

## Abstract of the Proceedings of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, 1937

*January 7, 1937.* Forty-nine members and thirteen visitors present. Forty-seventh Annual Meeting. At the Active Session, the office-holders were reelected for the current year, with the exception of the Secretary, whose resignation was accepted. President A. C. Emlen named a committee consisting of Dr. Stone and Messrs. Potter and Street to nominate a candidate for this post. Dr. Stone spoke of a tentative plan for reorganization and revision of the by-laws, a formal report of which will be submitted at a later date. Messrs. Weyl and Robinson were appointed as Auditing Committee.

Dr. Stone read a poem, entitled "The Doctor," by C. Brooke Worth, pertaining to a Negro folk legend of the King Vulture. Following this "Phonograph Reproductions of Songs of American and British Birds" were played.

Mr. J. Fletcher Street reported on the Cape May Christmas Census, taken on Dec. 27, and then read a paper called "Preserving the American Emblem," which embodied the results of a survey of nesting Bald Eagles in New Jersey and Delaware in 1936.

*January 21, 1937.* Twenty-two members present. Mr. Joseph Hickey made "Remarks on Local and Amateur Study," stating that professional ornithologists have left local field ornithology almost entirely to the amateurs. The responsibilities of amateurs, therefore, are to study bird territories, migration, instincts, flight habits, song frequencies, mortalities, sexual selection, behavior, exact distribution and specifically interrelated habitats within small areas. To do this best they should read the current periodical literature, form book clubs, concentrate on single species, investigate communal roosts, determine percentages of non-breeding birds and study individual birds through the use of colored bands.

Mr. Philip A. Livingston suggested "A Year's Work for the D. V. O. C.," proposing an ornithological survey of the Delmarva Peninsula. His enticing word-picture of the region

undoubtedly won him a corps of volunteers. There is a real need for information from this quarter.

*February 4, 1937.* Thirty-four members and twenty-six visitors present. Mr. Norman J. McDonald was elected Secretary of the Club. Two committees were also named: Communications, Drs. Worth, Stone and Choate; Field Trips, Messrs. Potter, Weyl and Hess.

Mr. Potter estimated that 20,000 Herring Gulls spend the winter along the Delaware River between Philadelphia and the two Capes.

Mr. Wharton Huber showed some exceptionally fine slides and moving pictures of the flowers and birds at his summer home in Cedarville, Chester County, Pa. The slides were prepared by himself in a new way which shows the photographed object, such as a spray of goldenrod, brilliantly lighted against a dark background. Mr. Huber noted an 80% mortality in fledglings of ground-nesting species last summer, the Black Snake being an important predator at this stage of the birds' development.

*February 18, 1937.* Twenty-nine members and twenty-three visitors present. Mr. Joseph M. Cadbury described "The Audubon Nature Camp in Maine," whose first session he attended as Nature Instructor last summer. Hog Island, in Muscongus Bay, proved to be a strategic center for studying the several regional types of bird-life. One of the most interesting features of the summer was a boat trip to Matinicus Rock, where American Eiders, Arctic Terns and Leach's Petrels were nesting. Slides and moving pictures demonstrated that the speaker's eloquent enthusiasm for the Camp was justified.

*March 4, 1937.* Forty-seven members and thirteen visitors present. The following Associates were elected:

Edward W. Marshall, Haddonfield, N. J.

R. Dale Twining, North Hills, Pa.

Harvey Moore, Chestnut Hill, Pa.

John A. Silver, Roxborough, Pa.

Dr. Stone spoke on the field identification of "The Smaller Sandpipers," stressing the chief difficulties which beset the

amateur ornithologist in this pursuit. First mentioning general and historical points of interest, he continued with a discussion of migration routes, and finally commented on the fine points of discrimination in the identification of the Red-backed Sandpiper, Sanderling, Buff-breasted, Pectoral, Baird's, White-rumped, Least, Semipalmated and Western Sandpipers.

Mr. Potter added the information that the Western Sandpiper's sparrow-like note, its feeding habits and its slightly decurved bill may serve to distinguish it from the Semipalmated Sandpiper.

*March 18, 1937.* Thirty-three members and twelve visitors present. Mr. William B. Evans brought with him for display a copy of Bartram's "Travels" which had belonged to Alexander Wilson, the owner having penned many interesting notes on the margins of the pages.

Mr. Joseph H. Palmer, Delaware County Game Protector, led a round-table discussion, presenting the attitude of the Game Commission and the hunter toward bird-life, bounties, bag-limits and conservation. D. V. O. C. members who have sought birds frequently at Tinicum were surprised to hear from Mr. Palmer that as many as 15,000 Pintails have been there recently, and that between 1000 and 2000 rails of several species were shot there last Fall. The discussion then turned to Mosquito Control work, which, in its old style, Club Conservationists were glad to hear Mr. Palmer condemn for destroying natural bird habitats.

*April 1, 1937.* Thirty-four members and fourteen visitors present. Secretary Norman J. McDonald acquired the envy of untravelled members of the Club with his report of "A November Century Run in Texas." Colored slides and bird skins were used to illustrate his glimpses of the Lesser Snow Goose, Blue Goose, Caracara, Harris's Hawk, Sennett's White-tailed Hawk, Roseate Spoonbill, Black-necked Stilt, Roadrunner, Cactus Wren, Derby Flycatcher, Vermilion Flycatcher, Green Jay, Audubon's Warbler, Harris's Sparrow and many others seen between Mexico City and Brownsville, Texas.

*April 15, 1937.* Thirty members and thirteen visitors

present. Mr. Carlton M. Herman brought information of a new sort to the D. V. O. C. in his talk on "Diseases of Birds." Captive birds at the London Zoo have been found to be most susceptible to disorders of the respiratory tract, while enteritis, nephritis, endocarditis and arterio-sclerosis are also common. The speaker's research on bird malaria at the Austin Experiment Station has disclosed that 60% of Chipping Sparrows are infected with malaria. Microscopic demonstrations of malarial parasites were shown.

*May 6, 1937.* Thirty-five members and sixteen visitors present. A recent trip to the Okeefenokee Swamp was described jointly by several members of the Club. President A. C. Emlen began with a general account of the region, exhibiting slides prepared from Dr. Harper's well-known photographic series. Mr. Bartram Cadbury spoke of interesting resident birds, including Pileated Woodpeckers, Anhingas and Brown-headed Nuthatches. Mr. Joseph Cadbury spoke of the early spring migrants, noting that these species had all wintered in the southern United States. Mr. Julian Hill projected moving pictures of the trip.

*May 20, 1937.* Thirty-seven members and fifteen visitors present. Mr. John A. Gillespie presented "The Fifth Delaware Valley Round-Up" to an enthusiastic audience. The number of participants in this annual project has increased steadily, for this year there were twenty-three groups, comprising sixty individuals, afield. One hundred and ninety-four species of birds were recorded, of which 123 were found in the Philadelphia region and 190 in the Delaware Valley. Birds not seen on previous Round-ups were the Brant and Black Tern. Total for the past five years is 223 species.

Plans were made for a field trip to Cobb's Island and the Delmarva Peninsula over Memorial Day, under the direction of Mr. Livingston.

*October 7, 1937.* Forty-two members and fifteen visitors present. Mr. Philip A. Livingston presided at a joint presentation (by himself and Messrs. Choate, A. C. Emlen, Hill, Lindauer, McDonald, McMullen, Moore, Rolston, Street, Twining and Underdown) of a report on "Spring Trips to the

Eastern Shore, Including Memorial Day Cobb's Island Trip." Mr. Livingston's enthusiasm for this territory was shared by all when the following birds were seen: Gull-billed Tern, Royal Tern, Oyster-catcher, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Prothonotary Warbler and a host of others. Colored moving pictures by Mr. Weyl showed ornithological and other adventures of this trip.

*October 21, 1937.* Thirty-three members and seventeen visitors present. Dr. Edward E. Wildman began the evening's proceedings with a motion picture called "A Robin Builds Its Nest," showing in a few minutes what few of us have the patience to sit and observe over the necessary period of several days.

Dr. Frank G. Speck then gave an absorbing account of "Nature Aspects Among the Algonquins." This Indian tribe regarded birds as the special protectors of Man. By their flying they were thought to sweep the air clean of noxious creatures, while the highest flyers—the Hawks, Eagles, Swallows and Nighthawks released thunder and lightning to purify the air with fire and water. Hence they were called Thunderbirds, and they appear symbolically in many forms of Algonquin art and culture.

*November 4, 1937.* Forty-three members and fourteen visitors present. The following Associates were elected:

Jerome Groskin, Ardmore, Pa.

E. Perot Walker, Ardmore, Pa.

Philip C. Walton, Merchantville, N. J.

Albert E. Conway, West Chester, Pa.

A Sanctuary Committee of Messrs. Gillespie, Joseph Cadbury and Schmid was appointed to raise funds for contributions to bird sanctuaries.

Mr. James Bond offered "The Birds of the Bay Islands, Honduras," as a tantalizing tidbit for city-bound adventurers. Landing virtually on "terra incognita," Mr. Bond proceeded to discover six forms of birds which were previously unknown to science. The affinities of the island fauna, although close to the Honduran mainland, were three-fold—West Indian,

Mexican and adjacent Central American. The predominant element, however, was the latter.

*November 18, 1937.* Twenty-seven members and six visitors present. Dr. F. Raymond Keating addressed the Club on "Birds of the Great Smoky Mountains." While most of these birds were familiar forms, several of them are subspecifically different from those of the Philadelphia region. There appeared to be, moreover, a definite segregation of some of them into lowland and highland groups. Robins, for example, were found in the lower valleys; they disappeared on the slopes higher up; but on the loftier summits, at 6000 feet elevation, they reappeared. Among the birds mentioned in this talk were the Song Sparrow, Pileated Woodpecker, Hummingbird, Mountain Vireo, Golden Eagle, Duck Hawk and Wild Turkey. Colored slides of everything from rhododendrons to nesting Duck Hawks were shown.

*December 2, 1937.* Fifty-four members and seventeen visitors—a record attendance—present. "The A. O. U. Meeting in Charleston" was commented upon by attending D. V. O. C. members, namely, Drs. Stone, Harper and Worth, and Messrs. McDonald, Street, Huber, A. C. Emlen and Underdown.

Dr. Stone then gave an account of the preparation of his new work, "Bird Studies at Old Cape May." His first visit to that region was in 1890, but it was not for many years that he began to assemble his notes with the idea of putting them together in book form. The final task was to produce the book itself, for which Messrs. Poole, Roland, Street, Bishop and Brown made artistic illustrations, while many members contributed photographs and notes.

*December 16, 1937.* Forty-seven members and twenty-three visitors present. Mr. Samuel L. Cresson delivered an account of the Academy's expedition to Chiriqui, Panama, last summer. Beginning at sea level, on the island of Pacheca, he and a fellow ornithologist, Brooke Worth, studied nesting rookeries of Man-o'-war birds and two species of Boobies. Later they camped at various elevations on the extinct volcano of Chiriqui, finally reaching its 11,500 foot peak.

At this summit they found species of Robins and Juncos living in a Temperate climate which completely belied the presence of tropical jungles two miles below. Mr. Cresson exhibited a baby two-toed sloth, brought back by the expedition as a pet, and then concluded his talk with a display of colored slides of the mountain scenery.

The first copies of Dr. Stone's book were distributed.