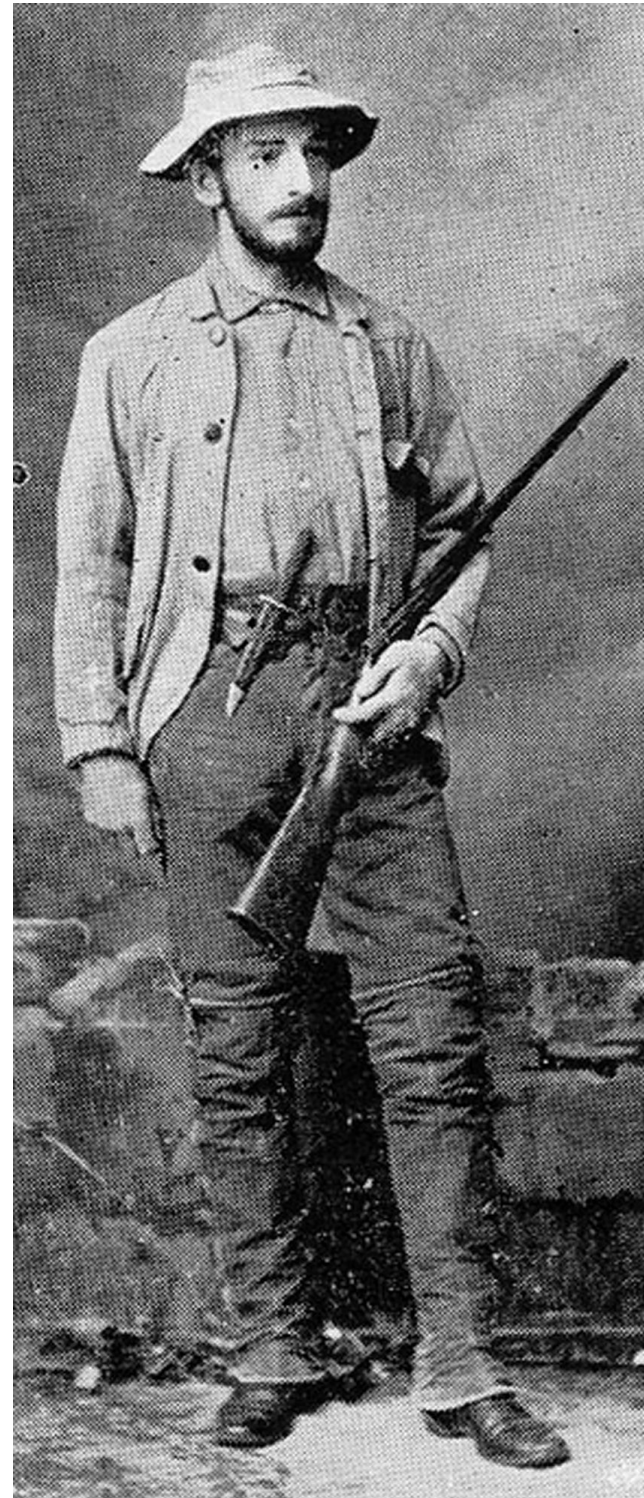


# Witmer Stone: Noted Ornithologist, 1866-1939 Cape May Point State Park



- ◆ Author – *Bird Studies at Old Cape May*, over 900 pages of detailed observations of birds and habitat, which has long been considered the Bible of Cape May birding.
- ◆ Provided over 50 years of service to the Academy of Natural Science of Philadelphia in a variety of positions, including Director of the Academy.
- ◆ Founding member of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club (DVOC) – 1890
- ◆ Before the 20th century, ornithologists shot birds to study them and make proper identification. With the invention of binocular field glasses and publication of detailed field guides, it became possible to study birds in the field without killing them. Dr. Stone was an advocate for this change.
- ◆ A pioneer in conservation— In 1923, Stone delivered an address to the Nuttall Ornithological Club entitled *The Ornithology of Today and Tomorrow*, in which he described the changing focus of ornithology from the study of bird skins and eggs, to the study of living birds and their habits.



## Stone in Mexico , 1890

- ◆ Stone was President of the American Ornithologists Union (AOU) from 1920—1923.
- ◆ He served as chairman of the AOU committee on the protection of North American birds from 1896 - 1901. This committee was where the cause of bird protection took hold, and gave birth to the National Association of Audubon Societies.
- ◆ During Stone's Chairmanship the Lacey Act was signed into law on May 25, 1900. This was the first national legislative protection for birds.



Dr. Stone studying bird skins.

## Dr. Stone birdwatching in 1935.

- ◆ When Witmer Stone first observed the spectacle of fall hawk migration in Cape May it was accompanied by the continuous sound of gunfire. He said, “the shooting of hawks during the autumn had become a regular pastime among certain so-called sportsmen.” Stone loudly protested the slaughter, and in 1930 members of the DVOC approached the National Association of Audubon Societies to demand protection of the hawks at Cape May Point. This led to the establishment of the Witmer Stone Wildlife Sanctuary.



State of New Jersey  
Division of Parks & Forestry



National Park Service  
U. S. Department of the Interior



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For more information go to [www.dvoc.org](http://www.dvoc.org)