

ABSTRACTS OF PROCEEDINGS

Compiled by Donald H. Jones

1994

JANUARY 6. With thirty-eight members and three guests present, the Club elected W. Hart Rufe III- President. Other officers elected were Sandra L. Sherman-Vice President, Donald H. Jones-Secretary, and Barbara M. Haas-Treasurer. Elected to Council were Alan Brady and Erica Brendel. Michael O'Brien, Janice Gordon, and Kenneth Gordon were elected Fellows. Barbara Haas reported account balances as of December 31, 1993 were \$22,459.52. Tom Bailey will succeed Earl Harrison as Field Trip Chairman effective March 1, 1994. Following reports of Christmas Counts led by Sandra Sherman the meeting adjourned to the foyer for the traditional refreshments coordinated by Naomi Murphy and Ronald French.

JANUARY 20. No meeting due to weather.

FEBRUARY 3. Thirty-seven members and seven guests attended the meeting held in the auditorium of the Academy of Natural Sciences. Joe Perna and Bob Usewicz were elected to membership. Jan and Ken Gordon read a letter acknowledging the D.V.O.C. contribution to the Natural Resources Defense Council to support their efforts in Delaware Bay. Richard Crossley presented a program featuring excellent slides about Japanese birds and birding hotspots. Slides of Fish-eating Owls were spectacular.

FEBRUARY 17. Thirty-one members and three guests attended the meeting. Bob Sehl presented the Trustee's Report on the Endowment Fund which had a balance (12/31/93) of \$46,708.73 and provided \$2679.21 in earnings to the Treasurer's operating account. Dr Keith Bildstein presented an interesting study of the breeding biology of White Ibis using data from coastal South Carolina and showing that the effect of Hurricane Hugo on the population was related to the destruction of freshwater crayfish (which are necessary for the development of hatchlings but not adults) and not destruction of breeding habitat. An excellent study of avian ecology.

MARCH 4. No meeting due to weather.

MARCH 17. Fifty members and thirteen guests attended the meeting. Steven Kerr and Jan Eric Pierson were elected to membership. Member, Sid Lipschutz, a substantial contributor to the Vireo collection, shared some of his photographic experiences. He compared wild versus captive photos, made us eat humble pie in his ID section, and proved beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

APRIL 7. Forty-two members and four guests attended the meeting. Sheila Bowes was elected to membership. Frank Gill gave a fascinating program on DNA-DNA Hybridization. Will the next century birder will give up his binoculars for stun gun, syringe, and chromatography plates?

APRIL 21. Fifty-six members and eleven guests attended the meeting. Alan Gehret was elected to membership. Frank Windfelder reported that in 1800 years the biomass of the population would equal the mass of the earth itself. He did not speculate on the implications! The Sutton's, Pat and Clay, presented an excellent program on owls and followed this with a book signing for their new publication, coincidentally also on owls. Some tips: look down not up (for pellets and wash-not birds), consider habitat requirements such as roosting and feeding sites in relatively proximity, read all you can find about the creatures AND expect more disappointments than successes. Their book would be an excellent starting point.

MAY 5. Forty-one members and six guests attended the meeting. Dr. Hugh Mainzer presented a very informative program on Lyme Disease. The large number of questions after his presentation attested to the interest in the subject. Everyone should have come away with at least some new information and a balanced perspective in how to minimize your chances of an encounter with the spirochete.

MAY 19. Thirty-eight members and five guests attended the meeting. Dennis and Anna Bert and Todd McGrath were elected to membership. Dr. Peter Stangel described the role of Partners in Flight/Aves de las Americas in the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and its efforts to protect neotropical migrants before panic sets in. The formula is unique-qualify for federal funding by finding at least a one-on-one private sector match. It has worked; in the last six years nearly \$85 million has been produced for conservation organizations. The Partners in Flight piece has raised 8.4 million to support bird conservation projects. The tools: habitat protection, management, professional training, and public education. Several interesting pamphlets were provided.

JUNE 2. Twenty-five members and five guests attended the meeting. Gene and Wendy Gladston were elected to membership. Tom Bailey moderated the annual Big Day Reports.

JUNE 16 THROUGH SEPTEMBER. Informal meetings wherein members discuss their sightings and other ornithological topics filled the summer schedule.

OCTOBER 6. Forty-six members and five guests attended the meeting. A member reported on the great success of Kirtland's Warblers this year, 633 singing males. Bob Mercer suggested that this may only be a short-term artifact of a large fire that got out of control several years ago and that the long-term situation may be more grave. This fire also prompted passage of legislation prohibiting control burns to restore successional Kirtland's habitat. Kevin Karlson, with friendly jabs and occasional help from Wes Biggs, gave a presentation on the Dry Tortugas. His slides documented the few breeders, numerous migrants, and frequent rarities encountered at this famous birding and historical location. The quality of his slides sets a high standard for those of us that are photographers.

OCTOBER 20. Fifty-eight members and eleven guests attended the meeting. Bernice Koplin and Ed Fingerhood are to meet with Martha Akins, Superintendent of Independence National Historic Park, to work out the details of preparing the bird list for this area. Bill Clark presented a program on Eagles of the World using a wealth of slides and his vast experience to give us a large sampling of these species, their distribution, and habits. His close personal encounters with many of this group made for an interesting evening.

NOVEMBER 3. Sixty-five members and nine guests attended the meeting. The Gordons' announced Council's approval of a \$500 donation to the Nature Conservancy for the Two Mile Run project in the Poconos. The death of Alston Jenkins was announced and comments were made from a newspaper article reporting the death. Alston's untiring efforts on behalf of local conservation was highlighted. Ed Kwater presented a program on shorebird identification, with able assistance from Sandy "please focus that slide" Sherman. We were introduced to feather tracts important to identifying a shorebird and molt sequences for aging the critters all amply illustrated by excellent quality slides. Remember juvenile scapulars are short. All kidding aside, after two misses because of foul weather, Ed finally made it, and we all should have found something in his program to take into the field that will improve our ability to sort out who's who in this difficult area,

NOVEMBER 17. The Annual Banquet was ably chaired again this year by Ed Fingerhood. It was held at Ilona Keller Dugan's Restaurant on Roosevelt Boulevard. The 1994 Julian Potter Award was presented to Frank Windfelder for his extensive research at Taylor's Farm in Riverton, N.J. Frank's efforts here were part of the New Jersey Breeding Bird Survey coordinated by the New Jersey Audubon Society. No Witmer Stone Award was presented in 1994. Our speaker was Debra Love Shearwater, founder, owner, and operator of Shearwater Journeys offering pelagic birding trips out of Monterey and other California coastal locations. Her outstanding program was "Through the Seasons: An Introduction to the Seabirds and Marine Mammals of Monterey Bay".

DECEMBER 1. Forty-nine members and fourteen guests attended the meeting. Jim McKinney and Jim and Linda Waldie were elected to membership. B.J. Rose gave an excellent program on identifying female ducks. His initial quiz was humbling although his talk proved it isn't as hard as you might think. So, next time in the field, take a look at the ladies themselves and don't rely so much on the company they keep.

DECEMBER 15. Thirty-four members and ten guests attended the meeting. Sandy Sherman substituted for the for President Rufe who was counting life birds near Antarctica. The membership elected the following new members: Larry Lewis, Nathalie Hebert, and Sheryl Forte. John Harding presented Frank Windfelder the Julian Potter Award for 1994 for his work at the Taylor Farm. Member and frequent Philadelphia Birdline substitute for a traveling Armas Hill, Andy Ednie, introduced us to the birding wonders awaiting us in the neighboring state of Delaware. His excellent slides, geographical background, and numerous humorous comments provided a thoroughly entertaining evening for all those in attendance.

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JANUARY 5. Sixty members and six guests attended the annual meeting. The minutes were approved as read. The nominating committee's slate for officers and council was elected unanimously: William Hart Rufe III-President; Sandra L. Sherman-Vice President; Donald H. Jones-Secretary; Barbara M. Haas-Treasurer; Alfred Driscoll and Tom Bailey Councilors replacing Robert Mercer and Naomi Murphy. Robert S. Ridgely, Peter J. Dunne, and Ellen S. Short were elected Fellows. Barbara Haas gave the annual treasurer's report. For the year income was \$8441.88 and expenses were \$8054.47 for a net gain of \$387.41. Sandy Sherman led a discussion of the recent Christmas Bird Counts with compilers or participants detailing the highlights of the counts. Following the CBC reports, all adjourned to the lobby where we enjoyed beverages, snacks, and conversation. Thanks to Paul Guris and Ron French for doing the work involved in providing the food and drink.

JANUARY 19. Sixty-nine members and thirteen guests attended the meeting. Elected to membership were Ron Weiss, Bert Filmyer, Martin Selzer, and Lynn Jackson. Phil Street reported on the annual Pocono Weekend field trip, "Lots of finches but all House!". Member David Ward gave an account of his 1993 trip to Antarctica, South Georgia, and the Falkland Islands. His excellent slides gave all a sense of the geography, climate, and life in the region. David related the simplicity of the food chain there: krill which live on plankton and everything else which live on krill. It was both an educational and entertaining program.

FEBRUARY 2. Sixty-four members and seventeen guests attended the meeting. Jean Gutsmuth and David Agro were elected to membership. Bob Sehl gave the Trustee's (Robert H. Sehl, Christopher K. Walters, and Steven R. Wing) report on the Endowment Fund — a December 31, 1994, balance of \$43,933.98 and a disbursement of \$2,692.66 to the Club's operating account. A letter was read acknowledging the Club's \$100 contribution to the Natural Lands Trust in memory of long-time member Allston Jenkins. Member and Focus On Nature Tour owner Armas Hill treated us to an education on the ABCs of South America — Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. The climax was breathtaking slides of the total eclipse taken in South America's other B, Bolivia, during a recent Focus On Nature tour.

FEBRUARY 16. Forty-one members and eight guests attended the meeting. Rodman Thompson was elected to membership. Alan Brady provided some information for a discussion of the Bicknell's subspecies of Gray-cheeked Thrush which may soon become a full species. It is a smaller bird with noticeable contrast between the back and a more rufous (but not as rufous as Hermit Thrush) tail as opposed to nominate Gray-cheeked. George Reynard stated that the songs and calls differ. Bicknell's can be found breeding in New England mountains (Alan suggested the Kancamangus Highway); it winters in the Hispaniola while other races generally winter in northern South America. Rick Mellon asked for a replacement to captain the D.V.O.C. Birdathon Team. By evening's end Megan Edwards had fought off the hoards of other contenders for the position. Good luck Megan! The somewhat regularly irregular annual biannual member's slide contest was presented with ABA Birds, non ABA Birds, Natural History, Scenery, and Birders as categories. Thanks to the judges, the projectionist and her helper, all those who brought slides, and the many biting comments from the floor, a fun and entertaining evening was the result.

MARCH 2. Sixty-three members and ten guests attended the meeting. Members added to their Pennsylvania life lists images of all the rarities they had missed over the years as Frank and Barb Haas

presented a program on Pennsylvania Rarities. The audience certainly related to this program. It was difficult not to hear audience comments like, "I tried for that bird five times but never did find it." The program was dedicated to Bill Stocku who always seemed to be a day late for several of the rarities; the bane of employment. Earlier in the meeting Frank and Barb were honored for not only being avid chasers but also for being most gracious hosts to other birders. Frank Gill, on behalf of the American Birding Association, presented the Haases with the ABA Commendation for hosting the many birders that visited their home in quest of the Hoary Redpoll during last year's winter finch invasion. Our thanks to Frank and Barb for their program and their untiring efforts to promote ornithology in Pennsylvania.

MARCH 16. Sixty members and five guests attended the meeting. Judy Lukens was elected to membership. Upcoming splits were announced. They included the Scrub Jay: to be split three ways, the Florida subspecies, the Santa Cruz subspecies, and all others; Gilded Flicker from Yellow and Red-shafted subspecies; Bicknell's from Gray-cheeked Thrush; restoration of the orioles, Baltimore and Bullock's; separation of the Spotted Towhee from Eastern Towhee, and separation of the Nelson's (inland race) of Sharp-tailed Sparrow from the coastal forms. This could be a banner year to add new species to your life list without leaving the comfort of your home PROVIDED you've kept good records of subspecies as Ed Fingerhood has been pleading. Sam Droege presented a program on composite population trends (based on BBS and CBC data) of selected species in Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. His challenge to the Club: go beyond the statistics and try to theorize (and presumably than prove) the causes for the trends seen.

APRIL 6. Fifty-four members and five guests attended the meeting. Michael Fritz elected to membership. Paul Lehman took us around North America introducing us to the many migrant and vagrant traps and some species that have occurred at these locations. His central theme was that traps occur when there is an habitat oasis in a surrounding of nonhabitat, thus islands, peninsulas, a patch of trees in the desert or prairie, water in the desert, and so on. We all should be more in tune with these factors after this program and better understand some of our local and distant "hot spots."

APRIL 20. The regular meeting format was dispensed with for this joint meeting with the Academy of Natural Sciences. The meeting was a very special presentation honoring Guy Tudor and Robert Ridgely's twenty years of study of neotropical birds. Illustrator and author respectively of the ongoing monumental work *The Birds of South America*, the two gave a joint lecture covering various aspects of their work. It was a highly informative and entertaining presentation on the many problems encountered and how they were resolved or left for future contributions. Prior to the program Guy Tudor was awarded the Academy's highest honor and Frank Gill and Hart Rufe gave brief histories of the Academy and the D.V.O.C. and the interactions between the two organizations.

MAY 4. Forty-two members and two guests attended the meeting. Council approved purchase of the loudspeaker system. Funds from 1995 Birdathon will go to: first \$250 to Tinicum for construction of an osprey platform; next \$500 to Nature Conservancy for the Manumuskie project in NJ; balance to Nature Conservancy for its Pocono projects. Pulitzer prize winning author, Jonathan Weiner, described the story behind his writing of *The Beak of the Finch*. The book describes the monumental work of Peter and Rosemary Grant of Princeton University on Darwin's finches on the small islet of Daphne Major in the Galapagos Islands. The program was both educational and as entertaining as the style of the book itself from which I quote. "It was six o'clock in the evening and the tide was coming in. (Ian Abbott, a graduate student was on the narrow barnacle encrusted ledge, the only access onto Daphne Major). Because Abbott was sharing the ledge with these sharp barnacles, he wore a pair of old shoes. But because his wife and Peter Grant were the only other humans on the island at this moment, Abbott wore nothing but the shoes. Abbott squatted on his haunches, watching as the sun set on the neighboring island of Santa Cruz, and as hundreds of seabirds beat their way back to their roosts on Daphne Major. One millimeter beneath the future of Ian Abbott's genetic lineage, a single barnacle towered above the rest. And as the first waves lapped the welcome mat, this great white barnacle opened its lid, extruded its feather duster, bumped into something, and nipped shut as powerfully as only as behemoth among barnacles can..... At least this is how they tell it now on Daphne Major; where the story is passed down from one generation of finch watchers to the next. They say Abbott screamed. Abbott bellowed. Abbott danced up and down on the welcome mat. At that moment Abbott hated a barnacle as no man ever before had."

MAY 18. Forty-eight members and eleven guests attended the meeting. Megan Edwards reported that the D.V.O.C. Birdathon Team found 198 species placing them tenth in the competition. Michael Male and Judy Fieth gave us a preview of the Eastern North American Warbler video they are putting together for a private eventual sale and release. Only one word to describe the footage-SPECTACULAR. Their seven-year labor of love hopefully will be available this fall.

JUNE 2. Thirty-two members attended the meeting. At a special meeting of Council, Fred Ulmer was elected an honorary member. Tom Bailey led the discussion of the May Run reports. An early adjournment at 8:57. Wow!

JUNE 16 THROUGH SEPTEMBER. Informal meetings were held at the Academy.

OCTOBER 5. Forty-six members and six guests attended the meeting. A thank you note was read from Kay Ulmer thanking the Club for its recognition of Fred's passing and acknowledging the many years of enjoyment it brought to her husband. Ron Austing gave us a presentation on "Ramblings of a Professional Bird Photographer." With superb slides Ron traced the history of bird photography and the technological advances in cameras and film that have made it so much easier than years's past. The transition was from staking to stalking. His enthusiasm for his narrative was infectious.

OCTOBER 19. Fifty-two members and five guests attended the meeting. Alexander Cohen and George Lewis Armistead were elected to membership. Louis Bevier and Fred Purnell treated us to culture and birds from a recent trip to Italy proving that despite the native taste for avian cuisine there is still excellent and exciting birding in this beautiful Mediterranean country.

NOVEMBER 2. Thirty-nine members and eight guests attended the meeting. Rick Mellon announced a meeting prior to our next regular meeting to organize a group consisting of any interested members in contributing to the revision of the Checklist of the Birds of the Delaware Valley. Bob Mercer again admirably chaired our occasional book auction. Over \$500 was raised for the Conservation Fund.

NOVEMBER 16. The Annual Banquet was yet again ably chaired by Ed Fingerhood. It was held at Ilona Keller Dugan's Restaurant on Roosevelt Boulevard. Our speaker, Noel Snyder, presented a program on the Thick-billed Parrot and the attempts to re-introduce the bird into southeast Arizona.

DECEMBER 7. Sixty-four members and nine guests attended the meeting held in the Weidner Room of the Academy of Natural Sciences. A suggestion was made that member phone numbers be available in *Cassinia*. The members present agreed overwhelmingly that this is desirable. Members number(s) will try to be obtained through mail-back slips provided in future Larus mailings. Alexander Caulder's Alexander Wilson plaster statuette has arrived at the Academy courtesy of Alan Brady and Tom Reeves and those contributing funds for this project. The Club donated a substantial amount for this endeavor. Shawneen Finnegan, with the help of her husband Paul Lehman, humbled the audience with a selection of thirty quiz birds for us to identify. Thank God, Shawneen remained to lead us through the whys of the correct identifications. Otherwise the arguments could still be raging. A program like this serves us well in dramatically demonstrating how far we still have to go in sharpening our ID skills.

DECEMBER 21. Twenty-nine members and nine guests attended the meeting. Rick Wiltraut was elected to membership. Members Tom Reeves, Doris McGovern, and guest Tom Walker provided us respectively a species perspective, an historical and trail perspective, and a management practices perspective on the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum (just Tinicum to most of us). We owe all three a debt of gratitude for providing a most interesting program and discussion. Otherwise this meeting would have been a casualty of the Washington budget buffoonery.