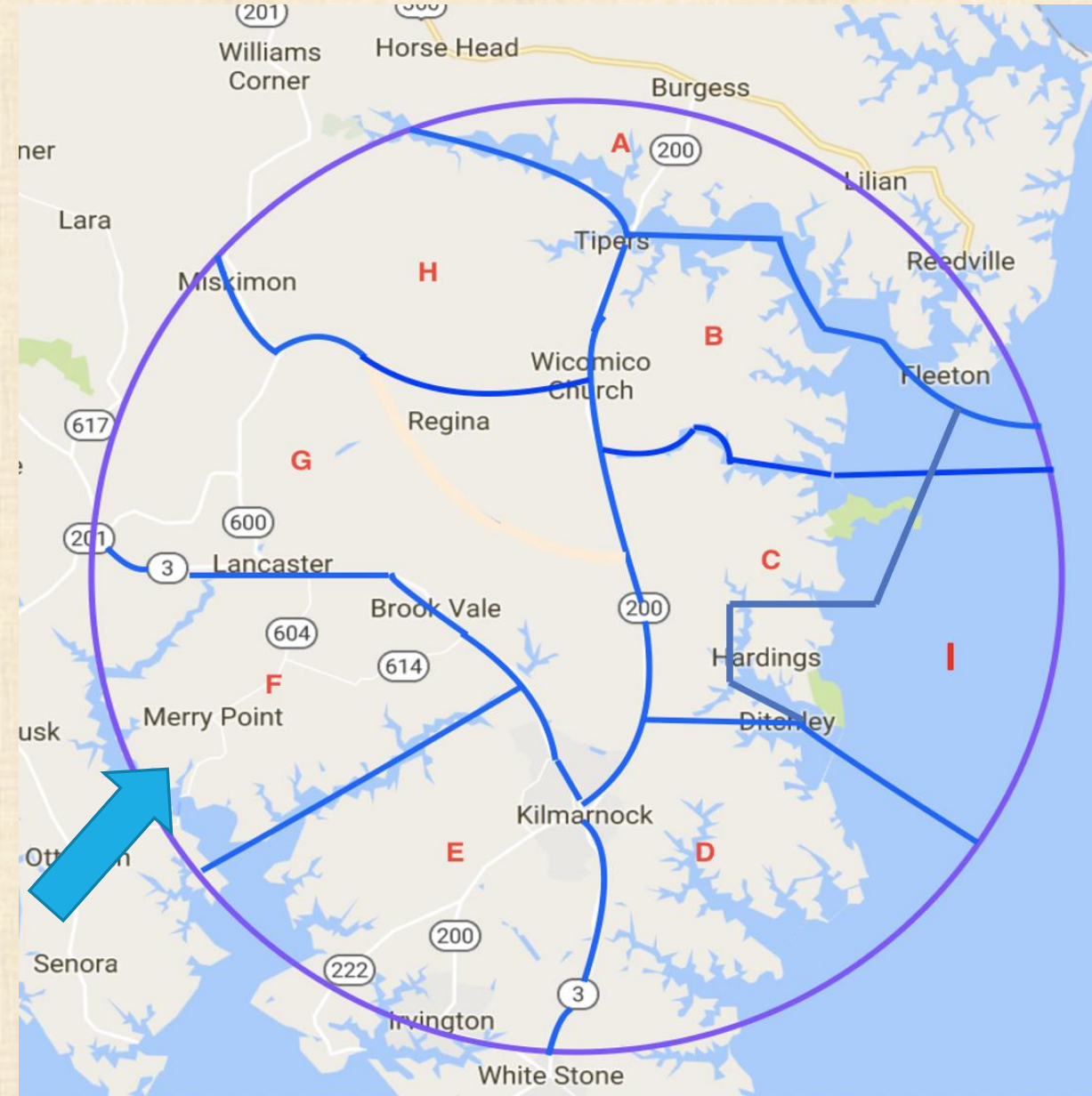
N-L CBC SECTOR "F"

General Description of Boundaries

- From Lively, South to where the road crosses the Eastern Branch of the Corrotoman River, the North West banks of the Eastern Branch of the Corrotoman River, areas south of Rte3, all of the areas of North of the Western Branch of the Corrotoman River

Including

- Lancaster south of Rte 3
- Merry Point
- West Point
- North east area of Lively
- Western Branch of the Corrotoman
- Davis Creek
- John Creek
- Little Branch



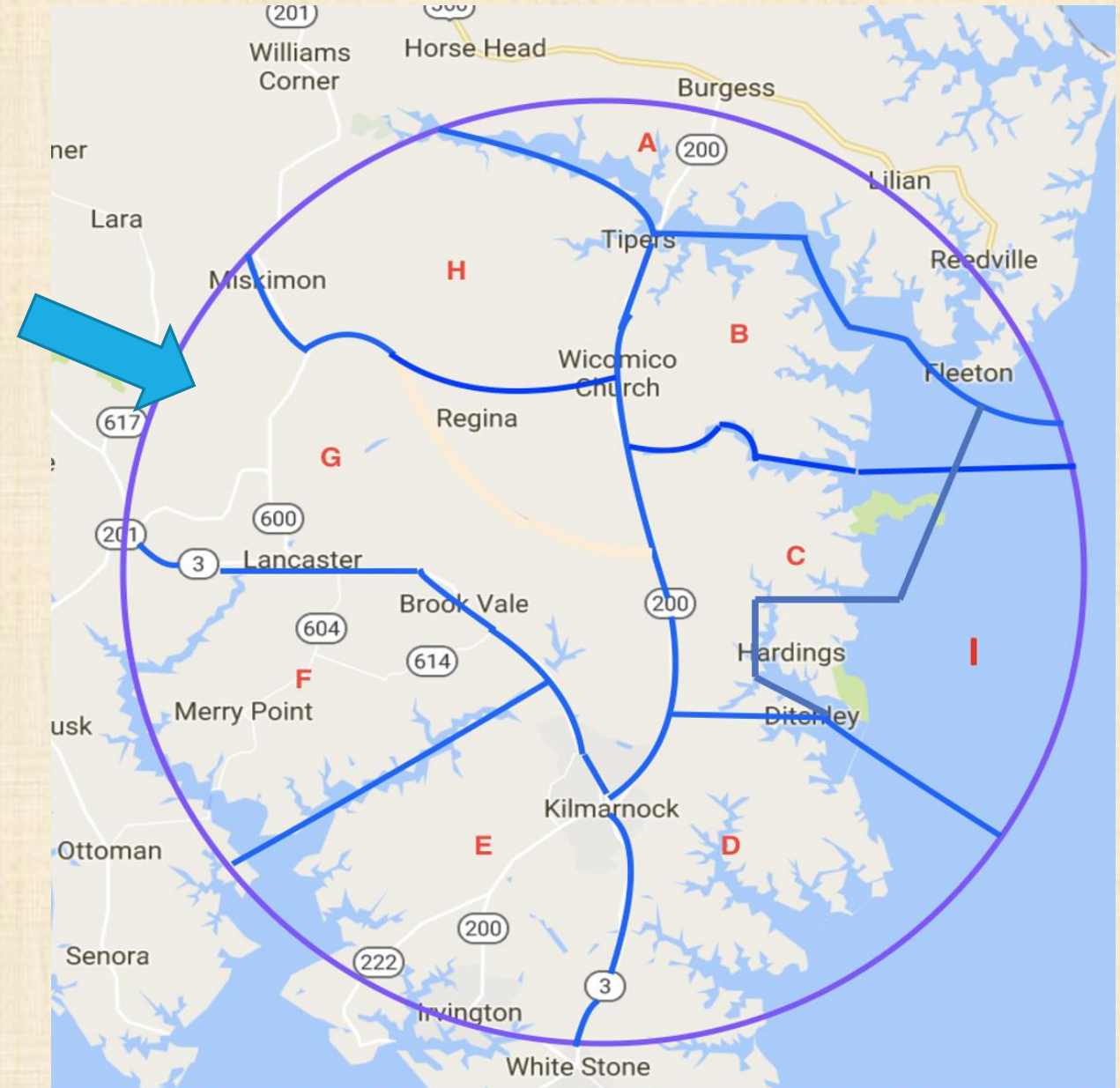
N-L CBC SECTOR "G"

General Description of Boundaries:

- From Lively the circle arc continues near Alfonso to Miskimon, then stays South of Beanes Road and Browns Store to Road to Rte 200.

Including:

- Norris Pond
- Davis Pond
- Camp Mill Pond
- Regina
- Hickory Hollow Preserve



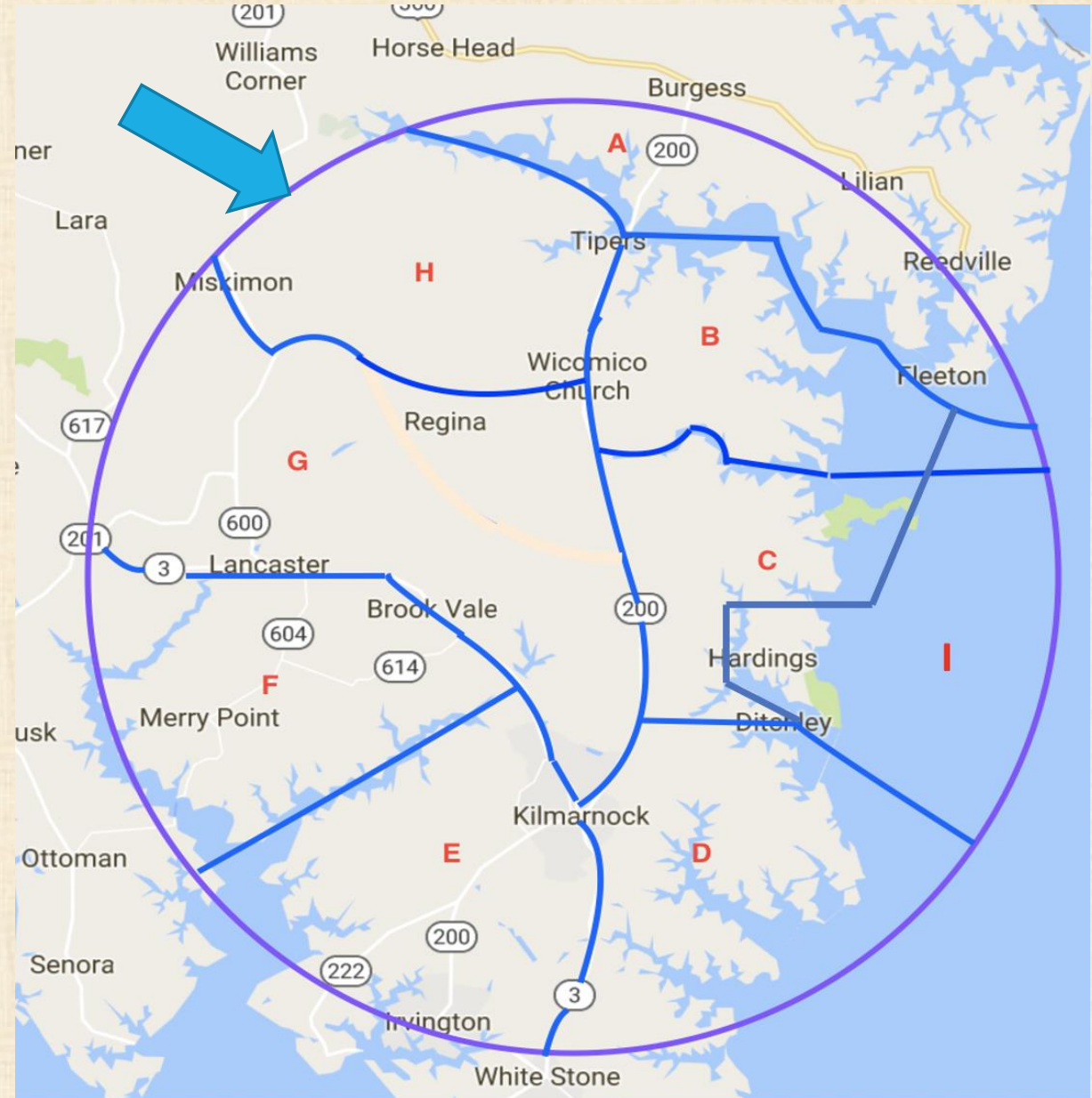
N-L CBC SECTOR "H"

General Description of Boundaries:

- South Bank of the Greater Wicomico, West of Rte 200, North of Beanes Road and Brown Store Road, to the east of the Arc from Miskimon to the Greater Wicomico River

Including

- Bush Mill Stream Natural Area Preserve
- Oak Mill
- Indian Point
- Tipers
- Georgetown



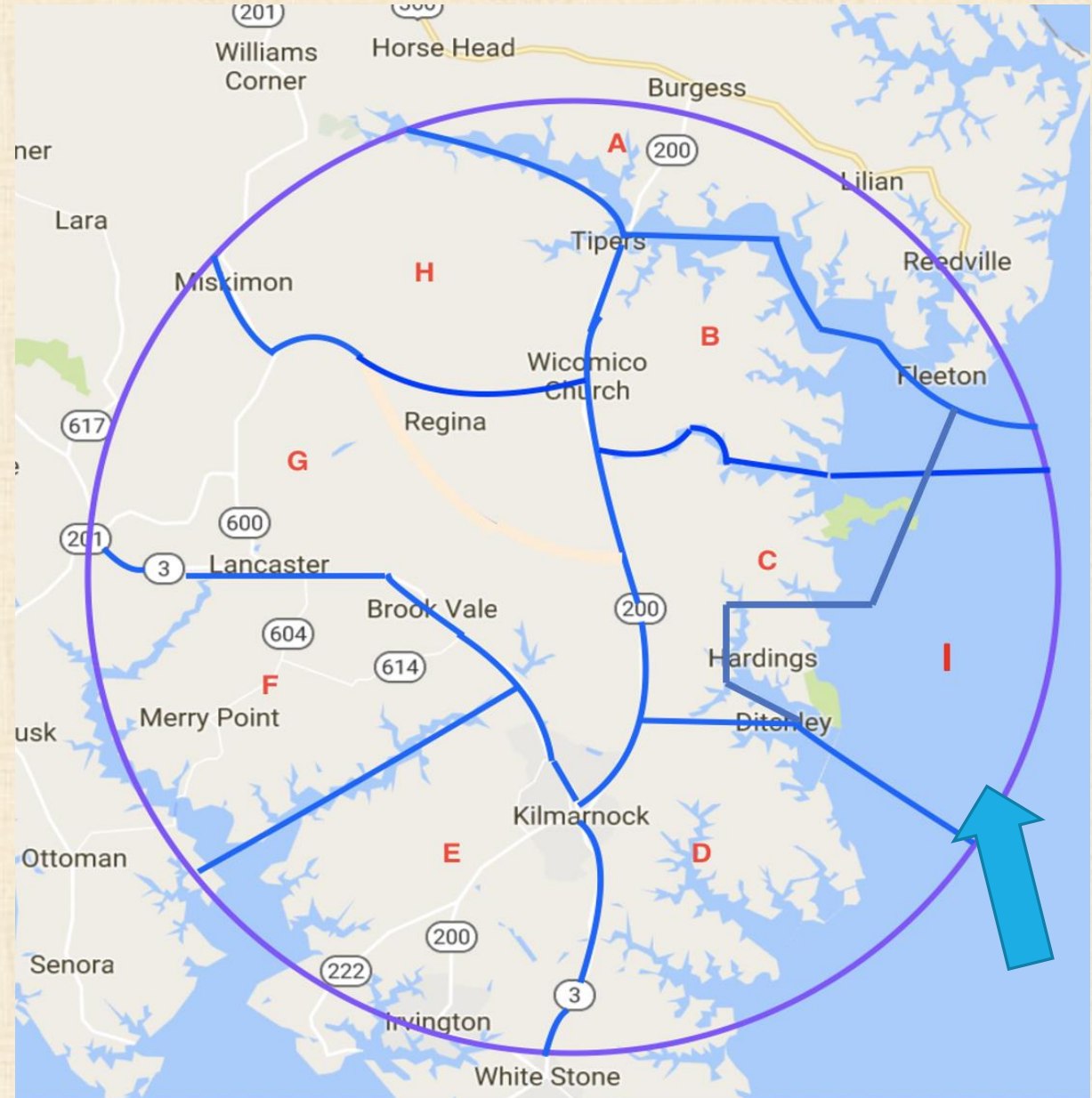
N-L CBC SECTOR "I"

Description of General Boundaries

- Areas over the water along the Chesapeake Bay side of the Circle

Including

- Hughlett Point
- Chesapeake Bay





Things are looking up



Red Breasted Mergansers



Proud birders different year than above!



Warmth & Fun adding things up Sadly, not together this year

So What Has The CBC Told Us For the Northern Neck

- **Just a few years of data but every year yields more data, increased perspective**
- **Last year we had 39 participants and saw 103 species**
- **Most abundant were Canada Geese, Ruddy Ducks and Buffleheads –thousands**
- **Least seen as a single bird were Gray Catbird, Winter Wren, Clapper Rail & American Pipit, Green-backed Heron**
- **Next least at two individuals were American Woodcock, Brown Creeper, Bonaparte's Gull, Canvasback, Pied billed Grebe, Northern Gannet, White breasted Nuthatch, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail**

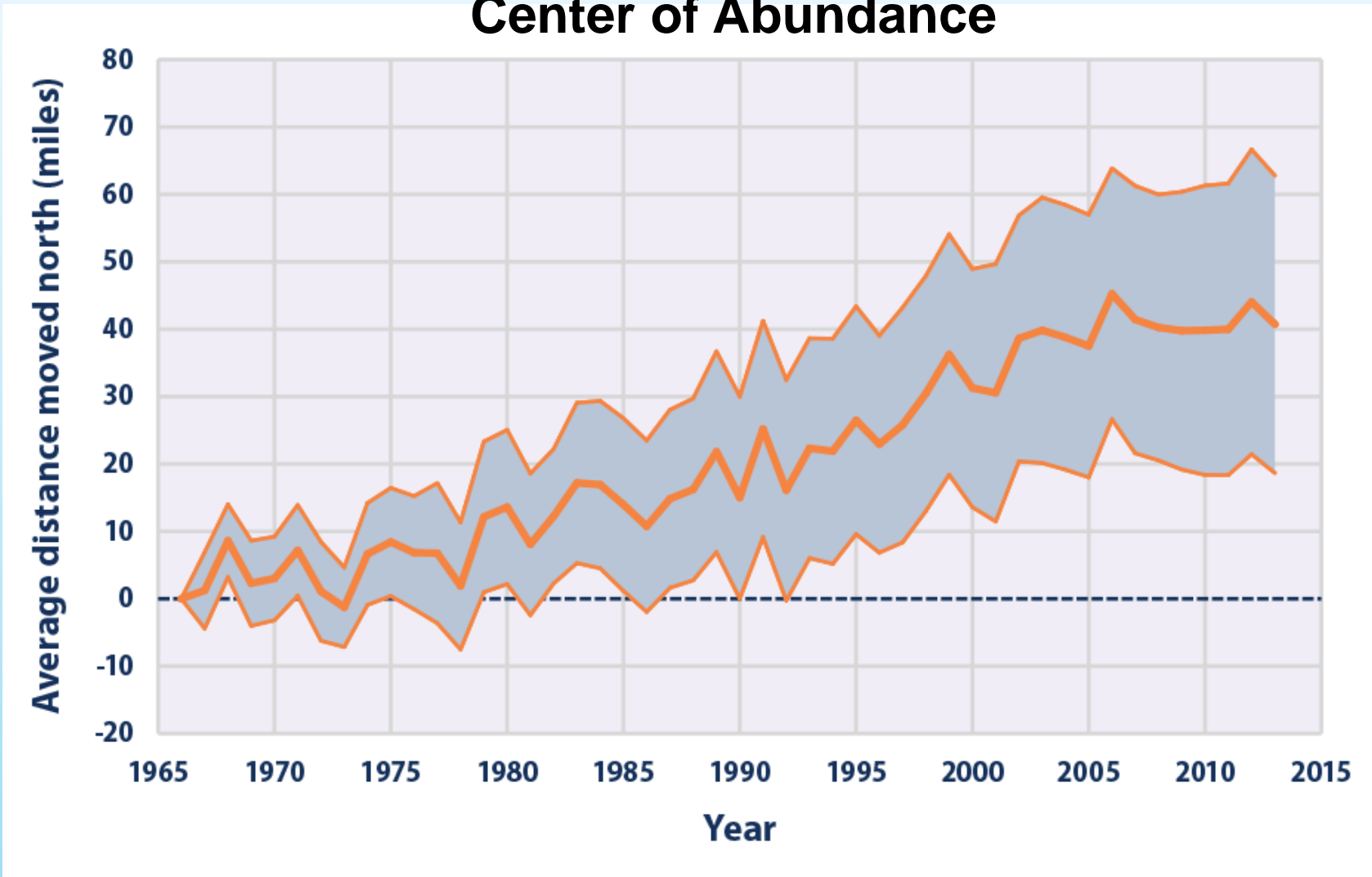
So What Has The CBC Told Us in Over 100 years

- **Lots of data analyzed with well over 200 peer reviewed scientific papers published**
- **Long term decline in most species composition and decline in species numbers**
- **Decline estimated to be Three Billion birds since 1970 in North America**
- **Since 1970, more than 50% DECLINE in populations of Snowy Owl, Chimney Swift, Bobolink, Sprague's Pipit, Oak Titmouse**
- **Habitat loss and climate change are the greatest threats**
- **Habitat loss is a challenge as food and shelter are lost or changed**
- **Climate change is a dire threat to the entire food chain and Web of Life**
- **See the next two pages for some trends uncovered through analysis of Christmas Bird Counts**

Global Warming Trends in Birds

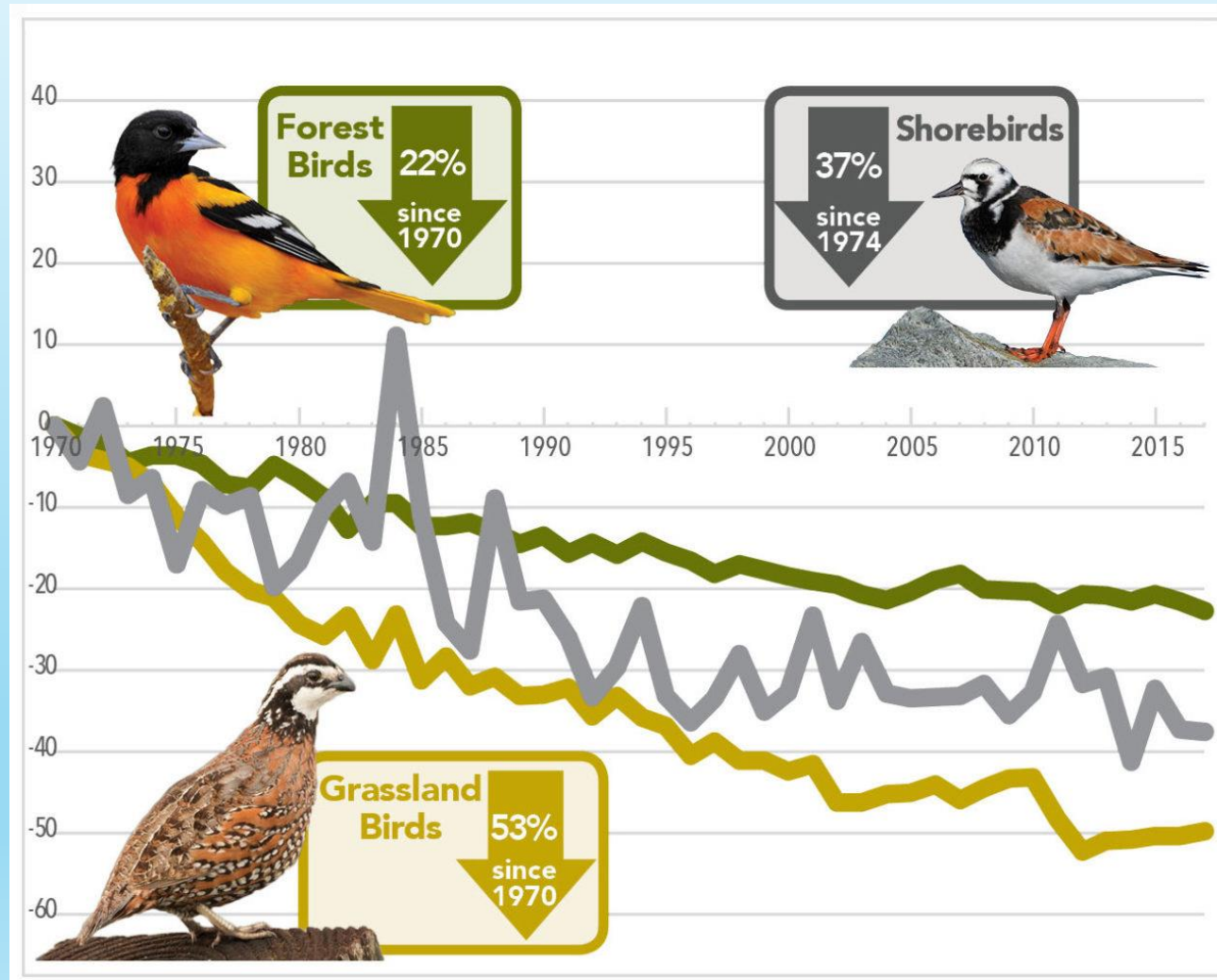
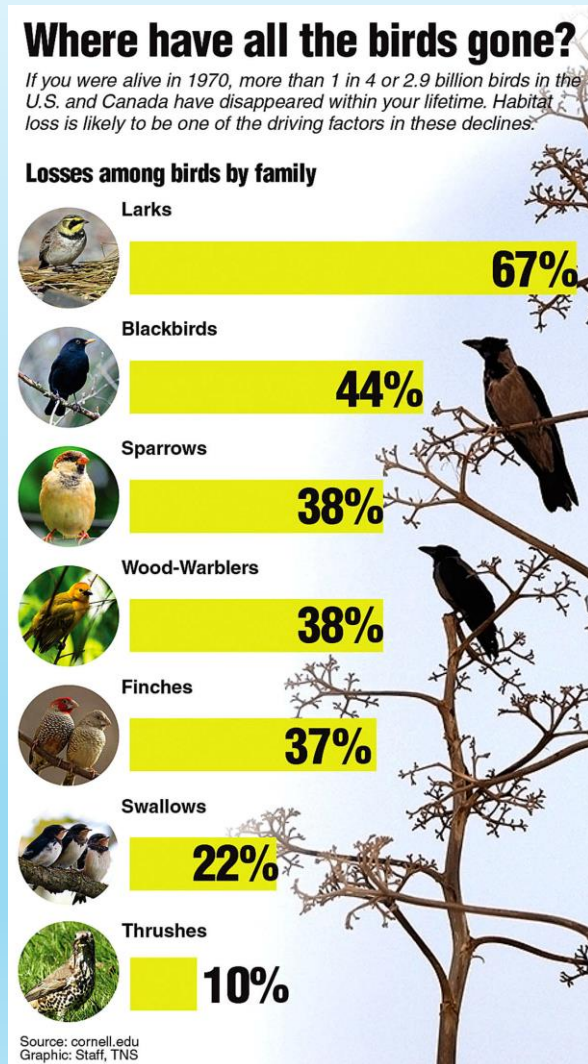
Northward Shift of Bird Populations 1966 – 2013

Center of Abundance



Based on 305 widespread species, Audubon Data & EPA Report, 2014

In 2019, a group of researchers published in the journal *Science* an analysis of bird population data collected between 1970 to 2017 and found that North American bird populations had decreased by about 3 BILLION birds. Scary, to say the least. Search the web for “bird decline 2019” to read more. The CBC is more important than ever.



Interested in membership? Go to National Audubon Society or Northern Neck Audubon Society on the web.

Thanks to:

George Bird Grinnell for starting an Audubon Society

Harriet Hemenway & Mina Hall for starting Mass Audubon

Frank Chapman for starting the CBC

Jeff Wright – Founder & Compiler of the Northumberland-Lancaster Count and Photo Contributor

Betsy Washington – Photo Contributor & Edits

All Sector Leaders & Birders - past and future

FOR MORE INFO - contact Jeff Wright by email at pec11908@me.com