

January 30, 1950

THE DVOC CROW
(a sample)
by Harvey Moore

I don't know whether a fellow who has been honored by having the appellation "FELLOW" conferred on him, should do anything about it or not. Not being clear on what the responsibilities of "FELLOW" were, I looked it up in the dictionary. Among other things, I found it meant "not very important person." So, as the term "important was included even if derogatively qualified, I accept the N.V.I.P. point of view, and am doing something about it.

For a long time it has been in the back of my mind that something was missing from the DVOC. We lost an old time clearing house for sharing personalities, exploring our quirks and iniosyncracies, and getting some fun out of it, when the old well-attended field trips went out of style - due to the automobile and abandoned train schedules. And nothing has taken place of the gokd natured club member association those old field trips gave us. I know we have the meeting nights, but some of us are less vocal than others. And besides, unless a member has seen a Sandhill Crane in his back yard, he is wasting time reporting Johnny Bulls and Starlings. There just isn't any medium in existance for getting things off our chests, like this idea for instance. There isn't any place where a member can make trivial, but humorous, I hope, comment on some fool bird adventure he has had. No place where he can gently kid a fellow member, or even present a try-out idea, which Chandler Ross may think worth working up into an article for Cassinia.

So I am proposing we try to remedy that, and get out, semi-occasionally, a mimeographed sheet like this. Something exclusively for attending club members. As evanescent as the conversation on a field trip. With no permanent value whatsoever. Aimed simply at keeping alive a DVOC feeling of good fellowship.

Dr. Stone expresses exactly what I am driving at in his Birds of Old Cape May where he says:

"As I look back upon the many years**I realize that my greatest pleasure has been in the delightful association with men of kindred interest.**The personal ~~contact~~ has-always meant as much or more than the ornithological association."

And that is what this idea I am trying to foster is aimed at preserving. The delightful assoication and personal contact of men of kindred interest.

Somebody, of course, would have to stick out a neck and take on the mimeographing job. For that I'll stick my neck out. But it does NOT include the responsibility of keeping the mimeographed sheet filled with words. Members would have to pass along to me "copy" Ideas; funny things they have run across in their birding; bird verses (my own pet falling); good natured, but scurrilous, remarks about fellow members; dissenting opinions; or even a serious, but abbreviated, bird study; - anything that will help preserve and encourage "the delightful association of men of kindred interest." I would work such things up on a sheet like this, for distribution to members on a meeting night.

Below are samples of the kind of stuff I mean. Unfortunately, in this first attempt, all the copy, of necessity, must be my own. I didn't ask anybody's advise, or help. If the idea is a flop, I want the flop to be mine alone. If it isn't, we can remedy this solo performance on later sheets.

PLEASE RETURN TO:
Mr. Roy C. Imsick
7718 Queen St.

When the house of mine was building, back in 41, I used to go up to the building operation and meet Fletcher Street who designed it, and whose memory will always be fresh. We'd soon forget about house construction, and go hunt the Mocker, who was very new in Riverton those days. One day, as we started out for the Mocker, a big "V" of Canada Geese went over, and Fletcher said;-"Why don't you start a House Life List?" And I did with those geese.

By 1947 there was 110 species on it. Addition were getting hard to get. But I got two this month (January 50) on two successive days. I had been out of circulation for a month or more. On my first venture outside, as I opened the door, I said;-"Watch me get a House Life Lister." Then I looked up. A big lumbering, low-flying Rough Leg was going over to the river trees. A House Life Lister!

Next day I went out with the same remark; and there in the street at the end of the driveway, was - of all things - a fine looking Sanderling, industrially picking up something to eat off that stone roadway! Another House Life Lister!

I started out on the same remark next day. But as Sancho Panza says - "it could not always be fair weather," or "man is not born with a silver spoon in his mouth," or "the pitcher goes once too often to the well," - and I got no more House Life Listers.

ORNITHOLOGICAL NOTE

The VIOLET-RED WAXBILL is really a bird,
I learned that today from a book;-
To life-lister that one, please do take my word,
To Rhodesia you'd go for a look.

There's another one there, and you Could look for him,
The JESUS BIRD wandering about
On the top of the water, although he can't swim,
Which the book says is true without doubt.

Authority-"The Rhodesian Annual 1949"
unsigned illustrated article p-114.

THE EVENING GROSBEAK

Hesperiphona vespertina vespertina.

On January 29, while out in the field, I bumped into Julian Potter. From different sides we were both looking into some hackberry trees at a flock(18) Evening Grosbeaks. When I got home, I looked em up further.

The Evening Grosbeak was first seen in 1823 by that old Indian Authority, Henry R. Schoolcraft. He was Indian Agent on our (then) Northwestern Frontier, stationed at Sault St. Marie, in the upper Michigan Peninsula, on the St Mary's River that connects Lake Huron with Lake Superior. Unfortunately, among the many accomplishments of this very versatile nautsman, naming and describing the bird is not included. That was left to one W. Cooper (whoever he was) who did it from a Sault St Marie specimen.

Cooper erroneously thought the bird sang only in the evening. This, and the fact that the specimen came from the west, caused him to poetically call it "Hesperiphona vespertina vespertina," Named for the Hesperides, the three western maidens who, with a dragon, guarded the golden apples GE (Earth) gave to Zeus as a wed wedding gift. They lived in the mysterious west, in the Garden of Hesperus, on the border of Ocean where the evening sun dips down below the horizon. Cooper knew his Greek Mythology all right. The name also proved good on a subsequently discovered trait of the birds. They love apple seeds!

From now on I'm going to call all Evening Grosbeaks I see "Hesperides." If there are but three individuals in the flock, their names will be Aegle, Arethusia and Hesperia; but if the flock is larger, I'll have to call on the DVOC for additional names.

The Evening Grosbeaks breeds in Alberta, on the eastern slope of the Canadian Rockies. They have no proper imigration, but wander about in winter in search of food. Pough, in Audubon Bird Guide, says, very logically, I think,—"If enough winter bird feeding stations are established to free the Evening Grosbeak from dependence on natural foods, its population might increase greatly in years to come." Potter suggests planting hackberry trees. That flock we were looking at have been eating those hackberries for over a month.

Griscom says the first appearance of the Evening Grosbeak in the New York area was in a "Phenominal invasion" in 1890. The next records are in 1910, since which time it has been a sprodadic winter visitor. — Dr. Stone gives ALL the New Jersey records up to the publication of his book. He starts with 1890, jumps to 1910, then to 1918, after which the gaps close to almost yearly records. As he only gives three records of individual birds for Cape May, Wrights record of 24 at Stone Harbor this year is exceptional.

Now lets take a slam at Julian Potter.

POTTERS ERRATUM
Hopewell Pa. 10/21/49

Lycopodium obscurum is
The plant that Pot forgot,
When, looking down upon the ground
He thought he saw a lot.

And instantly was I puffed up
With egotistic pride,
For I knew more than Potter knew,
And this I could not hide.

I said;—"That stuff is NOT ground-pine,
No more than its allurum; (*)
It's lycopodium, all right,
But not the breed obscurum."

"It could be "corvus footus"
In the language scientific,
Which translates "crowfoot" easily
In lingo less terrific."

"Lycopodium obscurum, Pot,"
I continued with disdain,
"Is NOT the thing you're looking at;—
Flabelliform's the name."

So because in any lustrum
Only once is Potter wrong,
The thing is so momentuous
It's recorded here in song.

(*) allurum is a new order awaiting
discovery.

TAIL FEATHERS

And this about finishes a sample of what's on my mind. If the idea takes, and I get some "copy" from members, I'll do another one. Maybe we can get it established, after which it should develop into a clearing house for DVOC ideas, both sane and cockeyed.

In our copy I think we should be free with each other's names. "THE DVOC CROW" should do a lot of crowing about members, as well as about birds. Through it we should be able to feel the same delight Dr. Stone got from his association with man of "kindred interests." It should express the charm and gaiety we get out of our relationship with men who derive esthetic and scientific pleasure watching birds in their natural surroundings.

Copy should have some laughter in it. And where the subject permits, should be in the vernacular of every day speech. Maybe the lousier it is the better it will accomplish the purpose I am aiming at.

Anyhow, everything goes. The sky's the limit. Address me at the job where I have access to mimeograph machines.

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