

1977 OFFICERS

President ----- Stephen T. Harty
Vice President ----- Charles A. Wonderly
Secretary ----- James K. Meritt
Treasurer ----- Walter F. Lipski
Editor, Cassinia ----- Keith Richards

PROGRAMS

- JAN. 20 PHOTO CONTEST - Bring 3 slides from each of 3 categories: Birds, Natural History, Scenes
- FEB. 3 JOURNEY TO GALAPAGOS - DONALD S. HEINTZELMAN
- FEB. 17 BIRDS OF SCANDINAVIA - PAUL WEIRICK
- MAR. 3 LOCAL BIRDS AND BEASTS - RICHARD C. BELL
- MAR. 17 ENDANGERED SPECIES OF NEW JERSEY - PAUL McCLAIN
or a member of the Department of Environmental
Protection of New Jersey
- APR. 7 BIRDING IN PERU - JAMES F. AKERS
- APR. 21 A NEW LOOK AT BIRD BEHAVIOR - ALBERT E. CONWAY
- MAY 5 VETERINARY CARE OF CAPTIVE ANIMALS - DR. WILBUR
AMAND (Meet at Phila. Zoo Administration Bldg.
Gate on 34th Street - 5:00 - 5:30 PM. Box supper.
Sign up or phone 215-482-3154)
- MAY 19 SPRING ROUND-UP REPORTS

Informal summer meetings will be held June 2, July 7, August 4, September 1, and September 15.

All meetings (except May 5) will be at 8:00 PM at the Academy of Natural Sciences.

ADDRESS CHANGES

Please notify the Secretary (James Meritt, 809 Saratoga Terrace, Turnersville, N.J. 08012) promptly of any change of address.

1977 DUES PAYMENTS

1977 membership dues are now payable to the Treasurer (Walter F. Lipski, 485 Willow Drive, Cinnaminson, N.J. 08077). A number of members have already made payments. If an envelope and slip are enclosed, your payment has not been received by the Treasurer as of the date of the mailing of this Newsletter.

Please respond promptly and help the Club avoid the cost of a follow-up mailing.

CONGRATULATIONS

At the Annual Meeting held on January 6, 1977, Frank W. McLaughlin and Dr. William E. Parker were elected Honorary Members of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club.

Richard Bell, Edwin Bloor, Christopher Caracino, Frank Neumann, and Dr. Edward Wildman were elected Fellows.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Philip B. Hoppin, 212 E. Maple Ave., Moorestown, N.J. 08057
Dr. Marvin R. Hyett, 403 Silverhill Rd., Cherry Hill, N.J. 08002
Ronald T. Reuther, Philadelphia Zoo, 34th and Girard Ave.,
Philadelphia, Pa. 19104

A REQUEST FROM THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR

I hope that future issues of the Newsletter can include brief articles or notes of general interest written by Club members.

If you would be interested in contributing in this manner, please contact me.

John T. LaVia, 56 Millbrook Drive,
Willingboro, N.J. 08046
Home: 609-877-8025

WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S AROUND?

Dial the Birding Hot Line (215-BEN-BIRD).

The Hot Line is again soliciting your support for another successful year of operation. Checks should be made payable to the Academy of Natural Sciences and mailed to Dr. Frank B. Gill, Academy of Natural Sciences, 19th and The Parkway, Phila., Pa. 19103. A note should be enclosed indicating that the contribution is for the Hot Line.

Your contributions are, of course, tax deductible.

1977 FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

- JAN. 15-16 POCONOS. Reservations required. For details contact Phil Street (Home: 215-363-7776).
- JAN. 30 SHARK RIVER, N.J. Meet at Pat's Diner on Route 35 in Belmar at 8:00 AM. Leader: Rick Mellon.
(Amesbury, Mass.)
- FEB. 19-21 NEW ENGLAND. Headquarters: Swiss Chalet Motel (800-258-1980). Leader: William Tucker. Call Rick Mellon for trip details.
- FEB. 26 HUDSON CANYON PELAGIC TRIP. Reservations required. TRIP SOLD OUT.
- MARCH 6 WEST JERSEY. Meet at Brooklawn Circle Diner on Route 130 at 8:00 AM. Leaders: Ed Manners and Will Middleton.
- APRIL 3 DELAWARE. Meet at Bombay Hook Refuge headquarters at 7:30 AM. Leader: Keith Richards.
- APRIL 23-24 POCOMOKE. Contact Rick Mellon for details.
- MAY 8 SPRING ROUND-UP
- MAY 28 HUDSON CANYON PELAGIC TRIP. Reservations required. Contact Alan Brady (Office: 215-968-2833; Home: 215-598-7856).
- JULY 9-11 CONNECTICUT LAKES, N.H. Contact Rick Mellon for details.
- AUG. 7 N.J. PINE BARRENS (Flora). Meet at Chatsworth Fire House at 8:00 AM. Leader: Rick Mellon.
- SEPT. 3-5 CAPE HATTERAS, N.C. Contact Alan Brady for details.
- OCT. 1-2 BARNEGAT TO CAPE MAY. Meet at Barnegat Lighthouse at 8:00 AM. Leader: Bob Sehl.
- NOV. 6 BAKE OVEN KNOB
- DEC. CHRISTMAS COUNTS

Rick Mellon, Field Trip Chairman
Office: 215-862-2924
Home: 215-295-5533

In the last several years a great leap forward has been made for all of us birders. The various rare bird alerts have replaced the inefficient old-boys' network in spreading the word of any rare sightings. Previously, unless you were part of the elite, the only chance you had of hearing about such a thing as the Green-tailed Towhee in Mickleton last winter was six months later in the seasonal report in American Birds. Now a simple phone call puts anyone in touch with the latest sightings, including accurate road directions to the rarer findings. Moreover, with many birders converging on an announced rarity, it is harder for the bird to escape without being sighted by all. Yes, we listers have it quite easy these days.

Unfortunately all is not as smooth as it may appear, which brings me to the case in point: the Lesser Black-backed Gull at Round Valley Reservoir. Although Bob Sehl often berates me for my Agnew-like reaction to a previous search in the cold for Larus something or other: "you've seen one gull, you've seen them all," I was more than a bit excited at this report. Last winter Jim Meritt and I drove down to Maryland to spend a depressing morning in a garbage dump looking for this species. Now all I'd have to do would be to stop off at a pleasant little reservoir and add to my list the last gull I can reasonably hope for in North America, unless this year's Newburyport gull is a Red-legged Kittiwake.

The first inkling of trouble came when I found the reservoir on my road map. I found it too easily - it's a very large reservoir. Finding one gull on such an expanse could take more than a few minutes. I then checked the field guides to see whether there were any marks other than the smaller size and yellow legs to distinguish this species from the Great Black-backed Gull and learned to my sorrow that "sub-adult and winter Lessers still have pink legs." Well, identification won't be a problem; everybody will be there to confirm this sighting.

All began well. The place was easy to find, it was indeed a pleasant spot, and there was a welcoming party of some fifty Snow Buntings. Moreover, soon everybody did show up to join the search. The frustrated members of Alan Brady's propeller-less boat trip swelled the numbers of searchers, and when Dick Bell's jeep disgorged the rarest of all New England birds, a genuine Bill Tucker, I was ready for a glorious day of DVOC birding.

I really don't have to finish this account, do I? We're all birders. We know all there is to know about frustration. We'd sight a black-back type, jump in the cars to get closer or to get in better light, and yet never quite get a good enough look to be sure. A gull sitting in the water does not show much in the way of leg color, and the distances were such that the "easy" criterion of size was impossible to apply with any degree of certainty. I went back at dawn the next day to try again and became more and more frustrated as my continued efforts ended in failure.

I'm sure glad I don't care much about gulls.