

Abstracts of Proceedings

Compiled by Ronald J. French

1996

JANUARY 4. With forty-nine members and eleven guests present, the Club elected Sandra L. Sherman president (the first woman to hold this post in the DVOC's 105-year history). Other officers elected were Donald H. Jones, vice president; Ronald J. French, secretary; and Barbara M. Haas, treasurer. Elected to Council were Sally Conyne and Megan A. Edwards. Honorary membership was bestowed on Charles A. Wonderly, and Keith Russell was elected a fellow. Christopher K. Walters presented the Trustees' Report on the Endowment Fund, which had a balance as of December 31, 1995, of \$54,557.19 and provided \$2,848.75 to the Treasurer's operating account. Following reports of area Christmas Counts, the membership adjourned to the Academy foyer for refreshments, which were coordinated by Megan Edwards, Ron French and Rick Mellon.

JANUARY 18. Thirty-five members and five guests attended the meeting, held in the Academy's auditorium. Dana Cohen and Henry Webster were elected to membership. Sally Conyne exhibited skins of Chipping and Clay-colored Sparrows from the Academy's collection for observation prior to the meeting. Colin Campbell reported that a male Painted Bunting was still present at a feeder in Bethany, Delaware. Emile DeVito of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation presented a very informative program on "Song Bird Migration Here and in the Tropics," with emphasis on forest fragmentation.

FEBRUARY 1. Forty-nine members and thirteen guests were in attendance. Jan Gordon, Conservation Committee chairperson, urged members

to write to their local congressional representatives urging them to support H.R. 2745, which would repeal the salvage rider that gives the timber industry carte blanche to log indiscriminately in old-growth forests. Alan Brady submitted photos of a mystery sparrow present at Peace Valley Nature Center in central Bucks County. Most members felt it was an aberrant Chipping Sparrow, although some members voted for Clay-colored Sparrow. Members Sally Conyne and David Agro, who is collections manager for the Academy's bird department, then presented their splendid program, "An Introduction to Neotropical Birding," with excellent slides and a plea to the membership to support conservation efforts in the tropics through eco-tourism.

FEBRUARY 15. Thirty-eight members and ten guests attended the meeting. Andy Bauer, Diana Morris-Bauer, Louis Bevier and Harvey Tomlinson were welcomed as new members. It was reported that due to spraying of pesticides in Argentina, 3,909 wintering Swainson's Hawks were found dead in that country's agricultural fields. Bill Hoehne reported a male Barrow's Goldeneye on the Delaware River near the Scudder Falls Bridge. Joan Walsh, staff biologist for the Cape May Bird Observatory, then presented an informative program on "New Jersey Breeding Bird Atlas, Facts and Rantings."

MARCH 7. The meeting was canceled due to inclement weather.

MARCH 21. Forty-six members and twelve guests were in attendance. Jim Hartley and James Stewart were elected to membership. Pres-

ident Sandy Sherman reported that in the upcoming supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union's 1983 "Checklist of Taxonomic Changes," Gilded Flicker, Spotted Towhee and Bicknell's Thrush have been promoted to full species. Ed Fingerhood stressed the importance of keeping records of subspecies. The birds may someday gain full species status. Barbara Haas seconded this, especially for state records. Bill Murphy reported individual Northern Shrikes at Green Lane and Nockamixon State Park, both in Pennsylvania. Member Armas Hill then presented a special program, "Pelagic Birds, Near and Far," in tribute to member Alan Brady. A reception, complete with food and drink, followed. Brady was honored for his fine photographs of birds and his many other contributions to the club.

APRIL 4. Forty-four members and five guests were present at the meeting. Tom McParland was voted into membership. Ward Dasey had a Louisiana Waterthrush near Medford, New Jersey, and a Yellow-headed Blackbird and a Eurasian Wigeon at Mannington Marsh, New Jersey. At Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge at Brigantine (still known as "Brig"), Don Jones had a "cloud" of Short-eared Owls (a "cloud" consisting of four birds). Bob Schutsky, owner of Bird Treks tours, then presented his program, "The Birds and Beauty of Arizona."

APRIL 18. Fifty-one members and seven guests attended the meeting. Megan Edwards urged members to support the DVOC team in the upcoming New Jersey Audubon Society World Series of Birding. Council voted to use the proceeds from this effort to erect an Osprey nesting platform along the Delaware River at the Taylor Tract in Pennsauken, New Jersey, with the balance of the money being shared by the Pennypack Ecological Trust in Pennsylvania and the Revolving Land Trust of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation. George Reynard announced that he is co-authoring a sound recording on the rails of North and South America, and asked

members to submit any suitable recordings to him for possible inclusion in this effort. Alan Brady joined the throngs of birders on Long Island, New York, on April 15 in search of the Northern Hobby reportedly seen there the day before. He got photos of a perched bird but is not convinced of its identity. Our speaker was Mark Jaffe, environmental writer for *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and author of the book *And No Bird Sings*. Jaffe presented a program on the havoc caused to bird life on Guam by the introduction to the island of the Philippine Brown Snake.

MAY 9. Forty-six members and eleven guest were in attendance. Keith L. Bildstein, director of research at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, was unanimously approved as a new member. Alan Brady passed around a photograph of the alleged Northern Hobby reported at Long Island last month. A discussion ensued, and the general consensus was that the bird in the photo was a Peregrine. Mike O'Brien reported 14 Pine Siskins at his feeder in Pine Hill, New Jersey, and Peg Ridgely noted an American Bittern at the pond at her home in Lafayette Hill, Pennsylvania. Mercedes Foster of the Smithsonian Institution then presented her program on the research she has done into the neotropical birds known as manakins.

MAY 16. Sixty-three members and thirteen guests attended the meeting. The DVOC team in the New Jersey Audubon Society's World Series of Birding identified 196 species in 24 hours, from High Point to Cape May. A discussion ensued concerning the problem of migrating birds flying into tall buildings. Bill Murphy reported 30 species of warblers at Fort Washington State Park, Pennsylvania. A Summer Tanager was part of a flock seen there on May 13. Our speaker was Kenn Kaufman, author of *Advanced Birding* and editor of the "Changing Seasons" column in *American Birds*, who gave a dramatic, amusing and thought-provoking talk on "Birding in the 21st Century."

JUNE 6. Twenty-seven members and three guests were in attendance. Colin Campbell showed slides of an oiled loon with a large yellow bill. The group then discussed why the bird was a Common Loon and not a Yellow-billed Loon. The bird had been photographed at Port Mahon, Delaware, the week of May 20. Ed Fingerhood announced that he has 168 species in his quest for a Philadelphia County Big Year. Tom Bailey noted that there are three pairs of Dickcissels present near Somerville, New Jersey. Bailey, as field trip chairman, then presented the May Run and Big Day reports.

JULY 11, AUGUST 1 and SEPTEMBER 5 and 19. Informal summer meetings were held, at which members discussed their sightings and other ornithological topics.

OCTOBER 3. Fifty members and twelve guests were present for the meeting. President Sandy Sherman reminded the group that at our next meeting we will vote on whether to change the meeting format. The new format, if approved, would consist of an invited speaker for the first meeting each month and an expanded ornithological studies session, in the form of a workshop or group discussion, for the second meeting of the month. The summer meetings would not be affected. Barbara Haas announced that she will resign as Treasurer at the end of 1996. Frank Haas announced he will resign as editor of *Cassinia* at the end of the year, as well. Their efforts are greatly appreciated. Sid Lipschutz gave a very interesting demonstration on flight, using the wing of a Great Black-backed Gull as a visual aid. Frank Haas reported that he had checked with member John Miller after the recent hurricane and learned that both Sooty Terns and Brown Noddys were seen on the Delaware River after the storm. He then checked the Susquehanna River and found Sooty Terns there. Nature photographer Kevin Karlson presented an astonishing slide program, "Birds of the High Arctic," with many excellent, close-up photos of nesting shorebirds and waterfowl.

OCTOBER 17. Fifty members and six guests attended the meeting. The membership voted overwhelmingly to change to the new meeting format as of February 1997. Ed Fingerhood announced that a pair of Osprey had attempted to nest on a buoy in Salem Harbor in Lower Bucks County, Pennsylvania, last spring. Hart Rufe had a Long-eared Owl in the woods behind his home in Perkasio, Pennsylvania, on October 1 and again on October 16. Walt Peoples had both an immature Bald Eagle and an immature Golden Eagle in the air at the same time at the hawk watch at Bake Oven Knob, Pennsylvania. Ray Davis presented an excellent slide program, "Birds, Bats and Butterflies."

NOVEMBER 7. Thirty-four members and three guests were in attendance. Jan Gordon of the Conservation Committee explained to the group how various species of albatross are becoming entangled in commercial fishing nets and drowning. She urged members to write to their congressional representatives to stop this devastation. Ed Fingerhood heard a King Rail for his 200th species in his quest of a Philadelphia County Big Year. Phil Street had twenty-five Black Vultures in the trees in Berwyn, Pennsylvania. Armas Hill noted that thirty Marbled Godwits were present at Absecon, New Jersey, off the causeway to Brigantine Island this week. The DVOC slide contest was then presented, and first-place awards went to Steve Kerr, for his shot of Common Nighthawk; Tom Bailey, for Big-horned Sheep; Tom Bailey for a shot of Mount Rainier; and Andy Ednie, for his photo taken at Jamaica Bay.

NOVEMBER 21. Forty-six members and four guests attended. Ken Rieker was elected to membership. A discussion took place regarding the gull present at Pennsville, New Jersey, that originally was identified as a Silver Gull from Australia. Armas Hill noted that an Australian who was shown pictures of the gull thought it was a Red-billed Gull from New Zealand. The two birds plus a third from South Africa were re-

cently split. The origin of the Pennsville bird is in question since several birds escaped from the Bronx Zoo not long ago after a heavy snow storm collapsed a roof on one of the cages. A further discussion ensued with regard to the origin of other gulls currently being seen in the States, such as Kelp Gull, Black-tailed Gull and Slaty-backed Gull. Ward Dasey noted that an adult male Rufous Hummingbird is present at a private residence in Oaklyn, New Jersey. Colin Campbell reported that the Ross' Gull at Indian River Inlet, Delaware, is still present. Sandy Sherman pointed out the many rarities at Cape May, New Jersey, this past week, including White-winged Dove, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Swainson's Hawk and Black-chinned Hummingbird. Bill Hilton, director of education at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, then presented his banding program, "Hummingbirds and Hamburger: The Tropical Connection."

DECEMBER 5. President Sandy Sherman opened the proceedings of the Annual Banquet, held at Ilona Keller's Dugan's Restaurant under the chairmanship of Ed Fingerhood, with an introduction of past presidents. Members of long standing were also introduced, including Al Kronschnabel, a member since 1956. Bill Clark, author of *Hawks* and founder of the Cape May hawk-banding project, was acknowledged. Bill Murphy accepted the Julian Potter Award for his outstanding contribution in field work at Fort Washington State Park in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. The Witmer Stone Award was not presented this year. Robert Ridgely of the Academy of Natural Sciences' Ornithology Department introduced our guest speaker, Steve Hilty, author of *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia* and *Birds of Tropical America*. His program was titled "Dreams and Realities in the American Tropics." A good time was had by all.

DECEMBER 19. Thirty-six members and five guests were in attendance. President Sandy Sherman announced that, on December 11, the John Heinz Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum (still known

as Tinicum) was declared the first Important Bird Area for the United States in a program introduced by the National Audubon Society to save habitat for wildlife. Ed Fingerhood has now added Bald Eagle and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker to his list in his Philadelphia County Big Year. His total is 207 thus far. On the December 7 pelagic trip out of Brielle, New Jersey, a Lincoln's Sparrow alighted on Lynn Jackson's binoculars for a few seconds before taking refuge elsewhere on the boat for the ride back to land. Ward Dasey reported that the Barrow's Goldeneye was back on the Delaware River near Mudd Island. Sid Lipschutz then presented a delightful program on "Bird Artists and Bird Art, Then and Now."

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JANUARY 2. Thirty-nine members and three guests attended the meeting. Treasurer Barbara M. Haas gave her eleventh, and final, Treasurer's Report. Haas thanked the membership for its support. The nominating committee's slate of officers was elected unanimously: Sandra L. Sherman, president; Donald H. Jones, vice president; Ronald J. French, secretary; Naomi Murphy, treasurer; Richard Mellon and Stephen Kerr, Councillors replacing Alan Brady and Erica Brendel. The Council voted member Robert Ridgely an honorary member, and Ward Dasey, Sally Conyne and Roy Frock were named fellows. New members received into the club were Ryn Agnew, Ian Baldock and Pacho Gutierrez. Ed Fingerhood finished his 1996 Big Year quest in Philadelphia County with 208 species. John Miller still holds the record, with 225 species in 1965. Just as the Cape May Bird Observatory opened its new headquarters in Goshen, New Jersey, on January 1, a Northern Lapwing flew over the facility — a great omen. Christmas Count reports followed.

JANUARY 16. Thirty-seven members and seven guests attended. George Reynard noted that his

new recording, "New World Rails," on rails, gallinules and coots of the Americas, is now available. Colin Campbell reported a Thayer's Gull at the Cherry Island landfill in Wilmington, Delaware, along with a Glaucous, a Lesser Black-backed and three Iceland Gulls. Mike O'Brien showed slides of the Rufous Hummingbird that was present at a feeder in Oaklyn, New Jersey. Laurie Goodrich of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary presented an excellent program on "Veracruz, a River of Raptors."

FEBRUARY 6. Forty-four members and three guests attended. Trustee Christopher K. Walters gave an informal report on the financial status of the Endowment Fund for 1996. Alan Brady announced that the Alexander Wilson statuette by Alexander Calder is now on exhibit at the Academy, at the entrance to the library on the second floor. Our membership donated this work of art, and a plaque attests to the club's generosity. Member Dr. John Drummond presented a program on "Birds of Nepal and India."

FEBRUARY 20. Fifty-three members and seventeen guests were present. Those in attendance were guests of the Academy, prior to the start of the meeting, at a private showing of the new, magnificent exhibit, "Hunters of the Sky," on the raptors of North America. Appreciation was expressed to members Sally Conyne, Louis Bevier, Robert Ridgely and Ruth Pfeffer for their efforts in the Academy's presentation of the exhibit. Roy Frock announced that one of the California Condors that had been released in Arizona had been killed by a Golden Eagle. Sally Conyne, Louis Bevier, Phil Street and Bob Ridgely then presented an excellent program, complete with specimens, on the extraordinary collection of skins housed at the Academy, part of which is the former DVOC collection.

MARCH 6. Forty-eight members and two guests attended. One of the guests welcomed was Charlotte Stokes, mother of Donald Stokes of the Stokes Field Guide series. Jane Henderson and

Dr. Frank Spitzer were welcomed as new members. Sandy Sherman announced that the Delaware Bayshore Office of the Nature Conservancy is looking for volunteers to monitor Delaware Bay beaches and collect data on the activities of shorebirds during migration. Ward Dasey reported that the Bald Eagles at Moorestown, New Jersey, are incubating. Anita and Paul Guris found two Snowy Owls and a Thick-billed Murre on a recent visit to Portland, Maine, as well as an immature Ivory Gull, the intended target of their trip. An informal program of slides was presented by Colin Campbell, Rick Mellon and Don Jones, on birds of Israel, shorebirds of the world and Arizona birds, respectively.

MARCH 20. There were forty-two members and four guests in attendance. President Sandy Sherman shared her experience of having held the rifle of Alexander Wilson, at an Academy-sponsored dinner. The rifle is part of the ANSP's collection. Irene Goverts, Belynda Stewart and Adrian Binns were elected to membership. Conservation Chair Jan Gordon discussed methods being used by many big companies of planting a new strain of coffee trees that can grow in full sun. This method eliminates an understory habitat that is very important to neotropical birds and many North American wintering species. She urged members to buy only shade-grown coffee. In the second of the expanded ornithological-studies programs, Kate Somerville, Hart Rufe, George Reynard and Don Jones discussed their methods of recording bird songs in the field. Each method was different, and all were very informative.

APRIL 3. Fifty-two members and five guests were present. Sandy Sherman announced that long-standing member and past president Bob Sehl was stepping down as a trustee; he was replaced by Past President Hart Rufe. Phil Street announced with regret the death of member John Evans on March 23. A pair of Osprey are attempting to nest in the Delaware River on a

buoy off of Salem Harbor as reported by Ed Fingerhood. Doug Wechsler, head of Project VIREO at the Academy, gave an extraordinary presentation on the VIREO collection of bird slides.

APRIL 17. Forty members and six guests attended the meeting. Member Jim Danzenbaker, visiting from California, was warmly welcomed. Ed Fingerhood and Bob Mercer asked members for help with the North American Migration Count in their respective areas. Ray Hendrick noted that a Great Blue Heron colony at Quakertown Marsh in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, had four nests in 1992 and 28 nests in 1996. Speaker and member Louis Bevier presented a most informative program on the lumping and splitting of species.

MAY 1. The meeting opened with thirty-two members and four guests in attendance. Sandy Sherman announced the passing of Irma Broun, a great conservationist and widow of Maurice Broun of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, on March 25. On April 27, Alan Brady observed a flight of hundreds of Broad-winged Hawks high in the sky over the Delaware River on the New Jersey side, north of Bull's Island. Speaker Dan Brauning of the Pennsylvania Game Commission gave an excellent program on "The Rise and Fall of Bird Populations in Pennsylvania Over the Last Century."

MAY 15. President Sandy Sherman dispensed with the usual format for this evening's meeting, which was held at the Philadelphia Zoo. Paul Guris announced that the DVOC team in the New Jersey Audubon Society's World Series of Birding had placed eighth, with 198 species. Speaker John Finch, curator of birds at the zoo, presented a program on the zoo's successful program of reintroducing young Bald Eagles into the wild. The eaglets are the offspring of parents that reside in the zoo but are unable to be returned to the wild.

JUNE 5. Twenty-eight members and three guests were in attendance. The membership voted to continue the new meeting format that sets aside the second meeting of the month for extended ornithological-studies issues. Jan Gordon, Conservation Committee chair, noted that, in response to the problem of New Jersey crabbers taking horseshoe crabs off the beaches unchecked for use as eel bait, New Jersey Governor Christine Whitman has declared a 60-day moratorium on the taking of any horseshoe crabs. Gordon urged members to write to the governor and urge her to continue this moratorium, with emphasis on the importance of the natural resource to migrating shorebirds as a food resource. Emmerson Bowes reported that the DVOC World Wide Web page is being prepared. Ed Fingerhood reported that there are Peregrine Falcons nesting on many of the Delaware River bridges, and a pair has taken up residence in an artificial nest box placed on City Hall tower. Bill Murphy then reported on the May Runs. Fingerhood also noted that, as part of the North American Migration Count, 137 species were reported in Philadelphia County on May 10, 1997.

JULY 3, AUGUST 7, and SEPTEMBER 4 and 18. Informal meetings were held at the Academy.

OCTOBER 2. Forty-two members and three guests attended. Alan Brady announced that past President Lester Thomas will be 99 on November 1. Members signed a special greeting card to send to him on the occasion. Bill Murphy reported that the hawk watch at Militia Hill, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, recorded its 100,000th raptor, a Broad-winged Hawk, on September 22. Speaker Eric Stiles of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife, presented his program, "Cape May Stopover Project."

OCTOBER 16. Forty-one members and seven guests attended. Stephen Maciejewski and Dr. Ted Floyd were welcomed as new members.

Frank Windfelder reported on his successful field trip to Tuckerton, New Jersey, to observe the recently split Nelson's and Salt-marsh sharp-tailed sparrows. The group had "crippling" views of all three subspecies of Nelson's. Louis Bevier had a Violet-green Swallow and a Western Kingbird at Cape May. Gerard Bailey noted a Northern Saw-whet Owl at Medford, New Jersey, on October 13, and Ken Rieker saw the Eared Grebe at Green Lane Reservoir in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, on October 16. Windfelder then presented a follow-up to his field trip, a detailed slide presentation on the species and subspecies of sharp-tailed sparrows.

NOVEMBER 6. Fifty-eight members and seven guests were in attendance. Sid Lipschutz commented that he and Dr. Marvin Hyett observed two small Canada Geese at Bombay Hook on October 6. He believed them to be Cackling Geese, a race of Canadas. Alan Brady noted that the first pelagic Christmas Bird Count from Brielle, New Jersey, was planned for December 19. Ted Floyd reported a late Blackpoll Warbler at the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge on November 1. Megan Edwards introduced Jan Pierson, a founder of Field Guides, Inc., who presented a program on "Birding in the American Tropics."

NOVEMBER 20. President Sandy Sherman opened the annual banquet, held again at Ilona Keller's Dugan's Restaurant, by humorously noting, through past Abstracts of Proceedings, how little times have changed. The Julian K. Potter Award for field ornithology was presented by Bert Filemyr, committee chair, to Nicholas J. Pulcinella, a member of the Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee, for his extensive work in Delaware County, Pennsylvania. The Witmer Stone Award Committee was chaired by Dr. Ted Floyd; no award was presented this year. Sherman noted that the first banquet was held on Oct. 17, 1968, under the presidency of Lester Thomas. She credited Ed

Manners as the person in attendance who had been a member the longest — since 1941; three men have been members for fifty years: Charles Wonderly, Alan Crawford and Dr. Peter Hall. Ed Fingerhood capably chaired the banquet for the seventh year. Bird photographer extraordinaire Arthur Morris then guided us through a memorable evening of fantastic bird photographs.

DECEMBER 4. Forty-two members and three guests attended. Gerard Bailey was voted in as a new member. Sandy Sherman noted that the New Jersey telephone hotline had information on Red and White-winged Crossbills, Pine Grosbeaks and Common Redpolls seen in the vicinity of Clinton Road in northwestern New Jersey. Tom Reeves had an Evening Grosbeak in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, on December 3. Frank Windfelder had the Brown-chested Martin, a South American stray, in Cape May, along with Western Tanager and Ash-throated Flycatcher. Ron French reported that an Ash-throated Flycatcher is still present at Arlene Koch's home in Northampton County, Pennsylvania. Colin Campbell pointed out a drake King Eider is still being seen off Cape Henlopen State Park in southern Delaware. Armas Hill dazzled the group with his report of two phenomenal pelagic trips out of Chile recently. Member Earl Harrison then presented a wonderful photographic lesson of both seen and heard-only birds.

DECEMBER 18. Forty-four members and three guests attended. Emmerson Bowes announced that the DVOC Web page is now in place and can be reached through the Academy's Web site. Conservation Chair Jan Gordon commented on tropical forest fires around the world. Don Jones had nine Evening Grosbeaks at Chatsworth, New Jersey, and Al Driscoll reported four Ross' Geese out of more than 70,000 Snow Geese at Mannington Marsh, New Jersey. Member Adrian Binns presented a very informative ornithological-studies workshop on the large gulls in our area. □