

## 1969 FIELD TRIPS

**January 26:** North Jersey coastal ponds. About 25 hardy D.V.O.C. observers assembled at Shark River on a cold and clear morning.

Although quantities of waterfowl were observed in Shark River basin, no rarities were seen. A lone Iceland Gull at the inlet was perhaps the only bird of note.

The group followed the beach southward, checking all the fresh water ponds. At Old Sam's Pond a Tufted Duck, origin uncertain, was observed among the other waterfowl present. This bird, a perfect specimen, was seen well, carefully studied, and duly photographed.

**February 22-23:** Portsmouth, N.H., to Cape Ann, Massachusetts. A sea trip scheduled for February 22 was postponed a day because of rough weather, but various groups of D.V.O.C. observers made good use of the day by covering coastal areas from Bald Head Cliffs, Maine, south to Cape Ann. Among the species seen during the day were Barrow's Goldeneye, Harlequin Duck, King and Common Eiders, Glaucous and Iceland Gulls, Black-headed Gull, Black Guillemot, Snowy Owl, Common Redpoll, and Lapland Longspur.

The February 23 boat trip out of Portsmouth was rewarding but far from comfortable because of strong icy winds. Among the birds seen were two Red-necked Grebes, two Razor-bills, many Black Guillemots, and quite a few Kittiwakes.

A Varied Thrush at a feeder in Andover, Massachusetts, attracted a few observers on February 23.

**March 8-9:** Chesapeake Bay and eastern shore of Maryland. Several observers enjoyed excellent weather on this weekend trip to Maryland.

Whistling Swans and Canvasbacks were seen on the Choptank River at Cambridge. Several Bald Eagles, both adults and immatures, were observed at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. Large numbers of Canada Geese were in the fields between Chestertown and Eastern Neck, and at the latter locality Black Vultures and Redheads were noted.

**April 25-27:** Delmarva. Although it has always been called the "Pocomoke trip" in the past, it might be wise to label this annual late April excursion the Delmarva trip. Certainly the highlight of this year's annual trip was not in the Pocomoke. Early on the morning of April 26 at least three Yellow Rails were heard simultaneously by George Hitchner and Richard Mellon along the Elliott Island (Md.) road. They were heard a bit later by George Reynard and others. Tape recordings were made by both George Hitchner and George Reynard. Further publication is expected on this most interesting find. A number of Black Rails were also calling at Elliott Island, and one or two Common Loons also chimed in.

Land bird migrants were quite scarce in the Pocomoke, with a Cerulean Warbler being perhaps the most unexpected bird there. The Swainson's Warbler was heard.

Also reported during the weekend were two Gull-billed Terns at Indian River Inlet, six Black-necked Stilts and one Wilson's Phalarope at Little Creek, and two Bald Eagles at Bombay Hook Refuge.

**May 11:** Spring Round-up. On a cool, cloudy, windy, and sometimes rainy day thirteen parties of D.V.O.C. observers located 235 species on this 37th Spring Round-up. Various areas ranging from the Poconos to Cape Henlopen were covered. The group led by David and Herbert Cutler, birding entirely in the state of Delaware, took top honors with 187 species.

Among the more interesting birds recorded by the various groups were Snow Goose, Peregrine Falcon, Golden Plover, Curlew Sandpiper, Parasitic Jaeger, and Lawrence's Warbler. No Bonaparte's Gulls were reported.

**June 22:** Little Beach Island, New Jersey. About 15 observers visited Little Beach Island, the barrier island located between Holgate and Brigantine Island. The group departed from Oyster Creek in several boats, two of which were ably handled by Captains Brady and Kronschnabel.

A high tide had apparently caused considerable damage to the nesting colonies on the island, as a number of eggs were found scattered, partially covered with sand, and deserted. Active nests found included six Least Tern nests, one Oystercatcher nest, and one Horned Lark nest.

The list of birds seen on the trip was most interesting inasmuch as the date of the trip was well beyond the normal migration season. Among the birds recorded were the following: Brant (10), King Eider (1), Oystercatcher (8), Semipalmated Plover (2), Piping Plover (10), Black-bellied Plover (14), Ruddy Turnstone (8), Willet (15), Knot (6), White-rumped Sandpiper (1), Semipalmated Sandpiper (30), Western Sandpiper (4), Caspian Tern (1), Roseate Tern (1), Forrester's Tern (30), and Horned Lark (10).

Three pairs of Ospreys were nesting on the poles in the center of the island.

**September 7:** Delaware marshes. Jack Linehan led a D.V.O.C. contingent south into Delaware on an all-day trip under ideal weather conditions. Areas covered included St. Georges, Pickering Beach, Little Creek, Port Mahon, Bombay Hook, and a number of spots along Route 9.

Five Upland Plover were seen near the Dover Air Force base. Nine species of herons were seen, including two Least Bitterns. Among the shorebirds noted were some 35 Avocets at Raymond's Pond, Bombay Hook. Among the land birds a Blue Grosbeak was perhaps of most interest. A Barred Owl was heard at Finis Pond, Bombay Hook.

Approximately 80 species were seen on the trip.

**October 11-12:** Barnegat Light to Cape May, New Jersey. The highlights of this annual trip came early. While at Barnegat Inlet the fifteen or so observers were looking over a flock of about fifty Royal Terns fishing along the jetty when a Long-tailed Jaeger appeared and gave chase to a Laughing Gull. Although the jaeger was at first about a quarter mile away, the long tail, small size and slim proportions, and buoyant flight served as good identification characteristics. After a short chase, the jaeger dropped away from the gull and flew south, directly in front of the group where a closer observation was possible.

A few minutes later five other jaegers were seen — this time all Parasitic. They came in a group chasing Royal Terns and several times followed them right up over the beach.

A flock of about 150 Black Skimmers was still at Barnegat Inlet. Gannets, Red-throated Loons, and many scoters were moving offshore.

On a visit to Brigantine Refuge later in the day a dozen Avocets were noted.

The observers spent a sociable Saturday night at Dr. Choate's home at Cape May Point. The following morning was spent birding at Cape May Point where only a minor fall flight of passerines was observed.

**November 9:** Bake Oven Knob, Pa. A Bake Oven Knob trip originally scheduled for November 2 was postponed a week because of inclement weather. The weather on this date was not much better. Between the raindrops about a half dozen hardy observers saw about a dozen Red-tailed Hawks.

**December 20-January 1:** Christmas Counts. Most observers wound up the year in the traditional style, by participating on one or more of the various local counts. The Cape May Count, the "granddaddy of them all", totaled 153 species, equalling the previous record. There were four species new to the count and no less than seven species of warblers. At Bombay Hook 131 species were found, two below the record high. Brigantine reported 119 species and Delaware County 101 species. The Gloucester County (N.J.) count of 97 was well above the previous high of 86, with seven species added to the composite list.