



Barnacle Geese Photo © N. Murphy

DIGITAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DELAWARE VALLEY ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

## From the President

Nature festivals have grown in popularity over the past decade and now number in the hundreds each year throughout the country. This October, members of the DVOC will play an important part in the success of two birding events in the Delaware Valley: Silver Lake Nature Center's "All Things Birds" (of which we are a part sponsor), and the 59<sup>th</sup> Annual Cape May Autumn Weekend / "THE Bird Show".

These festivals may be different from each other in approach, but both bring awareness to the community about our outdoor world through programs and activities for the whole family. They introduce new people, young and old alike, to the joys of bird watching through field trips, sessions on bird identification, nest box building, live hawk and owl demonstrations, and owl pellet dissection. In addition, there will be vendors and exhibits that include artists, carvers, crafts, conservation organizations, tour and optics companies, and much more. There will be something for everyone. Nature and bird festivals are not only an educational way to spend a day, but are also a great way to learn about the resources that we have available to us. And let's not forget that they are also a great deal of fun.

An extraordinary amount of time, effort and preparation are put into making these events successful. They are a labor of love by the volunteers, many of whom are members of our club. With two marvelous festivals coming up this fall, I hope that you will support these events by spending the day participating in all of the wonderful activities that they offer.

October 8 - All Things Birds  
[www.silverlakenaturecenter.org](http://www.silverlakenaturecenter.org)

October 28-30 - Cape May Autumn Weekend / *THE Bird Show*  
<http://www.njaudubon.org/Centers/CMBO/FallWeekend.html>



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- .....and much more.

We are still producing a paper Larus for our members who cannot access Larus-on-Line. If you are able and willing to forgo a paper copy of the newsletter in favor of the expanded Larus-on-Line, please let me know at [ndmurphy3@hotmail.com](mailto:ndmurphy3@hotmail.com).

Naomi Murphy

## 20 Questions and Then Some with Henry ("Harry") T. Armistead



Harry Armistead

1. How and when did you begin birding?

In September 1949 at age 9, I stepped out of our Maryland house and saw a brilliant yellow male goldfinch on a purple thistle. That was my "goldfinch epiphany." I've been interested ever since.

2. What model were your first binoculars?

3X opera glasses that were my mother's. She was an opera buff. I sometimes take my Bausch and Lomb 8 X 42 Elites, my "car" binoculars, to the orchestra. Some of the musicians and soloists are worth looking at (and listening to, even). Older favorites were

big, clunky Bushnell Custom 10 X 50s, almost 3 pounds. Now, I love the Swarovski EL 10 X 42s but they take twelve to thirteen cranks to focus at close range. The best scope is the Leica Televid APO 32X straight through. My worst mistake was buying a Questar on reputation. I hate it.

3. Who fostered your interest in birds?

My mother, early on. My mentors have been Dave Cutler, Dick Kleen, Chan Robins, and Fred Scott.

4. When did you join the DVOC?

I joined DVOC in 1959. Several years earlier a schoolmate of my father, C. Chandler Ross, declined to sponsor me. He said I was too young. He was SO right. As an aging preppie, I am STILL trying to decide what I want to be when I grow up. My father, though not a birder, had additional birder/DVOC connections. A classmate of his at Chestnut Hill Academy, class of 1918, was Frederick V. Hebard. Another earlier classmate of his at St. Paul's School was James Bond.

5. Which DVOC members are most memorable to you?

The ones with an edge, characters: Alan Brady, Ernie Choate, Dave Cutler, and Philip Street et al.

6. Who are your most regular birding companions?

Bob Anderson. George Armistead. Liz Armistead. Carl Perry. Julia Roberts. Will Russell. Jared Sparks. Paul Sykes. John Weske. Hal Wierenga and Lynn Davidson. Catherine Zeta-Jones. And of course the late Dave Cutler. Will and I attended Penn at the same time. He once told me the DVOC was essentially his fraternity while at U of P.

7. Where did you go on your first local birding excursion?

Many times along Wissahickon Creek at my first home in Fort Washington on Lafayette Avenue.

8. Where was your most memorable birding abroad?

See 14 below.

## Separating Sharp-shinned & Cooper's Hawks

Article by Art McMorris

Photos by Clay Sutton

There are three North American accipiters: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk and Northern Goshawk. All are agile forest dwellers with short rounded wings and long tails that enable them to accelerate rapidly and maneuver amazingly well through branches and tangles while chasing their favorite prey, birds. The largest of the three, the Northern Goshawk, is the most distinctive: it is a beefy bird with a bull neck, thick chunky tail and bulging secondaries, and it flies with strong, rowing wing beats. It is more often confused with buteos than with its smaller cousins. The tough ID challenge among the accipiters is distinguishing between Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks.

Accipiters are shy forest birds, and we see them most often when they're flying out in the open during migration, which they're doing right now. Cooper's are larger than Sharpies, and in both species the females are larger than the males, so there are 4 different size classes, with no overlap. But you may as well forget this when hawk-watching: size is probably the hardest characteristic to judge in the field, and when the bird is soaring up in the deep blue sky with nothing to compare it with, size is very difficult to judge reliably. Sharpies and Cooper's have very similar plumage too, and plumage marks are hard to see in a soaring hawk anyway, so you can forget about that too.

So that leaves shape and flight style, the two characteristics that are the most useful in identifying any hawk. The head of the Cooper's is noticeably larger than that of a Sharpie, protruding much further forward than a Sharpie's head. This is partly because the Cooper's head actually is larger, but mostly because the birds hold their wings differently when soaring: Cooper's hold



Sharp-shinned Hawk.  
Photo © Clay Sutton

## 20 Questions and Then Some ...cont'd

9. Where is your favorite place to bird?

Our family vacation place in Talbot County, MD, where I've kept records since 1954. The yard list is 265. Best days were 93 species (once) and 92 (twice). My Mount Airy yard list is 108. Also: Cape Charles, VA and Blackwater N.W.R.

10. What place would you most like to see?

Antarctica. Also: Alaska, Greenland, and the Canadian Arctic. And the big marshes/swamps: the OkevangoDelta or the Pantanal. Elat during the spring raptor migration.

11. Are you a lister or a record keeper?

Record-keeper, and compulsive diarist. In the past 24 months, my posts to MDOS-PREY and VA-BIRD comprise about 92,000 words. But some lists are important, such as the Maryland yard list, Maryland state list (335) and Dorchester County, MD, list (296). I don't know what my life list is and don't much care. I CAN tell you it is under 600 for North America. I haven't traveled much since I was a teen.

12. Do you chase rarities?

Rarely (pardon the pun). Last March I chased a Great Gray Owl at Cape Vincent, NY. It was only 60 miles from where I just happened to be anyway. I didn't know about it until my wife, Liz, read about it in a local newspaper while I was visiting my in-laws. I also chased the Baltimore Ross's Gull.

13. What was the most exciting bird you discovered?

A Black-throated Gray Warbler, a first for Cape May County, September 30, 1961. Best of all: I was able to show it to many others the same day. Finding a new Cape May bird now is like discovering a previously unknown Mozart symphony or Rembrandt painting. In general I do not find rare birds. In 56 years I have found 3 state records, none of them really rare.

14. What is the greatest avian spectacle you witnessed?

In September 1959 off New South Wales, Australia, I was a deckhand on a freighter. The sea seethed with countless thousands of seabirds: petrels, shearwaters, and Wandering Albatrosses.

15. What is the most amusing event while birding?

Have a seat.

\* In September 1966 on our honeymoon, we found a Bausch and Lomb scope on a tripod lying in the surf at La Push in Washington State. Fifteen years later in Norfolk at Paul Sykes' house after the Back Bay Christmas count I was talking to a man I'd never met before from Lantana, Florida: the late Howard Langridge, Florida's top lister. When I told him about the scope, he looked at me in disbelief. It had been his. While canoeing in the surf six weeks earlier he'd capsized, losing his scope then!

\* At Cape Charles, Bob Anderson noticed an Osprey flush and drop a large fish into some high weeds. After a long search Bob found it, took it to the banders to weigh on their scales, cleaned it, and it fed three of us handily. It was a nice Channel Bass.

\* After Virginia made him jump through countless hoops, the state finally issued John Weske a banding permit. He showed it to me. Among the species they OK'd for him to band was Sable Antelope, the result of some computer glitch in their

## \*IDENTIFICATION TIPS\*

## Separating Sharp-shinned &amp; Cooper's Hawks.....cont'd

their wings straight out, with a nearly straight leading edge, whereas Sharpies usually hold their wings somewhat hunched, with the wrist jutting forward, so the head ends up sort of tucked in.



The overall profile of a Sharpie is a capital letter T, whereas a Cooper's is a cross.

Cooper's Hawk.  
Photo © Clay Sutton

The second most useful character is the tail. Cooper's have a proportionately longer tail: the tail appears as long as a wing, whereas a Sharpie's tail appears much shorter than a wing. This gives the Cooper's a slimmer, sleeker appearance than a Sharp-shin, even though it is a larger bird. Secondly, a Sharpie's tail is square-tipped as compared with the round-tipped tail of a Cooper's. This difference is most noticeable when the tail is folded closed and all but disappears when the birds fan their tails, and there are occasional Cooper's with squareish tails and Sharpies with roundish tails, so this is not foolproof. Finally, a Sharpie's tail has a narrow grayish terminal band which doesn't stand out very well, whereas a Cooper's tail has a wider, whiter terminal band which stands out quite well, especially when the bird is flying overhead with the sun at its back.

Wing shape is also different. Cooper's have proportionately longer wings, making them appear slimmer and contributing to the slimmer appearance of the whole bird. The wings are evenly tapered, and are usually held with a straight leading edge and very little bulge on the trailing edge, compared with the lumpier, cocked-forward appearance of Sharpies' wings. Both soar with their wings held flat.

To make matters more interesting, immatures of both species have a different shape than adults. As with many raptors, immatures have longer flight feathers, giving them broader wings and longer tails. These are their training wheels: it makes it easier to fly, but it renders them less maneuverable. Although the characters noted above for adults also hold for immatures, the distinctions become less clear-cut. For example, the tail of an immature Sharpie

## 20 Questions and Then Some ...cont'd

template, not someone trying to be funny. Best of all was their irritation when he asked them what had happened.

16. What built your career as a birder?

Chances to write, edit and compile.

17. As someone who enjoys writing, do you have a favorite bird book or author?

As bad as asking if I have a favorite bird: robin, Green Heron, Merlin, any chickadee, owl, nightjar, rail, or nuthatch. Stop me when I get to 30. "Birds Over America" by Roger Tory Peterson is number one. RTP is under appreciated as a writer. Any book illustrated by Fuertes, Liljefors, Thorburn, Lars Jonsson, Dave Sibley, Major Allan Brooks, Francis Lee Jacques, Walter A. Weber, or George Miksch Sutton. "Sand County Almanac" by Aldo Leopold. The Sibley guide, is a masterpiece, although it skimps on habitat information. Any book by Brooke Meanley. Pete Dunne is a very entertaining writer.

18. What are your other interests?

Classical music. Redneck jokes. World War II. Squirrels. Boating. Poetry. The Holocaust. Colonel Richard H. Meinertzhagen, his ornithological and British army careers. Collecting natural history books. I have over 3,400. I've reviewed bird books for "Library Journal" since 1969. As a librarian I've had countless opportunities to acquire books for free, or nearly so.

19. What is the most dramatic change in birds or birding you've seen?

1. Electronic resources and improved communication, such as LISTSERVS, the internet, BNA online, websites, SORA ([elibrary.unm.edu/sora](http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora)), [birdingonthe.net](http://birdingonthe.net), e-mail, GPS, cell phones, even Google.

2. The quantum leap in bird book publishing, now in its golden age, especially with magisterial Handbuecher such as "Handbook of Birds of the World," "Handbook of the Birds of the Western Palearctic", the similar set for New Zealand, Australia and Antarctica, "Birds of Africa" and "Birds of North America." Plus countless 100s of regional bird finding guides as well as field guides for most countries/areas of the world. 3. The phenomenal growth of ecotourism.

20. How do you think birders can improve as conservationists?

Write letters, become involved with local conservation issues, attend hearings and speak up. Write and document what you see - it has significance. Participate in citizen science activities: Christmas counts, atlassing, breeding bird surveys, the feeder watch, etc. Volunteer at a local refuge, park, sanctuary, and your bird club. Give money to outfits that get things done, such as The Nature Conservancy.

21. Is there anything you would like to change in the DVOC?

No. Great website. Good newsletter. Excellent speakers, programs and field trips. Otherwise ... more outreach to younger birders. Our hobby/avocation is ageing.

22. Will you be at the DVOC annual banquet this year?

Oh ... probably. I am something of a prodigal son and loner. I never go to meetings hardly. All my fieldwork is on the Delmarva Peninsula - thirty weekends a year and most of my vacation leave. When home, I work, pay bills, catch up. But this year I'd like to go. Speakers Judy Fieth and Michael Male are great people. Super boat handlers, each year they take us to Cedar Island, VA, for the Wachapreague Christmas count. Their videos are tops.

## \*IDENTIFICATION TIPS\*

### Separating Sharp-shinned & Cooper's Hawks.....cont'd

can look nearly as long as that of an adult Cooper's. Immatures of both species are distinguished from adults by dark longitudinal breast streaking, which gives them a darker overall appearance.

In flight, both birds alternately flap and glide. Sharpies, being smaller, have a lighter, more buoyant flight, and their flapping is snappier and faster, with wing beats too fast to count, than the slower, stiffer flapping of Cooper's. When a soaring bird is viewed head-on, a Sharpie's tail often appears cocked up a little bit, whereas Cooper's seldom if ever do this.

None of these characters will clinch an ID by itself. There will always be exceptions and close calls. For example, when it's windy, hawks will fold their wings in a little bit, so that a Cooper's can take on the same wing-cocked appearance as a Sharpie. As is always the case with similar birds, it's best to base an ID on a combination of characters.

### Eco-Friendly Tips

#### Invasive Species: Deadly beauty

Non-native plants, animals and microorganisms are the second biggest threat to global biodiversity, following the loss of habitat. In order to help stop their spread, make sure that the plants that are growing in your yard or garden are native to your region, and replace those that are not with native plants. Ask your nursery for advice, or consult with various Web sites such as [nature.org](http://nature.org)'s [invasive species](#) section, USDA's [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) site or [invasive.org](http://invasive.org) for more information.

Source: *The Nature Conservancy*

#### Lawn Care and Pesticides: No pain, no gain?

Apart from the serious health threats to both humans and wildlife posed by the direct ingestion of pesticides, they can also cause allergic reactions. Natural regimes like pH balance, aeration and natural fertilizers can often be combined to provide a healthy lawn, without resorting to harsh chemicals. To learn more visit the EPA's [Lawn and Garden](#) site.

Source: *National Resource Defense Council*

#### Water: Knowing when to say when

A leaky sink can lose 50 gallons of water in just 24 hours. Likewise, hosing down patios and sidewalks wastes water and can carry contaminants into rivers and other waterways. Fix leaks as quickly as possible and sweep patios and sidewalks in order to minimize this unnecessary use of water.

Source: *The Nature Conservancy*

## What's On-Line...by DVOC Council

The DVOC website ([www.dvoc.org](http://www.dvoc.org)), through steady evolution over the last few years, really has become the primary resource for club news relative to meetings, field trips and other activities. Virtually everything that you want to know about the club is on the site. It's great! Hopefully, you all have become regular users of the site – but if not, now is an excellent time to do. Web content has been greatly expanded and the site is now well on its way to becoming the premiere resource for birding information for the entire Delaware Valley.

Over the last few years, Adrian Binns, along with the technical support of Lynn Jackson, created and maintained a website called *Delaware Valley Birding*. Adrian's vision was that there should be one website that would be the "go-to" site for information on birding in the Delaware Valley. And that's what *Delaware Valley Birding* became. The bad news is that Adrian's site no longer exists. The good news is that significant portions of the information from his site have moved over to the DVOC website and more information will be added over time. Bert Filemyr, our webmaster, did a tremendous amount of work to bring this content over, and we all owe him our thanks.

So what's out there and how to you get to it? We thought you'd never

ask! The link to the new content is located in the upper left hand corner of the home page. When you click on that link, some of the information you will find is:

- \* Species accounts, songs and images for birds found in the Delaware Valley area.
- \* Links to various listservs, including info on status and distribution of birds.
- \* Links to information on local and pelagic weather conditions, and tide tables.
- \* Alphabetical listing of Delaware Valley birding hotspots.
- \* Links to hawk watching sites and organizations.
- \* Pelagic birding links so that you know what to expect on your pelagic, who the tour operators are, etc.
- \* Links to state records committees.
- \* Contact information for area clubs, organizations and societies (e.g. Audubon chapters, local bird clubs, etc.).

Well, this is not an inclusive list, so we urge you to navigate your way to the new pages and check out this exciting addition to our website. If you have suggestions for other suitable content for the website, contact Bert Filemyr, the webmaster, at [afilmyr@comcast.net](mailto:afilmyr@comcast.net).

## A Review - Birds of Pennsylvania by Franklin Haas and Roger Burrows by Ron French

*Published by: Lone Pine Publishing International*

A new publication has come to join Earl Poole's "*Pennsylvania Birds*", "*The Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania*" edited by Daniel W. Brauning, and "*The Birds of Pennsylvania*" by Gerald M. McWilliams and Daniel W. Brauning. Finally, we Pennsylvanians have an illustrated bird guide of our own.

The text is quite complete and provides information on identification, size, status and habitat as well as nesting ecology. In addition, information relative to feeding habits and voice are covered along with how to separate similar species, and where the best sites are in Pennsylvania to find each species. The introduction provides information on birding groups, conservation, bird feeding, nest boxes and the impact of West Nile Virus on bird populations. Several pages are dedicated to Pennsylvania's top birding sites. A simple color code is utilized for the range maps.

*Birds of Pennsylvania* is a worthy endeavor, with all of the data about the species on the page along with a drawing for quick reference. The illustrations by Gary Ross, Ted Nordhagen and Ewa Pluciennik are excellent, in most cases. A few species are too stylized for my taste, and a few of the drawings seem faded. I suspect the fading is a printer's ink problem and not the fault of the artists. The drawings, in most cases, show only alternate or the basic plumage. Most immature plumages are not illustrated but are described in the text.

A lot of hard work goes into the preparation of a publication such as this and, although there is always room for improvement in bird guides, not much has been forgotten in this one. I certainly want this book in my library and I strongly recommend it, especially for the new birder. Because it only deals with birds found in Pennsylvania, the guide minimizes the errors new birders sometimes make in identification. The book will make an excellent gift for new and seasoned birders alike.

Overall, I find *Birds of Pennsylvania* to be a worthy addition to any birder's library.




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Franklin Haas is a fellow and life member of the DVOC.

## BIRDING HOTSPOTS

## Carpenter's Woods, Philadelphia, PA

by Steve Lawrence

Carpenter's Woods, situated in West Mt. Airy in northwest Philadelphia, has long been recognized as a birding hot spot. It owes its existence to the principal of the nearby Henry Elemental School who persuaded the city to preserve it for her students' study of nature, especially birding, when the area was being developed in the late 1920's. Having read about it in Owen Sewell Pettingill's "*A Guide to Bird Finding: East of the Mississippi*", I focused on the West Mt. Airy area when we decided to buy a house in Philadelphia. We moved into 637 W. Ellet St. on April 30, 1959, and lived six houses from Carpenters Woods for the next fifty-four years.

Many area birders know Carpenter's Woods very well, and I blush at being asked to write about my all-time favorite site. Among many others, Keith Russell and Erica Brendel love the spot as much as I do and know much more.

Carpenter's Woods is an approximately twelve block rectangle of the Wissahickon Valley bordered by West Sedgwick Street on the southern side and West Mt. Pleasant Avenue to the north. It extends like a thumb beyond Greene Street to McCallum. On three sides, there are city blocks with larger homes between the woods and Allen's Lane. On the fourth side, across Wissahickon Avenue, there are more wooded areas leading toward the Wissahickon Creek and the horse stables.

Carpenter's Woods is excellent for birding in spring. It's best from mid-April to late May, when there can be substantial fall-outs of neo-tropic migrants, especially warblers. Sadly they are not quite as overwhelming as they were during the years when Joe Cadbury influenced many Germantown Friends' students like Keith Russell to become lifetime birding enthusiasts. Fall can be good, often more so in the late afternoon than morning. Summer and winter are fair to fairly good, always with some unusual sightings but more or less similar to other areas of the Wissahickon.

In the peak spring season, the time to bird

is early, at sunrise. Generally the best starting point outside the park is at the bus stop on West Sedgwick at Wayne Ave. The early sun gets insects and birds moving along that edge first, and it is a good place to spot early overhead migrants, such as Broad-winged Hawks, some other buteos and accipiters, and the occasional Common Loons. After a good front on a sunny morning, the trees along Sedgwick and also around the corner on Sherman can be alive with migrants.

Next, enter the woods at the Sedgwick and Sherman Street entrance. Having reached the main path, turn left and bird the main path to the cross walk. Turn down to the right to the area known as the Meadow. As the sun goes higher, the Meadow can come alive with birds at all levels. Some may be bathing in the brook and preening on bushes and lower limbs. Others require serious neck bending. From there, the path to the left curves around to a vernal pool (in a wet spring), an area that frequently yields Northern Waterthrush, Swamp Sparrow, Common Yellowthroats and even an occasional Hooded Warbler. Then, reverse to walk back through the Meadow and along the path to the upper spring. The wooded areas on both sides of the Meadow, as well as the walk directly up from the spring to the upper level and the main path, can be excellent for thrushes, with Swainson's common and Gray-cheeked regular in mid-May. Generally, by ten or eleven, things slow down in Carpenter's Woods, but that's true almost everywhere. Late afternoon and early evening are not nearly as productive.

From early June until late August is a slow season in the Wissahickon. Wood Thrushes continue to breed in good numbers in Carpenter's Woods along with the expected permanent residents. Other breeders occasionally include Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Great-crested Flycatcher, Wood Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, Pileated Woodpecker and many Catbirds. Any warbler is extremely unusual at this time, however, the "greater Carpenter's Woods area", (from W. Mt. Pleasant to Allen's Lane between

Greene and Wissahickon and the small development across Wissahickon Avenue to the edge of the park and Livesey Lane down to the creek) can be interesting in summer, very good in autumn and worthwhile in winter. There are Veeries, an occasional Common Yellowthroat, three species of flycatcher, Eastern Towhee and Baltimore Orioles down Livesey Lane during summer. Louisiana Waterthrush is often spotted along the creek's edge, along with Belted Kingfishers, Wood Ducks and the occasional Green Herons. In addition, look for migrating Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers in August.

Autumn – from late August until late November – can be very good, although morning walks in the woods are seldom as active as in springtime. Often the best birding at that time of year is in late afternoon in the area from West Mt. Pleasant down to the Wissahickon. Many migrants feed along Mt. Pleasant where the late afternoon sun produces the best choice of food. Warblers, tanagers, vireos, and flycatchers are active, with swallows, swifts and nighthawks often overhead. It is the time of year when one can spot more raptors in the area than at any other, from September Broad-winged Hawks to an occasional Rough-legged Hawk or Northern Goshawk in November.

The homes on West and South Mt. Pleasant and West Mt. Airy from Greene to and across Wissahickon, have many ornamental fruit trees that at times attract large flocks of Robins and substantial flights of Cedar Waxwings, as well as other lovers of fruit and berries (starlings, too, alas). In this area, Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks are regular and the many varied trees attract good numbers of woodpeckers, including many Yellow-breasted Sapsuckers which sometimes linger into the next year.

Livesey Lane, which angles to the right off Allen's Lane just before Wissahickon Ave., also catches many fall migrants. There are at least four stops that can be productive: just past the second driveway on the right; in the vicinity of the trail that comes in from the left; at a rough "parking" area on the left

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## BIRDING HOTSPOTS

## Carpenter's Woods...cont'd

just beyond the trail to the right and finally, at the creek itself by the "Livesey" house where it is "illegal" to park, so it is best not to leave a car unattended for very long.

Wintertime produces populations of the usual visitors, but Carpenters Woods often has more Winter Wrens along the creek than one might expect, from early November until the first freeze-up in early winter. It used to be the winter home for hordes of Purple Finches, but now they are very rare. The woods and surrounding neighborhood areas have the same owls as in summer, which are sometimes much easier to find. Red-tailed Hawks are common and Sharp-shinned and Cooper's are regular over the woods and throughout the areas outside the park, especially to the west. It is probably the best time to look for a Pileated Woodpecker, especially in the upper area below and beyond Greene St. Another "hot spot" for Pileateds is along Livesey Lane, especially along the upper trail to the right. In almost any season, one must

beware the cyclists on that trail.

Interestingly enough, the general habitat of Carpenter's Woods and the surrounding area has not changed drastically in the past 40 years. This is because it is surrounded by well established residential areas that have changed very little in that time. Much environmental work has been accomplished in Carpenter's Woods as part of the Natural Lands Restoration Environmental Education Program (NLREEP). The project lasted from 1997 through 2004. It was funded by the William Penn Foundation and accomplished by the Fairmount Park staff members and neighborhood volunteers, particularly in the Meadow area. A number of programs, ranging from culling the deer herd to weeding out exotic plants and planting native plants and trees have started to produce results. There has been an increase in populations of amphibians and butterflies, as well as the continued but not overwhelming presence of local mammals. While there has been an increase in

numbers of Red Fox and the presumed presence of an occasional Coyote, still the greatest danger for birds comes from cars and feral cats.

Carpenter's Woods and the surrounding area is an interesting place for a half day of birding in almost any month of year (except in February when birding in the South may be a better idea), however it is THE place to be for outstanding birding from the middle of April to the end of May.

Carpenter's Woods is easily accessible by car and bus and, to a lesser extent, by train. Parking is best on West Sedgwick between Wissahickon and Wayne, but there are opportunities to park side streets on all three sides that border city neighborhoods. The area is reasonably well patrolled, so avoid parking in the obvious no-parking areas. The Wayne Avenue bus, which connects with all other transportation into the city, makes its noisy turnaround right at the Wayne Avenue entrance, providing easy and inexpensive access.

## Bivalve: Cumberland County, NJ ..by Sandra Keller

Bivalve is comprised of 4,200 acres of forested uplands, brushy edges, fallow and crop fields, brackish wetlands and a small freshwater pond. Good views of the Maurice River near the Delaware Bay, and an active clam processing plant, add to the great birding opportunities here. Bivalve is located a bit off the regular birding route and so may not be very well known to many Delaware Valley birders. Officially known as the Commercial Township wetlands restoration area, Bivalve is located in Port Norris, Cumberland County, New Jersey with access points off of Route 553. PSE&G owns and manages the site for marsh grass as part of their Estuary Enhancement Program that is creating areas for fish hatcheries as a result of mitigation against the fish kill at their Salem County nuclear generating plant. The tidal marsh grass areas are constantly changing, with more and more grass starting to grow and less areas for roosting shorebirds at high tide. Some of the fields have "grown-up" to successional brushy edges. This is better for some species, worse for others. I don't know if plans are in the works for intensive mowing. With all of the varied habitats, my cumulative species list is now up to 239 for the seven years that I have been keeping a Bivalve list.

## Timing:

The mudflats are tidal so this has to be kept in mind when birding here for shorebirds and waterfowl. Predicting the proper tides can be a real challenge, especially since wind direction and intensity also impact water levels. Basically, I have found that a half hour to an hour after low tide is best at Bivalve. That is actually when the water starts to drain from the mudflats and conditions should be good for most

shorebird species. High water levels are needed in winter for waterfowl. Visit the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's *Tides On-Line* webpage for current information at <http://tidesonline.nos.noaa.gov/>. Passerines are usually best in the morning, but can also be good in the afternoon with a bit of diligent searching. The gulls along High Street near the clam processing plant feed all day, so this area can be checked at any time.

## Photographic Opportunities:

Photo ops are excellent at Bivalve. The shorebirds are right alongside the boardwalks on most tides and the birds don't usually flush as you walk around. If they do flush, they return quickly. The herons, egrets, and ducks can be a bit harder to get close to. Expect a different species mix depending on water levels. The gulls feeding on the clamshells along High Street are extremely close. I have gotten almost full-frame shots with my small Nikon Coolpix using my car as a blind. Passerine photography can also be good since sparrows sometimes feed right along the Strawberry Avenue trails. If you are interested in doing passerine photography, I recommend that you find the current feeding area, set up your equipment and then wait for the birds to come to you.

## References:

Bivalve is briefly mentioned in Bill Boyle's "*A Guide to Bird Finding in New Jersey*", published by Rutgers University Press, 2002. The area is given more coverage in Clay Sutton's "*Birding Cumberland: a Birder's Guide to Cumberland County, New Jersey*", published by Cumberland

## BIRDING HOTSPOTS

## Bivalve: Cumberland County, NJ ..cont'd

County in 2003 and available at Cape May Bird Observatory's two centers in Cape May County.

## Directions:

Bivalve is located just south of the town of Port Norris and on the west side of the Maurice River. I haven't managed to explore all of the trails and viewing areas, and still have not walked the whole dike system. Some of the tidal areas are best explored from a canoe. Many fields around the access roads are private property but birding from the road can be quite productive.

The three areas mentioned most in the seasonal accounts are shown below. Check the New Jersey Delorme Atlas, page 66, grid J10 for more information:

## High Street:

\*Turn onto High Street from Route 553. The first viewing platform is 8/10 of a mile down the road. Look for a bike route sign along the road that indicates a right turn. This is where to go for the boardwalk and dike access to the first viewing area.

\*Proceed another 5/10 of a mile down the road for the second High Street viewing area. En route you will pass the clamshell pile. Stop here to look at the gulls as they feed on the pile and roost on the pilings near the factory. This area is not for the faint of heart (or smell!) and I don't recommend it to those who can't take the smell of rotting clams. Continue down and park at the concrete building for another dike access then continue further along the sand road (which can be impassable in the winter for non four-wheel drive vehicles) to an excellent overlook of the Maurice River and Heislerville WMA on the far bank. An observation tower here is accessible from the dike.

## Strawberry Lane

Return to Route 553 and go 5/10 of a mile north from High Street. Turn left and proceed down the road. It is very poorly maintained at the end near the parking area. The boardwalk is straight ahead from the parking area while the trails start off to the east.

## Robbinstown

Return to Route 553 and go another 8/10 of a mile north along Route 553 from Strawberry Lane. Turn left and continue down the road for 5/10 of a mile to an opening on the left which gives another view of the mudflats. A freshwater pond is on the right.

## Getting Started:

The area is so diverse that most birders will want to explore on their own after getting to know the place. Who knows what waits to be discovered? Maybe there are breeding Black-necked Stilts, Avocets, and Mississippi Kites just waiting to be discovered down here in Cumberland County. Deer ticks and chiggers can be a major problem in Cumberland County so be prepared. I like to wait for the first frost in the fall to go off-trail.

## Fall:

The species variety is greatest in this season and it is my personal favorite. Fall starts in mid-July with migrating shorebirds. Expect both species of Yellowlegs, Western, Semipalmated, Least, and White-

rumped Sandpipers. With careful scrutiny, the Short-billed Dowitcher flocks should yield the occasional Long-billed Dowitcher. Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, Dunlin, Ruddy Turnstones, Stilt Sandpipers, Willets, Solitary and Spotted Sandpipers can all be found feeding on the mudflats in the fall. Both Marbled and Hudsonian Godwits are annual, but rare. I like to start on Robbinstown Rd on an outgoing tide when the water is receding but still covers the mudflats. I typically scan first for the bigger shorebirds like the Godwits. Then, after a half hour or so, the water has receded enough and conditions are right for the small and medium sized shorebirds. I head over to Strawberry Lane for the peeps and usually stay there until the mudflats are completely exposed.

Cold fronts in August bring the first southbound passerines. East Point, just across the Maurice River, is a known migrant trap and good fallout there often results in migrants at Bivalve. The trees and edges along Strawberry Lane can be productive after a fall cold front. Keep an eye out for migrating hawks. The buteos are flying fly mostly in the late morning and early afternoon, the accipiters all day, and the falcons in the afternoon. The dikes along High Street provide a good vantage point for watching the skies. Listen for Bobolinks overhead as they migrate south and feed in fields of Fox Tail Grass. Dickcissel is another bird mainly heard only as they fly overhead to their feeding areas. October is sparrow month. The paths along Strawberry Lane and the dikes along High Street are my favorite areas to explore for these seedeaters. Keep an eye out for Clay-colored, Lincoln's, and Lark Sparrows. The dabbling ducks are back in October and raptors are still migrating, so keep watching the skies. November brings the diving ducks and is the best time to search for Orange-crowned Warbler. Try the weedy fields along Strawberry Lane for this species. I can't even begin to list all the species to be expected at this season. Keep an eye out for rarities like Cave Swallow, Western and Ash-throated Flycatchers and Swainson's Hawks. In a nutshell, expect anything!

## Winter:

December is a transitional month. The birds are still moving, but the weather will play a key role in what's around now. Assuming the water is not completely frozen, Strawberry Lane and High Street provide good viewing areas for scanning the tidal marshes for Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, American Wigeon, Gadwall, Black Duck, Mallard, and all three species of merganser. Keep an eye to the skies as Bivalve is excellent area for wintering raptors. Bald and Golden Eagles, Harrier, Black and Turkey Vultures, Red-tailed Hawk, Merlin, Peregrine, and Rough-legged Hawks can all be expected here. Snow Geese are usually on the move to and from their feeding areas. Dawn and dusk can be the best time to view the birds as massive numbers of them return to their roosting areas. Watch for Short-eared Owls at dusk from either viewing area and listen for Great Horned Owls calling from the woods. This time of year is also good for scanning the Maurice River from areas along High Street for the diving ducks like Canvasback, Common Goldeneye, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, and Long-tailed Duck. Watch here also for Horned Grebe and Red-throated Loon. Gulls – Lesser Black-backed, Herring, Bonaparte's, Greater Black-backed, Ring-billed, and Iceland - are all regular here in winter. The best areas to check are High Street at the clam processing plant and along the river. The trails that meander through the fields

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

## BIRDING HOTSPOTS

## Bivalve: Cumberland County, NJ ...cont'd

and woodland edges along Strawberry Lane are excellent this time of year for Field, Chipping, Tree, White-throated, White-crowned, Fox, Song, Swamp, and Savannah Sparrows. Orange-crowned Warbler is also found along here. A new path has been put in on the left of High Street as you are driving out – before the first boardwalk access. It passes a wet grassy area and continues down toward a bridge over a small creek. I have had Eastern Meadowlark, Savannah Sparrows, and Least Bitterns here. Birding possibilities along this new path will depend on how dry or wet the area is. Annual rarities to check for in winter include “Eurasian” Green-winged Teal, Eurasian Wigeon, Barrow’s Goldeneye, Eared Grebe, Glaucous and Black-headed Gulls, Vesper and Clay-colored Sparrows plus whatever else shows up. Both shrikes have been seen in Cumberland County so look for these birds at Bivalve. Watch for lingering birds in mild winters. I had an Osprey in the area on January 8, 2004.

## Spring:

This is the season for song and beautiful breeding colors. It’s when I see my first Ospreys back on the nesting platforms throughout the marsh. The number of dabbling ducks increases, swallows and martins return, herons and egrets start feeding here again later on in spring. Both the High Street and Strawberry Lane boardwalks are excellent vantage points from which to scan the marsh at this time of year. Woodcock use the surrounding fields for their display flights come the warmer nights starting in early March. Robbinstown Road and its access points should be checked in April and May for Virginia, Clapper, and the rare but annual migrant King Rail. The dike at the end of Robbinstown Road can be good for these species but beware of ticks. I had a King Rail right at the start of the dike here this past spring. All six New Jersey breeding terns can be found here; from the ever present Forster’s Tern to the much more rare Royal Tern. By late spring you can expect migrant warbler songs in the woods along Strawberry Lane but keep in mind that south Jersey is not a predictable spring migrant warbler area. The proper conditions are needed; namely a couple days of south winds to get the migrants moving north, then a cold front to hit at night to put the birds down. Even with poor migrant conditions, a few migrants should be in the trees along Strawberry Lane. Early morning is best.

Shorebirds will have started their flight north and will stop over here to rest and feed. Tidal conditions are the key to good viewing in the spring just as they are in the fall. Keep an ear out for Bobolinks. Their distinctive “bink” flight call can usually be heard around the fields come May. Bobwhite were regular along Strawberry Lane and Robbinstown Road but have declined recently. Although they are not a “given” anymore, I still hear them now and then. May is the time to search for Cliff Swallow in the swallow flocks. It is an annual migrant that will take searching to find. A night’s foray should produce both Chuck-will’s-widows and Whip-poor-wills along Strawberry Lane and Robbinstown Road in the proper habitat. Some regular rarities to watch for are Ruff and White-faced Ibis in mid-April and Wilson’s Phalarope and Black Tern in May. I have had Sedge Wren in May twice along the dikes off of High Street. Try the fields around Robbinstown Road and Strawberry Lane for Mississippi Kites. They are seen annually in the area.

## Summer:

Although summer is probably the slowest time at Bivalve, a summer birding trip can be rewarding. Yellow-breasted Chat and Blue Grosbeak are regular breeders along Strawberry Lane, and June is a good time to go see them. Ospreys nest on the numerous platforms at Bivalve and it is enjoyable to watch the young grow and fledge. Herons and egrets are always around in some numbers. Least Bitterns nest in the freshwater areas and are fairly numerous some years depending on water levels. Try the pond at the second observation area along High Street near the concrete building. Brown Pelicans use Bivalve at high tide for roosting in the summer months and they can be numerous in some years. I had eighty birds roosting in the area one day in 2002. In other years, I have seen only a few. Try walking the dike system or even exploring some of the more inaccessible areas by canoe or kayak in summer. Who knows what could show up?

A full day of birding can easily be spent at Bivalve. It is one of my favorite areas in New Jersey and I hope I have conveyed to everyone the possibilities here. Good birding and please email me your trip reports! (skeller@snip.net)

## Quarterly Caption Contest by Naomi Murphy

You know, some photographs just cry out for a good caption. So we thought...hey, how about a quarterly caption contest? Folks could submit their catchy captions to the editor and the results (maybe the two or three best captions as judged by the Larus committee) would appear in the next issue, along with a new photo that is just crying out for a good caption. Why not?

So, our first photo is shown below. Send your catchy caption to me, Naomi Murphy, at [ndmurphy3@hotmail.com](mailto:ndmurphy3@hotmail.com). I’m also looking for any photos that you may have that are also just crying out for a good caption. If you have such a photo, please send that along to me, too.



## 2005 DVOC Banquet by Naomi Murphy

Michael Male and Judy Fieth are our speakers for this year's banquet. They've worked together on natural history films since 1980 when they met in New York City while working as freelance crew on TV documentaries and commercials. Michael and Judy started filming birds for a "video guide" back when VCRs were first making an appearance. They concentrated on warblers for the first ten years, filming a few here and there between jobs that paid the rent. By 1995, Michael and Judy had all of the eastern species and were able to finish their first video guide, "Watching Warblers". The success of "Watching Warblers" allowed them to devote more time to making bird tapes. It took only three years to film "Watching Waders" and another three years to film *both* "Watching Sparrows" and "Watching Warblers West". Michael and Judy did a program for DVOC last winter and, based on everything I heard that night, everyone really enjoyed it. Copies of the "digital guides will be available for sale at the banquet. Use the registration form included in this newsletter and SIGN UP TODAY.

Specifics about the banquet:

Date: November 17

Location:

Penn's Landing Caterers  
Sheet Metal Worker's Hall  
1301 Columbus Boulevard  
Philadelphia, PA 19147

Time:

Cocktails – 6:00 p.m. (cash bar with cheese and crackers)  
Dinner – 7:00 p.m.

Website: [www.pennslandingcaterers.com](http://www.pennslandingcaterers.com)

Menu:

Choice of:  
Sirloin of Beef au Jus  
Sweet Thai Chili Glazed Salmon  
Vegetarian Puff Pastry filled with mushrooms and peppers

Wild Rice  
Broccoli  
Rolls  
Coffee, tea  
Sherbet

Cost: \$38.50 Per Person (includes 7% tax and all gratuities)

Parking: Free

Directions: Delaware River waterfront just south of where Washington Avenue intersects Columbus Boulevard.

## Bird Facts – Fall 2005

### *North America Bird Size Records*

Heaviest: California Condor 23lbs

Lightest: Calliope Hummingbird 0.1oz / 2.7g

Tallest: Whooping Crane 5'

Longest: Mute Swan 60"  
Trumpeter Swan 60"

Shortest/Smallest: Calliope Hummingbird 3.25"

Greatest Wingspan: California Condor 109"

Shortest Wingspan: Calliope Hummingbird 4.25"



Calliope Hummingbird  
Photo © Adrian Binns

## Watching from a Bicycle by Colin Campbell

One of the most attractive features of birding is that it can be done anywhere, anytime, and still advance the 'science' by documentation; what other pastime can say that? One doesn't have to go to Antarctica, Belize, Costa Rica, Jamaica etc. to find birds or items of interest which catch the eye.

My local bicycling route is twenty miles long and is concentrated in the north-west corner of Delaware, where I live. I head from my house to Governor Printz Boulevard (entailing a steep downhill – yes, DE does have a few – with an entertaining two speed humps, named Ouch#1 and Ouch#2) which runs parallel to the Delaware River, to Amtrak and to the I-495 for about four miles. Traffic noise from the I-495 pretty well blocks out bird song, but views of the Cormorant (Great in winter, Double-crested in summer) roost on a river marker, the bizarre Osprey nest this year on a river light, and road casualties amongst the broken glass, gravel and general detritus does make for an interesting start to my ride. Turning off at Edgemoor and passing over the railroad and under the interstate gives me my first view of real chemistry – the Dupont Tioxide plant. Not particularly appealing to the eye, but at least I can now hear the Killdeer attempting to nest in the roadside stones. The quiet Hay Road has much to offer for the cyclist in training. Holland Mulch (“Bring Your Stumps To Us”) has intriguing machines making brown, steaming mountains. A wayside memorial to one Danny Duchemin who died on this spot in 2003, aged 17, has a tiny space of remembrance stones, a ceramic frog, a sporting glove and, most intriguingly, two rolls of Scotch tape. Makes you think.

On past the sprawling complex of the Conectiv coal-fired power station, where a long wait can be had if a rail delivery train of nutty slack is encountered. More Killdeer, Red-wings, doves, grackles by the road to the one-lane bridge over an orange, unnamed tidal inlet where Belted Kingfishers can occasionally be seen, along with egrets and the odd Glossy Ibis and a shorebird now and again. The road to the entrance of the Sewage Works (oops, sorry, the Wilmington Wastewater Pollution Control Facility) has Willow Flycatcher and Common Yellowthroat in spring and summer and a lot of illegally dumped trash. The works, famous for its Black-headed Gulls a few years ago, also had a surprise more recently – shorebirds, including Spotted, Solitary and

Semipalmated Sandpipers, gathered around a disgusting pool formed in the discharge piles from the 'processing'. Unfortunately, increased security measures have made access difficult, but the piles of processed shtuff are constantly moved and carted away these days.

Adjacent to this 'Facility' and with a different aroma is the famous Wilmington Cherry Island Landfill – a haunt for gull-lovers (Larophiles), especially in the winter. A new decree has made access for birders a little more difficult but still available. And you can still dump all you can get in and on a car or wagon for only \$3.50. But that is a subject for a separate article. Ducks, gulls (12 species to date), Fish Crows and swallows abound in season; surely, a new species for Delaware will again crop up here, following the fabulous Thayer's Gull on 1 March 2003. This must be the place for Cave Swallow, Raven, California Gull .....

Pedaling onward and over the I-495 on 12<sup>th</sup> Street and the next eye-catching sight is the jail, oops, sorry, The Delaware Department of Correction, Bureau of Adult Correction, Multi-purpose Criminal Justice Facility. Geez, what's wrong with 'Prison' if they need more than one syllable? You don't actually see any jailbirds for your list. Now under Amtrak and there's Hogar Crea's Men's Center for Long Term Residential Drug and Alcohol Treatment. No birds here; I would have thought a few bird feeders should be an essential part of rehabilitation. It worked for me.

Now into a different part of Wilmington, but still with cycling tourist attractions: the United Tabernacle of Christ, Little Africa, Cathedral of Fresh Fire (“where Pentecostal flames are always burning”), Aunt Bumpy's Soul Food Place, Shades of Blue Bar & Lounge, Spirit Life Ministries, Anointed House of God ... and a total paucity of avian life. Are sparrows and starlings 'soul food'?

Then back onto Governor Printz Blvd and home to complete the circuit. Don't tell me that local urban birding is boring! But do it on a bike.

“You can observe a lot just by watching” (Yogi Berra).

## A Bicky Blitz by Jeff Holt

**Saturday, June 11, 2005, 9:00 AM, Woodbury, NJ:**

Colin Campbell rolled his venerable Subaru Outback to the curb. With my binoculars, bird tapes & field guides at the ready, Colin doesn't even have to take the vehicle out of drive and we were off. Our destination was the Adirondacks (a/k/a the Daks) in New York; specifically, Whiteface Mountain near Lake Placid. The goal ... to tick a Bicknell's Thrush (*Catharus Bicknelli*) before the AOU lumps it with the Gray-cheeked Thrush.

Having made the dash (if you can call a 5 plus hour drive a dash) to the Daks on numerous winter excursions, my prediction that we'd hit

the Keene Valley exit off the New York Thruway at 2:00 PM proved accurate. As we rolled down the exit ramp, I commented (with a perplexed look from Colin) that we'd find a hot dog vendor along Route 73 near the thruway exit. He was there and doing a brisk business although, after eating his dogs, I have no idea why. A few miles along Route 73 brought us to Chapel Pond. In the winter, Chapel Pond is the center of the Daks' ice climbing universe. A short walk across the frozen solid pond draws beginners and experts alike to the numerous frozen gullies, waterfalls and seeps that extend along the far shoreline. Alas, in June the only ice to be found was in my partially consumed Coke. It was a bit disorienting to look at the cliff face which I usually know only when it is covered with ice and snow.

Once back in the car, we considered our accommodation options as we headed on towards Lake Placid. We'd anticipated that finding a place to sleep wouldn't be a problem since the tourist season hadn't quite started yet. As we rolled on, however, it became clear that we'd elected to pursue our quest on the same weekend as a Harley motorcycle rally. We decided to take a break from birding and go into Lake Placid proper to secure a room. Just north of town, we noted a vacancy sign on a modest (read cheap) looking motel. We scoffed when warned by the proprietress that the rooms lacked air conditioning. What's a little hardship for two intrepid adventurers? Besides, the forecast indicated that lows would be in the 50's that night and the room did have windows with screens.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

## A Bicky Blitz by Jeff Holt .. Cont'd

To reach Whiteface Mountain, one drives north out of Lake Placid on Route 86, a twisting road which parallels a branch of the Au Sable River, which, in the waning afternoon light, was being fished heavily by competitors in a two day fly-fishing tournament. A chance to glimpse one of my favorite ice climbs (Multiplication Gully) in full spring flow was a bonus sight. After about a dozen miles, we came to the Veterans Memorial Highway, made the left turn and began the drive up Whiteface Mountain. The upper half of the highway is a toll road that is only open during the day in June. Prior planning enabled Colin to arrange with the local station of the NY State Park Service to borrow the toll gate key. This gave us access to the upper part of the mountain before dawn on Sunday. With the key in our possession, we made a leisurely drive back to Lake Placid, with a few roadside birding stops along the way. The oddest thing we encountered (I hesitate to use the word highlight) was a Hairy Woodpecker which inexplicably decided to peck away at the macadam of Route 86, rendering himself in relatively short order, an ex-woodpecker by a passing Volvo.

Back in Lake Placid, the next order of business was drink and sustenance. Without hesitation, I directed Colin to the Lake Placid Pub & Brewery. While watching Afleet Alex win the third leg of the Triple Crown, we proceeded to work (a burden we had to shoulder so that others who may follow can be guided accurately) our way through, pint by pint, the entire beer menu. (The Ubu Ale and the 46'er I.P.A. are recommended). Following dinner and drink, we returned to our room, where, after a minor battle with the windows, we retired for the evening.

### Sunday, June 12, 2005, O'dark Hundred, Lake Placid, NY

Feeling our best, we left for Whiteface before dawn. The key we'd secured the day before worked as advertised on the toll gate. The size of the trees dropped dramatically, from the typical 30 foot plus to about 6-8 feet in height about a half mile from the top of the mountain. We arrived at the summit parking area (approx. 4800' elevation) to a cloudy and windy dawn. Almost immediately, the sounds of singing Winter Wrens and White-throated Sparrows sur-

rounded us. Since we knew that the Bicknell's breed near the summit, our plan was to judiciously use a tape to locate our target bird while we worked our way slowly down the mountain. We birded our way down few hundred feet of road before we caught sight of our first thrush. Momentary joy abated when it sang a Swainson's song. The song burst from Swainson's was, however, the combination that opened the door. Within minutes we heard and got great looks at our first Bicknell's Thrush. Continuing to work our way down the road, we eventually tallied four more Bicknell's, and while none wanted to cooperate enough for a photo, we had ample opportunity to obtain the proverbial "drop-dead looks."

A leisurely drive down the mountain, with multiple stops to bird, brought us back into the valley just as the diner opened for breakfast. We were on the road shortly before 9:00, this time electing to follow the scenic shoreline of Lake George south. Even at our casual pace, we arrived back in New Jersey well before dinner and in plenty of time for a beer to celebrate our tick.

## Membership Update—July through September, 2005—by Anita Guris

The third quarter of 2005 was productive, welcoming in 6 new members. We are reaching more local birders through the web site than ever before. Most notably, one in three candidate applications are from the internet. Thanks to Bert Filemyr our Web Master! The [dvoc.org](http://dvoc.org) web site has become a major part of our membership drive initiative and the value of the internet for our club should not be taken for granted.

The vision of the membership committee is to strengthen the club known as THE club for serious birders, and serious birding fun seekers. The combination of vast amounts of ornithological knowledge, and passion for birds in all respects, make for the perfect birding club and that club is DVOC.

As we continue our quest for larger member audiences, and more active members to propel our club forward into the upcoming years, I ask you to continue to welcome friends, family, and all birders into DVOC to enjoy the richness of knowledge and camaraderie the club has to offer.

Sadly, this is my last communication as membership chairperson. Due to my unpredictable health concerns, and other family obligations, I have decided to resign from the membership chair position. I have thoroughly enjoyed my tenure and will continue to support the new chairperson in any way possible. I have tried to serve my term well, and leave this position with only a slightly heavy heart. I am confident that my successor will continue to provide service to the club in a far greater capacity than I was able.

Please join us in welcoming the newest members to our club! Let us

know if we have overlooked anyone and we will post the missing bio in the following issue of *Larus*. The first three member's bios that are shown below were unintentionally omitted from previous issues of *Larus-on-Line*.

### February, 2005

Lydia Reichner

Lydia grew up with a birdfeeder outside her kitchen window and a copy of the birds of North America on the table. Her father spoke of seeing Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, and her grandmother kept a copy of her Audubon books on the coffee table. As a result, Lydia was always aware of birds and she watched them. Lydia became fascinated with loons when she lived in Maine. She walked the neighborhoods with her father's old binoculars. Lydia truly became a birder about two years ago when she went down to Cape May and bought herself a good pair of binoculars. She joined a morning walk in the Meadows, and nothing has been the same since. Lydia discovered her new passion knows no bounds. As a member of DVOC, Lydia knows that her involvement in birds and birding will increase by leaps and bounds. Locally, Lydia birds on Hawkins Road, Lebanon State Forest, Batsto, and the Cranberry Bogs on Big Hill Road, Brigantine, Motts Creek, and Bull's Island.

Scott McConnell

Scott tells us that he grew up in the Roxborough section of Philadelphia, right around the corner from Charlie Wonderly, who served as his guru and introduced him to the DVOC years ago. As a teenager, Scott used to bird the Schuylkill Valley Nature Center quite a bit; eventually he started roaming the Wissahickon. He moved to Montgomery

## Membership Update ~ July through September, 2005..cont'd

County in the late 80's where he birded Evansburg State Park, Valley Forge, and Mount Superfund (the Collegeville hotspot) along with other areas in Montgomery County. Scott often birded Cape May over the years. Currently, Scott is working on his masters in Zoology at Oklahoma State University. Per Scott, he is suffering from "landlockeditis" but he continues to study grasslands shorebirds and raptors in the Oklahoma panhandle.

### May, 2005

Ken Mitchell

Ken is a retired chemical engineer who has been birding for 25 years. He enjoys the constant learning involved with birding. He birds primarily in South Jersey – Palmyra Cove, Mannington Meadows, Forsythe, and Long Beach Island.

### July 2005

Dino Fiabane

Dino teaches anatomy and physiology at the Community College of Philadelphia's Northeast Regional Center. His background in geography and biology is closely related to his interest in the natural sciences. He has been birding since July 2001. Dino's interest in birds was peaked after he participated in a bird walk led by a particularly enthusiastic ranger at Rocky Mountain National Park. He birds in South Jersey and regularly participates in New Jersey Audubon Society field trips. Dino intends to participate in DVOC field trips and looks forward to the fellowship of birders.

Anthony Croasdale

Anthony is 28, and has been birding since he was ten. He travels extensively with his band and birds wherever he goes. He spent most of the summer of 2004 in Northern Manitoba with the Hudson Bay Project as a field assistant working with Snow, Ross's and Canada Geese, as well as Semi-palmated Plovers. He birds Tinicum, Pennypack Park, Palmyra Cover and the Jersey Shore. Per Anthony, he plans to return to college to pursue a degree in Ornithology.

Thomas D. Mason

Tom has been interested in birds since he was ten year old. He first observed Baltimore Orioles, Killdeer and Barn Swallows by the tee where his father first taught him to play golf. His dad bought him a Peterson's field guide for his 11<sup>th</sup> birthday, and that was the beginning of his interest in identifying birds. Tom's boyhood interest was rekindled in 1993 when a co-worker invited him to a bird walk at Haverford College. Since that time he has attended DVOC field trips as well as other local bird trips/events. Tom is a member of NABA/SEP Chapter. His 14 year old son and wife are backyard birders.

### September, 2005

Kathleen Geist

Kathleen writes that she got her start in childhood because her parents always kept binoculars on the dining room table to watch the feeders. Her interest solidified into a passion on the job as a naturalist at Peace Valley

Nature Center (on trips with Fred Mears) and at Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association. Kathleen birds locally most often with friends, and participates in birdathons and Christmas counts. She works at the Greenwood Charter on grounds of Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education in Philadelphia which allows her to bird at and after work! Kathleen is a member of Cornell's Feeder Watch.

Alan Crawford III

Alan says he is the son of a long-time birder (73 years and counting) who once banded songbirds and taught him about birds at an early age. He has been birding sporadically for about 45 years sporadically. Local birding for him is at home (species count 222), and Tyler, Ridley, Springton and the Cape May area.

Lower Marion Conservancy (LMC)

Dani-Ella Betz, Conservation Coordinator of the LMC coordinates a bird monitoring program for the Lower Marion Township area which uses local residents to survey the bird population year-round. Chris Walters is one of their monitors. Dani has attended several DVOC programs and says she always learns something.

## "All Things Birds" ~ an All Day Event at Silver Lake Nature Center:

Join the staff at Silver Lake Nature Center on Saturday October 8, 2005 for free programs and activities for the entire family. One of the goals of this event is to make people aware that Silver Lake Nature Center is a good place to go birding and to learn more about birds. Activities for all ages will be going on all day in conjunction with Silver Lake's annual bird seed sale. There will be bird walks, woodcarving and displays of artwork, as well as blue bird box building and owl pellet dissecting.

Mercer County Wildlife Center, a New Jersey state and federally licensed facility that cares for injured, ill, and displaced native wildlife, will bring some of their live birds and give a presentation at 1:00 that includes information about the natural history of each species. Bird walks begin at 7:30 a.m. The rest of the events are scheduled from 10:00 to 4:00. The DVOC is helping to sponsor this exciting event, so mark your calendars and plan to attend and support this worthwhile event.

Silver Lake Nature Center  
1306 Bath Road  
Bristol, PA  
215-785-1177  
[www.silverlakenaturecenter.org](http://www.silverlakenaturecenter.org)  
*Always free parking*

## Citizen Science - Project FeederWatch

From backyards and city streets to remote forests, anyone who counts birds can contribute to the Lab's research. Data from the projects described below are used to monitor bird populations and outline conservation efforts. Citizen Science is a partnership between the public and professional scientists. People across the continent are gathering data to better understand and conserve birds and everyone is invited to participate.

Project FeederWatch is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. FeederWatchers periodically count the highest numbers of each species they see at their feeders from November through early April. FeederWatch helps scientists track broad scale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance.

Project FeederWatch is operated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in partnership with the National Audubon Society, Bird Studies Canada, and Canadian Nature Federation. Anyone with an interest in birds can participate! FeederWatch is conducted by people of all skill levels and backgrounds, including children, families, individuals, classrooms, retired persons, youth groups, nature centers, and bird clubs.

You will count birds that appear in your count site because of something that you provided (commercial or natural food, or water). For each species, report only the highest number of individuals that you saw *in view at one time*. By following this procedure, you are certain to avoid counting the same bird more than once. You'll report your bird counts to scientists at the Lab of Ornithology, either over our web site or on paper Data Forms.

There is a \$15 annual participation fee (\$12 for Lab members, CAN\$35 for Canadian participants) that covers your materials and

newsletter subscription, staff support, web design, and data analysis. Project FeederWatch is supported almost entirely by participation fees. Without the support of our participants, this project wouldn't be possible.

U.S. participants receive a [Research Kit](#) and the Lab's quarterly newsletter, *Birdscope*. Your kit, which arrives in November (or 3 weeks after you sign up when you sign up during the FeederWatch season) contains instructions, a bird identification poster, a wall calendar, a resource guide to bird feeding, and data forms—everything you need to start counting your birds. You provide the feeder(s) and seed.

You can count the birds anywhere that you can consistently observe throughout your count days. Choose obvious boundaries, such as the border of your yard or the area within a courtyard.

Our survey is conducted each winter from November through early April. You may join at any time of year and start receiving the quarterly issues of the newsletter. The last day to sign up for any given season is Feb. 28. On Mar. 1 we begin taking sign-ups for the following season. Kits are shipped in the fall or, if you sign up during the season, about 3 weeks after you sign up.

It's up to you how much time this takes! Select your own bird-count days—two consecutive days once every two weeks (or every week if you enter data online and you choose to count that often). Count during all or part of those days. FeederWatch results are regularly published in [scientific journals](#) and are shared with ornithologists and bird lovers nationwide.

As a FeederWatcher, you will learn more about winter birds and how their populations are faring. You'll also contribute to the science and conservation of North American feeder birds.

Source: Cornell Lab of Ornithology, [www.birds.cornell.edu](http://www.birds.cornell.edu)



## Update Your Contact Information!

The time is rapidly approaching when we will issue an updated DVOC Membership Directory. In the interest of ensuring that information is as up-to-date as we can possibly make it, we are asking that you use this form to submit updated contact information. Please include any changes in your name, mailing address, day time or evening telephone number and email address. Send your update sheet to:

Naomi D Murphy  
234 Orlemann Avenue  
Oreland, PA 19075

Alternatively, you can send any changes to Naomi Murphy at [ndmurphy3@hotmail.com](mailto:ndmurphy3@hotmail.com).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Day Time Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

## Pennsylvania Game Commission Seeks Info on Barn Owl Sightings

Pennsylvania Game Commission officials are seeking information on Barn Owl sightings in south central and south eastern Pennsylvania. Barn Owls are a species of concern in the Commonwealth, since they have been in decline for the last several decades.

The Game Commission has developed a Barn Owl Conservation Initiative to help in the conservation and potential recovery of this species. The initiative's goal is to compile information relative to the status and distribution of Barn Owls in the state, including information on nesting, foraging and roosting habitats. Once all of the data has been compiled and analyzed, biologists will be able to determine where conservation initiatives should be directed. Those initiatives may include erecting nest boxes in suitable habitat and documenting productivity. Education and outreach would also be included to in-

form farmers, other landowners and the general public about the importance and benefits of Barn Owls.

DVOC members may be well positioned to help with this effort. If you are aware of any Barn Owls in your area or are interested in helping to construct Barn Owl nest boxes, please contact Biologist Jamie Zambo at 610-589-4913. Mr. Zambo can also be reached through Pennsylvania Game Commission Southeast Region Office by calling 610-926-3136 or mailing to 448 Snyder Road, Reading, PA 19605.

Southeastern counties: Berks, Bucks, Chester, Dauphin, Delaware, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Philadelphia, Schuylkill and York

## Winter Birding in the Netherlands

Source: *A Wild Goose Chase Trip Report*, by Adrian Binns



Jackdaw ~ Photo © N. Murphy

***Day 1: Amsterdam south to Hoek van Holland; Schouwen - Zeeland: Stellendam, blind and harbor; Ouddorp fields; Brouwersdam***

With plenty of room to stretch out and one of Naomi's little white pills, the trans-Atlantic flight went by just like that. We quickly picked up our mini van and, in no time at all, were headed south. When you hear the expression "a mountain out of a mole hill", you realize that it applies, in a literal sense, to this country. Most of the Netherlands is below sea level and mountains are literally the thousands of mole hills one sees beside the road as you drive around. The landscape is flatter than a pancake. Bicycles are a common means of transportation and demphels (speed bumps) give mole hills a run for their money, height wise.

The kilometers ticked by as we headed south. We passed a number of common species en route including (Western) Jackdaws, (Common) Magpies, Woodpigeons, (Common) Kestrels and (Common) Blackbirds. Before we knew it, we were at Hoek van Holland, our first destination of the trip. Our target was the House Crow, an Asian species that has recently become established in the area, most likely due to ship assistance. A few Carrion Crows were about, and the smaller, noisier (Western) Jackdaws were everywhere as we looked around the train station and harbor. We found some Great Tits along with Herring and Common Gulls on our walk. Not too far away, we scoped the harbor jetty which had thousands of Great Cormorants and large numbers of Black-headed Gulls. We found (Common) Redshank in the pools along with (Eurasian) Oystercatcher, Great Black-backed Gull, a few Common Ringed Plover and a lone Dunlin. As we walked back to the van, we saw a group of three crows. Two turned out to be Carrion Crows, the third was our target species. We watched it as it dropped down to the ground, walked about and gave us great views before it took off.

We picked up a sandwich and a map (it always helps), took the short ferry ride across the Calandkanaal onto Voorne and then over the bridge to Stellendam on Goeree. Cetti's Warbler was first up, and one responded to the tape only a few feet away as we walked amongst the reeds. This skulker played hide and seek for fifteen minutes but, in the end, we all got to see it. The Harbor held large numbers of Great Crested Grebes and Gadwall, along with Tufted Ducks and Eurasian Coots. The roadside verges yielded the first taste of the geese that we were here to see and, even though it was just a few Graylags, we were ready for the onslaught that was to follow.

The polders (reclaimed land) around Ouddorp were outstanding. First we saw a (Eurasian) Curlew or two, followed by a few Egyptian Geese, and then many more of each species. We had a large flock of Greater White-fronted Geese and an even larger flock of Barnacle Geese. The biggest surprise was the mother lode of plovers, no doubt all European Golden, which swirled about the sky. A conservative estimate would be 10,000 birds. It was a sight to see, even though it was at a great distance. A few Brant of the dark bellied subspecies were scattered amongst the geese, and (Northern)



Great-crested Grebe ~ Photo © N. Murphy

## A Wild Goose Chase ...cont'd

Lapwings could be seen 'rowing' in the air in decent size flocks. At least one Common Buzzard was in the area, the first of what would be many on the trip. The numbers of ducks were pretty impressive with hundreds of Eurasian Wigeon, a few (Common Merganser) Goosanders, Common Teal, Pintails and (Common) Shelducks. A flash of cobalt in one of the narrow channels indicated that a (Common) Kingfisher was darting about, and a couple of Little Grebes were also seen in these channels. The report of an early returning Eurasian Spoonbill was of great interest to us, and as a few of us were scoping Bar-tailed Godwits and checking out Little Egrets, Bill found the bird sleeping in a nearby field. We reached the Brouwersdam at dusk and found a single Purple Sandpiper amongst a dozen Ruddy Turnstones as well as a family group of Common Eiders roosting on the rocky shoreline.

**Day 2 : Schouwen - Zeeland: Plantureluur; W. of Serooskerke; Neeltje Jans; the area between Aagtekerke, Grispskerke and Meliskerke; W of Sabbinge; Goes; Flaauwers**

By the time we had finished breakfast (8:15), dawn had broken and we headed out to the fields east of our hotel in Schouwen to a large wetland known as Plantureluur. The sheer volume of birds was overwhelming. Sporadic reports over the last few weeks indicated that two Red-breasted Geese



Meadow Pipit ~ Photo© N. Murphy

where being seen, but this meant methodically going through the thousands of Barnacle Geese to find them. One by one we searched but, despite the fact that we had a huge flock relatively close to us, the bird eluded us. We found two dozen Bean Geese of the Tundra race. There could have been more, but it is a too vast area to cover completely. The spectacle of (Eurasian) Curlews, (European) Golden Plovers and (Northern) Lapwings continued to awe us as they rose and swirled in huge flocks in the overcast skies Bert located a few stunning Smew on the water and we all concurred that, though the male is rather dapper, the females are also very attractive. The far end of the same impoundment held Bewick's and Mute Swans. After almost an hour and half of scanning the area, we headed for the south western edge of Schouwen. Along the way we picked out a Red-necked Grebe and several Horned Grebes before stopping at Neeltje Jans the causeway to Zeeland. Bert quickly spotted the (European) Shag on a buoy on the North Sea side and we encountered several Meadow Pipits perched on a wire fence on the other side. Our last stop this morning was in an area between three villages in the south western corner of Zeeland. We spent a lot of time scanning the fields for flocks of (European) Golden Plovers in hopes locating the ((Eurasian) Dotterel that was wintering in the area. Although we did not find any plover flocks let alone the dotterel, we did well with a couple of birds. Naomi found a Rough-legged Hawk perched on a fence post, our first one of the trip, and Bill found a family of Gray Partridges.

Lunch was a quick stop for a sandwich at a petrol station in Middleburg topped off with coffee at Mickey D's. We were amused to see a group of five gulls not far from our lunch stop which included a Black-headed, two Common and two Herring. They were stamping their feet in a short grass meadow and listening for worms. We hit the north coast of the island, added Hen Harrier, which was new for the trip, a large flock of 100 Avocets and both (Common) Chaffinch and Dunnock, which were in a shrubby area near one of the car parks. The mist rolled in and the overcast day took a turn for the worse. We tried again for the Red-breasted Goose, but had to settle for an immature (Eurasian) Spoonbill flying off into never land along with four Graylag Geese. By 4:30, visibility was poor and it was drizzling, so we decided to call it day and look for a dinner spot in town.

**Day 3: Schouwen - Zeeland: Neeltje Jans; Plantureluur; Phillipsdam - kramersluizen, plaat van vliet; Strijen fields; drive up north to east of Amsterdam. Hoge Veluwe National Park; Leuvenum - de zwarte boer**

It was one of those thick pea soup mornings and no matter where we went, it seemed to get worse. (Arctic) Black-throated and Common Loon, Red-breasted Goose and Flamingo.....we tried, but when you can't tell if you are even in the right spot, then.....

One nice consolation was a Redwing on a front garden lawn just outside Renesse. The Neeltje Jans produced a pair of Sanderlings (we could see about 40 feet in front of us) and while driving, our first Great-spotted Woodpecker flew over the vehicle. Leaving the south, we stopped along the causeway at Philipsdam and it looked as though there would have been a great deal to scope if it had been clear, but alas, all we could make out were the hundreds of (Eurasian) Oystercatchers and Brant along the edge of the water and a lone Red Knot. A



Northern Lapwing ~ Photo© N. Murphy



Zeeland Area Photo © B. Filemyr

## A Wild Goose Chase ...cont'd



Eurasian Oystercatchers ~ Photo © N. Murphy

female (Eurasian) Sparrowhawk that landed on a gate a short distance from us.

Our options for lunch were few and far between, especially since we could never locate the promised bakery that was supposed to be in every town and village. So it was off to Mc Donald's once more, after which we hit the motorway heading north east to the largest national park in the Netherlands. The landscape changed dramatically as we climbed in elevation to some 70 feet (oxygen please) and we began to see large tracts of trees. The Hoge is a mixture of beech, larch, birch, spruce and fir forest with carpets of heather and moss. At the entrance gate, Bill picked out a few Eurasian Tree Sparrows, and amongst the Blue and Great Tits, a (Eurasian) Nuthatch. It was late afternoon, very overcast and we were losing light as we tried to find Black Woodpecker, Europe's largest. Several Willow Tits, a Short-toed Treecreeper, a small flock of Firecrests and seventeen Red Crossbills kept us busy for a while, but there was no sign of the woodpecker at our first stop. We continued down the road and came across a large flock of Chaffinches, a Green Woodpecker and, a little further into the woods, an even larger flock of Brambling which were foraging on the ground. When the flock took off, we were astounded to see that there were at least 200 of them. The landscape opened up the further north we went and we stopped when we came across another active flock. This time we located a Marsh Tit and heard the distant drumming of a woodpecker, but we never could locate him. We were surprised when we came upon a large area of sand dunes in the park and had a dozen (Common) Ravens flying about the dunes. We saw a group of about fifteen Red Deer foraging in an open glade as we were leaving the park. All of the deer were stags with massive antlers. Our last stop of the day, which was also the first beer of the night, was at a spot where we tried to call in a Tawny Owl. After about an hour of trying, right at 6 pm, the bird responded and put on a nice little show for us as he flew about the upper canopy calling pretty much all of the time.



Roosting Ducks ~ Photo © N. Murphy



European Goldfinch ~ Photo© N. Murphy

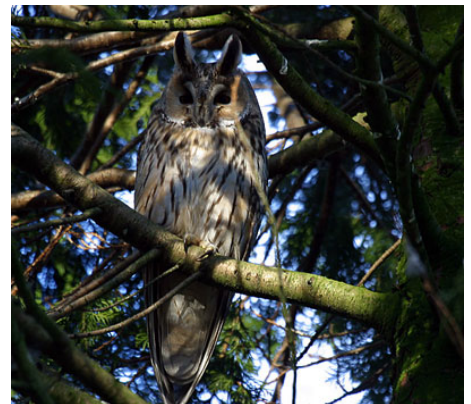
day. We left it to the staff to sort out the problem.

Peter took us around to some of his favorite Flevoland birding spots along with some other areas for specific target birds. We began across from Harderwijk at Wolderwijd by scanning for Red-crested Pochard amongst the thousands of Tufted Ducks and Common Pochards. We saw a few Smew and Gadwalls, but no Red-crested. Just as we were packing our scopes into the vehicle, four Red-crested's flew in and showed well. A little further south, a group of Whooper Swan's flew overhead and about nine Great White Egrets were seen in the reed

**Day 4 : Flevoland: Zeewolde - Wolderwijd; Elzenlaan; Hilversum: Goois Natuureservant - Hoogt van Tkruis; Muiden motorway service station; Flevoland: Ostervaarsplassen - Ginvandebosch; Grote de Praambult;**

After an early breakfast, we headed out with Peter, our friend who lives in a short distance from where we were staying. While the locals may not be accustomed to getting up early, they certainly got a taste of what it is like when my slice of toast set off the fire alarm. No one moved!

It took a while before one or two guests appeared in their pajama's and boxers, and even longer for the fire engine to show up. By then, we had pretty much finished our breakfast and headed out on what was a crisp but gorgeous



Long-eared Owl ~ Photo© N. Murphy

## A Wild Goose Chase ...cont'd

beds. On the outskirts of Zeewolde, we walked a neighborhood where we had great success with a wide variety of finches, including a group of (European) Goldfinches and (European) Siskins feeding on alder. In addition, we had a (European) Greenfinch, Hawfinch and five (Eurasian) Bullfinches that showed their brilliant red breasts as they flew over. Dunnock and Long-tailed Tit rounded out a wonderful half hour. Common Buzzards became increasingly numerous as we headed south of Flevoland. At times we saw four or five in a ½ mile stretch, most of which seemed to be on the ground waiting for rodents. We got a chance to scope Whoopers in a field and, while looking for a band of (Eurasian) Jays that flew across the road, had half a dozen (Common) Skylarks fly over. Three Long-eared Owls were roosting in a cedar at the edge of someone's front garden in a neighborhood beside the Hoogt Van Tkruis Nature Park in Hilversum. One in particular gave unobstructed views. The Hoogt had numerous tits though the only uncommon one we saw was Willow. Great Spotted Woodpeckers were heard and seen a number of times as we walked through the pines and deciduous woods as was Goldcrest, (Common) Crossbill and (European) Siskins. (Eurasian) Jay's finally gave great looks and Bill located the (Eurasian) Treecreeper, a rarity for the Netherlands. We had great looks at this bird and were able to check out the field marks on the wing and compare it to the common Short-toed Treecreeper.



above White Storks ~ Photo© N. Murphy  
 the reeds and being chased by a Hen Harrier. We then saw a Merlin on the mudflat, followed by a Peregrine perched on a log. We turned and found a Goshawk perched across the marsh which was eventually chased off its perch by a smaller raptor. The raptor show continued at the second and third vantage points where we located a distant White-tailed Eagle. We had close Common Buzzards, wonderful views of a soaring Rough-legged Hawk and were treated to three White-tailed Eagles in flight.

We found a group of Ruddy Ducks at the northern end of the reserve that were new for the list and decided to look for a pair White Storks and some flamingos that had been reported. We only found Greater White-fronted Geese at the stork spot and flamingos were nowhere to be found. We were compensated, however, when a male Goshawk narrowly missed us as it flew right across the road, at eye level, in front of our vehicle.

**Day 5: Flevoland: Natuurpark Lelystad; Friesland: Heerenveen; Horwerd / Ameland Ferry terminal; opp. Bilje; Harlingen; Makkum, Piamm, Gaast, Workum, Hindeloopen, Koudum, Stavoren, IJsselmeer, Mirns, Oudemirden. Flevoland: Zeewolde marshes.**

We joined Peter and his Flevoland Birding Club in Northern Friesland early this morning, but not before stopping to look at the White Storks that were building their nest at the Natuurpark. We made a quick stop en route for Bohemian Waxwings which we did not find, but we did find a group of Rooks at a McDonalds! We saw a thin layer of ice in the channels as we continued north. Gulls, mainly Commons, were very evident in the fields, and Common Buzzards numerous. Grey Herons, on the other hand, were far and few between.

We reached the ferry terminal at Holward fifteen minutes behind schedule. Bert figured the fifteen minute courtesy rule was in effect, and he was somewhat shocked to find the group nowhere in sight. We called Peter to let him know we had made it. and he told us the group was having coffee in the terminal! Five minutes later, the scopes were out and the multi-national group was assembled. Bill and Bert's find of nineteen Black-tailed Godwits did not generate a lot of excitement despite the fact that they were apparently early returnees. Everyone was very excited, however, by a Red-breasted Merganser. I guess everybody has a different perspective. The mud flats were covered in waders, ducks and shorebirds – Shelduck, Redshank, Curlew, Turnstone, Dunlin, Sanderlings and a lone Knot. A single Snow Bunting was seen on a row of pilings and Rock Pipits flittered about the rock jetty. From here we searched a section of marsh and grazed areas that paralleled the Waddensee to the west for Short-eared Owls. It did not seem to us that this was the best time to look for Short-eareds since it was a bright sunny day. The Flevoland, however, insisted that good numbers of owls are often seen hunting throughout the daylight hours. We did not find even one but we did see Common Buzzards, (European) Golden Plovers, a Common Snipe and about thirty Shore (Horned) Larks.



Zeeland Trail ~ Photo© B. Filemyr  
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## A Wild Goose Chase ...cont'd

After a very quick stop for a sandwich on the go, we worked our way down the southwestern Friesland coast from Harlingen to Oudemirdum. We checked many flocks of geese for Lesser White-fronted and Red-breasted, but the task was daunting to say the least. Barnacles and Greater White-fronts were all over the place in the thousands...tens of thousands. We scanned the closer flocks thoroughly, but we were unable to do justice to the more distant flocks and to the huge constantly moving skeins as they flew in and out. We probably only covered a fraction of what was out there. It was an amazing sight to see and in the end, it got the better of us. We checked the Waddensee for any sea ducks but were disappointed by the lack of activity. We had better luck on the IJsselmeer when we finally located a dozen or so Greater Scaup amongst Great Crested Grebes and (Common) Goldeneye. Back to the polders, we came across an estimated 2000 (Eurasian) Curlews in a field, num-



Graylag Geese ~ Photo © N. Murphy

bers the likes of which we had never seen before. We reached Zeewolde on Flevoland by the time it was getting dark, and checked the marshes where thousands of Tufted Ducks and Common Pochards, along with several dozen Smew, were settling in for the evening. We tried for Water Rails and had two or three respond to our tape and then called it a day.



European Robin ~ Photo © N. Murphy

**Day 6: Flevoland: Ibisweg; Oostervaardersplassen – Zeearand Trail; North Holland: Den Over, Kleiput Vatrop, Den Helder, De Putten; South Holland: Amsterdam Burgemeester Cramer Gracht; Mijdrecht**

Driving the roads just south of the Oostervaardersplassen at first light, we came across a huge flock of starlings roosting along the tree lined road. We noticed that some of the birds were larger and it soon became apparent that we had thirty Fieldfares mixed in the flock. We watched as they flew about, landed in the plowed field and flew back into the trees. We headed into Oostervaardersplassen and walked the three mile Zeearand

Trail which leads to a large blind overlooking the marsh. Barn Owls roost in one of the maintenance buildings and we were able to hear one of them give their eerie screech. We kicked up three Common Snipe along the trail in a very small wet wooded area and clearly saw the white trailing edge to the secondaries. A pair of stunning Bearded Reedlings was coaxed into view at a small blind to the north side of the trail where they stayed within inches of the ground at all times. There are some birds that really are striking and this species must surely be near the top of the list.

Whooper Swans and Graylag Geese flew overhead on their way out to the fields while (Common) Shelducks stayed on the water. Water Rails were very vocal and close by the hide as well as the channel crossings, but they did not show themselves. We estimated that we heard about a dozen in all. The birds in the wooded areas were very active and included a dozen or more (Winter) Wrens, (European) Robins, (Common) Blackbirds, Great, Blue and Willow Tits, Goldcrest, Short-toed Treecreeper, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Redwings and our target bird, the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker which we found lightly tapping near the top of a dead tree. We saw four Great White Egrets from the Zeearand Hide and then headed back to the vehicle. We picked up two Song Thrushes in the car park along with several Redwings.

We headed north over the Markerwaarddijk that separates the IJsselmeer from the Markermeer to Den Over. It was low tide, and though we could see that there were many birds out there, we decided to move further around the top to Kleiput Vatrop. Here the birds were just as far out, but we did not have to walk too far to scope them. The tide line was a good 600 yards out and the birds stretched from one end to the other. There was an assortment of thousands and thousands of birds, including spectacular flocks of Dunlin. For us at least, the highlight was a Hooded Crow that was being chased by gulls from the tide line to close to the shore before they gave up.



Flocks~ Photo © N. Murphy

At Den Helder, we looked for Glaucous Gull near the harbor, and after only seeing a few gulls, we split up in different directions to look it. While Bill and I were admiring the Prince Willim, a gorgeous galleon ship dating back to 1651, Bert had the bird as a fly-by. We stopped at a large pond farther down the west coast where Lesser White-fronted Geese had been reported in recent days. A first scan of the flock consisted off Graylag, Greater White-fronts, Barnacle and a Cackling Goose. Naomi located the Lessers on the second scan...the birds obviously woke up from their sleep since now their small heads, orange bills and yellow eye ring were showing very well. This was our 12th goose and we were delighted to have finally located them. We had to coax a local woman out of her car so that we could show her the Lessers but it turned out she was more excited by a Cackling We had time for one more stop, maybe two, so we wasted no time in getting down to Amsterdam to a well known parakeet roost. The Rose-ringed Parakeets never showed so, with just enough light left, we made a swing south east of Amsterdam and picked up a pair of Little Owls at a nest box in someone's orchard. It was a great way to end the day.

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## A Wild Goose Chase ...cont'd

### Day 7: Kampen Fields; Hoge Veluwe; Zeeland: Philipsdam, Neeltje Jans

We'd decided the night before that we would concentrate on woodland birding in the morning, followed by a search in the south for the Red-breasted Goose and some loons that we'd missed due to the fog on day three. Peter's morning fax, which we got at breakfast, made us change our plans! There was a Red-breasted Goose reported about half an hour north of where we were. We headed out and in no time were in the fields north west of Kampen. We began scanning the flocks but, since it was first light, we only found two or three small groups. The flock nearest to the road held mainly Greater White-fronts with a few Graylag and 'Tundra' Beans thrown in. We were surprised to find a Ruddy Shelduck in the front row – just another species that had somehow gotten into the mix. We scanned another group, and found a few Barnacles mixed in but then, as the sun rose, an incredible number of geese were flying into the fields from their evening roosts. We watched as skein after skein noisily searched for the best location to feed.

The task of finding a single Red-breasted seemed daunting. We checked the various flocks and realized that there was only one that held Barnacles. It was not a terribly big group of birds in relation to the other flocks, but it was farther away. We slowly scanned from left to right, right to left and back again. The small family groups of Greater White-fronts took off and left fewer and fewer birds to scan. Then I found him. He was in the middle of the group, wandering around,

allowing us to view his superb plumage – the color of which is very reminiscent of a Harlequin Duck. This was our last goose of the trip, and quite possibly the highlight.

Our early success with the goose freed up a great deal of time and so, by mid morning, we headed into the woodlands at Veluwe. We found large flocks of Brambling and (European) Siskins feeding on the larch cones at the tops of the trees. At times, the noise was deafening and the birds all around us. Blue and Great Tits were common, but we also found many Willows, one Marsh, one Crested and several Coal Tits to round out our tit list. We heard a Black Woodpecker calling and were able to track down this beast of a bird, a female, which flew to the top of a tree and then around the area for a minute or two before disappearing into the woods. Great Spotted Woodpecker, Short-toed Treecreeper, Goldcrest and (Eurasian) Nuthatch rounded out an excellent hour of birding.



Common Redshank ~ Photo© N. Murphy



Eurasian Wigeons ~ Photo© N. Murphy

It took a couple of hours, but we made it back to the Zeeland area. The mist was not as bad as last Friday and we were able to use our scopes. We looked for flamingos at Philipsdam which was a bust though we did get a good laugh when I stopped someone to ask if he spoke English. "Certainly" was the reply. "Have you seen any flamingos?" I asked. "Many, many" he replied. I was onto a winner here, so I asked, "Can you tell me where?" as I pointed to the shallow bodies of water around the sluice gates. "Not here, back in my home country" was his reply. He was German. There's always a comedian about, even in the middle of nowhere. We did get an odd pairing of Canada and Cackling Goose here.

At Neeltje Jans we had eight Razorbills, one of which was relatively close in; a Common (Harbor) Seal; good numbers of Red-breasted Mergansers; Shag (same one as last week, different location); two Lesser Black-backed Gulls, one of which may well have been the nominate race; a large group of Dunlins and Grey Plovers as well as two Bar-tailed Godwits. Best of all, Bert located the loon that we had driven all that way to see. We had side by side comparisons of (Arctic) Black-throated and (Common) Great Northern Loon, showing not only the size difference (Arctic was about 3/4's the size of Common) but also the structural differences (shape of the head and bill) and finally the very obvious white flank patch. It was one of those days that could not have worked out any better.



Rock Pipit ~ Photo© N. Murphy

### Day 8: Flevoland: Lepersplassen; drive to Amsterdam

Fog got the better of us this morning which, unfortunately, meant that we could not look for the flamingos. We made a token stop on the pier near Lepersplassen and were able to see a female Smew and five Snow Buntings beside the road and on the rocks. After a quick stop to at the entrance to the pier, we decided it was best to head for the airport. As it turned out, we needed the extra hour to get to the airport because the fog had traffic crawling for at least half the journey.

Note: Participants in this trip were Adrian Binns, Bert Filemyr and Bill and Naomi Murphy.

## Delaware Valley Rarity Roundup: Summer ~ June thru August 2005

### Pennsylvania

Common Loon - Peace Valley, Bucks Co, June 11  
Sedge Wren - Roxborough, Philadelphia Co, June 30

Eurasian Collared Dove - Coatsville, Chester Co, Aug 6-12

Bonaparte's Gull - at Lake Nockamixon, Bucks Co, Aug 12, an early record

### Delaware

Swainson's Warbler - Blair's Pond, Milford, Kent Co, w/o May 28, 1st record since may 1988

Mississippi Kite - Appoquinmink Bridge, Newcastle Co, June 9-12

Hudsonian Godwit - Bombay Hook, Kent Co, June 12

Black Tern - Logan Tract, Kent Co, July 17-Aug 10

Franklin's Gull - Bombay Hook, Kent Co, July 30

Long-tailed Jaeger - Logan Tract, Kent Co, July 21, a 1<sup>st</sup> for Kent Co

American White Pelican - Ted Harvey WMA, Kent Co, Aug 22-26

### New Jersey

Garganey - the Bayshore Drive observation deck in Barnegat, Ocean Co, Jun 2.

Clay-colored Sparrow - Hoffman Park, Hunderdon Co, June 2-4

Mississippi Kite - Sandy Hook, Monmouth Co, June 6

American White Pelican - Forsythe NWR, Atlantic Co, June 12-Aug 14

Garganey - at Forsythe NWR, Atlantic Co, June 18

White-faced Ibis - Forsythe NWR, Atlantic Co, June 21-July 2

Swallow-tailed Kite - Hidden Valley, Cape May Co, June 23

Pine Siskin - Wells Mills Park, Ocean Co, July 5

King Eider - Sandy Hook, Monmouth Co, July 6

Red-necked Stint - Forsythe NWR, Atlantic Co, July 17

Magnificent Frigatebird - at Cape May Point, Cape May Co, July 19

**Brown-headed Nuthatch** - Cape May Point, Cape May Co, July 23-28, **1<sup>st</sup> State Record**

Mississippi Kite - Forsythe NWR, Atlantic Co, July 28

Magnificent Frigatebird - Stone Harbor, Cape May Co, July 30

White-throated Sparrow - Cape May Point, Cape May Co, w/o Aug 7

Magnificent Frigatebird - Great Bay Blvd, Tuckerton, Ocean Co, Aug 20

Rufous Hummingbird - Higbee Beach, Cape May Co, Aug 22

## Fall 2005 Bird Quiz ~ by Adrian Binns

In addition to current scientific and common names, many birds have vernacular names that were assigned and used locally. Many of these names are not commonly found in modern bird literature.

Have some fun with this issue's bird quiz. Do you know the current, common names for the birds listed below?

1. Texas Bird of Paradise
2. Bumblebee Buzzer
3. Voodoo Bird
4. Sea Snipe
5. Logcock
6. Torch Bird
7. Jiddy-hawk
8. Sicklebill
9. Bastard Broadbill



# Fall/Winter 2005 UPCOMING MEETINGS

## OCTOBER 20 AT 7:30 GEORGE ARMISTEAD "BIRDING SOUTHERN ARGENTINA: THE PAMPAS, PATAGONIA & TIERRA DEL FUEGO"

Join George, a DVO member, as he highlights the trips he's led for Field Guides to the bottom of the world.

**Ornithological Study-** Matt Sharp: Vagrant Western Hummingbirds.

## NOVEMBER 3 AT 7:30 SAM FRIED "EASTERN AUSTRALIA BIRDING"

Sam's program on eastern Australia birding promises to be entertaining and educational. Join us to learn more about this interesting and colorful avifauna.

**Ornithological Study-** Colin Campbell: Greater and Lesser Snow Goose.

## NOVEMBER 17 ANNUAL BANQUET: SPEAKERS, MICHAEL MALE & JUDY FIETH

See page 10 for additional information of our speakers, food options, banquet location, etc.

## DECEMBER 1 AT 7:30 SCOTT BARNES "BIRDS AND HAPPENINGS AT SANDY HOOK BIRD OBSERVATORY"

Scott is the Senior Naturalist at Sandy Hook. He'll highlight activities at "the Hook" such as: hot birds, ongoing research, Natco Lane and Coneskonk Point, etc.

**Ornithological Study-** Carl Perry, Ivory-billed Woodpecker Wood workings.

## DECEMBER 15 AT 7:30 MEMBER'S PHOTOGRAPHY NIGHT

Bring your best photos and duke it out with the rest of the club's crack photographers for 1st prize. Categories are: birds, birders, flora & fauna and landscapes.

**Ornithological Study-** Art McMorris, 2005 Peregrine Falcon Nesting Season in PA

## Field Trips

### OCTOBER 15, 2005 (SATURDAY) - TUCKERTON MARSHES, NJ

Sharp-tailed Sparrows are the target for this field trip. We should get great looks at Salt Marsh Sharp-tail's as well as being able to compare all races of Nelson's. A walk along 7 bridges road will add additional species. We have gotten Clay-colored Sparrow in several years. Bring high boots or wellies. Pack a lunch if you will follow us to Brigantine afterwards. Meet at the end of 7 Bridges Road at 7:30 sharp!

Leader: Frank Windfelder (215) 673-0240

### OCTOBER 22, 2005 (SATURDAY) - BIRDING THE NATIVE GRASSLANDS AT THE PENNYPACK TRUST, MONTGOMERY CO., PA

Tour the native grasslands at Pennypack Trust for sparrows and other grassland birds. Notable recent finds there include Dickcissel, Lapland Longspur, Orange-crowned Warbler and Vesper Sparrow. Savannah Sparrows are abundant. The area is also good for raptors. Meet at the Creek Road entrance off Terwood Road, 1.2 miles south of Edgehill Road, Huntingdon Valley, PA. Telephone leader for driving instructions or go to their web site where a map can be found.

Leaders: JoAnn Raine (215) 659-3921 and Paul Driver

### NOVEMBER 5 OR 6, 2005 (SATURDAY OR SUNDAY) - BAKE OVEN KNOB, PA

This is a great trip for raptors and possibly even Golden Eagle and Goshawk. A decision on which day should have the best conditions will be made the week prior. Meet at parking lot at 8:30AM and bring lunch.

Leaders: Frank Windfelder (215) 673-0240 or Bill Murphy (215) 885-2488 and Chris Walters (215) 642-6862

### NOVEMBER 12, 2005 (SATURDAY) **NOTE DATE CHANGE** – SAW-WHET OWL BANDING AT HIDDEN VALLEY, PA.

This trip is full. Contact Adrian Binns to be put on a waiting list. Join Scott Weidensaul at his banding station along the Kittitany Ridge on Second Mountain in Schuylkill County during the peak of Saw-whet migration. Meet at the banding station at 6:30PM. Dress warmly. Expect to be out until 11PM. Limited to 15 participants.

Leader: Adrian Binns (215) 364-4407

### NOVEMBER 19, 2005 (SATURDAY) - FRANKLIN'S AND CALIFORNIA GULL TRIP

Half day. Western species are most likely to turn up in late fall. We will make a special trip to Cherry Island to search the hordes for these rarities. This is also a good chance to study plumage and molt in gulls at a time when at least Herring Gulls are actively molting and most people do not look at gulls. Meet at Fox Point Park at 8:30.

Leader: Matt Sharp (215) 299-1069

## Fall 2005 Bird Quiz Answers

1. Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
2. Ruddy Duck
3. Smooth-billed Ani
4. Phalaropes
5. Pileated Woodpecker
6. Blackburnian Warbler
7. Pomarine Jaeger
8. Long-billed Curlew
9. Ring-necked Duck



Smooth-billed Ani ~ Photo © A. Binns

## Sad News

Two long time members of the DVOC have recently passed away.

Helen McWilliams, one of the first women to join the DVOC in January 1983, died peacefully at her home. Helen was an enthusiastic birder in the Swarthmore area and throughout the Delaware Valley for more than forty years.

Dr. Kenneth Gordon passed away after a period of illness. Ken was a life member who had a high level of interest in the club's conservation efforts and enjoyed participating in DVOC field trips.

Condolences go out to the families of Helen and Ken. Both members will be missed.



# DVOC Annual Banquet

November 17, 2005

Members and Non-Members Welcome!

Michael Male and Judy Fieth are our speakers for this year's banquet. Michael and Judy are the creators of the fantastic video/DVD guide series on warblers, waders and sparrows. They have worked together on natural history films since 1980 when they met in New York City while working as freelance crew on TV documentaries and commercials. They started filming birds for a "video guide" back when VCRs were first making an appearance. Michael and Judy concentrated on warblers for the first ten years, filming a few here and there between jobs that paid the rent. By 1995, they had all of the eastern species and were able to finish their first video guide, "Watching Warblers". The success of "Watching Warblers" allowed Michael and Judy to devote more time to making bird tapes. It took only three years to film "Watching Waders" and another three years to film *both* "Watching Sparrows" and "Watching Warblers West". More information about these guides is available at [www.birdfilms.com/index.html](http://www.birdfilms.com/index.html).

Michael and Judy's presentation to the DVOC last winter was a tremendous hit. Join us for some fine food, camaraderie and a very special program.

#### Location

Penn's Landing Caterers  
Sheet Metal Worker's Hall  
1301 Columbus Boulevard  
Philadelphia, PA 19147  
[www.pennslandincaterers.com](http://www.pennslandincaterers.com)

#### Menu—Choice of

Sirloin of Beef au Jus  
Sweet Thai Chili Glazed Salmon  
Vegetarian Puff Pastry filled with mushrooms and peppers

Wild Rice, Broccoli, Rolls  
Coffee, tea  
Sherbet

**Time:** Cocktails – 6:00 p.m. (cash bar with cheese and crackers)  
Dinner – 7:00 p.m.

**Cost:** \$38.50 per person—all entrees. (includes 7% tax and all gratuities)

**Parking:** Free

**Directions:** Delaware River waterfront just south of where Washington Avenue intersects Columbus Boulevard.

#### Banquet Reservation Form (Submit no later than Tuesday November 11)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Entrée: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$38.50

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Entrée: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$38.50

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Make your check payable to DVOC

Mail reservation form and check to Bernice & Joseph Koplín, 251 St. Joseph's Way, Philadelphia, PA. 19106

Home Phone: (215) 922-7803 Work Phone: (215) 985-3900