

ABSTRACTS OF PROCEEDINGS

COMPILED by COLIN CAMPBELL

Figures in parentheses after the date refer to number of members + number of guests in attendance.

1998

JANUARY 8 (46 + 6). The Club elected Don Jones president, Ron French vice president, Colin Campbell secretary, and Naomi Murphy treasurer. Ann Bacon and Adrian Binns were elected to Council (to 2001), joining Rick Mellon and Steve Kerr (to 2000) and Megan Edwards and Sally Conyne (to 1999). Sandy Sherman serves as immediate past president. Naomi Murphy reported that the Club was in a healthy financial position and that the Huber and Potter funds had been liquidated as part of a transaction transferring moneys to the Windsor Fund. Local notes included Ash-throated Flycatcher at Palmyra, Golden-crowned Sparrow at Cape May, and Western Tanager at Lake Nockamixon. Following reports of Christmas Bird Counts in the area, the traditional convivial evening was enjoyed in the foyer, with Ron French and Paul Guris supplying the food and beverage, respectively.

JANUARY 22 (48 + 7). Joe Majdan was elected to membership. Don Jones gave a short history of the DVOE Endowment Fund, after which DVOE Trustee Chris Walters gave the Annual Report showing fund assets of \$82,843.97. The deaths of members Ted Widing and Doman Roberts were reported. Emmerson Bowes announced the new DVOE web site at www.acnatsci.org/dvoc. A *Selasphorus* hummingbird in a northern Delaware garden had been captured and positively identified as an adult female Allen's Hummingbird. Dr. Daniel Klem presented "The Birds of Armenia" project, in which he described this little-visited country, its topography, its people and customs, and its birds — the reason for writing the book.

FEBRUARY 5 (58 + 4). The sudden death of former Club president Harry Franzen on February 1, 1998, was announced; after a brief eulogy, a moment's silence was observed. Dr. Robert Ridgely described to a spellbound audience the story of the recent finding of a new species of antpitta in southern Ecuador with tape recording, photos, and specimen. Local notes included Baltimore Oriole in Langhorne and Le Conte's Sparrow in Cape May. Jeff Gordon, a Delaware-based Victor Emanuel Nature Tours leader, introduced his presentation on birding the Arctic and Antarctic regions with music, then proceeded to give an excellent talk.

FEBRUARY 19 (37 + 1). Joseph Koplín, Amy Henry, and Jamie Stewart were elected to membership. Conservation chair Jan Gordon encouraged conservation efforts from the Club via the book auction and the New Jersey World Series of Birding. She and Bob Ridgely are actively trying to save the West Basin of the East Park Reservoir within Fairmount Park. Ted Floyd reported on the exceptional Pennsylvania bird counts of 1997–98 with Harlan's Hawks reported from 11 counts. The deaths of former DVOE president Lester St. John Thomas, on February 1, 1998, and of Dick James of the Schuylkill Center on February 17, 1998, were reported. Bob Mercer acted as auctioneer at the biannual DVOE book auction and did a great job in extracting extra bucks from reluctant pockets.

MARCH 5 (39 + 6). Ron French stood in for Don Jones, who was suffering from post-total-eclipse shock. Ed Fingerhood expounded upon news reports that a specimen of the supposedly extinct Forest Owlet, collected about 90 years ago, was

a fake. Sandy Sherman announced the formation of the Birding Club of Delaware County. Reports of two Right Whales on a pelagic off New Jersey on February 22 and 61 Lesser Black-backed Gulls in Richboro, Pa., were amazing. Robert Rockwell gave a fascinating account of the damage caused by Snow Geese on their Arctic tundra breeding grounds.

MARCH 19 (52 + 3). Concern over the amount of glass to be used in the new visitors center at the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge (Tinicum) building and the proposed dilution of the Endangered Species Act caused blood to rise. John Miller offered to band the Prothonotary Warblers nesting in boxes erected by Augie Sexauer. The demise of the old Bluenose Ferry was lamented. Advice was given to prevent salmonella from infecting bird feeders and prevention of mouse infestations at bird houses. A Pink-footed Goose at Lake Ontelaunee and a Bar-headed Goose in Ron French's local quarry were reported. Members John and Ray Miller gave a lavishly illustrated talk on local bird-banding.

APRIL 2 (50 + 2). Walt Peoples discovered that he had a tenuous genealogical link to Alexander Wilson. Ed Fingerhood received hearty thanks for arranging the Annual Banquet for several years, as he handed over the reins to Bernice and Joe Koplin. The Peregrines on City Hall were incubating two eggs. A roosterlike Ruff was reported from Pedricktown. Bill Uhrich gave a superb historical account of the birds of Berks County and the fun and effort involved in updating a century-old book.

APRIL 16 (55 + 11). Matt Sharp was elected to membership. Belated but fond eulogies were said for Lester Thomas. Ron French reported that 500 Great Egrets had been shot in Oklahoma after the state fish and wildlife agency had give permission for Cattle Egrets to be shot. Separate sightings showed that it took just 30 minutes for a Swallow-tailed Kite to fly from Cape Henlopen, Del., to Cape May, N.J., on April 14, 1998. Sally Conyne, Louis Bevier, and Leo Joseph arranged

for DVOC to tour the Academy's labyrinthine Ornithology Department, and all appreciated the skins, mounts, and education.

MAY 7 (38 + 6). John Scott was elected to membership. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* had an article on the city's Peregrines. Alan Brady suggested that all pelagic birders keep a look out for the Cape Verde Shearwater, possibly the next new seabird for the area. Local notes were outweighed by notes from a big migration in Texas and rare birds in the Everglades and Dry Tortugas of Florida. Leo Joseph of the Academy gave a fair dinkum talk of his research into some classic Australian species.

MAY 21 (27 + 0). Paul Guris, captain of the DVOC team in the New Jersey World Series of Birding, reported on the second-place position (we wuz robbed!), with 198 species in poor weather. Sandy Sherman gave a wonderful presentation on the history of North American warbler books, covering all aspects from Audubon and Wilson through early Peterson to present-day Dunn and Garrett.

JUNE 4 (19 + 0). Former president Hart Rufe was reported to be recovering quickly from bypass surgery. Local notes included a singing Swainson's Warbler in Dauphin County. Disappointment was expressed in the number of May Run reports turned in, since a discussion of the May Runs was to have been the evening's topic. An interesting discussion on possible reasons for the lack of migration noted during the spring was followed by a forum on honesty in the World Series of Birding, in which, over the previous few years, several teams had reported totals out of line with normal expectations. Hopefully, new rules would enable genuine totals to take precedence.

JULY 2, AUGUST 6, and SEPTEMBER 3 and 17. Informal summer meetings were held.

OCTOBER 1 (49 + 3). Ed Fingerhood reported on an article describing how crows had learned to use moving vehicles to crack walnuts; George

Reynard reported that studies had shown that these intelligent birds could count to four (coincidentally, the number of their toes). Bill Murphy encouraged the experienced birders in the audience to offer their services as field-trip leaders and exhorted greater attendance on trips. Don Jones announced two recent Council decisions. DVOC members may nominate to Council for special recognition nonmembers who have contributed in a big way to the enjoyment and/or conservation of birds in the Delaware Valley region. Two persons will be invited to be guests of the club at the Annual Banquet. Any member who leads a workshop will be reimbursed up to \$100 for reasonable expenses incurred in the preparation of his or her talk. Ward Dasey showed excellent photographs of a juvenile Saw-Whet Owl at Palmyra. Paul Guris followed with footage of the Bulwer's Petrel seen on a memorable Memorial Day trip out of North Carolina. Sally Conyne gave a two-part talk, the first on her role at National Audubon Society as director of citizen science — the economics of birding, habitat destruction, and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's "Birdsource" program. The second part was a graphic account of her role as part of the Iwokrama Project in Guyana, in which 1 million acres of pristine forest area have been afforded protection by a combination of government agencies and academic and charitable institutions.

OCTOBER 15 (43 + 6). Big Day pledges from DVOC members amounted to \$1,203. Pleas for contributions to the DVOC website were given by webmaster Emmerson Bowes. Locally, a Painted Bunting was reported from Silver Lake Nature Center, while farther afield, Armas Hill reported on his recent trip to southeast Brazil, where his group's sighting of a Cherry-throated Tanager was the first ever by North Americans. Frank Windfelder led a warmly received workshop on the identification of Bicknell's Thrush.

NOVEMBER 5 (38 + 2). Phil Street, chairman of the Archives Committee, announced that the transfer of DVOC's storage cabinets from the

basement to the Ornithology Department, at the request of the Academy, was complete. Phil also reported a flock of 18 Marbled Godwits at Brigantine Island. Members' slide night resulted in the Grand Prize to Adrian Binns (birds: kittiwake with young), with other categories being won by Colin Campbell (birders: Attu hot tub; landscapes: Alien III exoskeleton) and Steve Kerr (flora and flora: timber rattlesnake).

NOVEMBER 19 (41 + 2). Joe Majdan suggested DVOC should be more visible in the field by creating patches or decals for members. President Don Jones promised to take up the idea at the January Council meeting. Eighteen species of sparrow had been seen in Delaware in the previous four weeks, reported Colin Campbell, who also had a probable Rufous Hummingbird in his Delaware yard. Club member Marv Hyett gave a highly entertaining talk on the birds of Absecon, N.J., illustrated with his own exquisite slides, which demonstrated that good birds can be had even in the crowded conurbations of today.

DECEMBER 3 (125). The Annual Banquet was held at Ilona Keller's Dugan's Restaurant. The Witmer Stone Award for publications was awarded to Phil Street for his seminal *Casinia* article on "Birds of the Pocono Mountains: 1986–1996." The Potter Award for field work was awarded to Ward Dasey for his work at Palmyra, Mannington Marsh, Christmas Bird Counts, trip leading, and surveys. Each received an inscribed plaque, as did the two nonmembers honored for their contributions to bird enjoyment and conservation in the region. These first-time recipients were Christine Connelly, for her work in preserving grasslands at Brightview Farm, and Hanna B. Suthers for her bird studies of a regenerated natural field near Hopewell, N.J. Attending past presidents were honored. Guest speaker author Peter Mathiessen gave a very well-received series of excellent anecdotes on his work with cranes of the world. A very entertaining evening, enjoyed by all.

DECEMBER 17 (47 + 0). Jane Henderson took over as *Philadelphia Larus* editor from Megan Edwards. Continuation of the East Park Reservoir conservation saga was outlined. The sad news of the death of Ed Fingerhood on December 6 was announced. After a brief eulogy, a moment's silence was observed. It was announced that DVOC member Freda Rappaport was moving to Ithaca. Two copies of the 20-year souvenir edition of *Casinia* were made available for purchase. A pelagic American Woodcock was seen 44 miles off the New Jersey coast. Member Alan Brady gave a fascinating account of his latest oceanic adventure, a cruise from the Canary Islands to the Falkland Islands on board the *Lindblad Explorer*, calling at remote islands and looking at their history and their birds.

1999

JANUARY 7 (46 + 6). The Club re-elected Don Jones president, Ron French vice president, Colin Campbell secretary, and Naomi Murphy treasurer. Ellen Short and Bert Filemyr (to 2002) replaced Sally Conyne and Megan Edwards on Council, joining Ann Bacon and Adrian Binns (to 2001) and Steve Kerr and Rick Mellon (to 2000). Three fellows of the DVOC were elected: Megan Edwards, Louis Bevier, and Bert Filemyr. Sandy Sherman gave a moving eulogy to the memory of Ed Fingerhood, who contributed so much to the Club over his twenty years of membership. Ruth Pfeffer, Chris Walters, and Ed's uncle, Sidney Fingerhood, offered their tributes. Don Jones called for volunteers to chair the Archives and Ornithological Studies committees. Ron French introduced Ken Kitson from Bucks County Audubon Society, who spoke briefly about his newly published book *The Birds of Bucks County*. Ron French, program chairman, conducted a round-up of Christmas Bird Counts, and the audience was reminded that the Birdsource website (www.birdsource.cornell.edu) would have all the results. The evening ended in traditional style with, once again, Ron French organizing the food and Paul Guris selecting the beverages.

JANUARY 21 (39 + 5). Dick Lutz was elected to Club membership. The new Checklist of the Birds of the Delaware Valley is likely to be old before it sees the light of day. The delayed Treasurer's and Trustees' reports were approved. The Townsend's Solitaire at Heislerville, N.J., was still being seen. The Club's annual Montauk trip, led by Chris Walters and Dr. Erica Brendel, bagged Red Phalarope and Common Murre. Member Gerry Bailey gave a marvelous presentation on the birds of New Jersey.

FEBRUARY 4 (42 + 4). The DVOC records are being updated and collated by Phil Street with assistance from Hart Rufe, Ann Bacon, and Academy staff. The audience was asked to watch developments for the proposed new sports stadium in the city, with concern that Franklin D. Roosevelt Park might be considered as a site. Alan Brady gave a brief history of Charles Lucien Bonaparte, who resided near Philadelphia in the 1820s and who, of course, gave his name to the gull that is the logo of the Club. Members had been twitching Yellow-billed Loon and Black-tailed Gull in New York. Member John Miller gave a presentation of a trip to Manitoba and Churchill.

FEBRUARY 18 (30 + 4). Alan Brady reported that the old magnesite plant at Cape May Point had been purchased and will become a part of the State Park. February 19–22 will be the national Great Backyard Bird Count weekend. Increased sightings of coyotes in birding areas were reported, as were rare-gull reports including a Kelp Gull in St. Mary's, Maryland. Leo Joseph graciously stood in for a late speaker cancellation and gave an account of his varied research work at the Academy, including using DNA sequencing to determine the ancestry of certain species of curassow.

MARCH 4 (46 + 3). Edie Parnum was elected to membership. Last call for membership dues to be paid prior to excoiation was made. Slides of world gulls and the Massachusetts Pink-footed Goose were shown. Paul Guris introduced the evening's speaker in his own inimitable way, and the speaker, Pete

Dunne, responded in fine style, giving an account of the history of the World Series of Birding, its moments of pleasure and pain, current controversies, and his potential resolution for this year's event.

MARCH 18 (39 + 2). With the president again away twitching, a long-suffering vice president (Ron French) took the chair. Sandy Sherman thanked all contributors to the latest *Cassinia*, Number 67, just released, especially the Publication Committee of Steve Kerr and Clay Sutton. Emmerson Bowes called for members' photos to be placed on the Club website. Paul Guris enthralled the audience with a well-researched and highly informative talk on tubenose identification in the Atlantic, including some possibilities for the future.

APRIL 1 (59 + 6). Jeff and Martha Gordon were elected to membership. Sandy Sherman was congratulated on the quality of the recently published *Cassinia*. Slides, if they could be called that, were shown of the purported Algonquin Spruce Grouse and the so-called Miami Crow, confusing many until they realized what day it was. Lots of other real people reported lots of other real birds. In one of the most spectacular displays of photography the Club has ever enjoyed, Kevin Karlson gave an animated description of the wildlife of the Dry Tortugas, Florida, and the Gulf Coast.

APRIL 15 (39 + 5). Don Jones announced the Council's unease with the proposal of giving funds for a tower at East Park Reservoir. The sighting of an accipiter taking a star-nosed mole was unusual. Don McClintock introduced the evening's speaker, Carol Griffiths, who spoke of her research work on the taxonomic status of New World Vultures. In a very detailed and fascinating study, she showed that her work disputed the recent repositioning of these vultures with the storks.

MAY 6 (35 + 5). Katrina Knight was elected to membership. The new third edition of the *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America* was available from the Backyard Bird Company. Also just published, by the Birding

Club of Delaware County, was member Nick Pulcinella's *Birds of Delaware County*. The excellent program was given by Vincent Muhter on the color of birds, with special reference to his research work on the color dominance of Lazuli Buntings in Montana.

MAY 20 (43 + 4). The big news was that the crack DVOC squad had won the World Series of Birding, a prize denied them the previous year. An astounding 223 species were recorded and the success was enjoyed by all, as Sandy Sherman and Erica Brendel produced champagne to toast the champions— Paul Guris (captain), Mike Fritz, Adrian Binns, and Bill Stocku. Thanks were accorded to Nikon for sponsorship. DVOC caps were on sale and looked excellent; thanks to Joe Majdan for the idea and the initiative to get it done and to Adrian Binns for the Bonaparte's Gull design. Several members made pleas to put more pressure on state legislators to prevent horseshoe-crab collection in the area. Yellow Rails were reported from Cumberland County, New Jersey, and a Black Rail was near Hawk Mountain. Delaware's farthest-north record of nesting Brown-headed Nuthatch was reported from Big Stone Road on Milford Neck. Member Armas Hill presented a program on Japan — its life, both human and avian, was illustrated with superb slides of Steller's Sea-Eagle, Blakiston's Fish-Owl, and a selection of cranes.

JUNE 3 (20 + 0). James Quigley and Fred Crown were elected to membership. Don Jones said that Nate Rice, the collections manager at the Academy, had offered tours for those DVOC members interested, and had asked for volunteer help. Once again, May Run reports were few and far between, so Program Chair Ron French opened a discussion on the use, misuse, and abuse of tape recorders in the field. Armas announced that tour leaders had received notice that national parks were to ban the use of tapes within their boundaries. A lively debate ensued, culminating in the conclusion that the use of tape recording is a conscience call of the individual using it.

JULY 1, AUGUST 5, and SEPTEMBER 2 and 16 were informal meetings.

OCTOBER 7 (50 + 5). Adrian Binns took over as Field Trip Chair from Bill Murphy, who received a tumultuous sitting ovation. Council approved expenditure on two projects proposed by Jan Gordon: purchase and erection of Purple Martin houses at Philadelphia Water Department properties and helping to secure a parcel of land linking two Valley Forge Audubon tracts. Spectacular migration included an unprecedented number of Monarch butterflies. Phil Moylan entertained us with superb photographs of shorebirds from both East and West coasts.

OCTOBER 21 (36 + 5). Diane Dasey was elected to membership. Frank Windfelder was lost in a sea of Sharp-tailed Sparrows on his Club outing to Tuckerton. Sandy Sherman reported that a stretch of Two Mile Beach at Cape May had been handed over to the Cape May National Wildlife Refuge by the U.S. Coast Guard. Doris McGovern reported hilariously on the rescue of a Blue Jay that had been choking on three large acorns. Margaret Rubega gave a fascinating account of the feeding habits of Red-necked Phalaropes, explaining the reason for spinning and the mechanism of swallowing brine-fly larvae.

NOVEMBER 4 (32 + 5). Nate Rice, new collections manager at the Academy, brought several skins, including a purported Little Shearwater, found dead at Cape May. Locally Northern Shrike at Green Lane, Yellow-headed Blackbird at Hancock's Bridge, an abundance of Cave Swallows in Cape May, and over 70 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported in Richboro. Photographic contributions to the Members' Slide Night were exceptional, and Steve Kerr's Le Conte's Sparrow won the Grand Prize, with Steve also winning the Landscapes category (rocks at Churchill), Harry Todd winning the Fauna and Flora (buckeye) and Tom Bailey the Birders category (Don Jones).

NOVEMBER 18 (107). The Annual Banquet was held at Ilona Keller's Dugan's Restaurant. Don Jones formally introduced the officers and Council, the five Honorary Members present, other members with 50 years of membership, and the 13 past presidents present. Colin Campbell presented the Witmer Stone Award for meritorious publications to Nick Pulcinella, and Bill Murphy presented Paul Guris with the Julian Potter Award for outstanding field work. Recipients of the non-members' honors for contributions to birdlife in the area were Robert "Pat" Ford and Dennis Morar of the Philadelphia Water Department. The speaker, Julio de la Torre, gave one of the most dramatic and entertaining talks ever heard at a DVOC banquet on "The Owls of North America."

DECEMBER 2 (46 + 10). The Bake Oven Knob field trip produced both eagles, a Northern Goshawk, and Pine Siskins. A lucky few saw a Black Guillemot on Lake Ontelaunee. Blue Jays were seen taking chunks of ice from a member's garden. Odd loons were in evidence at Peace Valley Lake and odd flycatchers at Cape May. Robert Ridgely's finding of the Jocotoco Antpitta had been published in *Auk*, whence it was learned, to rapturous applause, that the scientific name was *Grallaria ridgelyi*. Armas Hill stood in at short notice for the scheduled speaker and gave a wonderfully illustrative account of birding adventures in Argentina and Chile.

DECEMBER 16 (56 + 5). Peter Lowen was elected to membership. The Brielle pelagic produced Manx and Greater shearwaters, Northern Fulmars, Black-legged Kittiwakes, and 5 Pomarine Jaegers. A Snowy Owl that had been seen at Port Mahon was captured and found to be not only wounded but badly emaciated; it died the next day. Other local notes included Osprey at Naaman's Road in Claymont, Del. Clay Sutton enthralled the audience with a highly illustrated talk on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. During the trip, his group found the first documented nesting of the Siberian Tit in the U.S. A fitting end-of-the-millennium lecture.