

1968 FIELD TRIPS

January 20-21: Poconos. Several DVOC members enjoyed a weekend of rather chilly birding in an area not frequently visited by birders in winter. Birds were generally quite scarce. Only three Evening Grosbeaks were seen. Perhaps the highlights were two woodpeckers that don't usually winter there, a Red-bellied Woodpecker and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.

February 10-11: Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to Cape Ann, Massachusetts. The innovation of this trip was the sea voyage from Portsmouth harbor out around the Isle of Shoals and return. The group had hopes of continuing on some distance past the Isle of Shoals, but a change in the weather forced the boat to return. There were strong winds and snow flurries. The observers were rewarded for their fortitude by views of Kittiwakes periodically gliding overhead, a flock of about sixty Black Guillemots near the Isle of Shoals, several Dovekies in the water only a few yards from the boat, and about a dozen Thick-billed Murres.

At Newburyport the group listed some specialties of the area: Barrow's Goldeneye, Iceland and Glaucous Gulls, Lapland Longspur, and Snowy Owl. The Eared Grebe was at Cape Ann.

March 31: Delaware County. The weather was clear and breezy when the group met in the morning at Tinicum Wildlife Preserve. John Miller acted as leader there, but Harry Todd assumed this role when other locations were visited.

A Redhead was among the waterfowl at Tinicum. A Great Horned Owl's nest was seen at Tyler Arboretum, and a red-phase Screech Owl was seen nearby.

Several species of woodpeckers were seen at a feeder in Newtown Square, including the Pileated.

April 26-28: Pocomoke Swamp, Maryland. The annual trip to the Pocomoke Swamp was well attended, with some observers arriving Friday night and camping out and others arriving Saturday morning. By mid-morning the little dirt road through the swamp was almost closed to vehicular traffic as many observers from other bird clubs were on hand to spot the early warbler arrivals. The Swainson's Warbler, always the primary goal of most observers, was seen or heard by many. Other area specialties noted included the Brown-headed Nuthatch, Yellow-throated Warbler, and Black Vulture.

Little Creek Refuge was a favorite stop for many either en route to or from the Pocomoke. Seen there were nine Black-necked Stilts, a Peregrine Falcon, a King Rail, and two Golden Plover.

May 12: Spring Round-up. On a cloudy day with some intermittent rain fourteen groups combed the area from Bucks County to Ocean City, Maryland, and reported 232 species. Bruce Carrick, Harry Armistead, and William Russell took top honors with 191 species. Some of the highlights reported by the various groups included Black Rail, Curlew Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope, Northern Phalarope, Parasitic Jaeger, Short-eared Owl, and Connecticut Warbler.

Conspicuously missing from the counts were Horned Grebe, Stilt Sandpiper, Water Pipit, Golden-winged Warbler, Pine Siskin, Red-headed Woodpecker, Black Vulture, and Sharp-shinned Hawk. The Marsh Hawk appeared on only two lists.

June 9: Sea trip. Intermittent heavy fog on the boat trip taken from Cape May put a damper on the day's activities, and the trip terminated early. Few birds of note were seen.

June 16-28: Iceland. Eight DVOC members, together with three wives and one son, enjoyed a highly successful visit to the land of fire and ice.

The group spent the first five days in the Reykjavik area in southwestern Iceland. They then went by plane to Akureyri on the north coast, Iceland's second largest city. From there the group went inland to Lake Myvatn, some fifty miles distant. After the return to Akureyri some of the group went by chartered plane to the island of Grimsey off the north coast for a brief visit. Grimsey is only a few miles in diameter and is bisected by the Arctic Circle.

Among the birds noted on the Iceland trip were Redshanks, European Oystercatchers, European Golden Plovers, Wheatears, Pied Wagtails, Redwings, Redpolls, Snow Buntings, Whooper Swans, Fulmars, Kittiwakes, Shags, Grey Lag Geese, Tufted Ducks, and Barrow's Goldeneyes. All possible alcids except the Dovekie were observed. One intermediate phase Gyrfalcon was seen, but this was not close enough to photograph. For many this was the ornithological highlight of the trip. An observation of three transient House Martins was considered most unusual.

There are approximately ten pairs of Gray Sea Eagles in Iceland, but these birds were not seen. They breed on two western and central peninsulas which were not visited. Other species missed included the Manx Shearwater, Pink-footed Goose, Rock Ptarmigan, Snowy Owl, Leach's Petrel, and Storm Petrel.

September 8: Delaware marshes. On this full-day trip south into Delaware a number of areas were visited. These included Bombay Hook Refuge, Little Creek Refuge, Port Mahon, and St. George's. Weather conditions were ideal.

There were 18 species of shorebirds at Bombay Hook, including three Northern Phalaropes and about 50 Avocets. A pair of Caspian Terns was observed also.

There were a number of shorebirds also at the fill overlooking the canal at St. George's, but no additional species were observed. A few fossils, including sharks' teeth, were found.

October 6: Sea trip. A boatload of hardy DVOC adventurers enjoyed a day at sea aboard the *Riptide* out of Cape May. Weather conditions were ideal in the morning, but it was a bit rough and cold in the afternoon.

Large numbers of southbound scoters were seen, with all three species represented. One immature Gannet was seen quite close at hand. With the exception of one or two possible jaegers seen only from a distance, no pelagics were observed.

There were quite a few landbirds on the lightship, over twenty miles offshore. Among these were two Brown Thrashers, a Long-billed Marsh Wren, and a male Black-throated Blue Warbler.

October 12-13: Barnegat to Cape May Point. One of the highlights of this trip was the hour or two spent at Barnegat Light on Saturday morning. About 50 Royal Terns were fishing off the northern jetty, and several Parasitic Jaegers periodically gave chase, sometimes driving the terns up over the beach. Common Loons, Gannets, scoters, and Double-crested Cormorants were in steady southern procession offshore.

After landbirding down the island the group continued on to Brigantine Refuge. A Hudsonian Godwit there was the highlight.

A congenial evening was spent at Dr. Choate's home in Cape May Point on Saturday. The following morning there was a fair hawk flight consisting of several hundred birds. These species were seen: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Marsh Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Pigeon Hawk, and Sparrow Hawk.

November 3: Bake Oven Knob. There was intermittent drizzle throughout the day, which made conditions for hawk-watching something less than ideal. Taking a cue from the weather, a few observers called it quits early and went over to Lake Ontelaunee to look for waterfowl. Gene Stern, appropriately attired for the wet weather, was rewarded for his persistence by at least one Golden Eagle and one Goshawk late in the day.

December 20—January 1: Christmas Counts. Many observers wound up the year (or began the new) by participating on one or more of the several Christmas counts taken in the area. Among those in which DVOC members played a major role were the following: Bombay Hook Refuge, Delaware (133 species); Cape May, New Jersey (131 species); Rehoboth, Delaware (122 species); Oceanville, New Jersey (108 species); Glenolden, Pa. (103 species); Lower Bucks County, Pa. (78 species); northwestern Gloucester County, New Jersey (76 species); Moorestown, New Jersey (66 species); and Central Bucks County, Pa. (58 species).