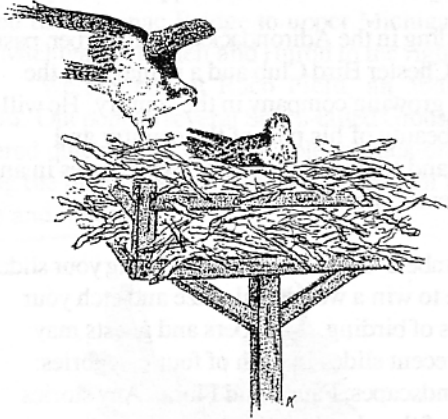


Philadelphia Larus

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Autumn 2000



Osprey on Nest
© Adrian Binns

DVOC Assists Nesting Ospreys

by Sandra Sherman

This spring, DVOC's Conservation Committee was approached by concerned members of the Delmarva Ornithological Society (DOS) to assist financially in placing Osprey nesting platforms in the marshes of South Jersey. It seemed a strange request and, not knowing that we didn't have the full story, DVOC Council at first chose to take a pass on this project.

But, on a trip out on Capt. Bob Carlough's catamaran *The Skimmer* in mid-May, I quickly understood why we had received the request: Storms that washed through the back-bay marshes behind Wildwood, Cape May County, last winter did serious damage to the rickety wooden platforms that the Ospreys have used for years in this vicinity.

What I saw was sad: several pairs of Ospreys moping around, sitting directly on the marsh, with no place to nest, or a few that had rebuilt flimsy nests directly on slabs of peat that had washed up on the marshes in those same storms. These birds had little chance of successfully breeding this year.

I alerted President Ron French, explaining the situation, and he rallied Council to agree to resurrect the proposal and, in fact, get it moving quickly. Bruce Lantz, DOS Research Committee chair and a Conservation Committee member — as well as a member of DVOC — then jumped into action on Memorial Day Weekend.

On Saturday, May 27, Capt. Carlough, who had already been contacted by DOS, donated his services to

Michigan Trip Report: May 26-31, 2000

by Anna Bert and Adrian Binns

As the sun came up on that Friday morning in Michigan, we were riding north toward the site where we planned to look for the Henslow's sparrow. We had been on the road for twelve hours, having driven through the night on the Pennsylvania and Ohio turnpikes. Nobody had slept more than a few minutes all night because the conversation and the jokes never stopped.

Our group consisted of Adrian Binns, leader, Paul and Anita Guris, Dennis and Anna Bert, Irene Goverts and Frank Windfelder.

On a small farm road in the north end of Bay County, Anita found the Henslow's Sparrow and we all had a good look at it.

Nearby, on Grim Road, we saw and heard a Sedge Wren. We also saw a Mourning warbler, Veery, Blue-winged Warbler, and a Golden-winged Warbler. Around the corner, on the road to Molasses Lake, we saw a Black Tern and heard an Alder Flycatcher. By 10:45 we'd already had a very successful morning.

After lunch, we were off to Tawas Point State Park, which projects into Lake Huron. We had the park almost to ourselves. We saw Caspian Tern, Dunlin, White-rumped sandpiper and Sanderling. Around 3:00 PM, while walking around the point near the lighthouse, we encountered a pocket of birds in a small pine grove: American Redstart, Bay-breasted Warbler, Orchard Oriole, Great Crested Flycatcher, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Brown Thrasher, Blackpoll Warbler and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. By the time we reached our motel that evening, we had found 111 species of birds.

On Saturday morning we had a 7:00 AM appointment to see the Kirtland's warbler.



Kirtland's Warbler
©Adrian Binns

Continued on Page 5

As we bring up the curtain on the 2000-2001 DVOC Season, I would like to reflect on the efforts that are necessary to make this possible. Colin Campbell, our program chairman, is busy setting the various programs into place in order to make this the best season ever. Bernice and Joe Koplín are getting the menu and preliminaries prepared to make our banquet a night to remember. Adrian Binns, with the help of other members, is planning some very special field trips. All of their energies are greatly appreciated.

I am hardly scratching the surface of the efforts of our members to make our club the very best it can be. Still without our attendance these efforts can be in vain. Let's make a special effort to come out for our programs, banquet and field trips. They are all very special events and deserve the support we can give them.

I would also like to report at this time that Katrina Knight, our Archives Chairperson, has the Minutes of our meetings from 1964 on in her possession and is preparing a recommendation for having them bound in the fashion of previous minutes. We hope to have a report for Council in the very near future.

I look forward with great anticipation to the season ahead. Come out and share it with us.

Ron French, President

FALL FIELD TRIPS

Sun, Sept. 3: Pelagic out of Cape May aboard Morning Star to canyons SE of Cape May for White-faced Storm Petrel. Cost: \$96. Max. 20 participants.
Call: Armas Hill (302)529-1876
(font@focusnature.com)

Sun, Sept. 17: Fall birding at Bailey Tract, Palmyra, NJ. Anything is possible at this great location, but the focus will be on migrating warblers. Last year 22 species, including Connecticut Warblers, as well as Lincoln's and Clay-colored Sparrows.
Call: Ward Dasey (609)953-1685
(w.daseyiii@worldnet.att.net)

Sat, Oct. 7: Tuckerton Marshes, NJ. Sharp-tailed sparrows, with great comparison of all races of Nelson's, as well as Saltmarsh Sharp-tails. A walk along 7 Bridges Rd. is likely to add another dozen sparrow species. Followed by a once around at Brigantine NWR.
Meet at end of 7 Bridges Road at 7:30 sharp.
Call: Frank Windfelder (215)673-0240
(windfelder@aol.com)

October 5: "Bird Tasks for the Millennium." Paul Baicich, avid birder, cook, raconteur, author, Editor of ABA's "Birding." A history of trends in both birds and birders, followed by present day hopes and aspirations for avian populations and the noble art of birding.

October 19: "Birding in the Adirondacks." Bill Barber, past president of West Chester Bird Club and a manager at the largest mushroom growing company in the country. He will share with us the beauty of his part of the country and describe the birds and some of his birding experiences in an amazing twin projector show.

November 2: Members' Slide Show Night. Bring your slides and have a chance to win a wonderful prize and etch your name in the annals of birding. Members and guests may bring up to three recent slides in each of four categories: Birds, Birders, Landscapes, Fauna and Flora. Any stories behind the taking of the photos are welcomed.

November 16: "Conservation of the Philippine Eagle and the Philippine Rain Forests." Ralph Mancke trained as a chemist, became a biologist and ornithologist after "retirement," and dedicated himself to worthy conservation causes. His talk derives from his volunteer work with the Philippine Eagle foundation. It describes the group's efforts to protect this magnificent monkey-eating eagle and its habitat.

December 7: Annual Banquet. "Birding in the New Millennium." Kevin Karlson, one of the foremost bird photographers in the country, has traveled around birding hot spots in America. He will explain what it will take to preserve these places for the generations to come.
See Banquet details and reservation form on Page 5.

December 21: Memorable Moments. In keeping with the holiday season, this program will feature thought-provoking and/or humorous stories and anecdotes from members. Rich experiences while birding, most memorable moments in the field, dump or sewage pond, items of interest/concern from the media. Anything you know the audience will enjoy. If you wish to contribute to this little pot pourri, let Colin Campbell know well before the date.
(302)792-2506
colin.campbell@cibasc.com

Sat, Nov. 4: Bake Oven Knob for raptors. Golden Eagle, Goshawk, winter finches.
Meet 8:30 AM in parking lot. Bring lunch.
Call Frank Windfelder (215)673-0240
(windfelder@aol.com)

DVOC Contributes Conservation Funds to Aid Threatened species at Brightview

by Ron French

During the summer Tom Gilmore, President of the New Jersey Audubon Society, requested our financial participation in a project at Brightview Farms in Columbus, New Jersey. This project paid Christine Connelly, the owner of Brightview Farms \$7000 to forestall the cutting of her hay in order to permit the grassland birds found there to finish their nesting. Her loss in not cutting the hay was estimated at from \$7,700 to \$8400. It seems that the New Jersey Dept. of Agriculture does not have a plan in place for the protection of grassland birds in hayfields.

With the approval of Council, \$500 of Conservation Funds was donated to New Jersey Audubon to offset part of their \$7,000 expenditure. DVOC noted that this was a one-time contribution and was made with the understanding and hope that ornithological studies would be performed and recommendations made to the New Jersey Department of Agriculture for setting up a guideline for cutting hay in fields where threatened species may be present. We will keep our members posted on the progress made to achieve this end.



Spruce Grouse
© Adrian Binns

After a short video, our ranger, Joe, led us out to the bird's habitat. We had great looks at the bird in the Jack Pines right after we arrived.

On Saturday afternoon we crossed the 45th parallel, halfway between the equator and the north pole on the way to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. We crossed the Macinac Bridge to upper Michigan, with Lake Michigan to the left and Huron to the right.

We stopped at Raco Field, an abandoned airfield. Out popped several Sharp-tailed Grouse. They scattered quickly, but we were able to track one down among the pine trees nearby and get excellent looks in scope and binoculars.

Our next stop was a forest service road where Paul spotted a male Spruce Grouse. We got out of the van to get a good look at this tame, beautiful, close-up bird. We were able to take pictures of it for several minutes.

When we finished the day at Zeller's Village Inn for dinner, we all felt we had had two awesome days of birding, with a new total of 131 birds.

On Sunday we birded the spruce bog area at Hulbert's Corner where Ruffed Grouse were drumming. In the afternoon we toured Seney NWR where we saw Trumpeter Swan, Osprey and Pine Siskin.

Sunday night at 10:00 PM was our appointed time for joining the Yellow Rail "search and band" party, but that night when we came out with Eric, the ranger, no rails were calling. Eric said he would take us out again the following night.

On Monday morning we visited Whitefish Point Bird Observatory. The point extends out into Lake Superior, and functions like Cape May Point in the fall. It is the last point of land for migrating birds before they This is where we succeeded in finding a Boreal Chickadee, much to Adrian's relief.

We made a special stop after Whitefish to see Sandhill Cranes, and then stopped at some recommended sites for Le Conte's Sparrow. Anita and Paul heard the bird, but none of us were able to see it.

As promised, we met Eric, along with two

interns, that night at 9:30 PM at Seney, and followed a road out to the back part of the refuge. At dusk we began to hear Woodcocks and Whip-poor-wills calling. Common Nighthawks swooped overhead. A Virginia Rail called further up the road, and then finally we heard the Yellow Rail.

Wearing hip waders, we ventured slowly into the sedge grass. Eric and one intern knelt on the sedge and used the two-stone method to call in the Yellow Rail. Eventually, after about 15 minutes, the rail flew into the lit area before us.

Shortly after midnight the bird walked up onto Eric's thigh. Eric caught the bird in his hand, and then quietly and efficiently weighed, measured and banded it. The bird was the size of Eric's hand, and weighed 58 grams. The rail's call at close range was memorable. It didn't hurry off, but walked away slowly when released.

After we lost sight of our rail, the greatest challenge lay ahead: tramping through two hundred yards of uneven sedge and cattail marsh thigh-deep in water. Between uneven tufts of grass, our feet entangled in grass and slipping into unexpected deep holes, it was strenuous and treacherous getting back. But we all made it.

On Tuesday morning we covered some previous territory again, trying to find the Connecticut Warbler. We never did find one, but we did see a Pine Marten.

We drove seven hours into Canada, arriving at Algonquin Park on Wednesday. We added seven new birds for the trip list, now totalling 174. One nice addition there was a male Black-backed Woodpecker on a telephone pole close to Road 60. We all enjoyed the billion-dollar visitor center and had lunch there.

We arrived in our home area around 11:00 PM, with new life birds for everybody.

Three Days in the Swamp

By Anna Bert

Colin Campbell's Pokomoke weekends always spell birding, fun, adventure, and more birding. These three days there in the beginning of May mean we can count on Prothonotary Warbler, Blue Grosbeak and Summer Tanager for our year list. It's a great way to celebrate spring migration.

When we arrived at Bombay Hook on Friday morning, May 5, 2000, Ellen Short and Colin were already pointing out Short-billed Dowitchers, Dunlin, Semipalmated Sandpipers, and Semipalmated Plovers to their group from the Lifelong Learning class in Wilmington. Greater Yellowlegs, a Coot, and an immature Bald Eagle were also seen there.

A delicious lunch at Sambo's in Leipsic followed. Colin and Ellen recommended crab cake sandwiches to ensure that the Black Rail would be seen that night - as happened a few years earlier.

After lunch we birded Port Mahon Road and found Seaside Sparrow, Ruddy Turnstones, and Spotted Sandpipers. Then we drove down to Little Creek and viewed Stilt Sandpipers among the shorebirds, and White-eyed Vireo from the tower. At Ted Harvey afterwards, we saw more shorebirds.

Dinner in Dover followed at a lively Mexican restaurant. That night we waited for the Black Rail to appear but he didn't keep his appointment. After we left for our motel, Colin's group narrowly escaped being run down by a speeding teenage driver. The speeding car ended up in the marsh but no one was hurt, fortunately. They did hope that this interesting method of flushing skulking marsh birds might work, but any possible rails would probably have been squashed.

Saturday was an even warmer day than Friday but we were all up early to visit the Cypress Swamp starting in Maryland and continuing in through Delaware. Our group now included Don Jones, Augie Sexauer, Mike Lyman, Jim Lyman, Chuck Lyman, Chuck Hetzel, Phil Thompson from Great Britain, Ellen, Colin, Dennis, and Anna Bert.

We had great views of Prothonotary Warblers carrying nest material to a nesting site right next to the wooden bridge on the Pocomoke River at Shepherds Crossing Road. We saw also Louisiana Waterthrush, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Great-crested Flycatcher. Meanwhile Colin and Dennis helped one participant open the locked door of his truck. Further up the road we had glimpses of Pileated Woodpecker, Pine Warbler, and Indigo Bunting.

We enjoyed a fine lunch at Em-Ings Barbecue in Maryland while watching a nest of baby robins enjoy theirs under the eave of the pavilion outside.

Next, we drove east to Assawoman Refuge. The Brown-headed Nuthatch didn't appear but a Gull-billed Tern was seen at Mulberry Landing, along with the first Least

Tern of the summer, as well as Black Skimmers, Blue-winged Teal, and an Osprey on nest.

The site with the most ticks and mosquitoes turned out to be the Piney Run portion of Assawoman Refuge. There Mike was able to see a Yellow-Breasted Chat while the rest of us had to be satisfied with its varied song.

Dinner that night was accompanied by guitar at the Mexican restaurant in Selbyville.

We finished up on Sunday in near record-breaking sun and heat, birding Trap Pond State Park and nearby Trussom Pond. Scarlet and Summer Tanagers were found in Trap Pond, along with Wood Thrush, Ovenbird, and Prothonotary Warbler.

At Trussom we saw Orchard Orioles, Rough-winged Swallows, and nesting Phoebe. At a private residence on Raccoon Pond, which we were given permission to visit, nesting Blue Jays, Wood Thrush, Northern Parula, and yet more Prothonotary Warblers were found. It was a restful shady respite as well.

The last stop we made with the group was at the railroad track above Ellendale. There a Grasshopper Sparrow and Horned Lark were cooperative but the sought-after Vesper Sparrow was not!

We headed home while the remaining group covered Logan Tract and I'm sure they saw still more wonderful birds.

The final tally for the trip was 155 species.



Please submit announcements, pieces to be considered for publication, schedules and other information

for *Philadelphia Larus* to:

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202 Penn Oak Road

Flourtown, PA 19031

215-836-1965 (phone + fax)

janeh008@aol.com

DVOC Website Address:

<http://www.acnatsci.org/dvoc>

Continued next column, this page

In Memoriam

Three long-standing, venerable DVOC members
have passed away during the past few months:
Al Zaid, Ed Manners and Phil Street.

Albert Zaid died of cancer on May 23, 2000. An active member of DVOC in the 1940s, he rejoined in the 1990s and became involved again. He participated in many Christmas counts, and was active in the Lancaster County and Center City areas.

Ed Manners died of prostate cancer during the summer of 2000. Many of us remember him as the Saw Whet Man. He kept track of the Saw Whet Owls in the Thorofare, NJ area, and was responsible for educating many people in the importance of conservation, especially where his beloved owls were concerned. I had scheduled an interview with Ed for *Larus* when I talked with him at Florence, NJ in February of this year. He had to postpone the interview because, as chairman of a tree committee in his community, he was otherwise occupied on the appointed day. I never got to do it. Naomi Murphy recalls Ed's saying, on many occasions, "This was the best day of my life!" J.H.

Phil Street died on August 5, 2000 at Pocono Lakes Preserve. He was a retired investment banker and noted ornithologist. Sandra Sherman's interview with Phil appeared in the Spring 1996 issue of *Larus*. She wrote: "One of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club's most distinguished members, Phillips B. Street has rubbed shoulders with many of the country's most preeminent ornithologists. ... He has birded with Roger Tory Peterson as well as some of the early members of our own club - Witmer Stone, Julian Potter, Ernie Choate. ... Street was elected to membership in 1945, on the same night that he gave a talk on the birds of Trinidad. ... He is probably best known for "Birds of the Pocono Mountains, Pennsylvania," first published in the 1954 *Cassinia*, issued in December 1955. ... Street also authored "A History of the Delaware Ornithological Club, the First One Hundred Years" in the 1990 centennial edition of *Cassinia*."

A memorial service will be held on Thursday, September 14, 2000 at 2:00 PM at St. David's Church, Radnor. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the World Wildlife Fund, 1250 24th St. NW, Washington, DC 20037 or any conservation program of your choice.

Ospreys, Cont'd from Page 1

take DOS representatives out to scout the salt marsh.

The following day, the crew returned and placed 3 brand-new red-cedar platforms, as Ospreys perched nearby. At that point, there were at least eight osprey pairs on the marsh peat or sitting on collapsed platform poles. There were two other pairs nesting on the marsh, one of which had already laid eggs, the other had hatched young.

Kathy Clark of the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife's Endangered and Nongame Species Program acknowledged the damage done over the winter to the platforms, explained in an e-mail message, "Unfortunately our program staff is at its lowest level in early spring. We worked in a few areas to straighten platforms, but did not get into Wildwood. Some of our oldest nests were in Wildwood, and were most susceptible to winter damage; newer nest structures have been placed in many other places."

On Saturday, June 3, I joined the DOS team as they placed the last two of five Osprey platforms. They are sort of "prefabricated" homes, able to be assembled quickly. The five platform-placers got their feet wet (both literally and figuratively) with the first one; amazingly,

from the time they stepped off the Skimmer until the second platform was erected was 21 minutes flat.

First, they dug a four-foot-deep hole, an easy task in the mucky marsh; the 12-foot-long post was inserted, then a sleeve was placed to keep the post upright, and the mud was filled back in. The platform itself was seated onto the top of the post, then screwed into place. Perches were added to the tops of the platforms, using four different styles. A predator guard encircling the top of the post was attached, then a nestful of bundles of driftwood and dried marsh grass (a donation from Fort Dupont State Park in Delaware) — "furniture" — was added. Voila! Home!

This summer, Ospreys were hanging out on all five platforms; although it was too late this year for them to nest successfully on the new platforms, they will be able to return next season and start the cycle all over. (Capt. Carlough reported that two of the three pairs that nested on the marsh were successful this year.)

The platforms were at the ready, having been built earlier by DOS member Lew Dumont.

DVOC's \$500 contribution to this process will help assure that more platforms will be available for the Ospreys in the future. Working together with DOS on this conservation project benefited both clubs — as well as the birds.

Golden Swamp Warblers Revisited

by Jane Henderson

It was a dark and stormy morning. At 6:00 AM on May 21, 2000, Bert Filemyr, Martin Selzer and I drove up Hawkin Road, looking for the advertised DVOC field trip. The first sign of life there was Erica Brendel, who had stopped her car to listen for a bird.

Then we saw our leader, Don Jones, all but incognito inside his rain-soaked poncho. One look at Don inspired Martin to say, "It's a trip leader's worst nightmare: people showing up!" Don confessed to us later that, when it was nearing 6:00 AM and he was still alone out there in the dark, in the pouring rain, he did entertain thoughts of going back home, drying off and warming up.

But, as so often happens, once we got going, what had started out as an unpromising morning turned out to be a great day.

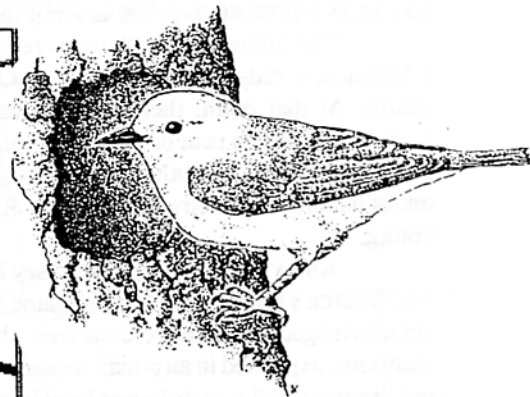
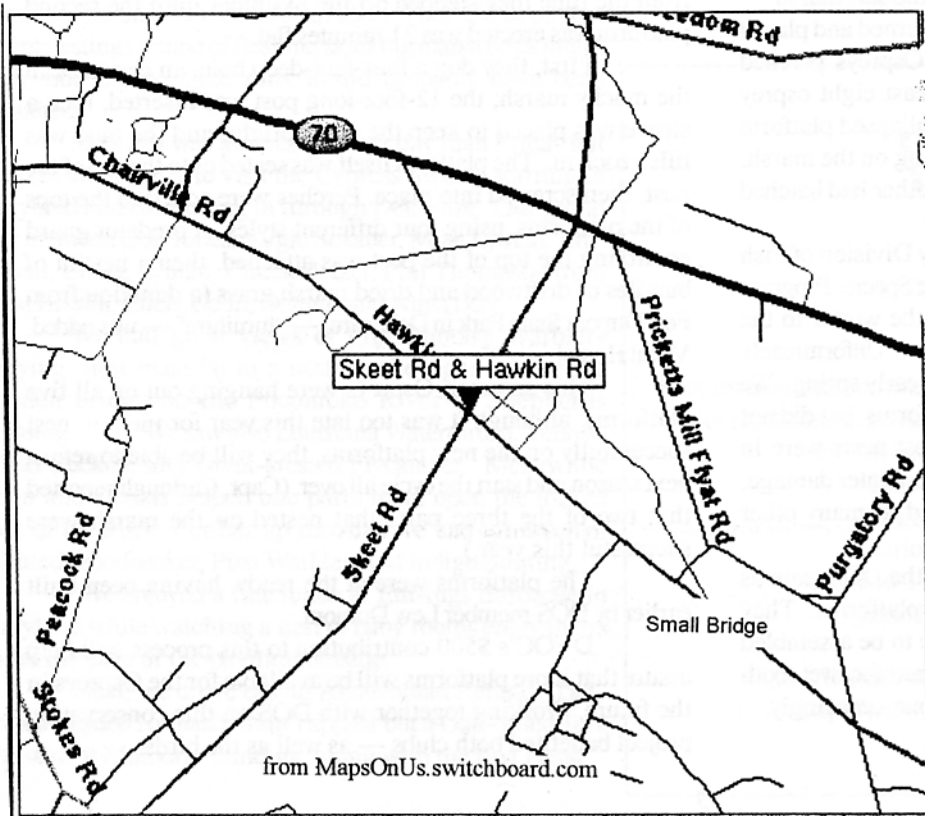
Remember Augie Sexauer's article about nesting Prothonotary Warblers in the Spring 2000 issue of *Larus*? On May 21, in the Hawkin Road area, we got marvelous looks at eight species of warblers including Prothonotary, Hooded, Kentucky and Worm-eating. We also got to see the nesting boxes for Prothonotaries that Augie described for *Larus*.

We went from there to Brightview Farm for Grasshopper Sparrows and other grassland birds. I counted 39 species for the morning.

Directions for getting to Hawkin Road:

Going east on Rte. 70, turn right at Skeet Road. In about 1/2 mile, turn left at the first crossroad, which is Hawkin Road. After about 1/2 mile on Hawkin Road, the paved road ends and a dirt road begins at a small bridge. This is the usual meeting place.

From Rte. 206, go west on Hawkin Road past the power line to the bridge.



Prothonotary Warbler
© Adrian Binns

Annual DVOC Banquet

Thursday, December 7, 2000

Cocktails 6:00 PM Dinner 7:00 PM

Dugan's Ilona Keller Restaurant

7900 Roosevelt Boulevard

Philadelphia, PA

(215) 333-7900

Speaker: Kevin Karlson

“Birding in the New Millennium - What Will the Future Bring?”

Banquet Reservation Form

The annual DVOC banquet will be held on Thursday, December 7, 2000 at

Dugan's Ilona Keller Restaurant

7900 Roosevelt Boulevard

Philadelphia, PA

(215) 333-7900

6:00 PM: Cocktails 7:00 PM: Dinner

I (we) wish to order #___ Prime Rib @ \$25 #___ Salmon @ \$21 #___ Turkey @ \$21

Name _____ Street Address _____

Town and Zip _____ Phone () _____

Please send your order and check by November 30, 2000 to:

Bernice and Joe Koplín

DVOC Banquet

251 Saint Joseph's Way

Philadelphia, PA 19106

(215) 922-7803 (H)

(215) 981-0630 (W)

DVOC Team Wins WSB Again!

By Naomi Murphy

Out of the sixty-three teams that participated in the World Series of Birding this year, the Lagerhead Shrikes won again. They have become a well oiled machine, experts at the game of "hit and run," and highly skilled at the arts of scouting, planning, executing and dealing with the unexpected.

Our team was made up of Paul Guris, Megan Edwards, Mike Fritz, Adrian Binns and Bill Stocku. Anita Guris provided an astonishing level of logistical support by handling van rental, hotel bookings, all of the food and drink needed for the team on the big day, submission of expenses to Nikon, and on and on. Anita's work was critical since it freed up the team members for the endless dry-runs that are so essential to the success of an event of this magnitude.

The sharing among teams was unparalleled. Multiple teams staying up at High Point were swapping discoveries and following up on each other's reports for the whole week. Mike and Megan were sharing constantly with Steve Kelling from Cornell down in the south. The attitude throughout seemed to be "every bird I give to five other teams means that much more money for conservation."

The Zeiss team, Pete Dunne, Don Freiday, Richard Crossley and Will Russell, came in at 218 because they forgot to write in Philadelphia Vireo. That officially put them one bird behind our 219. Our team decided that, despite what the rules say, we wanted the event to be ruled a tie. This was done and both teams' names will appear on the cup. This illustrates the way a fund-raising event like this should be, with the importance placed on conservation and camaraderie.

The monies raised by the DVOC for the World Series of Birding are the primary source of the club's conservation funds. Recent projects include: the provision of Purple Martin Houses at three sites on the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers, a contribution to the Natural Lands Trust of Media to help with the acquisition of a prime tract of forested land in Montgomery County which connects the previously separated parcels of the Valley Forge Audubon's Meng Preserve, and the restoration of Osprey nesting platforms on the New Jersey bayshore.

If you did not have an opportunity to contribute before the event, you can still help. Please make your check payable to: Naomi D. Murphy, DVOC Treasurer, 234 Orlemann Avenue, Oreland, PA 19075