

FIELD TRIPS

September 4-6	Cape Hatteras, North Carolina Contact Rick Mellon or Alan Brady
October 16-17	Barnegat Light to Cape May Meet at the Light at 8:00 A.M.
November 6	Boat Trip to Hudson Canyon Tickets limited. Contact Alan Brady.
December	Christmas Counts

For further information about any of the outings, contact the Field Trip Chairman, Rick Mellon (215-295-5533).

NEW JERSEY BIRDS RECORDS COMMITTEE

On February 1, 1976, a New Jersey Birds Records Committee was formed as part of the New Jersey Audubon Society's Wildlife Research Unit. The Committee is similar to those already established in several other states. Its duties are (1) to establish criteria for records of birds in New Jersey, including a standard form of sight records, (2) to draw up a New Jersey State list based on these criteria and to publish it, (3) to review the reports of species new to the state or of rarity and decide on the acceptability of the records, and (4) to maintain records in a central location.

The Committee consists of six members, two each from the New Jersey Audubon Society, Urner Club, and DVOC. The present DVOC members are Jim Akers and Jim Meritt.

Species unusual to the state should be reported on standard forms which have been prepared and will be available at DVOC meetings. They can also be obtained from either Alkers or Meritt.

CONGRATULATIONS

George Reynard, an Honorary Member of the DVOC, gave a paper at the recent meeting of the AOU in Haverford, Pa. George's subject was the vocalizations of several owls, including the rare Stygian Owl. I remember well that dawn at Blancaneaux Lodge in Belize when I was leaving on a birding hike and met George returning from his nocturnal birding. He was justifiably excited with his success in recording the Stygian Owl and now has shared his success with the AOU.

From the Editor

With so many DVOC members flying off on so many exotic birding adventures, I thought it might be of interest to recount a successful family car trip that proved that prohibitive plane fares needn't keep the ardent birder close to home. We wound up about a third of the way to Ireland on the western coast of Newfoundland. The birds were worth the trip.

We began as all long, tiring journeys should with two beautiful days as guests of gracious hosts on the island resort of Martha's Vineyard. Yes, we went across the famous bridge on Chappaquiddick Island, but our interest was healthier than most; we were after the birds along the ocean shore. We were rewarded with a good look at a Roseate Tern. Earlier we had seen many land birds (including Black-billed Cuckoo) in the well-forested areas of the Vineyard itself.

The genteel island living was quickly behind us as we set out to camp in Fundy National Park in New Brunswick. We didn't expect to see many birds here and were more concerned with entertaining the non-birding wife and daughter. The famous tides and general scenery were well worth seeing, but the birding was a pleasant surprise. Immediately around our tent we had Gray Jays eating out of our hands, Boreal Chickadees, Ravens, Evening Grosbeaks, and a Great-horned Owl calling during the night. The numbers of warblers were of particular enjoyment, as we always seemed to have Black-throated Green, Blackpoll Black and White, Magnolia, Redstart, and Blackburnian Warblers around us. There were lesser numbers of Black-throated Blue, Canada, Bay-breasted, Yellow-rumped, Parula, Ovenbird, and Yellowthroat. Except for hundreds of Semipalmated Plovers there was no shorebirding to speak of, but there were Common Eider off in the surf. Our disappointment here and throughout our trip was that I could not produce a life woodpecker for the boys. Every woodpecker we tracked down turned out to be the very common Yellow-bellied Sapsucker except once when we were busy swimming in Newfoundland and my wife saw the Black-backed Three-Toed all by herself--we haven't forgiven her yet.

We didn't actually get to do much birding in Nova Scotia as we had to hurry towards a ferry on the way in and race a hurricane on the way back, but Cape Breton Highlands National Park did produce Spruce Grouse, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Arctic Tern, Black Guillemot, Northern Cormorant, and two breeding plumage Common Loons. We'd like to go back and track down those wandering flocks of White-winged Crossbills that are supposed to exist.

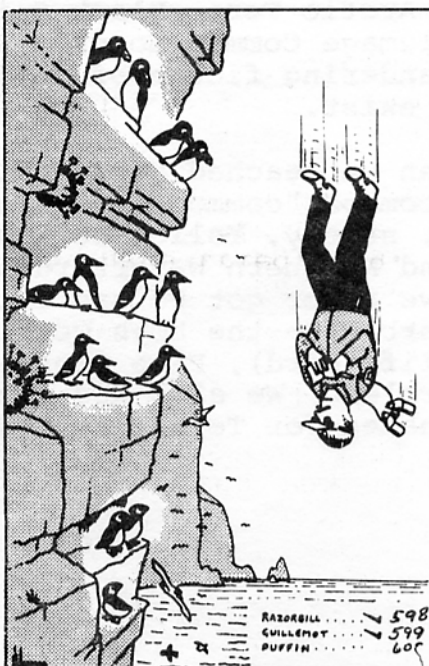
The highlight of our trip came when we reached Newfoundland where the abundance of certain very uncommon "common" eastern birds gave me as much enjoyment as any lifer; namely, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Fox and Lincoln Sparrow, and Northern Waterthrush. Our best birds were Mourning Warbler (we never got to see this one though it was one of the few singing warblers--the boys were miserable that they couldn't count it as a life bird), Pine Grosbeak, Pine Siskins everywhere, and Wilson Warbler. We also had Sterns, Twillicks, and Fat Oxen--Newfoundland names for Terns, Yellowlegs, and Ruddy Turnstones.

Now for the very best of all. Jay, Vernon and I climbed Gros Morne (the second highest mountain in Newfoundland). It was a tough eleven mile round trip, but Vernon made it worthwhile by picking out a Willow Ptarmigan with young on the grassy slope of the mountain. We wandered around the summit for a couple hours with Ravens, Water Pipits, Horned Larks, a spectacular view, and finally my single most wanted lifer, Rock Ptarmigan. It's hard to believe where this bird nests (we saw a female and one young): we were on the absolute summit with no bushes of any sort, just rocks. The park naturalists were excited with our success, as no one had seen Ptarmigan since May--a party of serious birders hadn't seen either species just days before we had both. I figured I deserved a little luck after all those mountains we climbed in Alaska looking for this chicken.

The ferry ride between Nova Scotia and Newfoundland covers one hundred miles in six hours. We had clear weather for both crossings, and since this boat ride was not arranged by Alan Brady, we didn't even get seasick. We spotted countless Greater Shearwaters, many Wilson Petrels, two Gannets, two Sooty Shearwaters, three Fulmars, and one exhausted land bird that dropped into one of the life boats. We were able to get within four feet of this plain brown bird, so plain that the jerk we asked to take a picture of it for us couldn't be bothered. Why all the fuss? It was absolutely not a North American species. I want to see some more plates, but I'm 95% certain we had a Corn Bunting. I hope it's not the very first sighting in AOU area or I'll never forgive myself for not getting a picture, as the bird just sat and sat until within a few miles of Nova Scotia.

Even without our European visitor, we had an exciting family trip. There was much to do besides bird, and even many other birding excursions we could have tried, e.g. the bird islands just off the coast. With the ever rising air fares, I suspect that many birding families will want to try this economical car and tent vacation.

John T. LaVia, Editor, 56 Millbrook Drive, Willingboro, New Jersey (609-877-8025)



86th Annual Banquet

Thursday October 21st 1976

6:00 P. M. Refreshment Hour

7:00 P. M. Dinner in the African Hall

8:30 P. M. Featured Speaker---

Richard Rowlett
"Seabirds and Animals"

Price: - \$11.00 per person

Send reservation by October 11th.,
with check, marked Banquet, payable
to D. V. O. C. to----

Ron Logan,
4639 Edgemont Street,
Philadelphia, Penna., 19137